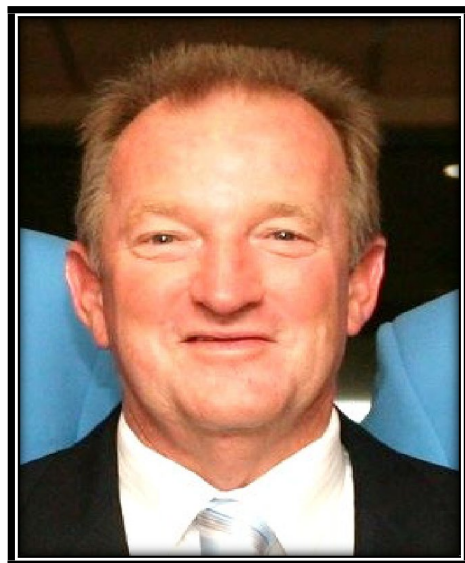


Ian Matthew

Ian Matthew is a legend within the Refereeing fraternity throughout the Touch Football world. From his humble beginnings as a “park” referees to the highest position as a Director, Coach and Educator at the International level.

In the early eighties Ian cut his teeth in the cauldron of the then Vawdon Cup. A inter district competition played at Port Hacking Oval on Wednesday evenings using a full field with eight player a side and the ability to kick on the fifth touch. The tournament was also known as the Metropolitan Cup and Sydney Championships and Ian’s first entrée into representative refereeing came at the Sydney Championships played at Tempe and Heffron Park.



New South Wales Touch under the leadership of Peter Rooney organised and structured a Referees Association in 1977 and introduce a graded referee badge system. After many years proving his worth as a referee Ian was graded in 1985 as an NSW Grade III referee being the seventy third such graded official.

Ian continued to referee in NSW events including the Vawdon Cup, Country Championships, and State Cup culminating in him being invited to officiate at the inaugural World Cup held on the Gold Coast in Queensland in 1988. Prior to the commencement of the event a Test tri-series was held between Australia, New Zealand and Canada with Ian earning five caps from the tests and seven caps at the World Cup, the highlight being refereeing the grand final in the Mens 35 years division between Australia and New Zealand.

Ian’s refereeing efforts bought his to the attention of Barrie Keenhan the then Director of Referees for NSW Touch who appointed him as a Member of the NSW Touch Referees Panel in 1991. Ian was further rewarded that year with appointments to the Australia verses New Zealand test matches in Hamilton New Zealand prior to the World Cup which was played in Auckland where he referred the Mens 35 years Grand Final.

In 1992 Ian took over from Barrie as Director of Referees for NSW Touch a position he has held to the present day. In 1999 after an organisational restructure with NSW Touch the holder of this role was classified as the Technical Director and became a Director on the Board of the NSW Touch Association.

In 1993 he became a member of the then Australian Touch Association (ATA) (now Touch Football Australia – TFA) and remains a member of the National Referees Panel again, to this day.

Ian was awarded Life Membership to Campbelltown Touch Association in 1986, and the following year officiated at the Inaugural Masters World Cup on the Gold Coast. Prior to the World Cup in Sydney in 1999 Ian was appointed Referee's Director for the Federation of International Touch (FIT) and oversaw the selection, appointments, and coaching of referees for that event.

In 2000 when the Olympic Games came to Sydney, Ian was awarded the Australian Sports Medal (ASM) from the Australian Government for his contribution to Touch over many years.

During that year and leading into 2001 he created and presented a Referee Introductory level accreditation course to a Federation of International Touch Member nation as a forerunner of what was to come.



In 2002 he rolled out and presented the Referee Intermediate Accreditation course globally to Federation Member nations. The following year Ian was awarded Life Membership of the New South Wales Touch Association. The World Cup in Kumagaya, Japan in 2003 saw Ian again oversee the selection, appointments, and coaching of referees for that event.

The NSW Blues Awards and Referee Grading Night are an annual event on the NSW Touch calendar where awards are made to honour those who have contributed over the past year to the sport in New South Wales. The NSW Referee of the Year awards had been made since the award ceremony's introduction but in 2006 NSW Touch renamed the award to honour Ian Matthew by awarding the Referee of the Year, the Ian Matthew Medal.

The sixth World Cup was held in Stellenbosch, South Africa in 2007 and Ian took a company of fifty-two referees to officiate at the event. As always, he used his time to improve his compliment by having each referees assessed and coached during the tournament.

In 2010 Ian received a 25 Year Service Award from the NSW Wales Touch Association for his services and dedication to the Referee fraternity in that state. The following years he was awarded Life Membership of Touch Football Australia.

Touch Football Australia wrote regarding his award:

“Among Ian's Touch Football achievements include being the International Director of Referees (1999 to present), International Referees Panel Member (1999 to present), New South Wales Touch Association (NSWTA) Board Member (1999 to present), National Referees Panel Member (1993 to present), NSWTA Referees Director (1992 to present), NSWTA Referees Panel (1991 to present) and NSWTA Technical Director (1999 to present).

Ian became a Life Member of NSWTA in 2002, and in 2006, the NSWTA Referee of the Year award was renamed the 'Ian Matthew Medal'. Ian received a TFA 25 Year Service Award in 2013, and a NSWTA State. He was inducted as a TFA Life Member in 2011.”

Two year later in 2013 Ian received the 25 Year Service Award from Touch Football Australia.

In 2015 he attended the World Cup in Coffs Harbour, Australia again with a compliment of ninety referees to officiate at the event again mentoring and coaching his charges during the tournament. The same happened at the 2018 World Cup in Malaysia and at the 2024 World Cup in Nottingham England he was in charge of a compliment of over two hundred referees and coaching panel members

His efforts in running the international referee arm of the sport saw him awarded the third Life Membership of the Federation of International Touch in 2022. Not to be outdone by the International governing body, the New South Wales Touch Association in the same year named Ian as one of the top three referee over the past fifty years at their Golden Jubilee dinner.

Ian Matthew has been responsible for managing, writing, presenting, assessing and appointment since appointment to the NSW / ATA / FIT Director of Referee role. He has been responsible for the education and training of referees locally, statewide, nationally and on the international stage at World Cups, Youth World Cups, Test Matches and European Championships.

Under his leadership the touch community now has an Advanced Referee Coaching Course and a “Welcome to Refereeing” Course that covers the whole spectrum and is being delivered worldwide.

In recent years this education and training has involved pivoting from a face-to-face learning environment to an online environment. The Touch world is eternally grateful for his involvement in the sport and hopes he continues his amazing work for many years to come.

