

**Referees Commission Member**  
**Vice-Chair Domestic Referee Development**  
**RC Candidate: Patrick Webster**

This past season has certainly seen some of the most challenging times for our sport and our country. We have learned to do more with less and been reminded that no matter what great plans we make, there are circumstances so far out of our control that we find ourselves at the mercy of things much bigger than us. It is my hope this finds each of you healthy and safe in these unprecedented in my life-times, and those in need are receiving the support they require.

I am running for the position of the Referees Commission Vice-Chair for Domestic Referee Development again. I believe we have made great strides over the past 3 seasons regarding referee development in the US, but there is still so much more we can do, and these most recent circumstances have illustrated the flexibility with which we need to do them. The number of certified referee instructors has been expanded to aid in the need of the regions and divisions requiring additional service. The number certified referee observers have been expanded to facilitate the continued development on the local and regional level. The launch of the new national referee database along with the tools for electronic submission of evaluations on both local and regional levels has significantly improved trackability of referee usage and development.

Looking forward I see the role of the Referee's Commission and that of Domestic Referee Development Committee, expanding into the web-based information and education space. The one clear evolution of our sport brought on by the current state of the world, is that we need to support our sport through remote tools where appropriate and necessary. There has been a piloting of live on-line certification seminars to help meet the needs of divisions and regions while complying with current social distancing guidelines. I look forward to taking the learnings from these events and building on a series of tools to aid the recruitment and development of referees across the country.

With the aid of some of the premier coaches, athletes and referees in our sport, I am planning on developing a series of instructional courses to be piloted during the 2020-2021 season as part of a beginning referee curriculum. I strongly believe coaching and fencing is still very regionalized at the lower levels, and thereby the referee development needs to be also regionalized when creating new referees and explaining applications of rules within the context of the actions as they are being executed in their divisions/regions. Therefore, not all contents of a referee seminar can be put into a webinar. I look forward to working with representatives from all areas to roll out materials that fit the needs for all.

My goal as the chair of the Domestic Referee Development Committee (DRDC), is to make sure there is appropriate representation from all regions with experience in all aspects of the sport of fencing. It is with this strong diagonal slice of coaches, athletes and referees that this team can bring forward the tools and perspectives necessary to continue building the strongest referee corps our fencers deserve.

I look forward to serving you,

Patrick Webster

Current Vice-Chair Domestic Referee Development