

Reading Referees' Association

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READING REFEREE

Editor - Brian Palmer

October/November 1999

Assistant Editor - John Moore

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Editorial

The saddest duty of an editor is to record the passing of a good friend and colleague and on the next page I do just that. Peter Pittaway's death was not entirely unexpected, but it was no less tragic. We can't afford to lose members with his ability, experience and commitment.

There is better news. The season is settled in and our new course has gone well in the excellent hands of Malcolm Garstang, Brian Wratten and Dick Sawdon Smith especially. Peter rightly had confidence in his team.

We continue to get plaudits for our website including "Excellent site" from the directories/search engines UKPlus and Lycos. Our articles continue to appear weekly in the *Evening Post* and have included one by Paul Hopes on girls' and women's football (6 October).

May I make another plea for stories about referees and refereeing which are 'funny ha-ha' or 'funny peculiar'? Ring me if you prefer me to do the writing down. Thanks.

Opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Reading RA
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Peter Pittaway

Peter Pittaway has died at the age of 58 after a brave struggle against cancer.

Peter's main career was in the army where he attained the rank of Major in REME, but he had a lifelong dedication to football and refereeing. He qualified in 1962 and officiated at the highest levels in army and civilian football, as well as on the local leagues where he continued to referee after being retired from the Football League until prevented by illness from going on.

Peter's first important appointment was not long in coming. While still a Class 3 he was linesman for an army international – Hong Kong v. Australia – in front of a 65,000 crowd. After that he felt ready for anything and took charge of many prestigious matches including a Greek Cypriot Cup Final in Nicosia, two Kentish Cup Finals between the Belgian and French Army teams and a British Army Cup Final. He was linesman for a UEFA Cup match between Inter-Milan and SV Hamburg and reserve official for the Charity Cup. During a posting in Germany he officiated on the *Bundesliga*.

Peter joined the Reading RA in 1979 when he returned to Reading from an overseas posting and, in spite of other postings, remained committed to the Society. He was an active committee member who always spoke his mind for the good of refereeing. His particular contribution was to referee training as Training Officer and many referees owe their secure grounding to Peter's sound teaching. He also played an active and creative role in training at County level.

Peter lived as he refereed. He was committed to doing things well, expected high-standards and never left colleagues in any doubt about what he thought, or players in any doubt about who was in charge. Yet he was a kind man who never hesitated to offer help and support, even when he was in less than good health.

Committed as he was to his football he was still a devoted family man who enjoyed nothing better than being with his wife Maria, their children and partners and new granddaughter for a traditional Sunday lunch.

Peter had so much more to give and will be sadly missed, not only by his immediate family but by his many colleagues in the Reading RA, in REME, and in refereeing and football generally.

SEPTEMBER

Monthly Meeting

The shortest business first half on record. Suspicion that the Chairman Derek Reigate had another appointment proved unfounded. He reported that the new date for the County Quiz would be Monday 15 November and it would again be at the Madejski. Volunteers sought for our team.

The Secretary Martin Albury added to the items on the agenda paper

- an apology from the Handbook editor for associating both the Fair Play and Linesman's Award with the name of Bert Newman.
- a request from Alan Turner for the marks relating to the Awards to be returned to him at regular intervals
- confirmation that the new Welcome plaque for the dressing room was ready to be presented to Reading FC when they agreed an occasion

League Reports

Reading Football League

Derek Reigate reported that

- On 11 September, no nets were provided at Palmer Park and the whole programme had to be cancelled. The RFL is sorting it out with the Borough Council
- two pitches had been reported by referees as too small. The officials visiting one of them, Highmoor, had found no problem.
- another referee had reported a club for having no second ball or flags. The League had acted in each case.
- Woodford Park referees' changing room now has a carpet (!)

There were no reports from the other leagues.

Ted Cambridge expressed disappointment that only four 3-to-2 promotion candidates had turned up for an excellent presentation by Brian Wratten. It is a compulsory part of the promotion process and, if the absentees fail to attend one of the other seminars on offer, they will be excluded from promotion.

The Chairman reported that Peter Pittaway had suffered a stroke and was not at all well. Several members had been in touch with him and a card would be sent expressing our corporate best wishes.

