

Reading Referees' Association

www.readingrefs.clara.net

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Reading Football League	Derek Reigate
Reading Sunday League	Karl Wilson
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READING REFEREE

Editor - Brian Palmer

August/September 1999

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Editorial

Start of another season. Maybe a bit special because we move into the new millennium (or possibly we don't, but that's another story).

Since the end of last season, a couple of innovations to report. New committee member Michael Rowley has devised a Recruitment Stand for use at local small-a-side competitions and it had a number of successful outings. And the long-awaited website finally appeared at the end of June and has been very well received (www.readingrefs.clara.net). Members who attended the August meeting were able to see it in action in an off-line demonstration. What the Webmaster (yours truly) would like now is a stock of funnies about referees – quotes, jokes, stories, whatever – because I am committed to a monthly update with new material each month for the section entitled 'And Now have a Laugh on Us'. You might get a laugh there yourself.

Also since the AGM, probably a record re-registration of members, with 112 signed up already. Sterling work by Brian Wratten, but we all need to help to bring in the slow ones. Let's make it our ambition to get more to the monthly meetings. If you're a regular, bring a friend. If you're not, think about it. Have a good season anyway.

Opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Reading RA
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AUGUST MONTHLY MEETING

Chairman Derek Reigate welcomed members to the first meeting of the new season. Disappointingly, there were lots of apologies and fewer than 40 members present. Ted Cambridge reported that Keith Simmonds was about to leave hospital after a serious operation. Best wishes were sent from the meeting.

On behalf of the Secretary, away on holiday, Brian Wratten drew attention to the following:

- The County FA is (a) considering the funding of a recruitment stand, following the initiatives of Bracknell and ourselves and (b) has already extended its Public Liability Insurance to cover 'Referee Recruitment Summer Roadshows'.
- Since the AGM, Malcolm Garstang has taken on the key role of Recruitment and Retention Officer; Shane Leather and Tony Smith have been co-opted on to the Committee and Shane has agreed to act as Assistant Secretary. This leaves one vacancy on the Committee. Volunteers requested.

The Chairman highlighted several points about the National RA Conference(full report, pages):

- Membership at present stands at 112 – probably the highest ever at this stage (16 up on last year)
- The next training course will start on 28th September. 15 registered already, limit of 24. However, contingency plans are in place to run a parallel course if necessary.

League Reports

Reading Football League

- The League is not allowed to suspend players who 'insult' referees. They can refuse re-registration and have done so in two cases.
- Terry Gibbs detailed the many improvements to local pitches made and promised by Reading Borough Council.

- Phil Lewis confirmed that the rule which required substitutes to be numbered 12 upwards is still valid. In the case of squad numbering, the facts should be reported to the League by the referee.
- He reported a potential problem with a club playing in an all navy strip. If the referee is unhappy, the club must change and have been told so.
- George Mills and Stuart Gentle had attended the League's recent Presentation Evening on behalf of the RA, at which 10 of our members had received awards for their 'long and loyal service':

Michael Baker
Peter Kelly
Mike Costello
Ken Wiltshire

Neil Isham
Ken Clark
Cliff Watkins

Michael Bellman
Terry McPherson
Jim Davison

- The laminated Referees' and Club's Charter card was being issued as another way to help relationships.
- There is a new poster for dressing rooms on the 'if you abuse, you lose referees' theme.

The Chairman congratulated the League on its commitment to referees and on its many initiatives, and asked for his comments to be reported to the League council.

Sunday League

Karl Wilson reported that no issues directly relevant to referees had been discussed. He said he personally valued team sheets and would be making them an issue this season.

- George Mills reported that the 1999 County Quiz will be held at the Madejski Stadium on Monday 15 November.

Mentorship: Michael Rowley described how he was approaching the task. Various members underlined the need to keep recruitment and the support of newly-qualified referees separate.

Brian Wratten explained that he could not supply copies of the LOAF yet (to the 50+ members who had ordered it – a record) because the RA had not yet received

them from the printers.[The latest version of the Laws is now available on the website. Ed]

Grand Christmas Draw: the Chairman asked for a volunteer to organise it.

