**West Midlands Federation**

Policy for the Development of Match Officials\*.

\*The term Match Officials is inclusive and refers to referees, assistant referees, performance reviewers, mentors and coaches.

As set out in the Constitution, the Federation is a collaborative organisation formed by, and accountable to its member Societies (North Midlands Society of Rugby Football Referees and Staffordshire Rugby Union Society of Referees). Its core aims are to develop match officials, to meet the needs of the game within the West Midlands and to maximise the strengths and skills within the member Societies.

This policy was agreed on 20th October 2020, following meetings with representatives of the interested parties, and is to be reviewed annually during the close season.

**Vision**

To be a national model of best practice of how a Federation should operate.

**Purpose**

To recognise and develop match officials from both North Midlands and Staffordshire Referee Societies where potential has been identified by the ‘home’ Society in the first instance. Those selected will be supported so as to give them a greater chance to develop to and beyond the Midlands Division (L5).

Selection of Federation referees will take into account factors such as potential and commitment to progress beyond level 5, appropriate fitness levels and availability. Other factors may also be considered.

Federation referees will be subject to annual review and will be expected to demonstrate appropriate progress if they are to remain a Federation referee after two seasons. There are a number of reasons why a third or subsequent seasons would be justified and any extension beyond the two years will be decided by the Federation. Such decisions should be transparent and made known to both Societies.

The grading of individual referees remains the responsibility of each Society. Referees who are at level 6 but are judged to be at their peak will still have the opportunity to be appointed at that level by their Society (see Implementation below).

**Implementation**

Federation referees will be selected by the Selection team which comprises the following Federation representatives: Chairman, RFRU representative, Appointments Officer (AO), Coach (FC) and Performance Reviewer (FPR). Up to five referees, nominated by their Society, will form the A list. Selection will be based on potential and there will be no requirement to balance numbers between the two Societies.

To ensure consistent and appropriate Federation support for the A list, the Federation will appoint a Performance Reviewer and Coach to work with the A List referees. Representatives of both Societies will confirm the AO, FPR and FC in post and be involved in identifying a replacement when a vacancy arises. The Federation recognises that these appointments have the potential to support and assist the postholders in their aspirations to move to a higher level.

Appointments will be made by the Appointments team, consisting of the AO, the FC and the FPR. The Appointments team will appoint a maximum of five referees at Level 6 each Saturday, whether for Exchange games or within the Federation. Each Society will be able to put forward further names to be available to the Appointments team if appropriate. In weeks when there are more than five L6 league games to be covered by the Federation, the remaining games will be appointed at Society level. The Appointments team will decide their own way of working and have the option to involve others in the process in whatever way they choose, if they wish to do so. L6 matches scheduled to be played on days other than Saturday will be appointed by the Society, but if an appointment had already been made on the understanding that the game would be played on the Saturday, that appointment will stand. In the event of a referee appointed to a Saturday game becoming unavailable for any reason, the AO will be responsible for reappointments.

The AO will arrange Exchange Fixtures, both inward and outward, for Level 6, 7 and 8 games. The Appointments team will appoint referees for the Level 6 games; referees for outgoing exchange matches at lower levels will be appointed at Society level.

A review of the progression and operation of the process (including membership of the A list) will be held at least annually. A Federation development squad and the Federation’s role in developing match officials other than referees will be considered for future seasons.