

VOLUME XXXII No 5

April/May 1989

**EDITORIAL**

I guess every editor is starting this month's editorial with a comment on Hillsborough.

I hesitate somewhat to add to the mountain of words already written, but it was a tragedy that can't be allowed to go by. Not just for the sake of the bereaved and their kin, but to try to learn something out of otherwise unmitigated disaster.

What offended me most was the determination of some to point the finger. There has to be a scapegoat. The fans, the police, it doesn't matter who. As long as someone can be blamed, people seem to feel better, more secure for the future. It eases the communal guilt. What surprises me is that such an event has taken so long to happen. There have been warnings, from Burnden Park on. And in a sense we have all condoned it.

The language we use gives it away. We have 'pens' and 'crush barriers'. The barriers are apparently designed to withstand 400 lbs per square inch. People just aren't. Thousands of people, there to be excited, standing on a terrace is a recipe for disaster. I was first frightened - and I'm 6ft 4 and no lightweight - nearly 40 years ago, standing to watch Stockport County v. Liverpool in the 5th round of the FA Cup. The crowd was 27,833. The present ground safety limit is 6,000 (yes, six thousand).

Let's hope for urgent but sensible and sensitive action. Good for the game may yet come out of disaster.

Enjoy your Summer with or without football. See you again next season. Hope we see Reading still in Division 3 too.

---

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

Unsigned items have been written by the editor

Other editors have permission to reproduce any items with appropriate acknowledgement

[Editor's address: 1 Bulmershe Court, Earley, Reading RG6 1HX  
Telephone no: (0734) 663756]

## **PRESIDENT'S PIECE**

### **Instructions**

One of the criticisms often levelled at having Football League referees as guest speakers at our monthly meetings is that they talk about themselves and what they have done, and that they talk about football at a much higher level than most of us can ever aspire to. To be honest, I don't think it a bad thing every now and then, for although we might not like to admit it, many of us like to hear a little bit of gossip particularly about players and other referees in the professional game.

David Hutchinson at our February meeting was a little different, although he did talk about himself, at least about what he did, and about the game at the top of the tree, the Football League. However, as I'm sure everyone who attended will agree, it was not a self-centred talk and it kept everyone interested to the end. He went through the instructions - or 'talk' he preferred to call it - that he gives to his linesmen prior to a match.

It reminded me of some of the instructions I received over many years of lining, and also how they have changed and developed, particularly I think in the last 5 to 10 years, in response of course to the change of attitude in the game. Football has become more professional. Isn't it sad that that word has been given an almost dirty meaning. There have always been those who have cheated in football, there have always been the hackers, but in the last two decades at least those unpleasant aspects of the game have become more orchestrated. In response referees, as David Hutchinson showed, have had to improve their own professionalism to combat tactics which have become accepted as part of the game, and it is up to the referee to spot them.

David's talk to his linesmen is a long one (35 minutes I think he said), certainly longer than any I have experienced. There was one referee on the circuit who sat his linesmen down and read his lengthy instructions from a typed sheet of paper. The problem was that the linesmen usually nodded off before the briefing was through. David overcame this likelihood by going through most of his talk on the pitch, illustrating his requirements at the relevant positions, and giving time for each part to be assimilated before going on. Every eventuality was covered.

How different from the instructions our old friend Charlie Kearse used to give. Few of our members today will remember Charlie who sadly passed on some years ago, but who had been a member of our society for over 50 years. He was also a Football League referee and officiated at international level in his younger days.

Perhaps to give some idea of Charlie's character and of the time that he refereed in, let me just mention what happened when he turned up at Prospect Park to referee a Reading & District League match and found that there were no goalposts erected and the groundsman had gone home. Cancel the game? Not Charlie. "Put two coats down at either end of the pitch for goalposts", he said, "and I'll be the judge if it goes under or over the cross-bar." That's what they did, without a murmur and without a complaint. Could you do it today?

So what were the instructions Charlie gave to his linesmen? He told me one day after reading an article I had written in my weekly column in the Reading Chronicle. "When you have two fellow referees running the line to you as you do in the Football League, it's very easy" he said. "What I said to them was very simple: 'Run the line for me, the way you would like me to run it for you.'" Do unto others . . . .

Of course David Hutchinson and his colleagues on the Football League today couldn't get away with that. The Football League referee today gets more money, gets more glamour, gets more recognition, but I wonder if the referees of Charlie Kearse's era didn't have more fun.

