Manual of Guidance for Match Officials of the Premier and First Divisions of the Thurlow Nunn Eastern Counties League

July 2026

FOREWORD

In the coming season you will serve as a Referee or Assistant Referee on the Thurlow Nunn Eastern Counties League's List of Match Officials for the Premier and First Divisions. By accepting the invitation to serve, there are certain commitments that have to be made on your part and in return you will receive the full support of the League, who will provide you with development assistance and full support.

As many of you are already aware, officiating on a Supply League signals a big step in your refereeing career and represents many changes as a Referee or Assistant Referee. Many clubs at this level have enclosed grounds, the skill factor is often better and there is a paying attendance, with certain clubs regularly attracting a large following.

These factors bring with them certain responsibilities on your part. The Thurlow Nunn Eastern Counties League expects that your standard of administration and communication will be of the highest level. You will also be expected to conduct yourself, on and off the field of play, in a professional manner.

This booklet is designed to be a point of reference for you in your role as an Thurlow Nunn Eastern Counties League Match Official. You are strongly advised to take note of its content and regularly revisit it. By doing so, you will be in a position to approach each appointment with confidence, ensuring that you achieve the maximum performance level possible.

Finally, it only remains for us to wish you well for the coming season. We trust that you will enjoy your time officiating at this level of the game. Never hesitate at any time to contact any of us.

Andy French
Chairman
Match Officials' Sub-Committee
Email: andylfrench@btinternet.com
Mobile No. 07841 538976

Brian Chapman
Referees' Officer
Email: bchapman074@gmail.com
Mobile No. 07984 298060

John Tythcott
Referees' Appointments Secretary
Email: johntythcott@hotmail.com
Mobile No. 07966 534545

Heather Trevers
Referees' Administration Officer
Email: heather.trevers@btinternet.com
Home No. 01206 845176

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section		Page
1	Introduction	4
2	Order of Precedence	4
3	The ‘Four Day’ Rule	5
4	Personal Details	5
5	Communications	5
	5.1 Electronic	5
	5.2 Communication by Telephone	6
	5.3 Communicating with Clubs	6
6	Closed Dates	6
7	The Appointment Process	7
8	Acknowledging Appointments	7
9	Relinquishing an Appointment	7
10	Team Sheets	8
11	Match Reports	8
12	Misconduct Reports	9
13	Travel Arrangements	9
14	Postponement of Matches	10
15	Preparation on Match Days	11
16	Dress Code	12
17	Travelling to the Ground	12
18	Arriving at the Ground	12
19	Reporting of Late Arrival	12
20	Non-appearance of a Match Official	13
21	Team Colours	13
22	Guests at Thurlow Nunn League Matches	13
23	The Dressing Room	14
24	Injury or Illness during a Match	14
25	Warming Up and Warming Down	14
26	Post-Match Hospitality	15
27	Post-Match Requirements	15
28	Performance Measurement	15
	28.1 Referees – Club Marking Process	15
	28.2 Assistant Referees	16
29	Merit Tables	17
30	Performance Warning Letters	18
31	Annual Review of Performance	18
32	Observers	18
33	Match fees	18
34	League Documents	19

1. Introduction

This Manual of Guidance is designed to assist Match Officials who officiate on the Thurlow Nunn Eastern Counties League Premier and First Divisions.

It is not a definitive document but aims to provide advice and guidance on issues that Match Officials may encounter at this level of football. If, after consulting this document, you have still not been able to find the solution to your problem you are strongly urged to contact the officers of the League.

2. Order of Precedence

The Football Association **Regulations for the Registration and Control of Referees** sets an "Order of Precedence" of appointments for Referees and Assistant Referees, which is as follows:

(1) The FA Challenge Cup Competition and The FA Women's Challenge Cup Competition (Fourth Round Proper onwards)
(2) The Premier League
(3) EFL
(4) FAWSL and The FA Women's League Cup
(5) The FA Challenge Trophy Competition
(6) The FA Challenge Vase Competition
(7) Affiliated Association County Cup Competitions *
(8) Step 1 List and The FA Women's Championship
(9) Step 3 List
(10) The FA Youth, FA County Youth Challenge Cup Com-petitions and The FA Women's Challenge Cup (prior to Fourth Round Proper)
(11) Step 3/4 Leagues, the Women's National League and Cup (Tier 3/4), Inter League Cup and FA Sunday Cup
(12) Step 5/6 Leagues (including selected Step 7 divisions)
(13) Senior County Leagues (men's game) and Regional leagues (tier 5/6) (women's game)
(14) Intermediate County Leagues
(15) County Junior Leagues (men's and women's)
(16) All other Competitions, including Youth Competitions

