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EDITORIAL

Since the last issue appeared, I have received a letter from Mr Ken Burns, Immediate Past President of the national RA, who felt that my editorial and article on the rules contro-versy, which mentioned him by name, called his integrity and that of the RA solicitors into question. Those who know me will understand that that was not my intention. It seemed to me that when the issue under discussion was one of 'wide-reaching implications' - the General Secretary's words - and two firms of solicitors took quite opposite views, then a third opinion would be helpful. I did not believe I was questioning the integrity of any of those concerned. However, I clearly expressed myself unusually badly, and equally clearly have offended someone who has given immense service to the RA.

On receiving Mr Burns letter, I responded immediately and made the following apology with my explanation:

'1 My editorial and article in the latest edition of the 'Reading Referee' were in no way intended to question your personal or professional integrity or that of the RA solicitors.

2 I have the highest respect for you personally and as President and Immediate Past President of the national RA.

3 I sincerely regret that what I have written could have caused offence, and I apologise unreservedly to you and to any others who feel offended.'

Mr Burns has accepted my apology.

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Last edition of the magazine for the season. Hope you have enjoyed reading my efforts. Still plenty of space for yours. Have a good summer whether refereeing or not.

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## **MONTHLY MEETINGS**

### **March**

The correspondence with national RA over membership loomed large in the resume of committee business and the Assistant Secretary explained that we are now leaving matters in abeyance in the expectation of action from the centre. An item of immediate concern was the report of an assault on a member acting as linesman. President George Mills and others stressed the need for anyone assaulted to take action in our continuing efforts to stamp out such attacks.

Our speaker was first aid expert, Roger Beavis, who started by reminding everyone that he could not give a first aid **course** in an hour. Some quick pointers rather, to help us to deal with an emergency with a bit more confidence. [John Lambden, as Training Officer, stressed later that the referee should not take charge unless he has to].

History. Find out what has happened.  
 Symptoms. See what is happening.

If player not breathing: raise neck (with person lying on back). Head drops back, windpipe opens (but might be problem with vomit, might have to use fingers).

Severe bleeding. Always looks bad, especially spurting from vein. Lay casualty down, raise limb, press your finger on wound.

Internal bleeding. More difficult. Get clues from history and symptoms. Casualty goes pale, with shock; blueness at extremities. Keep casualty quiet and comfortable. Get him to hospital as soon as possible. (Useful tip: get the person who's going to summon the ambulance to come back and tell you how long it will be - to make sure the call has actually been made).

Suspected heart attack. Keep person at rest in semi-recumbent position. Get help quickly.

Fractures. Signs and symptoms: pain, tenderness, swelling, bruising, loss of power, deformity.

Rules: 1. Check breathing. 2. Treat bleeding. 3. Deal with fracture.

Try to treat casualty in situ. Tie one limb to another for support. Make sure there is circulation. Might be necessary to ease fracture apart.

Ribs. Can puncture lung and create breathing difficulties - blood frothing at mouth. Lay person on **injured** side, then good lung can work normally.

Jaw. Person may stop breathing. Normally best for casualty to hold pad under jaw, leaning forward to project any vomit.

Spine. What happened? 'Feels like I've been cut in half.'

**Don't move the casualty**. Send for expert help and comfort the injured person.

Skull. Sign is bloodshot, black eyes. Yellow fluid (or blood) from ears. Get messenger to describe symptoms to hospital.

Lower limbs. Provide support.

Kneecap. Don't bend the knee (it won't re-straighten).

Foot. Take the boot off if a fracture is suspected.

Concussion. 'Brain shaking'. **Always** treat it seriously. Can go into 'compression' - bleeding inside the skull. Casualty bright red (can also mean a fracture). Put into 'recovery position'. Symptoms include temporary loss of consciousness, pallor, sweating etc.

When treating the casualty for whatever, don't give anything by mouth.

Members listened fascinated and had many questions of detail for Roger, which he answered with skill and good humour. He re-emphasized that the advice he had given was not a comprehensive course in first aid, but would, he hoped, be of help in an emergency.

## **April**

In spite of numerous absentees refereeing, an attendance of over 50. Business included a plea to local leagues for uniformity on substitutes, although it was admitted that the leagues do make their own rules clear. At least part of the problem is that referees don't always read the rules carefully. Fees were discussed again, especially the suggestion of a maximum for expenses, which no referee wanted. The all-in fee was much preferred because it allowed clubs to budget at the beginning of the season and took all the hassle away from referees (and appointments secretaries). Our views would be reported back to the leagues. A number of cup final appointments were announced and members congratulated (Plum Tree on page 14).

