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EDITORIAL

Whoever said 'England doesn't have a climate, it has weather' was undoubtedly right. What a disruptive mixture we've had recently, but after four days of brilliant sunshine as we go to press, maybe the worst is over.

Regular readers will remember that on occasion I have been known to look at the other code for lessons soccer could learn. After the Wales v. England rugby international I shall have to be more careful. Surely our most lenient colleague would have had fewer than 30 players on the park very soon after the start. Yet even after obvious punches, and even more obvious results of punches, no-one was sent off and the commentators expressed no surprise. I understand this is the new 'get-tough' policy. To be fair the governing body did chastise the players after the event

. . .

And so many controversies around in soccer at the moment: the ban on artificial pitches for the FA Cup; the continuing ban on our teams in Europe post-Brussels; the possible extradition of some of the alleged trouble-makers. A puzzle rather than a controversy is where Reading FC will end up this season. One minute in the relegation zone, the next reaching out for the promotion group - so little separates the teams. With the new play-off system the end of season could be exciting for the fans but more than a bit nail-biting for the players and managers.

You may have noticed that this issue is the fattest ever. Thanks to some of you for providing material but also thanks to our purchase of a new, quality photocopier, which makes the magazine much cheaper to produce. More work though, especially for the Secretary. Thanks Derek.

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

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JANUARY MEETING

What a night! Weather-wise. Minus several degrees Celsius with snow, and calculated to keep people indoors, including referees. Some 30 stalwarts turned up guessing that Alan Robinson had no hope of getting through from Waterlooville and back. They were right. But he promises to come on a future occasion.

The various items of business included discussion yet again of the problematics of expenses payments. The differences between leagues' practices have always been a bone of contention, but of course we can't agree with each other either. John Lambden reported his disappointment as Training Officer to have only four candidates signed up for the new course. In response to what seemed a demand for a change of evening, classes had been arranged for Mondays instead of the usual Tuesdays. It was hoped that more would actually turn up on the night. [and they did - there are now fourteen. Ed]

The second half of the meeting was devoted to our own quiz competition, with the members divided into four teams. Gus Higgins, the question-master, handed out sheets, each bearing 20 questions. The idea was that the team first wrote down its answers, then devised a question of its own. The second - and fun part - was asking other teams the questions. What came out of it? Apart from the fun, a worry about the accuracy of some of our knowledge of the Laws. And a distinct impression that some of the more experienced referees hadn't read the Chart recently enough. It is easy to shrug it off and argue that the newly qualified should have the Laws at their fingertips, but shouldn't we all? The quiz situation **is** different and some of the questions were tricky (though not trick), but is that excuse enough? I am one of those who believe re-training should be compulsory, both for promotion and renewal of the badge, and part of that re-training should involve a greater knowledge and understanding of the Laws than is possible with beginners. It may happen one day.

FEBRUARY MEETING

The weather was better and 60+ members enjoyed another evening of participation (this time premeditated!).

The chairman attacked the business briskly and it so happened that there was not too much to report. Members were reminded that

park supervisors can call games off and referees must accept their judgment. It was announced that the Fair Play Award was to be renamed in memory of Bert Newman, and Fred Porton was to have a new award named after him (see page 15). The question of travelling expenses had been left over to the next committee meeting, so there was no recommendation to be made yet. On the social side, Terry Gale described a very disappointing ice skating trip in spite of his efforts and excellent publicity; Mike Borland (back on his feet without sticks) announced plans for a trip to Wembley on May 19 to see England v. Brazil. On behalf of the society and the County FA, Ted Cambridge welcomed our new members from the last training course and presented them with manuals of guidance.

For the second half John Lambden had prepared 'group tasks'. We were split into groups and had to consider questions on one of three themes which (as we discovered later) interlocked. 'Fair play/spirit of the game'; 'match control'; 'ungentlemanly conduct'. Good discussion was generated within the groups and there was more at the reporting back stage. Again, something to learn for everyone and a pleasure to hear our newer colleagues taking a full part.

REPORT FROM SOUTHERN DIVISION (thanks to George Mills)

A number of items were discussed including:

Supplies - Continuing problems. RA looking at the possibility of giving supplies over to an outside firm because of problems and lack of space (and in spite of budgeted profit of £20,000).

Recruitment - The Reading RA paper (see pp.12-13) is being forwarded to the Instructional and Publications Committee along with those from High Wycombe and Surrey.

