

READING REFEREE

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Editorial

Last issue of yet another season.

This is the time when we should all review how things have gone. That's how active referees learn and profit from their experience, and it is also true of societies. The trick is to have clear objectives for the season and then honestly examine how far you have achieved them.

Aside from the normal running of the society, we planned to celebrate our 75th Anniversary in style and our Dinner and Dance was certainly a success. We have tried not to neglect 'grass roots' refereeing and have also had a good quality programme of Guest Speakers arranged for us. Yet we have failed to attract members to meetings in the numbers we had been used to. The fact that it seems to be a widespread problem among societies doesn't make it feel any better and it remains a disappointment, especially for the Committee who work so hard on our behalf. The remedy is in our own hands - they can only do so much. Let's start with a good turn-out at the first meeting of the new season on Thursday 21 August.

Until then, enjoy your rest if you get one, or your summer-time refereeing if that's what you prefer.

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March
Monthly Meeting

Nearly 70 present - our best for some time - no doubt attracted to hear Dermot Gallagher, our Guest Speaker. And they were not to be disappointed.

Modest in style and stature, Dermot started like a stand-up comic, and went on in the same vein. He said he isn't good at standing up talking at people at Society meetings, but he does like to share his problems with friends and get them involved. He promised we would all have learned something by the end of the evening.

By a number of devices he got us to identify the four things that (not surprisingly) cause him problems: the players, managers, spectators, and we have to admit, colleagues. He then gave examples of problems, recounted in a humorous way, but always with a serious message. His accounts of less-than-satisfactory 4th officials were particularly pointed.

What qualities does the referee need? Dermot got some good help from members: e.g. confidence, man-management, correct application of the Laws, knowledge of competition rules.

Should players/managers become referees? Only if they are properly trained and experienced. A story of Alan Ball after a game to illustrate the gap.

Problem of the large video-screen replay. The example of a corner incorrectly given. When the crowd has seen your error, what do you do next?

In and between, Dermot was telling stories, often against himself (like the time he forgot how to do a penalty shoot-out) and stressing how we all go on learning. In response to a question he stated his belief in all levels of

the game. He thinks the separation of the Premiership referees into an elite group has created a dilemma which he would wish to disappear. When Dermot revealed his timetable for the past few days, we realised we were doubly privileged - that we had had an excellent presentation/discussion and that he had made time to come to Reading at all. The Chairman's thanks were echoed by all present.

The business part of the meeting, unusually, followed after half time. The biggest news item was that we had beaten the Reading Football League by 33 pins in the skittles challenge match - thanks to the efforts of the ladies however!

A new type of social event (for the Reading RA) had been arranged for May 2nd - a Race Night to which all members and friends were invited.

Dick Sawdon Smith announced that the Reading Civic Society was holding a meeting on May 7th to discuss the Reading FC plans for a new stadium..

The third part of the meeting was devoted to 'Grass Roots Football' presented by Cliff Watkins and Andy Awbery. While Andy had been injured, he had been going around the local parks with a video camera. The referee in the frame was to be Malcolm Garstang. It was emphasised that the aim was not to criticise the referee. Rather it was to comment on two incidents to be watched on video, and open them up for discussion.

The first was Malcolm's position behind the net for a corner. Although it worked on the occasion in question, for many the cons outweighed the pros. The second incident involved a late flag from a club linesman which the referee missed, not surprisingly. This led to a tantrum by the normally competent linesman a few minutes before half-time and to his dismissal/non-dismissal. An extremely difficult and discussible situation, with plenty of suggestions (after the event and from the safety of the Rendezvous Club). We look forward to more from Cliff and Andy [and hope not to be the referee on view! Ed].

April
Monthly Meeting

After the pleasure of a full room in March, back to a very modest attendance of less than forty, including only four from the recent course to receive their certificates. More food for thought for the Committee.

President Brian Palmer presented the certificates to our new colleagues and spoke briefly about starting refereeing and the role of the Reading RA. The Training Team were congratulated on the conclusion of another successful course.

The Secretary reported various plum appointments: to Berks & Bucks finals (listed pp.) and to two FA Umbro Trophy semis -
1st leg Iain Williamson 4th official
2nd leg Alan Wellsted Assistant Referee.

Andy Awbery reported the appointments for the Reading Football League finals (listed pp.) and praised the officials of those that had already been held.

The Secretary reminded members about the forthcoming Race Night to be held as a joint venture with the Reading FC Supporters' Club at the Royals' Rendezvous Club. Friday 2 May and tickets at £2 each.

