

February 2002

The next meeting of the North Middlesex Referees' Society will be held at 7.30 pm, on Friday, 8th February, 2002 at Cockfosters FC, Chalk Lane, Cockfosters, Barnet, Hertfordshire, EN4 9GL. Special Guest is Ron Roberts, FA Staff Referee Instructor.

Very many congratulations to FIFA Assistant Referee and longstanding Society member, Phil Sharp, who along with Herts referee, Graham Poll, has been selected as England's representative at the FIFA World Cup, 2002, in Korea and Japan. For more on Phil's exciting appointment and a snapshot of his career so far, see elsewhere in this edition of the magazine.

As highlighted above, our guest speaker at next month's Society meeting is Ron Roberts. Robin Jagot writes a short profile on Ron in this issue - Robin suggests we should not miss this meeting!

Peter Dace has sent me his "Reminiscences" for both this month's magazine and next month's. The reason is that our respected Life Vice-President is off to New Zealand on the 8th of February to see England play 5 One-Day Internationals against the host country. Bon Voyage, Peter, we look forward to an account of your trip, so take a notebook!! Have a marvellous trip and a safe return.

As usual, any intended jokes in this issue are the responsibility of Vice Chairman, Vince Yeudall.

Also included in this issue is an extract from an article, first printed in the AFA Argus, by Society member David Williams. David is also a member of the AFA Society and writes regularly for their magazine.

On Wednesday, 23 January, a large gathering of promotion hopefuls, including a number of Society members, attended Middlesex HQ in Harrow to take a written examination paper, under the FA's new system designed to improve the standard and consistency of referees and refereeing. Separate exams were set for Level 7 to 6 (Class 3 to 2) and Level 6 to 5 (Class 2 to 1). The AFA and other counties have also arranged for similar tests to be taken. Since the exam, probably the first for many years for some candidates, a number of referees have been seen walking about with ashen faces mumbling, "Why did they change, just when I thought I could squeeze through under the old system?"

Thanks to everyone who enquired about my health, following the virus I picked up before Christmas. Well, I am not yet back in the middle, or on the line come to that, but I believe I am winning, at last, and look forward to start serious training soon.

In last month's Editorial, I mentioned that young Daniel Richardson had recently started playing table tennis at Ellenborough TTC, **(the venue for the Elephant Race Nite on Sunday, 10th February)**. In passing, Daniel mentioned to one of the youngsters at the club that he was a referee. After watching Daniel in action, on the nearby Enfield Playing Fields, the youngster decided to go on next training course run by Robin and his team, which starts Monday, 28 January. From little acorns.....

Closing date for the March magazine is Monday 18 February 2002



THAT'S UNUSUAL

by Mick Osborn

As referees we can recognize which offence has just been committed, whether it requires a direct or an indirect free kick, whether it warrants the culprit being warned, cautioned or sent off for his misdemeanor and under which category the action falls, for example unsporting behaviour, dissent, violent conduct, to name but a few. On the whole, in spite of what team mates and supporters of the offending player like to convince themselves, we do a good job. But, are we complacent? The answer to that is “No” if what we hear at our meetings is anything to go by.

I find “Match Incidents” one of the most interesting spots on the agenda. It provokes discussion usually on unusual situations that tend to throw us. At the January meeting the following question was posed. A match has started with one of the teams fielding only seven players. Later, one of the seven is sent off, (or it could be that he is injured and unable to continue.) What action should the referee take? If you were not at the meeting, stop reading now and think about that one. OK. Now read on.

Law 3 states, “...A match may not *start* if either team consists of fewer than seven players.” But the question was, can it *continue* with fewer than seven players? We have to turn to our old friends, the International F.A. Board. On page 14, Decision 1 relating to Law 3, states in part, “...The Board is of the opinion however, that a match should not *continue* if there are fewer than seven players in either team.” (The italics are mine.) The Football Association’s booklet, “Advice on the Application of the Laws of the Game” is more specific. “If a team with only 7 players has one dismissed from the field of play, that match must be abandoned.”

