

What is Basketball Australia's Trainee Referee Green Shirt Program?



Aim

The aim of the *Green Shirt Program* is to make beginner/inexperienced officials easily recognisable to all players, coaches and spectators with the objective that people will identify these officials are learning and will be tolerant of mistakes.

Background

Most sports have difficulty recruiting, training and retaining officials. Between 1997 and 2001, the number of officials in Australian sport dropped 26%. A recent survey conducted by the Australian Sports Commission identified that harassment, abuse and lack of respect for officials were major causes of the declining number of people officiating. In an effort to improve the retention of officials in South Australia, the Office for Recreation and Sport piloted a *Coloured Shirt Program*, which was based on a program that had been initiated by the SA National Football League. Basketball South Australia was involved in the pilot, which demonstrated improved results in retaining officials.

Waverley Referee Development Program

Due to recent issues with various teams who have had Green Shirt Trainees or Apprentices on their game, I felt it important to explain the Waverley Referee's Development Program.

Firstly, trainees are required to referee only on a senior men's shift (Monday, Wednesday or Thursday night). The purpose of this is to strengthen the trainee's ability to identify and deal with conflict that is very rare on junior basketball. It is very challenging for many of these trainees (who could be as young as 14 years old) to manage ten adults at one time, especially since they have been taught to respect and listen to their elders. Our current referee numbers are not currently at an acceptable level and we wish that once these trainees are given their stripes that they will remain on a senior's shift. This both helps our shortages on some nights and is also crucial for them to develop as a referee.

Secondly, trainees who have proved independent of their senior mentors are appointed as apprentice referees. These referees remain in a green shirt and appear to be trainees, although they do not require a senior referee to be standing next to them, instead their senior mentor will run opposite them as their partner referee. If you have concerns regarding a trainee or apprentice referee, attempt to approach the senior referee first as these concerns may be addressed or clarification provided.

Finally, I would am disappointed to witness certain behaviours from players arguing or shouting at these green shirt trainees/apprentices. It is important for us to realise that the most likely outcome of intimidating a young referee is that they lose their confidence to blow their whistle and in fact, the referee will make even less calls. Due to some of this behavior, I have specifically instructed all senior mentors to have a no tolerance policy in regards to any player arguing or intimidating a trainee or apprentice in a green shirt.

If you would like to discuss any further issues regarding our development program, then please do not hesitate to contact me.

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