

Report for Grading and Assessment Season 2017 – 2018

This season has proved to be quite a challenge ensuring that exchange and Federation games are covered. There were 40 exchanges with Counties which included Gloucester, East Midlands, London, Herts, Somerset, Eastern Counties, Warwickshire, Oxon and Dorset & Wilts. We also covered 6 Federation appointments. Unfortunately with Advisor availability we were not able to watch many of our own referees, in fact, we only managed to see 6. This is not satisfactory if we consider that all our referees should be watched at least once in a season if only for a health check or to try and further their development. In the future there needs to be a reassessment of how we try to improve this aspect of our game. Our membership is increasing and we have several new as well as young referees who we need to support and develop as a Society. Perhaps it may be possible to implement a system where referees who are injured or not appointed would be willing to go and watch their colleagues. This has been muted by our secretary and with two volunteers so far we need to see how we can move this forward. It might be possible to approach clubs who may be able to offer an “observer” to watch our referees at their club. The current situation I feel is not satisfactory and we, as a Society, need to address the issue.

We do have a small pool of advisors but we do need to recruit more. If you feel you are getting to the end of your refereeing career perhaps you might consider joining the current group. It can be rewarding and it is certainly something I am sure referees would welcome to be watched and have a feedback by someone on the touchline.

The time has come for a reappraisal of the grading cards. Initially they were used quite well and provided discussion areas for the referee to use when talking to coaches and captains after the match as well as providing a basis for the grading committee. However this season has seen a dramatic drop in their use to such an extent one must question whether it is worth pursuing them. Perhaps there needs to be further discussion within the Society to consider their use.

This season we nominated James Dowds and Joel Taylor to the Federation development squad. Unfortunately Joel had to step back for personal reasons but hopefully he will be back in the fold for next season. James continues to make good progress and has been given some level 6 matches where he has performed well at this higher level. We wish him well on his journey.

I must thank my resident team of advisors, Peter Downes, Philip Bowden, Peter Dickinson, Doug Chalmers and Andrew King who brave the elements to give their time so readily to the Society and its referees. I also welcome Chris Goss who has also given his time often sacrificing his refereeing appointment to help out as an advisor and hopefully I can persuade him further as he is an experienced official and able to offer a great deal. I have also managed to enrol Charles Owen-Conway to cover some of the Amersham games where we have had an exchange referee and Charles is also someone with a wealth of experience. I also must thank Paul Stanley for all his work in coordinating the fixtures and exchanges for me to make the necessary advisor appointments. Although I call him the “Dark Lord” I don’t know what I would do without his endearing telephone calls in particular those where I have had a senior moment with my appointments. May the force stay with him!

Malcolm Jamieson
Chairman – Grading and Assessment
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