

Reading Referees' Association

www.readingrefs.org.uk

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Reading Football League	Derek Reigate
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READING REFEREE

Editor - Brian Palmer

April/May 2000

Assistant Editor - John Moore

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Editorial

The end of another season and, as usual, specially good news for some with promotion or a plum appointment or two. For others a year, I hope, of doing the business and enjoying it, in spite of all that seems to be working against us.

There are possibly reasons for optimism. The FA is re-organising itself and the recent declarations have suggested a tougher line with the nonsense-makers. Even the media seem less ready to knock us all the time.

On the national RA front, the Management Consultancy Team will be reporting before the end of the year and there are hopes of changes for the better.

Closer to home I have to remind readers that this is my last issue after 17 years as editor. I intended to serve for five years but have been pressed each year to continue. No longer. It really is time for a new hand, especially a younger one. I have enjoyed serving the society in this way and am grateful for all the support I have received, especially from my Assistant Editor John Moore and regular contributor Dick Sawdon Smith. In my turn, if invited to do so, I will assist the new editor in any appropriate way. I wish him or her well.

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

Monthly Meeting

A disappointment to be in the Players' Lounge and yet it made it all more sociable, homely even, for the nearly forty members present.

Amongst the Secretary's news, he highlighted the fact that the B & B FA will pay referees for attending personal hearings: travelling expenses @ 20p a mile and 'substantiated loss of earnings'.

Brian Wratten reported that the present training courses were at or near the exam stage (with 18 and 17 candidates respectively).

In his report on the Reading Football League, Terry Gibbs made the following points:

- Referees were thanked for reports on disciplinary issues. They would be considered after action by the B & B FA
- Referees are asked to check that their correct phone number is in the handbook and to notify any changes
- Four officials will be appointed to all of this year's cup finals which will be at Reading Town's ground
- The Chiltonian is to merge with the Hellenic, to make a new East and West First Division.

Mentorship. Mike Rowley had circulated publicity about mentorship and the Royals' Academy; he was still looking for more mentors, though the number of newly qualified referees taking up the whistle remained disappointing.

On behalf of the Management Consultancy Team, Brian Palmer thanked all who had completed the questionnaire – Reading had completed 56 from 162

members. He also especially thanked Dick Sawdon Smith, the facilitator, and members of the Think Tank, because only a small number of Think Tank reports were anticipated.

John Freeman reported that he was to attend a hearing after reporting post-match nonsense in which he could not pick out one culprit and so cited the club. He felt sure the club would get away with it and advised newer referees not to be down-hearted if their case against clubs was not upheld.

Neil Isham reported a serious problem with broken glass on the pitch at Highmoor. He had enlisted both teams who were keen to play to comb the whole pitch. He reported the problem but did not see it as Highmoor's fault.

Unusually the Guest Speaker had nothing to do with football – at least not the round ball variety. Andrew Melrose, at 6ft and 16-stone, looked an ex-Rugby player and is. He is the RFU's Referee Development Officer for the South West Region, which (strangely) includes Reading.

He is one of such officers in a paid, professional team of eight responsible for referee training/development, headed by the National Referee development Officer who is a business man/manager who has never refereed. They are in charge, in theory, of some 5,000 referees, though the true figure is nearer 2,500. Possibly because of sponsorship.

There is no national body for referees like the RA – the 43 federal referees' societies (roughly county areas) are 'effectively independent', yet the RFU controls training, development and promotion.

Andrew described the hierarchy of levels, 50% being in the lowest (C). There is an elite squad of young and promising referees (B1*) being fast-tracked for the top. The 65 National referees get between £150 and £250 a game; for an international the fee is £1,500 and Andrew commented that one referee had done 50 in one season.

We then saw video clips used for training. With referees miked up we could hear the chat – polite and first names on both sides. Not quite the football we know.

All societies have a trained training team and have monthly training sessions validated by the RDO.

There is also a hierarchy of touch judges and advisers (mentors/assessors).

In spite of the professional structure they have and the organised emphasis on training and development, Andrew is concerned for the grass roots ‘who get nothing’ If a senior referee retires, everyone’s sorry; if the grassroots referees stopped, there would be no rugby.

