

Referee Column: Australasian Taekwondo magazine.

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Referee career development pathway

Where there is match play in taekwondo competition, the referee is required to manage the fight between 2 contesting players, and there are judges to score the points. The referee is required so that the competition rules can be implemented. The match cannot happen if there is no referee to manage the match according to the rules and there are no judges to score the points, likewise there is no match if there are no players. One cannot exist without the other.

The referee is the custodian of the rules in the competition court arena. Not everybody can be a referee. He must first want to be a referee; he must want to be involved in managing a match fight between 2 opposing players. The referee must apply the rules and be able to withstand abuses and pressures from coaches and spectators. The referee must be able to manage difficult players and difficult match situations. The referee can rise above all this and still remain calm and exercise control and manage the fights according to the rules.

There is a development pathway for a referee, and it can be a very rewarding career, perhaps not fulltime, but nonetheless still a very rewarding one. A referee can progress all the way to the top and referee at the Olympics and World Championships.

The National Referee Board of Taekwondo Australia runs courses in all states and qualifies referees for all classes from club class level through to 1st class or senior national referee level. This development pathway has gathered interest in other countries that have shown interest in our Australian development pathway including Oceania countries.

The entry point is at either club level or state level as a corner judge. Here the focus is in the training of referee judges in correct methods of scoring points in competition. It is not just pressing buttons. There is skill requirement, including eye, hand and finger-thumb co-ordination. Recognition of a point has to be confirmed by vision and then transferred to the hand scoring unit by pressing the button. There is also requirement to do this all within 1 second and that the correct colour button has to be pressed.

This sounds all too easy, but practice alone is not the only criteria to be good, a referee must be consistent and focused at all times. There are now tests that can measure the reaction time and anticipation time. We also measure colour co-ordination, vision testing and high blood pressure testing. Regular practice and experience improves skill and execution. There are simulation tests being developed to measure scoring profile, accuracies of scoring and eye-confirmation-hand-thumb-action becomes very important.

After practicing for at least 1 year as a corner judge, the referee can progress to the next level to become a referee officiating a match in the centre. As a novice centre referee, his development is best gained at the state level. Here he gains confidence through practice and display of his practical hand signals, match management and court craft. A mentor helps guide the new referee in his development. He gains experience handling a real match in the middle with 2 opposing players and apply the rules, so he has to know the rules very well. He has to interpret the rules instantly when confronted with any situation. The novice

referee is usually placed in matches involving the colour belts and juniors. His development in this stage is very important, if confronted with a very difficult situation that is controversial or the abuse from coaches turns him off. In these cases, the mentor guiding the novice referee is very important so the novice referee can be guided in his development.

The 3rd class referee can improve and hone his judge scoring skills at national level, and gain further experience to develop his confidence. The higher the level of competition, the more stressful and the more pressure there is. Some more experienced 3rd class referees can be called on to officiate as centre referee at the national colour belt and junior black belt matches, thus giving him more experience to handle more pressing matches.

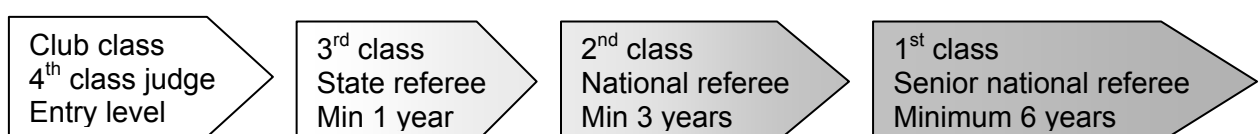
After a minimum of 2 years in the centre at state level, the referee can test for 2nd class or national level referee. His skills levels would have improved along with his ring craft confidence. He can manage matches in close proximities and also at comfortable ranges. He would feel comfortable managing junior or senior black belt matches. He progresses to officiate as a centre referee at national level and national selections level. He can move with the players, fast ones, slow ones, erratic ones and even the difficult and awkward ones. He starts to gain a feel of high stakes matches at the selections where the prize for the players is a representative position with the national team at a world level tournament.

The good referee trains himself and starts to consolidate the accepted contemporary standards required to be an excellent referee, clear in his actions, his movements, his ring craft, his authority on the court, his knowledge of the rules and he starts to feel “at home” in the centre court. He starts to feel comfortable in all situations on the court. He practices his hand signals, starts to memorize his competition rules and gains proficiency in his actions and match management.