The Guest Speaker was David Downs, Reading FC official historian, Education Officer of the new Academy, author and old friend of the Reading RA and many of its members.

David reminded us that the first time he visited us was just after the publication of *Biscuits and Royals*, his history of the club, in 1984.

He started with two true stories of refereeing incidents. Of a Mr Wood in the 1930-31 season in a match against Bury, who sent off and then re-instated one of the Bury players. He was sacked by the FA and never refereed another league match. The second concerned Tommy Youlden who fired his free kick against Rochdale into the side netting. The referee Walter Harvey, gave a goal in spite of the protests and the visiting goalkeeper was cautioned for dissent.

One surprise this season was a goal scored direct from the kick-off by Darius, one of the Under 19 squad – which was not a lob and hit the net halfway up.

David recalled another unusual referee – his Music master at Reading School, Mr Moore. The pitch was lengthways adjacent to the main drive, so Mr Moore drove forward and backward in his car following play and lowering his window to blow the whistle at the appropriate times.

In another of David's games, playing for the Beetle and Wedge against the Grapes, the referee who was getting a lot of stick from the Grapes' players, confided that he would blow up early if they looked like winning!

[Not a member of the RRA we are assured. Ed]

David's books include *Biscuits and Royals*, a History in Pictures, a Statistical History and a book about the Jersey Tournament called *Keep it on the Island*.

In his 34 years running the Reading Primary schools' rep side, there have been 1099 games, no cautions, no sendings-off and no fees for referees (though he has never been short).

His present post is Education Officer for the Academy (9-19 years). He supervises the education programme for the 16-19 year olds and teaches them core skills which include two sessions on the Laws. He could use some help from us. He also visits the schools to keep an eye on the younger ones. The aim is to make sure that any boys who don't make the grade can still make it at something else, and also to provide an alternative in case any that do make it have to give up through injury.

As expected, David had brought some of his collection of memorabilia and said a few words about each of them, including a medal from 1894 when Reading lost 18-0 to Preston NE, a 1907 Reading FC shirt and an International cap won by Jimmy Greaves and sold when he fell on hard times.

David concluded by inviting us to offer our services as officials for the Under 9 – Under 16 games at Cantley Rec each Sunday at 11 a.m. (The FA appoints officials to the older age groups from the Hellenic and Isthmian League lists).

The question session was enlivened by a discussion about sanctions for the different age-groups: were the referees really told they couldn't caution or send-off players? Did you really want to send off a 9 year old who handled the ball on the line? David insisted that he would expect proper sanctions if required, but hoped for understanding and common sense. Vigorously supported by Michael Rowley, he invited members to try it for themselves.

The Chairman's warm thanks were echoed by the members.

OCTOBER

Monthly Meeting

About 30 members turned their back on yet more live European football on TV, and braved the wet and windy weather to enjoy the company of a few of their RRA colleagues. The meeting started on a sad note with the Chairman calling for a minute's silence as a mark of respect to our Training Officer, Peter Pittaway, who had died recently after a long battle against cancer.

The business part of the meeting was concluded very quickly, with only a few issues of any substance being discussed. A worrying incident raised by one of our newer members concerned a locked gate at King's Meadow which had prevented an ambulance gaining access to an injured player. After a considerable delay the person concerned had to be airlifted to hospital by helicopter. The Reading Sunday League had been notified and had promised to take the matter up with the Council.

The latest RRA training course was now well underway, with 26 students (12 adults, 14 youths) of whom all but two had said they planned to referee regularly. There was already a long waiting list for the next course. A County Instructors' Course was to be held in Aylesbury on 20-21 November. Five RRA members were going.

Feedback from the latest County RA delegates' meeting included a reminder to members not to respond to letters from solicitors about match incidents. Such correspondence should always be referred to the County FA and copied to the County RA.

Once again those who stayed for the second half (thankfully nearly everyone) enjoyed a very entertaining and useful training session led by Malcolm Garstang.

On this occasion we were split into 5 groups – Assessors, Supply League officials, other Class 1&2s (2 groups), and Class 3s. Each team had to identify and agree three things which would help to improve the standard of refereeing.

