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EDITORIAL

It's great to be able to start with the news that Chairman Bernie Young is much better in health and hopes to be at our November meeting, but it's very sad to have to record the passing of our old member, Len Forbes.

Professional football meantime continues to lurch from nonsense to straightforward daftness bordering on insanity. Poor old Reading FC (now getting some better results) are faced with a bill for £100,000 for acting in line with Government wishes and installing a membership card scheme. The trouble is that Government has now decided to impose a national system and Reading's computer is incompatible. No wonder they're feeling miffed.

'The Match' - ITV's dramatic (they say) new presentation of football - has a camera on the 18 yard line so that the viewer can make off-side judgments! No joke. In the first match a decision of the referee was actually challenged on that basis. No mention (of course) of the position of the second last defender.

Well-known player kicks holes in the door of the referee's changing room - which he really should not have done. The only consolation seems to be that it's better than kicking holes in the referee. The assault in the Wimbledon tunnel, and the suggestion that those who saw it and reported it were somehow being sneaky and it was **they** who were acting against the spirit of the game as it really is.

Last edition before Christmas. Do have a really good festive season. See you at the December free drink and nosh meeting.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Members,

I would like to thank everybody who phoned or sent 'Get Well' cards whilst I was in hospital. I am now on the mend and hope to be with you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Bernie Young

PRESIDENT'S PIECE

The Seat of Confidence

For many years I was a member of REEL, the Reading Schools/Industry Liaison Group, and of the Business Studies Consultative Committee of Reading College of Technology. The purpose of both bodies was to try and ensure that education in the town went at least some way to preparing pupils to meet the needs of industry and commerce. Teachers often posed the question, 'What is it that industry wants from education?' My reply was, 'The best thing you can do for us is to send us confident young people'. At the College of Marketing where I talk to managers in industry about developing their staff, I give similar advice: 'The critical factor is to instil confidence'.

In refereeing, like in most things in life, our greatest need is confidence. Confidence is of course not to be confused with arrogance, and it's not the same as complacency.

How do we instil confidence in others? How do we attain self-confidence? How do we as individuals become confident referees? Well, in my opinion, the seat of confidence is a three-legged stool. One leg is **knowledge**. In refereeing we must understand the laws of the game. Only 17 laws. It isn't much to ask is it? But if, after passing your initial examination, you think that you know them well enough, then that's complacency, even arrogance.

When I refereed years ago on senior leagues, my linesmen sometimes expressed surprise that included in my kit was a copy of the current Referee's Chart. But I often found when an unusual incident occurred, it would put a little doubt in my mind. Had I done the right thing, made the right decision? By being able to look it up immediately while the incident was still fresh, it

gave me confidence for the next time I faced similar circumstances. If I was wrong it was the last time I made that mistake. Attending RA meetings of course enables you to listen to other peoples' experiences and how they coped. Confucius, that wily old chinaman, said in 600BC, 'A fool learns from his own experience, a wise man learns from the experiences of others'.

Our second leg in building confidence is **skill**. What skills do we need as referees? The skill of administering those laws. Anyone who can remember his or her first game will know full well that there is a world of difference between knowing the laws of the game and putting them into practice. This is of course why Reading pioneered the mentor scheme, why we put forward our proposals to the national body that there should be a practical examination after a suitable period of actual refereeing experience. The skill of applying the laws should be learnt early. Then there is the skill of handling people. Sometimes it has been likened to man-management skills but, although some of the principles are the same, referees are not managers. Nevertheless we still have to control 22 players with the objective of giving them 90 minutes of enjoyable sport. This requires human relations skills. We need the skill of being in the right place at the right time to make decisions that are seen to be better. This means anticipation, positioning, understanding the game, being fit.

