

Reading Referees' Association

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Reading Sunday League	Peter Pittaway
South Chiltern Minor League	Mike Overton

READING REFEREE

Editor - Brian Palmer

April/May 1999

Assistant Editor - John Moore

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Editorial

The end of another season approaches and I have that feeling I used to have when I supported Stockport County as a boy – next season just has to be better.

However, I am not going to dwell on what has gone wrong – the Di Canio nonsense and all that, the continuing inability of our masters to give referees the support they deserve and need, the inexorable march of commercialism, to name but a few things.

In spite of all that, we have lots of local football where the good massively outweighs the bad, a flourishing (South Chiltern Minor) youth league, where youngsters can still enjoy themselves and get good early experience, often with qualified officials in charge.

The Reading RA flourishes too - in numbers and in what is on offer to members. It would be nice to see more at meetings but those who do come have a good evening with their pals. That doesn't change. Lots of new trainees and victory in the Quiz again.

A couple of personal landmarks as well, with 'Uncle George' (George Mills) getting his 50 year Award and Iain Williamson making the Football League line. (More about them later).

Have a good Summer, with or without refereeing. Hope to see you on 19 August

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March

Monthly Meeting

Some 35 members present and the cynics wondering whether Chelsea's European game had proved too strong a counter-attraction for some. More likely all the evening games to be refereed. Best wishes went to George Mills, an unwilling absentee, just out of hospital.

The Secretary announced that the Berks & Bucks FA public liability insurance now covered members for £5,000,000. The fees sub-committee had met; national RA had received £3,000 for the Charity Shield; the replacement 'Welcome' plaque for the officials' dressing room at the Madejski stadium would be presented to Reading FC at a home match before the end of the season.

Little news from the leagues: the Clayfield Copse saga continues; the Sunday League is still concerned that foul language is not being properly dealt with by referees,

Ted Cambridge reported from the Berks & Bucks FA that fees would be going up by £4 (senior cups) and £3 (others). Mileage allowance would be up from 18p to 20p. Arrangements to make the association a limited liability company were near to being finalised; Law changes: every ball would have to be checked for suitability; 'diving' would have to be cautioned. [Have I been presumptuous? I was taught to check any ball before it was used and always do, like everyone else I thought; I also thought we already had the power and obligation to caution for 'diving' as 'unsporting behaviour'? ? Ed]; the 'Jersey Experiment', described in the *Reading Referee* earlier in the season will continue for another year. [No comment. Ed] There was to be an experiment with two referees per match in Scandinavia next season.

Training. Good to see Peter Pittaway with us in spite of his ill-health. That is commitment. 24 of 26 trainees had continued to attend and would take the examination. Peter paid tribute to Brian Wratten who had led the course for him and expected all to pass. There would be a practical training session at Cintra on 29 March for which more volunteers were sought.

RA Quiz – Divisional Final. Peter reported that we had been defeated – coming 5th

– but not disgraced. He made special mention of Neil Haddock who was our highest scorer and Chairman Derek Reigate who stepped in at the last minute when we were let down, and performed respectably.

The Chairman reminded members that they should be thinking about the AGM. His term of office as Chairman finishes this season and new Committee members will also be needed.

Brian Wratten appealed for volunteers to deliver magazines to cut our mounting bills for postage.

He also reminded members about the County Training Officer's Course 20-21 November.

On behalf of George Mills the Chairman asked for 12 referees for this season's Royals' Cup to be held on 23 May.

The Guest Speaker was Ray Payne, FA Area Adviser for Beds, Berks & Bucks and Oxon and a Football League Assistant Referee, who also referees on the Jewson League.

From the outset it was clear that Ray is used to talking in public – he was well organised and articulate. He would be talking about *referee behaviour* and drew parallels with his school's preparation of a Code of Conduct for pupils. Respect has to be earned and the behaviour of the referee is critical.

With the aid of overheads, Ray started with 'things NOT to do'.

DON'T have the wrong attitude.

Think about your role. The game is for the players, not you. It needs a certain quality of person. Don't be a Hitler; don't get satisfaction from 'putting people in the book'; don't consider yourself too good for that match, or any match.

DON'T try to please people (players, officials, spectators)

Your job is to enforce the Laws. Always assume there is an assessor there.

DON'T have a poor approach

Be systematic with your kit and always have it ready in good time. Do your

own packing. Have a routine. Regulate your diet – you are an athlete. Think about the food and drink to take with you.