When the results were presented a lively debate ensued. FITNESS featured on nearly every group's list, with food, sleep, body and mind all affecting the way we referee. It was accepted that not everyone had the time or inclination to attend the regular gym sessions held at Theale Green School (Tuesdays 8pm – contact Cliff Watkins), although there must be many RRA members who would benefit from (and enjoy!) these evenings. Because it was very easy to make an excuse *not* to exercise, some members found it helpful to pair up with a colleague (eg to go jogging on a regular basis).

POSITIONING was discussed in detail, particularly where you should stand at goal kicks and corners. Newer referees received some sound advice from more experienced colleagues, such as

- think about the dropping zone
- take account of the weather conditions
- consider the level of ability of the players
- be on the alert for the short kick
- vary your position to keep players on their toes
- be ready to change your position quickly once a kick has been taken.

Not surprisingly, the conclusion about the third topic selected for discussion - DISSENT – was that there was no right or wrong way of dealing with this. The topics identified on several of the lists (eg communication, assertiveness, man management, etc) all had a part to play in good

refereeing. Amongst the good ideas suggested was that referees should carefully analyse games where dissent occurred. They might consider

- what prompted the reaction from the player(s)?
- did I make use of the skipper(s)?
- could I have handled things differently?

To conclude the session Malcolm invited the groups to add up the collective years of experience of those who had contributed to the session. The grand total was a staggering 409 years (and that didn't include your Editor who was absent on holiday!).

Colin Pike

CATHERINE WHEEL ADVERT

SERVICE BEFORE SELF

Shining Example of Some Young Colleagues

The Safer Reading Summer Football Competition organised by Reading Borough Council aims to provide underprivileged young people with enjoyment and recreation which they would otherwise have been denied.

In spite of problem with the organisation, this year's competition was very successful, thanks in no small measure to the quality, enthusiasm and dedication of the young referees from the Reading RA.

There were 8 x 2 hour sessions of 7-a-side matches with the following officiating:

Craig Beales and Stuart Bravey - 1 session

Matthew Gill - 2 sessions

Nick Overton - 5 sessions

Chris Hayman - 6 sessions

Michael McLeod - 8 sessions

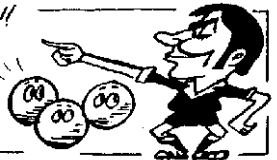
Thanks are due also to two somewhat older members: Brian Wratten who was i/c referees and did more than a bit of the organisation and some of the refereeing, and Dick Sawdon-Smith who gave him valuable support.

But where do we put it?

The Safer Reading Summer Football Competition were so grateful they subsequently presented Brian Wratten with a cup for the Reading RA. The only snag is we have nowhere to display it. One of our wits suggested the Reading FC trophy cabinet because there was plenty of room in there! Any non-frivolous ideas?

"REF" AT HIGHMOOR... REFEREE'S DECISION DECIDES RESULT !!

STOP PRESS!...and they did!



THE CLASS OF FOOTBALL IN THIS FRIENDLY GAME WOULD HAVE PUT SOME OF THE DISTRICT SIDES TO SHAME.

WITH A SHIMMED DOWN DOUGGIE WEBB FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO GET THRU FOR THE PRESS..

"THE POST.. CHRONICLE" full Malcolm FREEMANTLE & ETC BOYS STILL EQUIPPED THEMSELVES WELL

THE REFEREE'S SURPRISED ME... IN FREEMANTLE-BURT & NEWMAN THEY HAD A LIVELY ATTACK... BUT LATER ON JOHN OLIVER... DOUGGIE & DAVE DIBBEN ALL BUT SAVED THE GAME.

THEY SHOULD HAVE PICKED ME! AS IT IS ALAS!! I HAVE TO REPORT A GALLANT DEFEAT... THE REFS WHISTLING UP 3-2 VICTORS!

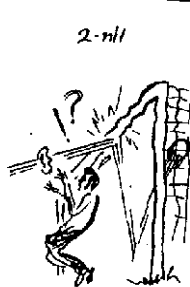


1-nil



almost!

Ray PIGDEN heads away a cert goal from Dave DIBBEN...