* Affiliated Association appointments only take precedence over National League System, The FA Youth and FA County Youth Challenge Cup Competitions appointments if the appointment is in the Affiliated Association's nominated Senior Cup Competition or in the Semi-Final and/or Final of any other Affiliated Association Competition whether the appointment is as a Referee or an Assistant Referee.

Fourth Officials, where appointed, do not form part of the Order of Precedence and usually do not take precedence over an active appointment.

"Standby/Reserve Officials" may be appointed to other competitions but do not form part of the Order of Precedence and are not to be accepted by Referees in preference to an active appointment.

3. The "Four Day Rule"

Where release from an appointment is required to enable a Referee to take a more senior appointment, at least four days' notice must be given to the relevant County Football Association or Competition by the Association or Competition requesting the release.

Once the Football Association or County Football Association has appointed a Match Official, if subsequently the match is postponed, abandoned or results in a draw and the re-arranged fixture is then scheduled to take place less than four complete days from the date of the original match, the Football Association or County Football Association appointment will take priority.

4. Personal Details

Your personal details will be held by the League on a computer system. The Referees' Administration Officer is responsible for holding and maintaining this information. If any of your personal details change, even if it is a temporary change, you are required to inform the Referees' Administration Officer immediately that change is known. This must be carried out in writing via email. This is particularly important in respect of address or contact telephone number changes, as well as new e-mail addresses.

5. Communication

5.1 Electronic

The League conducts most of its business by email. However, there are some words of caution in respect of the use of e-mails.

- Only use an e-mail address that you have constant access to.
- Do not provide an address which emanates from an occasional visit to an Internet Café.
- Ensure that you type the address correctly before sending the message.
- If your e-mail account has an auto-acknowledge facility ensure this is activated to receive an acknowledgement from the recipient. If you have not received an acknowledgement within 48 hours either re-send the transmission or, if urgent, seek some other means of communication.
- Similarly, if your e-mail requires a response, follow it up if a response is not received within 48 hours.
- If you ever suspect that a virus has corrupted your computer, cease sending e-mails until you can guarantee the integrity of your equipment.
- Do not use e-mail addresses that give the impression that you have a cavalier or flippant attitude to your role of referee (e.g. redcardrichards@aol.com is not acceptable). Remember, Club Secretaries see these e-mail addresses.
- The League will not accept the sending of inappropriate e-mails to any of its addresses.

5.2 Communicating by Telephone

Communication by telephone should be kept to an absolute minimum. The telephone should only be used in an emergency and as a last resort (please see Section 10).

If you leave an answer phone message, ensure that you apply the basic ABC principles of communication:

A Accurate B Brief C Clear

Under no circumstances will mobile telephone message texting services be an acceptable form of communication with the League.

5.3 Communicating with Clubs

Clubs will communicate with you to provide you with confirmation of appointments. This will normally be conducted via e-mail as the Club will be required to provide you with details of the location of their ground. Once a Club has notified you of a fixture you must immediately acknowledge with the Club that you have received this information.

The home Club shall advise the Match Officials of the date and time of kick-off of each match, to be received at least five days prior to the match and the Match Officials must acknowledge receipt to be received at least three days before the match.

If you receive notification from a Club about a fixture that you were initially appointed to but have been subsequently removed from or relinquished, you must immediately inform the Club who notified you and the Referees' Appointment Secretary. This is critical to ensure that the fixture does not remain uncovered.

You are strongly advised to keep a record of your communications with individual Clubs, including dates, times and names of persons you conversed with.

6. Closed Dates

At this level of football, the League operates a "closed dates" system. Fundamentally this means that you are available to officiate on a football appointment unless you make yourself unavailable by "closing" the date on MOAS.

