

**READING REFEREE**

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*Editorial*

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## **MONTHLY MEETINGS**

### **September**

A meeting with *two* differences: Vice-Chairman Cliff Watkins was in charge (Derek in Greece again!) and the Guest Speaker was our own Dick Sawdon Smith.

It was reported that Life Member George Mills was making good progress. He had been rushed to hospital some two weeks previously and had been fitted with a pacemaker to correct his heart problem.

Ted Cambridge was now the County FA Examinations' Officer but would be relying on support from Stuart Gentle who had assisted George Mills for some years.

Mike Overton, our representative on the South Chiltern Minor League, gave some statistics: 271 teams U/9 to U/16; 3722 registered players (so far); 45 referees of whom about 30 are appointed each week.

Members were reminded to report to the Leagues any problems with their games or pitch or facilities.

The acting Chairman responded to Dick Sawdon Smith's article in our September issue. While accepting Dick's description of things in the post, he told members of the efforts of the present Committee which were perhaps not always obvious.

### **Problem Spot (or Two)**

Gary Douglas spoke of an incident in an end of season 'nothing' game he was refereeing when he was inexperienced and still a Class 3.

Unexpectedly he had to send two players for fighting and then a third for getting involved. This one attempted to assault him but Gary got away unharmed. He carried on with the game but later wished he had abandoned it. The players seemed uninterested after the incident and he felt uncomfortable and detached.

On balance the advice from the floor favoured abandoning the game. Disregard any feeling of sympathy for one or other of the teams. Ask yourself whether you are confident in yourself – are you in fit condition to do the game justice?

A second and more light-hearted question. Finchampstead were winning easily 4-0. When Sonning attacked virtually for the first time, Gary realised the ball was going down. He let play go on but the attack ended with an awful cross. As Gary knew – according to Law he should have stopped play and dropped a replacement ball to restart.

Not to be outdone, Cliff Watkins told a salutary tale which also posed a question of Law. With 11 minutes to go a player headed for goal, carried on, caught hold of the goalnet and the crossbar came down and hurt another player. A park ranger was summoned and eventually arrived to fix the crossbar and net. When Cliff tested it it came down again. With the agreement of the players who had patiently put up with the delay, he finished the game with no crossbar and no net! Wrong in Law as he knew, but the moral of the story was to remind members to check the security of the crossbar as part of their pre-match routine.

Finally from Andy Awbery. Unseen by the officials the goalkeeper fainted when the ball was bobbling about outside the area. He came round only to find it in the back of the net. What do you give? In discussion a distinction was made between unconsciousness caused by an accident like the clash of heads, and that caused by a player's fitness or, in this case, illness. It was correct to have given the goal.

Second half and Dick Sawdon Smith with *two* flipcharts. He started by saying the editor of the *Reading Referee* was wrong to say Dick was going to give a talk on "What can we do about Club Linesmen?" The title was correct [sigh of relief from the editor] but we were going to do most of the work.

Dick started by referring to the LOAF and the references to club linesmen. He suggested as an aim that as individuals and a Society we should improve co-operation, relationship and consistency. We were

then invited to propose good and bad points about club linesmen. Surprise, surprise, the negative list was *much* longer.

The preliminaries over, we were divided into groups, mixed by experience, to tease out the four most important points to be made to a club linesman. Perhaps it was no surprise that in the plenary session very similar points emerged and Dick's task in drawing them together was that much easier.

Dick summarised as follows:

Try to brief both linesmen together, well before the start if possible and approach them with a smile. If you aren't friendly and enthusiastic, you can't expect them to be. Ask for their name (for the linesman's award).