Ted Cambridge was pleased to report that the County FA could now fine a player directly and one had recently had to pay £100

As always, the second half started with changes to Law. Using his laptop and large screen plus video examples, Malcolm Garstang gave a comprehensive presentation.

Reminders from FIFA: deal properly with jewellery, offensive language, tackles from behind racist remarks

- Flying substitutes are to be allowed in U/16/Women's/Veterans' football (subject to competition rules).
- Any balls which may be used must be tested.
- 4th official now has authority to inform referee about misdemeanours in technical area.

Fouls and Misconduct: 'simulating action' to deceive the referee must be treated as 'unsporting behaviour'. Two aspects: 'simulation' - pretending something has happened which didn't (no contact); 'exaggeration' - pretending to be injured (after non-injuring contact).

Malcolm stressed that to caution for unsporting behaviour you must be 100% certain that *no physical contact* has been made. Your view and positioning (which rely on your fitness) make the most difference to your ability to make a correct decision – that the player is guilty or not guilty of simulation/exaggeration.

If you are not sure that a player is trying to deceive you - a public rebuke.

- Don't make gestures which could inflame the situation.
- Beware of retaliation.

The important factors in identifying simulation/exaggeration:
where is the play? view; positioning and fitness; awareness; alertness; concentration; communication; action

The meeting concluded with a presentation about the new website (launched in June). Brian Palmer, who devised the site and is responsible for its upkeep, gave some background and Malcolm Garstang, again using his large screen display, took members on a trip around the site (off-line) with commentary and explanations.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

Reading RA 20 May 1999

The first with President Terry Gibbs in the chair and a number of more interesting items than usual. Some 40+ members present in spite of counter attractions including the *Evening Post* Senior Cup Final going on on the pitch outside!

The first item was, as usual, the presentation of the Bert Newman Fair Play and Linesman's Awards and for the 19th successive year, Bert's widow Sybil came to do the honours. As always, she expressed her pleasure and gratitude at being asked and even managed to slip in a few words of congratulation to Bert's old friend, George Mills, on his 50-year Membership Award.

The excellently produced and previously circulated Secretary's and Treasurer's reports bore witness to a busy and successful year, with higher membership and an improved financial position, though, as in other societies, attendance at monthly meetings was not improving, in spite of the valiant efforts of the officers and committee.

The proposed changes to rule in respect of the creation of Life Members and Vice Presidents had been foreshadowed in January and were carried without further discussion. The proposal to discontinue providing the *Football Referee* as part of the membership package, in order to avoid a rise of £2 in subscription, sparked one of the best discussions in years. In spite of arguments for freedom of choice and the temptation of a £4 reduction in subscription, the meeting firmly voted the proposal down. A vote of confidence both in the *Football Referee* and the need to expose all our members to refereeing issues, national as well as local. The consequence was that the subscription for 1999/2000 will be £18-50, with half rate now for all in full-time education as well as those over 60.

And so to the elections. Immediate Past President Brian Palmer and Chairman Derek Reigate had both been proposed for Life Membership and were asked to leave while their cases were presented. Suffice it to say that both were accepted

and individually expressed their gratitude for the honour bestowed upon them by their fellow members. Ted Cambridge, unfortunately unable to be at the meeting, was elected Vice-President in recognition of his many years of service to refereeing, especially in his role as County FA officer.

Unfortunately there had been no nominee for Chairman. With the agreed temporary suspension of Rule 6, Derek Reigate was elected to hold office for a further year. Colin Pike has resigned from the position of Assistant Secretary but it had to be left as there was no nominee. New committee members were Terry Chamberlain, Malcolm Garstang, Neil Haddock and Michael Rowley.

The President thanked all the officers and committee members for their commitment and essential contribution to the running of the Association and welcomed those coming into office.

M. Albury, B. Palmer, P. Pittaway, R. Sawdon Smith and B. Wratten were elected as voting delegates to attend the B & B RA AGM on 14 June.

