



A VISION FOR SQUASH REFEREEING IN SCOTLAND

2025-2028

Background

The Challenge

Squash refereeing in Scotland faces a range of challenges, with a small and declining number of officials. Some regions of Scotland have no qualified officials at all, with an average age of over 55 meaning that the long-term ability to deliver high quality officials for competitions in Scotland is under threat.

The Opportunity

Squash refereeing is a great opportunity for all to get involved in the sport, and with just 8% of registered referees female (compared to **36%** of player base) and 7% under 35 (compared to **26%** of player base) there is an opportunity to grow the workforce and the diversity of the workforce to continue driving up standards.

The Standard

Scottish Squash has signed up to the World Squash Officiating qualifications framework, to ensure a consistent standard of refereeing across the globe, and to give Scotland's officials the best chance of progressing to the level they wish to reach.

The Future

While these challenges are significant, they also present an opportunity for Scotland to lead the world in squash officiating. By becoming one of the first nations to create an officiating strategy, the vision set out in this document will provide a direction to address the challenges faced while providing collective goals for all in Scotland's squash community to work towards.

Process

By the squash community, for the squash community

This vision has been crafted by Scotland's squash community. Driven by a working group made up of referees, and members of Scotland's squash community, consultations have been held with the wider refereeing body, with players, coaches, parents and competition organisers having the opportunity to provide feedback and thoughts to the project.

What did we hear?

The referee's perspective

"We don't always feel appreciated by Scottish Squash for what we contribute to events."

"Long spells of concentration are required, which inevitably impacts decision making."

"Fair systems need to be put in place for appointments, including sufficient notice for events."

"We need strong systems for quality assurance, and to support the development of new referees."

The community perspective

60%

Have had positive experiences with Scotland's referees

70%

Prefer when there are referees to mark matches

Referees are respected for their fairness, honesty, and commitment.

Need for updated knowledge on modern refereeing directives.

Need for improved training to ensure better alignment with global refereeing standards.

Key Aims

Fresh perspectives

Refereeing in Scotland should be seen as something which can be done by anyone. Referees starting out on their journey should feel welcome in a supportive community, and should know what steps they can take to reach their desired level. Events should be safe spaces, with opportunities to learn and improve.

Building a community

Scotland's referees should have equal opportunity to achieve what they want from squash refereeing. Whether refereeing in league matches, supporting at national competitions or looking to referee on the world stage, Scotland should have structures to support those ambitions. The contribution of Scotland's referees should be recognised, and their experience when refereeing should be professional and collaborative.

Raising the bar

Scotland's squash referees should be certified by a global framework which recognises their skills and effort, and ensures a high-standard of officiating at national-level events.

Using this document

This document provides a roadmap for the future of squash officiating in Scotland. Any decisions made in relation to refereeing, whether by Scottish Squash, referees, competition organisers, players (and everyone else involved) should reflect the vision and steps set out in this strategy.



Fresh perspectives

Building Scotland's officiating capacity

The plan

- Implementation of a pathway for referees which shows all referees what opportunities are open to them from the beginning of their refereeing journey.
- Targeted initiatives aimed at under-represented groups should be prioritised.
- Delivery of marking courses at the club and regional level will begin to increase confidence as a potential step zero on the referee pathway.
- Focus on marketing the positive aspects of refereeing, along with the opportunities that it brings for those that wish to get involved in the game at a higher level.
- Target groups that may be well-placed to help out with refereeing, such as parents and regular spectators at squash events.
- Implementation of a mentoring system to support referees early in their officiating journey.
- Work with the player base to share potential opportunities in refereeing, along with an understanding of the challenges.

The ambition

- Work in conjunction with regions to create a pathway for referees from multi-club leagues and regional events to national championships.
- Delivery of referee development course targeting women and girls in season 2026/27.
- Begin delivery of markers awareness courses in 2025, with targeted follow-up with those expressing an interest in taking their first steps as a referee.
- Scottish Squash to identify and highlight positive refereeing stories from season 2025/26, and to share refereeing opportunities and challenges.
- Encourage junior players to develop their marking confidence at events.
- Train referee mentors to support new referees in season 2025/26.



Building a community

Supporting, retaining and empowering Scotland's referees

The plan

- Implementation of a pathway for referees, which rewards referees for effort and ability.
- Procedures should be open, fair and transparent – implementation of new appointments procedure.
- Referees should be fairly treated – fair notice for competitions, travel expenses covered and food provided where appropriate.
- A system of quality improvement focused on learning should be introduced, providing opportunities for referees to give and receive feedback on their performance and to identify areas for development.
- Implementation of a mentoring system and appropriate peer support to ensure referees have access to continued support.

The ambitions

- Work in conjunction with regions to create a pathway for referees from multi-club leagues and regional events to national championships.
- Develop appointments process to recognise qualification level, commitment and effort.
- Work with Gold competition organisers to ensure fair notice and payment of expenses for all referees at events.
- Implementation of a new development-focused observation alongside existing appraisal structure.
- Provide regular opportunities for feedback and suggestions to enhance the referee experience.



Raising the bar

World-class officiating in Scotland

The plan

- Mandatory requirement of engagement with WSO qualifications to remain part of the referee registration.
- Quality assurance systems in place, to identify strengths and areas for development, and to assess high standards at events.
- Work with competition organisers across Scotland to provide appropriate development opportunities for all referees.
- Continuous professional development and networking opportunities to be arranged, with a focus on raising standards.

The ambitions

- All referees at Scottish Squash national championships to hold a WSO qualification by season 2026/27.
- Work with competition organisers to provide development opportunities through supported referee appointments in season 2025/26.
- Introduce two referee CPD calls in season 2025/26 to raise standards and ensure a continued focus on development.