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EDITORIAL

Pride of place in this issue must go to Reading FC who will play at Wembley for the first time in their history on March 27 in the Simod Cup final.

By all accounts the semi-final was incredible and incredibly tense, though neutral observers thought Reading deserved their victory. Who, honestly, would have given them even a sniff of a chance earlier in the season considering their below-par league form? The Times called their Simod Cup challenge "relentless" and they certainly have shown incredible character as well as skill in beating three first division clubs on their way. We wish them well for the final.

Let's hope their successful cup run gives them the edge they need in their league matches to put a few victories together to avoid relegation.

Two different items in this issue relate to the way referees are treated by 'higher authority': the County FA and our own national RA. If only those involved in the administration of football would remember that they are only there because of the game, not the other way round, that their job is to enable, not to prevent, that rank and file referees deserve better than they receive. No doubt, the criticisms will be taken as a sign of 'disloyalty'. In fact it is the societies and individuals that really care, that are loyal to the RA and FA that want them to get their houses in order, so that the game of football ultimately does not lose out.

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

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PETER JEFFERIS

After some months of illness, which he bore with fortitude and his usual good humour, Peter Jefferis died on March 7th.

Peter played in local football for the Reading Old Blues before turning to refereeing in 1953. He officiated on the local leagues and also on the Southern, Athenian and Hellenic. When he retired from active refereeing after some 20 years, he became secretary of the Old Blues and was a familiar figure acting as (an outstanding) club linesman.

From 1953 Peter was an active and committed member of the Reading RA and held a number of offices over the years. He was a founder of the Newsletter, this magazine's predecessor, in 1958, and was editor/co-editor until 1970. From 1959 he was a member of the committee; assistant secretary 1962-1970; vice-chairman 1970-72; chairman 1972-74; a vice-president from 1974-88.

Peter was a man of quiet dignity, a gentleman whom the RA motto fitted eminently well: "Service before Self".

We have lost a good colleague and friend. We extend our deepest sympathy to his wife and family.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

January

New Year and over 60 members in attendance. The Chairman pushed ahead with the business as we had four guests waiting - members of the forum which was to follow.

Amongst the routine matters were a number of apparently small but nevertheless important issues. Colour clashes. A member had asked for a discussion of the problem of socks of the same colour. While everyone agreed it was a problem, the difficulties of local park sides were recognized. The leagues don't insist on a change of socks being available and so it was hoped referees wouldn't refuse to do the game just because of a clash. However, it was decided that the matter was important enough to be raised with the local competitions by letter, so that they were aware that identical socks did constitute a colour clash and the referee could insist on a

change - in the hope that all the competitions would modify their rules at the end of the season.

Personal hearings. Nothing has been done in spite of our protests, and it seems that the County is continuing to resist any change in the unsatisfactory arrangements which force referees to wait in the same inappropriate place as the players called to the hearing and their associates. We have been asked to quote recent cases. Two members confirmed from very recent experience that they had been placed in exactly the situation we had complained about. New written evidence will now be submitted. The support of other societies has been sought and it was clear from the mood of members that the committee has full support in trying to ensure decent conditions for referees who are obliged to be at a personal hearing.

Substitutes. Unbelievably, the Law amendment still isn't understood by some referees as well as players, and the FA has issued yet another letter. Dick Sawdon-Smith's article in our last issue should have helped our members, but I have also tried later in this issue to do the ultimate simplification. I just hope they don't change the Law for next season!

Half-time and the assembly of our panel for the Forum. Peter Bartlett, local player and club manager; Frank Hawkins, local club chairman and referee; Stewart Henderson, Reading FC Youth Development Officer; Ken Nice, referee and County rep. side manager. All interested in local football but with wider horizons.

George and John, predictably, had prepared a set of demanding but stimulating questions. They started with **offside** (and there was no collusion with the editor who happened to have written an article on the subject in the last issue of the magazine). There was, for me, surprising agreement that the Law was probably best left alone, in spite of the many admitted problems (which proves they hadn't seen my article . . .). Peter wondered about a simplification, but not with any great enthusiasm. (I suspect the non-referees didn't really realize how difficult it is to get the offside decision right).

