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EDITORIAL

A Happy New Year to all our readers! And happy and enjoyable refereeing!

Always interesting (but dangerous) to speculate about what is in store this year for football and referees. Will a national membership scheme really happen and, if it does, will it kill or cure the game? Will we get back into Europe, or will the odd situation persist in which our own politicians contrive to keep us out? Will the Liverpool stranglehold on the first division be broken at last? Will the somewhat higher profile of referees and refereeing, through Alan Robinson, finally lead to really positive action by the FA to deal with assaults? Will the RA push the FA into making a practical element compulsory in the qualifying examination? (RA policy since the successful Reading motion in 1982 and we still haven't got it). I'm quite good at asking the questions - it's up to you to supply the answers!

Prospects back at the ranch look good. The Reading RA already has its second highest ever membership, thanks to our training team and membership officer in particular. Most of our members are active referees; many attend our monthly meetings **and** take an active part. What the officers would always welcome though - and rarely get - is feedback (positive and negative) about the Society and its activities. What more can we do for our members? What can we do better?

If you haven't made it a New Year resolution yet, make it one now. Resolve to improve your Society as well as your refereeing.

Opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Reading RA

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PRESIDENT'S PIECE

Sportsmanship

Have you noticed how many words have changed their meaning over the years? Perhaps the most obvious example in recent times is the word 'gay' which, when I was a young man, meant 'carefree and merry'. A few years ago an outdoor equipment firm called itself 'Survival Aids'. No doubt a different name would be chosen if it were starting today. 'To commute' used to mean 'to exchange' but now it's generally accepted as 'to travel', hence the term 'commuters'.

Another term that seems to have changed its meaning is 'sportsman'. I thought this a couple of years ago when Fatima Whitbread was chosen as Sportsman/woman of the year after her gold medal in the World Cup Games. Two years before she had been beaten by Tessa Sanderson in the Olympics, and she remained sullenly on her seat, neglecting to congratulate her team-mate on her success. As a contrast, the East European athlete whose record she had beaten to take the gold, went up to Fatima after the winning throw and kissed her in congratulations. That lady was my sportsman of the year.

'Sportsman', meaning a person who 'exhibits fairness, generosity, observance of the rules, and good humour when losing', seems to have become so diluted as to be unrecognisable. Why has this happened? Who is to blame? Certainly the authorities must take some of the responsibility. The FA itself committed an enormous blunder when appointing Don Revie as England Manager less than a year after his club had been fined for their disciplinary record. A man who not only condoned his players cheating, but actually taught them how to do it. Other sports have been no better. How could tennis authorities allow that bully and coward John McEnroe to continue to behave with such appalling bad sportsmanship? They were no doubt frightened that spectators would not turn up if he didn't appear. In fact, of course, their cowardice was shown up because his lack of appearance at Wimbledon for other reasons saw no fall in attendance. Even those traditional guardians of sportsmanship, the cricket authorities - 'play up, play up and play the game' - have shown little guts when dealing with bad behaviour. Mike Gatting should not have been sacked for entertaining a young lady in his hotel bedroom. Surely that's something between him and his wife, and as the Bible says: 'Let him who is without sin amongst you cast the first stone'. Mike

Gattling should have been sacked for his shocking example in arguing with the umpire on the Pakistan tour. Let's face it, we've suffered from Asian umpires for many decades without resorting to a finger-wagging confrontation in the middle of a test match.

We as spectators don't always give our support in the right direction. My own involvement in professional snooker a few years ago led me to be involved with Steve Davis, who I found to be hardworking, loyal to his sponsors, as gracious in victory as in defeat. He also has a great sense of fun, and loves other sports, playing cricket and golf when he can. And yet it is Alex Higgins, the self-styled People's Champion who gets the cheers when he appears at a snooker match, despite the fact that he is indisciplined, uncouth and unreliable, as many a promoter will tell you.

