



January newsletter



Welcome back and Happy New Year from everyone at the Thirsk Talent Hub!

January has been all about resetting, refocusing, and starting the year with purpose. The students have returned from the Christmas break with excellent attitudes and a real willingness to learn — showing maturity, energy, and commitment from the first session back.

This month has also seen the launch of our brand-new Scheme of Work: Refereeing, giving students a fresh perspective on the game and introducing them to another vital role within football.

As the refereeing scheme continues, students will take on greater responsibility and apply their learning across lessons, lunchtime leagues, and Talent Hub sessions. We're excited to see their confidence and leadership continue to grow.

student spotlight

Each month, we celebrate some of our shining stars! This section highlights a student/s who has gone above and beyond—whether through kindness, creativity, hard work, or leadership. Let's cheer them on and be inspired by their example!

Year 7 - Oliver Lingard

Year 8 - Reggie Smith

Year 9 - Malik Hassan

Year 10 - Daisy Araujo

Well done to all four! Your attitude, commitment, and work ethic has been exemplary in the programme!

upcoming events

Here's what's coming up for the Hub in the next few weeks:

Year 5 Trials:

Mon 16th February 9.30-11.00am

Weds 18th February 10.00-11.30am

Year 6 Trials:

Monday 16th February 10.00-11.30am

Talent Hub: Young Leaders, refereeing and organising, March 2026 (Year 3 & Year 4 5-a-side tournament)

New Scheme of Work: Half-Term 4 Introduction & Principles of Performance Analysis





scheme of work

Refereeing



This half term, students are exploring the role of the referee and the importance of officiating within football. The scheme is designed to help students understand the game more deeply, develop respect for officials, and build confidence in leadership and decision-making.

So far, students have been learning about:

- The Role of the Referee – responsibilities before, during, and after matches
- Laws of the Game – key rules, restarts, fouls, and misconduct
- Positioning & Movement – being in the right place to make the right decision
- Decision-Making Under Pressure – making quick, fair calls in game-realistic scenarios
- Communication – managing players, explaining decisions, and staying calm.

Over the coming weeks, students will continue to build their refereeing knowledge and begin to officiate more complex games. We'll also explore pathways into refereeing for those interested in taking it further.



Sessions have included practical refereeing activities in small-sided games, and refereeing lunchtime leagues, allowing students to apply their learning in real time and reflect on the challenges officials face in changing environments under high pressure.





Learning experiences



Seeing the Game from a New Perspective

One of the biggest benefits of the new Refereeing Scheme of Work has been how it has encouraged students to view football from a completely different angle. Stepping into the role of an official has challenged them to stay neutral, remain focused, and make decisions in real time — often with limited information and no second chances.

Students have quickly realised that refereeing requires excellent concentration, strong positioning, and the confidence to stand by decisions, even when under pressure from players or teammates. This understanding has already begun to influence how students behave during games, showing increased patience, discipline, and respect for officials.

Practical Refereeing Experiences

Throughout January, students have taken part in a range of practical officiating activities, including:

- Refereeing small-sided games during Talent Hub sessions
- Officiating fixtures in lunchtime leagues
- Supporting lessons and internal matches as assistant referees

These opportunities have allowed students to apply the Laws of the Game, practise movement and positioning, & develop clear communication with players. Many have grown in confidence with each session, becoming more assertive and comfortable managing game situations.

Communication & Decision-Making

A key focus of the scheme has been communication — learning how to explain decisions clearly, use calm and confident body language, and manage players positively. Students have practised using simple phrases, hand signals, and preventative communication to keep games flowing and avoid unnecessary conflict.

Decision-making has also been a major learning point. Students are beginning to understand that referees won't always get every decision perfect — but being consistent, fair, and honest is what matters most.

Developing Life Skills Through Officiating

Beyond football, refereeing has helped students develop valuable life skills, including:

- confidence and resilience
- leadership and responsibility
- fairness and integrity
- problem-solving under pressure

By taking responsibility for games, students are learning accountability and gaining a deeper appreciation for the role officials play in making sport enjoyable and safe for everyone.





Refereeing pathways



As part of our new Refereeing Scheme of Work, we want students to understand that officiating is not only a valuable learning experience, but also a genuine pathway within football — locally and nationally.

Refereeing in North Yorkshire

Across North Yorkshire, refereeing is supported by County FA programmes that help young people get involved in officiating at grassroots level. Referees play a crucial role in ensuring games are safe, fair, and enjoyable — and there is a growing demand for new officials across youth and adult football.

Refereeing offers:

- opportunities to stay involved in the game
- leadership and decision-making experience
- confidence in communication
- a chance to officiate real matches at weekends

For students interested in football beyond playing, refereeing provides an excellent alternative or complementary pathway.

