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### EDITORIAL

I can't remember a time when a dominant theme ran through the whole season like this year's FIFA 'mandatory instruction' and the 'professional foul'. And where have we ended up?

By now, referees and to a (much) lesser extent players and public, may understand what is actually very clear - on paper. The problems are in practice and they just won't go away.

There remains a psychological problem about a player being sent off for what looks like a run-of-the-mill foul; there is a critical element of judgment in deciding (instantly) whether a goal-scoring opportunity was denied;; for us on the local parks, there is also the vast difference between the action of a lumbering Sunday morning pub player and the 1st division professional hard man. Presumably it can only get better . . .

At this time of the year referees seem to belong to one of two camps: those like me looking forward to 5- and 6-a-sides in the sunshine and those just waiting to hang their boots up and do other things until the new season, albeit a pretty short time away nowadays.

Whichever you choose, have a good Summer!

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

### Who is Spoiling the Game?

Even before the last World Cup was finished, there was talk about having to make the game more attractive for the next finals which are to be played in the United States of America.

Attractive to who? The American public, with the rumours of wider goals to increase scoring rates. Attractive to American television, with the equally strong rumours of splitting the game into four quarters to allow additional time for commercials. The Authorities said that these rumours were unfounded, but they admitted that they were looking at ways to make the game more entertaining. So what is it that has made this basically simple game less attractive?

Perhaps it is because so often players are filled with a desire not to lose, rather than with the will to win. Or perhaps it is because the game has been stifled by the coaching methods that for so long it has seemed appropriate to adopt.

Take for instance the free kick. When the Laws were first formulated, that was what it was intended it should be - a free kick. A kick free from interference by the opponents. Today, offending team players stand over the ball to prevent it being played freely, and what's more, this is not a voluntary act, they are taught to do it. If the kick is near the goal, then this tactic is used to allow the insidious wall to be formed. All of this has slowed down the game, reduced its attractiveness, lowered its entertainment value.

The sending-off of defenders deliberately bringing down opponents in a scoring position is a move in the right direction by the footballing authorities, a positive move towards making the game more entertaining. Let them now look at other spoiling tactics. And let them pay no heed to the outcry that will surely follow from the top coaches . . .

If anyone has made our game less attractive, it is surely these same coaches. They are the spoilers.

Dick Sawdon Smith

## **MONTHLY MEETINGS**

### **March**

It must have been a near-record if not a record attendance of nearly a hundred, thanks to a couple of dozen newly qualified colleagues - only to discover that Ray Lewis was **not** coming. It was not his fault. An administrative error on our side had led to a confusion of dates. Ironically he had been trying to fit us in for some two years. The secretary has started the process again. With luck we'll get him before he retires - Ray I mean, not Derek!

Among local league and competition news, it was reported from the Reading Football League that some referees are still (incorrectly) sending copies of disciplinary reports to the County FA also to the league. John Moore left us in suspense by revealing that Challenge Cup Final officials have been chosen but not yet notified.

The Chairman reported from County RA that #406 had been received as a recruiting bonus from the County FA. As a share-out would have amounted to too little per society, it had been decided to invest the money in training videos to be available on loan. One member pointed out, not unreasonably, that as Reading had trained a large proportion of the new referees, the money could have been shared out more fairly pro rata. County fees for referees remain unchanged for next season. Assaults on referees numbered 391 last season and the Chairman took the opportunity with so many newly qualified referees present to remind members of their obligations: if assaulted don't fail to do your duty - report the assault and see the whole thing through to make sure the guilty do not go unpunished. It depends on us.

After literally years of trying to get the County to provide proper facilities for disciplinary hearings - where the referees could wait in decent surroundings separate from the players and club members - we thought we had achieved an improvement. Unfortunately, one of our members reports that conditions at the South Reading Community Centre are no better.

Previously the excuse was cost as the hearings were held in a hotel. The Community Centre is hardly the Hilton and prices are correspondingly more reasonable. Referees must attend hearings and they do it in their own time. They deserve better. If you suffer unreasonable treatment, do inform the secretary. The committee is determined not to let the matter rest until a permanent satisfactory solution is found.

The recent training course had resulted in 31 taking and passing the exam - a great tribute to our training team led by Stephen Green. Most of our new colleagues were present to receive a symbolic whistle - in the absence of the Manual - and the congratulations of our President and all the members.

Not Ray Lewis, but our own Peter Pittaway after the break. For those who don't know Peter's background, he has refereed at the highest levels in the army and got as far as the Football League line. But he has always remained faithful to local football and its referees. And it was to them that he targeted his talk.

The fundamental aim in refereeing at any level is control. Everything else follows. A match is full of dangerous moments and it pays to know them. Get prepared: look at the league tables, get a sense of the standard, the likely type of game. Look at your Chart (Peter still does). Especially important for more experienced referees - you get into bad habits.

