



# [clear & obvious]

The Queensland Rugby Referees Association's Newsletter

## Premier Squad named for 2016

After a stellar 2015 which saw a number of referees make their Premier debut and several go onto higher honours (see story in this edition), 2016 is shaping up as being even better.

ARU Match Official Development Manager Rohan Hoffmann said Queensland is once again leading the pack in Australia when it comes to developing high quality match officials but there is still plenty to work on and improve.

"Last year was really a line in the sand for our group with a renewed commitment towards fitness, referee coaching, education, participation and personal development," Rohan said.

"Players now know that when their referee takes the field he/she will be supremely fit and that fatigue won't play a factor in decisions.

"Going a step further in 2016, every referee assigned to a Premier Grade game must have a Yo-Yo endurance test score above 18 to be considered for selection from round one.

"There will also be a number of compulsory education and development meetings and a strict adherence to honest self-review of games."

In keeping with QRU expectations and depending on availability, referees will be selected to do the best games on form first and foremost.

HOWEVER, certain games throughout the season will be used as development opportunities for referees who have been identified as Premier Grade potential.

Rohan said the newly selected Premier Squad will also be looking to help develop the next generation of referees by regularly turning up to do BJRU games on a Sunday and sticking around to mentor our younger members.

"As a leadership group it is important we help mentor the next generation of referee and spread the good word about taking up the whistle," he said.

"As Referee Managers/Coaches will have also committed ourselves to be more transparent with our referees and provide more honest assessments to help them improve."

Rohan said this year's squad is not set in stone and others could be added depending on performances.

"Squad selection is only the beginning and the hard work is now underway. We won't be afraid to promote and in turn drop referees if performances warrant it," Rohan said.

## 2016 Premier Match Official Squad, QLD

Premier Panel	
Berry	Nic
Aistrope	Tim
Barr	Shane
Cheriton	Matt
Foley	Cameron
Haydock	Paul
Hoffmann	Rohan
Horton	Rachel
Howlett	Chyna
Lawrie	Drew
Leseberg	Nick
Mitchelmore	Damien
Moloney	Luke
Moore	Simon
Rigby	Shaun
Ryan	Jordan
Stanfield	Cam
Twist	Andrew
Twomey	Kev
Way	Jordan
Woodhouse	Chris

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Emerging Talent Group	
Francis	David
Joseph	Nick
Lane	Declan
Meehan	Drew
Rasmussen	Sam
West	Lara

ASC National Officiating Scholarship Holder	
Cronan	Brett

## Rugby Ruckus – From the Editor’s Desk

Welcome to the Summer 2016 edition of the new look ‘Clear & Obvious’.

The temperature is still rising and things are heating up in referee land. The pre-season is well and truly underway and once again in this edition we dig deep into all things refereeing.

From articles about our new Life Members to the Management Committee’s 2016 agenda, we cover all facets of officialdom in Queensland.

There is a fitting farewell to ‘Big Willie’, some useful need to know info about the season ahead and how we aim to make the QRRA just as enjoyable off the field as on it.

As always, any feedback is appreciated and we would love to hear from all of you out and about in rugby land who have a story/picture/question about refereeing.

Please send any material you wish to contribute to ‘Clear & Obvious’ to [shaun@sequelpr.com](mailto:shaun@sequelpr.com) (yes the world’s worst secret is out about who does the newsletter) for consideration in the next edition.

## Many Grounds, One Club – Kick-off: the QRRA Golf Day

2016 will see the QRRA embrace a more Rugby type Club culture. Even though refereeing is an individual thing when you are out in the middle, we think as a group the QRRA is so much more than that.

With this in mind, a number of purely social events will be organised.

The first big social get together will be the ‘QRRA’ Golf Day at the Ashgrove Golf Club on Sunday February 28.

The Golf Day will cater for all playing abilities and will be a two or four ball (depending on numbers), best ball Ambrose Tournament.

Teams will be drawn out of the hat on the day with the teams to be a balance of those who regularly hit (The I think I am alrighters) and Hackers (Muppets).

Cost for the day is \$50 (\$25 for students) including motorised cart with a shotgun start at 7am. For those who don’t play regularly that means you must be there by 6.30am for a briefing and rules before tee off. Yes it is early!!! There will be prizes for nearest to the pin on some select par 3s, best approach on a par 4, overall team winner and of course last team. There will be a BBQ Lunch and presentation ceremony after the golf shenanigans.

