



ACT Rugby Referees Association

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2022, Sam Whittle

It is with pleasure I submit my report to members on the activities of the ACT Rugby Referees Association during the 2022 season. Of greatest joy to us all was the ability to conduct a relative normal season devoid of the difficulties we experienced during the 2020 and 2021 seasons because of the world-wide COVID-19 pandemic.

The Year in Brief

A small band of devoted members got the formal part of the season under way with the annual Will Boyle bridge-to-bridge run on 8th of February. This run commemorates the life and refereeing of Will Boyle, the youngest member to have been appointed to a 2nd grade Grand Final and whose life was tragically lost in October 2011. Will was just short of his 22nd birthday. This year's run, like those in the past, was followed by the commencement of training on Tuesdays and Thursday at Brumbies HQ run by member Steve Koh. The Association is particularly indebted to Steve for his dedication to these sessions and attendees benefited from Steve's standing as an elite level sports strength and conditioning professional. Steve is to be thanked for his dedication to training throughout the season.

Our Pre-season seminar with Game Management Guidelines was conducted at The North Canberra Bowling Club and Rugby Union Club, Turner, ('The RUC') on 5th March. With lingering COVID hesitations, this was a brief on-line presentation by our Rugby Australia Community Match Officials Manager Graham Cooper. Given the COVID enforced cancellation of the 2021 Annual Presentation Night, outstanding Association Awards were presented to 2021 recipients and framed jerseys to some of our sponsors in attendance.

The 2022 season began in earnest for senior competitions on 23rd March and for the juniors on 7th May. The finals were conducted late August and early September. Once again, ACTRRA trophies awarded to Grand Final Referees were presented at the conclusion of each match. This change has been widely acknowledged as a fitting component of the finals celebrations.

With a desire for greater engagement of our junior members, Executive decided to change the Annual Presentation event to a Sunday lunch. A good turn-out of members arrived at The RUC on Sunday 11th September to begin with canapes and bare-foot lawn bowls. Some serious competition between certain members was noted alongside some surprising levels of skill before we moved indoors for lunch. Association Awards and achievements were acknowledged with trophies presented and sponsors thanked. A framed ANZAC round jersey was presented to Jon and Christine Hawkins of Omni executive in appreciation of sponsoring the 2022 Military Round. A major highlight was the attendance of Association legend and Life Member, David Fryer who presented James Willemsen with the David Fryer Coaching award.

The Executive, members of the Coaching and Grading committee and other invitees attended a 2023 planning session on 29th October to consider priorities, strategies, and a suggested work schedule for the incoming Executive. This was considered a useful tool for the next Executive to jump start season 2023.





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2022 Awards and Presentation

Congratulation to the award winners for 2022. These awards were given at the September Presentation Lunch.

- The Peter Lawlor Trophy: Best referee as voted by clubs Brodie Ingram
- The BAR Trophy: Most improved voted by coaches Nathan Mass
- The David Fryer Award: Best coach voted by members James Willemsen
- The Jim Healy Memorial Trophy: Best 'club member' voted by members Nathan Mass
- The Will Boyle Memorial Trophy: Top scholarship referee Ethan Gumbrell
- The Bruce Portway Whistle: Dux of Level 2 assessment Ivan Gavazov
- The Members' Whistle: Dux of Level 1 assessment Angus Pearce
- The Refereeing Whistle: Most improved junior competition referee Nick Stoker
- The JS Waters Whistle: Most deserving junior referee aged u18 Doug Hull

Accolades.

Notable achievements and representative hours by members during 2022 include:

SUPER RUGBY AR4/5

Nathan Mass	AR4/5
Brodie Ingram	AR4
Rohan Nishantha	AR4/5
Ben Reedy	AR4/5
Dennis Biessner	AR4/5
Shaun Rigby	AR4/5
Mitch Egan	Assistant TMO
Toby Kitchen	AR6
Ethan Gumbrell	AR6

Australian Rugby Shield (Adelaide)

Steven Koh Referee

U/18 Academy Matches

Mitch Egan	Referee
Steven Koh	Assistant Referee
Ethan Gumbrell	Assistant Referee
Caitlin Bokor	Assistant Referee

SUPER W

Mitchell Egan	Assistant Referee
Amy Kilmister	Assistant Referee
Caitlin Bokor	AR4
Josh Winchester	AR4
Nick Shannon	AR5
Jo Brinkley	AR5

Uni 7s

Jo Brinkley	Assistant Referee
Ethan Gumbrell	Assistant Referee
Amy Kilmister	Assistant Referee

Level 2 Referee Coach

James Willemsen
Damien McLaughlin
Geoff Palmer

Junior Wallaby Internal Trial

Andrew Lawler Referee

Junior Grand Final Appointments – 2022

Congratulations to the following members for your appointment to the junior grand finals in September.

