

READING REFEREE'S ASSOCIATION

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District League	Martin Deacon
Sunday League	Mike Borland
Sunday Youth League	Stuart Gentle

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EDITORIAL

Welcome back! I hope you had an enjoyable holiday, with or without refereeing, and that your first games have gone well. Any World Cup touches so far? Dancing in front of the thrower at the throw-in? (More of the World Cup later).

Things are looking good for the Reading RA. We are now in our new meeting place and first reports are positive. We have at least 90 members already signed up - a record - and quite a number of them are new colleagues from last season's bumper crop. We have young new blood in the committee too in the persons of Steve Green and Paul Willis. And we have a re-vamped coaching scheme to provide practical help for our members, new or old. The rest is up to us.

Locally, for me, the saddest news is that the Reading Sunday Youth League will start the season even smaller, with just two age groups, in spite of all their efforts. Reading FC haven't started too well either, having earned only one league point as we go to press. Good to hear Ian Branfoot after the West Brom game refusing to blame the referee. Would that there were more like him about.

Did you notice we're on Volume XXX of the Reading Referee this season? Yes, the magazine started 30 years ago and has appeared regularly ever since. I have to admit to newcomers that I'm only in my 4th year as editor, but Dick Sawdon-Smith my predecessor, had been editor almost from the beginning. The format may have changed with time but a lot of what's in those early editions has a familiar ring (see pages 10 & 11).

Have a good season!

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

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

Reading RA AGM 15 May 1986

This was to be a historic meeting of the society in two respects. The members first agreed a change of venue for future meetings - the (nearly) new Trades Union Club round the corner in Chatham Street. Although we have been seriously discussing different accommodation for some time, we left the Oddfellows Hall with some sadness, and with considerable gratitude for the kindness shown to the society over many years. The meeting also agreed a change of rule to allow membership information to be held on a computer. Another innovation to improve our service to members.

President George Mills opened the evening with the annual presentation of Fair Play and Linesman's Awards in almost a re-run of last year's event. Ibis FC again won the Fair Play Award but with their Division 1 team this year, and old friend Terry Spice was top linesman for the umpteenth time.

The report from Secretary Derek Reigate spoke of successful monthly meetings with both variety and generally good attendance. The (relatively) bad news was that membership had slipped a bit for the second year in succession and ended at 107. However, with 51 newly qualified colleagues thanks to the efforts of our training team, things looked distinctly better for 1986/7. The Secretary mentioned with sadness the death earlier in the season of our oldest and most eminent member, Lionel Gibbs, who had served refereeing and the society for 64 years.

Robert Barnard-Smith's first report as Treasurer was very positive. He was able to point to a surplus of £100+ against a deficit of over £600 last year. Our first professional audit confirmed that we are continuing to use our funds well for the good of the society and its members.

All the officers were re-elected and, as a result of a ballot, Steve Green and Paul Willis were elected to the Committee to replace Terry Chamberlain and Roy Bennett who had had to resign because of the pressure of other commitments. The meeting recorded thanks for their service.

After detailed discussion of the proposed changes to rule, all but one were accepted and the committee promised a few more

'tidying-up' changes next year. The President then concluded the proceedings with presentations on behalf of the National RA to our two oldest members - Fred Porton and Don Sargeant - in recognition of 50 years service. Members gave them an appropriate ovation. A fitting conclusion to the meeting.

Berks and Bucks RA AGM 9 July 1986

Not quite the shortest on record - it lasted nearly an hour. All the officers were re-elected, including John Lambden as County Training Officer and Derek Reigate as Assistant Secretary. The capitation fee was raised from 50p to 60p.

AUGUST MEETING

The first meeting of the season and the first at our new venue. A good turnout, considering the holidays, of some 55 members, but looking a bit lost in the spacious hall. However, reactions to the Trades Union Club seemed to be uniformly favourable, although on that particular evening the special bar wasn't open because the steward was on leave too.

The regular business was despatched quickly, then President George Mills made two important presentations. First the Major Sainsbury Award (referred to in detail below) and then, on behalf of the County RA, a plaque to the referee of last season's Senior Cup Final, Brian Papworth, who is now a member of our society. He doubly earned it as the Wycombe v Aylesbury match was both tough and closely contested and went to a replay.

Finally Chairman and Training Officer, John Lambden, commented on the changes of Law. The two clarifications - about the completion of a substitution and the identification of the penalty taker - were both straightforward. However there was yet another spirited discussion of 'controlling the ball' when applied to a goalkeeper. In the words of FIFA this means when he 'is holding the ball in his hands', but members were quick to point out potentially ambiguous situations. John agreed to seek an official ruling to clear the matter up completely.

