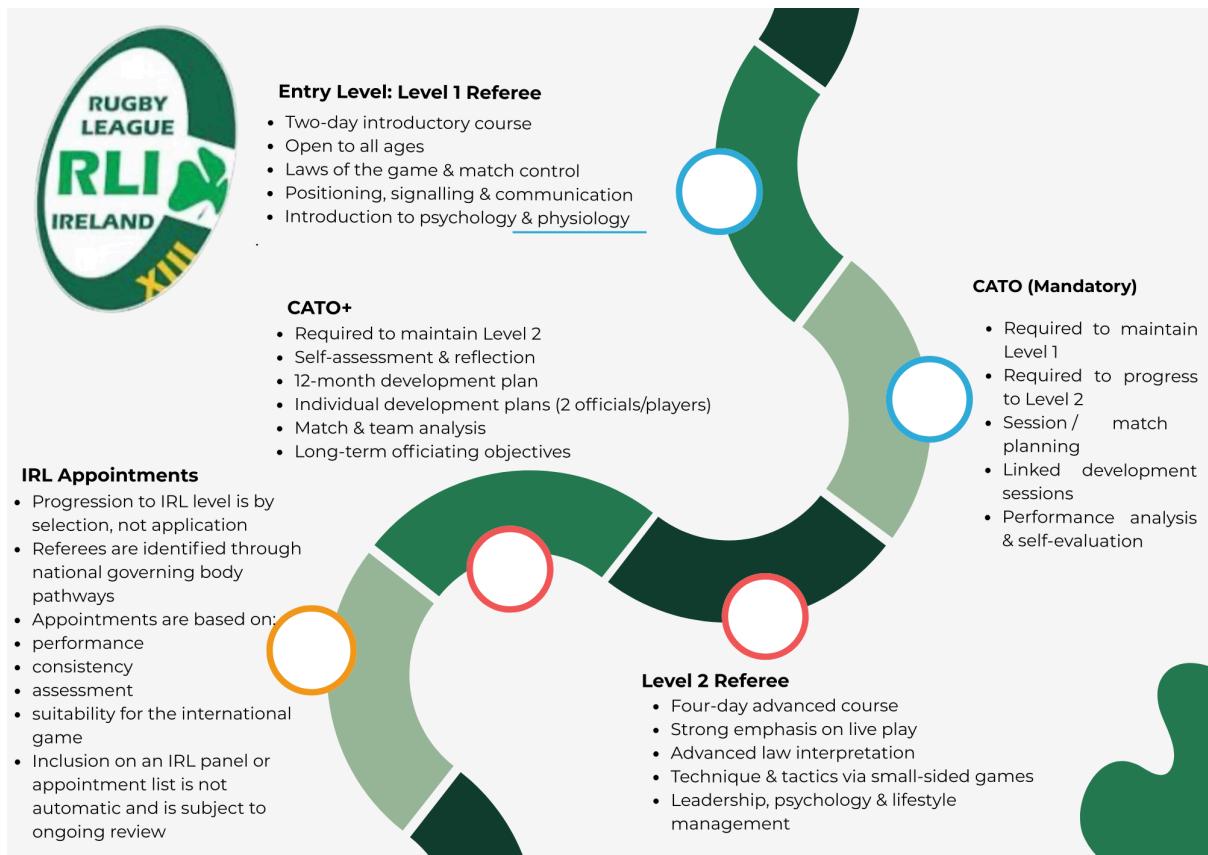


RLI Referee Pathway – Full Progression

Please contact referees@rli.ie if you are interested in becoming an RLI referee.



Step 1: Level 1 Referee

Purpose

Level 1 is the entry point to refereeing within Rugby League Ireland. It provides new referees with the foundational knowledge and skills required to officiate safely and confidently.

Overview

- Entry-level qualification, open to participants of all ages
- Focus on understanding and applying the laws of the game
- Development of basic match control, positioning, signalling, and communication
- Introduction to team organisation and how the game is played
- Introductory modules in sports psychology and physiology, relevant to officiating

Outcome

- Referees who successfully complete Level 1 are eligible to officiate at entry and development levels
- Referees enter the RLI referee pathway and officiating structure

Step 2: CATO (Level 1 Development Requirement)

Purpose

CATO supports referees in consolidating their learning and developing practical competence through structured experience and reflection.

Overview

- Mandatory to maintain Level 1 status or progress to Level 2
- Focus on applied refereeing practice and development
- Encourages reflective learning and performance awareness

Key Requirements

- Development of structured session or match plans focused on fundamental refereeing skills
- Planning and participation in a series of linked officiating experiences
- Performance analysis and structured self-evaluation

Outcome

- Demonstrated readiness to progress within the referee pathway
- Eligibility for consideration for Level 2 training

Step 3: Level 2 Referee

Purpose

Level 2 develops referees to operate effectively in more demanding match environments, with a strong emphasis on game management and applied decision-making.

Overview

- Four-day course with a strong emphasis on live play
- Advanced interpretation and application of the laws
- Development of positioning, fitness, communication, and control under pressure
- Use of small-sided and conditioned games to develop anticipation and decision-making
- Expanded modules in psychology, physiology, and lifestyle management relevant to referees

Outcome

- Qualification to referee at higher competitive and representative levels
- Entry into advanced appointment and development structures within RLI

Step 4: CATO+ (Level 2 Development Requirement)

Purpose

CATO+ supports advanced referees in developing consistency, leadership, and long-term performance standards.

Overview

- Required to maintain Level 2 status or progress to educator or elite pathways
- Focus on sustained performance, analysis, and mentoring capability

Key Requirements

- Completion of a structured self-assessment

- Development of a 12-month personal referee development plan
- Individual development plans for two referees or players
- Match and team analysis
- Establishment of long-term officiating objectives

Outcome

- Accredited Level 2 referee
- Eligibility for appointment to educator, mentor, or elite development roles within RLI

Step 5: International Rugby League (IRL) Appointments

Purpose

This represents the highest level of refereeing progression, involving officiating at international level under the jurisdiction of International Rugby League (IRL).

Overview

- Progression to IRL level is **by identification and selection**, not application
- Referees are identified through national governing body pathways
- Appointments are based on sustained high performance at senior and representative level

Key Points

- Selection is performance-based and subject to ongoing assessment
- Referees may be appointed on a match-by-match basis or included in IRL referee panels
- Inclusion on an IRL panel is not automatic and is subject to review

Outcome

- Appointment to international fixtures and competitions as determined by IRL

Important Note

Progression through the referee pathway is **supported and managed**.

Following Level 1, referees are supported throughout their development by assigned RLI educators or tutors, who oversee progression, development requirements, and readiness for advancement.