The climax of the meeting, as always, was the presentation of our own awards. As Vice-Chairman Karl Wilson was responsible for deciding the winner of the Major Sainsbury Award, It was soon clear from his preamble that the winner was Brian Wratten. Who else was a committed and active referee, fulfilling the role of Treasurer, key member of the training team and organiser of the Christmas raffle – to mention just the tip of his iceberg of devoted service? Members were clearly delighted with Karl's choice and responded with acclaim.

It fell to Peter Pittaway as Training Officer to choose the most promising Class 3 for the Fred Porton Award. After extolling the refereeing virtues of Shane Leather, Peter presented him with the trophy on behalf of the RA.

The meeting closed with a deserved vote of thanks by Chairman Derek Reigate to the President for his conduct of the meeting.

THE GRAHAM STOCKTON TROPHY

Another win for our star [I think they said 'star'] footballers in their annual match against old adversaries Bracknell RA. Just 1-0. A close encounter of the usual kind – 'more effort than finesse' – but very enjoyable for the 18 or so players who turned out for each team [only 11 at a time we are assured] and for the spectators.

In fact, although the game was close, without some quality saves by the Bracknell keeper, we could have won by more. Special congratulations to scorer Andy Brown and manager Geoff Donnelly.

NATIONAL RA CONFERENCE Bradford 19 June 1999

Report by Martin Albury

Derek (Reigate) and Karl (Wilson) arrived in Derek's car at about 10.30 on Friday morning to pick me up and we made good time on our journey to the Cedar Court Hotel on the outskirts of Bradford, apparently the best of the three hotels. We checked in and five minutes later we were enjoying a refreshing beer in the bar!

In the evening was the Civic Reception in Bradford Town Hall. A local grammar school choir and their band entertained us while we enjoyed the Bradford hospitality with a glass of beer. We were summoned to the Parliamentary Chambers to be welcomed to Bradford by the elderly and frail-looking Lord Mayor.

Then a choice of sweet-and-sour chicken or beef with dumplings and, of course, more beer and a return to further excellent entertainment.

Conference started at 9.00 Saturday morning with news that the Lord Mayor was unwell and an ex Mayor of 5 years ago was to stand in and open Conference. He turned out to be a referee who had been awarded the MSA some years previously.

President, Peter Willis, introduced the many guests in his usual entertaining way, and moved swiftly to the two nominations for Life Membership, both from the North Eastern Division. Conference accepted them unanimously. 19 nominations were made for the Long and Meritorious Service Award, of which 13 were in attendance to receive their well-earned awards from the President. The President summed up the awards by stating that he made no apologies for the length of time taken each year at Conference to make the awards. The 22 minutes it had taken this year was a small token compared to over 400 years service by the recipients.

A very long Obituary list was read out, with special comments for some of the more well known characters such as Harry Dempsey, the Auditor for the RA for many years. A minute's silence followed.

The Annual Report led to comments from several Delegates. Gordon Isaacs and Doug Douglas questioned the distribution of the Magazine and the late withdrawal of the Rule Change. It was explained that the rule change had been withdrawn because of the number of Societies that had responded with arguments against it. It was put back to the President that only dissenters would write in about it as those in favour would be content to wait for Conference and hear the debate.

Under Adoption of Accounts, detailed questions were asked about: the breakdown of the subscription figures, the 33% extra held in stock, the RA insurance and the Benevolent fund. The loss of £10,289 for the Football Referee led to lengthy debate and explanations. Conference was assured that its future was not in danger,

As appeared inevitable, the Proposed Rule changes and Notices of Motion took a bit longer. The increase of subs by £1 was passed. The second proposal - to change the subscription year to September and a proposed amendment – were defeated. After a quickie debate, travelling expenses were increased to 25p.

After lunch came the Northern Ireland proposals. The President asked if NI wished to debate each of the three proposals separately, or all grouped together in one debate. The latter was requested.

An excellent case was presented by NI. John Day spoke against on behalf of Council, but delegates spoke on both sides. It was going to be a close thing. But first there was to be more controversy! When the voting slips were being collected by the scrutineers the question was asked, ‘what exactly are we voting for here, one or all three rule changes?’. Some delegates had handed in all three voting slips, some had voted for all three on one voting slip and others (like myself) had got it right and voted for the first of the three proposed changes. The President restored order with some difficulty. He asked Conference if they were willing to accept the collection of voting slips as correct. If not he would scrap the vote completely and start it all over again – Conference was happy to continue. All three votes had a majority in favour of NI but not the 2/3 required.