The third of our legs is **attitude**. When Geoff Way and I talked to Ken and Kate Back about Assertiveness Training for referees, they were surprised when we said we never tackled even straightforward tasks on a Saturday morning before a game. They thought it was a dodge to get us out of those household chores our wives had been saving up for us. We explained that if the mower wouldn't start, if the shelves we fixed fell down, it could affect our attitude, and our game would be likely to suffer. This in turn could affect our confidence,

The attitude with which we approach each game is vitally important. Do we arrive with a smile or a grump? Remember, your attitude can, and will, affect the attitude of others. But it is our whole attitude to refereeing that can help improve our skills and our knowledge. Do we take time to review each game, to reflect on what went well, what perhaps can be improved upon, and what steps need to be taken to do even better next time? Are we always willing to learn?

So the three legs on our seat of confidence are **Knowledge, Skill** and **Attitude**. The thing to remember is that they are all as important as one another. If one of the legs is wonky or it doesn't match the others, then you can be sure that it will rock your confidence.

Dick Sawdon Smith

NO COMMENT

Littlewoods Cup: West Ham 5, Derby 0

. . West Ham increased their lead in bizarre fashion. Rosenior, supplied neatly on the left by Keen, saw his cross brush William's hand, ricochet off Shilton's knee and into the air. Ince rose highest to head home.

The Derby players drew the referee's attention to a linesman's flag, however, and a penalty for the handball resulted. Stewart converted comfortably.

The Guardian, 2/11/88

LEN FORBES

It is sometimes noticed how much local football owes to referees - off the field as well as on. Len was one of those who filled both roles with great ability.

As a Class 1 referee, Len gained the respect of players and fellow referees in local and senior football, and well deserved the plum appointment of the Berks and Bucks Senior Cup Final. He served the Reading RA both as an active committee member and as a faithful attender of the National Conference, and then for many years as a referee assessor

At the same time, Len was busy in the administration of local soccer. He was involved with the Reading Institute League which became the Combination and which he served for many years in partnership with Bert Newman. He then played a central role in the formation of the Reading Indoor League which flourished under his secretaryship.

Len was a stalwart of soccer and refereeing and he will be greatly missed.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

September

Some 60 members witnessed an unusual start - no minutes, so no matters arising. The Secretary had written to the leagues about possible colour clashes of socks and shorts, and some problems of payment of fees after matches. It was stressed yet again that referees themselves should take up matters like difficulties over payment - a real case is much more powerful than a general complaint. [Try keeping the match ball. Ed] The reported non-appearance of

a senior referee after accepting an appointment raised sharp responses. Dick Wilkins from the chair stressed our responsibilities, but also the difficulty if the culprits are not members of the RA.

Members voted a donation of £200 to the national RA Building Fund. Pat Monaghan announced the Christmas Draw prizes. He had managed to meet suggestions for a big first prize **and** for a host of smaller prizes as well. Up to us now to sell the tickets.

The 'It happened to me' spot was filled by Stuart Gentle. Not an incident from his first few games - from this, his 12th season.

Important to note to start with that the goal posts were square in section with those upper half stanchions. Play goes from one end to the other in two kicks. Referee left somewhat behind. The amount of ground Stuart really covered remained in dispute, but he claimed to be several yards outside the penalty box when the attacker loosed a tremendous shot from 20 yards. The ball flew into the top corner and came straight out. A defender caught it inside the area. 'A sixth sense told me the ball had hit the stanchion and come out'. . No reaction from the players to help him. Was it a goal or a penalty for handball?

Some interesting discussion, including recollection of similar incidents even in league football. John Lambden reminded us: if in doubt, don't give it. You have to be sure in your own mind. What did Stuart do? He asked the defender who said the ball went in and out. Stuart indicated the goal scored but some of the defender's team-mates showed annoyance. He then consulted 'their' linesman who confirmed the goal. More annoyance and the captain had to be cautioned for dissent. With the benefit of hindsight, a number of members expressed worries about such consultation and would (presumably) have disallowed the goal and given the penalty. [Cautions then for some members of the other side? Ed]

The evening was rounded off with a few more questions from Graham Stockton:

- Having turned down an appeal for a penalty early in the game, you hear a player say: 'We're playing 12 today lads'. First suggestions - a quiet word. 'They'll be playing 10 soon!' If the comment more public, make the reply more public. John recommended making it public anyway - make sure everyone knows you're not going to tolerate that sort of comment.