Age Group	Competition	Referee	AR1	AR2
10.1	U10 ACT JRU Championships (Black)	Hunter Howard	Jeremy Hughes	James Willemsen
10.2	U10 ACT JRU Finals - Gold	Angus Pearce	Ethan Sheridan	Douglas Hull
10.3	U10 ACT JRU Finals - Green	Noah Polishuk	Ethan Sheridan	Callum Hanlon





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11.1	U11 ACT JRU Championships (Black)	Noah Polishuk	Joshua Hancock	Trevor Hancock
11.1	U11 ACT JRU Finals - Gold	Jo Brinkley	Hunter Howard	Trevor Hancock
11.3	U11 ACT JRU Finals - Green	Douglas Hull	Ethan Sheridan	Callum Hanlon
12.1	U12 ACT JRU Championships (Black)	Mason Henderson	Kevin Cullen	Clair Greenwood
12.2	U12 ACT JRU Finals - Gold	Angus Pearce	Ethan Sheridan	Douglas Hull
12.3	U12 ACT JRU Finals - Green	Joshua Hancock	Trevor Hancock	Jeremy Hughes
13.1	U13 ACT JRU Championships (Black)	Jake Rath	Hamish Innes	Harrison Linton
13.2	U13 ACT JRU Finals - Gold	Jacob Beissner	Irene Jones	Mason Henderson
13.3	U13 ACT JRU Finals - Green	Ethan Gumbrell	Hayden Pepper	Jeremy Hughes
14.01	ACT JRU Under 14 Girls	Irene Jones	TBA	Clair Greenwood
14.02	ACT JRU Under 14 Girls	Jo Brinkley	Irene Jones	Clair Greenwood
14.03	ACT JRU Under 14 Girls	Anthony Kirk	Clair Greenwood	Josh Winchester
14.1	U14 ACT JRU Championships (Black)	Toby Kitchen	Hamish Innes	Jim Phillipps
14.2	U14 ACT JRU Finals - Gold	James Willemsen	Marc Hastie	Noah Polishuk
14.3	U14 ACT JRU Finals - Green	Ethan Gumbrell	Hayden Pepper	Kevin Cullen
15.1	U15 ACT JRU Championships (Black)	Jim Phillipps	Christopher Linden	Josh Winchester
15.2	U15 ACT JRU Finals - Gold	Craig McMahon	Marc Hastie	Jacob Beissner
15.3	U15 ACT JRU Finals - Green	Marc Hastie	Hayden Pepper	Angus Pearce
16.01	ACT JRU Under 16 Girls	Kevin Cullen	Christopher Linden	Ethan Gumbrell
16.02	ACT JRU Under 16 Girls	James Willemsen	Ethan Gumbrell	Clair Greenwood
16.03	ACT JRU Under 16 Girls	Harrison Linton	Anthony Kirk	James Willemsen
16.1	U16 ACT JRU Championships (Black)	James Harrop	Ethan Gumbrell	Mason Henderson
16.2	U16 ACT JRU Finals - Gold	Hamish Innes	Toby Kitchen	Jake Rath
18.01	ACT JRU Under 18 Girls	Robert Boyes	Toby Kitchen	Harrison Linton
18.02	ACT JRU Under 18 Girls	Ivan Gavazov	Jake Rath	Christopher Linden
18.1	ACT JRU First XV's	Mitchell Egan	Matthew Huggins	Kevin Cullen
18.2	ACT JRU Second XV'S	Josh Winchester	James Willemsen	Matthew Huggins
18.3	ACT JRU Third XV'S	Dennis Beissner	Christopher Linden	Jim Phillipps

ACTRRA Volunteers and Structure

In addition to those duties exercised by the Executive, there are many tasks undertaken by other volunteers of the Association. Firstly, the volunteer status of all these individuals should be appropriately recognised given they are a small group of members who contribute hugely to the running of the Association and its activities and without their efforts the Association could not function. Mostly these members are also active referees and/or coaches.

Part way through the season, Karl Hamlyn volunteered to take over certain functions including Registrar, and Red Card and MO Abuse reports. This involved many hours of liaison with both senior and junior Unions and our welfare officer, Matt Huggins. These duties provided a natural transition to Karl's new position as Chair of Coaching and Grading, replacing Jack Cunningham. Jack must be applauded for his tireless efforts steering the CAG committee through this transition and he has now moved to the dedicated Head of Referee Coaching position. At the same time as Karl's and Jack's appointments, Matt Hogan was appointed as Senior Coordinator and Appointment Officer while Dennis Beissner continued in his role as Junior Coordinator and Appointments Officer. The work of these five members deserves particular mention as an acknowledgment of the enormous time commitment by them on behalf of all members.





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Thanks to these members in particular, the new CAG committee structure has bedded down extremely well and is intended to continue into season 2023.

Development and Training

ACTRRA Executive and the Coaching and Grading Team acknowledge that Referee Development during 2022 was not as robust as we might have desired. Post COVID we were trying to encourage face to face development in conjunction with on-line sessions as arranged by Rugby Australia. This was only barely sufficient and for 2023, a greater emphasis is planned for more development opportunities and for greater attention to the specific needs of both junior and senior referees. Despite these acknowledged shortcomings, our on-field performance with limited numbers was acknowledged as generally high quality.

