

VOLUME XXX No 5

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### EDITORIAL

End of the season already. Soon comes round again. (And don't tell me what that's a sign of).

The usual mix of enjoyment and sadness both on and off the field. David Keen achieved his third Wembley appearance on the line for the Littlewoods Cup, but to the surprise of more than his Reading friends was not promoted to the middle. At other levels of football, our members have been well represented among the honours. A good number of members have been promoted. Some members have not been promoted and have not received any honours but they remain loyal to football, to refereeing and to the Reading RA. They too deserve congratulations.

We reached our second highest ever membership total when other societies are really struggling, but were saddened to lose the doyen of the society - Fred Porton MBE.

Among local league we hear that there are to be more defections to the Chiltonian. The Sunday Youth League did not get its hoped-for revival, but Mel Brant is working for better things next season. Norrie Hart, to whom the Sunday League has owed so much in recent years as General Secretary, is definitely standing down.

Reading FC have had better support and have stayed in the second division and Liverpool, for once, didn't top the First Division.

Enjoy the Summer with or without refereeing. See you next season.

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### **MARCH MEETING**

The Press Officer had really gone to town and the local papers wrote up the Guest Speaker in attractive terms - Keith Hackett, the well-known Football League and FIFA referee. But as we discovered again to our cost, having eminent speakers from a distance is doubly hazardous. We heard only days before the meeting that Keith would be unable to join us because of his refereeing commitments. The large gathering of over 70 members nevertheless had an enjoyable and informative evening.

Some important items of news came out in the business part of the meeting.

- John Lambden has resigned as County Training Officer and George Mills has given notice that, after this year, he will not be seeking re-election as representative to Southern Division.
- The County FA have instituted a Lionel Gibbs Memorial Medal to be awarded annually to the most outstanding manager, player, referee or administrator. (For new members: Lionel Gibbs, who died last year in his 80's, was Reading RA's most famous member)
- Arrangement have been made for members to have subsidized physiotherapy at Elm Park. Details from the Secretary.
- The Reading RA will second the Harrow Society's proposal at National Conference to allow discussion of the RA Annual Report. (This is something we have been pressing for for some years).
- David Keen had donated a ticket for the Littlewoods Cup Final (on which he was to run a line) to the society. It was presented with acclaim to George Mills - in recognition of his service to refereeing and the Reading RA, as well as the help he had given David throughout his refereeing career.

In the absence of a Guest Speaker, John Lambden presented the FA film on Fouls and Misconduct. Although many members had seen it before, there was lively discussion of a number of the incidents as well as disagreement on at least one. And I still think I was right!

### **APRIL MEETING**

Sometimes you have the feeling fate is not on your side, though on this occasion things worked out very well for the select group

of some 40 members able to attend the April meeting. Your editor was one of the absentees on holiday and, with a heavy evening programme of matches, a lot of our most active colleagues were missing too.

So what? Well, I'm assured we had one of our best speakers ever - Keith Hackett who had come all the way from Sheffield to be with us. (Thanks to David Keen for entertaining him prior to the meeting). After being prevented from coming in March, Keith was determined not to let us down. Unfortunately we always have difficulty in filling the hall in April and so don't normally invite an outside speaker . . . .

After the society business was over, the treat began. George Mills, who has been about a bit (and to whom I am indebted for the report of the meeting), reckons it was one of the best refereeing talks he has heard.

Keith Hackett, Football League and FIFA referee, is an imposing figure and not short of critics who don't like his particular style. Maybe it's because he gets on well with the players and doesn't always go by the book (in both senses). But he has style, both on the field and off, as his audience was to discover.

Keith took 'match control' as his theme and discussed the five 'C's' - Control, Correspondence, Concentration, Confidence and Co-operation. A lot of the points Keith was making would not be new to the more experienced referees, but it was the way he made them that kept his audience captivated. He drew on his vast experience - he has officiated in 30 countries so far although he is only in his early 40's - and that, coupled with his Yorkshire brand of humour, made it all fascinating. More than one member regretted the lack of a tape-recorder.

Just one particular mystery was solved for George. Keith explained why he seems to give his linesmen inconsistent instructions. In this country he asks them to come round for corners, but abroad, he asks them to stand behind the kicker. Why? Because in Hungary, for example, he (the referee) is marked down if the linesman enters the field of play by cutting the corner getting back into position. Hence Keith's (sensible) inconsistency!

What a wonderful start the evening was for the ten newly qualified members from the last course. They not only heard an exceptional talk but had the honour of receiving their RA Manual and congratulations from a FIFA referee as well.

Terry Gale's vote of thanks was echoed by all present.

## **SOUTHERN DIVISION**

Not a great deal of news from the March 28th meeting. Worth noting that RA Council will be proposing to Conference the appointment of Alan Robinson as Public Relations Officer (at a cost for 1987/88 of £2,400).

## **COUNTY 5-A-SIDE**

The date has now been fixed - **Sunday, 7 June 1987** (at HQ REME Training Centre, Arborfield).

### **A BAD GAME HAD A REFEREE**

No it isn't typist's gobbledegook - that's what I intended to write.