Misconduct forms - The FA has ruled it is up to County RA's to decide whether to have tear-off strips so that the referee's name is not sent to offending players

National Conference 1987 - a number of proposals are to be made by Council (see p.7)

Football Referee - Continuing criticism. Reported loss of approx. £150 per issue. Further income from advertising will be sought.

THE COUNTY QUIZ

Reading RA were in a three-cornered match (with Maidenhead and old rivals High Wycombe) which we hosted at the South Reading Community Centre. Alan Tate of Slough was quiz master, assisted by President George Mills who had prepared the questions as usual.

Reading got off to a reasonable start with four points out of the eight available, but in spite of their 16 points were third after round 2. A recovery to second in round 3, with 34 points to Wycombe's 42 and all to play for in the final round. Disaster. Out of a possible 32 more points Reading could only muster 8 and sank to third place with a final total of 42 points to Wycombe's 66. Maidenhead ended up with 51.

In spite of the disappointment of the result it was an enjoyable evening. Thanks to the officials and to the ladies who provided the refreshments, much appreciated by all present. And finally, thanks to the team of Robert Barnard-Smith (captain), Steve Green, Pat Monaghan and Paul Willis - defeated but not disgraced.

FROM NATIONAL RA

THE PROBLEM OF THE UNCONSCIOUS REFEREE

I would like to give my views on the 'interesting point of Law' the editor raised in the January edition of the magazine.

I should say right from the start that I did not see the incident myself and must take the unwise step of believing everything that I read in the newspaper. My views are therefore based on the incident described as follows: Referee David Axcell allowed a goal which Charlton players said did not cross the line. Before the game was restarted, the referee was knocked out during Charlton protests and senior linesman Pat Healey took over. He said to the Charlton players that in his opinion the ball had not crossed the line but he could not change the original referee's decision. The editor asks whether Mr Healey was right.

Let's deal with the theoretical side first. The Laws of the Game say that the referee can change his decision so long as the game has not restarted. Since Mr Axcell was removed from the field before the game restarted and Mr Healey took over, Mr Healey was the referee and was perfectly at liberty to change the decision

before restarting the game. In my view, then, his statement to the contrary was wrong in Law. However, the practical side of any problem (especially in refereeing) is rarely as clear as the theoretical.

Consider the problems if Mr Healey had come on to the field and immediately reversed the original referee's decision. It would then have been the Norwich players who were protesting vehemently that they had been deprived of a legitimate goal and he could well have had a full-scale riot on his hands. I feel that in trying to avoid putting himself in that position he excused himself on the grounds that he had no power to interfere, knowing that players do not have in-depth knowledge of the Laws, and in doing so averted a difficult situation. Unfortunately, his alleged comments were reported (as often happens when a referee uses bluff to get himself out of trouble) and it is then that criticism begins.

Personally, I think that Mr Healey was right to use whatever method he thought best to try to 'take the sting' out of the situation and it was a good example of practical refereeing (although not strictly correct in Law). However I have no doubt that there are members of the Society who will say that there is no such thing as good practical refereeing which is not correct in Law, or that, in the interests of justice, if Mr Healey thought that a legitimate goal had not been scored, and having been given the power to change the decision, he should have done so whatever the consequences.

The next question therefore is: Is it right to try to handle situations by creating your own Laws to meet the problem in some cases? Or should difficulties **always** be met head-on in line with the Laws of the Game?

Brian Papworth

SUGGESTED CHANGES OF LAW

In the last issue I asked for the law changes you wanted to see. Well, I got a couple of responses.

From Joe Flurry:

1. I'd liven the game up for spectators and players by replacing the throw-in by and indirect free kick.

2. The other law I would change is the offside law. Only slightly though. I'd like to see the law changed so that you can only be offside when you are over the 18 yard (penalty area) line. No need to alter the pitch markings - officials could use the 18 yard line (parallel to the goal line) as a guide right across the pitch.

and from Peter Kelly:

1. Abolish the four-step rule for goalkeepers and replace it with a five second time limit i.e. once the ball was under the control of the goalkeeper in the penalty area, he would have five seconds to play the ball out of the penalty box and the ball could only be played by him again in the penalty box once it had been played by another player.

The advantage of this law change would be to speed the game up and also stop goalkeepers tapping the ball around the box to gain ground for a kick out.