- 1      Positioning. Tell your linesmen which wing and forwards you wish them to take, and where you may require them to stand at certain set pieces (e.g. corners). You may also advise them to keep up with the rearmost defender (except the goalkeeper of course).
- 2      Clear signals. Ask the linesmen to make sure that the flag goes well above the head, with a clear indication as to whose ball it is at the throw-in. If it is not clear, to just wave the flag above the head and let you decide. (Illustrate with a flag how you want the signals).
- 3      Ball out of Play. Make sure that the linesmen understand when the ball is out of play, illustrating with the ball on one of the lines, showing the ball overhanging, and all of the ball over.
- 4      Offside. You can't teach the offside law in a few minutes, but give a short explanation. Explain that where the player is when the ball is kicked, and not when he receives it, is what counts. The player must be beyond the last but one opponent (i.e. nearer the opponent's goal line). Level is onside. Offside becomes an offence when the player is interfering or gaining an advantage. If

the linesmen should be unsure of this, ask them to flag and you will make the decision.

- 5 Acknowledgement when Overruling. Explain that if you overrule a flag for any reason, you will acknowledge the signal to show that you have seen it, but are going to carry on. (Illustrate how you will acknowledge) If you haven't whistled or acknowledged, tell them to keep flagging.

Finally, don't forget to thank them for their assistance, and if they have been particularly helpful, ask if they have ever thought of becoming a referee.

Dick was himself thanked warmly for an effective and informative talk/workshop and presented with a couple of bottles of wine as a token of appreciation.

### **10-YARD ADVANCEMENT – The Jersey Experiment 1998**

The coincidence of an August holiday in the Channel Islands and the Jersey RA's introduction of the world's most sought-after experiment with the Laws of the Game was too much to resist. Even my wife understood that this was important.

Through the kind offices of Alan Robinson, I was put in touch with Russell Barry, secretary of the Jersey RA, who arranged for me to watch both semi-finals of the Island's Charity Cup. During my stay I also met JRA President Charlie Tostevin and several of the Island's 35 referees who are implementing the experiment in all football played on Jersey this season. I received a most friendly and helpful welcome from them all.

It was through the initiative and determination of Charlie Tostevin in Jersey, and the co-operation and support of Ken Ridden at Lancaster Gate that the International Board agreed to the Law change.

The essential terms of the experiment are as follows:

- 1 The forward movement of the ball only applies to offences committed **AFTER** the award of the free kick and any necessary punishment (caution or dismissal) arising from the original incident.
- 2 The advancement of the kick **MUST** be accompanied by a caution for one of the following four offences:
  - Unsporting behaviour.
  - Dissent.
  - Delaying the taking of a free kick by carrying, throwing or kicking the ball away.
  - Failing to respect 10 yards at a free kick.

In all cases the advancement of the ball is in addition to a caution.

Under these conditions a player could be cautioned for the original , and again for one of the above reasons after the award of a free kick. He would then be dismissed ( a second caution in the same match) before the ball is moved forward ten yards.

- 3 When the ball is moved forward it must be towards the mid-point of the goal line
- 4 If ten yards take the ball into the penalty area, the kick remains direct indirect as originally awarded. Under no circumstances does it ever become a penalty kick.
- 5 If a team wish to take the original free kick quickly tee should be allowed to do so, but quick free kicks are not permitted after advancing the ball.

Not surprisingly perhaps, the evidence of pre-season friendlies and tournaments is that the new Law is having a *deterrent* effect, without actually being put into practice. It is estimated that by the end of August the ball will have been moved forward only *twice* in about fifteen matches. In both cases for not retreating ten yards.

I watched a highly competitive semi-final without seeing an occasion when the ball might have been advanced under the required terms. In a very physical game the referee issued several yellow cards for reckless late challenges, but despite the obvious lack of love between the teams, all decisions were accepted without further dissent or unsporting behaviour and there were no problems with players delaying the taking of kicks.

The view of the referees is that, in these early stages, players' discipline and behaviour are much better than last season, although there is a slight concern that perhaps the effect of the mere threat of punishment may wear off as the season progresses.

In order to complete the detailed questionnaire which is required after every game, Jersey's referees will have to develop the habit of counting how many free kicks they award for Fouls and Misconduct! Counting the number of times the ten yard advancement is applied will be easier.!

The results of the experiment will be collated and studied by the JFA and the FA before further discussion and decision at the International Board. Perhaps in the years ahead referees all over the planet will be applying a Law change which originated with some 30 Men in Black working for one of the world's smaller FAs. Something about acorns and oak trees comes to mind.