Dates may be closed for personal reasons or for the acceptance of other football appointments – **but only those defined within the Order of Precedence**. Do not attempt to close dates for other football appointments outside the Order of Precedence as the Referees' Appointment Secretary will not accept them. In addition, do not attempt to disguise such appointments as other personal closed dates. This is unacceptable.

There are various times during the year that you will be required to close dates:

On Receipt of the Monthly Fixtures

You should close dates for the following month at the time you acknowledge your monthly appointments. This information should be entered on MOAS.

Ad-hoc Dates

Ad-hoc dates, including additional personal dates and football appointments outside those allocated in the monthly fixture list, should be closed in MOAS and must include the reason for closing the date, i.e. business, personal, injury or football.

7. The Appointment Process

The Thurlow Nunn Eastern Counties League starts with a complete season's fixture list prior to the commencement of the season. There will naturally be a number of amendments to these programmes which will be made as the season progresses.

Referee appointments will be completed on a monthly basis after those made by the FA Premier League, the Football League, the Panel Leagues' and the Contributory Leagues' competitions. Although our appointments will be sent to these competitions this does not negate responsibility for individual referees to notify these competitions of their Thurlow Nunn Eastern Counties League appointments.

Once the Referees' Appointment Secretary has completed all the agreed appointments for the coming month they will be emailed to the Clubs and Match Officials via Full-Time. They will also appear on MOAS.

The Match Officials have a responsibility to notify dates to their County Football Association for all Thurlow Nunn Eastern Counties League appointments.

8. Acknowledging Appointments

You are required to acknowledge monthly appointments as soon as possible on the MOAS system.

9. Relinquishing an Appointment

There will only be three occasions when you relinquish an Thurlow Nunn Eastern Counties League appointment:

- To accept another football appointment with higher priority within the Order of Precedence
- For personal or business reasons
- Due to injury or illness

If you receive a football appointment that takes precedence over a League appointment you must immediately communicate this fact to the Referees' Appointment Secretary and request permission for your release. You must ensure that you receive acknowledgement of that request and confirmation of your agreed release.

It is your responsibility to honour any League appointment. However, it is accepted that there may be occasions, due to personal or business reasons, when you will be unable to fulfil an appointment. The release from an appointment under these circumstances will only be accepted for genuine and valid reasons. In such a case you must immediately contact the Referees' Appointment Secretary.

If unfortunately you become ill or are injured you must contact the Referees' Appointment Secretary immediately if it is likely that the illness or injury will prevent you from fulfilling a League appointment. When contacting the Referees' Appointment Secretary be prepared to provide him with an estimated date of resumption of duties. The Thurlow Nunn Eastern Counties League, in certain situations, may require you to provide authenticated documentary medical evidence of your injury or illness.

Once you have been released from an appointment it is your responsibility to personally contact all the other Match Officials on that fixture and inform them that you are no longer assigned to that game. In addition, it is your responsibility to contact the home Club Secretary and inform them that you have been released from that appointment and will not be fulfilling it. You should advise the Secretary that he should contact the Referees' Appointment Secretary to confirm the details of the replacement Match Official.

The League will maintain a list of withdrawals from appointments and may review the position of any Official on the list should a pattern of unsubstantiated withdrawal develop.

If a Match Official has closed a date but then it becomes available, they should advise the Referees' Appointment Secretary immediately that they are now available for appointments.

If for any reason you have to call off within 24 hours of the kick off you must telephone the Referee Appointments' Secretary and not rely on emails.

10. Team Sheets

The Match Officials of Thurlow Nunn Eastern Counties League matches will be required to take part in the exchange of paper team sheets with representatives of both Clubs 45 minutes prior to the commencement of the game in accordance with the League's Rules.

All Match Officials should make themselves conversant with the completion of the forms. The Referee is responsible for ensuring that he keeps a copy of the Team Sheets in case there are any queries in the future by the League or the League. In addition copies of both Team Sheets should be emailed to the Referees' Administration Officer as soon as possible after the game.