The Chairman, Derek Reigate reminded members that the May meeting is the AGM. Nominations for officers had to be made without delay (though proposals for membership of the committee could be made at the meeting itself).

Life Member George Mills reported that appointments had been made for all the Royals' Cup games up to the semi-finals - the latter would be notified shortly.

Amongst the items of other business, Ted Cambridge confirmed that the County's Public Liability Insurance does cover stand-in referees. He also explained that U/11 11-a-side football was being phased out - last U/9s in 1998-99; last U/10s in 1999/2000.

Vice-President Terry Gibbs mentioned the persistent adverse comments about referees in the press and wondered whether there was any advice to be offered especially to young referees. The problem was acknowledged in a spirited discussion but no clear solution emerged. The Editor of the *Reading Referee* mentioned his attempts to publish *complimentary* pieces from the press - which do occur from time to time - in order to strike some balance. He asked members to send him any such items they saw.

The lucky winner of this season's draw for the FA Cup Final tickets was none other than Vice-Chairman Peter Pittaway. [All above board - I drew the ticket! Ed]. The reserves are Trevor Gorringer and Graham Brown.

Problem Spot

Andy Awbery related an incident brought to his attention by one of our local referees. The problem of a 'brilliant advantage' that went wrong.

Attacker scythed down but the ball runs to a colleague with a clear chance to score. Referee shouts 'I'm coming back' to make his intention to punish the foul quite clear. Unfortunately, the ball is struck at the goalkeeper who clears upfield and the player who committed the foul hits a screamer into the opponent's net. No break in play till then for the referee to take the promised action. But it isn't even that simple. During the over-exuberant celebrations the guilty player is injured. He is also already on a yellow card. What should the referee do next?

Opinions, as always, varied - from 'you go by the book whatever the circumstances' to 'use common sense' (and therefore do nothing). It was pointed out that, if the 'advantage' had not been given, the guilty player

would probably have been sent off, and the innocent side might well have been a goal better off, whereas they were now a goal *worse* off.

In fact, the referee did nothing but clearly felt very uneasy about the outcome of his 'brilliant advantage'.

Perhaps surprisingly, some members would likewise have done nothing, but others would have gone strictly by the book (again, in the safe environment of the Rendezvous Club) and sent him off in spite of the injury and euphoria. The moral is clear (and was emphasised later by Guest Speaker Roger Milford): be very careful about using advantage, even with the new period of grace, at local park level.

Roger Milford really looks like what we used to see on television, except that he wasn't wearing the famous wristbands.

Roger started refereeing in 1972 and was on the Football League line by 1978/79 and in the middle in 1980. That is pretty fast-track. He has done the major finals and of course achieved fame or (notoriety) for the Gazza incident which he told us he didn't penalise because he didn't see it.

In his soft West Country burr, Roger started by assuring us he was not a poseur and not one of the other things he's been accused of either. The hair is natural and the wrist sweatbands essential - because he sweats. The fact that they advertised a particular group was accidental - a gift from his daughter as predominantly black ones are difficult to come by.

Roger said he would just ramble on and was prepared to receive questions at any time. 'Advantage'? Difficult, especially at local level. He was reminded of an occasion in a Spurs v. Everton match when the scorer of the winning goal celebrated by climbing up the fence. He cautioned him, but what if that had been a second cautionable offence? Roger was astonished to be advised by Ken Ridden that he could just have mentioned it in his report (i.e. without caution). Roger confessed he could not be a referee now with the mandatory instructions. [And yet he is a Football

League assessor. Ed] He saw himself as a 'common sense' referee and was dubbed 'alternative'. His refereeing was all about talking to players, joking with them. He talks little to managers - too risky. Does talk to Andy Grey, but they don't always agree!

Roger is quite opposed to the idea of professional referees. It would make the referee too vulnerable to pressure - e.g. a threat to oppose the renewal of his contract - and to bribery. When he refereed he was fireproof because he didn't feel at risk.

Advantage? Remembers stopping one dream of an advantage - for which he get enormous stick - because from the two players' body language he just knew they would start a fight. In fact his action kept them both on the pitch. Corners? Why do referees take up the conventional position on the goal-line? Try the 'D' as a starting position, but in any case don't remain static. [He was not thinking of club linesman I suspect. Ed] Foul language? Yes, of course, a great deal is tolerated at the highest levels but it all depends on how it is used or directed. Common sense should prevail. Consistency? In the broad sense unachievable. Every game is different and referees are all different. What you should achieve is consistency over 90 minutes.