Up-to-date information on the progress of the experiment is available from Charlie Tostevin on 01534 872944.

Jim de Rennes

[Thanks Jim. Nice to know something many of us have advocated for years (though not in that form) is at least being tried out. Jim is editor of the Kinston RS magazine and an Associate Member of Reading RA. Ed]

## **A GAME OF TWO HALVES**

### **A reminder from Alex Ferguson for Dick Sawdon Smith**

What would you say to a referee, is the most crucial part of any match?

When I started refereeing, it was impressed on me that the first 15-20 minutes was the most important. It was then that you stamped your authority on the game.. In that opening phase you had to make sure the players knew you were in control. Good hard blows of the whistle and clear decisions, only allowing advantage in exceptional circumstances.

All of course very good advice, but I was reminded recently about an experience that changed my view about the period of the game for which we must be most alert. No doubt many of you watched the television series, 'The Alex Ferguson Story' in which the camera followed him into the dressing room amongst other places. At one match it showed us his half time team talk. Managers can earn their money at half time," he explained.

This took me back to a game many years ago. The home club was one of those country clubs aspiring to senior status, who had built a new stand for spectators and a clubhouse where activities in the bar throughout the week helped finance their aspirations. However the dressing room still consisted of the old wooden hut that the club had grown up with. The walls were so thin that at halftime, my linesmen and I sat drinking our tea listening to the club manager ranting at his players. We could hear every word and it was very educational.

Not only did he tell his players what they were doing wrong, he had also made notes about the weaknesses of certain opposition players, and laid down how they should be tackled in the second half: sometimes not very gently. We could feel the aggression caning out of that dressing room and we knew that the players would come out fired up and determined to carry out the managers Ins instructions.

We were going to have to be at our sharpest to keep it all in check, but at least we had a preview of what to expect. It made me realise that the most critical time of a game for a referee can be the 15-20 minutes after half time when the manager's exhortations are still ringing in the players ears. This is no time to sit back and relax, even if the first half was uneventful.



This was a lesson I should have long since learnt- I remembered after refereeing a senior game down in Gloucestershire, the club secretary came in the dressing room with our match fees. "In the first half", he said to me as he handed over the brown envelope, 'you were the best referee we have seen at this ground this season, but in the second half you were very nearly the worst.' My linesmen looked down at their feet with embarrassment at this forthright outburst pretending to undo their boots, but they knew. we all knew he was right.

For us as well as the players, it's a game of two halves. No matter how well the first half has gone we need to psyche ourselves at the half time break for the second half. Have our own half time talk, if only in our head.. It is not until that final whistle is blown that we can afford to relax.

#### **THE GREAT UNKNOWN . . . .**

The *Evening Post* newspaper salesman outside Marks & Spencer knows I'm a referee. He's a long-standing Cavaliers (Sunday League) supporter and I often ask him how his team is doing. On this occasion, before I could open my mouth, he said: "We've got Theale on Sunday. The referee is J. Moore. Who's J. Moore?"

Richard Highfield

#### **SOCCER REF'S OWN GOAL**

*(The Express 9/9/98)*

A man who was paid £11,000 after claiming he was in too much pain to walk was caught refereeing a local football match.

Timothy Panton, from Shirrell Heath, Hampshire, who had been receiving benefits for four years, was charged with fraud after an anonymous tip-off. Panton, 42, was sentenced to two years' probation at Portsmouth Crown Court yesterday after pleading guilty.

## **MORE FROM THE PAST**

### **1963-64**

On 12 October Tottenham Hotspur lost a record seven players on international duty: three played for England three for Scotland, one for Wales.

Welsh Cup holders, Borough United, became the first Welsh team to win a European tie when they beat the Maltese team Sliema Wanderers in the Cup Winners' Cup. They lost to Slovan Bratislava 4-0 in the next round.

In November England beat Northern Ireland 8-3 under floodlights at Wembley - the first time an international had been played fully under lights.

On Boxing Day just two First Division games produced 21 goals: Fulham beat Ipswich 10-1 and Blackburn beat West Ham 8-2.