2-nil

then John NEWMAN crashes in a beauty to increase lead



Dave DIBBEN

Colin GUNNEY

Douggie WEBB gives the PRESS a look in with a crafty overhead goal!

2-1



but Dave POTTER rushes in a NEWMAN cross... 3-1



too late PETER GILL heads in... 3-2.



John OLIVER



Douggie WEBB

— READING & DISTRICT REFEREES XI



Malcolm FREEMANTLE John NEWMAN Jeff BURT Roy PIGDEN Dave POTTER Ray HUIT Malcolm FOSTER David DOWNS Mike CUTBUSH sub. Frank GRASSPOOL Dick SANDON Nigel WRIGHT

THE WHISTLERS IN ACTION

YESTERYEAR

When Dick Sawdon Smith took over the running of the Reading RA football team in the early seventies, he changed the practice of playing end-of-season games against 'real' football teams, who invariably won by a hatful of goals.

Instead he organised matches against teams of schoolmasters, the local press and local club secretaries, as well as other referees; societies, in the hope of getting more equal games.

The cartoon, from the *Reading Chronicle* (April 1974) reproduced on the opposite page, was brought to our attention by our September Guest speaker, David Downs. In those days David got together the schoolmasters' team, but on this occasion he was obviously 'guesting' for the *Whistlers*.

I shouldn't, but I couldn't help laughing . . .

I read in the newspaper today, a report on a match between Hull and Rotherham. It wasn't so much the action on the pitch that made me smile, it was what happened off it.

The Rotherham centre half was sent off following a clash with an opponent just before half time. The player, Guy Branston, stormed up the players' tunnel and attacked the referee's dressing room door by punching a hole in the wooden panel. What he didn't realise was that there was a glass panel behind the thin wood . . .

Minutes later, the player who had left the pitch, left the ground in an ambulance, having severed an artery in his arm. The manager said: "*It was a silly thing to do, but he's only a young lad. Perhaps we should have sent someone down the tunnel with him*". Probably to make sure he was comfortable with his fluffy toy and dummy!

John Moore

FROM THE PAST

1969-70

UEFA decided to settle drawn matches in their three competitions by kicks from the penalty mark – rather than by the toss of the coin used previously.

At the end of March Leeds United had lost only three of their previous 52 matches and were in line for the treble. Everton pipped them at the post for the :League Championship. They lost by one goal to Celtic in the European Cup semi-final and were defeated by Chelsea in the FA Cup final replay. Their eight fixtures in 22 days in April probably best explain their demise.

Bobby Charlton made his 100th appearance for England when he captained the team against Northern Ireland at Wembley in April. He also scored.

When England drew 0-0 with Scotland at Hampden later in the month, it was only the second time that that had been the result. The previous occasion was the very first game between the two countries in 1872.

After a lean spell with no trophies since 1953, Arsenal had a commanding run in the Fairs Cup and snatched the final from the jaws of defeat. They came away from the first leg at Anderlecht 1-3 down after being three goals behind until five minutes from the end. A full house at Highbury saw newcomer, 19 year-old Kelly pull a goal back in the 26th minute. John Radford got the equaliser 20 minutes from the end which gave Arsenal a technical lead on the away goals rule, but John Sammels made it 4-3 with a goal a minute later.

In the newly-established FA Trophy, Macclesfield Town beat Telford United 2-0.

There was an international scandal when England captain Bobby Moore was arrested in Bogota days before the start of the World Cup finals on a charge of jewellery theft. He was bailed out to allow him to play in the finals. It

was eventually proved to have been a 'frame up' and two of the staff of the store were convicted of conspiracy.

The World Cup 1970

Considered by many to have been the finest. England, fielding six of its 1966 team had to play Brazil, a team of stars including Pele, in the early stages. This game was looked upon as the real final. In a temperature of 98 degrees F it was a memorable game of the highest standard and included that miraculous save by Gordon Banks of a Pele shot in the 10th minute. In spite of making plenty of chances, England lost 0-1 to a goal by Jairzinho.