Recruitment

Match Official involvement in all sports Australia wide has suffered a post-COVID participation loss of 30% and ACTRRA has not been immune. Our ability to provide Match Officials to an increased number of games has been a season long challenge for both senior and junior appointments. The entry "Club to Appoint" in weekly lists has been all too common and much consideration given to possible solutions. Early in 2022, Denis Hughes was appointed as Referee Development Officer. His role was to oversee recruitment, particularly of school aged referees. With much regret, Denis had to forego this role as the work rate proved prohibitive. Executive and CAG Committee are considering initiatives to begin before the 2023 season so that we might have a crop of new referees in time for some of the early 7's competitions and pre-season trials. We have produced a business card for members to distribute that outlines the process to becoming a new referee. All members should consider their role in recruiting and supporting new members to the Association.

Match Official Abuse

Match Official abuse is a serious threat to Rugby as we know it. It is a major dis-incentive to referee recruitment and a major contributor to membership churn, both at the novice and the experienced levels. If we are unable to recruit, train, and retain referees of quality, the game will ultimately suffer at the highest level. Unfortunately, although the numbers of abuse reports in 2022 were anecdotally less than last season, it was the increasing gravity of abuse that is of greater concern. Abuse reports have not been confined to any sector but of particular concern is abuse by team officials and others whose adherence to the Rugby Code of Conduct should be an example to others. Your Executive has and continues to work tirelessly with both Unions to manage this blight. My particular thanks to Matt Vowles and Craig Leseburg at Brumbies, to Greg Baynham at ACTJRU and to Graham Cooper at Rugby Australia for their ongoing support in dealing with this crisis of MO confidence.

Sponsorship

The end of season 2022 marks the completion of our 3-year sponsorship cycle. On behalf of the Association, I extend my sincere thanks to our sponsors during the period 2020 to 2022, namely: Canberra Consulting, Aulich Law, Omni Executive, Waidt Services Australia and The RUC. Other sponsors for part of this period included Keane Consulting and Brumbies Rugby. With the generous support of these companies, we have been able to supply on-field and off-field kit to all members, free annual registration, purchase top-of-the range on-field communications kits with sufficient handsets for a team of 4 referees, a referee coach and the media recording, as well as a pop-up shelter and tear drop flags for use at carnivals and larger events.





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During the year, the Executive have actively sought sponsors for the 2023-25 period and it is my great pleasure to announce that agreements have been signed with Canberra Consulting, Omni Executive and Waidt Services Australia. In addition, an agreement is being finalised with The RUC that takes account of ACT legislation for Clubs providing support to community organisations. Through the generosity of these companies, ACTRRA is in a strong financial position for the next 3 years.

Kit: 2023-2025

Your Executive has considered the balance of kit to be provided to each member against historically excess quantities. In early 2022, a large amount of unused on-field and off-field kit was donated to the Tonga Relief Appeal run by Brumbies Rugby. This represents a potential waste of resources if similar quantities are purchased in the future and ACTRRA, like all responsible organisations, must consider the land-fill implications of excess unwanted clothing. To this end, your Executive has decided to limit the 2023 supplied kit to the yellow based on-field kit and a tracksuit for each registered referee and a long, lined jacket to new referee coaches. With a massive amount of dedicate work by Assistant Secretary, Nathan Mass, the O'Neills clothing company has been contracted to supply all items of ACTRRA kit for 2023. A small number of alternate strip jerseys will be managed centrally and provided where a clash of colour occurs. Other items of ACTRRA kit including additional on-field kit as might be required can be separately purchased by members from the O'Neills on-line store. These items are stock patterns in ACTRRA colours and are manufactured to order at significantly reduced costs. Many sporting clubs world-wide are adopting this business model to save on resources and costs.

Match Official payments

It is with great pleasure I can announce to members that during the season separate ongoing agreements have been reached with both the ACT Brumbies Community Rugby, (Senior MOPP), and the ACT Junior Rugby Union, (Junior MOPP). This is the first time an official financial agreement has been formulated between the ACTJRU and any other affiliated body and marks a long-desired watershed in the relationship between ACTRRA and ACTJRU. Both agreements expand the payments matrix to include match payments for Union arranged trials, for Assistant Referees and a sustainable model for travel allowance and for travel to officiate at Penrith, a meal allowance. Both agreements included an agreed method for annual review based on independent validation as endorsed by the ATO.

Military Round

Following on from the 2021 initiative, the 2022 Military round was held on 23rd April at John I Dent fixtures in Queanbeyan, Tuggeranong and Penrith. Once again, ACTRRA is grateful for the support of Brumbies Community Rugby and the senior clubs to mark Rugby's acknowledgement of the ANZAC tradition. Thanks to the Australian Defence Force for supplying buglers to conduct moving Last Post memorials at Queanbeyan and Tuggeranong. The event was made particularly special given the generous funding of special camouflage inspired jerseys for all ACTRRA members thanks to additional support from Omni Executive, one of your new sponsors for the new 2023-25 kit.

