

Mentors and Assessors

Every job or hobby has its own jargon and a new referee is no different. Right from the start of training new words and abbreviations are thrown about. Don't worry you will soon grasp what they mean and if you don't know ...then ask!

Mentors and Assessors are some of people talked whose roles are not easily understood.

Mentors

When you start to referee during those first half dozen games, some one should be sent to watch you. That is your mentor. He is not sent to criticise but to support you and to point out that you are getting the very basic things right. He is not there to give you marks and is not connected to the clubs or the leagues.

For example, he will ensure that you are blowing the whistle correctly, or that your arm signals are clear and held for long enough. He might point out to you where you should be taking up better positions so that you give yourself better views of the play.

In those early games, it is as basic as that.

Of course unless you tell us, we won't know where and when you have a game so we won't be sending anyone to watch you. So that part is up to you. Once you have been allocated a mentor, you will always be able to contact him direct and as you accumulate a number a games you may want to ring him up and discuss incidents with him even though he wasn't present at the game.

Mentors are often active referees who feel able to take new referees under their wing. This will let you sometimes travel with your mentor to watch him and take in the atmosphere at a higher level.

Mentors are your non-judgemental friends, with whom you can discuss things openly and are there to support you.

The Lancashire Football Association have started running courses specially to give mentors extra skills and techniques to pass on for your benefit.

Assessors

Only after a couple of seasons, perhaps when you are ready to be promoted up the ladder will an Assessor watch you.

Most Assessors are senior referees or retired referees with many years of experience behind them. They have to undertake a Football Association course to get qualified

and this has to be renewed regularly. They also have to attend regular seminars at the Lancashire Football Association each season to keep up to date.

The Assessor will be there to watch you closely and to make a report to the Lancashire Football Association and to give you marks, which count towards your promotion. Much more emphasis is now given to Assessor's marks, rather than the old system of relying on the club marks. In fact promotion to Level Four and above are solely made on Assessor's marks.

Prior to the game, the Assessor should contact you, so that you will not be taken unawares when you see him. After the game the Assessor should also speak to you to discuss how the game went and to clarify an incidents, which may have occurred.

You will receive a copy of the Assessor report, with the marks awarded. It is broken down into several separate paragraphs, eg Application of Law, Positioning Fitness & Work rate etc. But most importantly the report also includes up to three areas of your particular strengths and three development areas, where the assessor thinks you might be able to improve.

It is important to realise the Assessor is not there to find and point everything you do wrong. The main objective is to try to help you to improve, so that you can move up the ladder.

Try to regard the Assessor as an ally; indeed he might be the only person on your side at the game!

You might disagree sometimes with what he has said but remember it his only his opinion on what he has seen that day. After you have been assessed several times look at all the reports, perhaps the same development area is mentions more than once. That ought to be good evidence that it is something you ought to be working on.

Finally the first thing you will always do is seek out what marks you have been given. If you have been given 70 then that means you are achieving a standard of performance, which is satisfactory for your refereeing level. Marks above that show you that you are moving towards being ready for promotion.

But it is important to state that no matter how far up the refereeing ladder you climb, there are times when you need someone to talk to. Most referees find a sympathetic ear, a shoulder to cry on or someone who has experience of what you are going through at the local referees' society. So try and get to their meetings as often as you can.