DON'T become complacent

Just because you are a Class 1 and experienced. Think about the game without prejudging it; prepare; don't become complacent *during* a game – the unexpected is waiting to happen.

DON'T lose your self-control

Players lose it, you mustn't. Don't rush in and try to separate players. Stand, watch and remember.

DON'T let down others

You represent your colleagues and the County FA.

DO be efficient with your admin

Respond when you get your fixtures; close dates in good time. Respond to clubs according to league's expectation. Get your misconduct reports right (plenty of help available if you have problems).

DO enforce the Laws

You need to know them and they do change.

DO act professionally

Look and act your part. Think how you speak to players, officials – politely, correctly; use 'please' and 'thank you'.

DO think about your physical fitness.

The game gets faster, standards expected are also getting higher. In the future fitness will be a key to promotion to the higher levels.

DO keep on learning

Every game teaches you something. Meetings with fellow referees, like RA meetings, all help.

DO remain enthusiastic and enjoy your refereeing

It shows when you are refereeing and you do a better job.

Ray then split the gathering into groups with the task of producing their five priority items for a Code of Conduct for Referees. There was a little confusion about 'behaviour' and 'qualities', but lists were produced.

There was, as expected, a good deal of overlap, but the following emerged:

- treat others as you would wish to be treated
- set standards, don't follow them
- be consistent
- respect players
- wear black and white kit
- be confident and positive
- be approachable but not over-friendly
- be self-analytical and honest with yourself
- be impartial
- be human/humble/tolerant
- be open-minded
- be smart in appearance
- be prepared
- be fit
- be firm and honest

Ray professed himself pleased with our efforts and concluded with a reference to the Code of Conduct for Match Officials published towards the end of February, which includes a section for referees (printed in the *Football Referee*) In his view, however, we must take responsibility for our own behaviour. The best form of conduct is self-discipline.

The Chairman thanked Ray for his excellently prepared and delivered talk.

April

Monthly Meeting

A meeting with a difference. The Loddon Room was packed with some 80 people, members present and past, members of other societies, representatives of the Southern Division, local leagues and, last but by no means least, national President, Peter Willis. All were gathered for the presentation of the 50 year Membership Award of the National RA to George Mills.(report on pp)

The programme allowed for 30 minutes of business but Chairman Derek Reigate

was out for the record. He welcomed everyone but especially the president, other guests and the members of George's family.

The Secretary reminded members of the AGM in May and the need for more nominees for the committee and various offices, including Chairman, as Derek Reigate was completing his 3 years. He had received the Berks & Bucks FA Disciplinary Reports and Minutes of the Southern Division Meeting of 13 March. Some of the Plum Appointments were printed on the agenda paper.

League Reports

Reading Football League

The case had been found proven against the player who assaulted member Peter Hitt. He had been suspended for 182 days with a £100 fine. The League would refuse his registration for 2 years.

The Clayfield Copse changing room problem remains unresolved.

Reading Sunday League

The case of the two players sent off by Karl Wilson is with the B&B FA

The Chairman emphasised the need for members to join the Committee and take up the Officer vacancies.

Richard Highfield asked members to come forward for the Reading 5's (to be held on 17 July) which ran very successfully last season after developing a doubtful reputation. Thanks to Richard the fee is now £30. The event will be advertised and applications invited from referees.

County Assessor's certificates were presented by Peter Willis to Terry Gibbs and Malcolm Hopson. Alan Turner had also qualified.

The draw was held for the pair of Cup Final tickets. The winner was Matthew Gill; 1st Reserve Karl Wilson; 2nd Reserve Declan Ford.

Peter Pittaway reminded members of the Training Day for assessors on September 5th at Faringdon.

When the business was concluded, George and Jess Mills entered to a standing ovation and the really serious business of the evening began as is described on the following page. **A very special meeting with a difference.**

GEORGE B. MILLS, MSA,

Life Member of the Referees' Association and of the Reading RA.

It was planned to be a special meeting and it was. George had to know the date, but the rest was kept a surprise. And when he came into the Loddon Room at half time to a standing ovation, you could see it on his face. He was confronted by a room packed with familiar faces, the faces of refereeing colleagues and friends from today and far back in the past.

