

READING REFEREE

Editor - Brian Palmer

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Editorial

The end of another season. Certainly *different*. The gulf between the multi-million pound 'top' of the game and the local park gets bigger and bigger, even between the Premiership and the other divisions of the Football League. The tyranny of the media and commercialism is set fair to get worse. Yet it is still possible, thank heaven, to find games to enjoy - and to referee.

A *difference* for the Reading RA was starting the season with no secretary, followed by the shock resignation of the Chairman Stephen Green which meant we lost our Senior Training Officer as well. And, ironically, the New Year started our 75th Anniversary (or 76th!).

But it is true about silver linings. Members have rallied round and business has been able to continue much as usual. A special tribute has to go to Brian Wratten who has worn so many hats it's surprising he has any hair left. The good news is that we have a strong list of potential officers and committee members for next season, as well as a healthy bunch of new recruits. So we go forward with our usual confidence into the future.

Congratulations to all of those whose season was rewarded with promotion and/or plum appointments. Best wishes to all of those who didn't quite make it - the majority. There's always next season . . . Have a good Summer - whether it includes more refereeing or not. Hope to see you on Thursday 15 August.

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MARCH

Monthly Meeting

Owing to Derek Reigate's indisposition, President Brian Palmer found himself chairing the meeting of some 50+ (though a number of those present were not yet members, being from the recent course). They were given a special welcome.

Among the business items:

Members were reminded that:

- the National RA Conference will be held 14-16 June at Stoke-on-Trent
- nominations for 1996/97 Officers have to reach the secretary by 18 April
- the society maintains a wardrobe of used kit to lend to beginning referees to get them started. Keving Parsons, Supplies Co-ordinator, is always looking for additions of discarded kit still decent enough to be used.

Members were asked for suggestions for

- the 1996/97 programme (to Secretary)
- the 75th Anniversary Celebrations (to Dick Sawdon Smith)

The following members were congratulated on appointments in the County Senior Cup Semi-finals:

Reading v Wokingham Town	Malcolm Garstang, reserve official
Maidenhead Utd v Aylesbury Utd	John Moore, referee; Larry Smith, linesman; Alison Chapman, reserve official.

Vice-President Terry Gibbs reported the case of a referee who started a game 35 minutes late because a team was incomplete and the players refused to leave the dressing-room. With at least seven present you should insist on a start and, if the team still refuses to co-operate, abandon the game and report the details to the League.

Martin Albury reported an accidental clash of heads in a local Sunday game which led to bleeding and the need for treatment. Neither team had a First Aid

kit, one had a bucket and sponge - used for both players to the concern of the referee. Keith Simmons, on behalf of the Sunday League, responded that buckets and sponges were not recommended and that from next season all clubs will have to have a qualified First Aider as well as a kit.

Ted Cambridge reported (as a County FA officer) that *promotion candidates* must apply this year *before 31 July*. As part of the promotion procedure, all Class 2 to 1 candidates will now have to attend a seminar, in addition to their practical assessment. Fees would be going up next season. There had been five recent cases of alleged assault in the Berks & Bucks.

Tom Walton invited the new referees to consider lining on the Allied Counties Youth League to gain experience.

Peter Pittaway expressed his concern that a senior referee (and member of the RA) had gone to a personal hearing as character witness for a player. (In the event he had not been called and the player had been found guilty).

Life Member George Mills gave details of the Royals Cup Competition to be held at Elm Park in early May for which 51 officials will be needed. A chance for most of our active members to be involved. Games are at 6-15 and 8-00 in the evening and George asked to be informed of any difficulties with dates or the earlier kick-off time.

On the (Problem) Spot

Twice.

John Moore, a last minute substitute, has so many problems he had to share *two* with us (with the acting chairman anxiously watching the clock).

Important league game, score 1-1. Ball played high and forward into the penalty area and dropping for a forward. A defender moves to meet it, eyes on the ball. John sees the attacker looking to see where the referee is. The defender runs into the attacker who falls over. What do you give? A penalty? Ignore it? Caution

the attacker for trying to 'con' the referee? Both experienced linesmen would have given the penalty (from their angle of view). John didn't. He gave an indirect free kick against the attacker and spoke severely rather than giving a caution.