Dick Sawdon-Smith

#### **SOME STATISTICS (thanks to UEFA)**

In the recent Official Bulletin of UEFA it was revealed that there are some 20 million footballers in Europe and in spite of increasing competition from other sports, there has been an increase of 7.13% since 1983. And 420,502 referees, including you and me. Fascinating stuff. What interested me most was a comparison of the numbers of referees listed for the big footballing nations.

The USSR has 155,000 referees for 4,800,300 footballers i.e. a ratio of approx 1:31; West Germany 62,687 for 4,765,146 i.e. a ratio of approx 1:76; France 22,579 for 1,608,470 i.e. 1:71; Italy 16,860 for 1,129,667 i.e. 1:67; England 25,974 for 1,005,000 i.e. 1:39; Netherlands 13,296 for 978,324 i.e. 1:74.

The extremes are: Albania where 3,757 players are controlled by 324 referees - one per team! - and Bulgaria where 442,829 players are probably not controlled by 351 referees (more than 100 teams each).

How can it be so different? What does it mean? It is certainly interesting to discover that in spite of all our protestations we have the second best ratio of all the major footballing countries.

What we don't know of course is how the statistics were gathered and whether we are comparing like with like. How are the players counted? Presumably the aggregate of registered clubs. The referees? Probably members of the national association, but perhaps registration practices are different in the different countries. Maybe membership is compulsory elsewhere. Still interesting.

## **MONTHLY MEETINGS**

### **March**

Nearly seventy members present including most of the thirteen recently qualified. A number of points of interest. A case of a local referee who had not stopped the game for what turned out to be a serious injury; members were reminded to err on the side of caution, especially with any suspicion of a head injury. Terry Gibbs mentioned that a number of referees have been sending reports of problems only to the league; correct procedure is always to report to the County FA with a copy to the league. Failure to do it properly means the guilty go unpunished.

Referees were also reminded that two reports are required if a player commits a sending-off offence after a cautionable offence (and also for any combination of offences that adds up to more than two cautions). Two cautions means sending-off and just one report. The annual quiz had been held at High Wycombe and Wycombe had won again. Could it be home advantage? North Berks came second and our team of Geoff Donnelly, Steve Green, Ivan McNelly and Graham Stockton was a valiant third.

Our guest speaker, Vic Callow, was second in a series of three Football League referees as this season's programme had turned out.

Vic warmed us up with a few funnies and then got down to the serious business: attitude and the three C's - concentration, control, confrontation.

- Attitude. Get the basics right: deal with your correspondence, pay attention to your kit. 90% is down to psychology. Take every game you're offered; don't make excuses and let people down. You represent every other referee, so don't forget it. Don't be officious. Junior football is difficult nowadays. Reflects

society. Youngsters are encouraged to express an opinion and often do so.

- Concentration. That's what it's all about. You have to observe, perceive, decide and convey a decision in, say, 2 seconds. Mental demand is tiring. We can't really claim we 'are under pressure' though because we can give up if we choose. Refereeing is an apprenticeship: you need experience after training. Vic admitted to having made plenty of mistakes to start with. On the line, watch the man in the middle. Watch, don't imitate. Use all the good things you pick up, but don't even try to copy someone else.

- Control. How do we get it? By respect, not finger-wagging. You need a love of the game, and understanding. Get a feel for the game. Be approachable, but only to a degree.

- Confrontation. Lots of potential 'confrontation situations' in any game. Can start when you meet the club secretary, the car park attendant. The team in the dressing-room, the team sheet, meeting the captains. The higher the level, the more the people: commercial manager, police, mascots and so on. On the pitch: the players, trainers; people in the dugout. Possible confrontation with press too. Best way to say 'No Comment' is to say something that adds up to nothing. Always better to avoid confrontation, than to have to deal with it. You devise your own ways.

Treat players with respect; expect respect in return. Vic cannot tolerate the player who bends down when you want to speak to him. He says 'I like to talk face-to-face, man-to-man'. You must decide what you want to say, but don't swear and do choose your words carefully. You can provoke a player into saying something in reply which will get him sent off. He told a story about how Jack Taylor tamed two of soccer's hardest men, Billy Bremner and Tommy Smith, by a few choice words about the other to each of them separately.