Peter Willis, President of the national RA who had known George since he took office some 18 years ago, had accepted the invitation to make the presentation because 'it was too important to miss'. In his inimitable North Eastern style, both serious and humorous, Peter spoke of George and all his service in the context of what the RA is and is about. He reflected on changes in the game in those 50 years and recalled the Reading motion for 100% membership, proposed to Conference in 1997 by George and carried with a large majority. He recalled too George's work in publicising the Reading RA's practical training video. Peter also emphasised the support George has had from his family, especially his wife Jess, who was there with children and grandchildren to share George's obvious pride and pleasure.



After the presentation of the engraved silver plaque to commemorate his 50 year membership, George responded. He was surprised and delighted to see so many

friends who had come to support him. He reminisced about some of the events of his 50+ years in refereeing and the RA. Nice story about the time he waded a stream to get to his match – that's devotion for you! George too stressed the wonderful support he had always had from Jess, and concluded with a poem warning of the danger of thinking yourself indispensable.

The evening concluded with an excellent buffet, the usual choice of liquid refreshment at the bar, and lots more reminiscence and chat.

Thanks are due to the many who helped to make the evening so successful, but especially to the prime-mover, Chairman Derek Reigate.

George B. Mills – 50 years on

George is actually now in his 52nd year as a member of the NRA. He qualified in Sheffield in 1947, gained his Class 1 in 1951, came to Berkshire in 1953 and refereed on the local and Hellenic leagues until his forced retirement through serious illness in 1968. He considers his best appointment to have been refereeing the Berks & Bucks FA Senior Cup Final in 1960 (won by none other than Wycombe Wanderers)

George, at present President of the Berks & Bucks RA and a Vice-President of the Berks & Bucks FA, has held almost every possible office in the Reading RA (see his refereeing CV below).

He was made a Life Member of the Reading RA in 1978, and of the National RA in 1990. He received the Long and Meritorious Service Award of the NRA in 1979.

George, now 80+ years young, is known for his utter devotion to referees and refereeing. His interest and commitment have never faltered, he keeps up to date with football and refereeing, and always has time for fellow referees, the newest recruits as well as his old friends.

1947	<i>Qualified as a referee</i> Joined Sheffield RA and National RA
1951	<i>Awarded Class 1</i>
1953	Moved South Joined Slough RA; Berks & Bucks FA
1955	Joined Reading RA
1956	Elected Member of Reading RA Committee
1958	Reading RA Delegate to Berks & Bucks County RA
1960	<i>Referee, Berks & Bucks Senior Cup Final</i>
1962-64	Vice-Chairman, Reading RA
1964-74	Secretary, Reading RA
1966-98	Senior Examiner, Berks & Bucks FA
1968-78	Berks & Bucks RA Representative to Berks & Bucks FA
1968-89	Training Instructor, Reading RA
1969-90	Assessor, Berks & Bucks FA
1970-88	Executive Member, RA Southern Division
1974-76	Vice-Chairman, Reading RA
1979	Awarded RA Long & Meritorious Service Award (MSA)
1979-84	Membership Officer, Reading RA
1983-88	President, Reading RA
1988-	President, Berks & Bucks RA
1988-	Vice-President, Berks & Bucks FA
1990	Awarded Life Membership, National RA
1998	50 Year Membership Award, National RA

REPLY FROM GEORGE

(who had to have the last word as always!)

‘What an incredible surprise I got’ writes George Bertram Mills (yes, as was revealed, that really is his name. Ed), ‘when I walked into the room packed with RA colleagues and my family to receive my 50 Year Award from the President of the national RA, Peter Willis. I really didn’t know Peter was coming and what was going to happen, because they wouldn’t tell me anything. It all made it an evening never to be forgotten. Thanks again to the man who organised the festivities, my

long-standing and great friend Chairman Derek Reigate, and to the Committee (who gave him a bit of a hand I understand!) and to everyone who came along to enjoy it with me'.

AVON FOOD SERVICES ADVERT

A PROFILE OF POTENTIAL

Iain Williamson

Iain has been involved in football from a tender age but he didn't start competitive games until Middle School. He then had what proved to be an embarrassment of choice – he played rugby (13-a-side) for Surrey and Middlesex County as well as soccer for his league's representative team and for Woking District, and was a representative sprinter as well as a cross-country runner. (Not a bad background for a future referee, come to think of it). As you would expect, he chose wisely, and progressed into men's football with Walton and Hersham, and Merstham in the Combined Counties' League.

Invalidated out with a serious knee injury when at his peak in an FA Cup game, Iain had to find a way to stay with football and he chose the familiar route. He feels he started too late – he is even able to quote the date he qualified (March 29th 1991) – because he was already 20 and lost time because he did very little during his first season.