Peter Lawler, OAM

For 36 years, Peter Lawler has fulfilled the role of Patron to ACTRRA. This is a record of selfless service to the Association and in my short time as your President, Peter has always been available to me with a discerning ear to listen, to proffer advise with integrity, guidance with wisdom and friendship without fault. I know these sentiments are shared by those in office before me and both I and my predecessors are humbled by Peter's service and commitment to ACTRRA. On behalf of all members of ACTRRA I want to thank Peter for his service as our Patron and wish him well in his 'retirement' from this role.





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As an aside I comment Peter's book, "They Blew it, A History of the ACT Rugby Referees Association" as a fascinating read and wonderful historical record as it spans the period from our Association's inception in 1838 up to 2001.

Executive Committee

My sincere thanks on behalf of all members to the ACTRRA Executive Committee of 2022. Ours has been a great team working on your behalf to assist the smooth running of referee services for the ACT Rugby community. After 3 years as Association Vice President, Matt Huggins is moving to the Northern Territory in early 2023. Thanks to Matt for all your support, your unbelievable work ethic and the sheer volume of great stuff you have done. Thanks to his idea, Matt became the first formally appointed referee Welfare Officer in Australia; a model now followed by many other Associations. Matt's tenacity in that role has provided a safe environment for fellow members who have suffered abuse to have a ready ear and considered advice. I greatly appreciate Matt's support as we have tried to rid our sport of the blight that is Match Official abuse. Matt has been instrumental in many getting initiatives and events off the ground and for this all members should be grateful for his efforts.

After a number of years as Assistant Secretary, Nathan Mass is standing down. Nathan has given greatly to the Association, not least of which has been his readiness to travel from the coast up to Canberra for meetings and Association activities. Of greatest significance has been Nathan's role in kit procurement. Thanks to Nathan, our on-field, off-field and special events kit has been seamlessly managed from concept stage through to individualised delivery. This level of commitment to the Association has been greatly appreciated by all members.

Peter Langford has taken over the finances of the Association with aplomb. He has always kept the Executive and members abreast of our finances to the highest standard. His financial report as an attachment to this report is a testament to his hard work. Thank you, Peter.

Mitch Egan has continued his involvement as Secretary and the degree of effort he puts in behind the scenes that often goes un-noticed. I would like to thank Mitch for all his efforts keeping the day to day mundane happening that in turn allows the Association to function.

Thanks

It would be remiss to forget thanking our coaches as without them we struggle to improve. I would like to encourage any member thinking of coaching to contact Karl or Jack as soon as possible so you might be accredited in time for the next season.

I extend my thanks to Graham Cooper at Rugby Australia for his ready ear, strategic overview and support to my role. Thank you to the Community Rugby Staff at Brumbies Rugby; Craig Leseberg and Matt Vowles as well as the support from Caitlin Brady particularly with last minute appointments. Thanks to Peter Johnson, Brumbies President, Matt Nobbs, Brumbies Board Chair and to all Club Presidents for your support during the season. Thank you also to Martin Sullivan and Greg Baynham from ACTJRU for your support.

Finally thank you to all Association members for your efforts during season 2022. I wish you and your loved ones my best wishes for the upcoming Christmas holiday period and for a safe, happy, and prosperous 2023.

Sam Whittle
President
November 2022.





ACT Rugby Referees Association

Treasurer's Report, Peter Langford

I am pleased to present the audited financial accounts for the ACT Rugby Referees Association (ACTRRA) for the year ended 30 September 2022, and wish to thank Bryce Gorrell and his organisation for once again carrying out the audit.

We commenced the year with an operating cash balance of \$23370 and \$9919.58 in the referee development funds, and ended the financial year with a balance of \$47707 in the operating account, \$20031 in an Interest-Bearing deposit account, and \$9920 in the referee development funds. The flow of funds during the year can be seen on the Cash Flow Statement which form part of these audited accounts.

This year we posted a deficit of \$2216.29. This deficit, for the most part, was due to the donation of our surplus clothing stock at the conclusion of our three-year sponsorship agreement and the purchase of new communication equipment.

Once again thank you to all those referees who donated their referee payments to the Association this year.

The Will Boyle Memorial Fund and Peter Conway Fund both remained virtually unchanged throughout the season apart from the addition of a small amount of interest. These two funds were set up to help in the development of junior referees within the Association. We can expect to see some movement in these accounts next year with a more focused approach planned around recruitment, particularly in the junior ranks.

A special thank you to our sponsors: Canberra Consulting, Waitt Services Australia, The RUC, and Omni Executive. Your contribution to ACTRRA is greatly appreciated, and we look forward to your continued sponsorship for the next three years.

Next year will see the issuing of the new kit which will include a refereeing strip (shirt, shorts, socks) and track suit. However, the Executive has decided not to issue an alternative strip to all referees, rather, purchase a limited number of shirts to be on hand where there may be a clash. However, these will be available online together with a range of other items for individuals to purchase, including kit bags, training shirts, and padded jackets. A special word of thanks needs to go to Nathan Mass for all his work organising this kit alongside O'Neill's

At the start of the year, I mentioned that the Executive was working on a business plan with a view to identifying our goals, and planning a way forward to achieve these. I am pleased to advise you that from a financial viewpoint we are very healthy, and this should continue into the future, thanks in no small part, to our sponsors.





