

January 2004

The next meeting of the North Middlesex Referees' Society will be held at 7.30pm on Friday 9th January at Cockfosters FC, Chalk Lane, Cockfosters, Barnet, Hertfordshire. Our welcome Guest Speaker is John Cooke, a member of the AFA's National Quiz winning team and someone who is always well worth listening to.

Welcome to the New Year! Did you enjoy your Christmas and have you made any resolutions for the rest of the season and beyond – like being fitter, always being in good time for a match, always being smart before, during, and after a match? I know there are dozens of them, but it's surprising how we keep getting caught out. Who was on the line recently when, having to supervise a substitute coming on he failed to notice he had a necklace on? As the player sprinted into position, as it happened near the referee, he was immediately asked to leave to remove his necklace! Oops, should have been checked before he came on! Easy done – add this one to the list above?

The December Society meeting took the form of a social evening. Eats were provided and Robin brought along a video. Terry Wilson ran a light-hearted football general knowledge quiz with the aid of Vince Yeudall, Percy Brown and David Woolf. Vince's team narrowly won, mainly due to the ubiquitous Len Wilcock, whose knowledge of trivia knows no bounds! Michael Mackay showed a few card tricks and Vince (inevitably) played his mouth organ. Good fun – and a big thank you to Cockfosters FC and to all who prepared the food.

This month's magazine includes articles by Peter Dace, "Are you Still Refereeing?" as well as his usual reminisces – from 1994, which also includes a photograph of guest speaker, actor Tom Watt, and two other chaps – nice to see you back from your cricketing jaunt abroad, Peter. Steve Wildgoose writes on "The Norway Cup" and Ken May continues his dissertation "Is there Life After Refereeing?"

Also in this issue, Charles Lifford repeats his request for your personal details, for inclusion in the Society's "50 History", and Mick Osborn asks "Will 2004 Really Be Any Better Than 2003?" The Society's 100 Club Draw results are also included, as usual. And look for bits and pieces of interest from some of the Society magazines we exchange with.

Gary Cobden pays tribute to Maureen Armsby who sadly died recently, so soon after husband, Ron, whose own obituary appeared in last month's Normidian. We send our sincere condolences to the family.

If you go away to see your favourite team play over the Christmas holiday, why not write to the magazine about your trip. The further you travel and the funnier the report the better! I hope to see Sheffield United play Wigan; I'll let you know how I get on!

Good news, bad news, good news! Our money raising, and wildly enjoyable, Elephant Race Nite on 15th February is still on. Bad news – the elephants have gone missing! Good news is that Chairman, Tom White, has made some more 'skates', which the elephants sit on. If you have any spare elephants, tell Gary Cobden!

Closing date for the next issue of Normidian is 19th January 2004

WILL 2004 REALLY BE ANY BETTER THAN 2003?

By Mick Osborn

Have you ever seen the Football Association's Code of Conduct for Players displayed in any dressing room or clubhouse you visit? Look in your County Handbook and you will see it there. I doubt whether many of the players I come across have even opened, or know of the existence of, a County Handbook. I have met players who do not know whether they are playing in a cup game or a league game or, in fact what cup or league their club is in. But, by some instinct developed during the eons of the evolution of man, they all seem to know their "rights" but, as in many other walks of today's society, seem ignorant of any responsibilities. Take just a few clauses in this code for example.

"Players should set a positive example for others, particularly young players and supporters." Once the older and experienced players would guide the younger members when they strayed from the straight and narrow, often keeping them out of trouble with a well-timed piece of advice. Now we often see the older player getting himself into trouble while the younger players looks on – and learn.

"Players should not use inappropriate language." These days, we seem resigned to the degrading of our language by the use of what was once considered foul. Even in schools and within a family, you can hear what I consider, (but others might not,) to be the most distasteful of invective. How often have we heard the manager/coach, who also has a code written especially for him, or the captain geeing up his players at half time, repeatedly employing a four-lettered word which, after all the money the taxpayer has lavished on his education, sadly seems to be the only adjective he has in his vocabulary. If we acted every time this word alone was used, we would have abandoned games most weeks through the lack of the minimum players required, so we turn a deaf ear and thus join in the lowering of standards. After all, apart from an article that appeared in a society's magazine some time ago, to my knowledge there is no listing of proscribed words.