It all started in earnest in 1992/93 when he moved to Reading (of course!), started refereeing on the Reading Football League and lining on the Suburban. He got his Class 2 (and went straight through to Class 1 the next season). He had a line that season on the RFL Senior Cup at Elm Park. And so on to Suburban middles and the Linesman's List of the Isthmian and, as a Plum, the middle of the final of the Royals' Cup.

Meantime Iain had started his series of four visits stateside to officiate in the USA Cup which conclude in 1995 when he was nominated 'Best Referee of the Tournament' and refereed the Cup Final.

Since 1994/95 Iain has had a string of cup semi-final appointments and earlier



rounds of the FA Trophy and Vase too numerous to mention. 1995/96 a line on the Berks & Bucks Intermediate Cup final; 1996/97 top marked referee on the Suburban League and the League Cup Final middle; FA Trophy semi-final reserve official

1997/98 Iain gained promotion to the Isthmian middle and the Panel (Conference and Football Combination) line. This season he has refereed the Berks & Bucks Senior Trophy Final (and had a good game too I am told). He also had his first Football League line appointment this season – Reading v. Peterborough in the 2nd Round of the Worthington Cup in front of a crowd of 10,000..

How does Iain fit it all in? He has to work for his living and he married in 1997. Typically he has arranged to have a job with sufficient flexibility, and a wife with sufficient understanding and tolerance to make it all just about possible. He is well aware of the increasing demands and stresses of the higher echelons but he is still determined to become a FIFA official if he can.

Quite apart from his obvious skills as a referee, Iain has two great personal qualities: he remains relaxed because he finds refereeing a release of day-to-day stress and, even more fundamentally, he believes there is always something more to learn and is most appreciative of all that his colleagues do and have done for him.

We wish him well.

STOP PRESS Since I wrote the above Iain has received the letter he was anxiously waiting for. He has done it. He has been appointed Assistant Referee on the Football League. Congratulations Iain from all of us. We have not had a member on the Football League line since David Keen was retired in 1987, so it was about time!

THE THINGS THEY SAY

Ray Clemence commenting on the Chelsea v Valerenga match:

‘Whatever their game plan, they’ve played it to the letter.’

Nice to know.

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Do we have to go backwards to go forward? asks Dick Sawdon Smith

One aspect of football that most fans and probably many referees are unaware of, is the amount of experimenting with the laws of football that takes place. Usually they are in relatively junior competitions. Sometimes a league may be asked to run an experiment for a whole season, or it may be relatively short-lived, such as at a Youth International competition.

The most prominent experiment in this country was probably carried out during the Watney's Cup. Younger members will probably ask 'What was the Watney's Cup?' (Older members might ask 'Whatever happened to the Watney's Cup?') It was a pre-season tournament for league clubs which had the 18-yard line of the penalty box extended right across the field. Offside could only be given goal-side of that line.

The experiment which took place last season in Jersey and is to be extended to a second year, is the one I would like to see become universal. If a player fails to retreat the required ten yards at a free-kick, the kick is moved 10 yards nearer the offending team's goal-line (à la rugby). Even without the need of a caution I think it would stop the tremendous amount of deliberate cheating that happens now to delay free-kicks.

Another experiment to be carried out next season is that of having two referees to control a game. FIFA referee Graham Barber is recently reported to be in favour. He allegedly said that being close to an incident doesn't always mean that you are in the best place to see it, and two pairs of on-field eyes are better than one.

I always thought that there were not two but three pairs of eyes at a match: the referee's and those of his two assistant referees. The whole purpose surely of 'upgrading' linesmen to assistant referees was not just to enhance their status, but to make it clear that here was a team of qualified and competent officials. That of course falls down if referees choose to go their own way. We were all shocked at our February meeting to learn that Nationwide Football League referees tell their assistants not to flag for more than three fouls in the course of the game. Can this

really be the way to treat fellow officials who may well have 10 to 20 years experience? (Is it the same in the Premiership?)

A point about the two referee system is that it is going back to how the control of football matches began. Prior to the 1870s, there were two officials appointed to each match: two 'umpires' who would raise a flag when an infringement was spotted. However, the umpires were then given (at first for cup-ties only) someone to whom they could 'refer' a decision. A *referee* no less, who would also settle any dispute between the umpires as to whether an offence had been committed.