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Chair Coaching Appointments & Grading Report, Karl Hamlyn

2022 has been a welcome return to an undisrupted season, with trial games beginning in February and the last Sevens tournament concluding in November. The Association introduced some changes to the Coaching Appointments and Grading Committee this year, with the aim of spreading the workload more evenly. I took over as Chair of the Committee mid-year from Jack Cunningham, who has shouldered a heavy burden over the last two years, particularly once we were unable to replace Denis Hughes who did a wonderful job for us as our Referee Development Officer. Jack will now focus on recruiting and training new referees. Working for the Chair are a Senior and Junior Appointments Coordinator, both demanding jobs performed admirably this year by Matt Hogan and Dennis Beissner. Greg Saphin was our Coaches Coordinator. Greg's work in ensuring that all referees are regularly seen by coaches is a vital role which I will aim to strengthen next year by splitting between a Junior and Senior Coaches Coordinator.

Some key principles I try to apply to my role as Chair are:

1. all members are afforded the opportunity to referee games appropriate to their ability.
2. those who are prepared to put in the effort to improve are encouraged.
3. the appointment and grading process is demonstrably fair and transparent.

That means if you aren't satisfied with the appointments you are receiving, the coaches and I will be open with you about your current grading and what you might do to improve that. Furthermore, the CAGC is not a closed shop and will always benefit from fresh faces. If you feel you have the experience and enthusiasm to fill a position on the Committee, I encourage you to become involved.

In season 2022 most weekends had us appointing to 25-30 senior and over 50 junior games across Canberra and the surrounding districts. That normally exceeded the number of active referees available, leaving us unable to appoint referees to 4th Grade, Canberra Suburban and numerous Junior Grade matches. Special thanks to those who undertook multiple appointments and travelled long distances to help us meet our commitments to ACT rugby.

It is a long-standing issue that we struggle to recruit and retain referees, and there are initiatives underway right now looking at how we might address that without simply repeating all the measures that have not solved the problem in the past. Key concerns with our current situation are:

1. Insufficient Junior Referees. We need to retain more of those members who referee the many junior games each week with more thought for what they can give than their own benefit.
2. Not enough junior referees are going on to senior level.
3. Our senior ranks have a solid pool of highly experienced referees but too few developing referees competing for places on the A panel.

Congratulations to Steven Koh, Nathan Mass, Mitchell Tummers, and Andrew Lawler who refereed their first 1st Grade games this season. As they have shown, if you think your mind and legs can handle a higher standard game than you are currently doing there is opportunity for advancement if you are willing to put the effort in.





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2022 saw the reintroduction of face-to-face Development Meetings, although attendance at these and the Physical Training Sessions was low. One common misconception is that these activities are geared towards our higher senior grade referees. All referees are welcome and encouraged to attend and we will aim to tailor activities that are appropriate to all referees, whether you simply want to improve your fitness and game knowledge, or seriously compete to referee 1st Grade and beyond.

As Chair of the CAGC, I handle all liaison with Brumbies Rugby and the clubs in relation to judiciary hearings, match official abuse and complaints. Having returned in 2021 after a decade away from the game I was shocked at the increase in match official abuse. It is essential that we all take a strong position on countering this. Don't hesitate to red card players who abuse match officials and ensure you submit incident reports where necessary. I clear all red card reports on behalf of the ACTRRA before they are received by the Judiciary, so when you submit a report, I may be in contact with you to clarify details and ensure all the information the Judiciary normally seeks is included. I will also always endeavour to provide you with feedback on the outcome of any reports you submit.

One final word, as you read this report there are only three more months until Season 2023 commences...





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Junior Appointments Coordinator, Dennis Beissner

At last we got through a full season without COVID or government lockdowns ruining it! That in itself, for me, is the greatest positive of the 2022 season. I'm very thankful we had a season of mostly enjoyable junior rugby. It was rewarding to see new referees enjoy learning a new craft, as well as seeing many returning referees make big improvements to their skills over the season. I will only mention just a few highlights of the season.

Thanks to Peter Langford for his efforts in this role for the previous two seasons (with assistance late last season from Shane Hughes and Caitlin Bokor when Peter needed to step down). Peter's work navigating the new Rugby Xplorer (RX) appointment system and providing me helpful tips and alerting of pitfalls was appreciated. My aim for the season was to work hard on ACTJRU having all scheduled games entered and updated in the RX system in the week before the games so that preliminary appointments could be emailed out on the Monday afternoon before the weekend and not needing to deal with multiple and ill-timed changes. Hopefully referees noticed that appointments were generally emailed early in the week so they could sort out and juggle their weekend commitments in between refereeing.