Linesmen. The question was whether linesmen had the right amount of authority. At local level with club linesmen, in spite of the high quality of the best, Ken was sure the referee must clearly make the decisions. Even with neutral linesmen - and Stewart stressed the pressure the linesman can be under from the crowd - the referee should retain his present authority. There was no support for a two-referee system as in some other sports.

Referee training. Again consensus. Frank saw the theoretical training with exam like learning to pass the driving

test. You then learn to drive. But he was worried about losing potential referees too early. Ken spoke in support of his experience of Reading's theoretical and practical training and confessed how ignorant of the Laws he had been as a player. Peter and Stewart emphasized the importance of practical experience and understanding the spirit of the game.

The increase in foul play. Here the panel did split. Peter and Frank - to the obvious surprise, it seemed, of pretty well all the members - suggested the game hadn't really changed. It is no dirtier: what has happened is that we now caution and send players off for things we used to cope with. Ken totally disagreed. He felt football is nastier, just as society is nastier. Stewart sat on the fence rather - suggesting that things had changed somewhat - but he did feel referees are book-happy. There were a number of (strong) contributions from members who applauded Ken's views (in both senses).

Is football getting out of hand in terms of its **administration**? Frank saw the confusion over the substitution Law change as good evidence that there is a problem. Peter reflected that faster communication doesn't seem to have helped. Ken stressed the role of leagues and clubs in passing on information to players. Stewart gave examples of the difficulty of getting information out of the Berks and Bucks, and believed referees should get together and sort out Law problems, so that there isn't confusion on the parks.

An intelligent choice of panelists and questions making a good start to 1988.

February

The meeting started with the sad news that one of our long-serving Vice-Presidents, Mrs Love, widow of Maurice, had died at the great age of 91. Members stood in silence. (Maurice was a member of the Reading RA in its early days and later a Vice-President. He had 34 years unbroken service as a Council Member of the Berks and Bucks, and was Honorary Secretary for 28 years until his death in 1962).

A number of points were raised under correspondence.

- A member had stopped a game because of continuous abuse from a particular spectator and had refused to restart it until the spectator had gone away. It was emphasized that the referee was entitled to do just that. The correct method is to deal with the matter through the home club's secretary - the responsibility is theirs. Don't get involved directly with the spectator.

- A letter had been sent to the local leagues drawing their attention to the problem of colour clashes with socks.

- Referees' fees for the Reading Challenge Cup are to be aligned with those for the Berks and Bucks cups. It is not yet clear which level is to be aligned with which.

The Guest Speaker, David Downs, had agreed to come at short notice because Ian Branfoot was unexpectedly unable to attend. David is chairman of the Reading Schools FA and a coach at the Reading Centre of Excellence. He is also the author of Biscuits and Royals, the history of Reading FC, now in its second edition (and well worth reading), and a notable collector of soccer memorabilia.

David started by welcoming the opportunity to have a dialogue with referees because he felt we are often misunderstood. He gave various examples of interesting points of Law and refereeing incidents. In the Reading v. Darlington game in the 1924/5 season, the free kick awarded to Darlington for a Reading foul throw led to a goal and Reading's defeat. The Law was changed the following season to the present situation where the throw is given to the other team.

In Reading's first game of the 1975/6 season they were awarded a goal when everyone but the officials knew the ball had gone into the side netting. David also quoted the occasion John Martin awarded a goal when the defender put a free kick into his own net.

He then showed us some of his souvenirs - a Jimmy Grieves international cap, Portugal v. England 1964; a Wales Under 23 cap; his own English Schools Trophy Finalist's medal and Reading RA Quiz winner's medal, as a member of the Reading Casuals' team; a poster advertising the opening of Elm Park which he believes to be the only one to have survived.

David was modest about his own football prowess but has affectionate(?) memories of the Club Secretaries v. Referees games out at Highmoor.

He has been running the Reading Under 11 side for many years and had now-famous players like Lawrie Sanchez and Neil Webb in his team. In some 750 games he has almost always had a qualified referee, sometimes with qualified linesmen. David sees the parents at the beginning of the season to tell them what is expected of the players and the spectators. He has never had a player cautioned or sent off. A little reminder for referees: if a player is injured, call on the trainer and leave it to him. No jokes please.