Incidentally, the referee would sit at the halfway-line outside the touch-line. It wasn't until 1888 that the referee went on to the pitch, and in 1891 the referee was given total control and the umpires were relegated to linesmen.

Could it happen again? If the two referees in our brave new world disagree over decisions and punishment, will they be able to refer to a *fifth* official sitting on the touch-line? (Presumably the assistant referees will revert to linesmen). Except for the TV monitor with which the fifth official will no doubt be equipped, it really would be re-visiting the past.

Catherine Wheel Advert

THE DUTIES OF A REFEREE

By W. A. Parsons

The purpose of this article is to emphasise one of the many duties as laid down in the LOAF. (law 5).

“SIGNAL for recommencement of the game after all stoppages.”

As I have been around the local parks as an assessor, I have noticed several times that after a stoppage in the game, no audible or even visual signals for the players to restart the game. To my observing and perhaps over-critical eye, referees omitting to do this do themselves an injustice as well as the players.

At the moment of a stoppage which involves a dead ball situation here are a few thoughts that I have listed when a referee has to restart a game:

1. **GOAL KICK.** Having waited patiently for the goalkeeper or other defender to retrieve the ball and place it (**CORRECTLY**, we hope) it is helpful and reassuring to point directly at the keeper when he is ready to take the kick, at the same time indicating that you are also ready by waving or beckoning him to proceed.

Outcome (a) he gains confidence in you.
(b) you are reassured by your control of the situation.

2. **CORNER KICK.** I would suggest that it makes a great deal of difference which diagonal you are positioned at in relation to the corner. If it is on the far side from you, whistle when the kicker is ready which indicates that you are ready, likewise. If on your side you can indicate by a wave of the arm and a shout if desirable, or whistle if helpful.

3. **THROW IN.** Point the arm in the direction of throw and shout “Blue throw” or “Red throw” if there is any doubt in the players minds as to whose throw it should be. Try to refrain from calling out “White ball” as most footballs are white to begin with.

Outcome (a) it niggles the players to blow for a throw in.
(b) they think that you have given a free kick.

4. **FREE KICK.** A signal to recommence the game in this situation depends on several points:
- (a) the position of the kick in relation to the pitch area.
 - (b) the proximity of the referee.
 - (c) a wall situation, if used.
 - (d) whether the players want to take it quickly or require time for position.

The experienced referee is able to weigh up the situation and indicate by whistle, arm movement and/or shout or any combination of all three. These signals must be given clearly in such a manner as to leave no doubt in the players' minds that the game is to restart.

- Outcome
- (a) give no advantage to the offending side.
 - (b) allow no disadvantage to the non-offending side.

5. **PENALTY KICK.** It is important to tell the kicker, "Wait for my signal." It is equally important that the players take up the positions required by the law. The referee must make sure that the players involved are ready. Then signal clearly for the kick to be taken.
6. **INDIRECT FREE KICK.** This award is signaled by the upraised arm, a position which must be maintained (after signalling for the kick to be taken) until the ball is touched or played by another player or goes out of play. An offside decision is also an indirect free kick to be taken from where the infringement occurred.
7. **AFTER ACCIDENTAL INJURY TO A PLAYER.** The game is to be restarted by a dropped ball, throw-in, goal kick or corner kick as required. In a dropped ball situation, the ball must touch the ground before it can be played. It may not be necessary to use the whistle, the action of the referee being sufficient.
8. **AFTER CAUTIONING OR SENDING OFF A PLAYER.** It is not necessary to stop the game to issue a caution but in the majority of instances the whistle has been blown and the referee should restart as required according to the situation.

This is a very difficult subject to cover in a few brief notes and I realise that we all approach the game differently, but for the enjoyment of spectators, the encouragement of players and the betterment of refereeing in Bedfordshire, "Good signalling, gentlemen".

[With acknowledgement to The South Bedfordshire Whistler]

THE PLUM TREE – SEASON 1998-99

Berks & Bucks FA

Senior Trophy (Saturday)	Referee 4 th Official	I. Williamson M. Garstang
Junior Cup (Saturday)	Assistant Referee	K. Parsons

Kentish Cup (Armed Forces' International Competition)

Belgium v. Holland	Assistant Referee	D. Ford
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Ryman Football League

Puma (Full Members Cup)	Referee	J Moore
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Hellenic League

League Cup	Referee	D. Ford
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Reading Evening Post

