CORE CONCEPT

Referee Development Programme Course: Assessors, Grading, Appointments and VAR Operations

15 – 19 March 2027
Amsterdam - Zuidas business district hotel

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Ref: 2014_29672 **Date:** 15 – 19 March 2027 **Location:** Amsterdam - Zuidas business district hotel **Fees:** 23500 SAR

Introduction:

Referee development programme management, covering assessors, grading and VAR operations, is a 1-week course for federation referee departments, league officiating managers and assessor panels, ending with a Referee Development Programme Plan. Many referee departments lose new officials early, grade them on thin observer evidence and appoint crews without written criteria, so match decisions draw disputes and officials face abuse with little support. Nominees already run referee education, assessment or appointments, and teaching is by case study on anonymised observer reports, grading tables and appointment sheets. CoreConcept Training Center delivers this referee development programme management course.

Course Objectives:

- Map the officiating workforce of a federation or league by level, age, retention and vacancy so recruitment targets match fixture demand
- Run fitness and Laws of the Game testing cycles with clear pass standards, retest rules and medical clearance records
- Operate an observer and assessor system with marking criteria, calibration sessions and report quality checks
- Set grading, promotion and relegation rules for officials that panels can apply consistently and defend on appeal
- Write a match appointment policy and run VAR operations by protocol, with conflict-of-interest checks and review logs
- Assemble a Referee Development Programme Plan with welfare, abuse reporting and budget lines for a case federation

Target Audience:

- Managers who lead a federation or league referee department and report to its referees committee
- Officers responsible for recruiting, educating and mentoring new and developing match officials
- Assessors and observers who mark officials' performances and write match reports
- Panel members accountable for grading lists, promotion decisions and match appointments
- Staff who coordinate video review rooms, replay operators and post-match decision reviews

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Course Outline:

Day 1: Officiating Workforce Foundations and Current-State Review

- Referee Department Role Map From Grassroots to Elite Panels
- Officiating Workforce Census by Level, Age and Region
- Referee Dropout Analysis Using Exit Interview Records
- Referees Committee Terms of Reference and Decision Rights
- Referee Programme Health Check With a Maturity Scorecard

Day 2: Laws of the Game, Testing Standards and the VAR Protocol

- Laws of the Game Knowledge Test Design and Marking
- Fitness Test Battery With Pass Standards and Retest Rules
- Medical Clearance and Annual Screening Records for Officials
- VAR Protocol Reviewable Incidents and Clear and Obvious Error
- Referee Education Curriculum by Grade and Competency Level

Day 3: Assessor Systems, Grading and Match Appointments in Practice

- Observer Report Template With Key Match Incident Marking
- Assessor Calibration Sessions Using Shared Match Footage
- Grading Points Table With Promotion and Relegation Thresholds
- Match Appointment Matrix Balancing Grade, Risk and Neutrality
- Conflict of Interest Declaration and Appointment Exclusion Log

Day 4: VAR Operations, Officials' Welfare and Problem Cases

- Video Operation Room Roles for VAR, AVAR and Replay Operator
- On-Field Review Communication Script and Decision Review Log
- Abuse of Officials Incident Reporting and Sanction Pathway
- Referee Mental Wellbeing Support and Peer Mentoring Scheme
- Grading Appeal Handling and Assessor Bias Detection Checks

Day 5: Case Study Building a Referee Development Programme Plan

- Case Federation Workforce Gap and Recruitment Target Setting
- Case Testing Calendar and Education Pathway Redesign
- Case Grading Review With Assessor Report Sample Audit
- Case Appointment Policy and VAR Readiness Assessment
- Referee Development Programme Plan Completion and Panel Review

Skills You Will Gain:

- Officiating Workforce Planning
- Referee Test Administration
- Assessor Calibration
- Official Grading Design
- Appointment Policy Drafting
- Video Review Room Coordination
- Officials' Welfare Case Handling
- Referee Programme Budgeting

Why Attend This Course:

- Deliver a Referee Development Programme Plan to the referees committee and the competitions department for approval
- Decide which officials to promote, hold or relegate, and which crew to appoint to a high-risk fixture, on recorded evidence
- Avoid disputed gradings, conflicted appointments and the loss of officials who leave after abuse or poor support
- Coach fellow assessors, tutors and appointment panel members on shared marking criteria and appointment rules

Conclusion:

Back at work, the participant presents the Referee Development Programme Plan to the referees committee, the competitions department and the league board. The committee uses it to approve recruitment targets, testing standards, grading thresholds and the appointment policy, while the competitions department uses its VAR readiness section to plan video review staffing. After the first full grading round under the plan, the department should review officials retained, appeal outcomes, assessor consistency and abuse reports, then adjust thresholds, education content and support services.

Frequently Asked Questions FAQ:

What should participants know before a referee development programme management course?

Participants should already run referee education, assessment, grading or appointments in a federation or league. Current refereeing at elite level is not needed. Bringing an anonymised observer report, grading table or appointment sheet helps apply the case work to their own department.

How does a referee development programme management course differ from a sports performance analysis or sport integrity course?

It covers managing match officials as a workforce: recruitment, testing, assessment, grading, appointments, video review rooms and welfare. Performance analysis courses study teams and players, and integrity courses deal with doping, match manipulation and athlete safeguarding cases.

Why does referee development depend on calibrated assessors and not only on fitness test results?

Fitness tests show readiness to keep up with play, but promotion should reflect decision quality in matches. Calibrated assessors mark the same incidents the same way, so grading points become comparable across observers and decisions can be defended on appeal.

What do participants take back from the referee development programme management course?

Participants take back a Referee Development Programme Plan with a workforce census, a testing calendar, an observer report template, a grading points table, an appointment matrix, a VAR readiness check and a welfare and abuse reporting route.