It will be no surprise to anyone that we had a shortage of referees throughout the season. You only had to review the final junior appointments sheet every week to see a high number of appointments with "Club to Appoint" that highlighted how low numbers were. Each week there were about 60 games to be appointed, but only 30-35 referees on average available each week to be appointed. So with that gap between demand and supply, it was inevitable that a lot of games would not get an appointed referee. This was why I was pushing hard for referees to accept or decline appointments as soon as they could – and enter unavailability into RX.

Over the course of the junior season's trials, 12 competition rounds, and finals, my stats show that only 67% of the 858 scheduled junior games were able to be covered utilising 62 junior and senior referees. About 1 in 3 (280) games did not get a referee appointed. The coverage rate was even worse for country venues, where only 25% of the 104 scheduled games were covered with an ACTRRA referee. This shortage provided opportunities for referees to 'step up' a get experience at high levels. Thank you to the many referees that were able to officiate multiple games each Saturday, or were able to travel to the country – without you, the stats would have been a lot worse. There were an additional 90 games covered at the Southern States week of championships – and all games appointed across 12 referees. Thanks to Nathan Mass for coordinating and appointing the referees at 'live-time' over that week (as the draw changed by the hour during the day!).

Unfortunately there are very few referees that are based in the country locations, and understandably there seems little desire (nor financial incentive) for Canberra based referees to travel long distances to referee when there are plenty of available games 'at home'. I don't think I really need to say it, but the association and ACTJRU need to reconsider strategies to increase referee numbers and retention. I would say that addressing referee abuse more seriously by the





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junior judiciary and recognising that Rugby Australia's (RA) insatiable desire to do everything with 'online courses', which doesn't appear to be working, are two key areas to look at.

Sadly RA has stepped away from the scholarship program (SSS) and have pretty much left all associations to their own devices to fill this development void. This uncertainty and lack of clarity at the start of the season caught us (and me) out, but I take responsibility that I didn't have a thorough program developed to implement. Nonetheless, Ethan Gumbrell and Jacob Beissner were accepted as our year 12 scholarship referees, and I think we had mixed results in what support the association volunteers were able to provide to them during the season - overall I don't think they were provided enough development. I was able to piggy back on NSW association work to have Ethan attend the U13s NSW country championships at Dubbo, where he performed well, and he received some additional coaching during the season. Jacob continued playing, which limited his referee development opportunities. That being said, both referees acquitted themselves well all season and were rewarded with grand final appointments. Ethan demonstrated his commitment to refereeing and was justifiably awarded the Will Boyle Most Outstanding Scholarship Award. Hopefully next year, a more structured program can be devised and put in place.

Another focus for me this season was to try and increase referee coaching for junior referees, as due to the previous two disrupted seasons, coaching has been limited. I think we had mixed success here. With the help of Geoff 'Chook' Palmer coordinating Referee Coach (RC) appointments, we were able to ensure that every junior referee was seen at least once during the season, and all but a few referees had two or more RC reports. Another target I set was to ensure that every new referee had a RC attend their first and second game – and I can gladly say with the help of those committed RCs that we managed to achieve this. I think all new referees were grateful to have someone there in support for their first go at blowing the whistle. I hope this is able to continue as a focus area next season. My thanks to the team of RCs that were able to get out and coach the junior referees, particularly as many RCs are still actively refereeing. Special thanks to James Willemsen, Greg Saphin, and Chook who all did 12 or more RC reports on junior referees.

I would like to thank the executive committee for their support during the season, and to Caitlin Brady from the Brumbies Community office for her support with appointment administration. My sincere thanks goes out Nathan Mass, James Willemsen, Kev Cullen, and Trevor Hancock for their support and being sounding boards during the season, but particularly for their help with all the jobs associated with coordinating referees and getting the To3 onto the field during the grand final weekend! Thanks to Jack Cunningham and then Matt Hogan for allowing me to steal the odd senior referee for U18 games (while they weren't looking), and for being a sounding board to see where we could progress junior referees into the senior ranks (but I don't thank them for stealing junior referees while I wasn't looking!). There is more I could cover so apologies if I missed something important to others or neglected to recognise individuals.

All the best for the off-season and hope to see you all return in 2023.

Dennis Beissner
Junior Gradings and Appointments Coordinator





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Brumbies Annual Report, Caitlin Brady - Brumbies

After the 2021 season was cancelled just as we were coming into the business end season, it was exciting to see the 2022 competition season return in its full form for the first time in two years. However, it did not come without its challenges, particularly when looking at referee numbers across the season, support for the association saw some referees come out of retirement to assist with officiating and appointments. The following took on key operational roles within the Association during the 2022 season.

Matt Hogan / Senior Appointments and Grading Coordinator

Dennis Beissner / Junior Appointments and Grading Coordinator

Karl Hamlyn / ACTRRA Registrar

Jack Cunningham / Rugby Development Coordinator

2022 registration numbers saw a 6% decrease with 127 registered members in comparison to 2021, having 135 registered members. Despite slightly decreased registration numbers this season, ACTRRA has continually adapted to changes as they have arisen by being able to recruit new referees as well as retain the majority of members. The 2022 season also saw plenty of reasons to celebrate, through the appointment of ACTRRA members who participated in recently revamped local representative fixtures, as well as Rugby Australia sanctioned representative games. The ACT Brumbies thank all ACTRRA members for their support over the 2022 season and we look forward to building on its success into the future.