When rules were first written for our game of football, it was implicit that no-one would cheat. There was no mention of a referee, as it was understood that players would discipline themselves. How different today when an English international, Viv Anderson, not only admits that he commits 'professional fouls, but actually advocates their use. He is also reputed to have said in his recent book that he sees nothing wrong in deliberately fouling behind the referee's back, and that it was up to the referee to spot it.

The Cambridge Rules of 1863 were drawn up due to a desire for the public schools at the time to play football against one another. When considering the rules to be included from those already in operation at the various schools, two questions only were asked: Is it fair? Is it reasonable?

Since that time it is of course not only sport that has changed, but the world itself, and probably more rapidly in the 30 odd years that I have been refereeing than ever before. We would be silly to think that we can change it for the better single-handedly, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't try. In 1966 I introduced to the Society the Fair Play Award, in an attempt to reward fair play and sportsmanship, and I'm pleased to say that it is still running today. May I therefore make the plea to all members who are refereeing in local football to support it, to return your markings so that at the end of the season, we of this society can show that to us at least the meaning of the word 'Sportsmanship' has not changed.

Dick Sawdon-Smith

UNEXPECTED PRESENT FROM OUR SISTER SOCIETY DOWN UNDER

A couple of years ago a New Zealand referee, Colin Morris, was visiting Reading and came to our Christmas meeting. (He claimed

it was out of friendship, not for the free food and drink). We decided we ought to keep in touch. I've been sending him copies of our magazine and have received material back about refereeing in New Zealand. He even phoned just after 4.0 a.m. one morning to apologize for not having sent me an article. He'd forgotten the time-difference as well.

When Ken Ridden, FA National Training Officer for Referees, was recently down under at the invitation of the New Zealand RA to run training courses, Colin Morris's Society, the Canterbury Referees' Association in Christchurch, entrusted Ken with an engraved commemorative plaque for their sister society. Ken made a special journey to Reading on the evening of our last committee meeting to make the presentation to Chairman Bernie Young, who accepted the plaque on behalf of the members.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

November

Chairman Bernie was not only back but in the chair and in great form. Over 70 members including two women colleagues present. Secretary Derek Reigate reported under correspondence that the national RA is seeking a solution from the FA to the problem for referees of membership card schemes. A note of thanks to the Reading RA from member Graham Sparks who was leaving for Southend-on-Sea. He was to go Monday but would be doing his match on Sunday! Brian Papworth had looked into cases of non-appearance of referees and was chasing one up; Paul Hopes reported that the Sunday League would co-operate fully with the RA to find and deal with the culprits.

The "It happened to me" spot was filled by Martin Shearn. His first picture was - you've guessed - an illegal stud, but he didn't dwell on it. The real incidents were both about offside. A clutch of defenders just outside the penalty box and an attacker just beyond/behind them (easier to visualize with the illustration Martin provided). Another attacker shoots from 30 yards past the bunch and the ball is in the net. Do you allow the goal or give offside? And he asked us to vote. Split down the middle. In the ensuing (heated) debate it became clear that some members (not necessarily the newest) don't know Law 11, and also that interpretations varied alarmingly. A second example was of the player who stands outside the penalty area at a penalty kick but in front of the ball. Is he to be given offside? For each incident Martin asked us to say what we would do if the ball rebounded to the player in the offside position - would we still give the same decision? And if not, why not? John Lambden pointed out the importance of other details - movement, the way the players were facing etc. To be concluded next month!

After the break the Chairman introduced Maurice Evans, former Manager of Reading FC and Oxford United, now scout. Maurice started by saying he tries to be honest and had to admit he was no lover of referees, though he accepts we have a difficult job. He has tried it. He loves football but claimed not to have been successful in any of his careers.

Football has changed drastically and is quicker, but he believes players are less fit and more reluctant to train than they used to be. Life has changed and players simply reflect the general lack of discipline. Referees over-react to language. We should be trying not to book players. He was never booked but would be nowadays. Players do take liberties and do cheat. Everybody in the business knows the cheats; some are idiot players. Rewards are so great now, players will do anything to win, even though a three week suspension might cost them £6,000 or £7,000. His son is an apprentice at Oxford. The situation is very different nowadays. He attends college, gets training every day. Attitudes aren't as good - there's no enjoyment or laughter any more.