One of the things still to be sorted out is the treatment of injuries - a farce at present. Roger related an incident he claimed happened at Swindon. The sole ambulanceman came onto the pitch with a pack on his back from which he proceeded to assemble a stretcher, fortunately not needed. Roger wondered how he proposed to carry it himself!

As Roger had threatened, he dodged to and fro, the whole performance interspersed with funny lines. His final messages were quite clear: use common sense and go out and enjoy it.

An entertaining talk which kept everyone interested, though Roger rightly confessed to be 'pre-mandatory instructions', so some of his advice has to be taken with caution.

GOOD NUDES FROM ITALY

Although there are many football teams in Italy representing professions, the teams of postmen and priests in the Rome area have just been informed that the Italian National Striptease Football Federation will soon be fielding an XI. Trained by former Roma defender Enzo Romano, the male strippers mean business. "We want to be taken seriously", says Nicola Devita. "Ours is a serious profession and we know we will have to ride jokes, but it's for charity and we're all fit men".

[*The Sunday Telegraph*, 16/3/97]

HOW DO YOU MAKE YOUR DECISIONS?

What prompts a referee to make his decisions? Knowledge of the Laws? Judgement and interpretation? Sense of fair play and the spirit of the game? Certainly these are all among the factors which must influence our decisions. More recently, however, I have become aware of a more insidious factor which, for want of a better term, I will simply call, 'Fear of litigation'. This is where the decision is predicated not upon what the referee has seen and believes to be correct, but upon the possibility of an incident resulting in him being taken to court on a charge of negligence.

I became particularly aware of this a few weeks ago. I was refereeing a game while another game was being played on an adjacent field. Both matches had kicked off at the same time. At one stage I noted that play had stopped on the other field. A player was on the ground and receiving attention. A few minutes later I heard the wail of sirens and an ambulance arrived to take the unfortunate player off to hospital. I completed my game, returned to the changing rooms, got showered and dressed. I was just about to leave when the referee from the other game - a mature gentleman with many years of refereeing experience - came in. I enquired what had happened. A paraphrase of his answer was as follows:

'We were half way through the second half. There had been no incidents to speak of and I thought everything was going well. Then

there was an awkward tackle and a player went down injured. At the time I thought I'd give a free-kick and have a quiet word with the player who had made the tackle. He hadn't been reckless but I wanted him to be a bit more careful. When I got to the injured player I discovered that things were serious. He had a broken ankle. I got what assistance I could and we sent for an ambulance. Then I thought about the player who had made the tackle and decided it was best to send him off. After all, if I'd let him stay on the field and another serious injury had occurred, I might have ended up being sued for negligence.'

So here we have a case where, based on what he initially saw, the referee judged that the player who made the tackle deserved nothing more than a quiet word. Then, having assessed the results of the tackle, the referee changed his mind and felt obliged to dismiss the player from the game. In short, the decision was based on the 'Fear of Litigation' factor.

I leave it to you to make your own judgement on whether or not you believe the decision to be justified. Certainly, over the past weeks I have given this matter a good deal of thought and have also tried to rationalise how I would deal with a similar situation. As we must all be aware, there are many ways in which the acceptable norms of our society are changing. Allied with this is an increasing tendency for people to seek compensation through the courts for all manner of grievances. Indeed, our lawyers must be delighted with the growth of litigation which is being seen in this country. Lawsuits for negligence, discrimination and malpractice have now become commonplace. Is there any reason to suppose that the football field will be exempt from the many lucrative opportunities observed by the legal profession?

It is easy to shrug it all off and think that we will never get caught up in a case of litigation. Hopefully none of us will - but then again, we just might! Of course, we are not alone in this. Since the well-publicised judgement against a Rugby Football referee who was sued by a player for negligence, officials in many sports have pondered on their own circumstances. As Association Football officials we have all read Law V - International Board Decision 13, which attempts to clarify the Legal Liability of Referees. At the same time we can only wonder how well these FIFA pronouncements would stand up in a court of law. It is, of course, reassuring to know that we have public liability insurance coverage

of £2,000,000 by virtue of our registration with the county FA. This, at least, should help us to escape financial ruin if a case went against us. But there's a lot more to it than that, isn't there? No-one relishes the prospect of being dragged into court. The impacts of disruption, anxiety and the entire mental trauma should not be underestimated. Neither can one ignore the possibly devastating consequences which the case may have on the defendant's family.