11. Match Reports

At the conclusion of every Thurlow Nunn Eastern Counties League game the Referee will be required to complete an electronic Match Report, which has the facility to document cautions, players sent to the Sin Bin, and sending offs for both teams. It also has a facility for the Referee to record any breaches of League rules or directives for that particular game. The purpose of the Match Report is to ensure that the Clubs have the correct information regarding disciplinary action taken against players. In addition, it facilitates the reporting of League Rule breaches to the League. This Report must be submitted via the relevant link after **every** game, regardless of whether there is any misconduct to report. All breaches of rules and

directives must be recorded in order that charges can be raised. In addition the Referee should enter their marks for the Assistant Referees.

The Match Report should be completed within the following timescales:

- For games played on a Saturday, forms should be completed by noon the following day
- For games played midweek, forms should be sent by noon the following day

12. Misconduct Reports

Match Officials should be aware that misconduct reports for matches played in this League need to be entered in the Referees' Portal for reporting discipline. You can see how to do this on the following link:

Referee Portal | Reporting Discipline - YouTube

Assistant Referees are reminded that in the case of a sending off offence they must submit a misconduct report to the appropriate authority in the same manner

13. Travel Arrangements

Every effort must be made to keep travelling expenses to a minimum and Match Officials have a part to play in that quest. The League operates a maximum distance that may be claimed by match officials, without the prior approval of the League. The total mileage that may be claimed by all three officials is 200 miles. Anything over this requires the prior agreement of the Referees' Appointment Secretary before travelling. (This may have changed and needs to be confirmed)

When travelling by private car you must claim for the journey, **calculating the mileage by the shortest route from home to ground**. It is appreciated that, despite this instruction, you may still use another route which, although providing a quicker journey, is not necessarily the shortest. With the modern development of orbital motorway routes, especially around large conurbations, it is often easier to circumvent these areas rather than travel through them. That is your choice but even in these cases it is imperative that the shortest journey is claimed.

It is a requirement that "joint travelling" will take place unless otherwise agreed with the Referees' Appointment Secretary prior to travelling to the game. If you wish to travel on your own this has to be at your own expense.

You should be aware that joint travelling arrangements are not always designed on a "pick up on the way" basis. There may be occasions where all three Officials are **expected** to meet at a mutually agreed point and then all travel together. In these cases, each individual Official is entitled to claim for the short journey to the meeting point.

When making arrangements for joint travel every Match Official has an individual responsibility to ensure that the arrangements are made in good time ahead of the match day. It is not acceptable to leave the making of arrangements until the day before the game. If, when making arrangements, it transpires that there has been a

replacement to any of the Officials the remaining Match Official(s) must contact the Referees' Appointment Secretary to establish the replacement.

If a Match Official travels to a game by public transport that Official may claim the appropriate second-class rail fare or any costs incurred by using a bus or taxi. However, if a taxi trip is to be undertaken prior agreement must be sought from the Referees' Appointment Secretary.

Prior to the commencement of the season each Official will be issued with an expenses form to be used for claiming expenses for each game. A completed expenses form must be submitted via email to the Home Club Secretary prior to the match. In all cases of public transport being used a receipt must be requested and, where provided, must be retained and shown to the club if asked for. These forms will be retained by individual Clubs and the League reserves the right to inspect them from time-to-time to check the claims submitted by Match Officials.

14. Postponement of Matches

During inclement weather a Match Official may need to inspect a field of play to determine its suitability for play. If you are the match Referee and are asked to do this but are unable to do this at the time or live too far away, an alternative Referee may do this on your behalf but they must be a Level 4 Referee or above.

If you are the Referee of a game, it may be advisable during periods of inclement weather to be proactive and contact clubs to discuss the state of the pitch, especially if you will not be available to take calls in the period leading up to the game, e.g. at work.

Under such circumstances the earliest the decision can be made is the day prior to the scheduled date of the game whilst the latest is one hour prior to the time the visiting team are scheduled to commence their journey.

In all other circumstances a referee should be called in to make a decision in the following order of availability:

1. The match referee (subject to time and travelling distance).
2. Another more local referee who must not be connected with either club. Prior to reaching his decision the referee who is making the inspection should consider the following:
    i) Consultation on the telephone with the match referee prior to the inspection.
    ii) Consultation on the telephone with the match referee after the inspection to mutually agree on a decision prior to notifying the home club.
    iii) The existing condition of the playing surface in conjunction with the prevailing weather conditions as previously confirmed with the local weather authority.
    iv) The views of the home club groundsman in terms of local knowledge and draining capabilities.
    v) The manpower available to the home club to carruy out any necessary work to make the ground playable.

vi) The time the visiting club are due to commence their journey.

vii) Whether or not the ground is dangerous, e.g. frost is dangerous but water is not.

viii) Whether or not conditions are, or could, turn farcical, e.g. excessive water on the pitch combined with a forecast of continued rain.

ix) In the event of fog check with the local weather authority re possible clearance, also bearing in mind the visitors' travel arrangements if the fog is known to be widespread.

