



Overview of English Refereeing

Men's 11v11 Football Referee Pathway

1 - FIFA Referee	Referees internationally (FIFA and UEFA), as well as on the English Premier League
1 - Select Group Referee	Referees on the English Premier League
1 - Select Group 2 Referee	Referees on the EFL Championship
1 - National List Referee	Referees on the EFL 1 & 2
2a - Panel Select Referee	Referees on the National League, step 1 of the National League System (NLS)
2b - Panel Referee	Referees on the National League North/South, step 2 of the NLS
3 - Contributory League Referee	Referees on Steps 3 & 4 of the NLS
4 - Supply League Referee	Referees on Steps 5 & 6 of the NLS
5 - Senior County Referee	Referees on Step 7 of the NLS and Senior County football
6 - County Referee	Referees on County League Football
7 - Junior Referee	Referees on County League Football
Y - Youth Referee	Referees Youth football (u15 and below)
T - Trainee Referee	A referee ongoing with their FA Referees Course
D - Referee Developer	A referee who holds a 'non-active' role as a Referee Coach, Mentor, Observer, Tutor

Women's 11v11 Football Referee Pathway

FIFA Referee	Referees internationally (FIFA and UEFA), as well as on the Women's Super League
Women's Super League Referee	Referees on the Women's Super League
Women's Championship Referee	Referees on the Women's Championship
Women's National Referee	Referees on the Women's National League
Women's Regional Referee	Referees on Regional and County Women's Leagues
Women's Youth Referee	Referees youth football (u15 and below)
Trainee Referee	A referee ongoing with their FA Referees Course

Not only do we have Referees, but there is the opportunity for specialist Assistant Referees. Upon progressing to Level 3 (Contributory League Referee) opportunities open up as a specialist Assistant Referee, mirroring the referee pathway all the way from being a Panel Assistant Referee, right up to a FIFA Assistant Referee.

As well as the 11v11 pathways, which are the most popular, Referees also have the opportunity to officiate in other forms of the game. Futsal, Small Sided Football, Mini Soccer, Disability Football and Walking Football all have their own pathways which allow Referees to service other formats of the game and progress to the higher levels should they have the ability, attitude and commitment.

Referees can be on multiple pathways, should they want to officiate in different formats of the game.

How many Referees are there in England?

In England each season there are c28,000 Referees who register with The Football Association, alongside c4000 people who start their refereeing journey by taking The FA Referees Course.

Qualifying as a Referee

The referee pathway starts you off as a Trainee Referee as you start your course with your local County FA. Upon completing The FA Referees Course and passing your practical refereeing assessment and Laws of the Game exam, you become a Level 7 Referee, unless you are 14 or 15 and become a Youth Referee.

Referee training, education and development

From the start of a Referees journey, The FA and County FA's provide training, education and development opportunities to all referees to support their development. This is a mixture of practical sessions on the field of play, indoor technical sessions that focus on clips, analysis and lifestyle, as well as distant learning through an online portal.

Grassroots Football

Every referee has the opportunity to apply for promotion to progress through the grassroots game. These promotions are decided by attendance at In-service training, laws of the game exams, observations from experienced referees on either three or five of your matches during that season and a set number of matches as an Assistant Referee.

The semi-professional game

Upon being promoted to Level 4, promotion is not optional and a merit table is produced using club and observer marks. This principal applies from Level 4 through to Level 2a. The National League System provides a superb learning environment for English Referees to progress through.

The professional game

Upon being promoted to Level 2a, a referee becomes a part of the [Professional Game Match Officials \(PGMOL\)](#) who are the managing body formed by The FA, the Premier League and EFL.

IFAB

The laws of the game that are applied to every game of football, from The FA Cup Final to a Sunday morning grassroots game, are set by the [International Football Association Board \(IFAB\)](#).