England under Alf Ramsey had lost one game all season and beaten the USA 10-0 when they met Pele's Brazil in the 'Little World Cup'. England were outclassed and flattered by the 1-5 score-line.

Rangers did the Scottish treble for the second time – they were the first to achieve it in 1949. In the League Cup they trounced Morton 5-0, took the League title by six points from Kilmarnock and completed the treble with two goals in the last minute of the Scottish Cup against Dundee.

Jimmy Dickinson retired after making a record 764 Football League appearances, all for Portsmouth. Dickinson, who played 48 times for England, was nicknamed 'Gentleman Jim' – during his long career he was never cautioned or sent off or, reputedly, even spoken to by a referee.

### **1964-65**

At the age of 15 years 165 days, Derek Forster, the Sunderland goalkeeper, was the youngest person to play in the Football League.

Dave Mackay, the Spurs veteran mid-fielder who returned after missing a season with a broken leg, broke it again in his first game back.

Shrewsbury player-manager Arthur Rowley retired in February having score a record 434 League goals.

Stanley Matthews finally played his last League match in February at the age of 50 years and five days. Already a CBE he had been knighted in the New Year's Honours list, the first footballer to receive the honour.

Northampton were promoted to the First Division having risen from the Fourth in only five seasons.

After a disappointing season the year before the World Cup, Alf Ramsey's England beat the highly regarded West Germans 1-0 in May.

Leeds United missed both halves of the Double by the slenderest of margins: they lost the FA Cup to Liverpool in extra time and were runners-up to Manchester United on goal average, a difference of 0.686.

# Refs turn blind eye to foul play by fairer sex

WOMEN'S league football is in danger of becoming more dangerous than the men's game because male referees believe that player in ladies' or girls' team are not nasty or skilled enough to "play dirty".

New research from Manchester Metropolitan University shows that professional fouls, designed more to attack a rival player than to gain possession of the ball, and vicious tactics such as elbowing are going unchecked in women's league matches because referees dismiss players as being clumsy or unfamiliar with the rules.

Lindsey Patterson, a psychologist and Sunday league player, said that in spite of the enormous growth in the number of women playing and watching football in the 1980s, women were far from assimilated into the sport.

"Among women players there are many who believe there to be a bias in the umpiring of their football games based upon their gender and relating to referees' ideas – and comments – about femininity and levels of skill," she said.

Prompted by her fellow players' concerns about the disparities in the way men's and women's games were being umpired, Dr Patterson analysed the behaviour of referees in 28 five-a-side football matches, each lasting 40 minutes and involving teams of both sexes in a public league. The

## Alexandra Frea on how deep- seated sexism strives to keep football a 'man's game'

findings were given yesterday to the annual social psychology conference of the British Psychological Society at the University of Kent in Canterbury.

She found that foul play by women players was far more likely to be ignored and unpunished. "Men are often told off for going for high tackles but referees don't pull women players up for doing it because they don't believe it could have been done with intent. Men are also told off for elbowing but if a woman player complains that she was elbowed, the ref might just say 'Oh, it wasn't that hard', or 'It is a contact sort you know,'" Dr Patterson said.

Similarly, an anguished plea of "ref-er-eeee" accompanied by a begging gesture from a male player who believes the head-height rule has been broken in a five-a-side match may well be met with a reply of "Good call" from a referee. A woman making the same appeal is likely to be overruled and to be lectured about the rules of the game.

Referees were far more likely to interact with male players and to talk to them, offering encouragement or

reprimands. They barely spoke to women players.

Part of the problem here, Dr Patterson conceded, related to the paucity of the English language. "It is easier for refs to relate to male players. They use terms such as fella, mate and lad liberally but there are few appropriate terms for women," she said.

Sexist behaviour is not limited to referees. Men strolling past a women's league game in a park will often walk right across the pitch even though the ball is in play – something they would not dream of doing with a men's or even boys' game. They are also likely to make derogatory remarks.

Dr Patterson believes that the reasons for such deep-seated sexism in football are to do with men wanting to preserve the masculine identity of what they see as their game.

"Football is very closely linked to the masculine identity. Men feel quite threatened by the entrance of women into their sport," she said.