One can but wonder the extent to which, consciously or subconsciously, the 'Fear of Litigation' factor may impact on our decisions. After all, self-preservation is a basic human instinct. Could it be that future referee training courses will need to include a module - presented by a legal expert - on the statutory responsibilities of match officials and how they should safeguard themselves against those who might otherwise take them to court? This, of course, presupposes that there will be a continuing supply of recruits who are so keen to be referees that they are prepared to adopt the motto, "Sue - and be damned!"

Brian Wratten

BUT IT'S EVEN WORSE IN TURKEY!

(from *The Independent*, seen in the Milton Keynes RA magazine, *Whistle Stop*)

Referee Metin Tokat so upset the Istanbul club Besiktas with his failure to award a penalty in a recent game that the club have gone a little further than making derogatory comments to the press - they have applied to the custodians of local justice to have the unfortunate man sent to jail.

The match, which Besiktas, fourth in the Turkish League, had been hot favourites to win, ended 0-0, infuriating the home side.

According to reports at the weekend, the Besiktas club lawyer Necati Toker said that the referee had abused his duty as an unbiased public worker in refusing to give Besiktas a penalty after a player from their lowly opponents Vanspor had "clearly handled the ball in the penalty area".

On that basis, Necati has applied to an Istanbul court demanding that Metin should be given a three-year jail sentence for abusing his position.

Rumour has it that Alex Ferguson s closely monitoring the situation . . .
REFEREES - TO KNOW THEM IS TO LOVE THEM?

UEFA's Referees' Committee is determined to continue to improve refereeing standards, and introduced some important innovations into the six-day course held in Limassol during February under the auspices of the Cyprus Football Association.

For the first time ever, the doors were opened to coaches and selected media reporters, with the aim of allowing the referees to improve their tactical grasp of the game and, at the same time, the image they project to the public.

"Judging by the reaction of the referees I have spoken to", commented the Chairman of the UEFA Referees' Committee, Dr Joseph Mifsud, "this new approach has been very positive and, personally, I believe in it. Coaches, match officials and journalists are very much part of football, so hearing their opinions and listening to their suggestions can, I am convinced, do a lot of good to the game".

Dr Mifsud echoed the view expressed by UEFA President Lennart Johnansson, who attended the course in Cyprus. "If I could demand one thing from the referees," he said, "it would be to improve uniformity. Players will accept decisions if they are equitable. But different treatments applied from game to game or even within a single game are very frustrating. for them."

The referees were asked to analyse selected incidents from last year's EURO 96 finals and, as Dr Mifsud commented afterwards, "we were a bit surprised that our top referees had such differing views about what action should have been taken." It was suggested that, with a view to EURO 2000, the referees could benefit from spending more time together before and during the tournament.

In Limassol, France's National Director of coaching, Gerard Houllier, accompanied by UEFA's Technical director, Andy Roxburgh, led the referees through an audio-visual session during which some of the 'tricks of the trade' were examined in detail. They then headed for the local stadium and directed a training session which allowed the referees to observe, as players, the niceties of, among other things, the offside trap.

One other major innovation stemmed from universal recognition that referees must, these days, be mentally equipped to withstand tremendous pressure. Dr Raymond Abrezol led the referees through theoretical and practical sessions of relaxation therapy which even the UEFA President found beneficial.

The course was initially attended by twenty-three referees from UEFA'S Top-Class category, all of whom passed their fitness tests with flying colours. They then made way for thirty-two colleagues who participated in the Introductory Course for newly appointed international referees. Much of the discussion focused on interpretations of the Laws of the Game and proposals which might - or might not - make life easier for the referee and his assistants. There was a unanimous call, for example, for greater severity with players who 'dive' with the express idea of deceiving the referee or who ask the referee to show yellow or red cards to opponents.

"But the most important thing," stressed Dr Mifsud, "could be opening the doors to coaches and the media,. I think they will be less critical if they are encouraged to see how referees prepare for their work."

[UEFA*flash* March 1997]

WHO ARE THE REAL FOOTBALL FANS?

Don't be fooled by the 'Bloke Culture' says Dick Sawdon Smith

Anyone who listens to sport on Radio Five Live, cannot fail to detect that it is infected with what is euphemistically called 'bloke culture'. This was perhaps epitomised by Danny Baker who made a series of controversial remarks culminating in his sacking for inciting listeners to picket the house of a referee with whose decision he disagreed. When a referee phoned through to what after all is a phone-in programme, Baker refused to let him speak. "We don't want referees on this programme," he said "I don't want to hear both sides of the argument. This is a 'fans' programme."