The second half of the evening was a training session organized by John Lambden. He had prepared leading statements on four topics: club linesmen; foul or abusive language; caution and sending-off; use of advantage. We split into four groups, mixed by experience, discussed and reported back. Many useful, practical points were made. Club linesmen vary in quality, of course, but generally provide valuable assistance. Give simple and clear instructions. With foul language, think how it is said, not simply what is said; judge intent. Abusive language is easier. When you caution or send-off, know why you're doing it and, normally, make it clear to the player why. Get the name first when you're sending off. Don't overdo advantage, especially at junior level - think of the consequences: could be loss of control. Position and nature of the offence are important.

An excellent way to spend an hour. A host of good points were made and everyone benefited. Older referees were impressed by the quality of newer colleagues who were obviously well trained and making rapid progress. Experiences were shared honestly. The outcomes were generally predictable, but no less helpful for

that. Process is sometimes more important than product.  
Thanks again to John.

### A PROBLEM OF CLASS

Most of us, I suppose, take the classification system for referees pretty much for granted. Every so often there is a ripple about someone who, it is said, should/should not have been promoted, or when some radical wants everyone's classification reviewed automatically at the end of the season and changed up or down. Generally though, it seems to be assumed that the system works: that Class 1 referees are 'better' than Class 2s who are better than Class 3s.

The secretary of one of our local leagues has given me a copy of his referees' averages for the season, noting the class of the referee and number of games. No names. Although you would expect some overlap between classes and the odd maverick result, I think there is more to these figures than that.

Av.Mark	9.7	9.0	8.8	8.6	8.5	8.4	8.3	8.2	8.1	8.0	7.9	7.8	7.7
No.of refs													
Class 1	1	1			1	1		1	2	7	1	2	
Class 2			1		1		2	1	1	3			2
Class 3		1		1	1		1	1	1	3	1	2	1

  

Av.Mark	7.6	7.5	7.4	7.3	7.2	7.1	7.0	6.8	6.7	6.5	6.3	6.2	6.0
No.of refs													
Class 1	3	4		1	4	2	1	1	1	2	1		
Class 2		4		1								1	
Class 3		7	1	2			2	2			1		1

The table shows clearly that the highest marked referee was a Class 1, the lowest a Class 3, but the line graph below shows that the general level of Class 2s was higher than that of the Class 1s. The bar charts opposite tell the same story. The average (mean) marks were - Class 1: 7.63; Class 2: 7.83; Class 3: 7.6. And for all referees: 7.66.

The obvious explanation is that . . . . but the Class 1s might disagree. There is plenty of room for speculation. Did the Class 1s get 'harder' games? Do the clubs expect more of Class 1s and so mark harder? Do Class 1s involved in more senior football deal less well with a lower standard of game? Whatever the explanation, it is worrying when 17 out of 37 Class 1s end the season with a mark below the league average.





**WE - ARE - THE - CHAMPIONS !**

Congratulations to Reading FC: players and manager Ian Branfoot. What a season! That record unbroken run of 13 victories to start with; leaders of the division throughout, in spite of quite a few periods of anxiety when the winning touch seemed to go; some moments of magic and some very dull games [I saw the one on Easter Monday]. It is 55 years since their ignominious drop into the Third Division (South) with a record low for Reading of only 30 points from 42 games (2 for a win in those days) and 96 goals against. But not as exciting a finish in 1986 as in 1926 when they achieved promotion to Division 2 by beating Brentford 7-1, on a day when Plymouth also had to lose - and they did. Who cares? The prospect of Second Division football is what matters. It will not be easy, but the Royals do seem to have developed character and self-belief. We wish them well.

**ILLEGAL MARKINGS**

Every so often referees are reminded, or more likely remind each other that goalkeepers must not make unauthorised marks on the pitch to help them in their positioning, and that they are to be cautioned for ungentlemanly conduct (that is, if you can catch them). And no-one seems to find it odd. Don't misunderstand me - I believe the referee must administer the Law. It's the fact that we've got ourselves into such a situation that I find distinctly odd.