Senior Cup	Assistant Referee	M. Bellman
	4 th Official	J. Davison P. Kelly
Junior Cup	Referee	G. Douglas
	4 th Official	K. Wiltshire
Jubilee Cup	Referee	K. Wilson
	Assistant Referee	C. Wood
	4 th Official	C. Hitt

Reading Football League

Senior Cup	Referee	P. Kelly
	Assistant Referees	D. Naish

Intermediate Cup	Assistant Referees	M. Rowley M Bellman K Wilson
	4 th Official	M. Albury
Junior Cup	Referee	K Clark
	Assistant Referees	N Haddock C Wood
	4 th Official	G. Douglas
Reading Sunday League		
Tilehurst Charity Cup	Referee	M. Garstang
	Assistant Referee	M. Bellman
Industrial Cup	Referee	J. Moore
	Assistant Referee	T. Walton
E. Cambridge Cup	Assistant Referee	J. Machin
	4 th Official	V. Bark
John Lusted Cup	Assistant Referee	K. Wilson
	4 th Official	S. Leather T. Chamberlain
Treasurer's Cup	Assistant Referee	J. Larkin
		B. Grover
South Chiltern Minor League		
Under 11 Trophy	Referee	C. Hayman
Under 12 Cup	Referee	D. Pitt
Under 14 Cup	Referee	M. Overton
Under 14 Trophy	Referee	I. Garden
Under 15 Trophy	Referee	C. Hitt
Under 16 Cup	Assistant Referee	P. Hitt

Under 16 Trophy

Assistant Referee

C. Hitt

Knowl Hill Garage Advert

PROMOTIONS

More good news for some of our members. Congratulations to each of them, and a special mention for Neil Haddock who has progressed from 3 to 2 to 1 in successive seasons.

Class 2 to Class 1 Neil Haddock; Michael Rowley

Class 3 to Class 2 Brian Russell; Karl Wilson: Brian Wratten

A word too about Brian Wratten. In spite of his qualifications and all his experience in the US and Switzerland, he (of course) has had to start again here.

And, finally, commiserations to those who didn't make it this time – get a new application in and go for it next season!

FAIR PLAY AND LINESMAN'S AWARDS

Congratulations to this year's winners of the awards we make annually to the local clubs and linesmen in recognition of the help they give us as officials and their contribution to Fair Play.

Fair Play Award

1	Earlbourne	RFL (Premier Division)	9.00
2	Highmoor Reserves	RFL (Division 3 Kennet)	8.66
3	Chazey Heath	RSL (Division 1)	8.62

Linesman's Award

1	P. Haynes	Emmbrook Sports (RFL)	9.00
2	B. Clark	Earley United (RSL)	8.66
3	W. May	Reading Exiles (RFL)	8.60

Many thanks from Alan Turner, who collects and collates the marks to all the referees who sent in their returns and helped to make the awards a success. We in turn thank Alan for yet another season of making it all happen.

FROM OUR MAN ON THE HIGH SEAS

Although Geoff (Donnelly) claims to be too busy skippering some huge tanker out in the Far East to write for the magazine, he did e-mail me a little story he caught on the World Service's Sports Round-up Programme.

‘A Johannesburg local top league. Tryhard [honest, Geoff says) v. Jaguars, in front of a crowd of 600+.

Referee awards a free kick. Player doesn't like it and draws a knife. Referee gets the better of him by producing a gun from his shorts and giving him the message in the chest. The referee was incarcerated.’

Geoff adds ‘And John Moore thinks he has problems with Strachan and Sara!

[Thanks, Geoff. See you on your next period of n months' leave. Ed]

MORE ABOUT MY OLD TEAM

In a Division 2 match between Stockport County and Fulham in 1913, Norman Wood, the inside-left, headed into his own goal in attempting to clear a corner. Ten minutes later, he handled in his own penalty area and Fulham scored from the spot kick. Soon afterwards, a Stockport forward was brought down in the Fulham penalty area. Wood shot the penalty straight at the Fulham keeper. Stockport lost 1-3. *[Is there such a thing as a negative hat-trick? Ed]*

And they blew it again

In 1927 Stockport County were persuaded by near-neighbours Manchester United to allow their amateur wing-half Hughie McLenahan to join them in exchange for three freezers of ice-cream. United scout Louis Rocca arranged for these to be given to the County club to raise funds at their bazaar. McLenahan subsequently turned professional - with United.

STOP STOP PRESS *My other 'profile of potential' of this season has also been promoted. Congratulations to Declan Ford who has made it to the Isthmian middle.*