If a decision is still in the balance after considering the above then also consider the time, distance and cost of the visiting team's travel.

If, after consultation with the match referee, the ground has been declared fit and the clubs instructed to travel, then only in exceptional circumstances should the match referee reverse this decision.

If an early inspection has not been carried out and the match referee arrives at the ground to find the playing conditions in doubt due to an unexpected deterioration in the weather, he should first consider all of the above points before committing himself to a decision, e.g. whether or not either or both of the teams wish to play.

If fog is the problem, then the match referee should also consider whether or not the paying spectator will be able to view the whole of the game. Please consult with the two clubs under such circumstances.

Remember – there are far less problems with a postponed game if the visitors have not travelled.

Payment of Referee – if a local referee is called in to inspect a pitch, he will not be paid a fee, although travelling expenses will be paid when actually incurred.

Should the match referee attend to inspect the pitch half the fee and travelling expenses will be paid if the game is postponed. If the game is played the normal fee and expenses shall be paid, although additional travelling expenses should be paid to the referee if incurred.

Notification of postponement – upon reaching a decision to postpone the game the home club must immediately inform the following:

i) The League Secretary, Fixtures Secretary and Referees' Administration Officer

ii) Away team

iii) Match officials

15. Preparation on Match Day

It is appreciated that at this level of football many Match Officials will have full-time occupations and that, on occasions, it may not be possible not to be working on the day of a match, especially midweek games. However, to ensure the most professional preparation possible Match Officials should attempt to minimise the disruption to their pre-match planning.

16. Dress Code

In order to present a professional image to Clubs a certain standard of dress is expected of Match Officials at this level. All Match Officials will wear either shirt and tie (trousers or skirt for female officials) or smart casual, e.g. polo shirt and tracksuit. Irrespective of which dress code is used it is important that all three match officials arrive dressed in the same manner.

Match Officials must wear uniforms comprising plain black shirts with white collars and black shorts. Socks must be black with a white top. Alternatively, a uniform comprising a black shirt with black collar and black shorts may be worn, but in this case socks must be all black with no coloured tops.

A Match Official's tie for the Thurlow Nunn Eastern Counties League is available for purchase from the Referees' Administration Officer.

17. Travelling to the Ground

All Match Officials should ensure that they have allowed sufficient time to travel to the ground.

As the amount of traffic on the roads increases the possibility of delay also increases. Prior to travelling Match Officials should make every effort to identify delays caused by roadworks or incidents. These can be found on the Internet or Sat Nav where long term roadworks or other reasons for delay are often documented. In winter months it would also be advisable to check the weather forecast in case of inclement weather that would affect driving conditions.

It is inevitable that on occasions Match Officials will be delayed travelling to grounds. It would be wise to be in possession of a mobile telephone in case of emergencies. You should always have to hand the contact telephone numbers of the other Match Officials (if travelling alone), the Home Club Secretary, the ground you are travelling to and the Officers of the League. If you are delayed in any way and anticipate arriving late, ensure that your match colleagues and the Home Club Secretary are apprised of your progress.

18. Arriving at the Ground

Upon arrival at the ground, it is your responsibility to seek out and confirm your arrival with the Home Club Secretary or person responsible for liaising with the Match Officials.

19. Reporting of Late Arrival

On all League matches you must arrive at least one hour prior to the scheduled kick off time. If an Assistant Referee arrives later than the stipulated time he must submit, in writing, a report to the Referees' Appointment Secretary explaining the reason for his late arrival and the time of arrival. In addition, the match Referee must also report this fact to the League. Where a Referee arrives late for a match, he must provide a written report to the League explaining the circumstances. This report must be made immediately after the match.