The solution? More women referees for a start. And a greater recognition by men that women who are prepared to get up early on a damp and dismal Sunday morning to run around a muddy field chasing a ball are likely to be every bit as dedicated as skilled as they are.

*(The Times, 24/09/98)*

## **NEW REFEREES' OFFICER FOR FA PREMIERSHIP**

An interesting innovation – some would say not before time – is the recent appointment of ex-FIFA referee Phil Don to the new post of Referees' Officer. His brief is to support, guide and train our top officials. He has certainly started controversially enough . . . . .

## **FULL-TIME REFEREES PROPOSED**

*(The Times, 19/9/98)*

There could be some full-time professional referees next season in the FA Carling Premiership, with the possibility of officials wearing sponsors' names on their shirts (John Goodbody writes).

The league is considering a number of innovations proposed by Philip Don, the league's first referees' official. However, Mike Lee, the Premiership spokesman, said: "They are just ideas under discussion and nothing has been agreed yet."

Others include video replays to settle whether the ball has crossed the line. Don said: "The ball crossing the goal line is fact. Fouls and infringements are down to the referee's opinion."

Last March, Fifa's international board, which oversees the rules, gave the Football Association the authority to conduct experiments in junior leagues. None has so far been carried out and Keith Cooper, the Fifa spokesman, emphasised yesterday: "We want to see how these studies work out."

## **REFEREES ARE THE FALL GUYS AS TRUTH TAKES A TUMBLE**

[Extract from an article by Mick Dennis in the *Evening Standard*, 29/9/98. Nice to know someone in the media both understands and wants to set the record straight. Ed]

. . . . . most of the country has accepted the persuasive and pervasive view that referees are inconsistent, inferior and incompetent.

Sit in the stand at any football match and you'll hear a constant chorus of abuse and criticism of the ref. That's completely understandable and forgivable, because fans are biased and are riled by any decision that goes against them. It's even understandable (if less excusable) for managers to rant and rave, because they are biased as well and because they need someone to blame when their team loses.

But so many broadcasters and journalists, who are supposed to be neutral, start with the assumption that the referee is likely to be wrong in any given circumstance and they do not let their scant knowledge of the laws temper their damning verdicts.

Players tug shirts, dive, appeal for decisions which they know should be given the other way, and generally try to influence and con officials. Then, when the poor old impartial referee gives his decision, managers rant, players explode and commentators deride and pillory.

That's what ruining the game; not bad refereeing but the constant, ignorant, abusive criticism of referees.

And if fans, managers, broadcasters and journalists berate referees all the time, why are we shocked when Di Canio lashes out? He's only catching the mood of the nation.

Making referees professional won't change anything. There has to be a change of attitude of people towards referees. There has to be an acceptance that referees are just honest people doing an excruciatingly difficult job and that without them there wouldn't be any football.

That change of attitude has to start at the top and it has to start soon before more matches degenerate into the near anarchy of the Sheffield Wednesday-Arsenal skirmish. . . . .

### **BUT IS IT FAIR?**

Reading RA's only female Class 1 referee has reluctantly put away her whistle after making good progress as far as the Isthmian line. And she still had youth on her side. So what's her problem? Fitness, or rather her inability to pass this year's fitness test because she can sprint and is a successful half-marathon runner. By a margin of 1.34% in the middle distance running section of the Cooper test – 35 yards short of the 2,600 minimum.

This seems to beg two serious questions. Given that women's running achievements are consistently lower than men's for understandable physiological reasons, should we have a lower standard for women referees? Most of us, I suspect, would firmly say no, on the grounds that the game is played at the same speed whoever referees it. It might argue for different fitness expectations for refereeing women's and youth football, but that's another issue.

The second question relates to the Cooper test itself which, it can be argued, 'has stood the test of time'. That much is true. However, is it the best we can do, especially if it is unintentionally biased against female officials?

Any test/examination should meet three main criteria. It should be *valid* (test what it's supposed to test), *reliable* (consistent) and *administratively practical* (easy to administer and cost effective).

