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EDITORIAL

One of the things referee magazine editors do is receive copies of (some) other editor's magazines. And they represent a wonderful diversity in content, style, quality of production etc. Many societies do not supply the 'Football Referee' free to all their members, so their magazine may have a different function from ours.

What editors have in common, however, is that they try to respond to their members wishes, but have great difficulty in finding out what those wishes are. If you are still out there, what about a bit of feedback? Tell me (politely if possible) what you like and dislike, what needn't be there, but is; what needs to be there, but isn't.

Referees remain right in the frame on the sports pages and most of the comment we're getting is unflattering. This season will be remembered, I'm sure, as the season of the 'professional foul' but the heightened interest in referees and refereeing created by the controversy seems to me to have put back the progress we seemed to making in the public eye.

Expedients such as 'professional referees' and 'ex-professional footballer referees' keep being canvassed. They seem certain to come, but without changes of attitude on the part of many associated with the professional game, there can't be any major improvement. It seems certain that the professional game will get more and more remote from football as we know it. And that's a very sad prospect.

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

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[Editor's address: 1 Bulmershe Ct, Earley, Reading RG6 1HX
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PRESIDENT'S PIECE

Would full-time mean better?

Have you noticed that when there are some controversial issues surrounding aspects of the laws of the game, the cry for full-time referees becomes louder, with particular demands for them to be ex-professional footballers?

This season, with the International Board's mandatory instruction regarding the so-called professional foul at a goal scoring opportunity, the cry has sometimes reached a crescendo. The question has to be asked: what are the objectives being sought with the introduction of full-time officials? What benefit is it thought would be gained?

It used to be thought that full-time referees, by being able to train more often, would be fitter, thus better able to control the games played at an increased pace. That argument is little paraded today as referees all seem able to keep up with play however hectic, and I personally am very impressed by the fitness of Football League referees.

Another benefit that, it is claimed, would ensue with full-time officials is more consistent decisions. Complete consistency is of course a pipe-dream. People will always see things differently as will referees see offences. However, I have often felt that insufficient training is given when some major change of law or interpretation takes place. You can see that some officials don't understand the reason behind the change. But it doesn't need full-time officials to have better training.

The other claim is that somehow the decisions would be better, more honest, if full-time referees were particularly drawn from the ranks of ex-players. The theory is that, by their contact with clubs, they would have a far greater understanding of the professional game which would enhance the quality of their decisions. I am a great believer in meeting, mixing and talking with players, but I wonder if this greater involvement might not have the opposite effect. Bobby Charlton has long been an idol of mine, as a player and for his behaviour on the field, but I recall him saying when a player was brought down going for an open goal, that the defender 'had no option'.

My question is: would a full-time, ex-professional understand the players point of view too well? We might well get acquiescence in the twisting of the laws that has so marked the professional game and made necessary such mandatory instructions.

Dick Sawdon Smith

MONTHLY MEETINGS

January

Sometimes you wonder whether the other members know something you don't - a modest attendance of 60 or so, perhaps suspecting that Guest Speaker Ian Porterfield might not make it. He didn't. Had to go out to celebrate with the Directors someone said . . .

A number of items of business. Good news from the training team: the current course has some 30 members, mainly in their late 20's, early 30's and 'promising'. Discussion of match-card-filling-in led to the conclusion that a blank card was too little, but there was no need to insist of full details of teams. Alan Turner reported good returns of forms for the Fair Play and Linesmen's Awards, but asked members to keep on sending marks in.

Social events-to-come included the trip to see England v. Cameroon at Wembley, and the Dinner Dance in May. Pat Monaghan reported that the cost of park pitches would be £40 next season. He reminded members to notify the leagues of any problems with pitches.

From the Southern Division a report that two changes of law were being recommended: that we should revert to the previous form of Law 4 on studs and bars and, an innovation, that players should not be allowed to pass back to the goalkeeper. It will be interesting to see how far they get.

In Ian Porterfield's absence, our ex-Football League linesman, David Keen, stepped into the breach and talked about - **lining**.

Law 6 tells us about linesmen and their duties, but few line properly. It starts when you get the appointment. Treat it as if you are the referee. Take your own (clean) flags with you. Check your handbook, travel arrangements; the higher the league, the earlier you arrive. Get there as early as the referee.

No referees give exactly the same instructions - ask if you have a query. A team effort. When you go out, check the nets; check your line; count the players in your half; watch for kick-about balls.

Stay off the pitch, except to supervise free kick or to prevent trouble, if asked. Leave the ball alone. Stay with the 2nd last defender as far as the halfway line.