Second problem. A keenly fought cup semi-final, half-time. John is walking off the field and sees a commotion involving about twenty people in the corridor to the changing-rooms. What do you do? John blew his whistle loudly and approached quickly. A player was lying on the floor, bleeding. What do you do next?

John cleared the players into their separate changing-rooms, helped the victim and then sought witnesses. A colleague of the player said an opponent had attacked him. But you saw nothing, what can you do? John first talked to the injured player's manager to explain what he could *not* do, then to the other manager, suggesting a tactical substitution as there was a second half still to come. This was done (and, of course, identified the assailant). John reported fully to the *League* - there was nothing he could report to the County FA because he hadn't seen the alleged assault. His action seemed to work - the second half was fairly normal.

Jim de Rennes, the Guest Speaker was called into early action and made the draw for the Cup Final tickets. First name out was Martin Albury's. [He had *not* organised the draw! Ed] First reserve: Colin Pike; second reserve: Gerry Cole.

Jim, an FA Licensed Instructor and Training Officer for the Kingston Society, underlined his late arrival into refereeing. He qualified in 1988, reached Class 1 in 1991 and two years later was Class 1X! His topic was to be 'Enforcing the 17 Laws (or is it 18?) on the local parks.'

Jim's 'talk' was to be based on a selection of projected stills which he would discuss with us. It was clearly going to be practical and realistic: what does the Law oblige you to do? How are you actually going to deal with a situation? After a nice opening joke about a funeral, Jim asked how we would deal with someone who, on your arrival at the ground, greets you with a foul remark. The

ensuing discussion revealed how many factors were involved, how different circumstances altered cases and how much remained to be decided by the individual referee on that particular occasion.

Jim thought 'stills' in some ways more valuable for discussion than video. With 'stills' you are forced to imagine the possible events leading up to and following the incident. That is what is important, not simply the judgment given at the time and whether it seemed right or wrong.

Many of the contentious issues in refereeing came out: how you deal with retaliation, with shirt-pulling, so-called 50/50 situations and so on, and also some, like the tackle from behind, which should no longer be contentious - the Law is now clear. If there is contact, it's a foul.

A referee's tools are: whistle, signals, body language and voice - all have a part to play in your match control.

In his talk, Jim illustrated the referee's essential skill of communication and kept his audience fully involved. Our newcomers were left in no doubt that there is more to refereeing than a knowledge of the Laws - and rarely a simple answer.

MONTHLY MEETING

April

Derek Reigate back in the chair to welcome a gathering of about 50. President Brian Palmer presented certificates to the newly qualified referees - most of the 21 were in attendance.

Among the business items:

- the RA insurance would cost 10p a member more next season to pay for an increase in benefit from £50 to £60 per week.

- Next season's programme would include Gary Willard as Guest Speaker in September and the County Training Team in October with a presentation on 'Confrontation' and in February with one on 'Lining'.
- The Evening Post was starting an adult 5-a-side competition in the summer, but it was not clear from discussion whether it had been sanctioned by the County FA. *Members must check before they agree to officiate.*
- On behalf of the Sunday League Keith Simmons mentioned the disappointing standard of lining on the cup semi-finals and asked what we could do to help. Not easy. The officials are appointed on their refereeing marks and do not necessarily get regular lining practice. If the league appointed them to lines prior to the semis and finals, other games would lose a referee. It was suggested that maybe the selection of officials should be reconsidered and the linesmen be selected on the quality of their lining. All would need to consider the matter further. Keith reported two recent cases dealt with by the league. A referee who arrived late and restarted the game, contrary to league rules, making it last 105 minutes. Also a case of a referee using foul language himself. Neither official, we were relieved to hear, a member of the RA.

Members were urged to support the main 75th Anniversary Celebration event which will be a Dinner and Dance with eminent guests, probably in early November.