2. I would also like to see teams penalized for not retreating ten yards for free kicks. If necessary introduce a similar rule to that used in Rugby Union with teams being awarded 'a further ten yards' if the team does not retreat the full ten yards. The main advantage again would be to speed the game up; penalize teams who stand over the ball or kick the ball away; stop players arguing with the referee over his decision.

[Thanks Joe and Peter. Peter's first suggestion might raise a bit of controversy, but I would guess there's quite a bit of support for the others.]

EVE-OF-FA-CUP-FINAL-RALLY

As usual, the London Referees' Association, LONSAR, will be holding its eve-of-the-final rally on 16 May, to which referees, including the cup final officials, are invited. Tickets at £2-50p each. Details from our secretary.

COUNTY FIVE-A-SIDE COMPETITION

This year the competition will be held at the Arborfield Garrison on a date still to be confirmed as we go to press. We have entered two teams and Martin Deacon is always on the look-out for talent. I think that's what he said.

A.I.D.S.

It is always difficult to get across to people the right level of concern about a problem - in this case a public health problem. Both government and the FA are being accused of having got it wrong. First it was argued that government was doing too little, too late; now that it is going over the top. The FA, however, seems to have been attacked by everybody for getting involved at all. If ignorance is the greatest enemy, I think the advice should be welcomed and publicized.

THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION
A.I.D.S and Injuries in Football

This letter has two objectives:

1. To inform you of the current A.I.D.S situation in the United Kingdom
and
2. To give advice to football clubs in order to minimize the risk of infection.

We are all aware of the dangers of this disease, due to the Human Immune Virus (H.I.V), through advertisements in the media as well as the booklet available to the general public. As yet, a certain percentage of persons infected (perhaps 20%) develop the fatal illness, but since this disease has been discovered only recently, its true natural history is not known and this figure may be an understatement. At present, it is incurable so every effort must be made to contain the disease. Usually, the virus is transmitted from an infected person through sexual intercourse; with a much greater danger in male homosexuals and bisexuals - indeed, ninety per cent of cases in the U.K. have been in male homosexuals. Drug misusers are also at risk due to needle and syringe sharing.

The virus is present in blood and body secretions including saliva and seminal fluid. Once infected, the person may not show any reaction (antibodies) in his/her blood for several week and what is more alarming is that the disease may not become evident for up to five years. However, during this period an innocent partner can be infected. No person has recovered from A.I.D.S. Fortunately, the virus does not survive long in the open and can be destroyed by simple household bleach and heat. So far no cases have been recorded from shaking hands, lavatory seats, swimming pools, insect bites and dry kissing.

The following points are of importance to footballers.

Safe sex requires a reduction in the number of sexual partners (preferably one stable relationship); a condom should be used unless both partners are certain that neither is infected (this will also reduce the spread of other sexually transmitted diseases) and prostitutes must be avoided (many are drug addicts) especially in Central and Eastern Africa.

Wounds, abrasions, weeping blisters should be cleaned with a dilute solution of Milton (concentration one in twenty); it is also available as a mouth rinse. Whenever possible the cut etc. should be covered with a sterile waterproof dressing. Thus first aid on

the field now means a dilute solution of antiseptic rather than the traditional bucket and sponge.

Showers are preferable to the communal bath, especially if a player has an open wound, skin rash or any body discharge. All baths and showers need regular cleaning with disinfectant or bleach.

If there is contamination of clothes, utensils, benches etc. with blood, then they must be immediately cleaned with disinfectant e.g. a one in ten concentration of household bleach. Strips must be clean and not shared. Each player should have a disposable cup for drinking. Sharing a bottle should be avoided. It is not safe to share a toothbrush or razor.

In an emergency when mouth to mouth resuscitation is required, a mouth piece should be available, although it is important to point out that no cases of infection have been reported so far with this procedure.

Finally, all medical equipment such as hypodermic syringes, needles, scalpel blades etc. should be put in the special incinerator containers (e.g. Cinbins). Surgical gloves and a thorough washing of hands are mandatory when dealing with an open wound or body discharge.

Further information can be obtained from your local doctor or health authority.

HERE WE GO AGAIN?

Red and yellow disciplinary cards, which disappeared from the English game six years ago, could return next season. The Football Association, who will discuss the topic at their close season meeting following a request from the international board, have asked the Football League for their observations on the cards, which originally ran from 1978-81.

