

When I qualified as a referee in 2015, my intention was to officiate younger age groups to gain a different perspective of football- other than playing. I then applied in early 2016 to officiate at the Chelsea and Fulham academies, refereeing every weekend with mentors overseeing and advising on my games. This increased my knowledge and made me a better referee.

With surprise and excitement, I was asked to officiate as an assistant referee Chelsea U23s vs QPR U23s, I never thought that I would be asked to do such a high calibre game at the age of 16 and only in my 3rd year of refereeing.

When I turned up to Chelsea's training ground I felt a little nervous as I didn't want to let anyone down who had put their faith in me. I didn't let this affect my game and tried to do my best in being a linesman for the referee Shaun Farrer. As we started our warm up I had a glance around to see what may be facing us during the game and spotted Ross Barkley which made my excitement increase to another level knowing his ability at football. When the game started I discovered that I was going to have to concentrate a lot harder, as it was played at a fast pace and the first five minutes was a challenge to keep up with the Chelsea back four. The game went on and I began to get to grips with the fast flowing game and locked myself on to the last defender. The biggest thing that I took from the game along with the experience is the advice given from both the referee Shaun Farrer and referee mentors Gordon Harrison and Peter Ashdown.

I would like to say thank you to Surrey FA for developing me as a referee over the past couple of years and asking me to officiate such a game.

Harvey Henley

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