- You award a free kick 25 yards from goal and administer a caution to the offending player. Before the defender is back, attacker

takes the kick and 'scores'. Do you allow the 'goal'? Easy consensus - No.

- You award a free kick and have a quiet word with the offender. He says: 'You're picking on me ref!' Some members would have had a second quiet word, others would have cautioned. All agreed it had to depend on circumstances, manner, tone of voice, and so on.

Stuart and Graham were thanked by the Chairman for their interesting and stimulating contributions.

October

A good start to the meeting. Some 60 members were present to hear the news that Chairman Bernie Young's condition has stabilised. He is hoping to be at the next meeting.

The Vice Chairman reported progress in finding a new Treasurer to replace Robert Barnard-Smith, now living in London. Members would be informed as soon as possible. Members were warned to be careful not to take on 5 or 6-a-side games where the clubs are not affiliated. Always ask. Big tournaments - like the Reading Fives - are usually OK. John Lambden reported the need for more coaches ('mentors'). Only 15 members so far had indicated their willingness to help. The training course was going well and the first of several practical sessions had been held.

The most serious item of business again concerned referees not turning up for games after they had confirmed. While such conduct is totally condemned by the RA, it is the leagues who have the information and who should take the severest action with our support - like sacking those who are guilty. The culprits are not necessarily our members, but, in any case, we can't do anything without information. As a postscript, members were reminded that it is not enough to tell the club if you are forced to cry off - the referee appointments secretary must also be informed.

Ted Cambridge reported that the County Poster Prize Competition had got off to a very slow start but he hoped members with any creative or artistic talent at all would have a go at sketching a poster. The theme is "What do you do without a referee?" Yes, it can be humorous. Full details from Derek Reigate.

The monthly 'It happened to me' spot was presented by Richard Highfield. Score 0-0 after about an hour. Tackle near half way and touch line, player goes down, apparently hurt leg. Referee lets play go on. 'Injured' player sprints to tackle 20 yards along near touch line, attempts a tackle and goes down again. Play progresses towards corner flag. Trainer wanting to come on. Referee motions him to go round goal to reach player. Ball goes

out for goal kick. Referee discovers trainer behind him. Trainer makes a few comments, not foul or abusive but niggling.

A number of questions: how did the referee know player did not need attention? (he sprinted after the ball after first 'injury'); was the signal really unambiguous? (better to give the trainer the benefit of that doubt?). There seemed to be consensus that whatever action was to be taken with the trainer, he should be allowed to attend to the player first. Action then. Just a word was favoured. Members were reminded that you can't caution a trainer for entering the field without permission or for dissent - anyone who is not a player has to be reported for misconduct to the County FA or FA as appropriate (not the competition).

Richard revealed that he was convinced the player was not seriously injured and just ushered both off the pitch.

Our Guest Speaker was Roger Beavis, First Aid Officer from British Telecom, who had proved a great success when he spoke to the Society on a previous occasion.

Roger said his talk would be about first aid generally but he would slant it towards football. The first thing is to get the priorities right:

- 1 **Preserve life** (ie clear airway more important than setting broken leg)
- 2 **Prevent condition from deteriorating**
- 3 **Promote recovery** (ie alleviate shock)

1 **Preserve life.** Unconsciousness leads to danger of dying - 3-4 minutes lack of oxygen produces irreversible brain damage. If a player is knocked out - act. Silence is the danger sign. If person is on back, tongue falls to back of throat and person chokes.

Place hand under neck, tilt head back; lift jaw with other hand to open mouth (if injuries allow).

Check for circulation of blood. Find pulse on neck - use three fingers not thumb.