There is no denying that conduct is becoming worse. Cautions and Dismissals are now too common a part of the game, recipients of which do not seem to bat an eyelid. The AFA has a magnificent trophy, The Wilkinson Sword, awarded by its Senior Officers to clubs with a good disciplinary record. Since 1980 it has not been awarded on only two occasions, in 1987 and 1993. It has not been awarded for the past three seasons. The carrot doesn't seem to work any more. Time for the stick?

Competitions should be held more responsible for their member clubs; clubs for their players and spectators. It should be mandatory for each player and relevant club officials to receive a copy of the pertinent Code of Conduct. In junior football, parents should be required to agree to a code of conduct. Those breaking the Code should be disciplined by the club, including the exclusion of parents from matches and, in extreme cases, their child from playing for the club. Referees could be obliged to report clubs' overall conduct on the result card and, in turn, competitions should take any appropriate early action.

There is a Code of Conduct for Match Officials too. Have you read it? Do you keep it?

HAPPY NEW YEAR



Are you STILL Refereeing?

There are many signs that a man is getting older. Despite the face seen in the shaving mirror appearing to be no different to the beholder, the face appearing before the outside world tells a different story.

I can quote examples in recent years e.g. going to a cinema one evening and, in my opinion, looking very trendy in smart tracksuit and baseball cap, the cashier said to me “do you want a concession sir?” Now on the assumption she did not think I was under 16, it came as a shock to realise for the first time that somebody thought I was over 60 (I was not at that time). I took little consolation that the cashier aged about 17 probably considered anyone over 39 (my published age) to be entitled to a concession. Further not long ago I purchased a small portable radio from a large, out-of-town superstore. Much to my delight the pretty, young female cashier appeared to be chatting me up only for delight to turn to dismay when she said in passing “would you like someone to carry the radio to your car?”

So what has this to do with football? Well just as a continuation of the above, whenever I meet someone I have not seen for some time they always ask, “are you STILL refereeing?” It is the word STILL that bothers me i.e. STILL as in, ‘at your age are you STILL refereeing’ or STILL as in, ‘despite your general condition are you STILL refereeing’ or more particularly, ‘despite the pace and rigours of the modern game are you STILL refereeing’? It is therefore the use of the word STILL with the unused innuendos that I find upsetting!

Not so long ago whenever I renewed an old friendship the question would have been to the effect “on which leagues do you officiate?” but now the S word is to the fore and to which I reply “yes I am STILL refereeing three times a week but as my Wife will tell you it is now the only thing I can STILL manage three times a week”!!

Peter Dace age 62 $\frac{3}{4}$



Middlesex County FA – Referee Misconduct Reports

Middlesex County FA have designed a misconduct report form that can be submitted by email. So, those with access to a computer can finally do away with the carbon paper!

The instructions for completing and submitting the misconduct forms, while perhaps a doddle for the technocrats, look a bit daunting to those of us who are being dragged away from ink wells and quills by our boot laces!

But the idea is excellent and MCFA are to be congratulated on their initiative. Also, it is reassuring to note that if any of us require assistance we can always contact the Office “where assistance will gladly be offered”.

We also are informed that any comments regarding the forms and the instructions for their use are welcome.



NORWAY CUP 2003

I have been lucky enough to go to Norway for the last 2 years to referee in the Norway Cup, which is held in Ekeberg every year. The Norway Cup is an international youth competition endorsed by FIFA and last year there were 40 different nations represented at all age groups, both boys and girls, from under 9's up to under 18's. There are some Japanese sides; African sides but mainly the sides are European.

The whole week is a chance to chat and spend time with other referees. Last year the emphasis was on refereeing during the day and going to Oslo in the evening for a few sherbets. Oslo is a 15-minute tram ride away and you are provided with a free tram pass for the week. Drinks are expensive so we tend to go out quite late (10pm).

Before you go you fill out a registration form on which you state which type of football you wish to referee and how many games you wish to do a day. The longest a game will last is 35 minutes each way. I tend to go for 4 games a day and stick to the over 12's. You also need to get a letter of permission from your county Fa stating you are allowed to go. This is an essential requirement as this shows the organisers you are a bona fide referee.