The meeting ended in good time to allow members to sample the wares at the main bar - and they certainly seemed to enjoy it.

MAJOR SAINSBURY AWARD

This is only the second year of the award and the presentation was made at the August meeting by President George Mills to **Mel Brant**. The citation referred to the awarding committee's two reasons for choosing Mel: (1) his season's refereeing - he ended up the third highest marked Class 3 in the Sunday League, and (2) his contribution to local football, especially the Sunday Youth League.

Congratulations to Mel who has been a loyal member and regular attender at monthly meetings since he qualified, and is also a key figure in the Shinfield club and their highly successful annual Youth 6-a-side Competition.

NATIONAL RA CONFERENCE, Guildhall, Swansea, 21 June 1986

Typical Welsh hospitality - excellent reception and the Swansea Male Voice Choir on the Friday evening - and, in spite of a long and rather dissonant Executive Meeting in the afternoon, even George was able to enjoy it.

The main hotel in the city centre was well up to standard but John and Bernie had a few tales to tell about theirs. It was close to the sea though

Conference opened on the Saturday with a generous welcome by the (lady) Lord Mayor. Then to business. Well, sort of. As the question of rules of membership was not even mentioned in the Annual Report in spite of its frequent discussion during the year and its obvious importance, it was agreed that John Lambden would ask about its absence. Peter Willis, the National RA Chairman, simply refused to respond or let anyone else respond. When a member of the Hounslow society rose on a point of order to ask why, he too was silenced. Although the Chairman does have absolute powers under Conference Standing Order 15, there are some, including me, who believe there was a question to be answered and it was not answered. And yet again democracy was the loser. In fact "conference" was to prove something of a misnomer for the events of the whole day.

National RA's financial situation continues fair but we, as individuals, were given another warning about the taxman.

1. Do declare your income from refereeing.
2. Don't meet the taxman alone if he asks to see you.
3. Let the General Secretary know if you are approached.

(There was a long article in last March's 'Football Referee' which explained it all).

Of the special guests, 'Mac' McMullen, Vice-Chairman of the FA, tried to reassure Conference about action on assaults. No-one I spoke to was convinced.

Three long-serving members were presented for Life Membership and then a larger number to whom the Meritorious Service was to be awarded. Impressive as always to hear the outstanding record of service of some of our colleagues.

The many detailed changes of rule were all carried by massive majorities after the necessary but incredibly long-winded business of card votes.

Afternoon and Major Ron Roberts. 'The Role of the Referee in the mid-to-late 1980s'. A brilliant, theatrical performance, with the voice and style (fittingly) of the Welsh orator. And the content was good too. Ron's theme was not unusual: the future of soccer is under threat. In society today all is questioned; there is a general reluctance to accept discipline, a code of laws. The spirit of sportsmanship is under constant attack. He listed and explained some of the causes: the abolition of the maximum wage; the win-at-all-costs attitude; managers who see referees as the enemy; too little support of referees from the FA (an FA memorandum of some years ago even suggested letting some things go); TV 'gurus' who mislead the public; the 'independence' of young people in an unstable society.

Solutions? Referees need to exercise benevolent authority; become bigger personalities; err on the side of harshness; inhibit mischief before it starts; encourage sportsmanship; talk to teams after a game. We need to improve our training by teaching understanding of the laws, to counter media mis-information publicly at all levels, to get assessors into re-training, to demand to know what County FAs are doing to improve matters e.g. in respect of discipline.

While not everyone would agree with all Ron was saying, it was said powerfully, passionately and with clear conviction. Best part of the day for me.

As always, the social evening had the Grand Annual Draw as its highlight. And we failed to win. Again. Even though George swears he put the tickets in the drum personally this year.

Final thoughts? A good non-conference. We often say the Conference is about what goes on outside the Conference Hall. This year it was literally true. Blackpool could be livelier next year.

THE NATIONAL RA DRAW

The first prize this year - a Metro car - went to . . . Mr Right of Sutton Coldfield. The other main (money) prizes went to Aberystwyth, Norfolk, Northants, Wiltshire and Newcastle. There were certainly spread around but not quite far enough! (Mrs Smallwood of Slough did win a watch). Copies of the full list available from Derek Reigate.

FIFA REFEREES' LIST

With the (forced) retirement of Alan Robinson at the age of 48 years, Allan Gunn of Burgess Hill has been chosen as his replacement. He joins the select group of George Courtney, Keith Hackett, Brian Hill, John Martin, Neil Midgley and Joe Warrall.