England were knocked out by West Germany, the defeated finalists in 1966. England were two up and coasting when Peter Bonetti, substituting for Gordon Banks, let the ball in under his body. Alf Ramsey then replaced Bobbie Charlton by Colin Bell and Martin Peters by Norman Hunter which seemed totally to unbalance the side. Seeler scored in 81st minute to bring the scores level and Gerd Muller added another in extra time.

Italy beat Germany in a 7-goal thriller but then met Brazil in the final. There was an extra edge to the game as both teams had won the Cup twice before and would get possession if they triumphed again.

The flamboyant New World against the skilled but negative Old. Pele started the fiesta with a spectacular goal in the 18th minute and provided the sublime pass four minutes from time to enable Carlos Alberto to score the fourth and, in spite of a Boninsegna goal, Italy were well and truly beaten.

1970-71

Ernie Tagg, the manager of Crewe Alexandra, sacked himself because he had become convinced that the club needed someone younger to take charge of the team.

In November, Bobby Moore, West Ham and England captain volleyed a clearance. The ball accidentally struck the referee and knocked him out.

With his customary quick-thinking, Moore picked up the whistle to stop the game and signalled the trainer on.

In a disaster to be more gravely repeated at Hillsborough some 30 years later, 66 fans were killed at Ibrox. Some of the crowd of 80,000 were beginning to leave when they heard the roar greeting a late equaliser. They changed direction and in the following maelstrom, barriers collapsed and people were crushed to death. The official report led to a new Act in 1975 (but that still did not prevent future tragedies).

The Football League rejected sponsorship of the League Cup and the four countries also refused it for the home championship.

4th Division Colchester United beat Leeds United 3-2 in the 5th round of the FA Cup. While Leeds fielded several internationals, Colchester had six players over the age of 30. Colchester next had to meet Everton at Goodison in the quarter finals. They lost 5-0.

Against all the odds Arsenal won the double – only the second time it had been achieved this century (Spurs were first in 1961). At the end of February they trailed Leeds by seven points in the League but then had an astonishing run of 11 wins in the next 13 games. Ironically, their final match was against Tottenham who could not be allowed to score (because of the goal average system) if Arsenal were to win the title. Bob Wilson kept a clean sheet. They then had to beat Liverpool in the FA Cup final. After a goalless draw at full-time, Heighway put Liverpool ahead. Eddie Kelly equalised with a scrambled effort but then, eight minutes from the attend, Charlie George scored with one of his blasters.

WARNING FROM COUNTY FA

Referees are reminded *not to respond* to communications from third party solicitors about incidents in matches.

If you are approached, contact the County FA and send them any letters received, with copies to the County RA.

TEAMWORK

Isn't it the result that counts asks Dick Sawdon Smith

In my dotage years as a referee, I often run the line to some of our younger colleagues. Let me say first of all that I am full of admiration for them. They are almost always extremely keen and professional; more so perhaps than we were in my earlier days.

They all have their own individual instructions for their assistant referees of course but there does seem to be one underlying theme when it comes to flagging for offences on the field. 'Before flagging', goes the usual exhortation, 'look up and see where I am and wait a few seconds to check that I am not better placed to see the incident.'

Sounds like unquestionably good advice of course. We don't want referees and their assistants giving contradictory signals. It could lead to disputes by players or add fuel to dissent. Nor do we want players thinking that the assistant referee is running the show. On the Nationwide Football League we are even told that assistant referees are instructed not to flag for more than three infringements on the field of play during each match.

Perhaps I am not typical of my generation of referees, but my instructions have always been a little different when refereeing with two neutral, qualified and experienced linesmen. They go something like this:

'If you see an offence please feel free to flag for it. If you flag and I blow my whistle at the same time the players will think we are on the ball, and the offender might even accept that he was doing wrong. If, however, I haven't seen the offence and you have, then I will be pleased to have your flag. If I

have seen it and have decided *not* to penalise, perhaps to play the advantage, then I will give you the signal: drop your flag and carry on. If I have seen the incident and consider its an offence but you flag before I blow my whistle, then it's my fault for being too bloody slow.'

I'm not saying of course that I'm right and my younger colleagues are wrong in their approach, but it's worth realising that there are alternatives. I always try to obey my referee's instructions whatever they are, although I sometimes find it difficult to delay raising the flag when I see an offence committed in 'my' part of the field. I would also say that in the past there have been times when the referee has had a bad day, or a bad ten minutes and I have felt obliged to rescue him from bad decisions, or the failure to take correct decisions.