For corners, follow instruction. Goal kicks, see the ball placed, go to 18 yard line decisively; go up field 5 yards short of 2nd last defender. Goalkeeper with ball in hand: stand level with 18 yard line, then go. If goalkeeper is off his line in bad conditions, stay with him. Penalties: follow instruction. Throw-ins: help with position. When running up pitch, keep your head up, watch for off-side (check most likely player). Chase all balls back to keeper. Do substitutions correctly. Practise the signal with the flag. Player off first. Referee stops watch. Be polite to the bench. Record cautions/sendings-off according to referee's instruction. (e.g. one linesman records, furthest watches). Eye contact; you are the eyes behind referee's back; different angle of vision. Be honest.

David then demonstrated the (vigorous) use of the flag for communication with the referee. In conclusion he reminded members that lining is an art. "You are there as a member of a team, to do a job. Do it well, your reputation is at stake". Two final bits of basic advice: practise and concentrate on off-side.

David was thanked warmly both for standing in at short notice and for the quality of his presentation.

February

Another sad opening. Members showed their respect to Life Member Cecil Grieshaber who had died recently. He was a close friend of Charlie Kearse but known to very few present members, and for the last 20 or so years had been very much more involved in cricket.

It was reported that we had come third in the County quiz - Wycombe won yet again, but our team of Ivan McNelly (captain), John Billings, Will Penny and Gary Webster were congratulated on their valiant efforts. The suggestion that we too should practise at monthly meetings found a good deal of favour.

John Moore reported on behalf of the training team that the course was going well with a near-record 32 members, many of whom were likely to take up the whistle.

Ken Arlott reminded members that the Reading Football League rules insist on a minimum of 10 minutes each way extra time - otherwise there has to be a replay. The match card does not have to be fully filled in with names of all the players when signed by the referee - teams and score will suffice. If the game is called

off, the referee is entitled to half fee and expenses. Inform the League if it is not forthcoming. If you are going to report a late start, you must tell the captains. Whether the League ever checked a club's denial that they had been told was not clear.

This month our guest speaker actually arrived - and in good time and raring to go. Keith Cooper, Football League referee from Swindon on his second recent visit to the society.

After taking the role of a brand new Class 3 last time, this season he was a year more experienced, but still a bit puzzled by many of the problem situations.

He warmed us up with one of his dead-pan funnies, then invited us to list the qualities of a referee. He got a good response and rewarded three colleagues for specially good answers, one with a whistle, two with flags.

His three 'volunteers' turned out to be the referee and two neutral linesmen being briefed before a game. For Stuart Mills, the referee, it was his first ever instructions to neutral linesmen, and he did a pretty good job, with the help of the odd word, especially from Ivan McNelly and Andy Awberry chosen to be his colleagues. He went through seniority, time-keeping, record-keeping, wings to run, offsides, corners, penalties, fouls, substitutes, eye contact, throw-ins.

In his fascinating rural Wiltshire accent, Keith got us all involved in thinking about what had been said, and without belittling the instructions the lads had arrived at, helped us to improve them, usually by making them more precise - a word he used more than once. We were made to think about what we were suggesting e.g for positioning at a penalty or corner. As on the last occasion, Keith was not doctrinaire, he didn't tell us what we must do, or even claim there is a 'right way'.

A glutton for punishment, Keith offered to respond to questions on his talk or more general. Teams of three officials? He believes they will come, but pointed out the problem if a particular grouping doesn't work. Most difficult teams to referee? Third and Fourth division because the players are less skilful. Professional referees? A questionnaire has been sent to Football League referees. Keith is convinced there will be some before the next World Cup, but who's going to give up his job? It will need to be a good contract. Deliberate hand-ball? Player should be sent off, but can't be yet - referee has to apply existing law.

Another excellent evening provided by a senior referee who still officiates locally and is willing to discuss the concerns of his colleagues on the local rec.

MONTPELLIER PLAYER SENT OFF - FOR WHAT?

The recent Manchester United v. Montpellier game was a wonderful example of the problem referees face.

Apart from all the usual thespian activity by our continental friends, there was the Mark Hughes incident. What intrigued me most in the end was not whether Baills should have been sent off, nor even what he actually did, but what he was **alleged** to have done. The versions I saw and heard referred variously to 'butted' 'head-butted' 'charged' 'knocked over' 'shoulder-charged in the jaw' 'hit' 'punched' 'knocked to the ground'.

I actually thought none of these descriptions entirely accurate. I thought Baills charged him violently shoulder to shoulder and Hughes made a meal of it. But I can't guarantee my version any more than the others.

LIKES, DISLIKES, FEARS AND PHOBIAS

It seemed a good idea but the result was a bit surprising. I am very aware that certain things about football and refereeing affect me - in different ways. So I talked to a few people, collected a few thoughts and put them together.

Wherever I am, I love to hear a whistle of a certain pitch. I change quite automatically into refereeing mode and, if it's at all possible, have to see what's going on. I don't exactly like the smell of embrocation, but it takes my imagination into the changing room before a match.

