

Reading Referees' Association

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Reading Football League	Derek Reigate
Reading Sunday League	Peter Pittaway
South Chiltern Minor League	Peter Hitt

READING REFEREE

Editor - Brian Palmer

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Assistant Editor - John Moore

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Editorial

Because of my holiday arrangements which now have to include grand-children and school holidays, I am writing my editorial even earlier than usual - end of July rather than end of August - and it does make a difference. Shearer's recent ankle injury has led to speculation about England's World Cup chances. Are we really so dependent on one man? David Mellor has just been given the job of 'seeking a fair deal for the fans' (of League football that is) in cahoots with Tony Banks, the Minister for Sport, both Chelsea supporters. Could that be significant? And how much will they be achieve in the context of the accountant-led business of professional football? I suppose we should be grateful that some of the lesser League clubs (including Reading) are at least getting new stadia to replace their present antiquated homes. Let's hope the real fans will be able to afford the new admission charges.

But the real game for most of us is sub-Football League, and for many just on the local parks. Our ambitions are pretty modest: to have decent pitches and facilities, and support from our leagues and County FA. We shall be putting the latter to the test very soon because our Vice Chairman, Cliff Watkins was assaulted during a Charity 6-a-side in June. Fortunately, Cliff is fully recovered from his physical injuries, but will his assailant's punishment fit the crime and so discourage the others? We shall see. Meantime, do re-read Ted Ring's wise advice on minimizing the risk of being assaulted, and then go out and enjoy your refereeing and the new season!

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MONTHLY MEETING

August

[Copy to be supplied by Colin Pike]

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 15 May 1997

A nice full room of members to be welcomed from the Chair by the President, Brian Palmer

The meeting opened as usual with the presentation of the Bert Newman Fair Play and Linesman's Awards and his widow Sybil did the honours for the 17th successive year. On the comprehensive Secretary's report there were no comments other than congratulations . Brian Wratten introduced the numerous changes to the letter of the rules on behalf of the Committee. These had been circulated well in advance and it was hoped all queries and suggestions had been satisfactorily dealt with. They obviously had and the amended set of rules was carried unanimously.

One of the marks of our present Committee is the quality of its paperwork and the Treasurer's report was a supreme example of professionalism. Brian Wratten explained the exceptional nature of the year as it included the 75th Anniversary celebrations, but he was not unhappy (unusual for a Treasurer?). Dick Sawdon Smith asked about our investment in the Royals' Rendezvous Club, given the news about Reading FC's now impending move to Smallmead. Members were assured that we were covered in the contract and expected, in effect, to move with the Club. If all failed, we would get our money back, but the Committee would be keeping a watchful eye on developments. Brian then proposed no increase in the annual subscription - and that too was carried unanimously!

Somewhat unusually, there was a ballot for both Vice-Chairman and membership of the Committee. Cliff Watkins was elected Vice-Chairman and Andy Awbery will replace his as Membership Officer. Peter Pittaway

moves from Vice-Chairman to Training Officer. Martin Gallagher was elected to the Committee in place of Alison Chapman who had had to step down and was warmly thanked for her contribution.

Peter Pittaway and Dick Sawdon Smith agreed to attend the Berks and Bucks RA AGM as Reading delegates.

The final part of the meeting was dedicated to the two society awards for our own members. Vice-Chairman, Peter Pittaway, presented the Major Sainsbury Award to Chairman, Derek Reigate, for his outstanding contribution to refereeing and the Referees' Association. The Chairman then presented Michael Rowley with the Fred Porton Award for the 'most promising Class 3 referee'.

The meeting closed with the President's thanks to all present, reciprocated by Terry Gibbs, Vice-President, on behalf of the members.

After the meeting there was time for chat and refreshments, again provided by Brian and Mrs Wratten, to whom we sent our thanks.

BERKS & BUCKS RA Annual General Meeting 16 June 1997

The business of the meeting was made more difficult this year because of a reluctance of those present to take an active part, in spite of the encouragement of President, George Mills, who was in the chair. It seems that perhaps all was too uncontroversial to stir members into action. Eventually all the business was conducted and the officers were all re-elected.

The second half had been assigned to Peter Molyneux, former Secretary of the Southern Division, who was to talk to his paper on 100% membership.