I feel that it's a little like a football team. They have strikers whose job it is to get goals, but in the end it doesn't matter who scores as long as you get the right result.

THE NEW READING RA TIE

Have you got yours yet?

Essential accessory for anyone, especially those on a higher league or with aspirations.

Navy with a wide (14mm) bright blue stripe and a narrow gold one, with the RRA logo. Quite elegant and nice quality polyester. Goes beautifully with or without a blazer.

Superb value at £7-99.

WOMEN IN BLACK

The title of one of my articles in the *Evening Post* last season.

Things are moving on. 21 year old Amy Rayner of Stafford has just been promoted to the Conference line. That is worthy of comment for a start. How many 21 year old men are there on the Conference line? Not too many I guess.

Because of Amy's promotion, it was possible for the first time to field a team of women officials at a Football Conference game – Saturday 13 September, Kidderminster Harriers v. Nuneaton Borough. The media naturally took an interest, but I suspect were disappointed. Wendy Toms, our most experienced female official - on the FIFA list now - and colleagues Janie Frampton and Amy were given a somewhat special welcome. Two or three minutes into the game, however, (and thank goodness) the fans were chanting as usual, and Wendy got more verbal stick from the Nuneaton supporters when she blew for a foul against the Nuneaton captain.

David McVay writing in the *Times* concluded:

‘The plaudits, however, went to the ladies. The sex angle aside, Toms and her two assistant referees would have departed the Aggborough stadium still anonymous to the crowd,

Undemonstrative but firmly in control was how they rules the roost. Just the way it used to be in the old order of all-male officialdom.’

Now, if women's matches are being played in the spirit men's matches used to be and women officials are operating as men officials used to, isn't there a moral there somewhere?

NOT THE PLAYERS THIS TIME

Red card for tipsy Russian refs

[Ori Lewis writing in the *Guardian*, 17/9/99]

Four Russian match officials, who were rather the worse for wear when they arrived in Israel for the Hapoel Haifa's Uefa Cup tie against Club Bruges, were prevented from taking charge of last night's match after embarrassing their hosts with an evening of drunken antics.

The Russians' visit got off to a bad start when their flight landed at Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion airport. They attempted to fondle women police officers and at one point broke into an impromptu song-and-dance routine.

To prevent further embarrassment, the quartet – Sergei Kosiano, Sarvon Martinov, Sergei Husseinov and Pavel Ginzburg – were whisked off to a waiting car which took them to a Haifa restaurant. However, the partying continued.

“The officials kissed the hands of waitresses and insisted on filling their glasses with whisky,” Shimson Amrani, one of the proprietors of the restaurant said. “They rose from their seats in a drunken stupor and lunged at the bar.”

The four continued to harass the waitresses, trying to land kisses and pinch them. “I had to replace the waitresses serving their table with waiters,” Amrani said. At one stage, the officials went into the street and began directing traffic.

Tovi Malach, the local Israel FA representative, said he was awaiting instructions from Uefa on “what to do with the Russians”. Their places at the game, which Haifa won 3-1, were taken by Romanian officials.

[Thanks to Phil Lewis who spotted this one. Ed]

SOME FACTS AND FIGURES – NEW THIS SEASON

(with thanks to Mal Davies, editor of *The Midland Referee*)

- In the Auto Windscreens Shield matches that begin on 8th December, the FL will experiment with moving the ball 10 yards forward after a free kick has been awarded for an infringement when the offending team has committed a further infringement such as dissent by word or action, failing to respect the required distance, unsporting behaviour or delaying the taking of the kick.
- For the first time, players' names appear on shirts in the FL who have also introduced squad numbering. Shorts are numbered as well; not required on Premiership.
- On the Premiership, the Referee, two Assistants, 4th Official and the Match Observer now meet at a hotel 3 to 4 hours before kick off. All five are taken in a chauffeur-driven car to the ground, arriving about 2 hours before kick off.
- The role and responsibilities of the 4th Official have been enhanced.
- Last season, only live Sky Premiership games or high profile games had 4th Officials who were Premiership Referees themselves. This season, all Premiership games will have a 4th Official who can be any Referee from the National List. So FL Referee will now have the opportunity of officiating at Premiership grounds.
- Technical areas/benches regulations have been reviewed. The covered area for both teams' officials and substitutes shall contain 11 seats. The substitutes (up to 5) and other club personnel (up to 6) must be named on the team sheet.
- A revised procedure for dealing with injured players has been issued in order to allow players to receive correct treatment safely off the field of play and minimise the number of occasions that the stretcher bearers