The Southport proposal about holding extra Divisional meetings was defeated, probably because such meetings already seemed to be permitted.

The proposal to tidy up rule 15 and to give reasons behind proposed rule changes and the first notice of motion about the frequency of law changes were all passed with large majorities.

Then came for us the most significant debate about the re-structuring of the RA. Both Brians (Palmer and Wratten) had intended to join the debate (in favour) but were unable to attend owing to family illness. However, even without their help, the motion was carried by a huge majority 10291 – 1007. Crucially, Council has accepted the need to seek help from management consultants (pressed for by Brian Palmer for some time)

The main Guest Speaker was George Cumming, ex-teacher and professional footballer with Partick Thistle, who gave what was probably the best talk I have ever heard about football and referees, aided by the latest technology and video footage. His enthusiasm was immense and when we heard what Scotland were doing for referees and football generally, it was not hard to see why! Scotland are getting it right and the rest of football, especially in England, can learn a great deal from them.

Return to the Cedar Court Hotel and a fast turn-round to get to the Stakis Hotel for the Dinner/Dance which went very well once they were ready for us. A reasonable band, very middle-of-the-road, entertained us afterwards until 12.30 a.m. only interrupted by a comedian and the Grand Draw for the car. Once again we were unlucky in Reading, the winner came from Hull.

Back at our Hotel at about 1.00 a.m. we sat down to a quiet drink with a couple of Bradford members. Derek was picking their brains in case we get Conference in 2001. A couple of drinks later at 3.00 a.m. we called it a very long day and went to bed.

Sunday morning. breakfast and an uneventful journey getting home just after lunch.

Many thanks to Derek for doing all of the driving and to both Derek and Karl for being good company for the weekend. It was tiring, but very enjoyable.

One last comment - about George Mills, Brian Palmer and Brian Wratten, all unable to attend at the last minute. They were definitely missed and we look forward to having them with us in Manchester next year.

Why don't you come as well?

ABROAD EXPERIENCE for Declan Ford

[Kept over from last season as it just missed the deadline for the April/May issue. Still good reading. Ed]

I recently had the privilege of being the army's representative at the Kentish Cup, when I was appointed as an Assistant referee for the Belgian Armed forces versus the Dutch Armed Forces. The Kentish Cup is a long-running triangular competition played between the UK, Belgian and Dutch (formerly French) Armed Forces, and due to their previous policy of conscription the competition has recently involved such stars as Jaap Stam and Ronald de Boer.

The game was scheduled to be played on 31 March in the Belgian town of Genk, and I eagerly awaited my first experience of European football.

The travel arrangements were to leave Aldershot by minibus at 07.00 on 30 March. I arrived on time and was met by the referee Trevor Kettle (RAF) and my fellow Assistant Dan Richmond (RN). Also travelling was Army FA Secretary, Terry Knight, and Brian Le Breton, the Army Referees' Secretary, was our chauffeur.

We arrived in Genk in mid-afternoon and the directions led us to the hotel where we would be staying. Excellent accommodation and superb Belgian hospitality made us feel very welcome. The evening was spent having a few quiet beers (not too many as the game was the next day) and watching Belgium lose to Egypt in the company of the Belgian 4th Official who fortunately spoke good English.

The day of the game arrived with a bright sunny morning and the promise of 25 degrees (but it's only March). A drive into Genk for a stroll around the shops and a chance to buy some Belgian chocolates (to keep the missus happy. 'But why can't wives and girlfriends go as well?'), before a light lunch and off to the ground for the 15.00 kick-off.

The normal pre-match rituals were completed before we led the teams out, with Trevor's call to 'show them that English officials are the best' the last of his instructions.

A real sense of pride during the National Anthems and we were into the game. The game itself was very different to what I'm used to lining on the Ryman League. The slow build-up, no defences squeezing up, and very little chance of offside due to the sweepers meant working doubly hard to maintain concentration.

