



I've always played football but only considered refereeing when I was 15 years old. My dad suggested it around the time when I wanted to begin working. I love being involved with football, so I love watching good players and being a part of their game. Being fit and making friends is also a positive. I would love the opportunity to be officiating at the international level one day. I am more confident talking and liaising with people, and I can manage and cooperate with people in a professional context. My verbal and nonverbal communication from refereeing has also helped me in my teaching profession.

- Laura Moya

STRATEGIES TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN FEMALE REFEREES



Barriers to refereeing for females

There are many factors that act as barriers to females refereeing football, including:

- ▶ Lack of information/knowledge of refereeing pathway
- ▶ Lack of time/interest
- ▶ Fear of abuse
- ▶ Unaware of opportunities to referee female-only games

Recruiting Strategies

Some ways that you can address these barriers and recruit new female referees to your club are:

- ▶ Promote all the offerings at your club for female referees through as many avenues as possible, for example:
 - Information evenings and networking

- Engage with local schools in the area
- Promotional stands at events

- ▶ There are many women who play community football and given the right support and encouragement might be interested in officiating at this level. This can be achieved by:

- Encourage and identify potential talent from a young age, Encourage players to complete the referee introductory course
- Promote refereeing opportunities and actively encourage females to attend courses
- Encourage junior girls to become referees. (E.g. 14-17 year old players who want to start working and already know and love football)

- ▶ Start an initiative that there must be a 'volunteer' referee member from each team from your club to attend a course and be the back-up referee should any of the allocated officials not be available

- ▶ Promoting the benefits of having female referees of female-only games and the positive environment that can develop in these situations
- ▶ Advertise refereeing as a way to earn money while being involved and giving back to the game

I'd like to be a referee, but how do I find the information and where from?

Allyson Flynn: The easiest place to start would be to contact your local association or Member Federation. They will have courses for new referees at the start of the season. FFA has also developed online Laws of The Game course which can be accessed at any time.

I'd like to referee, but I do not want to experience the abuse from spectators, or disrespect from the players/coaching staff when I make decisions. How do I know I am going to have the support from my club/association?

Kate Jacewicz: There are always people you can talk to; all you have to do is speak up. There's support at clubs and state member federations as well as the local branches. Refereeing feels quite isolating at times, however you are not alone, so don't hesitate to seek support or help.

I started refereeing two years ago when I was 15. I was playing for Playford Patriots we were told that FFSA were giving out scholarships for girls who wanted to referee; I discussed the opportunity with dad. His advice was I'd have nothing to lose, only gain from the experience, so I went and took the opportunity. I love the travelling aspect of refereeing and being able to meet a large community of people I wouldn't ordinarily meet. Gaining experience through refereeing with more senior referees or being mentored by them is motivating. Through officiating games I've gained confidence, an improvement that I and others have seen in myself. Officiating has also taught me a lot about being organised, working as a team, respect and one's reputation/presentation. As a referee I have to present myself in a way in which I will be respected by the players and coach, both on and off the pitch.

- Paula Orlandi