Advantage can be a real problem. At senior level they expect it; on Sunday morning they might tell you what to do with it. Make sure you get over what you will and will not tolerate. Common sense is involved a lot - implicit in every Law. That's why there's no Law 18.

Have confidence, self-belief, but avoid arrogance. Work hard even on the obvious things, like knowing the competition rules. Prepare yourself, concentrate, work on your control, earn respect, enjoy yourself.

In his responses to questions Vic said he was not at present in favour of the two-referee system recently written up in the Times (and quoted in our last issue), but he would welcome an experiment.

He does keep a memory of particular teams and players but recognizes and guards against the danger of prejudgment and preoccupation. In respect of foul language Vic admitted tolerance when it was used 'in conversation', but none if it was directed at the referee. He quoted a league in the North East which has apparently resolved the problem. If the player is not sent off, the referee is dispensed with! A very positive note on which to conclude.

## **April**

On this occasion our Guest Speaker, Lester Shapter, had come all the way from Devon and arrived before some of the members. Football League training?

The Chairman reported that at last the bench bought by the society in memory of Chippie Taylor had been placed in the Forbury Gardens along with two others at a recent ceremony. The County Poster Competition which we had helped to publicise had been somewhat disappointing. Prizes had been awarded for the best entries and, thanks to Steve Green, two of the posters would be produced to a professional standard and used for recruitment purposes.

It was reported that for the first time the society had a small working deficit in its finances. The Chairman explained that we intended to keep our capital untouched. At the moment the cost of the services offered by the society was exceeding the income from subscriptions and interest. One possibility (accepted by the meeting) was not to give every member a new Referee's Chart every year. This would be proposed at the AGM as it would entail a change of rule. It might still be necessary to increase subscriptions from the present £9 which had been held for three years.

Referees were requested for several small-a-side competitions: Shinfield (17 June); Digital (24 June); Racal (8 July). Details via the Secretary.

Lester Shapter, well known through his TV appearances, had chosen **Positioning** as his theme, but first gave a resume of his refereeing career. He started at 17 for money - the 10 shilling fee (50p) supplemented his wages of £2-10s. For some years he mixed playing rugby and refereeing soccer. He got to the Football League full list in 1972 and is the longest serving member. He was retained last season and hopes to be retained again. He still does local games, goes to his local RA and in his 32nd year as a referee.

Using the magnetic board, Lester then illustrated various situations.

- the kick off. He was interested in our suggestions as to the various possibilities and analysed the problems. Throughout, his style was inquiring and suggesting; no dogmatism.

- the 9-5 situation. Backing in/pushing is one of the most difficult to spot and get right. He often shouts 'arms', just before any contact. It seems to work for him, and the players appreciate it.

- the corner. Again a variety of possibilities. Surprise (for the players) is an important ingredient. The major decision is ball over the line. He brings his linesman in towards his near post, position depending on circumstances. He usually starts on the goal-line but moves out quickly. He is always changing his position.

- the penalty. Lester went through the many 'conventional' positions and discussed each one before revealing his: the linesman (from that half of the field) goes to the goal line; the other linesman goes to the opposite corner of the penalty box, with the referee standing in the penalty arc. Main problems at a penalty are: encroachment, goalkeeper position at the start of the kick and any movement, where the ball goes. All possible with this set-up. Lester acknowledges he could be caught one day with the second linesman right out of position. He used to use his 4th official to keep an eye on the other half but was stopped from doing that.

- mouth, dissent. He is known for using the indirect free kick without a caution. Incorrect in law but (for him) remarkably effective.

- offsides. He gives the full responsibility to his (neutral) Linesmen. With club linesmen he asks for the flag every time.

In response to a question, Lester agreed that goalkeepers are pushing the law to the limit in 'parrying' the ball. They are controlling it. The law needs looking at again. Fitness. This year all referees on the Football League and Contributory leagues are being tested for fitness. In 1991 all Class 1s will be tested before they can go on to a Contributory league line. Classifications are going to be revised too.

Lester concluded on a controversial note by confessing that he uses foul and sometimes abusive language to players. He quoted other referees who did. While accepting that it was 'wrong', it nevertheless helped him to communicate in the language the players used. A clear impression that members were not persuaded.

The last of our series of three talks by FL referees and all had proved interestingly different. Some 60 members echoed the Chairman's vote of thanks to our most controversial speaker of the season.