After a further minimum of 3 years at national level, he starts to believe he can test for the senior national referee 1st class level. At this level he would start to work on, if not already his own referee match management presentation style. He is more authoritative and more confident; he is very sure footed and believes in his actions, his hand signals, his movements and his all round match management skills. His role as senior national referee will start to expand as he is given court supervisory responsibilities and he learns to manage other referees and their work levels on the court. He becomes a mentor to the junior referees and the developing national referees. He is able to resolve issues on his own court and guides his team of referees on match days. He learns to assess referees’ performances and provides reviews and feedback to his team so they can become better at their work skill and performances. He helps set a standard and becomes a role model. He also starts to manage his court with regards to its safety environments, its risk management requirements, time schedules, roster schedules and problem solve any issues that may arise.

The more experienced senior national referee can take on more responsibilities and work alongside the national referee chairman / director and learns to oversee the full tournament management responsibilities. The National referee Board believes in empowerment and regularly rotates its most experienced senior national referees to take on more responsible roles to help develop their management skills for managing the tournament but also handle man management issues and environment issues.

Minimum number of years’ development pathway from entry level:



The National Referee Board recognizes referee performance excellence with the following annual national referee awards including rookie referee, most improved referee, referee of

the year, referee service award and commendation referee award. Each state is encouraged to replicate these national awards for their state referees.

When he has experienced being a senior national referee for a number of years he is ready to gain qualification to become an international referee. His confidence levels would be high and he is prepared and ready to try out the international stage. I will discuss this next development pathway and the experiences one can gain on the international stage in part 2 in the next issue.

Kim Seng
18th November 2006.

Referee class levels: Must renew every 2 years for NOAS and every 4 years with NRB. Experiences must be recorded in the NOAS logbook or NRB log sheet and verified.

Awareness or Refresher	This is a non-qualifying course and only introduces members to be aware of and understand the competition rules. Any member (over 15 years old) who is a red belt and above can attend. Referees can attend to refresh their knowledge of competition rules for credits towards their next upgrading or renewal of NOAS accreditation.
C –class	This level is introduced to qualify red belts of age 15 years and above. This also includes black belts of age 15 to 18 years. This qualification will qualify members to corner judge tournaments at club level tournaments and is a bridging course to become NOAS referee officials.
4 th class	<p>Minimum holder of 1st dan black belt aged 18 years and over. Must pass course requirements. Those who can demonstrate recent pass level requirements from C class can apply for credit towards 4th class referee qualifications, but course attendance is still required, if not done within 2 years. Qualifies referees to officiate at club and state level tournaments as a corner judge.</p> <p>NOAS renewal requirements: Must demonstrate participation in at least 2 sanctioned events as corner judge and attended 1 refresher course within 2 year period.</p>
3 rd class	<p>Must have satisfactorily judged at least 4 sanctioned tournament events after obtaining 4th class referee. Must have passage of a minimum of 1 year since obtaining 4th class. Must have the minimum rank of 1st dan. Must pass course requirements.</p> <p>Qualifies referees to officiate as referee and corner judge at all state level tournaments, and as corner judge at national events. Experienced 3rd class referees can be considered to referee colour belts and junior black belts at national level events.</p> <p>NOAS renewal requirements: Must demonstrate participation in at least 2 sanctioned tournaments or 8 simulation events or equivalent combination of tournament or simulation events as referee and 1 refresher course attended within 2 year period.</p>
2 nd class	<p>Must have a minimum rank of 2nd dan. Must have satisfactorily refereed and judged at least 8 sanctioned tournament events after obtaining 3rd class, and satisfactorily refreshed at 2 referee courses or seminars. Must have participated at state simulation events as referee in at least 4 simulation sessions. Must pass course requirements. Must have passage of a minimum of 2 years since obtaining 3rd class.</p> <p>Qualifies referees to referee and corner judge at all state level and national level tournaments. Eligible to referee and corner judge at national selection level tournaments.</p> <p>NOAS renewal requirements: Must demonstrate participation in at least 2 sanctioned tournaments or 8 simulation events or equivalent combination of tournament or simulation events as referee and 1 refresher course attended within 2 year period.</p>
1 st class	<p>Must have the minimum rank of 3rd dan. Must have satisfactorily refereed and judged at least 12 sanctioned tournament events after obtaining 2nd class referee, and satisfactorily completed 3 sanctioned referee courses or seminars. Must have participated at state simulation events as referee in at least 6 simulation sessions since obtaining 2nd class. Must have officiated at least 1 national level and 1 national selection event. Must pass course requirements. Must have passage of a minimum of 3 years since obtaining 2nd class.</p> <p>Qualifies referees to referee and corner judge at all state, national level and national selection level tournaments. Qualifies referees to be eligible to attend international level referee courses and qualify as an international referee.</p> <p>NOAS renewal requirements: Must demonstrate participation in at least 2 sanctioned tournaments or 8 simulation events or equivalent combination of tournament or simulation events as referee and 1 refresher course attended within 2 year period.</p>