A particular pleasure for one of our referees in local football is the moment he walks out flanked by neutral linesmen on the rare occasions he has them. 'You feel part of a team. It makes you realize how lonely refereeing usually is.'

'I love that moment I blow the whistle for the start of the game and I know it's down to me for the next 90 minutes. I suppose I like the tension, the challenge'. 'I prefer the final whistle on the day it really went right. The teams genuinely thank you and you just float back to the changing room. And if it's gone badly, I like to blow the final whistle to stop the pain. On those occasions I don't float, I run!'

'I dislike checking studs. It always seems dark and awkward and untidy in the changing room and I feel intrusive - in spite of believing in doing it.' 'My phobia is wind - not the internal variety. It always seems to make the players edgy and the game

unpredictable. And I seem to lose concentration. I have never abandoned a game because of the wind but I'm sure I should have done.' 'I can't stand feeling conned - like when players take it in turn to foul so you can't get a grip on it. I don't like games with twins either. Before they had to have numbers it was a nightmare'.

'I don't know whether I should say this, but I'm not keen on some of our colleagues when they're club linesmen. I know when I've a problem: "You'll be all right with me, I'm a Class 1" You never are.'

Got any favourite likes, dislikes, fears or phobias? Let me know and I'll publish a few more.

NATIONAL RA MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the national Referees Association stood at **15,694** on 31 December 1990. But there were **27,313** referees registered i.e. with their County FAs. In other words, which no-one seems to be expressing, only 57% of referees are members of the RA. Or, put the other way round, 43% of referees do **not** belong to the RA. That seems to me deplorable, It is National RA policy to seek 100% membership. Is National RA concerned enough to make it happen?

THE ANNUAL COUNTY RA QUIZ

One of the things our society seems to take less seriously than some is the annual quiz, almost always won by Wycombe. George Mills, our past President, with Alan Tate of Slough, sets the questions and runs the event. And we still don't do as well as we might. George would like to know why the society has difficulty in interesting members to join the team, or even to go along and support it. Are members afraid of being wrong? Of being criticized? Or just shy?

George believes that if members would actually attend, they would learn a great deal. The Quiz is a friendly occasion, with a lot of questions - 80 in the last one - and a nice progression starting with the straightforward and going on to the more difficult. At first you are given ten seconds to answer; by the last round it is 30 seconds for a longer answer to a more demanding question.

Members seemed to welcome the idea of questions on Law at meetings - that's how some rival societies prepare and of course keep up to date for doing the business of refereeing. That's what it's really about. With very little encouragement George has set us the following questions to give us all an idea what it's about. (Easiest questions first; answers on page 14).

1. The circumference of the ball shall not be more than 28 inches nor less than 27 inches. The weight at the start of the game shall not be more than 16 oz. not less than 15 oz.

True or False? If False, say why.

2. When a player is taking a free-kick outside his own penalty area, all opposing players shall be at least 10 yards from the ball, unless they are standing on their own goal-line

Complete or Incomplete. If incomplete, what is missing?

3. What action should the referee take if two players of the same team exchange blows? How should the game be restarted?
4. A player charges an opponent fairly with his shoulder when the opponent is about to receive a pass. The referee blows his whistle and awards an indirect free-kick to the opponent. Under what circumstances would the referee be justified in taking such action?
5. A defender has been dismissed from the field for the use of foul or abusive language. From the free kick awarded the ball is kicked directly into the goal. What action should the referee take?
6. Failing light causes the termination of a penalty kick shoot-out to determine the result of a match before the winners are known. What action should be taken?

"SHOULD FORMER PLAYERS BECOME REFEREES?" asks Tony Hardisty

A question not without controversy in refereeing circles, though for us there is another part to it - should they be given preferential treatment as ex-professional players? One RA is in dispute at the moment with its County FA and the national RA because in one area, it is alleged, a case of unreasonably accelerated promotion appears to have taken place in spite of constant reassurance. No doubt Steve Baines' progress will be watched with interest

The same few people **do** go each year and just wish that others would go too. There are two main snags for many - it is often distant and demands a Friday off work, and it costs. But you don't have to stay in the Conference hotels. The cost can be much reduced by staying with friends if you have any in the area or by choosing cheaper accommodation.

On the positive side, it is a great way to get a sense of our national organisation, to meet with a cross section of referees from all over the country and often overseas too. The Conference business should also be considered positive and sometimes it is.

The bit that was unfair in the criticism was the 'under-informed' bit. All our members receive the 'Football Referee' and Conference gets frequent publicity in that. I wrote almost four pages in the September magazine about last year's, and gave a mention of the coming Conference in the last issue.

We would be delighted to have a bigger Reading contingent in Torquay this year. 7-9 June. Secretary Derek Reigate has all the details.