David is pessimistic about the future of schoolboy football because of the new contract imposed on teachers. Also, standards are declining: the Schools FA recently selected an Under 15 player who had been sent off for head-butting only two weeks previously. The professional clubs are taking over. In the future youth football may well be restricted to the very talented.

The professional clubs do coach cheating. Leeds used to encourage blind side fouling; a number of players are well known for 'winning' penalties. Frances Lee was one of the masters. Injury shamming is prevalent too.

David concluded with a couple of problem situations for us to comment on. The first was one of those about offside with a player lying apparently unconscious on the ground. The second caused more controversy and remained unresolved. The player throws the ball in correctly but at the back of another player. Is it fair, legal? If you stop the game, what for and how do you re-start it?

A very entertaining talk, well received by the 60+ members present.

UNPROFESSIONAL TREATMENT

In the report of our December meeting (page 4), the continuing unsatisfactory situation in respect of personal hearings at Maidenhead is mentioned yet again. One of our members with very recent and bitter experience describes in detail what happened to him.

Dear Editor,

I have listened with interest to the discussions that have taken place over the last few years concerning referees' experiences at attending personal hearings at the Crest Hotel in Maidenhead.

I was requested to attend a personal hearing one Thursday evening in January. The designated time was 7-30pm and on the correspondence received from the Berks and Bucks FA I was asked to wait in the "Billiard Room" until called.

I arrived at 7-15pm and, on entering the hotel, I approached a hotel steward and requested directions to the "Billiard Room". After a pause for thought, he said there was no "Billiard Room" but there were two snooker tables in part of the open plan area next to the main bar. When I approached this area both snooker tables were in use, and the tables and chairs and tables in the area

were taken up by the drinks, jackets and coats of the six people who were participating in the snooker matches.

I was led to believe prior to arriving on the Thursday evening that the "Billiard Room" would be a designated room for referees to wait in and not face confrontation with the 'accused'. How wrong could I be! The so-called "room" is not a room, but is an area positioned in one large alcove in the open-plan arena with the bar as the central meeting point. It is a shame that the Berks and Bucks FA is not a registered business, otherwise I am sure they could be dealt with in a court of law under the Trades Descriptions Act.

At 7-30pm, Bill Gosling, the Berks and Bucks FA Secretary, wandered down to the bar area, recognized me through my Sunday League connections and asked if the player and club were present. I replied "I've no idea." It then became apparent they were not and Bill requested me to go and stand outside the suite the commission was using. 5 minutes later he re-appeared and stated "I can't find them." He went inside the suite and came out again another 5 minutes later and said he was going to see if they had turned up. He eventually came back - after another 10 minutes or so - alone.

At 7-50pm I was invited into the commission. They went through their normal routine and, after being asked a few totally irrelevant questions, I asked "What happens now?" I was somewhat surprised to be advised by the Secretary that, if the player's excuse for non-attendance is deemed acceptable, I will have to go through the whole unsatisfactory routine again. I left for home utterly frustrated. Because of my unsociable working hours, I had to go to the hearing straight from work and I arrived home at 8-40pm. Most of the evening had been totally wasted, plus I ended up missing my evening meal!

As a result of what happened I would like to ask the Berks and Bucks FA some questions (but of course we are expected to be seen and not heard).

1. Why should a player be given a second bite of the cherry when, if the referee had failed to turn up, the case against the player would have been dismissed?

2. A couple of days after the 'hearing', I read in the local press that the said player had again been dismissed in a County Cup match the previous Saturday. Could this have been the reason he failed to turn up and took everybody for a ride? Surely if a player fails to turn up at a personal hearing that he has requested and has confirmed in writing that he would attend, he should be suspended immediately and punishment handed out.

The player I dismissed is still playing on the local parks every weekend and I have still not been advised by the Berks and Bucks FA what action they will be taking. And it is now 6 weeks after his non-attendance!

3. As the commission hold their meetings in one of the suites, why don't the Berks and Bucks FA hire an adjacent bedroom for the referees? The costs of the evening are all levied from the clubs, so the Berks and Bucks would not incur any additional expense.

When I reflect on the whole saga, are the Berks and Bucks FA doing any favours to the likes of George Mills and John Lambden, our Training Officers, in trying to recruit referees? I fortunately have 18 years behind me and am able to shrug my shoulders - but I feel sorry for our new colleagues who may end up totally dismayed.