Fitness. You have to be fit. Physical sluggishness leads to lack of concentration. You must train. It's the last 15 minutes that count. Do you train around a pitch? Very few do, but why not? Good place to practise the various types of movement you will need. in the right conditions.

You need a good attitude. You need to want to referee, to want to enjoy it, to want the players to enjoy it. If you receive a fee, you are a professional. Make sure you earn it. You will still make mistakes, but O.K if your attitude is right.

First appearance does matter. Players have expectations - should be neat and tidy. Helps you to get respect. Take charge, start on time, don't hang around, blow your whistle as if you mean it. (Peter admitted the difficulty with getting your club linesmen and briefing them on a Sunday morning - nevertheless you've got to try). Don't say too much to players in early games. Develop your style - later you may wish to say more.

Your first decision is the important one - even if it's 'play on'. As a new referee, only give the obvious advantage. Brief your club linesmen together; say the same things in both dressing rooms. Remember you must carry out everything you promise/threaten.

Misconduct. Be prepared; know how you are going to re-act. There may be some things you don't want to hear, but if it's a challenge to your authority, deal with it.

Foul play. At first you may not recognize it quickly enough or at all. Better late decision than not at all, as long as you're right. Do some lines - good way to learn from more experienced colleagues.

46th minute is one of those dangerous moments, especially if first half has gone well. At half time players are being wound up, so you can't afford to relax. 2nd half has to be more important than the first - time is running out. Last 10 minutes you must be on top, concentrating. Always a danger of gaps in concentration. Difficult for anyone to concentrate totally for 90 minutes. Hardest games can be easiest for concentration. At half time think how you can improve for second half. The players are tiring.

In your early days, don't worry too much about the diagonal. Concentrate on the basics: detect the offences, whistle, give correct decisions.

In summary: anticipate, don't shirk responsibility; have the right attitude, be fit, be there, be consistent, be friendly but firm. Read the game, then you won't need to read the riot act.

Peter was thanked warmly for stepping into the breach and talking to us so effectively at short notice.

## **April**

This month no guest speaker was expected. It was fortunate it wasn't supposed to be Ian Porterfield, manager of Reading FC, as he had been sacked earlier in the day! In the unexpected absence of the Chairman owing to business commitments, Graham Stockton, as Vice-Chairman, was in charge for the first time, and did a good job.

The business on the agenda was certainly over quickly enough, but there were a number of interesting issues raised and discussed. An un-named colleague was reported who, it seemed, had not sent in a report of a caution and sending-off. While no action could be taken, it was an opportunity to remind members of their responsibilities and the RA's attitude to such dereliction of duty. Another member had called off a game because the pitch was unmarked - only the penalty spots were visible. He was surprised to read the result of the game in the press on the Monday! That would be looked into.

Ted Cambridge wearing his Sunday League hat was able to report swift action after an assault. The referee contacted him; he was convinced that the case was genuine, and the player was suspended from registration within minutes. Ted asked, not for copies of reports to the County FA, but information to allow the league to take action where appropriate in support of referees.

Peter Hitt reported that membership for the season had closed at a record 166. Graham Stockton had received over 100 requests for tickets for the Dinner & Dance but is now hoping to reach 150; Pat Monaghan asked for 40 referees for the Reading 5s on July 6th and Derek Reigate was looking for 8 members to do the Digital competition on June 29th.

The acting Chairman reminded members to take and keep the initiative if they want promotion: write for the form now and chase it up if no form arrives. The onus is on the referee and yet every season we seem to have someone disappointed. When the chairman seemed to be encouraging even recently qualified referees to apply, Ted Cambridge questioned the advice. It seemed to be agreed that, for most new referees, at least one season before applying was a good idea but that an exceptional minority are capable of putting straight in for promotion.

Colleagues who had been promoted and those with cup final appointments were all congratulated (lists on pages 13 & 14).

The second half was devoted to discussion led by Stephen Green, the Training Officer. He started by eliciting from members their problems in doing the job of refereeing.

From the medley of frank responses, he was able to show how they related most often to those places in the Laws where it is 'in the opinion of the referee'. Are there too many 'grey areas' for the football referee? Why do we seem to have more

difficulties than the arbiters of every other sport? He quoted rugby and hockey as particular examples.

Members discussed the powers of the rugby referee and pleaded for the 10 yard rule for dissent, wondering yet again why the FA persists in refusing to adopt it. John Lambden pointed out that the major difference between the two codes is that the rugby referee gets absolute backing from his county: the player and club are automatically disciplined as a result of the referee's action.

A number of difficult areas of decision-making were raised: the goalkeeper's control of the ball and steps; the 'professional foul' (yet again); and a new one it seems this season, the player standing right in front of the long throw expert. This led into the debate whether the Laws are the same at all levels and it was agreed, of course, that they are.