Problem, too, of constant changing of the Laws (IB to note). A quotation from Tasker Watson:

“I wish the Law makers would take an indeterminate sabbatical for

- the understanding of the spectators
- the patience of the players
- the sanity of the referees”

Philosophy.

- Manage a match for the maximum enjoyment of all participants.
- The professional game (500 players) and grassroots (250,000) are not the same.
- “It’s your game. You decide how you want me to referee”
- Safety; Equity; Law – in that order (increasing danger of litigation)
- “We don’t control players – we only control ourselves”
- Be consistently inconsistent – referee consistently according to the requirements of that match. We want individuals, not clones.
- Remember Law 29 – common sense
- The Laws exist before the match – the rule of the game start when you blow the whistle.

Referee performance

- Fitness and Positioning
- Knowledge and Application of Law
- Personality
- Judgement

A really interesting presentation. Although Andrew frequently apologised for his lack of knowledge of football/soccer, the parallels were there for all to see. Very different games and attitudes, but the fundamentals for the referee are just the same. Good evidence of the professionalism of the RU's approach and the resources they are putting into training.

APRIL

Monthly Meeting

A disappointing turnout of fewer than 40, especially for Karl Wilson, our Vice-Chairman, who was in charge in the Chairman's absence.

The good news was that some of our new referees had come along for their first meeting and were cordially welcomed.

Admin reports were on the agenda paper as usual; but Secretary Martin Albury drew attention to the need for players for the *Whistlers*, our 11-a-side team. Two matches were in the offing – a mini-tournament the following weekend and the annual Graham Stockton Trophy match against Bracknell RA which would be taking place around the time of the next meeting: on 15,16 or 22 May. Volunteers to Tony Beckett.

Other points:

- Training of young referees. The position is that trainees must have reached their 14th birthday before the night of the first examination at the end of the course.
- Referees' changing facilities.

Christchurch Meadows – planning permission is being sought for a new building to be funded by a lottery grant. Could take a little time.
King's Meadow – has been re-furbished.

- Members were reminded to get their money and counterfoils for the National RA Draw to Brian Wratten as soon as possible and not later than 18 May.

League reports

No reps present from the RFL meeting and nothing to report from the Sunday League.

Training

In total 34 candidates had qualified from the two recent courses and some 8-10 were expected to join the two local leagues. Brian Wratten and the training team were congratulated and Brian Wratten thanked Stuart Gentle for his work in organising the large number of examiners required.

A plum appointment and a list of promotions were read out (details on pages 9 - 10) and the members concerned applauded.

Re-structuring the National RA.

Brian Palmer briefly updated members on the work of the Management Consultancy Team.



PROBLEM SPOT



Ken Clark related in graphic detail a problem he had been confronted with concerning jewellery – an eyebrow ring. The opposition began arriving 15 minutes before kick-off. Five items of jewellery were removed without fuss, but the goalkeeper expected to play with his eyebrow ring taped. Ken

considered it dangerous and insisted it had to be taken out if the goalkeeper wanted to play. The keeper claimed he had always been allowed to play with it previously. Ken was ready to start with more than the required seven players but their manager took them off. A 'trainee solicitor' appeared with a disclaimer form signed by the player, so Ken decided to get started with the keeper's ring taped. The manager apologised to Ken at the end of the game.

The moral? Ken believes the Law is clear. Even taped the ring was dangerous and he will not allow such a thing again – disclaimer or no. More importantly we all agreed at the beginning of the season not to allow jewellery – why are we not doing what we said? What about consistency?

John Freeman reported how helpful it had been to have a colleague at a disciplinary hearing and he thanked Chairman Derek Reigate for giving him support.

George Mills described the arrangements for this year's Royals' Cup and asked for 10 referees on 15th and 16th May. Fee £30 for the day.

Tom Walton invited anyone interested in acting as Assistant Referee on the Allied Counties' Youth League (Wednesday evenings) to contact him. Mark McAdden mentioned a disciplinary case in which he had been involved. He had used only one form, but discovered later that if he had listed offences on separate forms the punishment would have been cumulative. This was confirmed by Ted Cambridge.

No Guest Speaker this month – instead a Quiz on football and other sports run by Karl Wilson and Shane Leather. We were divided into six and I have to say it was a good job we had Chris Hayman in our team. We didn't quite win but he got most of the points we did get!