Referees are no worse than they used to be but the game is more difficult. They must get some decisions wrong, but for the player that can cost a place in the team or for the manager his job. With every 1st Division goal on TV, officials are now being judged all the time. The commentators know nothing about it and make the situation worse. Incidents in the tunnel are not new, just publicized more now. Maurice is irritated by referees' pettiness eg checking rings and necklets before the game, running the length of the field to move the ball a few inches. Players make it difficult with offside, by feigning injury. The professional foul and deliberate handball are cheating and players should be sent off. But we'll never get consistency because referees are bound to see things differently from each other.

Referees, like players, improve positioning with experience. Best position for corner, penalty? How often we leave the goalkeeper's movement unpunished.

Managing is difficult and managers are badly treated. Maurice was (unprintably) critical of club chairmen and the FA Management Committee. Maurice has tried to bridge the gap between referees and clubs, but, whatever happens, referees can't win. Referees do tend to be homers and he understands why. The worst referees are those who constantly stop the game, who belittle players. Why not run alongside and talk, let play go on?

Nice story about Roger Kirkpatrick who wanted Maurice to move from near the goal post. Maurice mouthed an obscenity. Roger indicated again and Maurice repeated his word. Roger dressed him

down behind the goal in full view of everyone and Maurice was suitably chastened. [But then Roger was a real character. Ed] Clive Thomas was something of a maverick and liked to be the centre of attention but Maurice considered him a good referee. Maurice likes **not** to be able to remember the referee after the game - that means he was good.

Maurice responded to a number of questions. He doesn't think professional referees are necessarily the answer. He wonders if we've thought of trying to recruit all the YTS lads attached to clubs who do not get signed on but who have passed a test on the Laws (over 400 every two years). He believes players who are known as cheats should not be allowed to play for England. Maurice was thanked warmly and members agreed it had been an excellent evening.

December

The last meeting of the year and special as usual. No time lost on the business, mainly routine. Then John Lambden picked up the previous month's training discussion of offside and the two particular incidents used as examples. He was at pains to make the distinction between establishing the fact (was the player in an offside position?) before considering the matter of opinion.

The discussion of 'interfering with play' and 'seeking to gain an advantage' was illuminating - the complexity of the possibilities of interpretation was not concealed. As always, John had to stress the importance of all the particular circumstances and the intention of the player in the offside position. One point perhaps worthy of further discussion which did not come out, was 'intention' as it applies to the player trying to get back onside. It is usually assumed that he can be disregarded/forgiven, but why? Presumably he was seeking to gain an advantage by getting up with or ahead of play. Could it not be argued that, in trying to get back, his intention is also to gain an advantage - to allow his team not to be penalized, to avoid a goal being disallowed? The Law doesn't say 'to gain an advantage **for himself**'.

After half-time came the draw. Pat Monaghan and son Simon, also a member, had produced with the help of Mrs Monaghan, a magnificent display of **forty four** prizes. The biggest and best selection ever, with a videorecorder as the star prize. Life member Don Sargeant had the job of pulling the tickets out of the drum and this year, for once, quite a number of members in the room were lucky. I was, at least, sitting **next to** the winner of the video - Geoff Way. Must be some sort of providential reward as he has taken on the job of Treasurer!

President Dick Sawdon-Smith made the presentations to the new members in attendance, and then more than 80 of us got down to a

nice spread of meats, salads, baked potato, and hot beans and mushrooms for those who fancied them. All accompanied by a free drink! A very good start as always to the festive season.

A NICE NEW YEAR PRESENT

Football League referee, Ray Lewis, was promoted to the FIFA list - to replace John Martin, now forced to retire on grounds of age - from January 1st. As if that wasn't enough, he was appointed to the Manchester United v. Liverpool game, televised nation-wide on 'The Big Match' on New Year's Day. So everyone could admire his new badge! Superb second half after a dull first half. I guess he enjoyed it.