[Here, for newer members, I explain. that 100% membership of the RA has been national RA policy since 1977 when George Mills presented the motion on behalf of Reading. *Our* idea of 100% membership assumed the

County FA and the local RA branches working in partnership, with the leagues allowed to appoint only referees who were members of the RA as well as the County FA. The FA has refused to implement NRA policy]

Peter's paper, which had been circulated, describes in some detail the close, supportive and harmonious relationship local referees' societies have with the Hertfordshire FA. [This should have made interesting reading for the B & B FA members in attendance].

In a nutshell, the proposal is that referees would pay a joint fee (probably subsidised) to cover County FA and RA membership. The County FA, for its part would probably cover the cost of speakers, accommodation and contribute towards RA running expenses, but would also insist on 'members' attending a minimum of three RA meetings in the season. High standards would be expected of the referees in fulfilling their role and there would be sanctions. There would be a joint newsletter/magazine.

Of course, the usual responses of 'Big Brother' and 'closed shop' had already been voiced but, as I have personally always argued, we are all already *compelled* to belong to the County FA if we wish to be appointed by the leagues. So what's different about being compelled to be a member of the RA?

There was a generally positive reaction I understand among the society representatives, though some feeling that Hertfordshire was starting from a much better position than other counties (not to mention any by name). One worry seemed to be the possible loss of autonomy in the package being proposed.

Peter was to go on to present his paper to the Council and Executive Committee prior to the National Conference. It will be interesting to see their response in the fullness of time.

CONFESSIONS OF A CONVERT

Martin Albury's report on the National RA Conference, held at Plymouth on 21st June 1997

I was told (a long time after accepting the job) that the Secretary normally represents Reading Referees' Association at the annual conference, but doesn't actually have to!

There are three members who go each year, namely George Mills, Brian Palmer and Derek Reigate, and Brian Wratten joined them last year. However, Brian Wratten could not make it this year - for the poor excuse of a badly timed holiday. So initially I felt a bit pressured into going myself but, shortly after, I quite liked the idea. So much so that I almost, but not quite, persuaded Cliff Watkins and Andy Awbery to go as well!

The four of us, George, Brian, Derek and myself, travelled down to Plymouth in the luxury of Derek's (new to him) 5 Series BMW on the Friday morning of June 20th. A pleasant journey down the M4 and then M5 where we stopped for coffee, courtesy of Brian. Past Exeter on the M5 and onto the A38 and a few miles short of Plymouth we stopped for lunch at a very decent inn.

On arrival at the Plymouth Moat House Hotel there was a very friendly welcome by members of the Plymouth Referees' Society, who presented each one of us with a welcome pack which included some useful bits and pieces and information. The reunions started here. Old friends from previous conferences welcomed each other, many of whom were introduced to me.

The remainder of the afternoon and early part of the evening were spent relaxing in our rooms. Single rooms had been booked but we all had spacious double rooms. We met up again at 7.00 p.m. to go the 200 yards or so to the Civic Reception hosted by the Lord Mayor of Plymouth. Outside the Civic Hall we were treated to a musical display by a young Royal Marine Cadet Band. Inside we were treated to wine and made welcome to Plymouth by the Mayor, and then invited to look around the Halls and rooms at the many historic artefacts and treasures that were housed there.

Back at the Hotel, after a very enjoyable meal and with a couple of beers and more reunions, we settled down to the Kingsbridge Barber Shop Choir who provided us with an excellent performance of various well known songs.

An early start on Saturday, for me anyway, with breakfast at 7.30 a.m. and the Conference starting with the AGM at 9.00 a.m. The AGM was very much like any other, quite boring in fact. Presentations were made to a new Life Member and what seemed like an endless number of Long and Meritorious Service Awards, all of which I am in no doubt were fully deserved. My hands, not to mention my bottom on the rather uncomfortable seat, were by the end getting a little sore.

The proposals for changes of Rules brought about some interesting debate via the rostrum at the front of the hall. The first proposed change was for the subscription to be raised by £1.00 to £6.00 per year. The general feeling of the majority of speakers was that it should be adopted; some even suggested that the increase should be a lot more, bringing it up to about £12.50! The reasons for the increase were explained and seemed fully justified and it was subsequently voted for by a huge majority - approximately 6 to 1.

The second proposal also produced good arguments and was voted for by a majority of about 2,400, but not the two thirds majority required. The third proposal did not seem to offer a worthwhile change as it only "preferred" direct representation at conference and duly got voted against by a majority of some 6,000 - about 4 to 1.