Rumour had it that Mike Rowley was getting answers from the Internet with his new WAP mobile phone but it wasn't good enough to beat that team at the back.

Nice bottle of wine each for the winners but even the losers seemed to have enjoyed themselves.

SOME VINTAGE FUNNIES

(thanks to Andy Awbery)

"A million wouldn't buy him, and I'd be one of them".

Bill Shankly

"I used to go missing a lot - Miss Canada, Miss United Kingdom, Miss Germany".

George Best

"I've told the players we need to win so that I can have the cash to buy some new ones".

Chris Turner, Peterborough manager, before League Cup QF, 1992.

"If we played like that every week we wouldn't be so inconsistent".

Bryan Robson

"If you can't stand the heat in the dressing-room, get out of the kitchen".

Terry Venables

"It's now 1-1, an exact reversal of the score on Saturday". -

Anon Radio 5 Live.

"I'm not a believer in luck but I do believe you need it".

Alan Ball

Catherine Wheel Advert

FAIR PLAY & LINESMAN'S AWARD

Every year we reward the local league teams who have the best record for Fair Play and also the best Club Linesmen who make our job so much easier.

Fair Play Award

1	REME Apprentices	RFL	9.36
2	Compton	RFL	9.30
3	Emmbrook Sports	RFL	9.00

Linesman's Award

1	M Pinfold	Compton (RFL)	9.16
2	B Clark	Earley United (RSL)	8.80
3	M Stagg	Victory Gladstone (RFL)	8.71

Congratulations to them all and thanks to our members who completed the forms and to Alan Turner who yet again collected them in and collated the marks.

THE LADDER TO THE TOP

It was mentioned recently in this magazine that Alison Chapman, who had reached the heights of the Ryman League as an Assistant Referee and then taken time away from refereeing, had now returned to the fold.

We are pleased to say that her return has not only put her career back on track but has taken a massive leap forward. After returning to the Ryman League as an Assistant and as a Referee on the Suburban League, Alison received an invitation to be interviewed for a place on the Ryman League Referees' list. She has since learnt that she was successful and starts her new role at the start of next season. This rapid promotion puts Alison in the list of top female referees in this country and we wish her every success in the future.

Avon Food Services Advert

THE PLUM TREE

The following are the Cup Final appointments of which we have been notified.
Congratulations – and also to anyone who has inadvertently been omitted.

Berks & Bucks FA

Senior Cup	LG Smith	Assistant Referee
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Reading Football League

Berkshire Trophy

Senior Cup	K Wiltshire	Assistant Referee
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Intermediate Cup	N Isham	Referee
	S Leather	Assistant Referees
	D Naish	
	K Clark	4 th Official

Junior Cup	G Douglas	Referee
	M Emmett	Assistant Referee
	K Davis	4 th Official

Divisional Play-offs

Division One	M Albury	Referee
	M Baker	Assistants
	M Overton	
	K Wilson	4 th Official

Division Two	J Davison	Referee
	A Brown	Assistants
	B Russell	

– SEASON 1999-2000

Reading Sunday League

Tilehurst Charity Cup	J Moore D Naish	Referee 4 th Official
Industrial Cup	M Garstang P Jenkins	Referee Assistant Referee
E. Cambridge Cup	T Walton	4 th Official
John Lusted Cup	B Grover	Assistant Referee
Treasurer's Cup	K Wilson S Leather J Larkin D Flory	Referee Assistants 4 th Official

PROMOTIONS

And congratulations too to the following members who have been promoted:

Class 2 to Class 1

Tony Beckett, Chris Hitt, Paul Merrifield, Karl Wilson

Class 3 to Class 2

Brian Grover, Shane Leather, Mark McAdden

Special congratulations to Karl who has made the two steps in successive seasons.

Finally, commiserations to those who didn't make it this time. Some of our best didn't get there at their first attempt. Listen to helpful voices and stay with it. Don't forget your County FA's deadline if you want to be assessed for promotion next season. *The responsibility to apply in time is yours.*

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

Beware the twisting of truth, says Dick Sawdon Smith

A few weeks ago I ran the line at the quarter final of the English Schools Football Association's cup competition for counties at under 19 level. I mention the age, because these were young men (after all I was whisked off to do my national service at 18) rather than schoolboys. Within a short time they would be going on to play in men's football, some perhaps at a senior level, for they were the pick of their respective counties.