Paul Hopes

Not only does Paul reinforce the Reading RA's demand for decent conditions for referees at personal hearings, he also raises two other important issues.

Why should players be allowed to abuse County disciplinary procedures in this way? Not only do they avoid proper and timely punishment, they do it at the expense of referees twice over - the serious inconvenience for the referee in having to go to a second hearing, and the problem for his colleagues on the parks where the player is still active and unpunished.

The other issue relates to the powerlessness of referees to effect change in a matter which concerns them directly. It is right that County FAs should have power, but surely there should be a right of appeal if we are in disagreement. What was that about absolute power ? At present, if we contact the FA they will simply refer the matter back to the Berks and Bucks. The Reading RA recently refused to ask for payment for attendance at personal hearings because it is a professional duty we accept. Don't those with professional attitudes deserve to be treated as professionals?

[This magazine is circulated quite widely. It would be interesting to have comments from colleagues in other societies about practices in their area]

HOPE AT LAST? (Perhaps not in the South East)

Improving Local Grounds

The Football Trust is to spend an additional £2 million this year on building and improving local authority pitches and changing rooms in England.

The Trust, which is funded by Littlewoods, Vernons and Zettlers Pools from their spot-the-ball competition, has asked the Sports Council to ensure that areas suffering social and economic deprivation be given special consideration for funding.

The Times, 20/2/88

SUBSTITUTES

- 1 **LAW 3** says the **names** of substitutes **MUST** be given to the referee **BEFORE** the game starts.
- 2 The **LAW allows** up to **five** substitutes to be **named**.
- 3 The **LAW allows** up to **two** substitutes to be **used**
- 4 **Competition Rules MAY** stipulate a **lower number** to be **named fewer than two** to be **used**

READ YOUR CHART. READ YOUR COMPETITION RULES. CAREFULLY.

GETTING NICKED

No, not trouble with the law or even with the Laws.

One of the nice things about editing a referees' magazine is that you send copies around and receive copies of other societies' efforts in return. Most editors, as I do, advertise the fact that they don't mind other editors using their articles with acknowledgement. And it's quite flattering when your material is thought worth publishing for a second time. Unfortunately there's a bit of pirating going on. Some of our stuff is getting nicked. I thought you ought to know, and I thought they ought to know I know and that you know I know.

THEM AND US

The local societies and the national RA. Is it 'them and us'?

A major discussion at the Southern Division meeting arose out of a letter from the Suffolk County RA supporting the views of the Ipswich society. Put simply, they questioned the relevance of the national RA and wondered whether our rank and file members are getting value for money. What is the national RA doing nationally? It is rarely visible in the press putting forward our views; it is rarely consulted.

Brian Richards of the Chiltern Society had also written a personal letter for publication in the Football Referee, which the Editor told Council Members he does not intend to print 'for obvious reasons'. Indeed they are obvious, but I suspect not in the way the Editor meant. That refusal to allow expression of critical views is just what Brian and others are complaining about.

Also, according to the minutes of the Southern Division meeting, "the Vice-President rejected a 'them and us' situation because it was decisions made by society votes at Conference on which RA business was organized." Should we ask yet again what has happened to our Conference resolution of 1982 and the practical examination? Jim Jenkinson went on to say "The Referees' Association is the Membership at Society level, and not Council, Divisional Executives or County Committees." And yet the very hierarchical structure of the RA ensures that individual members' voices are not heard. A rank and file member has no direct access to the Council, however urgent or important the reason. He can't even get his letter published 'for obvious reasons'.

I print Brian Richard's letter below in full with his agreement (and for obvious reasons):

Dear Paul,

Every year up and down the country the Society membership/recruitment officers indulge in the annual war of attrition i.e. that of nagging members for their subscriptions. In general this is not an easy or rewarding job. Some members pay up immediately, cheerfully and without question; others prevaricate continuously; others "forget" for a few months. Usually, by the turn of the year the majority of the subscriptions have been gathered in, giving a true picture of the Society membership list.

