



THE REFEREE INTERVIEW

"It felt like a natural progression for me to take up the whistle"

Featuring:

John Dermody

Club: Lough Lene Gaels

County: Westmeath

Started Refeing: 2014

Profession: AVP with J.P. Morgan Bank (Ireland) plc.



What ignited your interest in refereeing?

When I finished playing, I coached underage Camogie & hurling with the club and county development squads. I would have had a great admiration for a lot of top quality Westmeath GAA referees such as Paddy Collins, Barry Kelly, Jimmy Weldon and James McGrath.

I had a general interest in refereeing and the rules of both GAA and Camogie. When I received a call from my club colleague Sheila Carroll asking if I had an interest in representing the club on the Westmeath referees panel it felt like a natural progression for me to take up the whistle.

What is the most enjoyable part about refereeing?

There is so much I find enjoyable about taking up the whistle. I love the social side of it, whether it be the meetings or fitness tests with the other referees, or the fun and laughter travelling to games with my incredibly reliable team of umpires.

However, in a perverse way, the part I enjoy the most would probably be the pressure of match day. The games involve game management, decision making, and a huge amount of teamwork with my team of goal umpires and line umpires etc.

It throws up its fair share of challenges, but as the saying goes, if it was easy, everyone would be doing it.

What would you regard as your most notable/favorite refereeing moment?

To referee an All Ireland Final in Croke Park is the pinnacle for a referee and I have been lucky enough to referee two. I cannot separate the 2018 All-Ireland Intermediate & 2020 All Ireland Senior Club finals in Croke Park as my favourite refereeing moments.

What advice do you have for up and coming referees or those who want to get into officiating?

Be as dedicated as you can be with regards to knowing the rules and maintaining your fitness.

For you, what is the least enjoyable part about refereeing?

For me, I guess it would be the abuse and shouting from the stands that my family who may be attending would hear. I never really hear anything when in the middle of a game for the most part, but I do not like the fact that my family would have to hear some of that side of things.



Referee John Dermody does the coin toss with the captains ahead of the 2019 League Semi-Final clash between Cork v Kilkenny

If you could change one thing about the game what would it be?

I think the game is in a good place. I think the 2019 championship is rightly regarded as one of the best and most exciting championships in a number of years. Maybe if I would change anything, it would be more along the lines of the reach of the game, in terms of numbers of attendances, players, referees/lines etc.

To be fair, the 20x20 campaign has been huge in increasing the profile of the game and the players. It would be great to have the numbers of referees increase also, as the more referees at national level, the better. That, and an All-Ireland senior title for Westmeath, of course.

What is one rule that non referees don't understand?

I think it would be the deliberate shoulder rule. I'm not sure if it is that non referees do not understand it or just do not like the rule.

A cheeky one but how do you rate your eyesight?

Scarily good, and I have the tests to prove it!!!!



Referee John Dermody takes charge of the AIB All-Ireland Senior Club Championship Final, March 1st, 2020