How often do you hear spectators, sometimes other referees, say 'he had a bad game'? And sometimes they're right. The referee might not have been experienced enough to officiate at that particular level; he might be unfit; he might have been preoccupied with some private trouble; he might have arrived late; he might just be incompetent.

Yet all those possible explanations may be wide of the mark. And more often than people seem to think. Some games actually seem to conspire to create problems for the referee, whoever he is and whatever he does . . . . .

A real example. The referee has two good club linesmen - he has had them before. Not long into the game, up goes the flag for offside as an attacker shoots for goal. Another player clearly in an offside position on the opposite side of the penalty box to the play, trying to get back onside. The shot is turned round beautifully by the keeper. Referee acknowledges the linesman and indicates the corner. Culprit as well as linesman mystified. Referee approaches linesman, explains about 'not interfering' etc. Linesman not convinced.

Play goes to the other end. The ball strikes the central defender's arm from very short range in the penalty box, the ball drops neatly to his foot and he makes a good clearance. 'Penalty, ref!' Even the defenders are surprised when he waves play on. Players on both sides start to make silly appeals and are clearly losing confidence in an official who seemed to me to have made two good decisions. (Ironically, had he taken the obvious and easy way out both times, he would probably have had no problem. Can it be right to be wrong?)

But it gets worse. One side is playing a clever offside trap and has that linesman quite dizzy (with the help of a few verbal spectators). He gets one clearly wrong, up goes the flag, the defence stop dead expecting the whistle, but the referee (again correctly) waves play on and a soft goal is scored. Linesman falls apart and is relieved to be relieved. His replacement has just the same problems.

So far there has been little foul play. Just before a throw-in near the centre line, the referee sees a player go up to another and kick him for no apparent reason. He sends the player off. His team-mates are incensed and a very 'robust' patch follows with the referee just in control but with difficulty. What the referee doesn't know (but discovers afterwards) is that this week's kicker is last week's victim - an old score was to be settled and in a sense was settled.

It still isn't over though. The referee is on the goal line for a corner, particularly watching an attacker who looks likely to impede the goalkeeper. But as the ball swings in, it is the keeper who has an armlock on the attacker. Clear penalty! At the moment the whistle sounds, two players clash fairly for the ball landing near the penalty spot. Defending players and their supporters go berserk; attackers puzzled but not complaining for once.

After the game everyone agrees the referee had a bad game - just didn't seem to be able to get anything right. I'm the only exception - I thought a bad game had had a referee.

### **KEEPING THEM ON**

It has been announced by the Football League that they are to keep four of this season's referees on, although they have reached the normal retirement age which has been strictly enforced until now. (Remember Clive Thomas's complaints when he was made to stand down?)

The lucky four are Neville Ashley (Nantwich), Colin Downey (Hounslow), John Martin (Alton) and George Tyson (Sunderland). The list has been increased by ten in all.

Whatever you think of the choice of the four referees named, the change of heart on the part of the Football League does raise some issues.

The arguments are broadly between retaining experience and encouraging youth. Every older referee retained (unless the list is constantly expanded which leads to other problems) means one younger referee not promoted. Given that promotion in England is

probably the slowest anywhere, that doesn't seem to make much sense. Another way round of course would be to accelerate promotion through our hierarchy of leagues and be much tougher about **demotion** - that's the other way to create vacancies for up-and-coming talent.

What we don't know, of course, is whether a general raising of the retirement age is being contemplated, or whether this year the Football League is responding to what are seen as special circumstances. Watch this space.

### **INTO DISREPUTE**

A few weeks ago I had the most upsetting of Saturday afternoons. There was a continual cacophony; there was dissent; there was foul language; it seemed I could do nothing right. At least two people were involved in a scuffle. I was abused, I was even jostled.

Thankfully, by the following Saturday the snow had cleared and I was able to get back to refereeing instead of having to go shopping with my wife.

Mick Osborn

(with acknowledgement to the North Middlesex and High Wycombe magazines)

### **FROM THE MIDDLE**

In the last issue I published one of the articles which first appeared in my series in the Reading FC programme. Here's another.

#### **The Direct Free-Kick**

(first published in the Reading FC programme 26/8/85)

One of the difficulties for some spectators and players is to remember which offences lead to direct free-kicks and which do not.

The direct free-kick offences (often called 'penal offences' because they lead to a penalty in the 18-yard area) are just **nine** in number and can be divided into a 2-3-4 formation - two with the body, three with the feet, four with the hands.

Remember, all these actions have to be intentional to be offences.

**Body** i) Charging in a violent or dangerous manner.  
ii) Charging from behind unless the opponent is obstructing.

**Feet** i) Jumping at an opponent (i.e. not attempting to play the ball, usually feet first). ii) Kicking or attempting to kick an

opponent. iii) Tripping an opponent (usually with the foot but can be done with the body or arm e.g. by the goalkeeper).