Our own Society is no exception to this picture. However, in the past few years as the total subscription (inc National RA, County RA, Society, and Insurance) has steadily increased, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of questions along the lines: "Why do I have to join the National RA?", "Why can't I just be a member of the Local Society?", or more forcibly

"What does the RA do for me?", or "What benefits do I get from RA membership?"

From a financial standpoint this has been exacerbated by the realization that whilst the Society subscription has remained unchanged for 4 years at £4, over the same period the RA subscription has increased 400% from 0.75p to £3. "What are we getting for our money?" is the usual riposte. Whereas in years past it was a comparatively simple matter of convincing members of the benefits of a National body, it has now become a major task, and in our area we now have a small but steadfast band of referees who want to join the Society but NOT the National body. This puts a small Society like ours in a particularly trying dilemma. We would like to encourage them to join the Society, become better referees and officiate at more games etc. Unfortunately under the present Rules of The Association, they must be ostracised in a "them and us" situation, which in the long run is surely a throat-cutting operation for the RA. Moreover, it is becoming increasingly difficult to answer convincingly the question, "Why can't the Society exist in isolation from the RA?"

My main worry is that this situation appears to reflect the widening gap between the local rank and file referees and the National body, in which the former are finding it increasingly difficult to identify with, or even understand the relevancy of, the latter. Does this account for the falling number of attendees at the Annual Conference, I wonder?

It would be easy, but somewhat fruitless, to list the probable reasons for this development, but in recent months the authoritarian manner in which the RA has sought to obtain both a mandate and finance for the proposed new offices, must feature prominently.

The point of this letter is simply a cri de coeur - HELP.

Is my Society alone in this dilemma? Talking to neighbouring Societies, I think not. Then what steps do other Societies in other parts of the country take in persuading possible members to join the RA? More importantly, if there is a problem, does the RA itself recognize it? If, as we would hope, the RA are alert to this worry, how do they advise us to proceed, and what steps are they taking to aid us, at the grass roots level?

Brian Richards

ANNUAL DINNER & DANCE

A new venue and a great success. Most of the referees at least would have been to Wokingham Town FC for other purposes, but not necessarily for a social function. Good atmosphere, food, drink,

music (and some movement), a raffle, and an excellent magician with a nice line in repartee. You couldn't help feeling sorry for Stuart Gentle (the chosen fall-guy), and on his birthday too. Thanks to Mike Borland particularly.

SOUTHERN DIVISION EXECUTIVE MEETING 6 February 1988

Amongst the items discussed were

- Supplies. Shiny kit will no longer be stocked and we are not going to get water-repellent shirts and shorts either. A 'Rolls Royce' kit for the affluent is being explored.
- Match record card. New design should be ready for Conference.
- Recruitment. George Mills described the Reading Mentor/Coaching scheme.
- Insurance. The letter below containing the list of claims for 1986/7 was circulated.

ROLE REVERSAL?

(Photograph from The Guardian, 27/2/88)

Brian Stein: "Off you go, ref. Yes, that's the dressing room."

COUNTY RA QUIZ

Runners-up again! Under this year's new format - all society teams together instead of a knock-out competition - our lads finished only 3 points behind High Wycombe's 64. And Wycombe had home advantage. Well done Steve Green, John Lambden, Ivan McNelly and Graham Stockton. Thanks, too, to George Mills and Slough's Alan Tate, who ran the event.

FROM THE MIDDLE

Another of the series of short articles I wrote for the Reading FC programme.

Advantage

[first published in the Reading FC programme 7/9/85]

Mr Roth, the West German referee, came in for a lot of criticism from the commentators during the England versus Northern Ireland World Cup qualifier last season. 'Too much whistle.' 'The game couldn't flow.'

We need to start by reminding ourselves that it's the players who commit the fouls, not the referee. The problem with that game - and there were a lot of fouls that would have led to retaliation if not penalised - was something else. England seemed determined to play to avoid defeat and so gave a limp, uninspiring performance. Referees certainly can affect games (either way), but no style of refereeing could have produced a classic out of that.