20. Non-Appearance of a Match Official

The Leagues covered by the Thurlow Nunn Eastern Counties League have agreed with all their Clubs that in the event of a non-appearance of a Match Official both Clubs **MUST** agree to a replacement Official. This ensures that a match will go ahead as scheduled despite the non-appearance of a Match Official.

If a Match Official fails to arrive at a ground at the stipulated time (at least one hour prior to the scheduled kick off) the other Officials at the ground should attempt to make contact with the missing Official, firstly by mobile telephone and then by telephone to the home address. If no contact is made by making these enquiries the Officials at the ground should then contact the Home Club Secretary and confirm that the missing Official has (a) been contacted by the Home Club and (b) whether he has acknowledged that contact.

If both (a) and (b) are affirmative the Officials present should then ring the Referees' Appointment Secretary and inform him of the situation. The Referees' Appointment Secretary will attempt to arrange a replacement Referee or Assistant Referee, dependent on the status of the missing Official. Contact with the Referees' Appointment Secretary should be carried out at the earliest opportunity to give the maximum opportunity to identify a replacement.

If the missing Official is a Referee and the only replacement that can be arranged is an Assistant Referee then the senior Assistant Referee for that match will take the place of the Referee. "Seniority" for these purposes will be determined by the length of service as a Level 5 Referee, then length of service as a Level 6 or 7 Referee and finally by total length of service as a Referee.

If the Appointments' Officer can provide no replacement the Home Club should be asked to make enquiries, possibly by a crowd announcement, to establish a suitable replacement. When a suitable replacement is found he should be afforded the role and responsibility of an Assistant Referee throughout the time he is carrying out that function. The Home Club may choose to offer financial recompense to such a replacement at their discretion.

After the game the match Referee should submit a report to the Referees' Appointment Secretary, outlining the details. If a person other than an Thurlow Nunn Eastern Counties League Match Official acted as an Assistant Referee the report should contain the name and address of the individual.

21. Team Colours

You should make yourself aware of any potential clash of team colours at the earliest opportunity. Match Officials are reminded that they do not have the authority to deviate from the black uniform. Law requires the Goalkeeper to wear colours that distinguish him from the other players and the Referee and Assistant Referees.

22. Guests at Thurlow Nunn Eastern Counties League Matches

The Thurlow Nunn Eastern Counties League does not discourage the taking of guests to League matches. However, there are certain stipulations that Match Officials must take into consideration if they decide to take guests to a game:

- There should be no assumption that guests of Match Officials will receive unpaid entry into a ground, or any preferential treatment in respect of hospitality.
- Any such concession must be at the instigation of the Club.
- Once at the ground the Match Official's primary responsibility is to prepare for the match and they should at that point part company with their guests.
- Under no circumstances should guests accompany Match Officials onto the field of play.
- Guests should never be taken to a League game wearing anything that indicates allegiance to one of the participating Clubs.
- No unaccompanied children should be taken to League matches.

23. The Dressing Room

The overall control and management of the dressing room is the remit of the match Referee, and the other Officials should take their lead from the Referee.

Security of the dressing room whilst it is unoccupied is the responsibility of the Home Club and they must ensure it is locked and secure when the Officials are not present in it. In the event of anything being stolen from the dressing room or items being damaged within it the Police need to be informed immediately and the matter reported to the Home Club Secretary and the League. It is advised that you should not take anything of value to a match. If, for whatever reason, you have taken items of value with you to a match you are strongly advised not to take them into the dressing room.

24. Injury or Illness during the Match

If the match Referee is injured or taken ill during the game then the senior Assistant Referee for that match will take the place of the Referee. "Seniority" for these purposes will be determined by the length of service as a Level 5 Referee, then length of service as a Level 6 or 7 Referee, and finally by total length of service as a Referee. If an Assistant Referee is injured or is taken ill during the game, both Clubs **must** agree on a replacement and the Match Officials should assist in every way in finding a replacement.

After the game the match Referee should submit a report to the Referees' Appointment Secretary, outlining the details. If a person other than an Thurlow Nunn Eastern Counties League Match Official acted as an Assistant Referee, the report should contain his name and address.

25. Warming Up and Warming Down

The Football Association encourages Match Officials to warm up before and warm down after a match.