**Hands** i) Holding an opponent (usually with the hand but can also be done with other parts of the body). ii) Pushing an opponent. iii) Striking an opponent. iv) Handling the ball (and in spite of the shouts of many spectators, it is **not** an offence if the ball accidentally strikes a hand or arm - even in the penalty area and even if the player gains an advantage from the way the ball is deflected).

And, of course, any of the offences could lead to the more serious punishment of a caution or sending-off, depending on the circumstances.

### [Reading Referees' Association]

#### A MANAGER ON OUR SIDE

David Pleat ... yesterday appealed for more discipline on the field and harsher punishment for offenders to help maintain the present improvement in playing standards (sic).

Pleat, speaking at a football writers' lunch in London, accused Gordon Taylor, the secretary of the PFA, of at times defending the indefensible. On Wednesday Mark Dennis, the former Southampton defender charged with bringing the game into disrepute for the third time this season was fined £600 by the FA and escaped suspension after Taylor had defended him at a disciplinary hearing for which the player arrived 75 minutes late

"Gordon Taylor has done an excellent job at the PFA," said Pleat. "He also sees it as his job to fight on behalf of his members and he does it brilliantly. But he sometimes goes out of his way to defend people who have sinned so many times that they don't deserve defending."

" . . . . players have been more responsible this season," he said, "but they are still not responsible enough . . . ."

(David Lacey, The Guardian, 8/5/87)

#### NEXT MEETING

The first meeting of next season will be held on **Thursday, August 20th.**

#### AWARDS

**The Bert Newman Fair Play Award**

The first winners of the award under its new title are:

1. Davis Street Rovers    2. Old Presentonians    3. Englefield

**Linesman's Award**

1. S. Dell, Mortimer    2. A. Farmiloe, East Reading  
3. B. Shearing, Old Presentonians

Congratulations to all the winners, and thanks to those who remembered to send in the marks and to Ben Gater who collected and collated them.

**PROMOTIONS**

Congratulations to the following members on their promotion (and commiserations to those who didn't make it this time). Special mention of Keith Dade, Keith Hall, Malcolm Hopson and Pat Monaghan who were promoted from 3 to 2 only last season.

Class 2 to 1: S. Banks, K.J. Dade, J.E. Flurry, K.E. Hall, M.C. Hopson, P.C. Monaghan, P.R.B. Taylor

Class 3 to 2: P.E. Absolom, J.C. Coombes, M.S. Costello, A.B. Gill, S.J. Green, J.W. Moore, R.G. Pedder, L.K. Skibinski, D.N. Wiltshire

**STOP PRESS - Reading Whistlers (our own team) into action**

- v. Bracknell** Friday 22 May    Adwest, Sonning    K.O: 6.30 p.m.  
**v. Slough** Friday 29 May    Polish Club, Slough    K.O: 6.30 p.m.

**THE PLUM TREE**

Congratulations also to our members who have had cup and shield final appointments this season (referee named first). The following are those of which I have been notified. Apologies in advance for any omissions (do let me know if there are any).

Football League

Littlewoods Cup: D. Keen (line)

Hellenic League

Division 1 Cup: B. Gater (line)

Middlesex Border League

AJA Cup: B. Gater (middle)

League Cup: D.H.G. Reigate (line)

Berks & Bucks FA

Senior Cup: R.D. Emmans (line)  
 Saturday Junior Cup: T.G. McPherson (middle)  
 Sunday Intermediate Cup: B.D.E. Ford (line)  
 Sunday Trophy: R.W. Haliday (line)

Reading Senior Challenge Cup: J.E. Flurry (line)  
 Reading Junior Challenge Cup: A.R. Higgins; P.R.B. Taylor

Combination League

BTC Senior Cup: M. Deacon (middle)  
 All Champions Cup: P.R. Hitt; M.C. Hopson, J.W. Moore  
 Invitation Cup: G. Crutchfield, S.J. Green (lines)  
 BTC Junior Cup: S. Banks; K.J. Dade, M. Mackenzie

District League

TNT Senior Cup: J.E. Flurry, K.E. Hall (lines)  
 Subsidiary Cup: J.C. Coombes; J.W. Moore

Sunday League

Tilehurst Charity Cup: W. Wallace, S. Banks (lines)  
 Industrial Cup: P.C. Monaghan, P.J. Hambly (lines)  
 Ronald Nash Cup: S.W. Gentle (middle)  
 Harold Lusted Shield: I.R. McNelly; J. Gray  
 John Lusted Trophy: T.E. Gale; K.J. Scott  
 Treasurers Cup: G.D. Emms; B.C. Dibley, L.K. Skibinski  
 Subsidiary Cup: K.J. Dade; D.N. Wiltshire, R.G. Pedder

Sunday Youth League

Vic Beasley Cup (U17): R.G. Allen, N. Wrey (lines)  
 Subsidiary Shield (U17): N. Wrey; E.P. Waters, P.J. Hambly  
 Roy Murdoch Cup (U16): R.G. Allen; B.G. Brown  
 Shield (U16): P.J. Hambly; E.P. Waters, B.G. Brown  
 League Cup (U16): E.P. Waters; N. Wrey, W. Wallace