Just after the restart the home team scored what was to be a controversial goal. The referee consulted with my other colleague on the far side of the field of play and between them they agreed that it was a legitimate goal. This was too much for two of the defending team who carried on a loud and prolonged harassment of the referee. Finally they got what they were asking for, their names in his book. The rest of the match was rather uneventful with the away side scoring four times to the home team's contentious one.

As we three officials left the field we were approached by the two schoolmasters with the travelling team. "You're not going to send in those two cautions are you referee?" they asked. The referee quite rightly confirmed that misconduct reports would be going in to the appropriate authority. "That's ridiculous," the pair exclaimed, "that was never a goal, so they can't be blamed for complaining about it." The referee replied that he and his assistant referee both agreed the goal had been correctly scored, but that was not the point. Dissent was an offence which warranted a caution.

The schoolmasters exploded with indignation. "Here we are," they cried, "trying to educate these young men, and something like this happens." I could not keep quiet any longer. "What you should be asking yourself," I suggested to the two teachers, "is whether you are giving them the right education. Perhaps you should be teaching them a little discipline and that dissent of the referee's decision, whether right or wrong, is against the laws of the game.

Had you done that they might not now have a disciplinary record and be better equipped for football in their coming years.”

It reminded me of a letter I wrote to the *Sunday Telegraph* a couple of years ago. Alan Lamb in his weekly column had commented on Sir Donald Bradman's observations about sledging, a particularly nasty habit that has crept into cricket. The greatest Australian batsman and captain ever said that he would not pick anyone to play for his country who sledged opponents. Alan Lamb's response was that with that criteria he would not have many players to choose from. The point I made in my letter was that if players knew that sledging would bar them from playing for the national team, they would stop sledging.

We seem to live in a world of George Orwell's newspeak. A little late for 1984 but readers of his novel will remember the slogan of the Ministry of Truth: War is Peace - Freedom is Slavery - Ignorance is Strength. In other words, everything is back to front. Everything is twisted.

In an FA Cup tie which Aston Villa were winning, the referee awarded a free kick to their opponents near the end of the game. An Aston Villa player rushed forward, encroaching in an attempt to delay the kick being taken. The player had already been cautioned so was sent off for a second cautionable offence. When asked after the game on television what he thought of his players action, the Aston Villa manager Mike Gregory said "The referee should have engaged his brain before showing the red card." In the way that these things are, the interviewer didn't think to suggest that perhaps it was the player who should have engaged his brain before encroaching, knowing that a second cautionable offence would lead to a sending off.

I wouldn't like to comment on the size of Mike Gregory's brain, but here is a law of the game, deliberately introduced to prevent the type of cheating that his player was engaged in and yet, in his opinion, given on prime time television, it was the referee who was at fault.

War is Peace - Freedom is Slavery - Ignorance is Strength - Right is Wrong.

Mike Rowley Advert

“WE DIDN’T HAVE ENOUGH BALLS”

Report in the *Southampton Echo*. seen by Andy Awbery

New balls please, we've been nuked!

A Basingstoke league football match had to be abandoned when all the footballs disappeared over a fence possessing the ultimate deterrent which reduced the players to asking: "Please Mister, can we have our ball back?" writes John May.

Because the footballs went over the fence of a top secret nuclear weapons plant.

Inter Tadley and Castle were locked at 1 - 1 when the last of eight footballs available to them said over the security fencing at Atomic Weapons Establishment, Tadley.

At that point, with 20 minutes left and no more footballs available the referee called the Basingstoke League Division 2 match off.

Castle FC secretary Greg Clarke said: "Its a new one on me. Six of Tadley's balls went

over the fence and two of ours, and it must have been a regular thing because they keep plenty of spares available, although not enough in this case. The balls went into a sort of security no-man's land where nobody is allowed to go and retrieve them without clearance..

"The frustrating thing was that we could see all the balls, but nobody could get them to continue the game. Not that we would have wanted to - they would probably have come back Day-Glo green!"

Castle did get their two balls back, though: "somebody hung around and waited for a security man to go and get them."