Reminders:

- the fitness training sessions continue at Theale Green school on Tuesdays at 8 p.m. All welcome. Contact Cliff Watkins on 610462, or just turn up.
- the annual match against Bracknell RA will take place, but not before the AGM when details should be available. Anyone who would like to play, should contact Pat Monaghan on 571136.

On the (Problem) Spot

Martin Shearn re-opened a problem from the *Football Referee*. The referee blows his whistle to start the game. The centre forward waits, the other forwards encroach. The referee speaks to him and again blows the whistle. After the third attempt, he cautions the centre forward. and shows the yellow card. Was he right?

In the discussion the issues emerged. What was the offence? No disagreement that there was an offence and that it was 'Ungentlemanly Conduct'. As it was committed before the kick-off was properly taken, the game had not started. Did that alter things? Was it something to be reported to the league? Should the yellow card have been shown? What if the same player received a caution during the game? With the help of Keith Cooper and Stewart Mills, it was all clarified.

This was a *player* not a club official. Although the incident took place before the match had started, the player was properly cautioned and shown the yellow card and the incident should be reported in the normal way to the County FA or other, not the league. A further cautionable offence would lead to sending-off.

Guest Speaker Keith Cooper is no stranger to Reading RA and seemed as pleased to be back as we were to have him.. He has been on the Football League for 18 years but has continued to do local games and remains a staunch supporter of the RA. He started by telling our newly qualified colleagues how the opportunities for reaching the top were greater than ever before and wishing them well.

His topic was 'Man-Management'. After a few funnies to warm us up, he defined man-management as a skill which may be natural, but (fortunately) can be acquired. (Ask someone who was there if you missed the George Courteney story!).

What are the qualities required of a referee he asked (to keep us involved). A very quick response: e.g. humour, confidence, patience, knowledge, fitness, experience, ability.

Keith started his list with *calmness*. Cools a situation and makes it easier to deal with (assuming you're not out of breath, so *be fit*).

Approachability. If someone asks you reasonably about something you've given, tell them why. Respond; no reason not to.

Ability to admit a mistake. 'In the end, I am a human being.' 'I may have got it wrong'. To be used carefully - you probably had a better view from three yards than the manager in his dug-out!

Confidence. How do you get it over to the players? More difficult than 30 years ago when there was respect and no backchat. Your 'image' is important. You need a *positive attitude*. Important to make decisions from near the play, say within ten yards if possible. So you have to be fit.

What is the effectiveness of the various tactics available to you?

The quiet word. Avoid belittling and public humiliation - you wouldn't like it. Use 'the triangle' when you want a word with a player - move diagonally towards him and expect him to do the same. Meet him halfway.

The not-so-quiet word. Sometimes you want everyone to hear, to know that that particular behaviour is unacceptable. Don't rush. Create yourself thinking time, then do what you have to do firmly and confidently.

Banter/humour. Can be really effective in taking the heat out of a situation but can go wrong, especially for the inexperienced. Story of Bryan Robson pulling at Keith's sleeve after an incident and, when ignored, saying 'Who am I?' After the third plaintive question, Keith remarked to one of his team-mates that he (Robson) seemed to be suffering from amnesia. Everyone saw the joke and the situation was more effectively defused than with a yellow card.

SILENCE. Don't forget that the look, without saying anything at all, can be highly effective.

Signals and gestures. Be sharp and correct with your signals. Use your whistle. Show authority not weakness.

Body language. It is important - the way you dress, stand, act. It starts from the moment you arrive. You are giving messages about yourself.

Definitions of 'to manage': to direct, to control, to cope with (you have to be prepared to deal with all arguments, eventualities), to succeed (we all want to do well, but we have to earn success, work for it), to conduct, to regulate, to govern, to influence (how you act affects the players). For example, how do you caution?

Keith announced that he had been talking for 40 minutes, the maximum, and would respond to questions, reminding us again that we should all use the RA and be unafraid. We all make assumptions and mistakes.

Among the questions and responses:

How do you prepare for a game with known 'hard men'?

As usual. Be aware - that's good preparation - but never prejudge.

What if you ask a player to meet you half-way and he doesn't come?

I wait, and wait . . . and wait. Don't lose your cool. Get other members of the team to get him back. The game won't restart.