Put patient in recovery position. Safe. Keeps airway open; patient may vomit but can't choke.

Bleeding - oozing or gushing. Gushing is urgent (especially likely from varicose vein).

Apply direct pressure with hand, elevate limb, lay patient down. If object in wound, eg piece of glass, don't try to remove it.

Press round wound to stop bleeding. Also use pressure points - where artery crosses bone.

Nose bleeds. Pull head forward; pinch nose; cold compress on forehead.

Head injuries. Often profuse bleeding. Don't probe injury. Apply pressure round wound.

Internal bleeding eg from kick to stomach. If patient starts to pass blood from any orifice, treat it seriously.

Fractures. Two types: open or closed

Open - allows germs into wound. Try to cover with sterile dressing.

At this point Roger was called out to deal with a real incident - one of our members had passed out and needed to be sent to hospital. (He's OK - yet another virus). In the gap, John Lambden initiated what proved to be a useful discussion of incidents members had actually had to deal with on the field. Roger promised to return in January to continue and - all being well - to complete his talk.

CHRISTMAS DRAW

What prizes! We normally have a lot of prizes to make sure there are a lot of winners. It was suggested that a star prize would be a good alternative. Pat Monaghan, the organizer, has managed somehow to achieve both - a VHS video-recorder plus a range of other prizes. Do sell all your tickets or let Pat have them back in good time if you can't.

Draw at the December meeting, but counterfoils and money back as soon as possible .

YOUTH FOOTBALL

Youth football is in the news again. At the beginning of the season it seemed the referee situation was better than it had been for a long time. Then we get reports of referees not turning up for matches and of the problems of unqualified referees. Controversy too about whether young/inexperienced referees should do youth games at all and the paradox that many experienced referees will not.

Youth games **are** different, but in discussion you have to differentiate between age groups. 9 year olds (who probably shouldn't be playing competitive 11-a-side soccer at all) present

a very different 'problem' from 17 year olds. In common are spectators, most of whom are fond(?) parents.

Young footballers, say of primary school age, haven't yet fully mastered the basics, though they often have quite a bit of personal skill and some tactical sense, gleaned from parents, a coach, TV or live adult football. For the referee the main difficulty is in reading the game and positioning himself. Fortunately the modest length of kick helps. The players tend to follow the ball, and play can change direction alarmingly. You don't normally expect any nasty foul play, but constantly need to distinguish intent from innocence/ carelessness. Ignorance of the law is common but no excuse.

My favourite difficulty happened when I was appointed to an Under 16 game and the manager of the club rang and asked me to do the preceding Under 12 game. I would have preferred to start my appointed game fresh and asked whether they really needed an experienced referee for such young children. He assured me they did. I agreed to do it.

For some 20 minutes the game was fiercely but fairly contested and I began to think my journey had been in vain. Then a quite small boy appeared to body check one going for the ball. I whistled and took him on one side to explain the unfairness of what he had done, putting it down to youthful ignorance etc. I gave an indirect free kick. Just before half time he did it again, quite clearly. This time a direct free kick and I told him quite clearly what would happen if he did it again. At half time I used Law 18 and shared my dis- pleasure with the manager. I suggested a substitution would not go amiss - I did not wish to create history by having to caution an 11 year old. Whatever would the B & B FA think?

Restart and the lad is still on. I was actually relieved when he was substituted a few minutes later.

By the time players have reached the mid-teens, you have different problems. They are more skilled and the game is more like football, but there is a much greater disparity of physical development - some little boys among the young men. There is real danger of physical damage and the need to distinguish between excessive but unintentional use of weight and strength, and deliberate foul play. The players are becoming more adult and less disciplined; parents/supporters are demanding more and urging greater competitiveness; some of the players are already playing in higher levels of the game and bringing some of the tricks back.

By the later teens the game really is football, often played faster and with more skill than local adult games. The referee's

fitness is tested. Many of the players in Reading play men's football on Saturday and Youth football on Sunday. Foul play is now for real. The role of spectators is ambiguous. The players generally seem to disregard them but the referee can still be fair game for everyone.