This raised a similar question in my mind. When the winner of a match has to be determined by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark, LOAF states, “When a team finishes the match with a greater number of players than their opponents, they shall reduce their numbers to equate with that of their opponents” What happens if a player, other than a goalkeeper, has to leave the field after the procedure has started? LOAF says, “Before the start of kicks from the penalty mark the referee shall ensure that *only an equal number of players from each team remain within the center circle* and they shall take the kicks.” Further on — “Each kick is taken by a different player and *all eligible players must take a kick before any player can take a second kick.*” My interpretation is that if at any time there develops inequality of numbers between the teams, the team with the greater number must remove one of their players before we continue. Am I right in my thinking? IFAB has nothing to say.

How often have you encountered the above situations? How often have you awarded a penalty just as time was about to run out? How often have you encountered the situation where the goalkeeper and an out-field player have changed places at half time without you being made aware of it? Not very often, I would guess, but we have to know how to deal with the unusual. We can read and re-read the LOAF but it is often the experiences and opinions of our colleagues that enlighten us.

It seems to me that this alone is good enough reason to come along to our meetings. See you next month? You could have a valuable opinion.

Our Guest Speaker: Ron Roberts Football Association Staff Referee Instructor

Society is pleased to welcome back Ron Roberts who last spoke to our members well over a decade ago. Ron as those of you remember was a former Southern League Referee and a Football League Assessor but became a Senior Staff Instructor for the Football Association and still plays an active part in National and International Courses for Referees. I would say to those members who have not heard Ron speak do not miss this meeting as you will experience a very amusing witty, and forthright speaker. A night not to be missed.

Robin Jagot

“ITS GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME “ By Brian Fuller

Were am I in the plot of things I ask Len Wilcock

I have heard the referee's Len speaks of who moan of games received that they think are beneath them
Is that not there choice to do so if they wish? We after all we are amateur refs

I took up refereeing because I could not get a game at a high level anymore and perform to the
standard needed. I also need to maintain a level of fitness.

I do not enjoy being a ref at youth games despite managing youth teams for many years with great
success. So I do not do youth football. That's good enough for me.

I did not like Sunday football as a player, so I do not ref Sundays again good enough for me.

I do not enjoy being an assistant ref to anybody, as I do not enjoy doing so.
Good enough for Me. But not for many league secretary's who will only give you a middle
for every two lines you do This means I have to do something I do not enjoy
Twice Before I can do something I like once. Not good enough for me.

I think I am a good ref but I forgo my chance to ref at a higher level because I do not like to line. My
choice and good enough for me.

I have left leagues because the games given were of such a low standard that I got no Enjoyment from
the games at all, the reason I went there in the first place. Not good enough for me. At my age I do not
have the time left to work my way up for years, I am good enough now.

I do not think any game is below me, but only ref for enjoyment and when the fun stops so do I. So as
a ref frowned upon for refereeing were and when he wants. Were do I fit in or should I quit now Len...

We are all different people with different slants on refereeing there must be room for us all, THE
GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY,

Happy New Year

Editor's comment.

The above is Brian's robust answer to Len Wilcock's interesting article in last month's magazine
entitled "It's Not Good Enough For Me", about referees who are "choosy" about matches they
accept; some excellent points made on both sides.

If you have an opinion on this subject, why not write to your magazine.

North Middlesex Referees' Society
present

Annual
**Elephant Race
Nite**

on Sunday, 10th FEBRUARY, 2002

at

**ELLENBOROUGH TABLE TENNIS CLUB
KIMBERLEY GARDENS, ENFIELD**

7:30pm Start

Ticket:- £5.00 Adult
£3.00 Child
(inc Buffet)

Available from Gary Cobden, phone: 01992-469153
or e-mail: garycobden@nmrs.freeseerve.co.uk

A night of fun and enjoyment for all ages

End of Season

Dinner & Dance

on Saturday, 11th MAY, 2002

at

THE APOLLO SUITE, COCKFOSTERS

Gentlemen: Dinner or Lounge suits please.