43 year old Allan, a former pro footballer who gave up playing through injury, reached the Football League line in 1973 and was promoted to the middle in 1975. He has twice had a line at Wembley: at the Charity Shield in 1982 and at last season's FA Cup Final. A native of Brighton, he is a member of the Brighton RA although he works in Burgess Hill. We wish him well.

WORLD CUP 1986

It's strange how long ago it all seems now, and irritating that the one thing most English supporters will remember is the Maradona punched goal. Of course I was incensed too, but the pious remarks of the commentators, implying that only foreigners cheat like that, did not help. I felt sorry for the officials. They are bound to get stick because no-one other than a referee can understand how the officials could have missed it. And when you explain to non-referees that it's to do with the angle of view and the speed of the action, they just assume you're being defensive - as you are.

As with the last Olympic Games my overall impression is that the World Cup has outgrown itself to become too important for its own good, and so even those involved are forced to forget what it is really about. In any case, I didn't think it was a classic like 1966 (of course) or 1970 (with that unforgettable Brazilian team), but there were moments. Like England striking form and Lineker scoring goals.

The match control? No surprise that on these occasions everyone becomes a referee watcher and critic, and, arguably to our discredit, we referees all get involved too. Although the consensus seemed highly critical, I wasn't quite as pessimistic as some. Perhaps I didn't see a cross-section of games. Certainly there was plenty to criticize, but of course we don't know exactly what the FIFA briefing included. I did like the way the stretcher

was rushed on. It led to some remarkably quick recoveries. I did **not** like the jumping and gesticulating in front of the thrower at throw-ins. It looked like ungentlemanly conduct to me. The nonsense around free kicks and the 'wall' was so blatant that surely FIFA must consider something like the 10-yard sanction. But, leaving aside Uruguay, I thought brutality and physical intimidation were actually less in evidence than on some previous occasions; on the other hand, the amount of cheating, actual and attempted, seemed greater than ever. It was a pleasure to see the Russian team getting on with the game in an honest and sportsmanlike way - and with no shortage of skill too.

Certainly the referees this year were required to have all the usual qualities and a bit of second sight probably helped as well. Although I thought the officials from the 'major' soccer nations were generally the best, some of the others looked better than the commentators would concede, but lacked the depth of experience our referees have. It's four years before the next World Cup. Rather than excluding referees from the 'minor' soccer countries, as is being suggested, why not an international exchange programme to extend their experience in time for 1990? I have a feeling the 'major' nations might not be over-enthusiastic however . . .

And lining. When is it going to be taken seriously?

Any bright ideas to improve things for 1990?

1986 FIFA WORLD CUP FACTS

There were 132 goals in 52 games (average 2.5 goals per game; 2.8 in 1982). Top scorer and winner of the Golden Boot: Gary Lineker (England: 6 goals). Emilio Butragueno (Spain) scored four goals in one game (v Belgium 5-1). Argentina (14 goals) scored the highest total of goals, while Denmark (6-1 v Uruguay) and USSR (6-0 v Hungary) scored the most goals in one game. Brazil's goalkeeper Carlos kept a clean sheet for 401 minutes before Michel Platini scored into the quarter-final, Brazil v France (1-1 aet; 3-4 on penalties). Quickest goal was in 63 seconds by Butragueno for Spain in their 2-1 win over Northern Ireland.

(with acknowledgement to the 'Midland Referee')

WHAT A START TO THE SEASON (in Scotland)

Unprecedented if not unbelievable - 21 of the 22 players given 2 penalty points each for joining in the brawl on the pitch during the Hibernian v. Rangers game on the opening day of the Scottish season. Player/manager and international Graeme Souness was the key figure in the trigger incident which left George McClusky needing nine stitches in his knee Rangers, who accepted

full responsibility and apologised were fined £5,000 and Hibs were fined £1,000, presumably for their players' retaliation. The SFA certainly seems to express more determination to curb violence on and off the field than our own FA, but do fines of a few thousand pounds mean anything to clubs dealing in hundreds of thousands? Is it harsh enough to deal with anarchy? The penalty points could act as a deterrent, but what about deduction of league points in cases so serious? That would cause more than a few squeals from the clubs, but players might just think before getting involved in the next fracas.

ONE ASSAULT DULY PUNISHED

Soccer player jailed for hitting referee

A football player was jailed for 28 days yesterday for assaulting the referee during a match.