The FA Refereeing Course – Laws of the Game

The FA offers an Introduction to Refereeing Course, which teaches the Laws of the Game and prepares learners to officiate grassroots matches.

Students learn about:

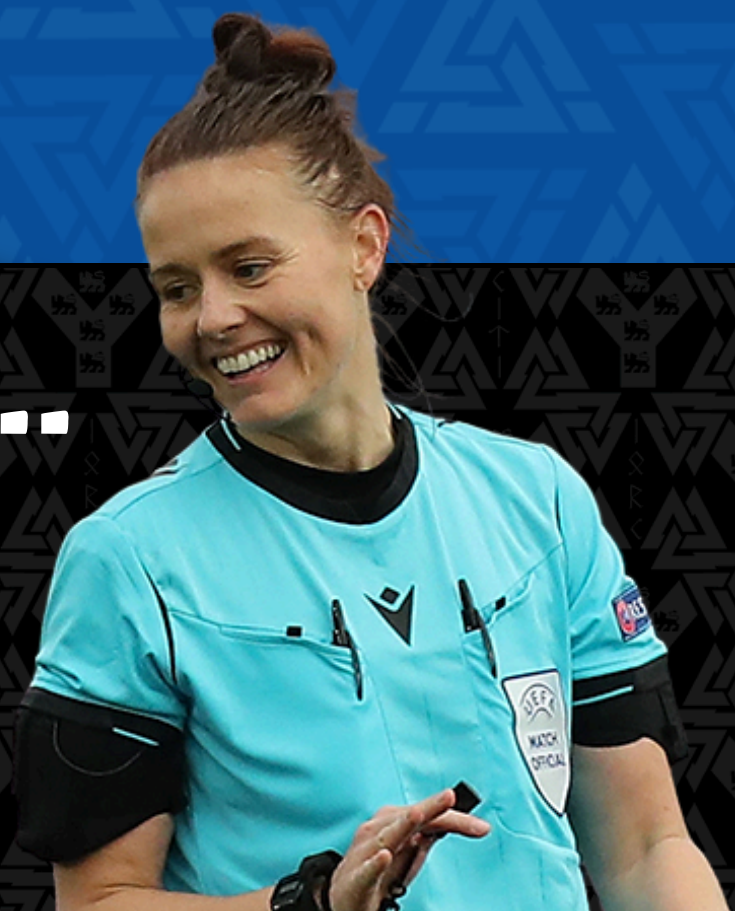
- key laws and restarts
- fouls and misconduct
- positioning and movement
- managing players and coaches
- applying laws consistently and fairly

FA Refereeing Course (Laws of the Game):
<https://learn.Englandfootball.com>

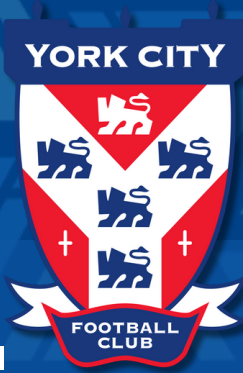
This course is suitable for young people and is the first step towards becoming a qualified referee.

did you know...

Rebecca Welch, from North Yorkshire, made history as the first woman to referee a Premier League match (Fulham v Burnley, Dec 2023) and an EFL match (2021). Formerly an NHS worker, she became a full-time referee in 2019, officiating in the 2023 Women's World Cup and 2024 Olympics before retiring in 2024 to join PGMOL



COACHES' CORNER



TIPS OF THE MONTH

inspirational

Be a positive role model. Inspire others through your attitude, effort, and willingness to lead by example.

inclusivity

Football is for everyone. We respect differences, support each other, and ensure everyone feels welcome, confident, and valued.

pitch personality framework

resilient

Stay strong in challenging moments. Learn from mistakes, stay focused, and keep pushing forward — resilience is what drives long-term success.

Dilan's Reflections talent hub lead coach

"The introduction of the refereeing scheme has been a fantastic learning opportunity for our students. It's allowed them to step into leadership roles, make decisions under pressure, and understand the importance of fairness and consistency.

Refereeing also develops resilience. Not every decision will be popular, and students are learning how to respond calmly, accept feedback, and move on quickly. These are essential skills in football and in life. The progress we've seen already shows just how powerful this scheme can be.

Keep up the good work Talent Hub students."



Dan's Reflections talent hub coach

"January has been a really positive start to the year. Coming back after the Christmas break, the students have shown excellent focus and a real willingness to learn. Introducing the refereeing scheme has challenged them in a completely different way, and it's been great to see how quickly they've adapted to the responsibility that comes with officiating.

What has stood out for me is how students have handled decision-making. Refereeing isn't easy... you have to think quickly, stay calm, and be confident in your choices. The way the group has embraced this challenge shows real maturity and resilience.

These experiences will help them not just in football, but in everyday situations where confidence and leadership are required."