League Secretary Graham Kelly said: 'Our league matches are seen in many overseas countries and it seems we are a bit out of step with them in not having cards. Referees feel it is an aid to communication to players, officials and spectators and provides information.' The League want to avoid a repeat of what happened at Tottenham in November, when Graham Roberts was carried off on a stretcher against Wimbledon - but no one knew until later that he had also been sent off.

The Guardian, 27/2/87

THE SHORTAGE OF REFEREES

A few weeks ago we were at a local park assessing a promotion candidate. Four games were being played; ours was the only one with a referee at all. The plight of the others was brought home to us when two of the teams were going round begging spectators to help out by refereeing their game.

Local football is suffering in a number of ways: candidates are fewer; more of those who do come forward and qualify are disillusioned, especially by dissent from the players; yet the attractions and demands of senior football, which constantly reduce the number of referees available locally, don't get any less. It is right that some referees will be ambitious to progress to higher leagues, but while this may be admirable for them, the consequences are certainly felt at local park level. (And if the rumoured increase in senior leagues were to happen, the local shortage would become more acute).

Also, many local clubs that do get referees are concerned about what seems to be a decline in standards. What we see happening is that, because of the shortage, referees are being appointed to games of a far higher standard than is warranted by their experience - and clubs and players are naturally getting the wrong impression. The referees are quickly disillusioned about their own performances in the light of comments made about them, and too often add to the withdrawal rate.

Solutions? Many societies are trying to increase recruitment by various forms of advertising, and Reading has had some success with its innovations but never enough. More radical solutions are needed in addition.

Why not a requirement that all clubs in local soccer should have one qualified 'referee' amongst their officers who would act as stand-in for the club if no 'official' referee were appointed?

The rules of local competitions already state that in the absence of an appointed official the clubs must agree a substitute who 'shall have the full powers etc'. Why not make sure that such a person would be available and at least qualified for the job?

We see it working like this:

Each club would have to nominate someone to take a referees' course in order to become qualified.

However, these referees would be designated differently, say Class 3(a) as in Scotland, and in effect have a limited registration. They would not be on any appointment list nor available for promotion unless at some future date they wished to apply for re- (full) classification.

While such officials would only referee in the lower divisions, they could also act in place of club linesmen in more senior games. Also, as an added incentive and to increase their experience, such referees could, for example, be used as linesmen in the early rounds of the County Cup. They would be entitled to wear a distinctive badge on their track-suit to indicate their status.

Such a scheme would have many advantages. Aside from the obvious, having been through a proper training course they would be fully conversant with disciplinary report writing. Too often we hear allegations of stand-in referees cautioning and sending off players without submitting reports.

As qualified referees they would also be entitled to membership of the local Referees' Association, with all the support and continuation training that implies. The liaison between the RA and the clubs would be enhanced too.

We have commended these proposals to the four Reading competitions and asked their views. One of the leagues has already voiced firm support. We have also sent the paper to the Berks & Bucks Referees' Association to be considered for submission to the County FA.

John Lambden and George Mills

FROM FOOTBALLER TO REFEREE

Football was my enjoyment till I reached 35, mostly playing in the forces. I learned through being cautioned and sent off during my playing days at right back, how most players react!

Experiences gained during my first season:

I've seen how a top team playing a bottom team going a number of goals down lose all their team spirit. I've seen the effect on teams when the players are constantly bickering at each other and rowing about how they should play. I've become very aware of the conman, especially around the penalty area. I've had the good games where teams play 110% football. I've seen players bubbling with excitement and enjoyed the sporting manner that exists with many clubs in our area. I've become fully aware that, if you do your job and it means a caution or sending-off, your marks for the game get a knock. But I'm satisfied that nobody's got into trouble unless they asked for it. I've had a good mixture of football: Saturday and Sunday leagues, some schools games and lines on the Middlesex Border.

Let's send a recruitment team around local clubs to educate and invite members to take up refereeing when they've finished playing. It's great!

Alan Turner

REFEREES AND YOUTH FOOTBALL

I would like to pose two questions:

- Why do we have so much trouble in men's football?
- Do referees and the Referees' Association only pay lip service to youth football?