Please indicate if you would like to play by emailing [shaun@sequelpr.com](mailto:shaun@sequelpr.com) and let him know whether you wanted to be classed as ‘I am an alrighter’ or a ‘muppet’? Entries for the day close on Friday, February 19 and there are limited number of spots so get in quick.

Dress will be QRRA polo with dress shorts and covered shoes. Hire Clubs will be available at a cost.



Focussing on fun both on and off the field in 2016

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## From the President's Desk

With last year's mud still clinging to our boots, we are now back for Rugby Season 2016. Welcome back, happy New Year, and may you have a great season of rugby!

Regular training sessions have started, to help us shed those extra Christmas kilos. Come along on Wednesday nights, to get into great shape for the season start. Our Season Launch is planned for 21 February – an ideal way to brush up on the ARU's expectations of players and referees in 2016.

If you missed our AGM, please make an effort to thank our retiring committee members, Mark Hogan, Dan Sheahan and Richard Bendeich, and to congratulate our new life members, Andrew Cole and Peter Gofton. A warm welcome to new committee members Shane Barr, Alan McLoughlin and Treasurer Simon Moore.

Please keep the family of QRRRA member Steve "Big Willie" Williamson in your thoughts, as they mourn his passing over Christmas. Thank you to the many members who represented us at Steve's funeral.

Your new QRRRA committee met in early January to plan our 2016 season. Please look over this plan (outlined in this edition) and think about how you might help us achieve these goals.

A big project for 2016 will be our **New Referee Development Program**, based around a few Brisbane hubs, to support junior clubs and schools in these areas. The aim is to partner with clubs and schools to create an ongoing annual program, fostering new referees among the ranks of players and their mums and dads. The Sunnybank club under the leadership of Cam Foley has done a great job in this area, and they are helping us to expand this initiative.

Your QRRRA Committee appreciates your support, and we look forward to a great season of rugby in 2016.

Mike Willis  
President



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## Meet our New QRRR Life Members

Late last year, the QRRR committee nominated two new people to become Life Members of the Association. At the AGM, both Andrew Cole and Peter Gofton were overwhelmingly endorsed by members after stellar and continued service to the QRRR. Below is a bit about both men (in case you live under a refereeing Rock!) and why they got their just recognition.

### Andrew Cole

Andrew commenced refereeing with the Queensland Junior Rugby Referee Association in 1977 and was presented the R. M. Bendeich Trophy in 1982. Andrew then became a member of the QRRR in 1984 refereeing 513 matches of senior rugby.

Andrew was nominated and appointed as a member of the AFRU Referees Panel in 1990 and began refereeing representative matches during this year. He remained on the AFRU panel until 2006 when he retired from the international scene. His first appointment to an international test match, Western Samoa v Tonga, was in 1997 and he went on to referee a further 30 international matches, included five Rugby World Cup matches. Andrew was also a Super 12 referee being appointed to 28 matches between 2003 and 2006. Four of these matches were semi-finals.

Andrew was appointed to his initial First Grade Grand Final in 1997 and was also appointed to the 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 First Grade Grand Finals and to the 2005 Premier Grand Final. He was the initial recipient of the Kerry Fitzgerald Medal in 1997, being voted the Best and Fairest First Grade referee. Andrew also won this award in 1998.

After retiring from active refereeing, Andrew continued his involvement in rugby by becoming a Super Rugby and Test Rugby reviewer in 2007, and was appointed ARU National Referee Coach in 2011, a position he still holds. In 2014, Andrew was selected as an IRB Referee Reviewer with appointments to many international tests in various countries and was a Reviewer at the 2015 Rugby World Cup in England. Even with all his international and national responsibilities, Andrew has continued his involvement with the QRRR (Brisbane) Inc. through referee coaching and the development of referees at all levels.



*Coley in action*

### Peter Gofton

Peter joined the QRRR (Brisbane) Inc. in 1994 and refereed 41 junior matches in his first year. Peter retired from active refereeing in 2010 after officiating in 744 matches at senior and junior levels.

Peter's first foray into association administration duties was in 1996, becoming the Pool 3 (Juniors) Appointments Officer and worked with Cole Barrett who was the Pool 2 (Seniors) Appointments Officer. Peter then undertook the Pool 2 appointments in 1998 when Cole Barrett became the QRU Referee Development Officer. Peter was awarded the association's clubman award in 1998. Peter passed the appointments baton over to Geoff Pegg in 2000 as he had a more important job to do; he was now the QRRR's President, a position he continued in during 2001 and 2002. During this time, Peter was also an active Referee Coach for junior and senior referees.