But who are the real football fans?. The myth has grown up that they are the people who turn up in their team's shirt, sing obscene songs and hurl abuse at the opponents, the match officials and opposing supporters. This is perpetuated in that excellent book by Arsenal supporter Nick Hornby, *Fever Pitch*, said to be the only book written by a football fan, and now turned into a film. But let's take as an example one of the few printable chants of Arsenal supporters. "We hate Nottingham Forest, We hate Liverpool too, We hate West Ham United, but Arsenal we love you."

Does that sound like real fans to you? Because it doesn't to me. It sounds like a collection of hooligans, using Arsenal as an excuse to display their immature coarseness and give vent to their viciousness. And these 'blokes' are supported by the likes of Danny Baker, and locally by Mike Lewis who writes crass, ignorant and biased comments about referees in his weekly column in the Reading *Evening Post*.

Who is Danny Baker, or anyone else who hasn't had the guts to take the whistle, to say "You're a referee, you can't be a football fan."? To me, some of the most dedicated people in the game are the men (and women) who see their football from the middle, from those on the FIFA list to those who officiate every week on the local leagues, perhaps those even more so. Many will referee Saturday and then spend the evening getting their kit ready for another match on Sunday morning. I had a young referee running the line for me one Friday evening earlier in the season, who had three more matches that weekend.

And what can we as referees expect? To be criticised, abused, slandered and sometimes even knocked about. Seldom thanked or praised.

For what?

I'll tell you for what, for the love of football. Danny Baker doesn't know what it is to be a football fanatic.

Dick Sawdon Smith

IS THE CORINTHIAN SPIRIT *REALLY* BACK?

It seems a long time ago now, but what did you make of the Robbie Fowler incident (in the game against Arsenal which led to a penalty and Manchester United's victory)?

There is no doubt, thanks to the frequent video replays, that Seaman and Fowler told the truth - no contact was made. However, the interpretation of Fowler's next action wasn't as self-evident to me as it seems to have been to the media and others. And as the media are so often wrong, I think we should always be suspicious . . .

To put it crudely, are we certain that Fowler really deserved all the praise he got (except from his own team-mates - of course) for telling the referee there was no contact? And, indeed, the rather surprising accolade he swiftly got from none other than Sepp Blatter? (Is even the suspicion of fair play in the professional game so rare that the General Secretary of FIFA has to give instant praise?)

It may be that Fowler is an honest player and capable of unselfish action, who hurdled his opponent and lost his balance. Inconveniently, it looked to me rather like a player who dived in the penalty area when he expected to be touched by a goalkeeper going for the ball. Given that another player had been cautioned for diving, he realised his folly and took the clever way out. He knew the referee wouldn't/couldn't change his mind so he had nothing to lose.

Now I don't know which of these two scenarios represents the truth, and would love to believe that the Corinthian spirit was showing through. Unfortunately, there seems to be too much ambiguity to go overboard in our praise.

I thought Fowler's honesty came in later when he seemed deliberately to hit a soft penalty.

Given the effect that that incorrect decision was to have on the championship, maybe the one thing the incident did show is the need to re-consider the possible role of a referee in the stand - with video playback - say, for penalties only. As a by-product, it might actually encourage fair play, because the *non*-penalty when the player flies through the air after no foul contact, would not be missed and would inevitably lead to a caution.

A BIT OF HISTORY

(seen in the May issue of the Basingstoke *Bleep*)

When Preston North End reached the final of the FA Cup in 1888, they asked permission to be photographed with the trophy before the game, so confident were they of victory. The referee, Major Marindin, told them: 'you'd better win the Cup first.' They didn't. West Bromwich Albion beat them 2-1 at Kennington Oval.

Arnold Birch, a goalkeeper with Chesterfield, scored five times for his club in 1923-24. All were penalties and Birch's total is a record for a goalkeeper in a season.

On Easter Monday 1936, when Luton Town were playing at home to Bristol Rovers in Division 3 (South), manager Ned Liddell had problems. Both his recognised first team centre forwards were out of action. After some deliberation, Liddell decided to draft Joe Payne in to fill the main striking role. The move was a sheer gamble because Payne had played only a handful of games for Luton and those as a defender. By half-time Payne had scored a hat-trick and netted seven more in the second half.