ACT Brumbies would like to acknowledge and congratulate the following ACTRRA Members who were selected to officiate Grand Final Matches and other Representative honours throughout 2022. Super Rugby Pacific and Super W were again well supported by ACTRRA members.

Grand Final Referees:

Canberra Suburban Cup:

Referee: Damien McLachlan

AR1: James Willemsen

AR2: Kevin Cullen

Women's 10s:

Referee: Mitchell Tummers

AR1: Trevor Hancock

AR2: Geoffrey Palmer

No4: Kevin Cullen

Second Division South Coast Monaro:

Referee: Matthew Huggins

AR1: Mitchell Tummers

AR2: Kevin Cullen

No4: Geoffrey Palmer

First Division 2nd Grade:

Referee: Damien McGrath

AR1: Ivan Gavazov

AR2: Brian Heaney

No4: James Willemsen

No5: Kevin Cullen

First Division 1st Grade:

Referee: Shaun Rigby

AR1: Rohan Nishantha

AR2: Nye Konig

No4: Greg Corin

No5: Kevin Cullen





ACT Rugby Referees Association

ACT Vets Colts Cup:

Referee: Steven Koh

AR1: Nick Stoker

AR2: Damien Mclachlan

No4: Ben Reedy

No5: Caitlin Bokor

BentSpoke Premier 15s:

Referee: Amy Kilmister

AR1: Christopher Cousin

AR2: Caitlin Bokor

No4: Timothy Dickeson

No5: Trevor Hancock

Spence Cup:

Referee: Nathan Mass

AR1: Matthew Huggins

AR2: Karl Hamlyn

No4: Geoffrey Palmer

No5: Ivan Gavazov

BentSpoke John I Dent:

Referee: Brodie Ingram

AR1: Matthew Hogan

AR2: Dennis Beissner

No4: Steven Koh

No5: Matthew Huggins

Representative Honours:

Brumbies City v Brumbies Country (Womens):

Referee: Christopher Cousin

AR1: Nathan Mass

AR2: Steven Koh

No: Anthony Kirk

Brumbies City North v Brumbies Country (Mens):

Referee: Dennis Beissner

AR1: Nathan Mass

AR2: Steven Koh

No4: Anthony Kirk

Brumbies Country v Brumbies City North (Mens):

Referee: Nathan Mass

AR1: Steven Koh

AR2: Dennis Beissner

No4: Anthony Kirk

Brumbies City South v Brumbies City North (Mens):

Referee: Steven Koh

AR1: Nathan Mass

AR2: Dennis Beissner

No4: Anthony Kirk

Brumbies v Waratahs Trial Match:

AR1: Brodie Ingram

AR2: Mitchell Egan

No4: Caitlin Bokor





ACT Rugby Referees Association

Australian Rugby Shield:

Steven Koh

Brumbies u18s:

Mitchell Egan (AR)

Referee Milestones 2022:

200 Games

Robert Boyes

James Willemsen

100 Games

Matt Huggins

Hamish Innes





ACT Rugby Referees Association

Notes for ACTRRA Annual Report on Referees who have died in 2022

Since the 2021 Annual General Meeting there have been at least four former members of the Association who have died. We remember those colleagues

Bill McLennan - 19 March 2022

Bill gained his ACTRRA Members Badge at a Summer School for Referees in 1965 and his Senior Badge in 1972. Bill was a very capable sportsman, representing the ACT at both rugby and squash.

When Bill moved to Canberra from Wollongong in 1960 he played Rugby for ANU, moving through the grades to 1st Grade in 1963 as the hooker. Bill refereed from 1965 till 1987 with a gap of a couple of years while he played for Easts and the ACT. He was a member of the ACT Representative team in 1967, 1970 and 1971. In 1978 he coached the Easts 1st Grade team. In addition, he was a Selector for the ACT Representative side in 1975-1977 and Manager in 1981. Bill was also Chairman of the ACT Coaching Committee in 1976-77.

Bill was awarded the BAR Trophy in 1974 and in 1975 he was appointed to his first 1st Grade game. In 1983 and 1984 he referred the Under 18 grand final and in 1984 he referred the 4th Grade grand final.

Bill was elected the Association's President in 1985 and 1986. At the time of his retirement Bill had referred more than 200 games of which 30 were 1st Grade games.

Bill McLennan was the Australian Statistician from 1995 to 2000. Bill had also headed the UK Government Statistical Service, the first person from outside the UK to hold this post. At the end of his public service career, he was awarded a CBE and an AM for his significant contributions to UK and Australian statistics respectively.

Tony (AJ) Duffy – 21 April 2022

Tony received his initial referee qualification at Sydney Boys High where he played, coached and refereed.

He joined the Sydney Association and rose through the ranks as an 'up and coming' young referee. Before coming to Canberra, he was already refereeing grade games in the Sydney competition.