Ladies: Posh Frocks

**PLEASE ORDER YOUR TICKETS AS EARLY
AS POSSIBLE**

Available from Gary Cobden, phone: 01992-469153
or e-mail: garycobden@nmrs.freeseerve.co.uk

*Book early, and pay for your tickets - £25.00 each -
monthly.*



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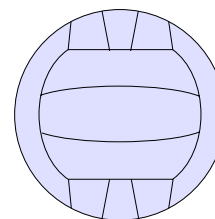
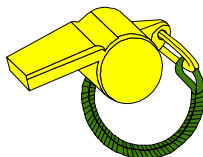
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Are again pleased to support North Middlesex
Referees Society in Season 2001/2002



NORTH MIDDLESEX REFEREES SOCIETY

100
CLUB

Draw results for January 2002 are shown below. There were 55 shares, and payout is 70% of the pool - £38.50. The January draw was made by Society Training Officer, Robin Jagot..

If you would like to join for the remainder of the Season, the amount payable now is £7; please complete the form below, and let me have it with your remittance. Each month, all the 'shares' are entered into a draw, and three prizes are drawn. Every month - except February and August - 70% of the pool is paid out in prizes; in February and August, the full 100% is paid out.

January

First	53	Frank McNeil	£22.00
Second	55	Steve Wildgoose	£11.00
Third	7	David Chapman	£5.50

Gary Cobden
Honorary Treasurer



NORTH MIDDLESEX REFEREES SOCIETY 100 CLUB Application for/Renewal of Membership - Season 2001/2002

I,, wish to become a member of the North Middlesex Referees Society 100 Club, and subscribe to shares each month.

I agree to make payment:-

By Cheque

By Standing Order (details will be provided on request) (Delete as Appropriate)

The initial term of membership is 12 months; renewal details will be distributed with the 2002/2003 Society Membership Forms. To join for the remainder of the current Season, a payment of £7 is payable.

Please forward the completed Application Form to Gary Cobden, Hon. Treasurer.

For Society Use:-

Numbers Allocated:

ON SALE NOW

NORTH MIDDLESEX REFEREES' SOCIETY

A CELEBRATION OF 50 YEARS OF FOOTBALL

including profiles, facts and photographs

written and compiled for the Society by
CHARLES LIFFORD

PRICE: £9.99

(p & p £1.00)

Social Events
Elephant Race Nite



This is your last chance to book tickets for the North Middlesex Referees Society Elephant Race Nite, which takes place on Sunday 10 February, at the Ellenborough Table Tennis Club, Kimberley Gardens, Enfield. For ticket prices and how to obtain them, see the advertisement elsewhere in the Magazine. This

is an evening of fun and frivolity where you also have the opportunity to have a small wager to win back some of your entrance money! Take part yourself, or just come along and watch the fun. And don't forget to bring your bucket and spade to follow the Elephants!

Annual End of Season Dinner and Dance



Also up and coming is the North Middlesex Referees Society End of Season Dinner and Dance, which takes place on Saturday 11 May, at the Apollo Suite, Cockfosters. Again, ticket information can be found elsewhere in the Magazine. If you would like to pay for your Dinner and Dance tickets over a period of time, instead of in a lump sum, please give me a call, and we can arrange for monthly payments to be made. This is a semi formal evening, with a nice meal, followed by dancing for all ages. So, come along guys, buy your good lady a ticket to thank her for what she will have put up with during the previous nine or ten months.

Gary Cobden
Honorary Treasurer

WORLD CUP SQUADS ANNOUNCED

YUGOSLAVIA

Itch
Annoyingitch Hardtoreachitch Scratchanitch
Hic Sic Spic Pric
Digaditch Fallinaditch
Horseraditch

SUBS: Mowapitch Letsgetrich Shagabitch

ITALY

Baloni
Potbelli Beerbelli Giveitsumwelli
Wotsontelli Toonsgotkenni Onetoomani
Legslikejelli Havabenni
Wobblijelli Spendapenni

SUBS: Cantthinkofani Buggermi

HOLLAND

Kenning van Hire

Van Diemansland Van der Valk Van Gard
Van Erealizeez
Ad van Tagus Hertz van Rental Transit van Dors
Van Coova Van Sprokendown Aye van Hoe

SUBS: Van Iller Van Ishincream Van Morrison

SLOVENIA

Whodyanicabolicov
Ticlycov Chesticov Nasticov
Slalomsky Downhillsky
Risky Swedishshev Mastershev
Fuckov Taykitov
SUBS: Rubitov Gechakitov Sodov Pastryshev
Najinsky Desert Orchid

Peter Dace reminisces – the Normidian of February 1992

Guest Speaker – Major Ron Roberts, talking on how the Armed Services run their football competitions.

