

REFEREE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

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CONTENTS

1. Purpose of Document	2
2. Proposal for Refereeing (standing).....	2
2.1 Current Challenges	2
2.2 Five-Tier System.....	2
3. Next Steps	4
3.1 Existing Referees	4
3.2 Assessment Opportunities	4
3.3 Information for Competition Organisers	4
4. Referee Pathway for Wheelchair Fencing.....	5

1. PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

This document outlines proposals developed by the Referee Advisory Group and Chris Farren for an amended referee pathway in the standing space, as well as a new (complimentary to the standing pathway) pathway for wheelchair fencing refereeing.

2. PROPOSAL FOR REFEREEING (STANDING)

Underpinning the continued development of refereeing is a proposed five-tier structure which aims to address some challenges within the current pathway.

2.1 CURRENT CHALLENGES

1 – The current L1 has little meaning with very few courses running.

2 – Level 2 spans a wide range of abilities from just starting out, through to those refereeing regularly, domestically at national events. This means competition organisers cannot distinguish between the ability levels of these referees.

3 – There is a large ability gap between current level 2 and level 3, since level 3 is the gateway to international refereeing with European EFCs. This large jump fails to recognise the progression among level 2 referees and makes it harder to identify the right candidates for the next level.

2.2 FIVE-TIER SYSTEM

Therefore, the proposal is to introduce an amended pathway focussing on five tiers as follows:

Level 1 – Club referee. Theory only. The current L2 theory course and theory exam will become L1. This then allows for BF to take a proactive approach to attracting referees and progressing them into L2.

Level 2 – Regional referee. Practical Observation (x1)

Level 3 – New National Referee. Observation only assessment (x2)

Level 4 – As per the current L3 as part of preparation for EFC C Licence

Level 5 – as per the current L4 as a Mock FIE exam.

A proposed calendar of assessment opportunities is being developed including using GBR Pathway camps to further increase assessment opportunities.



Level	Weapon Specific	Delivery	Assessment
Club - Theory (1)	Yes	Online or in person	Online Theory Exam
Regional (2)	Yes	Practical	1 x Practical Observation
National (3)	Yes	Practical	2 x Practical Observations (one of which can be at a GBR Athlete Development Camp)
EFC Ready (4)	Yes	Theory and Practical Observation	1 x Theory Exam 1 x Video Exam 3 x Practical Observations
FIE Ready (5)	Yes	Practical	1 x Theory Exam 1 x Video Exam Practical Observation All as per FIE Exam

Existing FIE Referees wishing to develop a second weapon will be fast tracked as follows:

National (3) 1 x Practical Observation

EFC Ready (4) Second and third observations to be done at an EFC event.

3. NEXT STEPS

BF are initially having a period of consultation with the wider membership with a view to implementing the new pathway within the 26-27 season.

3.1 EXISTING REFEREES

- Current Level 2 referees will be eligible to be assessed against the national level referee criteria at identified assessment dates.
- Current Level 3 referees will be upgraded to L4 (EFC Ready)
- Current Level 4 referees will be upgraded to L5 (FIE Ready)
- Referees with an existing FIE license will be fast tracked through their second weapon as outlined above in section 2.2.

3.2 ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

British Fencing are developing a calendar of assessment opportunities which can include GBR pathway camps to increase assessment opportunities.

3.3 INFORMATION FOR COMPETITION ORGANISERS

There will be no requirement to only use Level 3 National Referees, so this proposal will not negatively impact on the availability of referees.

4. REFEREE PATHWAY FOR WHEELCHAIR FENCING

Working with Chris Farren, the following pathway to sit alongside the standing pathway is being proposed:

Level 1 – theory only, outlining the key differences between standing and wheelchair fencing

Level 3* – national level. Practical assessment and theory examinations which can take place at relevant events.

Level 5* – Mock International. Assessments will take place at appropriate training camps where international fencers are present.

*Level 3 & 5 for alignment to the standing pathway.

Level	Weapon Specific	Delivery	Assessment
Introduction to Wheelchair Refereeing	No	Online	No Assessment
National	Yes	Practical	1 x Practical Observation 1 x Theory (General & Weapon Specific)
Mock International	Yes	Practical	2 x Practical Observations 1 x Theory (General & Weapon Specific)

Version History

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v0.1	23 rd July 2026	Chris Turner & Luke Deamer	



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