'The referee should have used advantage more.' Sometimes true, sometimes an excuse. Law 5 does allow referees 'to refrain from penalising . . . ' if stopping the game would give an advantage to the offending side. And Mr Roth did refrain on quite a number of occasions as you could see from his signals, sometimes the two-armed sweeping action in the Referees' Chart, sometimes the one-armed signal now seen at senior level. As on many other occasions, it is down to the referee's judgment whether to penalise, but he has to make his decision at once. And his anticipation can be wrong whatever he decides. In rugby, of course, the referee is allowed to wait and see. Another change of law we could 'borrow' from the rival code?

[Reading Referees' Association]

NATIONAL RA GRAND PRIZE DRAW

And it is. Tickets are now out. Please sell (or buy) as many as you can. Not too difficult with a car as first prize.

REMEMBER TO GIVE THE COUNTERFOILS AND MONEY TO GEORGE MILLS
(If you do, the Reading RA gets half the proceeds)

FAIRPLAY AND LINESMAN'S AWARDS

As the end of the season approaches, all marks should be sent to Alan Turner as soon as possible. The more marks he receives, the fairer the result. If you haven't got a form, either get one or send in the marks on plain paper. He'll still be grateful.

PRACTICAL TRAINING - DEMONSTRATION

As most of our members know, there is a practical option for our trainee referees during their course. In 1982 a Reading RA resolution was passed at the national RA conference, that we should press the FA to include both theory and practice in the qualifying examination. We are still waiting for that to happen, but meanwhile in Reading we continue with practical training on our courses.

There are some who are sceptical about the value of our system. How can you have three experienced officials 'shadowing' three trainees on a real local league match? Can it possibly work? Is it worthwhile experience? What happens to the players and their game? etc etc.

The practical session scheduled for **Sunday 20 March** will be your chance to see the system in action. Invitations have been sent to the neighbouring County FAs, referees' societies in the Berks and Bucks, and Southern Division representatives. It is also planned to have a video made for use in training, as well as to help persuade other training officers of the value of guided practical experience as part of the training programme. Details from George at the monthly meeting.

One day, national RA policy on a theoretical and practical examination - the only way to ensure compulsory practical training - might even be adopted by the FA.

A COUPLE OF TIPS

The 'Football Referee' has been publishing 'Quicktips'. These are even quicker.

Got any favourite bits of wisdom/experience to pass on? Do send them to me.

- When you are waiting for the players to arrive on the pitch or when you call the captains together, blow your whistle for real. Warms up the lungs and shows you mean business.

- When you are going to caution, say you're going to caution, then ask the player's full name; if you are sending off, get the name first.

TRAINING COURSE

It's not clear yet who produced all the clients, but the latest course started with 29 members and now has 36! One of our biggest for some time but no embarrassment to the training team. The induction course for assistants was also successful and George and John are now supported by another six colleagues.

Given the continuing shortage of referees and trainees nationally, it must be good news.

READING RA TIES

The great event at last - and well worth waiting for.

We now have our own ties designed by committee member Steve Green, that is until they are sold out. For those who weren't at the February meeting where they appeared, they are basically grey with a fine double horizontal blue stripe at intervals and, just at the right position below the knot, there is the Reading RA motif as on the magazine cover, Forbury lion and all. Polyester I would guess, and excellent value at £4-50. Mine has received admiring glances. (I think it was the tie).

See Kevin as soon as possible or give him a ring. He only started with 100 and hasn't many left.

EARLY PLUMS

British Colleges Barannan Bowl Final (Abingdon Town, March 2)

Crewe/Alsager College of HE v. West London Institute of HE

Referee: David Keen; Linesmen: Ray Emmans, Richard Over

British Colleges Nike Shield Final (Abingdon Town, March 16)

Liverpool Inst of HE v.College of St Mark & St John, Plymouth

Referee: Peter Pittaway (Linesmen from the Army FA)

MONTHLY MEETINGS

March 17 Ian Branfoot, Manager, Reading FC

April 21 Open meeting

May 19 Annual General Meeting

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Some of the officers and committee will be resigning this year. George Mills completes his period of office as president. Members are reminded that they should consider possible nominees in good time.

NO COMMENT

Soccer referees, it would appear, are a disappearing breed. The Football League say that fewer and fewer referees are applying to join the League panel and I can't say I'm surprised. After all, there cannot be all that many deaf, blind and stupid illegitimate children born every year in this country.

Paul Hince, The Manchester Evening News, 8/12/87
(reprinted in The Sheffield Referee)