Alex Myers ('an old man who's been around a bit') writes a poem entitled 'I'm very well thank you' suggesting it would be nice if all the players would like to know how we feel after the game.

Society Secretary Adrian Bland publishes results of the questionnaire he issued to all Members at the start of the season:-

Is Friday the best day for the meeting	yes 63% no 37%
If no, next best day	Monday 49%
Are you happy with guest speakers	yes 99% no 1%
Can any improvements be made	start on time More control More in-service training More time for match incidents
Other social events wanted	Theatre outings Race night Treasure hunt/car rally BarBQ Stag night Barn dance

Robin Jagot and Trevor Syms detail 'its only a line' and invite Members to attend a practical linesman's training evening at the Douglas Eyre Sports Centre in Walthamstow on 26th February.

Arthur Pearce pens 'Don't consider them pirates' and asks why 38 Referees officiating in Middlesex are not affiliated to any County FA. He wonders if it is because they are over 50 and do not want an X classification that advises clubs "this Referee is past his sell-by date".

Dave Dickinson writes from the Prince Francis Ward of Middlesex Hospital and thanks Society Members for their wonderful support and adds "as your Vice Chairman all I can say is that North Middlesex Society is the number one; the best in the world".

Have a laugh with Vince

Sir Alex Ferguson dies and goes to heaven. "Who are you?" says God. "I'm Alex Ferguson, and that's my chair you're sat on!"

Q1 *A player of the defending team, other than the goalkeeper, standing outside the penalty-area, deliberately handles the ball within the penalty-area. What action does the referee take?*

A penalty kick is awarded. If a goal scoring opportunity is denied then the referee will take the appropriate sanction also.

Q2 *A player deliberately lies on the ball for an unreasonable length of time. What action does the referee take?*

He stops play, cautions the player for unsporting behaviour and restarts with an indirect free - kick.

Q3 *When the ball is about to be dropped within the penalty-area, a defending player violently strikes an opponent before the ball touches the ground. What action does the referee take?*

The player is sent off for violent conduct, and play is restarted with a dropped ball

Q4 *A player enters the field of play without receiving a signal from the referee and then deliberately handles the ball. What action does the referee take?*

The player is cautioned for entering the field of play without permission of the referee. Play is restarted with a direct free-kick which punishes the more serious offence.

Q5 *A player leaves the field of play while celebrating a goal. what action if any, does the referee take?*

Celebrating a goal is an accepted part of football A caution is only warranted ~f a player gives an excessive demonstration of jubilation.

Q6 *While the ball is in play, the goalkeeper strikes an opponent in the area enclosed by the goal-line and the goal nets. What action does the referee take?*

The referee will stop play and send off the goalkeeper for violent conduct and restarts play with a dropped ball where play was stopped.

If you have any friends or relatives that would like to attend one of our courses in the future please advise them of our next course at Brimsdown Sports Club, starting on Monday January 28th. 7:30pm —9.30pm.

Robin

Have a Laugh with Vince

Two referees talking over a pint after a game: “My wife says she will leave me if I don’t give up reffing”. “What a shame!” his mate replies. “Yes I’ll really miss her” comes the reply

Gear Supplies Price List – Season 2001/2002

Matchday Kits

We can supply both Umbro and RA Kits. Both ranges are available with either long or short sleeves, and can be supplied with your County FA Badge pre-embroidered for a small additional charge. Socks are available with either plain white tops, or with hooped tops. Cushioned feet socks can also be supplied. Boots and Tracksuits are also available to order.