The Cooper test clearly meets the second two but what about the first? What *specific* sorts of fitness does the referee need and does the test test them? Intuitively we know specificity is important: a distance runner trains differently from a sprinter and more obviously from a hammer-thrower; in football a goalkeeper needs different training from a striker.

The Cooper test , just to remind those unfamiliar with it, consisted last season of a series of shuttle runs – eight 25 yard sprints – and a 12 minute run to cover a minimum distance of 2,600 yards. (The standard will be raised at the end of this season).

But what physical qualities does the referee actually need? In simple terms (a) *the ability to be quick off the mark, to change direction and to sprint relatively short distances*. The shuttle runs are a reasonably appropriate way of testing that.

(b) *running stamina* to be able to keep up the sprinting and to have the strength to move effectively around the largest of pitches in the worst weather conditions and for the duration of the longest match, a game with extra time.

Given that research has apparently shown that referees may move up to seven miles during a match, it is arguable that the 2,600 yard test falls far short of the ideal. So, as a minimum improvement, it seems that the distance requirement should be set higher but, with the greater availability of technology, one might expect alternative as well as more specific tests to be devised. In so doing the playing field might be levelled for our female colleagues whose strengths might be tested in totally appropriate but different ways. Interestingly, even if only the distance expectation were set higher, women would be less disadvantaged if we can judge by their record in marathon running.



## **FROM THE FA – AN IMPORTANT NOTE OF GUIDANCE**

### **INJURIES TO PLAYERS ON THE FIELD OF PLAY (DUE TO PITCH CONDITION)**

#### **- A GUIDE FOR REFEREES, CLUBS AND LEAGUES**

During the last season there was an increase in the number of insurance claims made against clubs and referees related to injuries suffered by players, which they alleged were due to the poor state of the pitch.

#### The Responsibilities of Referees

This applies to both registered and substitute referees.

As a referee, you should do all you reasonably can to prevent injuries from happening on the field of play. You have the authority to ask for a pitch to be made safe, or to cancel a game if you feel the pitch conditions are unsuitable for play. This may be an unpopular decision to make in some circumstances, particularly at the end of the Season, but it is vital that you exercise this authority at all times.

Claims have been made against referees where injuries have allegedly been suffered due to:

- Poorly prepared pitches, where there are large or excessive tufts of grass, or sizeable ruts or holes in the pitch;
- The effects of weather such as excessive water, mud or particularly hard grounds.

Referees must take very seriously their responsibilities in relation to a thorough pitch inspection before kick-off.

Referees should not rely on protection from a civil claim on Decision 1 of the Decisions of the International Board in respect of Law 5 - The Referee. This is unlikely to be upheld in English law as giving referees immunity in the way that it states. Referees should certainly not see it as an alternative to carrying out a full inspection prior to each game.

### **The Responsibility of Clubs and Leagues**

Clubs and Leagues also have a duty of care and must take all reasonable steps to minimise the risk of injury to their players and the players of the opposition team. Furthermore, this must be explained clearly to everyone involved at the club.

More specifically, a club must ensure that nothing is omitted to be done or done which is likely to cause bodily injury to the public, club members or others. This of course extends to the preparation of any pitches for which it is responsible. Clubs should also take great care that any obligations under pitch hire agreements are complied with.

### **WHAT'S ON THIS SEASON**

**19 November**            To be confirmed

**17 December**            Christmas Special: Grand Draw and all that.

**21 January**

18 February

**18 March**

**15 April**

**20 May**

### **TAILPIECE**

High Wycombe Society celebrated their 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at the beginning of October with a quite excellent Dinner and Dance. The principal guests, national RA President Peter Willis and FA Chief Executive Graham Kelly both spoke. No surprises from Peter – he is always amusing and good value. But Graham Kelly was a revelation. Not the rather sad and somewhat dour individual we see at the FA Cup draw or after some nonsense with a well-known player, but a dead pan

stand-up comic. Still quietly spoken but, thanks to the PA, you could hear and enjoy it all. Nice one about Peter Willis, which may or may not be true. Graham asked Peter to do a pitch inspection. Peter duly reported back that “three quarters of the pitch was perfectly playable – but the game was off because the other third was impossible”!