The British referees tend to fly across on the Saturday before the start of play on the Sunday. The referees are from all walks of life and are of all different levels. The week culminates in the finals, which are traditionally held on the first Saturday of August. The referees tend to fly back on the Sunday after the finals. Next year the finals are going against the tradition, as the dates are Sunday 25th July to Saturday 31st July 2004. We have used Ryanair from Stansted, as their fares are pretty good. Next year I am flying for £47 return and you are responsible for paying for this. The organisers arrange for a coach to pick us up from Oslo Torp to Ekeberg School, which is a 90-minute journey.

The British referees are given free accommodation at the Ekeberg school site. The classrooms are turned into dormitories and a room tends to have about 14-18 people in it. You take a sleeping bag and they provide a camp bed to lie on. The school showers are a 30-yard walk across the back of the classrooms to the school gymnasium.

The school provides a free continental style breakfast from 7am until about 5pm. This consists of bread, cheese, ham, butter, jam, pate, milk and water. The free main meal of the day is then served after 5pm. Reindeer is normally on the menu on the Thursday night. There is also a 'tuck' shop in the same cafeteria.

Last year there was a friendly where Manchester United were playing so we were given free tickets. There was also an U21 international where Germany were playing Spain. Guess who we supported?

The football is played either at one of the adjoining 32 pitches or you will go to one of the three other local sports areas to referee. Transport is supplied in order to get the referees to the right place at the right time.

On the Friday night the organisers put on referees only party where the referees are named for the finals on the Saturday. A bit like the eve of final rally for the FA cup but with more exciting people.

Norway Cup 2003 - continued

If you are chosen to be an assistant or to referee on a final you will have the rest of the British contingent there supporting you. The whole week has a great deal of camaraderie and it feels good to be amongst friends. If you are interested in participating next year please contact me at: WREDREF@AOL.COM or 01992 651127 and I will fill in any blanks you have.

Steve Wildgoose



A Letter From Bradford – sent to Vince Yeudall from Lee McCormack.

Please could you forward this letter to your magazine editor, assuming of course that your Association produces a magazine?

I am the magazine editor for the Bradford & District Referees' Association. In order to possibly improve the quality and content of our magazine and to establish links with other magazine editors in the West Riding region and further afield, I am writing to ask if I can be included in your mailing list for your magazine. Of course, I would be delighted to forward to you our monthly magazine.

I have enclosed a copy of our latest issue, which I hope you will enjoy. If you have any comments or feedback, they will be welcome.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards.

Lee McCormack
Magazine Editor – Bradford & District Referees' Association.

Editor's Note

Lee refereed at a Charity 5 a-side tournament at Arsenal last month, attended by Vince, Ricky and myself, where he acquitted himself very well in what was a high quality event, ably run by Arsenal's Mr Reliable on these occasions, Ray Coventry. And we will certainly add you to the Normidian mailing list, Lee.



From "HEY REF" the Bradford & District Referees' Society

IT'S REALLY WHAT YOU SING!

When you hear, "The referee's a Bast*rd" at games, spare a thought for the Referee of the 1878 FA Cup Final who had the misfortune to have the name Mr Bastard.



Simply the Best - again!!

Members may recall the article I wrote last month reporting the untimely passing of Ron Armsby – the founder of the Enfield and District Youth Sunday Football League.

Regrettably, Ron’s wife Maureen also passed away on 2 December following a setback in her own fight against cancer. Maureen was herself a stalwart of the Enfield and District Youth Sunday Football League, being Treasurer for as many years as I care to remember. Her funeral was held at New Southgate Crematorium on Wednesday 10th December, and was attended by several Society colleagues and many other Referees who had ‘plied their trade’ at one time on the EDYSFL. Maureen is survived by her two sons, Mark and Shane.

Maureen, like Ron – we all miss you, and owe you gratitude and thanks!

Gary Cobden



Ken May continues his series “Is there Life after Football”.

PLAYERS HAVE LOST IT!

The above statistics (see last month’s article, “When Bookings Were Not The Rule”, Ed) come about not through any clamping down on any particular aspect of misconduct; it is not that referees have chosen to become stricter or less tolerant about players’ behaviour; it is simply that traditional sportsmanship is now virtually non-existent and other commendable aspects of behaviour, such as self discipline, concern about opponents’ well-being and the good name of one’s own club count for much less. It is all about winning and personal ego. Cricketers don’t ‘walk’ when they know they are out and footballers ‘dive’ to gain an advantage. Fielders on the boundary are reluctant to signal that the batsman’s strike has gone for 4 runs and footballers claim that every ball out-of-play is theirs.