### **IT HAPPENED TO ME**

I am one of those referees helped by the appliance of science - I wear contact lenses when I officiate.

Towards the end (fortunately) of a recent game, a miskick from close-quarters struck me hard on the shoulder. When I turned I suddenly realised I had monocular vision. Where had the lens gone? A quick touch found it under the eyelid. A sort of relief. First time it had ever happened. What do you do next? Stop play and tell the world about your problem (and your secret)? 'Get a new pair of contact lenses ref!' 'Clean your contact lenses ref!' Hasn't got the same ring as 'Get some specs, ref!' So I just carried on. Nobody seemed to notice and the decisions didn't seem any more difficult.

I was relieved to blow the final whistle though, before I got struck on the other shoulder.

### **DOPE TESTS ALL NEGATIVE**

It seems that drugs may be one problem soccer hasn't got. UEFA has carried out tests at 11 matches so far this season after 15 last season. All have proved negative.

### **GOLFERS TO THE FORE**

Keith Dade is looking for fellow golfers again. See him or give him a ring on Reading 422454

### **PROMOTIONS**

The annual time of congratulations to our colleagues who have been successful in their application for promotion (and commiserations to the others. To them, best wishes for next year.) Special congratulations to F.W. Hawkins, B.A. Minhinnick, A.W. Turner and A.P. Wellstead, all promoted from 3 to 2 and 2 to 1 in successive years.

Class 2 to 1: F.W Hawkins, B.A. Minhinnick, J.W. Moore,  
A.W. Turner, A.P. Wellstead.

Class 3 to 2: M.S. Allen, A.D. Awbery, M. Bellman,  
J.A. Billins, M.F. Parrott, C.K. Pike.



**FAIR PLAY AND LINESMAN'S AWARD**

Keen competition as usual amongst clubs and club linesmen for our two coveted awards. Congratulations to the winners; thanks to all the members who sent in marks and to Alan Turner who does the recording, collating and final sums.

**The Bert Newman Fair Play Award**

- 1 Sonning (District)
- 2 Reading University (Combination)
- 3 SEB Reading (Combination)

**Linesman's Award**

- 1 R. Taylor (Marlow United)
- 2= F. Head (Sonning)
- 2= M. Wells (West Reading)

**DID YOU SEE THIS?**

Spurs v. Liverpool. 26 March. The Big Match. Alan Parry commentating, aided and abetted by Ray Clemence. Linesman flags, referee whistles and a goal is disallowed. 'No reason' agree commentator and assistant. There was a defender on the goal-line. There was indeed, and an opponent in close attendance when the shot was put in.

Our commentator and ex-pro footballer just did not know the Law. Even on the replay they couldn't get it right. Then Alan Parry started hedging. (Was he passed an urgent note? It was certainly suspicious). The goal-keeper had moved forward. Ray Clemence still didn't cotton on. Finally he conceded, grudgingly, that it was 'technically offside'. What **did** he mean by 'technically offside'? Not 'seeking to gain an advantage'? Not 'interfering with play'? Hardly, if you're an attacker next to a defender on the goal-line between the posts.

Viewers (and the officials) deserve better.

**FROM THE MIDDLE****Linesmen**

(one of my series in the Reading FC programme, 14/12/85)

Strange to think that football used to manage in its very early days with no officials at all. Then, still during the last century, there was an umpire in each half of the field who made decisions

**on appeal** as in cricket. The next stage was to have a referee on the touchline to whom any disagreement or problem was referred (as in present-day tennis). However, with the development of more competitive and professional football (and more disputes), the referee went into the middle and the umpires to the touchlines as assistants - the forerunners of today's linesmen. That was in 1891.

Except in (most) local leagues, linesmen are 'neutral'. They are fully qualified referees acting as assistants. They are usually slightly junior in refereeing terms to the man in the middle, as referee promotion up the hierarchy of leagues is first to appointments as linesmen, then as referees.

One of the 17 laws - law 6 - relates entirely to linesmen. It is brief. The specific duties are merely: to indicate when the ball is out of play and who is entitled to the kick or throw-in, and when a substitute is desired. More important though, is the general statement that linesmen 'shall also assist the referee to control the game in accordance with the laws'. In other words the three officials form a team with the referee as senior member.