Prices are as follows:-

Umbro Short Sleeve - £32.00	Umbro Long Sleeve - £33.00
Umbro Shorts - £23.50	
RA Short Sleeve - £18.50	RA Long Sleeve - £18.50
RA Shorts - £12.50	
White Topped Socks - £5.00	Reinforced Foot - £5.50
Hoop Topped Socks - £5.50	

County Badges added to Shirts - £7.25 extra on Umbro Shirts; £8.50 on RA Shirts

We are also able to supply Middlesex County FA Badges, and Referees Association Badges, for Kit use - £3.00.

Flags

Touchline Flags and Flagsticks are available in various combinations. Choose from Quartered or Super-Quartered, Plain, or Premier. Premier and Super Quartered are manufactured from high visibility solid warp knitted polyester yarn (125gm). Plain and Quartered are manufactured from high visibility warp knitted polyester yarn (52gm).

Flags and Flagsticks are also available separately. Alternatively, why not buy a complete set with Flag bag. If your existing Flagsticks are damaged, and require replacement end-caps or inserts, these can also be obtained (in pairs). If you are looking for Flags, but do not wish to pay quite so much, the RA's own flags and sticks are also available- in quartered or plain styles.

Prices are as follows:-

Touchline Flags:- from £11.50 (Plain) to £15.50 (Premier)

Touchline Flagsticks (pair) - £14.95; singles - £8.50; End-caps - £2.25; Brass Inserts - £1.25; Flag Bag - £5.25

Touchline Sets – Flags and Flagsticks – from £21.50 (Plain) to £25.50 (Premier)

Touchline Complete Sets – including Flag Bag - from £23.50 (Plain) to £27.50 (Premier)

RA Flags Plain - £4.75; RA Flags Quartered - £7.00; RA Flagsticks - £3.00

Matchday Accessories

We can supply Match Record Cards and Holders; General Purpose Postcards; Red and Yellow Cards; Wrist Lanyards; a selection of Whistles including the ever popular Fox range, and some with finger grips. Pressure Guages are available to order.

Prices are as follows:-

Match Record Pads - £0.70	Match Record Pad Holder - £0.70
Red and Yellow Cards and Wallet - £2.00	Red/ Yellow Cards/Wallet/Pencil - £2.30
All Purpose Postcards - £1.10	Red and Yellow Cards (set) - £1.10
Pencils - £0.10	
Plastic Whistle With Grip - £1.30	Plastic Whistle - £1.20
Plastic Finger Whistle - £1.40	Metal Whistle - £3.40
Pealess Whistle - £1.30	Lanyard - £1.60

Continued

Phil Sharp — FIFA Assistant Referee — World Cup Finals 2002

Everyone in the Society is so pleased for Phil, being part of football's greatest event. The fact that the World Cup Finals, 2002, take place in such an exotic part of the world as Korea and Japan must make it even more special.

This is not the first time Phil has featured in World Cup games. As far back as 1996-7 he was appointed to a World Cup Qualifying Competition game, Hungary v Norway. In 1997-8 he was again asked to take his flags to two World Cup Qualifiers, Romania v Iceland and Saudi Arabia v China.

Phil was again in World Cup action during the 2000 —01 season, being appointed to two more Qualifying Competition games, Netherlands v Portugal and Czech Republic v Denmark.

In 2001- 02, Phil was in World Cup action again with the World Qualifying Championship. Games he was involved in were, Paraguay v Colombia and Slovenia v Russia.

Many more other exciting and high profile games have been undertaken by Phil, which we will leave to another time. But for now let's just enjoy this time with him, his wife and support machine, Debbie, and his other very close friends in the Society, like Tony Ward and Paul Vosper and wish him every success in this exciting new chapter in his career.