The lines on the pitch have evolved since the last century in response to particular needs, to help both players and officials: for example the arc on the penalty box. Now, a small line in the centre of the 6 yard line and at right angles to it, and a similar one on the goal line, central between the posts, would help the placing of the ball in the correct half of the goal area; it could also help the referee in judging the side for the corner in some situations. (It could be argued that the one from the goal line is already permissible if it goes towards the net, ie is off the field - I have certainly seen no legal argument against the lines 11 yards [I assume] from the corner flags which have appeared on some of our league grounds, presumably because they too are outside the pitch).

Admittedly the lines I am suggesting would help the goalkeepers (the plural is important). So what? I once heard a famous psychiatrist say that in dealing with people 'the basis of "no" is "yes"'. In other words 'think positive'. Don't ask 'Why?', ask 'Why not?'. If only our football administrators could throw off their conservatism and allow even modest innovations, then County Associations would not receive letters like the recent one from Ted Croker of the FA. Referees were asked



to 'discourage' players from illegally marking the pitch 'because it leads to deterioration of the turf in the goal and penalty areas'. Yes, it really did say that. And all for the lack of a decision to add a few square inches of white line . . . .

### **THIRD TIME LUCKY . . . . OR UNLUCKY!**

This season I was fortunate enough to be appointed by the Sunday League as referee for the Tilehurst Charity Cup semi-final between Dee Roof Vikings and Sonning Common/Peppard. Fellow RA members Terry Chamberlain and Paul Verber were appointed as linesmen. The game to be played on 13 April at Emmer Green. The date and place were to prove significant.

The day dawned warm and clear. By prior arrangement, the three of us arrived at the ground at 9-45 a.m. and proceeded to inspect the ground. Both goals were in a pitiful state, not least because they were leaning outwards, and no amount of stamping would straighten them to anything near the vertical.

An even greater shock awaited us as we walked the pitch. In both goals and penalty areas were several sunken drainage channels, as well as holes up to 4" deep and 18" in diameter! This was to be the venue for an important game between two very good sides. Not wishing to be responsible for a game of that standard, with half my mind thinking I might be causing a player to injure himself or risking injury myself, I immediately called the game off, much to everyone's relief. I did referee that morning - a division 6 game elsewhere.

So to the following Sunday. As a result of prolonged rain overnight, an early arrival at Coley Park found the pitch waterlogged and unplayable. Another postponement.

Sunday 27 April dawned bright, warm, dry and full of promise. Inspection of the pitch revealed it to be fine - if anything, on the hard and bumpy side. The kick-off would be delayed while the pitch was watered . . . . (A word of thanks here to the Coley groundsman. Always helpful, and the pitch-markings were first-rate - not the case on all Council parks).

The game finally kicked off, quickly developing into a hard, uncompromising battle. Then in the 35th minute, as I sprinted after a long ball upfield, an excruciating pain shot through my left calf muscle. I stopped play (I had no option) and received treatment from Dave King, (thanks Dave), and managed to hobble through to half time.

After further treatment it was obvious I couldn't carry on. Both linesmen were of the same seniority so, following a toss of a coin, Terry took the whistle for the second half (shades of David

Keen). Brian Barthelemy, innocently spectating after his return that morning from Chicago, was pressed into service as substitute linesman. Thanks all round from me. Terry had a tremendous half, ably supported by Brian and Keith Boseley, my other appointed linesman - and the players. In spite of two weeks of waiting, both sides took it all in their stride.

Three attempts to get a simple game of football played. And I still failed and ended up a cripple!

Stuart Gentle

#### **THE TEN MOST DIFFICULT DECISIONS**

Regular readers may remember references to **Fair or Foul** by Harris & Harris, one of my favourite books on refereeing and the best I have seen from the USA. Leaving aside the slightly different terminology, which will give you a bit of fun, I think their choice of situations and what they say about them make interesting reading. Not that you'll accept all of it. .



### **A MEMBER'S HANDBOOK**

One of the innovations the committee is planning for the new season is a Handbook, to be available at the August meeting. It will have two functions: it will contain the latest version of the society's rules and a number of other sections covering a variety of topics which members will find useful (we hope).

At present the rules are contained in a little booklet, professionally printed and re-issued every few years. Result: you get your copy and put it at the bottom of the drawer, and alterations take a few years to be incorporated. As part of an annual Handbook, with the whole thing done on a word-processor, it will be easier, more up-to-date and cheaper.