What effect have the mandatory instructions had on you?

They have taken something away from us and made man-management more difficult.

How do you feel about TV/Sky TV?

You have to work with the system. You forget the (18) cameras, but it has raised the punters' expectations. The commentators increase the problems by endlessly going on about the finest details after dozens of replays. We get nearly all the decisions right, but the game does go at a horrendous pace and millions of pounds can hang on one decision. There will be more technology in the future to help the officials.

Will it mean more officials?

We can't get it right with three! More would not help.

What about professional players as referees?

Keith has no problem with that. They can come up quickly as long as they go through the system and get promoted on merit.

Professional referees?

We have them now. No advantage in full-time referees: it would be elitist and not practical for them if they could be dropped and lose their livelihood

When the Chairman drew the session to a close, Keith was warmly applauded and thanked for another instructive and entertaining evening. In his gentle Wiltshire burr, he had revealed his own humanity and man-management skills to a degree.

FAIR PLAY AND LINESMAN'S AWARDS

Fair Play Award

1	Compton FC	Reading Football League	8.88
2	Cox Green FC	Reading Football League	8.42
3	Earlbourne FC	Reading Football League	8.32

Linesman's Award

1	A Beach	Earlbourne FC, RFL	8.64
2	M Pinfold	Earlbourne FC, RFL	8.57
3	A Farmiloe	Reading Exiles, RFL	8.50

Alan Turner, the co-ordinator, writes: 'Thanks to all the referees who send the blue forms in. Your effort has helped once again to make these awards a success. They assure local clubs and linesmen that sportsmanship and effort don't go unnoticed.'

Thanks, too, to Alan for collecting the forms and doing the sums for another year.

WHEN DO TACKLES DESERVE THE YELLOW CARD?

A cautionary tale from Dick Sawdon Smith

I doubt if there is anyone alive today who can remember seeing Jack Smith play on the wing for Reading Football Club in the 1920s. But I knew Jack in his later years, and of course we always talked football. I well remember the tale he told me when he played against one of the hard men of his day. "I was a nippy winger" said Jack, "and in the first five minutes of the game I dribbled round him making him look slow and ponderous, before getting my cross in".

In the next few minutes the full back sidled up alongside Jack, "Do that once more my son, and I'll hit you so hard you'll finish in the top row of the stands". Jack knew his opponent to be a fearsome tackler and would be as good as his word. "He would be quite happy to give away a foul", said Jack, "because he knew that after being clobbered once I wouldn't risk it too often. So I kept out of his way for the rest of the game and got rid of the ball as soon as I received it".

Today of course if the defender carried out his threat it would have us reaching for the top pocket and a yellow card at least. But let's just stop for a minute, and ask ourselves why would it lead almost certainly to a caution. Let's face it, the laws don't say that bad tackling is a cautionable offence. If a tackle is careless, reckless or with disproportionate force then the award is a direct free kick. The book doesn't say "and a caution". And we shouldn't forget that if it is violent conduct or serious foul play then it is a sending off, not a caution.

There are only two headings under which a player can be cautioned for a tackle. Firstly, if he persistently infringes the laws of the game. That's fair enough, except that we need to be clear about what 'persistently' means. It isn't two or three tackles in the course of a game. Persistently is when a player continues to

commit offences as part of a design or plan of action. It could be described as the player's preferred method of play.

The only other reason that a tackle warrants a caution is for 'Ungentlemanly Conduct'. So what makes a tackle ungentlemanly? I think that the answer, is when it is not violent enough to be a sending off offence, but when the awarding of a free kick is **not** sufficient punishment.

In the case of Jack Smith's protagonist, what he was planning was an intimidatory foul. I'm sure we have all seen intimidatory fouls over the years, with experience they are fairly obvious. Goalkeepers and skilful players have suffered particularly. The offending player is quite prepared to give away a free kick to make their point, so something extra is needed. The caution which limits their further activity, under the threat of dismissal.

The spoiling foul is another example. I recall recently a television commentator concluding that a defender was quite happy to give away a free kick after he had held a winger to prevent him crossing the ball into the penalty area where a team mate waited unmarked. The referee quite rightly added a caution.