Match Officials should be cognisant of their other responsibilities when arranging warm up and warm down times, such as the exchange of team sheets.

General Warm-Up Rules

- Location: Substitutes must remain in the technical area unless they are actively warming up, which should typically take place in the designated warm-up area (often off the field near the touchline or assistant referee, depending on venue layout).
- Number of Players: There is a limit of three substitutes warming up at this level.
- Referee Discretion: The referee or fourth official can reduce the number of warming-up substitutes or direct them to move if their actions interfere with the match officials or play.
- Conduct: Substitutes warming up remain under the authority of the referee and can receive disciplinary action (including yellow or red cards) for unsporting behaviour or offensive gestures.

When arranging a warm down at the end of a match the Referee must take note of any issue during the match which might adversely affect the warm down and should make every effort to minimise the possibility of confrontation. This may include taking the decision not to participate in a structured warm down.

26. Post-Match Hospitality

At this level of football, the clubs have provision in their rules to cater for some form of post-match hospitality. This may vary from the provision of refreshments after the game to a formal invitation to attend the Home Club's boardroom/guest room.

If Match Officials are invited to join Club officials for post-match hospitality, they must be aware of the potential for confrontation if they become involved in discussion regarding contentious incidents from the match. Acceptance of any invitation must be by agreement. Match Officials are not expected to accept or join club officials in hospitality on an individual basis. If you know that you will be unable to stay for hospitality it is essential that you advise the club as soon as possible to avoid them catering for you.

27. Post-Match Requirements

As well as completing your Referee's Match Report, referees are required to complete the post-match confirmation on MOAS. This should be completed as soon as possible as clubs cannot enter the information which results in the referee's marks until this has been completed.

28. Performance Measurement

28.1 Referees – Club Marking Process

The Referee's performance will be measured in every Thurlow Nunn Eastern Counties League match. Commencing in season 2022-2023 clubs no longer allocate a specific mark for the referee's performance. Each club will indicate on a 10-point scale between Very Poor and Very Good various competencies as shown in the following diagram. The six competencies are weighted and comments will be required from the club for a marking of Very Poor or Very Good. In all cases the

indications given by the club will translate into a mark and will always be in the range of 50 to 90.

Clubs will enter this information via MOAS, and Merit Tables will automatically be generated. Each individual Referee can see their position on the Merit Table which updates automatically, with a small time delay. They will also be able to see their club marks but currently there appears to be a six-week delay before they appear.

	Very Poor		Poor		Expected		Good		Very Good	Weighting
Judgement of Major Decisions										2
General Decision Making										2
Match Control										2
Communication										1.5
Fitness										1.5
Player Management										1

28.2 Assistant Referees

The Referee will mark Assistant Referees on every League match. The mark will be out of 100 and will be recorded on the Referee's Match Report. The range of marks will be as follows:

Mark	Comment
81-100	This standard of performance will reflect a positive pre- and post-match attitude. Attention to the referee's team briefing and appropriate involvement in any post-match discussion relating to the performance conducted by the referee or, where appointed, the observer. Fully alert, appropriate for all incidents and eventualities. Full and confident performance of the duties expected, providing a high level of support, judging the referee's involvement accurately and providing assistance accordingly. Clear, accurate and well- timed signals with a positive response to the referee's signals and gestures. A high level in the accuracy of offside judgements, both active and passive, with clear evaluation of all factors taken. Appropriate and confident interaction with players, control of substitutes and, where appropriate, effective sensible management of the occupants of the technical area. Involvement in creating an environment of fair play and adding real value to the overall control of the game.
80	A performance which reflects a positive pre- and post-match attitude. Attention to the referee's team briefing and appropriate involvement in any post-match discussion relating to the performance conducted by the referee or, where appointed, the observer. Alert for incidents and eventualities. Confident performance of the duties expected, providing support, judging the referee's involvement and providing

	assistance accordingly. Clear, accurate and well-timed signalling, responding to the referee's signals and gestures. Evaluation of all factors in respect of offside judgements, both active and passive, before offering accurate advice. Interaction with players when appropriate. Effective management of the occupants of the technical area and control of substitutes. This is the minimum standard expected of assistant referees operating on the Thurlow Nunn Eastern Counties League.
61-79	A performance which reflects a shortcoming in one or more of the minimum expected standards outlined above. This may be reflected by the mark range depending upon the number of areas for consideration. Referees should bring to the attention of assistants any shortcomings in their performance that drop below the minimum standard at the post match debrief.

