

What are the objectives?

The outcomes of the National Referee Recruitment Campaign (NRRC) are three-fold:

- To raise the awareness and empathy towards referees through publicity and information sharing opportunities in local and national media. Examples are the *Referees' Corner* on Boots 'N All and features on referees in rugby magazines and newspapers.
- To increase the number of active referees in South Africa from its current level of approximately 2 000 to an estimated requirement of 8 000. This would ensure that every game of rugby is officiated by a qualified and BokSmart certified referee.
- To ensure that new recruits reflect the demographic make-up of the rugby-playing community.

The NRRC's goal for 2011 is to add a minimum 1 560 registered referees to the national database.

While the NRRC is tasked to undertake activities to increase awareness and stimulate interested people to call, sms or email us, the nitty-gritty part is up to the provincial referee societies. It is their obligation to take these interested people and convert them into happy and competent referees.

We need to work together

To achieve SA Rugby's goal of enlisting 1 560 new referees across the country the NRRC needs to work in harmony with the provincial societies. The NRRC needs to ensure that whatever recruitment activities are taken at national and regional level can be followed up by the provincial referee society in converting that interested person into a referee.

What does the NRRC propose to do in 2011?

Varsity Cup Competition

The Varsity Cup has grown from strength to strength and has proven to be a powerful recruitment tool through two channels:

- Endorsements from the captains aired on TV before many of the games
- Publicity and awareness activities at selected venues on match days.

In 2011 we would like to heighten this through the following **additional** activities:

- Sponsor a five minute slot on campus radio on the Tuesday following the Monday night's game. This would be a phone-in between the sports host and a local National Panel referee talking about a point of Law – possibly something that was a questionable decision on one of the TV games the night before.
- Establish a 'satellite referee society' on all 13 campuses that would make it easier for interested students to meet on a weekly basis.
 - These groups would be members of, and fall under the authority of, the provincial society but happen to conduct their weekly training sessions on campus.
 - If the university in question has a 'hostel league' these candidates would learn their craft in this environment, once trained and competent they would be available for club games as per all other referees.
 - The provincial society would assign a senior (National or Provincial Panel) or retired referee to act as their mentor and coach.

Goal: 260 new university referees

High school referee programme

Many of the current National and Provincial Panel cut their refereeing teeth while still at school, and following on from the success of a two-day camp in Western Province it is proposed to support at least one of these in each province in 2011.

- To be held during the school holidays at the end of the first term
 - Inland 25, 26 & 27 March
 - Coastal 4, 5 & 6 April
 - Minimum of 14 courses with 70 candidates each
- The course outline and material will be supplied
- Assistance with the advertising and promotion from the NRRC
- Programme and logistics to be organised by the provincial society

Goal: 980 new high school referees

SARU 'Black' rugby tournaments

There are approximately 140 teams participating in the various Easter and Heritage tournaments, these are ideal opportunities to recruit and train referees. It is envisaged the bulk of the involvement would be from SA Rugby's side but societies in the provinces where these tournaments are hosted would also provide assistance.

- Each participating team would bring an additional three people who are either already refereeing (but not formally) or are interested in becoming a referee
- They would undergo a training programme similar to the one given to high schools
- They would also act as touch judge and in-goal judges during the tournament

Goal: 420 new Black referees

Recruitment presentation

The NRRC will provide a PowerPoint presentation for use by provincial referee managers and development officers to use at school or club level. With consideration for proper notice, the NRRC will provide high-profile referees to attend recruitment sessions at clubs or schools. These obviously need to be arranged with respect to the schedules of these individuals.

Three cheers for the referee campaign

It is proposed to introduce through the formal school structures a '*Three cheers for the referee*' campaign. The idea is for players at the end of the game to shout the message out and then cheer.

This would be a positive way for the game to be concluded and start making a contribution to creating a more empathetic opinion of the referee.

Other activities identified by the provincial society

The NRRC may be in a position to support other recruitment activities conducted at a local level through the provision of media coverage, posters, promotional items etc. Again, the requirements would first need to be discussed prior to the event.

The next step

Cullum Johnston will contact you to discuss your thoughts on this proposal, alternatively you can call or email him with your comments.

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