What is the key to success for the youth football referee? As always it helps to know the Laws and get the decisions right as often as possible. The attitude of the referee seems even more critical - certainly with the teenagers - than with men. Adolescents on the football field are like adolescents elsewhere - they sometimes need to be children, other times they have to be treated as adults. A sensitive referee, willing to be tough but to temper his toughness, probably does best. After all, many of the youngsters are not used to having a uniformed referee, and I certainly would want the game to be enjoyable and a learning experience - so that we have a chance later of being respected rather than feared or hated.

It is often said that many referees refuse to take on youth matches because of the parents. It is true that some parents who watch their offspring playing football seem to undergo character changes like normal people once they get in a car. While we all develop our own style - I sometimes chat parents up, sometimes shout at them - you certainly can't ignore them. But that adds to the fun - especially if your 6ft 4ins tall and mature in years and experience. And most youth games are still fun.

FURTHER NEWS FROM CHAIRMAN BERNIE (spotted in the press)

Cup Rumpus Leads to Ban on Referee

Rumanian soccer authorities have overturned the result of the national Cup final in Bucharest and suspended all three match officials.

The game, on Monday, ended in chaos when spectators ran on to the pitch and fighting broke out after a goal by Steaua Bucharest was disallowed.

The incident happened in the 87th minute with Steaua and Dinamo Bucharest level at 1-1. When Steaua players refused to continue, the Dinamo team grabbed the cup from the table by the pitch and declared themselves winners by default.

A Commission of the National Sports Council later overruled Dan Petrescu, the referee, and declared Steaua 2-1 winners. Petrescu and both linesmen were later suspended for a year.

DEAR EDITOR (from Life Member, Mo Baker)

Thank you, and through you, the Reading RA for the recent copy of the Reading Referee magazine. It is nice to keep in touch.

I was interested to see the little paragraph headed 'Refs to be wired?'

Brings back memories of the time when there was great controversy and talk-ins about the art of communication of referees. The time in question was when the debate was about players and referees being closer, and whether or not referees should go into players' dressing rooms prior to a match and converse with both teams, giving the chance to the referee to explain briefly what he (this was prior to female referees) was looking for in the game, and how he would deal with situations.

It brought about a lot of controversy in local leagues and RA branches. Bearing in mind that it was also at a time when referees locally were getting lazy with match reports and failing to report misconduct in a proper manner (hence stereotype misconduct reports).

It was left in the air at that time about the viability of the situation, and like everything else, it died one of those natural deaths. One of the local decisions was that a referee could only go into the players' dressing room if it was specifically asked for in the rules of the competition. Local park leagues had no such rule, but the Hellenic League did. (I don't know whether or not that still persists). In those days we did have to visit the dressing rooms and inspect the boots of the players prior to the start of the game. Whether or not the players wore the same boots that we examined was a matter of conjecture. Anyway it was decided that on these visits, if the referee felt confident that he could communicate, then so be it. Communicate. If not, don't. I wonder if the same choice would be available if this 'wiring up' is adopted. I suppose it will be said that it will only affect senior leagues, and those referees are only there because they have mastered the art of communication.

Food for thought.

Yours sincerely,

[Thanks for your contribution, Mo. Nice to hear from you. Keep reading the mag. Ed]

THE SIN OF OMISSION - one award too few

The editor has been at it again. Unfortunately the award he missed out this time was the Vice Chairman's. There were **three** members who received the County Meritorious Service Award,

including Dick Wilkins. Apologies Dick. It's these word processors - no respect at all for the editor or your long and valued contribution to the Society.

FROM THE MIDDLE

Another of the articles which appeared as part of my series in the Reading FC programme

Ungentlemanly Conduct

(first published in the Reading FC programme, 2/11/85)

Just what is 'ungentlemanly conduct'? Certainly the most frequent reason for players to be cautioned. (Not 'booked' in referees' language because the player can have his name put in the book for a sending-off as well as for a caution). But what actually is 'ungentlemanly conduct'? Is it just a sort of referees' catch-all phrase? In a sense yes, but there is more to it than that.