enter the field. Referees will only summon the stretchers following a request from the physiotherapist.

- On the FL teams can now name up to 5 subs of whom 3 can play, as on the Premiership.
- Players cannot wear jewellery, except taped up rings. On the Premiership, studs & sleepers can be worn but must be taped. On the FL, studs and sleepers are not allowed.
- The cut-off date for age has been changed from 1st August to 1st March. As a consequence, 9 Asst Referees whose 44th birthdays fell between March and Aug this year, have now got another season before being compulsorily retired. There were no Referees.
- There are 24 new Assistant Referees on the National List, total 221, of which 104 have been appointed in the last 3 seasons, a high turnover. Stephen Bratt (Walsall), at the age of 22 years and 135 days on 1.3.99, is younger by 150 days than the previous youngest, World Cup Referee Jack Taylor (Wolverhampton), when he was promoted onto the line.
- There are 6 new Referees on the National List, total 73, of which 22 (5 new) also referee on the FA Caning Premiership. All 22 Referees on the Premiership will also referee FL games for the first time since 1994.
- Fees, with last season's in brackets, on the Premiership are: Referees £600 (£400), Assistant Referees £225 (£175) and 4th Official £175 (£175). FL fees have remained the same: Referees £195 and Assistant Referees £95; 4th Official's fee is £95.
- The Referee's and Assistant Referees' kits will be black; an alternative colour is green which can be used when the Referee deems it necessary.

**AVON FOOD SERVICES
ADVERT**

What's on this Season

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 18 November | Tony Rock, senior referee and instructor from the Army FA |
| 16 December | The Grand Christmas Draw and more time than usual to have a festive drink with your colleagues |
| 20 January | Former Football League referee and ex-Reading RA member, Tom Bune, now a co-ordinator of Premiership referees, including David Ellery |
| 17 February | Mark Halsey, ex-Spurs player and Premiership referee |
| 16 March | Andrew Melrose, a member of the RFU Training Team for Referees – insights from the other code |
| 20 April | To be confirmed |
| 18 May | Annual General Meeting and your opportunity to vote on issues affecting the future of your society |

Give the reporter a red card . . .

"Referees are absolutely useless. They know it, players and managers know it and fans know it. It doesn't matter what league you play in, the men who wear the black shirt have not got a clue."

These are words written at the start of a match report in an article on Monday 8th November in a national newspaper by a so-called journalist called Colin Young. If we came face to face and he was describing my performance, he would get more than a red card.

With all that is said and done about referees being more professional etc., how can the Football Association or indeed the Press Association, allow statements like this get into press? What gives any person the right to make such an outrageous and scandalous statement? I think you can tell I am not impressed by what was written.

The article was written about the game between Middlesbrough and Sunderland where Graham Barber did not see a deliberate elbow by Brian Deane on Paul Butler. I watched the highlights of the game and thought the conduct of the players was abysmal. It did not take a lip reader to see what words of opinion were being offered to the referee. Surely it is time that the blame for indiscipline is put where it should be, on the shoulders of those infringing, not on the official taking action?

It said later in the article that the referee "made a mistake" in not seeing the incident. He didn't make a mistake! A professional footballer, seeing the referee distracted in ensuring ten yards for a free kick, deliberately elbowed a fellow professional in the face, behind the match official's back, knowing he would probably get away with it.

I have never been an advocate of video evidence being used for such instances but the continuing epidemic of violent actions by cowards masquerading as sportsmen has changed my mind. If, by viewing the evidence, guilt is established, the book should be thrown at the players in question. Forget the fines, eight-week bans would soon stop this conduct.

John Moore