'Consistency' got a mention and David Keen sagely reminded us that the real consistency is consistency with yourself.

I guess most of us found the discussion interesting but for me it was in some ways unsatisfactory. We ranged too widely. A number of different interpretations were aired but not examined critically and for long enough, with the result that our less experienced members would be left, I suspect, with more, rather than fewer concerns and uncertainties.

For example, while it is undoubtedly right to say the Laws are always the same, the very presence of the 'grey areas' provides a proper way for the referee to respond to different circumstances. Refereeing Liverpool v. Manchester United is not the same as refereeing two teams in Division 5 of the local league - the same Laws are correctly applied differently.

The session certainly generated an amount of passion - and a wealth of material for several more discussions, perhaps in rather smaller groups.

## **AWARDS**

One of the things many referees say when asked why they referee, is that they 'want to put something back into the game'. Something we also put back as a Society is our support for those clubs who show the best sportsmanship - through the Fair Play Award - and those club linesmen who help us most from

the line by their qualities of skill and fairness - the Linesman's Award.

Congratulations to this year's winners:

**The Bert Newman Fair Play Award**

1. Old Presentonians Res )
2. Frilsham & Yattenden ) Reading Football League
3. St Bartholomews )

**Linesman's Award**

1. F. Wright (Forest Old Boys)
2. A. Harper (Reading Exiles)
3. M. Pinfold (Compton)

Thanks as usual to Alan Turner who again this year has collected and collated all the marks and made the awards possible.

**DEAR BRIAN (and DICK)**

**from High Wycombe magazine editor Mike Gardiner**

I have received the latest edition of your society's excellent magazine and would make a few personal comments about the content of the 'President's Piece'.

This season has been a truly bad one for the ranks of the 'men in black'. We have been used, abused and taken to task by the press, analysed in great detail by the modern wonders of TV, and the whole season seems to have driven a wedge even further between players and referees. There is something wrong with the system. What it is is difficult to say but, nevertheless, as referees we have to consolidate our position and be more positive by taking the lead to examine the situation.

It is clearly wrong when our senior colleagues have to meet in the latter half of a season to interpret a law. It is even more wrong that most of our park referees are now only just finding out what that interpretation is. It is no surprise therefore that other interested parties are scratching about to find answers e.g. professional referees, accelerated schemes for ex-pro players etc. These arguments are not going to go away as long as we sit by in our complacency and do not



produce a more logical and workable programme to respond to our employers' needs.

Professional referees can be better - not in terms of honesty, integrity or professionalism, but better in terms of time available to prepare for the introduction of new laws and interpretations, better in terms of communication with the FA, RA, Leagues and grass-root referees. Better too in terms of stress management at the highest levels.

Ex-pro players too can contribute more but, although they may have a better 'understanding' of the game, they will have to develop the other and equally required skills of man-management, common-sense and experience that come from 'managing' many hundreds of games at all levels.

The point that I am trying to make is that we referees, through our national RA, need to take a hard look at ourselves and LEAD rather than be dragged into change. We will certainly have professional (i.e. salaried) referees and linesmen within 2 to 3 years, but will we have to accept a two-tier system as well? Unless we take the initiative, keeping an open mind, our pay-masters will impose change without consideration of or reference to grass-roots football. This will surely not benefit 'our' game.

It has been a depressing season but perhaps we are to blame.  
**A MAIDEN'S PRAYER IS BEGINNING TO BE ANSWERED -  
 a short step for womankind?**

Our October/November issue contained a letter from Anne Newbery, raising the question of the treatment of females by the powers-that-be in football, both as players and as referees. Of course the snag with women's football, as we know from Channel 4, is that you don't get all that nastiness, just the old-fashioned skills. No doubt it will come soon enough . . .

**NEXT TRAINING COURSE**

The start of the first training course of next season has been fixed provisionally for **Monday 9 September**. Not too early to be getting people interested.

**REFEREEING IN GERMANY**

By a strange coincidence two of the magazines I receive from other societies recently contained articles from members in Germany who were discovering the differences.

The first surprise was having to re-qualify with written and physical tests - and the tests are annual. The second that all

referees have to be affiliated to a club which is responsible for kitting them out and paying their insurance. Clubs comply because if they don't they are fined! They welcome you. You do not, however, referee their games: the affiliation is merely (an effective) device for getting referees into the game. The weakness for the organisers is that referees are then free to do as many or as few games as they wish.

The referee has an identity card complete with picture which also serves as a free pass for Bundesliga games. Players likewise have to have an identity card with photo which is withheld if a player is sent off. So the player **cannot** play until further notice.

Perhaps even more interesting is the fact that they have a 10 minute sin-bin - often discussed here but not used. And it seems to work, especially for dissent.