Unfortunately, nobody from the Tadley team was available for comment.

The AWE is so secret their football club isn't listed in the Hampshire FA Handbook.

THE BOYS DONE BAD

A Sunday football team that lost every game of the season suffered a final humiliation when they were beaten by their supporters 5-4. The Joseph's Well side received a drubbing in all 22 games of the Leeds Sunday League. The match was the team's idea after fans jeered them off the pitch at the end of a 10-0 defeat.

(The Times, 8/5/00)

ENDANGERED SPECIES - WORLDWIDE !



There will be few referees in this area who have not heard of the Reading Saturday League's "Endangered Species" campaign. However, many may not be aware of its conception or its subsequent success.

The campaign started three years ago following a visit to one of the League's matches by League Chairman, John Dell. He returned from this particular match incensed at the level of abuse being levelled at the referee by players, managers and spectators. Such was his anger, he vowed that he would be sending a letter to all clubs, and would insist that it was displayed on their club notice boards.

It occurred to me that if the clubs were to be instructed to display a letter, then why not display a *poster*? The first "Endangered Species" posters were sent to all clubs, local Authorities and the media in October 1997. Such was the success of the launch, that it was not long before Meridian Television heard about it, and provided Mortimer, Checkendon and Neil Isham with the honour of being the first Reading league teams and official to feature on a *Meridian Tonight* news item. (Andy Awbery, Cliff Watkins and Neil Haddock took co-starring roles).

By this time, many requests were coming in from other leagues and Referees' Associations, to be allowed to use the posters in their area. This gained momentum when George Mills kindly sent copies of the posters to the national RA magazine, which attracted a full page article. Leagues as far away as Hull, East Sussex and, more recently, Philadelphia in the United States now have similar campaigns running. In particular, the enquiry from the USA certainly came as a surprise.

English referee, Kevin Peyton, who now lives in the USA, telephoned me one evening and said he had seen the posters and article in the RA magazine, and would like copies. My first reaction was, could I recognise the voice, and is this some sort of "wind-up"? As the conversation progressed, it was obviously a genuine enquiry, with Kevin relaying a similar set of events, that we experience in this country regarding losing referees due to abuse. Copies of the posters and computer disk were duly dispatched, with their "Chapter" Chairman Ed Marco sending me an e-mail to confirm that indeed another "Endangered Species" campaign was well underway.

Whether or not the campaign has been successful is of course difficult to judge. The League's view has always been very simple: if just one player or manager has thought twice about having a go at the referee, then it has been a success.

This season the League launched the third poster, with a slightly different approach. The first two took the line of "facts which players may not be aware of" (these could have covered both sides of the posters!). Our most recent one, however, has a one-liner (courtesy of Andy Awbery) and simply offers a slogan "Abuse a Ref - we lose a Ref". The latest posters caught the attention of the national newspaper *Sport First*, who also ran a full page feature on our campaign.

Such has been the impact of the campaign that we intend to keep it running. Next season will see us use another, slightly different approach, still hoping to keep the problems of abusing referees high on the League and clubs' agendas.

Philip Lewis

GET YOUR EXPENSES

Members, especially new ones, are reminded that we are required to attend County FA/FA disciplinary hearings and there is no fee. Out-of-pocket expenses such as travel, are allowed up to a limit of £50 (car mileage @ 20p a mile). In addition, any 'substantial loss of earnings' will now be paid by the County FA.

VISITORS TO OUR WEBSITE

Although it's not visible, we do have a counter which tots up the number of visitors. We seem to have settled down to about 80 a week.

What you don't know, of course, is who they are, how much they read and how long they stay. Just keep calling whoever you are!

GOOD NEWS FROM THE FA (TWICE)

The real FA website arrived at the end of February. It was a long wait but worth it. The one page, largely made up of the FA badge, has given way to a very professional, attractive and comprehensive site. You have to be patient while the first page loads, but they do give you a progress bar to watch. Only a little about referees as yet - although it is a large site - but they do promise further development.

AN OVERDUE PERSONAL HEARING ? asks John Moore

I have just received this morning a letter from the B&B telling me I am required to attend a hearing regarding the dismissal of a player on a Sunday match some four weeks ago. I am proud of the fact that with all the matches I have officiated in, I have only been to one hearing before and I was the fourth official on that particular match!