The Notice of Motion, the last vote of the day, led to considerable debate. Briefly, the Harrow Society was proposing that the national RA Council should give more attention to recruitment and retention, publish a plan of action by next January and implement it by the time of the 1998 Conference. The motion was opposed by Alan Robinson on behalf of the Council. Many speakers came forward, mainly to speak in favour and the proposal was very adequately summed up by the proposer, Gordon Isaacs of Harrow, who is quite a character and had spoken in all of the previous

debates. The motion was passed by a majority of 2,100 - an acceptable margin, as a simple majority is all that is required for a Notice of Motion.

At various opportunities during the day the guests of honour were called upon to speak to the meeting. These speakers included Mike Foster of the Premier League who were sponsoring Conference this year. Generally the call for these speakers and some of their responses provided light relief from some of the mundane and more serious matters of the meeting. Mike spoke of the sponsorship, but did not divulge the amount. He did, however, suggest that the hole in the annual finances created by the costs of Conference would now be fairly well filled. President Peter Willis said that we will have to wait for next years finances to be published to find out the amount!

The two guest speakers of the afternoon session were of the highest quality and were totally different in presentation. Firstly we listened to Tim Glynn-Jones, editor of the 'Match of the Day' magazine, who gave his views on referees, football, footballers and the media, and captivated the entire audience throughout his presentation. An extremely hard act to follow, I thought. The second speaker, Gordon Taylor, President of the PFA, did however manage it, though his style was entirely different. Again the audience was captivated by the standard and content of the presentation. Conference was worth going to for the speakers alone!

A break for lunch was had at 12.30 p.m.(which was a blessing if only to get off of my backside for a while), where more old friends were reunited and some new ones made. The Conference finished roughly on time, again with great relief to my backside, and we went back to our rooms to freshen up for the evening's Dinner and Dance.

I managed to get to the Hotel bar before the happy hour ended and enjoyed a quick drink while waiting for the others to join me. The meal was very nice, the band played 'middle of the road' stuff and the cabaret spot was a very good comedian. A fine time was had by all.

Breakfast early Sunday morning and we were off home after saying numerous good-byes, farewells and 'see you next year in Newport'. My treat for coffee on the way back.

My overall view of Conference? Apparently this was one of the best ever and I thoroughly enjoyed it - apart from those uncomfortable chairs that is! The average age was rather high, but I was not the youngest referee there and there were enough 'young' present to keep it fairly lively. It was very much an old friends' reunion, an excuse to meet each other year after year, but without the loyalty to the RA by these people it would surely be a far worse Association.

So the question to ask next is: 'Would I go again next year to Conference in Newport?' The answer is a definite YES, and Cliff and Andy have also, previous to Plymouth, declared their interest for next year. Any more takers? Can Reading RA set a trend and lower the average age at Conference?

Martin Albury

MORE SACKCLOTH AND ASHES FOR THE EDITOR

I usually manage to leave someone off the plums or promotions in the May issue.

This time I missed Graham Broadhurst's promotion to Class 1, but claim an excuse as he was assessed - for some unknown reason - in the Maidenhead Division.

For the second I have no excuse. I managed to credit Barry Ford's middle on the National U/16 Counties Cup Final to his son Declan. (I did at least keep it in the family!)

Apologies to both Graham and (especially) to Barry.

ONE ELEPHANT, TWO ELEPHANT

Counting the seconds with Dick Sawdon Smith

I suppose that football referees have always been timekeepers, although in some of the earlier sets of Laws such as the Eton College Rules of 1862, which said 'The game lasts an hour, and at the expiration of half the time goals must be changed', there was no mention who would check the time. But then in those days there were no referees; it wasn't thought necessary.

In 1886 the International Football Association Board (consisting of the four home associations) was formed to decide alterations to the Laws. In 1890 it decreed that the referee 'shall also keep a record of the game and act as timekeeper'. So watching the clock is nothing new for us, although even that gets us into trouble with some managers and players, who claim either too little or too much added time. We have all seen, for instance, the television pictures of Alex Ferguson with his stopwatch in his hand at the end of Manchester United matches.

But now, under this year's changes to the Laws, or at least the new mandatory instructions, we are required to measure time in seconds. 'If the goalkeeper holds the ball for longer than 5 to 6 seconds [at least we have one second's worth of discretion], the referee must adjudge it as time-wasting and award an indirect free kick'.

I know that many referees today have very sophisticated stopwatches including alarms that ring at half and full time, but I don't think even those will help us measure 5 to 6 seconds. I am sure that FIFA don't expect us to watch the second-hand go around every time a goalkeeper picks up the ball. After all, if we are watching the watch, we can't be watching whether the goalkeeper releases the ball or not.

