



The community refereeing programme

Description of project

The community refereeing programme is a series of workshops aimed at increasing diversity in refereeing and increasing knowledge of the Laws of the Game within minority groups in Northern Ireland. The course identifies communities with little to no referee interaction and provides theory and practical-based workshops on refereeing, while also linking the communities with other areas of the association, such as club development, futsal, volunteering and club licensing.

The project has reached out to a number of communities and developed their footballing programme not just from a refereeing perspective but also by improving their overall interaction with the Irish Football Association. To summarise with a quote from one of the workshop participants:

"Everything they do is great and I've been learning real skills here. We enjoy it – the pitches are great and I'd never done things like this before. It's amazing."



Referee manager Lee Tavinder during a practical session for immigrant referees

Objectives

- Deliver five theory and practical-based workshops on refereeing and the Laws of the Game to community football schemes that had no referee structure
- Identify one point of contact within each community
- Provide a full referee course for four people from each community
- Increase diversity in registered referees by 25%
- Refer communities to at least one other area of the association

Results

- Delivered workshops to 4 football communities with more than 15 candidates on each course
- Delivered follow-up workshops and programmes for all football communities, including futsal and club development.
- Full referee course due to be delivered to members of football communities to meet 25% target in diversity
- Key contacts established in each minority community

Tips for replication

- Make, establish and retain the key contacts and work with them directly – the momentum of the programme increased once a key contact in each community was found
- Use knowledge of the communities to save money on venues and facilities
- Keep an open mind and ask questions – one of the most valuable parts of the programme was asking the participants what the association could do for them
- Follow up – deliver on the promises made and do not underestimate the impact you can have

Contact information

Should you have any questions with regard to this project, please contact Lee Tavinder (ltavinder@irishfa.com)