THE CHRISTMAS DRAW

This year we sold a total of 6,562 tickets of which Ivan McNelly sold some 1,300 himself! Unlike Heelas's, Ivan is never **oversold**. Even after the purchase of the star prize, the videorecorder, and 36 other prizes (which were supplemented by 7 donated prizes), the Society made a profit of £100.

Thanks to all who gave prizes. Special thanks to Pat Monaghan and his wife and son who master-mind and carry through the whole operation. And to Ivan, of course, who keeps up the profits.

CHRISTMAS DRAW - List of All The Winners

Prize	Ticket No	Name of Winner
VHS Videorecorder	8202	G. Way
Tin of Mince Pies	8183	A. Wellsteed
Clock	0707	M. Borland
Bottle of Wine	6528	M. Hopson
Monopoly	2903	P. Hitt
Sodastream	6770	S. Ashby
3lb Christmas Pudding	1237	V. White
Pack of Snowballs	6174	L. Ocar
Ladies Bath Set	7028	Thelma c/o I. McNelly
Box of Chocolate Brazils	5195	Mr & Mrs J. Waters
12 Cans of Lager	4125	P. Pittaway
Cordless Power Screwdriver	2603	P. Hanlon
Jar of Roasted Peanuts	1922	S. Thacker
12 Cans of Coke	2906	P. Hitt
12 piece Glass Tumbler Set	3542	Mrs C. Minhinik
5lb Jar of Roses Chocolates	2450	S. Green
Motorist's First Aid Kit	2708	D. Hawkins
Fondue Set	0371	N. Pocock
Bottle of Sherry	4553	G. Smith

5 Video Library Albums	3631	S. Betteridge
£50 John Lewis Voucher	5053	G. Amery
Golf Umbrella	5805	Jane c/o I. McNelly
Children's Snowman Gift Set	2474	S. Monaghan
12 Cans of Lemonade	2801	N. Jackson
Chocolate Selection Box	5836	Mick c/o I. McNelly
4 Cans of Bitter Beer	4966	Aluminium Tower Hire
Motormate Torch	3920	K. Parsons
Tin of Biscuits for Cheese	8329	M. Webb
Set of 6 Coasters	6051	Rising Sun c/o I. McNelly
Bottle of Wine	6760	A. Maxted
10 Bottles of French Lager	6270	Dave c/o I. McNelly
Thermos Flask	0436	Mrs M. Barnett
Personal Stereo Cassette Player	0996	D. Allan
Clown (don. by N.Asham)	4908	Mrs P. Tappern
Tin of Assorted Biscuits	7681	N. McNelly
Bottle of Wine	8275	N. Dainty
Braun Hairdrier	8550	A. Young
Christmas Hamper	2547	D. Haliday
Cuddly Cat (R.Wilkins)	4817	Hillier
Cake Selection (J.Lambden)	6008	Wendy c/o I. McNelly
Set of Glasses (K.Dade)	6106	J. Naris
Mars Selection (W.Wallace)	4903	M. Tappern
Mars Selection (W.Wallace)	5432	L. Willis
3 Piece Track Suit (P.Pittaway)	0465	S. Beasley

THE NEW TRAINING COURSE

The latest training course started on the 9th January with 12 members. The team can cope with a lot more. Do your bit and persuade a few people to go along - they can still be accommodated even if they have missed a session or two. Details from the Secretary, John Lambden or George Mills.

MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS (Ramem889)

Since our membership has been held in a computer file, it has been possible to produce statistics with a minimum of effort (quite apart from up-to-the-minute membership lists and address labels for the officers at regular intervals).

By the December meeting this year we had a near-record 149 members on the books against last year's 126 at the corresponding time. Of these, 123 are active (108 last year). Again we have two 'Youth' members.