In the modern game, linesmen are of crucial importance in offside decisions, especially if teams are playing the 'offside trap'. Only someone unbiassed and exactly 'in line' can possibly judge the position of players at that crucial moment the ball was kicked.

Linesmen also give invaluable assistance with foul play. They provide two more pairs of eyes with a different angle of view from the referee's and on some occasions will be nearer the incident than the man in the middle.

Spectators can't help noticing linesmen giving signals with the flag - for throw-ins, goal-kicks, corners, offsides, fouls and substitutions - but many miss all sorts of other pre-arranged signals which pass between the referee and his colleagues. Sometimes the referee is seen to go and consult his linesman; often he has no need to, he has already had the consultation by gesture.

Although linesmen don't have final responsibility for the control of the game, in some ways their job is the more demanding. The linesman has the major if not total responsibility for offside decisions but is also expected to be ready to assist with all the others.



**SOCCER SHORTS**

Extracts from the book by Jack Rollin, Guinness Books 1988

**It really happened**

The Coventry City v Southend United match in January 1962 had been in progress for three minutes before it was noticed that both teams were playing in blue and white. Referee Arthur Holland stopped play and Coventry changed into red shirts on the field.

**Recommended to the B & B?**

In January 1955 Trinidad footballer Selwyn Baptiste was suspended for 1,000 years after playing in a cup game the day after he started a two-year suspension.

**How mean can you get?**

On 13 February 1982 Reading announced as an economy measure that the referee and linesmen at home matches would no longer be given biscuits at half time. Nicknamed the Royals, Reading had

previously been known as the Biscuitmen because of the close proximity of the Huntley and Palmers factory.

### **Beware of the dog!**

On 8 October 1955 during the Third Division (Southern Section) match between Aldershot and Brentford, a small dog grabbed the flag carried by linesman Ronnie Chappell, ran off with it and disappeared.

### **THE PLUM TREE**

Congratulations to all our members who have received cup and shield final appointments. Every year I manage to miss someone out because I don't have the information. I apologize in advance, but please let me know so I can mention you next time. Referee named first.

### Berks & Bucks FA

Saturday Intermediate Cup: R.S. Over  
 Sunday Intermediate Cup: P. Pittaway  
 Sunday Junior Trophy: I.R. McNelly (line)

### Oxfordshire FA

Charity Cup: M.H. Mackenzie (line)

Reading Senior Cup: J.E. Flurry; J.W. Moore  
 Reading Junior Cup: G.R. Harris, J.A. Billins (lines)  
 Reading Jubilee Cup: D.J. Chambers (line)

### Combination League

BTC Senior Cup: P.A. Kelly, A.D. Awbery (lines)  
 All Champions Cup: J.E. Flurry; G. Crutchfield, S.J. Green  
 Invitation Cup: K.J. Dade; A. Jordan, E. Saleh  
 BTC Junior Cup: P. Butler, S.R. Goulding (lines)

### District League

Cyril Towner Senior Cup: F.W. Hawkins, I.R. Tilbrook (lines)  
 Subsidiary Cup: B.A. Minhinnick; W. Penny

### Sunday and Sunday Youth Leagues

Tilehurst Charity Cup: K.J. Dade; F.W. Hawkins, P. Jenkins  
 Industrial Cup: I.R. McNelly; P. Willis, A.D. Awbery  
 E. Cambridge Cup: A.P. Wellstead, P.E. Absolom (lines)  
 Ronald Nash Cup: P.C. Monaghan; W. Penny, M. Bellman  
 Harold Lusted Shield: M. Deacon; M.S. Costello, E. Saleh

John Lusted Trophy: S.W. Gentle; T.E. Chamberlain, S. Carvell  
Treasurers Cup: W. Wallace; G.J. Webb  
Subsidiary Cup: D. Glasspool (line)

Vic Beasley Cup (U17): M. Bellman; N. Wrey, S. Goulding  
Town Crier Shield (U17): R.G. Allen (line)  
League Cup (U17): N. Wrey; M.E. Barnett, M.W. Barnett  
Touchwood Sports Shield (U16): R.G. Allen; M.E. Barnett  
Roy Murdoch Cup (U16): S. Goulding  
League Cup (U16): M. Bellman (line)

South Chiltern Minor League

Thames Valley Engraving Cup (U15): B.G. Palmer  
Consolation Cup (U15): M.W. Barnett; M.E. Barnett