So we need to have a method that is accurate without looking at the watch. Now you might feel that it is simply a case of counting 1,2,3,4,5. In actual fact a second isn't that quick. Try doing it and you will find that you are up to 6 long before your watch has registered 6 seconds.

When I was a small boy I was taught, although I can't think for what reason, to count a second as an *elephant*. Therefore to count six seconds you would say "*One elephant, two elephant* and so on up to six." If you decide to use this method, I suggest that you say it under your breath rather than out loud. I can imagine what some players might think if they hear you chanting *elephants*.

I have to say that I have always given goalkeepers a fixed amount of time to release the ball, but in my case it has been an extravagant 10 seconds. I, however, use a method which I came across when delving into isometrics as part of my keep-fit routine many years ago. I add a thousand to every second, so I say: "A thousand and one, a thousand and two etc." This I find gives me a very accurate time-check, and I can keep my eyes on the goalkeeper at the same time.

Incidentally, the Harrow School rules of 1862 said 'Free kicks must be taken without delay'. Does that sound familiar? Perhaps next year, FIFA will tell us how many seconds we should allow players to get 10 yards away from the ball when free kicks are awarded against them. A far bigger time-waster in my opinion.

UEFA AND THE USE OF TELEVISED 'EVIDENCE'

As a result of a recent case when clubs presented video evidence, UEFA's Board of Appeal has clarified its position (and that of the match officials).

'... Nor is it the place of the disciplinary judge to call into the question the decision of the referee in the realms of the Laws of the Game by making its own decisions. It is rather a matter of observing the established facts through the eyes of the referee and his assistant referees, as well as, if necessary, through those of the delegates - at least as long as no source of clear error has been identified with certainty. It must be stressed that the referee is an expert witness, who merits increased credibility. As a general rule, his views cannot be unhinged by those of

players, officials, supporters, commentators, etc. Those who enter the field of play agree to be unreservedly subject to the decisions of the referee. In addition, there is the legally unequivocal principle according to which the Laws of the Game do not stem from the law. . . .'

The Board of Appeal then stated that *'Plaintiffs should bear in mind that the organisation of sports events would be excessively threatened if all the decisions taken on the field of play were considered debatable . . .Nor does the camera constitute a generally appropriate means of replacing the referee. Its position alone can create distortion. Moreover, the context is often insufficiently taken into consideration with the number of cameras used and the way they are handled playing a key role in this respect.*

In order to adhere to the principle according to which the referee is the sole sovereign judge, the camera can under no circumstances be considered to be a suitable element for correcting his decisions.'

This statement shows that UEFA's disciplinary bodies hold a very guarded view of the use of televised material as a means of evidence. Such material therefore constitutes only a channel of last resort in the judgement of a case, and cannot be taken into consideration unless the reports of the match officials and other usual documents are insufficient for a decision to be adopted.

It was on this basis that the Control and Disciplinary Committee, using filmed documents, retroactively lifted the wrongly-issued caution of a player, who had not actually been involved in the incident. For reasons of objectivity, only official production material can be taken into consideration.

[UEFA *Bulletin Officiel* No 159 (slightly abridged)]

NEW PUBLICATION FROM FIFA

Among recent FIFA publications is *Sports Medical Advice for Football Referees*. It is said to 'constitute a valuable aid to the referee for his preparation and medical care' and has sections on preparation, nutrition, relaxation and keeping in peak condition. Could be useful reading for the serious referee.

REFEREE APPRENTICESHIP PROJECT

After three years of their project, the Israel Football Association has declared itself satisfied with progress so far.

When FIFA decided four years ago to reduce the age limit for referees the Association decided on radical action - the job was becoming more and more difficult, pressure was increasing and the players were fitter than ever.

'We decided that the situation of the amateur referee training according to his own programme had to change. However, on the other hand, we concluded that it was too early to introduce professional referees in Israel.

It was therefore decided to launch a referee apprenticeship system. Each season, the referees' committee appoints six top senior national league referees, each of whom is responsible for a group of twenty young referees from all over the country (i.e. about 120 referees in total, all aged between seventeen and twenty-two). Before starting their apprenticeship, these young apprentice referees are first assessed very carefully (personality, physical fitness, psychometric examination).

After two or three years of apprenticeship, the referees' committee selects the most outstanding, by sending special observers to assess their performance.

