

England Deaf Football

Referees Referee Coordinator's Report 2021-22

New Deaf Referees

- EDF were boosted by the addition of the following referees: Paul Kirby (Dorset FA), Andrew Tobin (Surrey FA), Peter Bishop (Hertfordshire FA), Simon Eyres (Middlesex FA, Sean Noone, Anjum Zahoor, Andrew Johnson and Adam Breeze (all Birmingham FA) – EIGHT in all. Fantastic news!
- A referees group was set up with the aim of helping each other. Two more referees were involved – Barry David (London FA) and Robert Scarth (Hertfordshire FA) making it 11 in all, enough to set up a football team of men in black! The text messaging has been highly constructive.
- It was somehow a pity that only Sean Noone and Phil Gardner were active in EDF League matches during the 2021-22 season. Simon Eyres voluntarily stepped in to help out for one game when he was supposed to be playing. Hopefully this will change for the 2022-23 season.
- It was a successful step recruiting deaf referees for the cup competitions:
 - EDF League Cup Semi finals, Sheffield - 2
 - EDF Challenge Cup Semi-Finals, Rugby - 3
 - EDF League Cup Final, Peterborough - 4
 - EDF Challenge Cup Final, St George's Park - 4
- Two referees, Sean Noone and Phil Gardner, were recruited for Glasgow ADFC's 150th Anniversary Tournament and enjoyed the experience.

Whole Game System

- The WGS mechanism was a nightmare – it did not help the EDF at all such as:
 - We could not track suspensions so had to rely on our instincts; it would be nice to be automatically informed of bans.
 - Several referees did not bother using the WGS
 - A few referees provided disciplinary reports as requested
 - One referee stubbornly refused to provide one, much to our annoyance
 - Some clubs did not inform EDF of suspensions
 - At least two clubs were affected by the “Saturday only” or “Sunday only” affiliation – they were led in thinking that players would be eligible to play despite the suspension length. This caused bad friction between two clubs throughout the season when this could have easily been resolved.
- Being a National league, it may be worthwhile entering into a FA Full Time league.

Recruitment of Referees

- Several clubs struggled to find referees for their matches particularly Brighton & Hove DFC who did not have the support of Sussex FA who refused to communicate with the EDF. Bradford

DFC too found it difficult to get hold of them. It appears that several FAs are using their domestic competitions as a priority and also there is a severe shortage of men in black.

- Whilst Sheffield & Hallamshire FA were excellent in providing officials, Birmingham FA was a disappointment at Rugby but it gave EDF the incentive to appoint deaf referees which worked a treat.

As already reiterated, the growth of deaf referees on our EDF database would be a solution to clubs but the distance and petrol costs may present a problem.

Suggestions for The 2022-23 season

- EDF to get hold of disciplinary reports from league and cup matches
- EDF to be instantly informed of players' suspensions
- Clubs to use permanent linesmen for matches – referees tend to lose their consistency when clubs keep changing linesmen throughout a game
- Clubs to consider using a referee and 2 ARs for cup matches in the main competition

My two years' association with the EDF is up so it is time to pass it on to a new person. I shall be happy to offer my support if needed and wish the new person every success. I have enjoyed officiating deaf football clubs at grass roots level; it has been a privilege and shall continue doing so. Finally, I wish to thank the EDF Head of Competition for the hard work in promoting deaf football and his cooperation.

All the best for the new 2022-23 season!

Phillip Gardner, EDF Referees Coordinator.