So, a number of ideas worthy of consideration. If only our FA would occasionally be willing to learn or take advice from others - either referees or FAs in other countries. Not much evidence so far.

#### **SOUTHERN DIVISION 5-A-SIDE**

After their success in the Berks & Bucks round, our squad of Martin Deacon, Roy Maybanks, Pat and Simon Monaghan, Dave Newman and Ebby Saleh, got as far as the semi-final where they narrowly went down 0-1 to the eventual winners, Isle of Wight. Well done, lads. National finals next year?

#### **SPECIAL PLUM FOR A WYCOMBE COLLEAGUE**

On the line at this year's FA Vase Final was Tony Williams of the High Wycombe Society. Congratulations, Tony, from your friends in the Reading RA.

#### **PROMOTIONS**

Congratulations to the following members (a record number I suspect) who have achieved promotion, and especially to Andy Butler, Steve Carvell, Neil Isham, Alan Jordan, Will Penny, Ebby Saleh and Gary Webster who have gone from 3 to 2 to 1 in successive seasons. (Extra applause too for Nigel Smith who has kept us waiting just a wee bit longer!)

**Class 2 to 1:** M.D. Albury, A.D. Butler, S.L. Carvell,

C.A. Connon, M.J. Dulak, A.B.Gill, N. Isham, A.J. Jordan,  
W.G. Penny, E. Saleh, N.C. Smith, G.D. Webster

**Class 3 to 2:** R.P. Auger, D.Crossland, N.C. Dainty,  
G.P. Donnelly, T.A. Fallon, R.W. Maybanks, S.A. Mills,  
G.A. Pithers

### **MORE LIKES, DISLIKES ETC**

Not too many responses to my request for more.  
However . . .

'What I really like is that moment when I have given  
advantage and the player sails through to score a cracking goal  
- especially if his team-mates have turned on me and started  
gripping . . .'

'What about when you pick up a bit of crafty shirt-tugging  
the player thinks you can't possibly see. And you're right  
there and your whistle nearly blows his head off. And he turns  
round and grins. You know you've won respect.'

'My fear is not restarting the watch. In my second season  
for some reason I got a B & B 2nd round cup game. Player injured  
after about 15 or 20 minutes. Stopped the watch. Some minutes  
later, another injury. The watch was already stopped! No  
panic, Ingersoll in my pocket. I'd never started it. I  
sweated. Club linesmen - should I confess? Brazenly I added  
6 minutes to the half. No-one said a word. I always  
double-check both watches and prime the linesmen now.'

### **LAW QUERY AND ANSWER (from the RA Instructional and Publications Committee's last meeting)**

#### Shinguards and small-a-side competitions

The committee pointed out that unless the rules of the  
competition specify to the contrary, the Laws of the Game must  
apply and shinguards must be worn.

### **THIS SEASONS' PLUMS**

(with congratulations from all who didn't quite make it this  
year!)

### **Berks & Bucks FA**

Saturday Intermediate Cup: T.G. McPherson

Sunday Trophy: A.P. Wellsted (line)

**Chiltonian League Cup** J.W. Moore

**Reading Challenge Cup**

Senior Cup: K.M. Parsons, A.D. Awbery (lines)

Junior Cup: G. Crutchfield (line)

Jubilee Cup: K. Arlett, G.P. Donnelly (lines)

**Maidenhead Norfolkian Senior Cup** E. Saleh

**South-west Inter-County Championship** A. Turner (line)

**Reading Football League**

Berkshire Centre Trophy

Senior Cup: F.W. Hawkins; B.A. Minhinick, P.J. Hambly

Intermediate Cup: K. Arlett; N. Isham, A.J. Jordan

Junior Cup: D. Crossland; G.P. Donnelly, G. Wallace

**Reading & District Sunday League**

Tilehurst Charity Cup: J.W. Moore; E. Saleh

Industrial Cup: A.P. Wellsted; A.B. Gill

E, Cambridge Cup: N. Wrey (line)

Ronald Nash Cup: K. Hall; R.W. Maybanks, S.A. Mills

Harold Lusted Shield: P.R. Hitt; R.G. Pedder

John Lusted Trophy: F.W. Hawkins; A.J. Jordan, L.V. Maskell

Treasurers Cup: W.G. Penny; G.A. Pithers

Subsidiary Cup: P.C. Jenkins; D. Crossland, N.L. Binns

**Reading and District Youth League**

Vic Beasley Cup: M. Bellman; A.K. Chapman

Town Crier Shield: A.K. Chapman; G. Alexander

**MONTHLY MEETINGS NEXT SEASON**

The committee always try to produce a balanced programme with guest speakers, training and other activities. They want to please you, the members. Please give suggestions, comments - supportive or critical - to any officer or committee member. Don't be backward in coming forward. This is your society.