Not so for Trevor who, after a slow start, had a busy time dealing with theatrical forwards (they really do roll for miles), some cynical defending and Dutch petulance after they had gone 2-0 down, although it was hard not to laugh because Dutch dissent sounds so funny. Still gets a yellow card though.

The game finished 2-0, eight yellow cards, and an overall feeling of satisfaction as we felt we had performed well in a game that was hard fought.

Even the Dutch were soon smiling again at the reception as the beer could now flow freely and we could relax in the knowledge of a job well done, although according to the Belgian coach 'There are no good referees, but sometimes a referee has a good game.' Some people are hard to please.

Sadly it was all over too soon, and we returned home the next day. It was an excellent experience, a chance to see what continental Europeans expect from officials and to experience a style of play alien to most English teams.

Declan Ford

MANAGERS SHOULD KEEP QUIET

Or at least make public apologies, say Dick Sawdon Smith

After I had made a decision in a game I was refereeing last season, one of the players called out to me in a good-humoured way, 'It's a good job our game's not being televised ref, or the replay would show that mistake you have just made'. The innumerable replays, slow motion, real time, differing camera angles of televised soccer have become so much a part of our lives.

Knowing full well that the cameras will never get down to the level of games at which I officiate, I replied, 'I wish it *was* being televised so you would be able to watch the video tonight and see that I was right.'

We mustn't think that replays are always bad for referees. True that mistakes, and everyone makes mistakes, are shown continually, often with glee by the commentators, but more often than not they show that the referee was correct in his decision. The commentators could be a little more even-handed of course. I watched the highlights of the Coventry v. Wimbledon game a few weeks ago when they replayed one of the controversial incidents.. It showed quite clearly that the

referee had made the correct decision. ‘Well’, said the commentator blessed with hindsight, the referee probably got it right.’ Probably? Would it have hurt him to say ‘definitely’?

I was listening to Thames Valley FM interviewing a visiting manager after his team had lost at the Madejski Stadium. It was his opinion that the referee’s decisions had cost his team the points. ‘In the past,’ he explained, ‘I have said the referee was wrong and, after viewing the video, I have realised that he was correct after all. I have phoned up to apologise. I don’t think’, he added, ‘that I shall be doing that this week.’

It made me think of Gordon Strachan who has had his fair share of run-ins with officials. When interviewed after one televised match in which a Coventry player had been sent off, he made snide, sarcastic remarks about the referee and his decision. However, when he viewed the video, he must have realised that the player *had* committed the offence for which he was dismissed, so he fined him according to club policy. Did Gordon Strachan phone up the referee and apologise for his comments? I don’t gamble but I’d put money down that he didn’t.

Sir Alex Ferguson appeared in print after the Charity Shield, saying that the referee had been conned into giving Arsenal a penalty. The television replay showed quite clearly that Irwin had held on to the Arsenal player’s shirt. Was there an apology forthcoming from Sir Alex? What do you think? And don’t forget that comments from this club have forced at least one Premiership referee to ask for police protection at home.

I have a theory about apologies when people get things wrong. For example, when a newspaper prints an incorrect story, its correction should be in the same large type and in the same position in the newspaper as the original story. Not tucked away in small print at the bottom of one of the inside pages. When *Watchdog* on BBC television has to show one of the continual judgements against it for being unfair in its comments, it should be read out by Anne Robinson and not some faceless voice. She would then perhaps not be so joyously sarcastic on the programme in future.

Football managers who incorrectly slate referees in public should be made to apologise in public, if possible on television, if that’s where they made their comments. This might make them think twice about opening their mouth.

MORE FROM THE PAST

1967-68

A truly exceptional goal was scored by Pat Jennings, the Tottenham goalkeeper against his opposite number Alex Stepney, in the Manchester United goal. When Pat punted the ball high upfield, it was caught by a gust of wind and bounced over the hapless Stepney's head into the net.

Although struggling in the second division, Cardiff City qualified for the Cup Winner's Cup as holders of the Welsh Cup and outshone both Tottenham and Aberdeen by reaching the semi-final – which they lost only by the odd goal.