We are often criticised as referees for the increasing number of cautions, and the yellow card has become, dare I say it, fashionable. Therefore I feel we must remember the purpose why we add a caution, when we have already penalised the player with a free kick. One purpose of course is to protect the present day Jack Smiths, the skilful players, from the intimidators. It acts as a warning that further transgressions could lead to dismissal. It is to deter spoiling tactics, which reduce the pleasure for players and spectators, and which are not in the spirit, the gentlemanly conduct, in which it is intended the game should be played. Above all however when cautioning for a tackle, it should simply be done when the free kick is not enough.

AN APPEAL

The Combined Counties League requires officials for middles and lines next season. The League is part of the Isthmian Pyramid System with current local

ASSESSORS AND INVOLVEMENT

During a recent game between Carterton and Didcot on which I was being assessed, the following incident occurred.

With less than 10 minutes to go, and the game still goal-less, the home side were pressing for the winning goal. I was just inside the penalty area on the left-hand side and my linesmen were on right wings. The ball was hit towards goal, then kicked away by a defender, only to hit a forward on the chest and upper arm - of which I had an excellent view from my position - - and dropped nicely for him to kick the ball into the goal.

I had no hesitation in awarding the goal and, with the linesman agreeing, retreated to the half-way line for the restart. A couple of the defending team claimed 'handball', but I told them it was 'ball to hand' at the worst. I restarted the game and, on a couple of occasions in the next few minutes, players told me 'it was definitely handball - ask the assessor. He saw it. He says it was.'

In the last minute of the game, I awarded a free kick to the home side who were leading by the 'controversial' goal. While waiting for the kick to be taken, one of the defenders had a few more words with me about the goal and, as he was walking away, he swore at me. I sent him off for using foul language. Immediately afterwards, another player came up to me insinuating that I had caused the sending-off by allowing the goal. As he turned away he said something else about me which I didn't hear clearly, but I suspected foul language. I cautioned that player for dissent.

My senior linesman, who normally referees at a higher level but was helping out because he was free, was up with play at the goal scoring incident, and confirmed that he saw no deliberate handball. I told him what the players said they had been told by the assessor, but we both agreed the assessor would not have said anything and we thought no more of it.

Ten days later I received the assessor's report through the post. Some valid points and tips for future reference which any referee is thankful for. Then under section 9 'General remarks and constructive advice':

'The turning point in this game came when Carterton scored the only goal; the player who scored clearly handled the ball before he scored. You did not see this because of your narrow position on your diagonal. This upset the Didcot players and a few minutes later you sent the fullback off for comments made to you after a free kick'.

Reading this made me wonder again whether the players might have heard the assessor say something about the alleged handball. I was so concerned that I contacted to be reassured that the assessor had said nothing.

Be that as it may, my concern (and the assessor's description of the incident) would never have arisen if only assessors always came into the referees' dressing room after the game to talk through what they had seen. If that was the case, it should be possible to clear up any factual misunderstandings at least.

Certainly, I and other referees I have spoken to, believe assessors should not influence either the referee or players during a game, and any comments about the referee should be for him or her alone.

Presumably, I now realise, I should have taken more serious action against the players claiming to be reporting the assessor's views. I guess that sort of deceit must rank as a classic case of 'ungentlemanly conduct'.

Martin Albury

ICIS Football League

Promotion to

Linesman's List

Chiltonian Football League

PROMOTIONS

Class 2 to Class 1

Class 3 to Class 2

For our older members

NEVER TOO OLD

Just recently I ran the line on an Insurance representative game. At 49 I thought I was coming to the end of my career; but would you believe it the other linesman was 77 next birthday. He passed the referee's examination in 1938 and still officiates five times a week: three midweek games on leagues such as the Police, university, and Heathrow Airport midweek leagues, schools, and Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning (and that's not including 5-a-side leagues). He has many memories, but his fondest one is receiving his trophy from Sir Stanley Rous after refereeing the Ceylon National Cup Final in 1963. His only complaint - that these days his legs sometimes ache after a game. And before any of you get cynical about his age, let me tell you the quality of his lining would put many of our senior linesmen to shame. It was nice to feel young again!