Each group of apprentices meets with their senior referee three times a week, to discuss matches by audio-visual means, to practise fitness exercises, and for lectures on various subjects (Nutrition, media, working under pressure, etc.). The apprentice referees sign an agreement with the football association, which covers their duties. Each receives payment of about US\$ 700 (c.£425) per month; in addition, they are paid for the matches they referee. An apprentice referee can therefore earn US\$1,500-2,000 (c.£970-1212) gross per month. New apprentice referees are joining the scheme every year, while the "veterans" have been grouped together under the supervision of two international referees.

Young referees who started out via the scheme are already refereeing state league matches, and three or four of them will start refereeing national league matches next season.

The first three years of the apprenticeship project have certainly been a success, and achieved two objectives:

- The development of young referees and the creation of a group of referees aged between twenty-three and twenty-six who can take charge of senior league matches.
- A sort of semi-professionalism of the refereeing sector as far as national league matches are concerned. At the moment, eight referees are involved in this aspect of the project, in which it will eventually be possible to involve all national league referees.

[A slightly adapted version of a piece by Jacob Erel in the *UEFA Bulletin Officiel* No 159]

[In total 2 pages of adverts]

ANOTHER WORD PUZZLE

The last word puzzle was successful I suppose because some members not only completed it but sent it in to the editor. (And I still have the bottle of wine for Andy Hall - awaiting collection).

This puzzle is a bit more difficult. It contains 24 words from the Laws. I will give you the first, just to get you going - 'Laws'. Find the rest and I may be able to persuade someone else to offer a prize this time.

[Words from the Laws and puzzle square - one page]

SOME POST-WAR HISTORY

Did You Know that

1945-46

- a financially struggling Manchester United had to share Maine Road with Manchester City. They appointed Matt Busby to be their new manager in the February.
- Football League players threatened to strike for a rise - from their £8 a week wage. It was raised to £9.
- the home FAs rejoined FIFA.
- 33 spectators were killed and hundreds injured at Burnden Park when crush barriers collapsed during the Bolton v Stoke FA Cup 2nd round, 2nd leg match. It was the worst disaster in British football up to that time.

1946-47

- the first 'normal' post-war season. The opening day's fixtures were identical with those of the aborted 1939-40 season.
 - Len Shackleton, transferred to Newcastle from Bradford for £13,000 (yes, thousand), scored six goals on his debut against Notts County.
 - the transfer record was broken when Derby paid £15,500 for Billy Steel of Morton, a Scottish international.
- Sam Bartram, the Charlton goalkeeper, who was suffering from food-poisoning, played in the FA Cup semi-final against Newcastle with a hot poultice on his stomach. Charlton won.
- the ball burst during the Cup Final for the second season in succession.

1947-48

- the total league attendance record was broken and topped 40,000,000 for the first time.
- 133,570 spectators attended the Scottish Cup Final replay.
- Tommy Lawton transferred from Chelsea to 3rd Division Notts County for a record £20,000. He soon became the first Div. 3 player to be selected to play for England.
- Colchester, then in the Southern League, reached the last 16 of the FA Cup.
- Jack Fairbrother was transferred from Preston to Newcastle. The fee of £7,000 was a record for a goalkeeper and led to speculation about where the escalating transfer fees would end . . . !
- Millwall's ground was closed for seven days after crowd trouble,

1948-49

- Southern League team Yeovil reached the 5th round of the FA Cup on player/manager Alec Stock's special diet of eggs, glucose and sherry - and the much-vaunted advantage of an 8ft slope on their pitch. They beat both Bury and highly-rated First Division Sunderland before being finally trounced 8-0 by Manchester United.
- obstruction became an offence for the first time.
- Notts County (with Tommy Lawton) netted 76 goals in 25 matches, including scores of 11 and two 9s. 6 of the 9 against Exeter were scored in 12 minutes.

- Portsmouth won the League trophy in their Golden Jubilee year. Their President at the time, who was not accustomed to losing battles, was Field Marshall Montgomery of Alamein fame.

WHAT'S ON THIS SEASON

- October 16** **Graham Poll**, FIFA and Premiership referee, and for a brief period one of our members. Son of a referee and with a wealth of experience in spite of his relative youth.
- November 20** **Tom Sneton**, Chairman of Leicester City FC. Well known for his views about the game and those involved in it.
- December 18** The traditional **Christmas Draw** and a chance for a more relaxed drink and refreshments.