The age bands of the various Classes (with last year's figures in brackets) are as follows:

Age	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Total
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25 and under	0 (2)	1 (1)	8 (5)	9 (8)
26 - 30	2 (1)	3 (3)	10 (5)	15 (9)
31 - 35	3 (2)	5 (7)	10 (6)	18 (15)
36 - 40	12 (12)	8 (5)	13 (13)	33 (30)
41 - 45	12 (12)	6 (5)	10 (11)	28 (28)
46 - 50	4 (7)	2 (1)	4 (2)	10 (10)
Over 50	4 (2)	3 (4)	1 (0)	8 (6)
Totals	37 (38)	28 (26)	56 (42)	121 (106)

Interpretation? 36 - 40 remains our largest age-group and presumably reflects the fact that many local players take up the whistle when their playing days are numbered/over. Last year's trend towards an older membership has been reversed by the addition of a significant number of younger new members.

120 of all our members (active and non-active) qualified in Reading (last year 98). 73 (55) of the active referees qualified during the years 1984-88 inc; 22 (22) qualified 1979-83 inc; 28 (31) qualified before 1979. As in previous years, more members referee locally on Saturdays than on Sundays: Saturdays - 76 (71); Sundays - 64 (53). Of these, 37 do both. 52 members are willing to do Saturday schoolboy games (44) and, remarkably, 54 (40) can be approached at Half Terms. 67 are willing to do 6-a-sides. Disappointingly, still only 25 (19) have volunteered to be coaches (mentors) for our new colleagues.

The dominance of the 'Tilehurst gang' - those living in the RG3 postcode area - has been slightly reduced. Only(!) 45 this year (48).

STOP PRESS

Ken Ridden was so interested in the video of our practical training, he took a copy of the two matches away with him. If we can get his support, it will be marvellous publicity.

FROM THE MIDDLE

In view of our recent discussions, the following piece from my series in the Reading programme seems particularly apt:

Offside

[first published in the Reading FC programme 21/9/85]

Strange to think that the offside law was introduced to improve the game - by preventing goal-hanging - when today it often helps to spoil it and/or create intense controversy.

The reasons are not difficult to find, the solutions quite a bit harder. Law 11 is not always understood - people forget the decision is made the moment the ball is played by a team-mate. But even worse, the sub-clauses are capable of different interpretations.

What is 'interfering with play or with an opponent' (!) or 'seeking to gain an advantage'?

For the referee, there are two areas of decision. **Fact:** Had the player got two opponents nearer their goal-line at the critical time? Was he in their half? (No offside, of course, direct from a goal-kick, corner, throw-in or drop-ball). **Judgment:** Those sub-clauses again.

The biggest difficulty comes with the 'offside trap'. Is the player caught out always guilty? While it is legal, is it in the spirit of the law?

Many referees would agree with managers and players who would like the law revised to remove both the negative tactics and the element of judgment. Why not, say, penalise any player in an offside position but only in the last third/quarter of the pitch?

The Rugby Football Union is much more willing to modify its laws than is the Football Association. Is it a coincidence that rugby seems to have fewer problems on the field than soccer has?
Reading Referees' Association

HOW COULD IT BE ALLOWED TO HAPPEN?

Filthy XI Slung Out

A soccer team formed out of a club banned for bad behaviour has itself been slung out of a Sunday league for on-pitch savagery.

Players from Autotec, in Filton, Bristol, assaulted referees and fought with opposing players. Police are questioning a team member following a match that was abandoned.

Sunday People, 11/12/88

SOCCER SHORTS

One of the nice things about having sons who are keen on soccer is that you get presents which reflect your/their interest. I do

anyway. In my Christmas stocking I found a copy of 'Soccer Shorts' published recently by Guinness Books. Here are a few of my favourite extracts in case you didn't get a copy.

Relatively Speaking

UEFA suspended the Stuttgart look-alike brothers Karl-Heinz and Bernd Forster after they had deceived a referee. The official was about to take the name of Karl-Heinz for a foul in the UEFA Cup game with Cologne. But Bernd hurried to take his place as Karl-Heinz had already been cautioned and a further booking would have meant a sending-off. The ruse would probably have escaped detection if they had not told the story to reporters.

In the 1946-47 season Joe Edelston was Reading's manager, daughter Kathleen was the club's secretary and her brother Maurice was a regular member of the first team forward line.