A strategic planning process was undertaken in 1999 and as President of the QRRR (state wide) in 2000, Peter implemented the recommendations of the strategic planning process and restructured the QRRR so that Brisbane would become a branch (Affiliated to the QRU) and country associations would be affiliated with their regional sub-union so as to develop and grow rugby in their area.

2002 saw a significant change with the introduction of Premier rugby and the re-organisation of community rugby. With Premier rugby, grants were provided to all competing clubs. As President of the QRRR (Brisbane) Inc., Peter was instrumental in successfully arguing that the association should be deemed a "club" and be eligible for the annual grant similar to that the clubs received which was the first movement towards referees being remunerated for their services.

Peter handed over the presidency to Peter Smith in 2004 but was back on the Management Committee as Hon. Secretary/Administrator after the Honorary Secretary, Treasurer and one committee member resigned immediately after being elected. In 2004, Peter was accepted to attend the ARU Referee Coach Level III program which he successfully completed. He has continued as a referee coach and was the referee coaching co-ordinator in 2008 and continues to be an active referee coach reviewing senior matches including Premier level.



*Gofto stoked to be a Lifer!*

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## 2016 QRRA Committee looking to kick goals

While most of the Association was getting over their Christmas food comas and watching cricket on the telly, the new QRRA Committee met in early January for the first time to map out its agenda and special projects for the 2016 season.

This year, the QRRA has set five strategic goals to try and achieve. A number of tactics and responsibilities have been assigned to committee members as outlined below to achieve these goals.

As always, we want the wider Association to help the committee achieve our goals and will be looking to appoint a number of members to help out. Please, if you are keen to help one of our committee members on a particular project let them know!?

### Committee Responsibilities

#### Sustainable Stream of Referees

- Junior Development Hub Coordinator – Shane Barr (overseeing the work of Damian Mitchelmore)
- Senior Recruitment/Retention of referees – Shaun Rigby
- Coaching – Alan McLoughlin (to oversee coaching, with Mark Hogan coordinating seniors coaches and Alan coordinating junior coaches)

#### Member Engagement

- Media & Communications – Shaun Rigby (Media, Twitter/web, newsletter)/Scott Chapman (Web)
- Member consultation – Simon Moore
- Interchange – Simon Moore
- Education – Duncan Male/Simon Moore/Shane Barr

**Financial Sustainability** - Treasurer - Simon

**Sponsorship & Resources** – Duncan Male/Simon Moore

#### Systems & Admin

- Secretary – Dave Bowler
- ICT – Scott Chapman
- Appointments – Mike Willis (with Neill McCann as new coordinator)



*New Committee down to business*



**1 BUILD A SUSTAINABLE  
STREAM OF REFEREES**

**2 ENGAGE MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH  
OUR MEMBERS**

**3 IMPROVE OUR  
FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**

**4 NEW  
SPONSORSHIP & RESOURCES**

**5 BETTER  
SYSTEMS & ADMINISTRATION**

**THE QRRA COMMITTEE'S  
2016 GOALS**

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## Goodbye 'Big Willie'

**On Christmas Day one of the QRRR's most loved members Steve "Big Willie" Williamson lost his long fight with cancer.**

Our sympathies go to his wife Anita, his children Emily, Claire and Bryce and the wider Williamson family.

The following is an edited extract from Past President and current ref coach Neil McCann's Eulogy.

Steve "Big Willie" Williamson was a larger than life character who joined the QRRR in 1999 after finishing his playing career as a respected second rower with the Wynnum Bugs.

Steve showed early maturity as a referee which was predominantly based on his understanding of the game and the player respect he commanded; some would say based on his physical stature making him impossible to ignore! He engendered gratitude from Appointments Officers at the time as he was prepared to referee at any place at any time, something which would come to distinguish his later career.

Steve was never a shrinking violet and soon became a willing participant in all Association activities including training, where he was responsible for designating nicknames to all and sundry including his own. Steve served as the Association's gear steward for a number of years and was at the forefront of updating our jerseys and ensuring that all members had access to an Association polo shirt to wear to matches.

During this time, as part of his duties in this role on education nights, Steve was responsible for cooking a BBQ for those attending these sessions after training. The "Willie Burger" became infamous but not for its gourmet value, nevertheless, these were staple referee food until a new caterer came in and the menu was substituted for something far more wholesome.

Whilst there was never a formal role called Social Co-ordinator, it is fair to say that Steve took this role voluntarily and regularly was the MC at many Association dinners, camps and functions, which enabled him to demonstrate his wit and well researched knowledge catching many a speaker out. He also was responsible for many referees being able to ply their trade in another form of the game at the annual Byron Bay Sevens with a number of these going on to bigger and better things.