A group of football experts, commissioned by the Government and chaired by Norman Chester, produced its report on the future of English football. Its recommendations were largely ignored by the FA and the Football League.

Hot favourites for the FA Cup, Everton, lost to 0-1 to West Bromwich Albion. Jeff Astle, who had scored in every previous round, fired home a 20 yard shot with his left foot ('my dummy leg') in extra time to complete his record.

In the European Championship, Alan Mullery became the first English player to be sent off in an international match. After being brought down by Yugoslavian Trivic's late tackle, Mullery retaliated by kicking the offender and was despatched.

Jimmy Hill resigned his post as manager of Coventry City to work exclusively for television. In five years he had completely overhauled the club and taken them from the Third to the First Division.

Under Malcolm Allison's leadership as coach. Manchester City pipped their neighbours United at the post – the last match of the season – to win the League Championship.

1968-69

Geoff Hurst scored six of West Ham's goals when they beat Sunderland 8-0. He admitted after the game that the he scored the first with his hand.

In November Jimmy Greaves scored his 200th goal for Tottenham

As his 60th birthday approached, Sir Matt Busby announced his retirement in January. He was the longest serving manager in the Football League, had survived the Munich air disaster which decimated the team and had gone on to achieve his greatest ambition for the club when they won the European Cup.

The smallest ever crowd at a Home International was recorded when Scotland played Northern Ireland at Hampden Park – 7,843.

Leeds United, under manager Don Revie, won the League Championship for the first time in their 69 year history. They only lost two games all season and with 67 points from 42 matches (two for a win in those days) they beat Arsenal's record which had stood since 1931. It was argued that they might have been helped by being knocked out early in the various Cup competitions.

In the FA Cup Final Manchester City beat Leicester City by Neil Young's goal which gave even Peter Shilton no chance. Not only did Leicester lose, they were also relegated.

The Footballer of the Year Award was shared – by Dave Mackay and Tony Book.

REFLECTIONS ON A SEASON PAST – AND THOSE WHO LET US DOWN

Having just counted the number of matches I attended last season, I am astounded to discover that it is 102. As I review a number of them, I can, with a wry smile, recall some comical, some bizarre but some horrendous incidents.

There was the woman player who ripped her shorts, asked her team mates to form a circle so she could change and, as she stepped out of the old and into the new, her so-called mates broke ranks and left her not knowing which way to turn!

Among examples of more usual misconduct, there was the defender who pulled an attacker back, thus preventing a goal-scoring opportunity, only to get the full force of a raised elbow in his face, which broke the defender's nose. The defender was sent off, but no action taken against the attacker. General view by the spectator-referees' panel – violent conduct, visible, if not to the referee, certainly to his assistant.

And the club linesman who indicated offside as the attacking player pushed the ball along the nearside touch line to run onto, then cut in and took the ball a further 20 yards and scored, only to see the goal disallowed, as a team mate was on the far touch line. The whistle was blown after the player scored, the score was level and, had the goal stood, one team would have been league runners-up, the others relegated !! The scorer was then sent off for double dissent, both relating to his appeals to the referee to overrule his assistant before the game restarted.

This leads me to the purpose of this article. How much easier it is for the referee to sometimes punish the innocent for technical offences and to ignore or excuse the more serious ones, which ultimately may lead to the offended player receiving a caution, or even being sent off for his comments.

I spoke to a number of match officials during the season and was surprised when they were asked why certain fouls or infringements went unpunished, to hear them say, 'I didn't see it' - quite reasonable; or 'it was not for me to say as this was not part of my pre-match instructions' - sitting on the fence scenario? I was even told by one referee that a deliberate trip from behind, which resulted in the attacking player taking no further part in the game and reducing his team to ten men, (not that this should influence anyone) and for which the referee awarded a penalty, did not deserve a caution. The reason? It would have resulted in the player being sent off for a second caution!.

There was also the referee who, having witnessed a mass brawl between seven players (which also included spitting), took no action as 'it wasn't that sort of a game and I had it all under control'.