Ten goals in one game - a record for the Football League - from a man who turned up at the ground not even expecting to play.

BERT NEWMAN FAIR PLAY AND LINESMAN'S AWARDS

Fair Play Award

1	REME FC	Reading Football League	9.00
2	Mortimer FC	Reading Football League	8.83
3	AFC Maidenhead	Reading Football League	8.75

Linesman's Award

1	M. Stannett	S. Reading CC, RFL	8.66
2	F. Wright	Forest Old Boys FC, RFL	8.25
3	S. Dell	Mortimer FC, RFL	8.20

Alan Turner, the co-ordinator for these awards, writes: 'Many thanks to all the referees who have forwarded their blue forms this season. You are all winners because your contribution ensures the Reading RA's recognition of fair play in our local football. Thanks once again for making it a success.'

And thanks, of course, from all of us to Alan for continuing to look after the scheme so well on our behalf.

PROMOTIONS

We congratulate the following members who have gained their promotion this season.

Class 2 to Class 1: G. Douglas, I. Durie, D. Fisher, J. Freeman, A. Hall

Class 3 to Class 2: D. Flory, G.P. Merrifield

And comiserations to those who didn't. Keep at it - quite a few I know didn't make it first time

A DIFFERENT SORT OF PLUM

Congratulations to Declan Ford who was one of the Assistant Referees for the **Women's FA Cup Final** - Milwall Lionesses v. Croydon.

COMPETITION WINNER

In spite of my offer in the last issue of a special prize to the winner of the Puzzle Square competition, I received only a (small) handful of entries. Andy Hall's name was first out of the hat. [Andy - please see me to get your bottle of highly recommended superplonk! Ed]

THE PLUM TREE

SEASON 1996-97

Congratulations to all our members who have received prestigious appointments this season. Here are the finals we know about. If you don't appear this season, maybe you've been there before or your time has still to come.

Berks & Bucks FA

Saturday Intermediate Cup Referee: M. Albury*

Sunday Intermediate Cup Referee: J. Moore

(*Unfortunately Martin had to decline the appointment)

Oxfordshire FA

Reading Football League

Senior Cup Referee: P. Hitt
Assistant Referees: K. Clark
M. Garstang

Reserve Official: R. Sweeney

Intermediate Cup Referee: M. Bellman
Assistant Referees: M. Gallagher
J. Glenfield

Junior Cup Referee: M. Baker
Assistant Referees: M. Costello
S. Swain

Reading Sunday League

Industrial Cup Referee: J. Moore
Assistant Referee: P. Hitt

Reserve official: T. Walton

E. Cambridge Cup Referee: M. Bellman
Assistant referee: D. Fisher

Reserve Official: J. Davison

John Lusted Cup Referee: M. Garstang
Assistant Referee: C. Wood

Treasurer's Cup Referee: J. Peacock
 Assistant referee: V. Bark

 Reserve Official: A. Higgs

National U/16 Counties Cup Final
Oxfordshire v. Northumberland

Referee: Declan Ford
Assistant Referees: P. Monaghan
 K. Parsons

LAW CHANGES

More changes are going to happen next season, as you may have seen in the press. They include attempts to improve discipline, clarifications and the incorporation of International Board decisions into Law. Worryingly or sensibly, depending on where you stand, two of the changes are direct responses to the present flouting of the Laws - the ball at kick-off will now be in play as soon as it moves forward, and the keeper will be allowed to move his feet at a penalty. I shall be particularly interested to see how the latter works out in practice. What tactics will kickers and keepers devise which don't constitute 'unsporting behaviour' (formerly 'ungentlemanly conduct')? The effect of the explicit time limit of 5-6 seconds for the keeper holding the ball could be interesting too.

These are only a few of the changes, so for next season it will be particularly important to read the Law Amendment sheet, to attend the August meeting where the changes will be discussed in detail and, dare I say, buy a copy of the Laws (Kevin will supply at a cut rate for cash up-front).

A PROPHET NOT RECOGNISED ?

The Guest Speaker at Basingstoke RA's September meeting will be
Dick Sawdon Smith, Immediate Past President, Reading RA. Dick is
going to do a presentation/workshop on *Club Linesmen*.

AND FINALLY . . .

Thanks from the Editor to all those who have contributed articles this
season, especially regulars Dick Sawdon Smith and Brian Wratten, to
those who have sent cuttings and other information and, of course, to John
Moore for all his support as Assistant Editor.