Steve also served as Interchange Co-ordinator and it was here that his attention to detail came to the fore. He meticulously prepared spread sheets with dates, times and localities, which provided calm reassurance to the travelling referees, hosts, drivers and administrators – everyone knew where they had to be and when they had to be there. These contributions did not go unnoticed by the Management Committee and in 2004, he was awarded the Paddy O'Brien Service Award as Clubman of the Year. Steve also served on the Management Committee in 2007.

The respect that he was held around the world as a referee was illustrated by overwhelming response to the "Red Card Cancer for Big Willie" campaign on Facebook.

Overall, Steve refereed 351 games for QRRR including 4 Grand finals and countless other games around the world. Steve always said rugby owed him nothing because he got some much joy and enjoyment from it. The rugby Gods and many others would strongly disagree with that. It certainly was a life well lived – may he rest in peace.



*Rest in Peace 'Big Willie'.*



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## Tight Five - News you can use

### Congrats

The QRRA is continuing its proud tradition of developing match officials with two of our members for the first time joining another four on the national panel.

Former Reds Half Nic Berry and young up and comer Jordan Way will join the Hoff, Damo, Rach and Chyna on the National Panel.

The two ARU newbies and the rest of the Premier Squad have been training hard for a big season ahead with hopes more from the QRRA will soon force their way into higher ranks.

Brett Cronan has also been awarded as an Australian Sports Commission National Officiating Scholarship holder for 2016.



*Nic taking in Berry flavoured fluids after training ha ha*

### Summer Sweat Simply Sensational

The 2016 season is just around the corner and the QRRA is better prepared than ever for the year ahead.

Numbers are at an all-time high at training with a number of new refs making their first appearance.

Remember any QRRA member is welcome to come to training at Ballymore on Wednesday nights at 6.15pm. Come along and don't be shy!

### Our New Website

After some tweaking in the off-season, our new website is now fully operational and, hopefully, working properly.

Please visit [www.qrra.com.au](http://www.qrra.com.au) and check it out.

### Admin

Commencing this year, there will no longer be a requirement for face-to-face SmartRugby training, with all SmartRugby training able to be completed online using the ARU's new Learning Management System.

The requirement for all members over the age of 18 to maintain a Blue Card remains, but will be strictly enforced – no Blue Card = no refereeing.

If you do not have a current Blue Card, please take steps to get one ASAP. If you need someone to sign your documents, Wednesday night training is a good opportunity.



*Our Admin officer Nick getting down to business*

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## Season Launch

Lock it in Eddie. Season launch is Sunday February 21 at Marist College Ashgrove starting at 8.30am.

Some other important dates are below (please note some are subject to change)

- QRRR Season Launch Sunday 21 February
- QRRR Golf Day, Sunday 28 February
- Junior Gold Cup 13 Feb – 13 March
- Premier/Club Comp begins 12 March to Premier GF on 7 August
- Super Rugby Part 1 – February 26 until end of May. The 2016 Super Rugby competition sees the first year of a new expanded format, with 18 teams from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Argentina and Japan all taking part. There will be 17 rounds, with each team to play the teams in their conference at least once, as well as a select group of the other teams.
- Wednesday 23 March: Education Night at Ballymore
- Saturday 2 April: Saturday evening 'One Club' social function
- Wednesday 20 April: Education Night at Ballymore
- Sunday 8 May: Sunday BBQ at Ballymore – 'One Club' social function
- Wednesday 18 May: Education Night at Ballymore
- **June Internationals – England touring Australia:**
  - Wallabies v England, Saturday 11 June, Suncorp Stadium Brisbane
  - Wallabies v England,, Saturday 18 June, AAMI Park, Melbourne
  - Wallabies v England, Saturday 25 June, Allianz Stadium Sydney
- Thursday 9 Jun: Test Match Event
- Wednesday 13 July: Pre-finals Education Night at Ballymore (team of three)
- Super Rugby Part 2 –The qualifying finals will begin in July with the Grand Final being played on August 6.
- Sunday 7 Aug: Post Premier Grand Final Social Function.

- Wednesday 24 Aug: Education Night at Ballymore (Sevens)
- Saturday 17 Sep: Annual Dinner

- **Wallabies 2016 Rugby Championship home schedule:**

Wallabies v New Zealand, Saturday 20 August, ANZ Stadium Sydney

Wallabies v South Africa, Saturday 10 September, Suncorp Stadium Brisbane

Wallabies v Argentina, Saturday 17 September, nib Stadium Perth