If a Referee awards a mark of 60 or below in respect of an Assistant Referee's performance, he must submit a written report to the appropriate League. All marks awarded to Assistant Referees by Referees and Observers will constitute the compilation of Merit Tables. At the start of the playing season an award will be made to the Assistant Referee who comes top of the previous season's Merit Tables.

29. Merit Tables

It is possible for Level 4 Referees to see their current Merit Table position via MOAS with respect to both club marks and observer marks at any time.

Removal from the Supply League Referees' List (Level 4) at the end of the season will be based on the final Merit Table positions of active Level 4 Referees on each respective Supply League for the period July 2025 – 31st May 2026 for season 2025-2026, according to the following criteria:

You will be removed from the Supply League Referees' list if, for the League/Supply League(s) on which you have refereed, you are:

- In the bottom 40% of the Observer Merit Table AND the bottom 20% of the Club Merit Table or
- In the bottom 20% of the Observer Merit Table AND the bottom 40% of the Club Merit Table or
- In the bottom 20% of the Observer Merit Table in any two successive seasons or in any two out of three seasons.

Regardless of Merit Table positions, the number of games officiated during the marking season, availability, fitness and administration will be amongst the other factors that may be taken into consideration when determining if a referee is removed.

First year Supply League Referees are exempt from the Merit Table retention criteria (except in exceptional circumstances) but not from other criteria such as availability, administration and fitness. Removal from the Supply League Referees' List will also result in removal from the Contributory League Assistant Referees' List.

30. Performance Warning Letters

The Thurlow Nunn Eastern Counties League will regularly review the current Merit Table positions for both Referees and Assistant Referees. If it is identified that a Referee or Assistant Referee is under-performing the Official may receive a performance warning letter from the League. Once an Official receives such a letter, he or she will be expected to show a substantial improvement during the remainder of the season.

31. Annual Review of Performance

At the end of every marking season the current Merit Table position will be reviewed for all Referees on the League's list.

With respect to Assistant Referees, Merit Tables for Assistant Referees will be prepared at various times during the season and presented to the Assistant Referee's appropriate County Football Association. Assistant Referees are usually given their Observers' and Referees' marks together with the relevant average marks at the end of the season.

A Referee removed from the League's List of Referees as a result of an annual review may be offered a place as an Assistant Referee on the List for the following season. This offer would be subject to the Official fulfilling the criteria laid down by his County Football Association. If an Assistant Referee is removed from the League's List of Assistant Referees as a result of an annual review, he may only return to that List in future seasons providing the nomination criteria is satisfied, upon recommendation by his County Football Association and acceptance by the League.

32. Observers

The management of observations is the responsibility of The FA and Observers are appointed as appropriate.

The referees should ensure that any appointed Observer who has made contact with them is advised of any changes to the game, e.g. venue, kick off time, postponement, etc.

Most Observers do like to be present to hear the pre-match instructions that Referees give their Assistants.

At the end of the game the Observer will visit the Match Officials' dressing room and make contact with the Referee and carry out a verbal debrief.

Reports for Referees and Assistant Referees are uploaded onto MOAS. Each individual Referee can see their position on the Observer Merit Table which updates automatically, with a small time delay.

33. Match Fees

For season 2026-2027 the following match fees will apply:

Thurlow Nunn Eastern Counties Premier League, First Division North, First Division South, and all League Cups.

Referee £60.00, Assistant Referee £50, travel 45p per mile.

In most instances match fees will be paid by BACS transfer within 48 hours of the conclusion of the game. However, if a match official prefers to be paid by cash on the day of the game, they must advise the club by return when acknowledging receipt of the match details sent to them by the club and give the club at least five days' notice.

If congestion charges, parking fees or low emission charges are incurred then they can be claimed in addition to travel expenses and match fees.

34. League Documents

All match officials should make themselves aware of the various league documents which include:

- Standardised Rules
- Cup Competition Rules
- Law Changes
- Mental Health Awareness in Sport

These can be found at https://thurlownunnleague.com.