Tony Murphy

[*Basingstoke Bleep*; seen in *The Chiltern Referee*]

FEES AND THE COUNTY FA

When I suggested in the last issue that the B & B FA should, and could afford to abolish the annual fee it charges its referees, I assumed the same would be true for other County FAs too.

I have just seen the following (newspaper extract?) in *The Chiltern Referee* which seems to provide pretty good evidence.

' Yorkshire football is suffering from what is, in the most literal possible terms, an *embarras de richesse*. The various football associations of the county have received unprecedented

sackfuls of fines from their errant member clubs.

West Riding FA has £145,000 from 16,000 bookings and sendings-off in the season just gone, while Sheffield and Hallamshire FA, and North Yorkshire FA report that they are similarly loaded East Riding FA has £37,000 and Pete Smith, the disciplinary secretary, said: 'We simply don't know what to do with the money. Sharing it out between the teams would seem to defeat the object, and we don't want to spend the money irresponsibly, so it's been put in the bank.'

Well, I have made a suggestion to deal with a tiny part of the money. Let's see if it catches on

MORE ABOUT MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNTY FA COUNCIL

Well, what a totally engrossing read the January issue of the *Reading Referee* turned out to be. I am, of course, referring especially to the Dick Sawdon-Smith - John Moore 'exchange'. Without question it had me captivated, furiously flicking between pages 14/15 and 10/11. Whilst there was an abundance of strong and commendable points made by both sides, I couldn't help dwelling on John's throw-away line on page 15, where, he complained at not being personally advised by the B & B FA of an impending Council Member vacancy, and referred to the appointment of the successful candidate as 'being filled, by yes, another league officer'.

For most this line will pass without further thought, not knowing who the person is, and assuming by John's tone that some grey-suited geriatric has been wheeled out to fill the post. Closer examination, however, points to a person who played in local football for one of the area's top teams for over 20 years, and for part of the time also held the job of club secretary. On concluding his playing career he continued as club secretary for a further 15 years. More recently he has held the post of General Secretary for the area's largest and most successful Saturday league, taking in along the way Chairman of the Reading Challenge Cup, team attendant to the County representative team and 15 years of coaching in minor football - in fact just another league officer !! I will leave you to decide who it is.

Perhaps John should be less concerned with the personalities appointed to these positions, or their current status within local football, and more with their contribution and background. I would suggest that Division 5 (Reading area) of the County FA should have representatives closely linked with all the local leagues and referees. Had John been appointed, I am quite certain he would have undertaken the job to a high standard with strong commitment and would have provided referees with a fine representative, but would it have helped local football, by once again leaving Saturday football without a representative with the level of detailed information, which 'just another league officer' can provide?

Philip Lewis

[Unfortunately this had to be held over for lack of space in the last issue. Still relevant. Ed]

PHYSIOTHERAPY - Everybody's Health Service

Where do you go if you have a sprained ankle, back pain, or simply need advice on how to get back after injury?

Jill Wigmore-Welsh is a chartered Physiotherapist and practising Acupuncturist based at Tilehurst Physiotherapy, a clinic opposite Prospect Park. Her experience with athletes is extensive, having spent 12 years with the British Judo Association at international level and 2 years with the International rowing team.

The clinic offers a complete and comprehensive treatment for the injured athlete and has a link with Bradfield College which can assist in full rehabilitation using their gym and pool facilities.

If you need professional advice or help, either call into the clinic at 218 Tilehurst Road or **telephone (01734) 594099**.

Alternatively contact **John Moore** for further information.

Concessionary rates for Reading RA members on production of a current membership card

DID YOU SEE THIS ONE?

Wimbledon boss Joe Kinnear has landed in hot water again for criticising another referee. 'I couldn't believe it when the ref gave the decision to the opposition yet again', he moaned. Video evidence later confirmed, however, that the opposing captain had indeed correctly called 'heads'.

[thanks to the Milton Keynes magazine, *WHISTLE STOP*]