***** ***, aged 26, a taxi driver, of *****, West Sussex, punched the referee, Mr Russel Cummings, twice in the face and, when he lay unconscious on the ground, jumped on his back, Chichester Crown Court was told.

***** was playing for a working men's club against the Royal British Legion side at Worthing and lost his temper when a free kick was awarded against his team.

He pleaded guilty to causing the referee actual bodily harm and was also ordered to pay him £400 compensation.

(The Times 2/8/86)

THE NEW HANDBOOK

As promised, copies of this new annual publication were distributed at the August meeting. (If you missed yours, just ask the Secretary, Derek Reigate). The excellent cover was designed and produced by new Committee member Steve Green, but don't blame him for the contents. Do let me know what you think, especially new members. What should be added/omitted and, of course, what errors have you spotted? (I saw two 'typos' as soon as it came off the press. Such is life).

FOOTBALL LEAGUE ASSESSOR

Old friend of Reading RA, Bill Cleere, Chairman of the High Wycombe Society, has just been appointed to the Football League Assessors' Panel. Bill is a former Football League linesman and

has been a stalwart of the Wycombe Society for many years. Congratulations and best wishes from Reading.

FOOTBALL'S GRAND OLD MAN DIES

Sir Stanley Rous has died at the age of 91, after, fittingly, attending the World Cup tournament in Mexico. As I wrote on the occasion of his 90th birthday, he was one of the most influential people in the development of football.

An international referee, he devised the diagonal system of control some 50 years ago; he was also responsible for redrafting the Laws into their present-day form. He was an outstanding and innovatory FA Secretary from 1934-1961, President of FIFA from 1961-1 and Honorary Life President thereafter. Soccer has lost a giant.

FROM THE PAST

Unfortunately the archive of magazines I took over when I became editor did not quite go back to the beginning. However, I thought the Editorial of this first of the season 25 years ago a very relevant souvenir. Other contents were a full tribute to Maurice Love for his immense contribution to Reading RA, the Berks and Bucks FA, the Berks and Bucks RA and local football generally. (His widow is still one of our Vice-Presidents). Page 3 contained news of changes of office: Cecil Grieshaber became a Vice-President, George Mills became Vice Chairman, Peter Jefferis was Assistant Secretary. Treasurer Ray Weedon was watched over by Fred Porton, one of the Hon Auditors 'again'! Among the Plum Appointments were two to the now defunct FA Amateur Cup (Preliminary Qualifying Round): Peter Jefferis and Dick Sawdon-Smith.

Page 4 - only four pages in those days - welcomed Charlie Twelftree as General Secretary of the Berks and Bucks FA and then talked about the World Cup and referees' disappointment at the disciplinary sentences on the Italian and Chilean players. Ken Aston was the referee - anyone remember what it was about?

A TIMELY PUBLICATION

One of the things John Lambden and the training team have to keep on stressing is the need to get your misconduct report right. It saves the Association that receives it both time and trouble, but, more important, it helps to get the player properly disciplined. Too many players get off because of a poor report. No excuse now - just **use** your self-check list.

FAIR PLAY AND LINESMAN'S AWARDS

Don't forget to ask Ben Gater for your forms and instructions - and do try to remember to fill them in and return them.

MEMBERSHIP

Enrolments for the new season are going really well but we are aiming to get **all** local referees into membership. Please help Stuart Gentle, our membership officer, by persuading any referee you know to join us.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

September 18 Guest speaker: Vic Heron, FA Area Adviser for Referees

October 16 Programme to be confirmed

SOCIAL EVENTS

Our 'social' sub-committee is busy planning a variety of activities for the coming season. Ideas so far include visits to a (new) bowling alley, pantomime, ice-rink and theatre in addition to our usual range of events. The organising team (Mike Borland, Terry Gale and Gus Higgins) need your suggestions **and support**.

DID YOU HEAR THAT

Football League referees are to become "more anonymous"? I was astonished when Bob Wilson (Football Focus, August 23rd) revealed that Football League club programmes will no longer be able to publish biographical details of the referee - at a time when the FA is at last talking seriously of trying to improve relationships between clubs/players and referees. Maybe I missed it all when

I was away on holiday, but Andy Gray, to his credit, seemed to find it very odd too.

NO COMMENT

Ian Rush may have to wait more than a month before learning his fate after being 'sent off' for allegedly swearing at the referee at Anfield. The FA confirmed yesterday there will be no automatic suspension because technically players cannot be dismissed after the final whistle.

Instead Liverpool's Welsh international striker is likely to be accused of 'after-match misconduct', and that means he could be charged with bringing the game into disrepute.

(The Guardian, 27/8/86)