In answer to the first question: after playing in Youth Football for five or six seasons with no referees, some of the players become uncontrollable and have no respect for the laws of the game, referees or administrators. It is no excuse for referees to say we don't do youth games because we are not prepared to have abuse heaped on us by parents. After all it's no different from the abuse heaped on us on Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning by players, spectators and the media.

In youth football, once the abuse from the line starts, you have to stand up and be counted. Call both team managers together and tell them they are responsible for their supporters and that you will abandon the game and report both clubs to the County FA unless the abuse stops. In my experience this works every time. You have only to control the game after this and that is no more or less difficult than a men's game. As the young players move towards the men's league, they will have become used to the man in black. So, how can we start to put things right? Simply by setting aside one Sunday in four for youth football.

The answer to the second question is a simple one: yes. There appears to be no liaison at national or local levels between the Referees' Association and youth football, other than the odd representative on a committee continually saying 'I cannot get referees. I'm awfully sorry.' Perhaps there is a case for a liaison officer who could inform the young players, managers and parents on the more contentious points of the Laws e.g. offside, use of foul or abusive language, either by visiting the local club meetings or by some other means.

Very few youth clubs have problems with numbers in the U/9 to U/13 age groups, but many teams from U/14 onwards fold up because half of the boys lose interest, change sports or have to stop playing due to the pressure of school work. We then have a number of boys who are still interested but can no longer get a game of football.

Is this an untapped source of referees? Has any referees' society ever tried putting on a training course for youth referees only? Perhaps these lads would feel more comfortable with people of their own age-group rather than with adults. Could this be part of the solution to the problem of getting more referees for youth football?

In answer to a recently posed question: no, the age limit for young referees should not be raised, but perhaps it should be stipulated that a youth referee can only officiate as a referee in games at least two years below his/her own age-group, though as a linesman in any youth football. Again in my experience being associated with two youth referees, this works very well.

Yes, as chairman of a local youth football club, perhaps I have an axe to grind, but remember today's youth teams are tomorrow's men's teams, and with youth football in a very delicate state, we need to look after it. If we do not, there will no longer be a shortage of referees but a shortage of football.

Mick Barnett

AWARDS

It has been decided to pay tribute to Bert Newman and Fred Porton by naming awards after them.

Many years ago Bert presented the society with the Fair Play Award and so it is appropriate that it should now be known as the 'Bert Newman Fair Play Award' and be so engraved. The conditions for making the award will not change.

In the case of Fred Porton a new award has been created - a shield for the most promising Class 3 referee.

The conditions of the award will be as follows:

'The Fred Porton Shield'

This award shall be made annually at or towards the end of the season to the 'most promising Class 3 referee'.

Eligibility

All Class 3 referees members of the Reading RA in their first or second season after (first) qualification shall be eligible to be considered for the award.

Awarding Committee

The winner of the award shall be determined by a sub-committee of three members chaired by the organizer of the society's coaching scheme. They shall be empowered to take into account their own observations, assessors' reports, league marks or any other information at their discretion.

The award

The winner of the award shall be entitled to keep the shield for approximately one year. The shield shall be engraved with the name of the winner who shall receive a replica to keep. The shield shall be returned to the Secretary in good time for the following year's presentation. It shall be insured by the Reading RA.

FROM THE MIDDLE

Some two years ago I had the idea of writing a series of short articles about refereeing for the Reading FC programme. The aim was to help spectators towards a better understanding of the Laws (and so indirectly help us), but also to keep the name of the Reading Referees' Association in front of people interested in soccer.

A number of members have suggested the articles would be interesting especially for new referees. They covered all the Laws, but not in numerical order, and there was no attempt to provide a course as such. (This is the first time I've had the space to publish one anyway). All that said, tell me what you think. (I chose this particular piece for obvious topical reasons!).

Pitch Unfit For Play

(first published in the Reading FC programme 15/3/86)

One of the referee's most difficult jobs can take place, especially in the depths of winter, even before the players have arrived. He may have to inspect the pitch in order to decide whether or not it is fit for play.

One reason it is difficult is that the laws don't really help. It is the subjective judgment of that referee at that moment in those very particular conditions.

But not only does the referee need his experience as a referee, he needs to be something of a meteorologist as well - and you how often even the professionals get their weather forecasts wrong!

The major concern for referees at all levels is danger to the players, and icy pitches usually present most problems. The referee looks for frozen patches and ruts, especially in the goalmouth, which could lead to broken limbs as well as a freak goal.