*Note: Thanks to Charles Lifford, editor of "North Middlesex Referees 'Society —A Celebration of 50 Years of Football" for providing information for the above article.
Ed.*

Supplies Continued

Other Items available as follows:-

Boot Laces - £1.15	Sock Ties - £1.10
NMRS Ties - £6.00	NMRS 50 th Anniversary Tie - £7.50
RA Tie - £5.50	LOAF (Referees Chart) - £3.00
FA Diary - £4.00	NMRS Credit Card Holder - £3.30
RA Baseball Cap - £5.00	RA Crested Holdall - £15.00
"Football Referee" Magazine - £0.75	
Coloured Shirts - £5.00	Coloured Shorts - £5.00

Christmas Specials

Christmas Wrapping Paper - Packs of 10 Sheets	£2.00
Birthday Cards - Packs of 12 Cards	£2.00

All Prices subject to fluctuation and change without notice.

Contact Percy Brown - 01707 851369 or 07801 985912

MINUTES OF THE NORTH MIDDLESEX REFEREES SOCIETY
HELD AT COCKFOSTERS SPORTS CLUB, ON
FRIDAY, JANUARY 11, 2002

Apologies: As recorded in attendance book.

The Chairman was pleased to welcome Mr. Rob Mullins and Mr. Richard Caabay to the meeting, and hoped it would be the first of many. Society Whistles were presented to Rob, and Richard by our President, Mick Osborn. Chairman was also please to announce that Phil Sharp, had been selected to join the World Cup Squad for this year's competition. A letter had been sent to Phil, on behalf of all members offering our warmest congratulations.

The Chairman, then spoke about the importance of ensuring that the meetings do start on time, and that members try and arrive in good time. It is extremely bad manners to delay our Guest Speakers who have given up their evening and in come cases travelled many miles to be with us.

Minutes of Previous Meeting: As there was no formal business or Officers reports at the December Meeting, there were no matters arising.

Secretary's Report: The Secretary just wished to inform the meeting that he had received from the Football Association information on the latest restructuring programme for referees and that this information had been received by most Society members,

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer was happy to announce that the membership had slightly increased, and that the total number of full members was 282 with 10 associate members. The Treasurer was happy to inform the meeting the accounts were in a healthy state,

Editor's Report: In his absence, the only message was for members to keep sending in their articles and that the latest date for the next edition is January 21st, 2002.

Training Secretary's Report: All members were made aware that the next course would start on Monday January 28th, 2002, 730p.m. start at Brimsdown Sports Club, Enfield.

The representatives of **Gear Supplies, M.R.A.** and **Recruitment & Retention** had no information or report to pass on to Society as no meetings had taken place.

Social Report: Members were reminded that the Elephant Race night will take place on Sunday February 10th, at the Ellenborough Table Tennis Club, Kimberley Gardens, Enfield.

A night not to be missed for all ages (£5-00 incI Buffet) The Dinner/Dance will need members support which will take place on Saturday May 11th, 2002 at the Apollo Suite, Cockfosters.

A.O.B. None.

Match Incidents: The first question raised was to do with the minimum number of players dealing first with what the Competition Rules state, and secondly reference was made to the F.A. International Board Decision on the minimum number of players allowed. The second question was on how best to carry out pitch inspections especially this time of year. It was stressed very strongly the paramount importance of Players Safety.

North Middlesex Young Referees

MATCH INCIDENTS.

Have you ever noticed how some senior assessors, training officers et al deal with match incidents at Society meetings? This applies to all Societies. They always go for the strongest possible discipline in any answer to a problem. If it is possible to “red card” they will. If words used by a player are in any way “offensive, or insulting or abusive” they will opt for a sending off. In fact it is hard for a dissent caution not to contain offensive, insulting or abusive material in some way. The heavy-handed answer is nearly always the answer given in all circumstances.

In the A.F.A. Society John Cooke will on occasions give a more down to earth and honest answer based on his experiences. I once said to John after he had assessed me “I did miss an advantage that I would have liked to have played”. John’s reply was “yes, I noted that you didn’t play advantage there, but I also noted down after it that I would probably have made the I same mistake in those circumstances”.

So when it comes to match incidents think extra tough and be sure to impress all the assessors.

REAL LIFE HUMOUR.

I love good humour; it never ceases to amuse me. However, I have found that the hand of fate and real life are the best sources of comedy. If I ever get to Heaven, I am sure it will be full of humour. Therefore I shall tell you a true football story from my youth.