Tony's name first appeared in the Association's records in 1967 as a member of the Junior Appointments Board and as the recipient his ACT Senior Badge based on the reciprocal qualification arrangements between Associations.

From 1968 until 1979 he was a member of at least one of the Associations numerous committees and/or was elected to one of the Office Bearer positions. In 1976 Tony was awarded the Jim Healy Trophy.





ACT Rugby Referees Association

Tony was appointed to his first 1st Grade game in 1969. Tony was selected as a referee from ACT to officiate at Country Week in 1971, 1973 and 1974 and during this time he was enhancing his reputation as a referee in Canberra. He was the 4th Grade grand final referee in 1971, the Canberra Cup (now 1st Division, First Grade) grand final referee in 1972, the Under 18 grand final referee in 1973 and the 1st Grade grand final referee in 1975, 1976 and 1977. In 1978 Tony referred his 100th First Grade game and by retirement he had officiated in 108 1st Grade games.

Tony participated in the Associations exchanges and in 1975 toured with the ACT Representative team to Adelaide.

Some of his Representative Matches appointments were:

- 1972 ACT Presidents XV v Randwick
- 1973 Australian Combined Universities v NZ Universities
- 1975 ACT v Victoria
 - ACT v Australian Combined Services
- 1976 ACT v Barbarians
 - ACT v Sydney
 - ACT v Fiji
 - Australian Schoolboys Championship Final
- 1977 ACT v Marlborough NZ
 - ACT Schoolboys v Japan Schoolboys
 - ACT v Queensland
- 1978 ACT v Western Australia
 - ACT v Counties NZ
 - ACT v Victoria
 - ACT v Australian Universities
 - ACT v Wales
 - Selected as the referee to tour NZ with the ACT Representative side

Following the 1978 season Tony's career in the Australian Public Service began to expand and he referred fewer games in 1979 and 1980. He was transferred to Brisbane where he refereed 1st Grade until 1984 and then Darwin where he continued to referee and be engaged in referee administration. After leaving Canberra Tony refereed at the Singapore Sevens for 11 years in a row and was the first Anglo Saxon referee to do a Singapore Sevens final. Knowledgeable Rugby people regard Tony as the best ever ACTRRA referee.





ACT Rugby Referees Association

Ron Tuckerman - 16 July 2022

Ron achieved recognition in several areas of sport in Canberra.

When Ron came to Canberra from Wollongong he played for Norths, mostly in 1st Grade. He was a part of their runners up team in the 1954 1st Grade grand final. Ron was selected in an Australian XV tour to Tonga at the end of that season. He was also part of North's 1956 1st Grade Premiership team and was selected to play for ACT in 1962.

Ron was selected as a front row (prop) in Norths 1988 Golden Jubilee team.

Ron's name first appeared in the ACTRRA records as an apology for the 1956 AGM and next as the Association's Treasurer for the 1957 season. It is also recorded that he was the appointed Timekeeper for the first International Rugby game to be played in Canberra on a Saturday, on 15 June 1957, between the ACT and the NZ All Blacks.

Ron attained the Association's Members badge in 1958 and his Senior badge in 1964. It was presented to him by Arthur Tierney.

Ron is first recorded as refereeing in 1960 and then not again till 1964, 1965 and 1966. The level of games is not recorded.

Ron was one of the two Association nominees who were part of the establishment of the first Junior Appointments Board in 1962.

After retiring as a player Ron joined Daramalan (now Gungahlin Eagles) as a coach and administrator. In 1970 he was the coach of the Daramalan 3rd Grade Premiership winning team which was the fledgling Clubs first premiership winning team.

Ron started his passion for lawn bowls after retiring from Rugby Union.

As a player he won 3 club major pairs, 1 triples and 1 fours championships, and played 500 Pennant Games for Yowani.

In 1993 he coached an Australian Under 25's tour to Malaysia and Hong Kong and in 1994 was the bowls coach at the Commonwealth Games in Victoria, Canada

Ron was awarded the Australian Sports Medal in 2000 and in 2010 he was inducted into the ACT Sport Hall of Fame.

Eddie Pook - 5 September 2022

Eddie came from New Zealand in 1964 to work in the Ecology Section of the CSIRO Division of Plant Industry. Most of his work was in research and he authored or contributed to numerous research publications on the subject of Forest Ecology, many of which dealt with research related to the ACT's then extensive pine forests.





ACT Rugby Referees Association

His name first appeared in the Association's records as being an active referee in 1964. The records do not record when, where or how he obtained his refereeing qualifications. It seems that he refereed mainly in the ACTJRU competitions and stopped refereeing at the end of the 1976 season.

During his 13 years membership of the Association, he was appointed to three grand finals in the JRU lower age divisions. By the end of his refereeing career Eddie had refereed more than 300 games for the Association.

His Association and CSIRO colleagues described Eddie as a quiet sort of fellow, always of happy countenance and friendly disposition and someone who was very fit – probably all good qualities for a dedicated referee.

