



## Reimbursement of RFU Course Fees and Scholarships – 2022/23

### Background

The Society, through the Management Committee, has previously agreed to reimburse RFU Course Fees where someone proceeds to join the Society and referees a certain number of games. However, over time it has become somewhat unclear as to what the Management Committee has agreed, and therefore we are failing to publicise this appropriately. This appears to once again be the case (as this background section was written in the previous 2018-19 paper), however combined with this the RFU training course has now changed and is the England Rugby Referee Award (ERRA), which takes place over a whole season (which potentially changes how we should do this).

### Why are we doing this?

As has been discussed at numerous Management Committee meetings seasons past, we continue to have an issue recruiting new referees to the Society. While transfers in from other Societies helps to continue to sustain us, attendance on courses that transition into new recruits for the Society appears to be down and the new ERRA format is not ideal for recruiting referees.

In response to this, we launched the Take Up the Whistle course, a short but practical course to help people get into refereeing (and which we developed a promotional video for, see the Society website). The cost of this currently course is £25, but participants get various items in return as well to keep (such as whistle and cards). For those who want to join the Society, they are then encouraged to undertake the season long RFU ERRA Course, at a cost currently of £75. In addition, the RFU should (in theory) be training new referees through their own recruitment of which a number should be being encouraged to (and then actually) joining the Society.

Other Societies are currently offering reimbursement of fees – but these are more in the form of scholarships, and are relatively limited (e.g. Oxfordshire have I believe 2 a year).

### Proposed scheme on reimbursement - refresh

It is proposed that the Management Committee formally adopt the following in respect of all new referees, and those that have qualified in the last 12 months and joined the Society.

Where an individual joins the Society in the season in which they are undertaking ERRA (as participants are encouraged to join during that season) or in the season following, and they referee 10 games/tournaments (as confirmed by their Regional Manager) by the end of the season following, they shall be entitled to receive a cash refund / a voucher for a corresponding amount from the Gilbert shop / money off dinner tickets equal to (1) in the case of those participants who have come through via the Take Up the Whistle Course, a full refund of their RFU Course fee (currently £75) and their Take Up the Whistle Course fee (currently £25), or (2) in the case of participants who undertook the RFU Course directly, a refund of full course fees and the provision of the whistle/cards provided to those who take part on the course.

The main change on prior seasons is that we are now refunding the full TUTW course fee (now £25, having been £15), which previously we did not do.



Where referees join the Society after undertaking TUTW, and undertake 10 games, they shall be entitled to a refund of their TUTW course fees through the same process. In addition, should they go on to undertake the ERRA course, they shall be entitled to have their fees refunded on payment of the ERRA course fee (where proof of payment is provided).

To confirm this has been undertaken, the short form attached as Appendix 1 should be completed by the referee, and sent to the Regional Manager for approval. Once approved by the Regional Manager, it is to be sent to the Treasurer/Assistant Treasurer for actioning.

### Proposed scholarship scheme

Noting that a course fee of £75 is not insignificant for younger members, I would like the Management Committee to consider the introduction of a scholarship type scheme, for 16-24 year olds, where the Society would, by application (and if necessary interview/testing) select appropriate individuals who the Society would pay the course fees upfront for, and then in turn look to differentially invest in them in the early years. Such a scheme would provide both positive publicity for the Society, help with addressing the need to attract younger members and hopefully allow us to identify and encourage talent early (perhaps from injured players). Apart from the small initial cost outlay, the main investment would be the need to manage this small number of individuals through some level of mentoring/coaching, and through looking to support them in the early years in the Society.

### Conclusion

I hope that the Management Committee will reaffirm our policy in reimbursing fees, such that the Communications Manager and the wider Committee, along with our Social Media team, can look to publicise it.

With respect to the Scholarship scheme, I hope that the Committee will at least endorse this in principle, and that this can be progressed forward ASAP.

Peter Coulthard, General Secretary  
24/10/2022

**Approved by Management Committee as amended on 24/10/2022**



## Appendix 1 – Refund of course fees for new referees

The below form is to be completed by referees who are seeking to obtain a refund of their course fees, having officiated at least 10 games in the season in which they undertook the RFU ERRR course and the season following. This is as set out in the “Reimbursement of RFU Course Fees and Scholarships – 2022/23” document as approved by the LSRFUR Management Committee on 24 October 2022.

Name: .....

Region: North / South East / South West / West

Did you undertake the RFU ERRR course? Yes / No

Season of RFU ERRR course (and venue undertaken at): .....

Did you undertake the Take Up the Whistle course? Yes / No

If so, please confirm when / where? Date: ..... Venue: .....

Amount to be claimed: £.....

Form of refund:

Gilbert kit voucher [ ]

Money off Annual Dinner or Regional Dinner [ ]

Bank transfer [ ] Sort Code: ...-...-... Account number: .....

### Games officiated

	Date	Home Team	Away Team
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

Approved by: ..... (Regional Manager)



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