Burial Detachment

In the 1945-46 season when the FA Cup was played on the two-legged system, Barnsley were drawn to play Newcastle at St James' Park and United won this first leg 4-2 before 60,384 spectators. The second leg was on the following Wednesday and local collieries in the Barnsley area put up the following notice: 'In order that management may have knowledge of the numbers intending to be absent on Wednesday afternoon, will those whose relatives are to be buried on that day please apply by Tuesday for permission to attend.' There were 27,000 'funerals' and Barnsley honoured their 'dead' by winning 3-0, even though they missed a penalty.

What a Coincidence

Kevin Bremner . . . joined Colchester on his 23rd birthday. On his 25th birthday he joined Birmingham City on a month's loan in October 1982. After being recalled by Colchester he went on loan to Wrexham, scoring for them against Reading on 1 January 1983. Loaned to Plymouth Argyle he scored against Reading again on 1 February and then on transfer to Millwall he completed a hat trick over Reading with another goal . . . at their expense on 30 April. In 1985 Reading signed him.

Repeat Performances

Colin Court made only one appearance for Reading in goal during the 1981-82 season at home to Swindon Town on 20 February 1982 when he had the misfortune to put through his own goal. But in the same match drawn 1-1, Swindon's goalkeeper Jimmy Allen made the same error himself.

NOT ONE OF OURS WE HOPE**Referee Forgot His Kit**

The reserve official for Reading's FA Cup tie against Maidstone last weekend arrived just a little red-faced.

"Would you credit it," said manager Ian Branfoot, "he'd come without any kit. So we had to hunt around for a tracksuit to put on."

"I couldn't believe that a referee could make a mistake like that. And you can print that too."

Reading Post 16/12/88

[Ian's remarks could be considered quite temperate in the circumstances! There must be a simple explanation. Perhaps there was a large hole the referee hadn't previously noticed in the boot of his car
Don't tell me who it was if you know - I might feel obliged to pass the information on. Ed]

**IS THIS WHAT THE ASSESSOR MEANT?
(asks Alan Turner)**

"It is often helpful
to move to the extreme
limits of the field"

"Movement in the field
should be developed
so that clear views of
incidents are main-
tained while keeping
clear of play itself"

THE WHISTLERS (our very own football team)

When Martin Deacon, the Manager, said he had organized a match for Boxing Day, the committee was, frankly, sceptical. The match happened and was a great success, even though the Whistlers lost 1-2 to a Select Tilehurst XI. Man of the match was keeper Mark Surtees (Bert's son and recently qualified as a referee). Special thanks to Kevin Parsons and his linesmen for officiating, to Pat Monaghan whose company provided all the players with trophies, and to Martin for his well-founded optimism. It's hoped to make it an annual event for charity.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

February 16 Guest speaker: David Hutchinson, Football League referee

March 16 Guest speaker: Vic Callow, Football League referee and Society Training Officer

SOCIAL EVENTS

Friday, 3 March Annual Dinner & Dance (and cabaret)
Wokingham Town FC. Tickets £13.50 each

MY HUGE HANDS WILL NO LONGER BE FROZEN (I hope)

Rarely do I feel the need of a T-shirt under my referee's top, even in the bleakest of winters, when I'm in the middle. On the line it's different. There, I wonder why the uniform is not a tracksuit for bitter but dry conditions, though I would regret even the marginal loss of mobility long trousers would bring (and I do need all the mobility I can get). But a few times each season my fingers do get cold enough to make writing in the book difficult, and even signing the match card can become a real problem. Maybe it's the great length of my arms

However, many years later, Father Christmas has provided an elegant solution - black fingerless gloves. Common during the '39

war but rarer since, though no doubt large numbers of referees will write to tell me they've been wearing them for years. The ones I've got, and have yet to try - the weather is irritatingly mild - are made of that special thermolactyl cold-repellent fabric (by Damart of Bingley, West Yorkshire). In appearance the gloves match the material of my shirt very nicely as well.

I don't think they will look **too** I just hope they work.

[I rush to add that I have no connection, financial or otherwise, with the manufacturers! Ed]