A hard pitch is not in itself dangerous - we often play on rock-like pitches in the autumn - but ground frozen to resemble a skating rink (eg after a lot of rain) would be really hazardous and reduce the game to a farce as well.

Very wet conditions are usually easier to judge. Will the ball travel and bounce reasonably well?

Unpredictable movements of the ball not only make the game something of a lottery, they also increase the possibility of badly-timed and awkward tackles which could lead to (quite accidental) injury.

On the other hand, a nice layer of fresh snow, if the ground underneath is reasonable, makes a perfectly playable surface. The referee just has to ensure the lines are swept and visible and the match ball is not white!

Canon League referees have the most difficult job of all. They are expected to make their pitch inspection hours before the game, sometimes the night before, to avoid travel for the visitors and spectators.

And we all know how wrong their decision can appear hours later if soft ground freezes over, or the sun comes out unexpectedly; if the fog goes away or comes down with a vengeance.

Also, at Football League grounds the **spectators** have to be considered from the safety angle - is the terracing dangerous owing to snow or ice?

Having made his decision to play a game, the referee may still have problems. If the conditions change much for the worse, he will have to decide if and when to abandon it - an even more serious decision because everyone feels cheated, including the referee himself.

[Reading Referees' Association]

FROM THE PAST

It was another cold afternoon . . . this time at Roker Park in the 1970s, Peter Sixsmith recalls. In those days, in the Clock Stand paddock, stood a guy called Ray who worked on the rigs and was often missing for a couple of months at a time. This particular afternoon Ray was making one of his spasmodic visits, and Sunderland were playing Oldham Athletic in front of 25,000 (those were the days). Oldham's left-winger was coming in for some particularly strenuous attention from Joe Bolton and, after the third or fourth jolting tackle, lay grimacing on the floor. Eventually the Oldham spongeman came on to treat him, treatment that seemed to go for an

inordinate length. Roker grew restless. All of a sudden, the Voice of Ray boomed out from the back of the paddock. "Give the bugger the heat treatment send him to the crematorium" Collapse, says Peter, of the Clock Stand paddock, referee, and Tony Towers who was about to take a throw-in.

Stephen Bierley, The Guardian, 7/3/87

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Only the meeting after next. Time to be thinking about any proposals for changes of officers and committee members and for changes of rules. Remember you have all the information in your handbook. Some minor re-wordings were held over from last year and will be proposed again. Any others needed?

STOP PRESS - QUIZ

After their victory against us and Maidenhead, High Wycombe went on to beat North Berks in the County final, but then lost to Gravesend, Kent in the Southern finals. Congratulations on their good run to our old friends (rivals).

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH FOOTBALL WEEK

We have had a first notification that an international youth tournament will be held in Reading at the end of August (24th - 30th). A large number of referees will be required. Details later.

MEMBERSHIP

We are up to 144 members - second highest ever - when other societies seem to be in decline. And the local parks are still short of referees. We must try even harder.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

- March 19** Keith Hackett, Football League and FIFA referee.
Author of 'Hackett's Law'
- April 16** Open meeting (inc. discussion of National
Conference business)
- May 21** Annual General Meeting

ANOTHER BIG PLUM

The society's only Football League linesman, David Keen, has done it again. David has been honoured with a line at Wembley for the Littlewoods Cup Final on April 5th. Lester Shapter of Torquay will be in the middle and Fred Young of York will be on the other

line. Congratulations from all of us, David. All the best for the big day.

DID YOU SEE THIS?

Three month ban from football for GBH

A footballer who broke an opponent's neck during a league match was given four month's youth custody after being convicted of grievous bodily harm.

Ian Rice, aged 20, knocked Christopher Ross unconscious with a punch and then kicked him with a studded boot as he lay in the mud. Rice, who was playing for the Torbay Sunday League leaders, Palace Place, against Watcombe United, was **banned by the Football Association for three months and fined for the attack.**

NO COMMENT

Tom Brown of Carlisle remembers standing next to a bloke at Brunton Park who timed his stream of one-liners to perfection. Before one home match a linesman discovered a small hole in the side netting and called over the referee. Just as the latter reached the penalty area a stentorian cry greeted him. "Hey, ref. Never mind about that hole in the side. These lot can't get it through the big bugger in the front."

Stephen Bierley, The Guardian, 14/2/87