The Handbook section proper will need to contain certain items, but there is plenty of scope for suggestions from members, and again, it will be easy to change things from year to year. Sections so far planned: the Reading RA - a bit of history of the society; list of officers, committee and league representatives (as in the magazine at present); what the RA does; mentorship scheme; report writing; physical fitness; further training; promotion; Major Sainsbury Award; Fair Play and Linesman's Awards; youth and schools' football; dates of monthly meetings; social events; The Whistlers (the RA football team); quiz team; Contact-a Colleague - list of topics and people to contact; useful

names, addresses and phone numbers; local leagues, details of officials.

[Please give your suggestions to the Secretary or direct to me. Ed]

**FAIR PLAY AND LINESMAN'S AWARDS**

The successful clubs and linesmen this year are as follows:

Fair Play: Ibis FC	Linesmen: T. Spice
BR Staff FC	J. Athill
Crowthorne FC	M. Stannett

Congratulations to them all (Terry Spice must have some kind of record by now) and thanks to Ben Gater and all who supplied the marks.

**SOCIAL EVENTS**

This month is our major event - the Dinner and Dance at the Aldermaston Mill on Saturday, May 17. (Tickets only available on the black market now, I understand). A good, and new way to end the season.

John is hoping to arrange a Summer Jumble Sale. I suppose that's a sort of social event. Listen for the announcement and give him your support.

**NEXT MEETING**

The first meeting of the new season will be held on Thursday, August 21st. If you can't attend the AGM, watch the press - there may be a change of venue.

**DID YOU SEE THAT?**

Who says the Italians can't score goals? Not Dino Provincilai, that's for sure. He scored 19 as his side, Pro Pianella, defeated Elice 47-1 - a goal every 1.54 seconds - during the regional championship in Abruzzi. The catch? Well, Elice, miffed at having a 2-0 victory over the leaders Pianciano annulled (don't ask me why) were on a go-slow in protest. I just hope the Manchester United scout realized that.

[Was the referee working-to-rule too in shortening the game to 73.92 minutes? Or did he simply leave the field to get another (bigger) notebook and not go back? The report didn't say. Ed]

**OR THAT?**

An advert in the Sunderland Echo stated that a field, suitable for use as an allotment, was soon to become available in the town, and quoted a number. The telephonist at Roker Park was not amused.

(Both by) Stephen Bierley, The Guardian, 26/4/86

**PROMOTIONS**

Congratulations to the following members on their promotion (and commiserations to those who were unsuccessful - a bit of critical re-appraisal and all the best for next year).

Class 2 to 1: IR McNelly

Class 3 to 2: MA Brant, KJ Dade, KE Hall, MC Hopson,  
PC Monaghan, JS Norris, KJ Scott, P Willis.

**THE PLUM TREE**

Congratulations also to our members who have had cup and shield final appointments this season (referee named first) [and sincere apologies in advance to anyone omitted]

Berks & Bucks FA

Saturday Intermediate Cup: RD Emmans (line)

Sunday Junior Cup: TE Gale; RF Taylor  
Minor U15 Cup: W Wallace (line)

Middlesex Border Cup: RM Pigden, G Way (lines)

North Berks Cup: PJ Hanlon

Reading Senior Cup: PJ Deacon

Combination League

BTC Senior Cup: CJW Surtees; JE Flurry  
All Champions Cup: PRB Taylor, M Mackenzie (lines)  
BTC Junior Cup: PD Verber; R Butler, RG Pedder

District League

TNT Senior Cup: P Willis (line)  
Subsidiary Cup: KJ Dade; N Wrey

Sunday League

Tilehurst Charity Cup: P Jenkins (line)  
Industrial Cup: SW Gentle; D Crombie, NW Burgess  
Ronald Nash Cup: B Gater; PC Monaghan, MA Brant  
Harold Lusted Shield: PV Hopes; J Machin, KJ Dade

John Lusted Trophy: RF Taylor; PRB Taylor, DJ Mills  
Treasurers Cup: IR McNelly; KE Hall  
Subsidiary Cup: W Wallace; T Chamberlain

Sunday Youth League

Vic Beasley Cup (U17): PJ Hanlon; W Wallace, G Lewendon  
Chronicle Cup (U16): N Wrey; E Waters  
Eric Willey Cup (U15): D Clark