Fortunately these are isolated incidents, so sleep easy. But I have found that, all too often, the first sign of trouble is a mistimed challenge or a deliberate foul and it is at this point that the referee's future match control may be decided. The referee may have played an advantage, which has then been lost. He may have penalised the offender, awarded a free kick and taken no further action. Or he may have missed a particular incident or called a wrong decision.

Whatever, it is normally at this point that one or two players come to the fore and start questioning the referee's decision and competence. On occasion the referee ignored the person, other times he may have firmly spoken to the player and once or twice cautioned straight away.

Last season I witnessed players spit at their opponent, stamp, kick out and clearly hit an opponent, with no action taken or, conversely, players being spoken to or cautions being administered for some totally inexplicable reason.

The point that I am making is that, if someone says something to you as the referee, it is very easy to react and caution, but do we ever think, ask or listen as to why that player may be so incensed? Is it because of something we may have done or not seen and, rather than investigate, we have chosen to ignore it?.

As I looked back over last season, my clearest impressions were:

- Referees' lack of fitness - which in some cases led to bad positioning and inability to clearly see the offence.
- Inadequate use of the assistant referee - most importantly in highly disputed or controversial decisions.
- Poor man management skills - not many players know the laws and sometimes they may need a little understanding. If not throw the book at them!

And finally, referees are continually being accused of inconsistency and it is not for me to stand in judgement. However, there have been a number of incidents, especially in local football, which I have seen go unpunished this season. This, I feel, has contributed to making the game more difficult to control and so become unenjoyable for the referee.

Significantly, the incidents I have been describing all happened with referees who are not members of the RA. We will never change the players unless we all start singing from the same hymn book. Membership of the Referees' Association and local society must be made compulsory, otherwise how will qualified referees learn to understand and interpret the laws? I know of one referee, who has been refereeing for 20 years and is not a member of any association, who recently confessed to not being sure if a player can throw the ball back to his goalkeeper . . .
...

Pat Monaghan

THE EDITOR'S DONE IT AGAIN

They say consistency is the mark of a good referee, so it's all right really. As in every previous year I have managed to miss someone off the end-of-season Plums. This time I used a (slightly) out of date membership list and the victim was Andy Brown who was 4th official for the RFL Senior Cup. Belated congratulations Andy!

ESPECIALLY FOR NEWER COLLEAGUES

Some very practical pieces of advice from Martin Bodenham speaking to the Kingston RS

Judging tackles

Referees should develop the habit of asking themselves these three questions in judging tackles:

- 1 Was it careless? If so, award a direct free kick and perhaps have a word.
- 2 Was it reckless? If so, then issue a caution (as well).
- 3 Did it use excessive force? If so, then dismiss the player.

This sequence of questions would be more helpful than simply asking oneself 'Is that cautionable?'

Advantage

Possession of the ball is not in itself an advantage, and in midfield situations, especially in park football, the free kick award is usually the better option.

In park matches it is also better to stop the game if you are going to caution a player, because failure to do so can cause confusion and retaliation.

Giving decisions

Never hesitate. Make it positive! When you don't know whose throw-in it is, JUST GIVE IT! Take control!

Explaining decisions

DON'T! By doing so you open the way to discussion, debate, criticism, and dissent. Dissent *must* be penalised early in the game because it won't go away unless you act.

Cautioning

It is important to take your time. Don't rush at players and brandish cards at them. Remain polite and observe the necessary procedures.

The whistle

Don't overuse it. Never let it become an irritant to the players.

10 yards

Is a long way! Most referees give up after eight.

Club assistant referees

Be courteous to them and they will give you 10% more.

Fitness and positioning

It is possible to be too quick and too close to play. The wider view is often more helpful.

Phases of the game

It is important to be aware that games go in phases. One incident, one goal immediately changes everything. If the game is getting tetchy, adopt a high profile, otherwise drift out of it. Above all maintain full concentration throughout.

[Thanks to our associate member Jim de Rennes who wrote this report of Martin's talk]

AND FINALLY

It's like a toaster the ref's shirt pocket. Every time there's a tackle, up pops a yellow card.

Kevin Keegan