'Ungentlemanly' sounds as though it belongs to a bygone age and nowadays does need interpretation. In the FIFA version of the laws in other languages (e.g. French 'conduite inconvenante') the various phrases used mean something like 'unseemly conduct' or 'improper behaviour.' That perhaps gives a better clue as to what the law-makers had in mind originally and what is behind referees' application of the law today.

There are dozens of possible reasons why the referee may caution under this heading. What they have in common is the notion that the player has gone too far in his offence, beyond that which is acceptable for punishment just by a free-kick. A player tackles unfairly in the run of the game - the sanction is a free-kick; a player makes a heavier, pre-meditated foul tackle - free-kick and caution. A player handles the ball - free-kick; a defender catches the ball to prevent a clear attack on goal - free-kick (or penalty) and caution.

However, this section of law also caters for those many offences which are clearly against the spirit of the game and yet don't fit easily into categories. It is ungentlemanly conduct, for example, to shout and/or gesticulate to put an opponent off as he is preparing to take a throw-in; or to stand on or move the ball to prevent an opponent from taking a quick free-kick. Some would smile and call it 'gamesmanship'. But it's cheating and it's cautionable.

Of course the force of the caution is to make it clear to everyone that certain forms of behaviour are unacceptable if the game is to be fair. To the player it is a formal warning. If

he commits a second cautionable offence (not necessarily ungentlemanly conduct), he will be sent off.

Reading Referees' Association

READING FIVES

Early warning. The Reading Fives will be held earlier next Summer. Date for your diary: **Saturday 10 June**. Pat Monaghan will be co-ordinating the referees as usual.

REFEREE TRAINING

The training team has just completed another highly successful course: 28 (out of 29) passed and qualified. The next course will start on **Monday 9 January**. Please play your part. If each of us got 1 person to take the course, we would be inundated (and delighted).

A 'promotion' evening was valued by the 7 members who turned up, but it was disappointing for the team to have so few. A 'refresher' evening will be held after Christmas for the newly qualified (date to be announced). Do take advantage - we have one of the best training teams in the business.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

December 15	Christmas Draw and free supper
January 19	Guest speaker - Roger Beavis on First Aid (Roger will try to complete his talk!)

SOCIAL EVENTS

Skittles Evening Saturday 14 January	Millers Arms, Caversham. Tickets are strictly limited: £4 each (including buffet) from Steve Green
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Date for the diary Friday, 3 March	Dinner & Dance (and cabaret) Wokingham Town FC. Tickets £13.50
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NO COMMENT (Simon Barnes, The Times, 8/10/88)

Westfield, this column's favourite team of last season, the Eddie Edwardses of football, finished their season with a record of: won 0, drew 2, lost 32, goals for 10, goals against 151. They escaped relegation from the Danair Combined Counties League because the candidate from the feeder league did not have facilities up to the required standard.

So far this season, Westfield have played 8, lost 8, scored 0, conceded 27. 'It's a definite improvement,' said their secretary, Dick Hill. 'We seemed to be letting in seven or eight every week last season, now it's only two or three. We've also been creating a lot of chances. We just need the players to put them away.'

But Westfield face a tough challenge this season from their deadly local rivals, Chobham. Chobham have a near perfect record of their own: played 7, lost 7, scored 0, conceded 23. Dick Hill commented: 'There's quite a lot of local rivalry because three years ago we had quite a useful side before Chobham took most of our players.' He added: 'It obviously didn't do them much good in the long run.' Chobham's secretary, Daisy Walley [sic], said after a recent defeat: 'I think we may be turning the corner.' If you find the world's pessimism overwhelming, and you seek refreshment of the spirit, just speak to the secretary of a non-league club.