I have subsequently heard that this player in question has taken this action out of fear of losing a chance to play in a cup final this month and an appeal allows him the time to possibly participate in the match. And I thought the only game we were involved in was football.

CHANGES OF LAW (for season 2000-2001)

At the February meeting of the International FA Board the amendments to the Laws of the Game were agreed:

- There was insufficient evidence to convince the Board that the 'ten-yard advancement' should be introduced globally. The FA were given permission to investigate further. Leagues who wish to participate next season can apply to The FA.
- There will be further experiments involving two Referees in leagues/cups abroad.
- The goalkeepers' 4-step law was removed. Goalkeepers will be allowed up to 6 seconds to release the ball into play.
- An Assistant Referee will be expected to give assistance to the Referee when he is in a better position to see an incident, especially if inside the penalty area. It is important that the Assistant Referee has a better view of the incident, and not the distance from the offence.
- At the taking of penalty kicks, the Assistant Referee will observe the movement of the goalkeeper off his goal line, and decide on whether a goal has been scored.
- The Fourth Official will have the authority to inform the Referee if the Laws of the Game have not been correctly applied. For example, if the Referee has not sent off a player for two yellow cards because he had not realised the player was already cautioned, the 4th Official will inform him.

- The Fourth Official will inform the Referee of any 'Violent Conduct' that has occurred out of the view of the Referee and his Assistants.
- Sending-off offence 56 will read: Uses offensive OR insulting OR abusive language AND/OR GESTURES.
- Kicks from the penalty mark to decide the outcome of a drawn game will include an equalisation of numbers taking the kick in cases where the kicks have exceeded five each and where one team has, say, 9 players because two have been sent off. The other team can nominate two of its 11 players who will not be taking a kick.
- There will be new restrictions on pitch-side advertising.
- The coach must return to his position in the technical area immediately he has issued his instructions.
- There will be no limit on the number of substitutes allowed for friendly international matches provided it is agreed beforehand.

(With thanks to Mal Davies, Editor, the *Midland Referee*)

IT RUNS IN THE FAMILY

Among our newly qualified colleagues are, as usual, a family connection or two.

Christopher and Richard Kearsley are identical twins;

Graham and Clive Pitcher are father and son;

Martin and Matthew Strange are father and son;

Andrew Webb is the son of our Bracknell friend and colleague and Football League Assistant Referee Alfie Webb;

Jonathan Wicks is the brother of Christopher, already a referee and one of our members, and son of Karen the Referee Appointments' Secretary for the South Chiltern Minor League.

Knowl Hill Garage Advert

A review of the season

We are at the end of another season and the partnership between Brian Palmer and myself is coming to a close after many years of collaboration on this magazine. I am pleased to have been associated with Brian, not only with the Reading RA Mag, but on other projects such as the series of articles for the Reading *Evening Post*.

We sat down at the start of the year and put our thoughts together on how this year would pan out and it is remarkable that many of the things we wrote have turned out to have become fact.

Perhaps the easiest to foresee was the Wembley fiasco and the plans that have become such a mess were there for all to see. Even now, no one is sure what they are up to, but then wasn't that always the case?

The European Super League took place by stealth as we suggested it would, and even now it is still continuing. Teams knocked out of one competition took part in another and the rewards for finishing top of your respective league now go down to the third placed team as well. Still the managers' cry about too many games per season, yet this is what they have wanted for years. The shame is that the novelty of European matches on the television has now disappeared when you can see them three times a week almost every week.

The FA Cup was not devalued as much as some said it would be by the absence of Manchester United, but the farce of the competition in Brazil was all we said it would be. How they must have wished they hadn't taken part.

I wish I could say that the 2006 World Cup had now been finalised but the vote still hasn't taken place. I have read this week how the Football Association are now saying if England are not successful then it will be the fault of the soccer violence that seems to have returned. I sense the decision of the award to foreign shores is already feared and that backs are being covered. After all, no one must be to blame for the countless millions spent on "gentle persuasion" of the delegates. But then, as Brian says, I am always a cynic!

Finally, all is not lost. I have read that FIFA are going to persevere with more trials using two referees on the field of play. Just when you think it can't get any worse . . .

John Moore