

Essex Walking Football League



Referee Guidance - 2026

The aim of the Essex Walking Football League is to always strive for the best possible refereeing for all our leagues and divisions. The League pool of referees is made up from a diverse group of referees who have a wealth of knowledge from both the eleven a side game and walking football and are all FA qualified.

As an aid to understanding what the League requires from its referees and to aid in continuous improvement, the League have put together this document which highlights the expectations and aspirations the League has for all its referees.

The notes below are meant as an aid to good refereeing and are not meant as a straight jacket but rather guidance to enable successful refereeing.

Questions to ask and actions to take to determine good refereeing outcomes:

1. Match Day Admin

- Prior to the start of the days play the referee should check the goal nets to ensure there are no gaps in the netting.
- Prior to the start of each game each team captain should hand their team sheet to the referee.
- Any Blue card or Red card should be marked against the offending player on the team sheet.
- After the game the referee should hand the team sheet back to each team captain so they can repeat the process at the next game.
- At the end of the final game the referee should retain the team sheets and either hand them to or photo and send them to Richard Coleman/Robin Ogilvie.

2. Control and Decision Making

- Game control is key to a successful game.
- Were the players' actions recognized correctly?
- Were the Laws applied correctly?
- Where a player is not walking, and there is no advantage to the opposition, then always award an indirect freekick and add to the team 'not walking' total. On the fourth 'not walking' infringement award a penalty to the opposition..
- Were all incidents dealt with efficiently/effectively?
- Were all the appropriate sanctions applied correctly?
- Always be within reasonable distance of incidents.
- Be positioned to make critical decisions, especially in and around the penalty area.

Essex Walking Football League



- Understand the players' positional intentions and keep out of the way accordingly.
- Demonstrate alertness and concentration throughout the game.
- Apply the use of the advantage to suit the mood and temperature of the game.
- Be aware of the players' attitude to advantage.

3. Communication and Player Management

- Ensure good communication with the players during the game.
- When giving any personal warning then, for the first two occurrences, a Green card should be shown. On the third warning a Blue card should be shown with 3 minutes in the sin bin.
- Ensure the level of involvement/profile suits the game.
- Understand the players' problems on the day – e.g. weather conditions.
- Respond to the changing pattern of play / mood of players.
- Demonstrate empathy for the game, allow it to develop in accordance with the tempo of the game and within the EWFL rules of walking football.
- Be pro-active in controlling of the game.
- Assert authority firmly without being officious.
- Be confident and quick thinking.
- Always appear unflustered and unhurried when making critical decisions.
- Do not permit undue questioning of decisions.
- Deal effectively with players crowding around after decisions/incidents.
- Do not allow the pace of the game or player pressure to negatively affect refereeing.

4. Record Keeping

- Where a Red card is awarded against a player make a brief note of the players name, number and short reason for dismissal.
- If a straight Red card is given then as well as the above, as soon as possible after the game, send a short report to the Referee secretary (Derek Hornsey) detailing the players name, number, team and a description of the incident.

Above are some aids to refereeing walking football and have been amended from FA Referee guidance with some requirements for EWFL requirements.