THE NATIONAL RA GRAND DRAW

It really is. With a car as first prize (even if a lot of tickets are sold), it has to be one of the most tempting. Many societies sell huge numbers of tickets and so appear more often than us amongst the prize-winners.

More important for the societies is the income they get from the sale of tickets by their members. For each book sold (at £1) the society gets **50 pence**. So if every member could sell **ten books** we would make **£660 clear profit**. **John Moore** will be delighted to supply more books if you have already sold out. **Remember to give the counterfoils and money to John** - we lose our share if you send them back to headquarters direct.

PENALTY KICK

Interesting news for all of us trying to administer the law on goalkeepers' movement at penalty kicks in spite of what we observe being allowed by others, especially on TV. Ken Ridden, the FA National Training Officer for Referees, has been given the task of looking into the penalty law and its interpretation. Also included in his remit is encroachment. What I don't know is the time-scale.

MORE FROM MISSOURI

Last season we had Michael McCrary, a student from the University of Missouri, over here for a term. He joined in the society and got in some refereeing. He also wrote me an article, recently re-published in the 'Football Referee'. We keep in touch and his most recent letter contains a good deal of interest and reveals some of the differences between our situations - caused not only by history but by climate and the size of the land-mass.

"We're in our off-season here in Columbia. Unfortunately the off-season is five months long. Kansas City is a two hour drive to the West, and St Louis is the same distance to the east. Both are running winter leagues for seniors and St Louis has one for the youth as well. In fact, St Louis is the northernmost city in the country to have a youth league in the winter.

Over the Christmas break a group of us referees drove down to Tampa, Florida and refereed a high caliber, four-day tournament. It was a 19-hour drive and we went straight through going both ways
. .

Premier clubs at almost every age division regularly attend a series of summer tournaments in five or six states. It is the best way for them to rate one another and to get the best competition possible with teams from other states. Our cup format does not allow for this large amount of interstate play.

In Missouri we have two youth cups, State Cup and Challenge Cup. A team can only enter one of them. The Challenge Cup is in the U-12, U-14, U-16, U-17, and U-19 brackets for boys and girls. They try to play it over 10 to 12 weekends from early March to the end of May. The state champion in each bracket goes on to the regional tournament. There are four regions in the country. Regional play is over five or six days in early July and starts as group play which leads to semi-finals and finals. In the U-16, U-17 and U-19 divisions there is a national cup. The four regional champions in each division get together, this year in Omaha, Nebraska the last weekend in July, and play single elimination.

The State Cup is for the lesser teams in these age brackets and is also played in the odd year ages as well. Play does not go beyond the state level.

So for a school age boy in Missouri, he really has a three or four season year. From late August until mid-November he plays for his school. Interscholastic regulations prohibit any play or practice with a club during the high school season. The club season, only in St Louis, starts in early December and will end, weather permitting, in early March. This brings his club into one of the cups. For the other cities in the state their leagues will be starting about this time so they play league and cup consecutively.

All of this should be over by the end of May and the tournament season kicks into gear (pardon the pun!). There are about a dozen top-flight tournaments that draw teams nationally and internationally. However the vast majority are regional or sub-regional in scope. For example the tournament in Columbia is sub-regional. It is played over a Saturday and Sunday in early June. Last year it drew 70-80 teams in 7 age groups for boys only. The furthest a team travelled was a five hour drive from cities like Omaha, Wichita, Kansas, or Des Moines, Iowa.

On the other hand, there is a tournament outside of Minneapolis that is on a totally different scale. They take a week in July and play from Sunday to the following Saturday. They draw over 400 teams from over 20 states and six or eight countries. I was there in '87 and '89 and am planning to be there again this year. They draw referees on an equally impressive scale. They house us in a college dormitory which isn't gratis but it is air-conditioned! My last time there referees from nine states as well as from Wales, Denmark, and Canada were on my floor. Quite a motley crew indeed. The best game I worked there was one of the U-16 semis on the line. The teams were from Copenhagen and Taipei, the referee was a native Pole living in San Francisco and the other linesman was a Canadian from Winnipeg. The Taiwanese side won the match but lost the final on penalties to an unbelievable Nigerian side in front of 4,000 spectators. It's an exhilarating week all round."

MONTHLY MEETINGS

March 21	Ray Lewis, FIFA and Football League referee
April 18	Open meeting
May 16	Annual General Meeting

Answers to the Quiz Questions (p.9)

1. False. Not 15 oz, 14 ozs.
2. Incomplete. . . . on their own goal-line, between the goal-posts.
3. Stop play. Send off both players and restart play with an indirect free kick by the opposing team.
4. If the player was not within playing distance of the ball and was not trying to play it.
5. Following the dismissal of a player for foul or abusive

language, the game is restarted with an **indirect** free kick and the referee would therefore award a goal-kick.

6. Winners are determined by the drawing of lots.