On Wednesday 10th October 1962 I went to see Finchley F.C. (later to become Wingate and Finchley) play West Ham to inaugurate Finchley’s new floodlights. The programme for the night shows a Ron Greenwood team containing Geoff Hurst, Bobby Moore and Martin Peters. A visit to Finchley was clearly going to make them household names sometime in the future!

However, this article appears on page two of the programme:

“It may interest you to know that as long ago as 1881 a somewhat notable event took place in that Finchley F.C. tried an experiment one night of playing a match with ball, goal posts, and corner posts treated with luminous paint (who said the Arsenal were the first?). It was distinctly amusing, but not sufficiently successful to warrant a repetition. They had to have three or four fresh balls and even then lost sight of the ball altogether.

We are confident that tonight’s attempt will prove more successful”. Well confidence is a fine thing, but fate was not on the programme editor’s side.

This game in October 1962 was eventually abandoned as everyone in the ground was enveloped in fog. The players disappeared in a dense fog that came down shortly into the game. My memory tells me that the game lasted about thirty minutes. It was replayed on ~ November 1962 and West Ham won 4v2.

MY NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS.

Along with my comments above I am renewing my resolution to remain only 23 years of age! I have had this resolution longer than I need to remember!

The process of ageing is I am told like the process of growing hungry, that is you suddenly notice it? Alas there are a bitter few, I must warn you from the outset, who believe that ageing is an art form and revel in it, but not for me. My resolution is “think young”, “be young” and “don’t change that decision”.

See you around.

DAVID WILLIAMS

Editor’s note: I am grateful to David, a North Middlesex member, for the above extract taken from his article written for the excellent “AFA Argus” magazine, printed in January, 2002.

IT WAS ALRIGHT LAST WEEK

So who is rocking the boat?

Many referees, who have a number of seasons under the belt, will have experienced the somewhat embarrassing situation of making a decision that is apparently against what is taken as normal.

What do I mean?

You arrive at the ground and declare the game cannot be played because the ground is unfit.

But then you decide.

You cannot wear that because...

“But Ref., the referee last week said it was okay. He let us play, he let me wear it, so why are you different?”

Dilemma, do you change your decision and go along with others, or do you rock the boat, and remain adamant.

Your pre-match inspection. Law 4. ‘Players equipment.’

This area seems to cause more headaches and differences between fellow referees, than most.

The condition of the pitch, the equipment or lack of it, the surrounds etc.

The player’s equipment or lack of it shin guards, undershorts, jewellery, hearing aids etc. Your main concern, as it is at all times, is players’ safety.

After your appointment, and upon your arrival at the venue, you have a responsibility for all that occurs. If in your honest opinion, the ground is in a dangerous or unplayable condition, try to get it rectified before the time of the kick-off Holes can be filled. Stones and glass can be cleared. Dogs’ mess can be removed. Do not forget to cover the whole of the field of play.

Icy conditions, or waterlogged conditions, on the other hand require a certain amount of local knowledge, or rising temperature or drying wind. These thoughts should be borne in mind when making your decision.

Having stuck with your decision, then immediately report to the League/Competition Secretary your action and the reason for it. The ground and its appurtenances are not covered fully by the LOAF. Corner posts definitely are. Do make sure they are fully 5ft. out of the ground.

With regards to players’ ‘adornments’, the answer is possibly more simple. They do not play. Until such time as they meet with the law and your approval, then they must sit it out. Heavy type rings, bracelets, medallions etc. should be removed or well taped over. Also plaster casts, dreadlocks, should be well protected or covered. Socks should always be up, to cover the players’ entire shin guards.

Rocking the boat! They are all there to be seen on television, so why should I remove my lovely medallion swinging around my neck! Because Mr Player, you’re not on the box, and the laws to which we play says so. Once again, any problems report them to the League/Competition Secretary and action taken.

With the threat of being sued these days, there is more pressure on the referee to get it right. With the advent of the Health & Safety Act we are all, including the players, deemed to be our own safety officer. In our sport, we should all be seen to be making every effort for the safety and well being of others. This would also include any spectators, who should be requested to remain back of the line.

OBSERVER