What chance has the poor old umpire or referee got when the participants show so little interest in acting honestly. I think it is a considerable achievement that for most of the time, at all levels, the adjudicator of most sports gets it right. And when the decision is wrong or controversial, all hell is let loose with the players unable to accept that it has invariably been given in good faith. This even leads to a rumpus, which on occasions will continue at or after the half or full time-whistle.

Stop Passing the Buck

So, if club officials at Park or Premiership level are really concerned about the misconduct record of their players, they should firstly put their own house in order before pointing the finger at referees. Football clubs are notorious for being unable to look at themselves and to recognise their own shortcomings. They are always “unlucky” for not winning. Very little credit is ever given to the opponents for their performance. It is invariably the referee that costs them the game. When they pay more attention at all levels to accepting responsibility for their own players’ behaviour, the game might regain some of its sanity. To reassure myself that it wasn’t me over-reacting in my last season of

refereeing, I checked my records for the one line I ran and was interested to note that a very capable referee issued 5 cautions!

Are We Professional Enough?

So if there is so much dissatisfaction with our performances what are the alternatives? At the highest level it is often advocated that employing ex-professional players might prove the answer. I have always been in a minority among fellow referees in actually agreeing with the proposal if only the ex-players showed an interest.

Repeating the cricket theme, most of the top class umpires are former county cricketers, thereby ensuring that they enjoy the respect of players and can take full advantage of their first-hand knowledge and recognition of bat/pad catches, LBW appeals etc.

There's little doubt that senior footballers would have all the experience to identify malicious over-the-top tackles, illegal use of the elbows, the culprit, if any, in a 50/50 challenge and shirt-tugging. They should be able to read the game and already have an adequate fitness level to cope with the game's demands. There is only one problem. They show absolutely no interest in taking up refereeing.

The former excuse about insufficient remuneration is scarcely applicable now that the fees and expenses are so much more generous. Rather like a career in the Civil Service, the long-standing tradition is that referees should serve their apprenticeship by service in the parks and gradually working their way up through the pyramid system. Only in recent years has the idea of accelerated promotion become more generally acceptable.

If proper use were to be made of the expertise that professional footballers will have gained in the game then I would support their being put on a "fast track" to the top, however unpopular this may prove with the rank and file, most of who take up refereeing for recreational purposes. The very best ones should always come through, whatever the system.

To be continued



From the Chiltern Referee

Q. When should you, a new referee, inspect players' footwear?

A. At any stage of the game if any player's safety is in doubt, or as the competition rules require.



From the AFA Argus

A player asked the referee if he could go behind the goal line to tie up his boots. As an opponent was attacking the goal this player rushed on the field without the referees' permission and stopped an obvious goal. What action should the referee have taken?



Peter Dace reminisces – the Normidian of January 1994

Tony Ward ‘examines the long and winding road to the top’ and complains that in this country it takes too long to get a Referee through to the top level i.e. at the last world cup Denmark had Peter Mikkelsen aged 30, we had George Courtney aged 48. He adds ‘the time is ripe to streamline the present system and they should scrap the ‘panel’ and revert to the feeder/contributory league avenue of progress’. In his own case he jumped from the Spartan league, to referee Enfield v Sutton United in the Isthmian League, seasoned Amateur Internationals such as Alf D’Arcy, Ted Powell and Larry Pritchard all played.

Michael Page ‘takes the first step’ and thanks Robin Jagot and Mick Osborn for all their efforts in getting nine trainees through their recent course at Old Finchleians ‘not just for providing the requisite knowledge to pass the exams, but instilling their obvious enthusiasm for the art of Refereeing into a previously cynical old footballer!’. During the course Michael questioned whether he had been playing football all these years, or perhaps some strange derivative game with local rules; ‘maybe I had at last discovered the illusive difference between football and the game some people refer to as soccer’.

‘Evening with Tom Watt and other aspects’ by Joe Walker. Joe says ‘I have a message to the members who did not attend that evening – you missed a good one’. Mind you as I sat there and looked around the room I counted 28 members and two of them had just passed the Referees’ course whilst the rest were the same members I saw at the last meeting. Out of a membership of 208 – only 28 attended. I said to myself what a poor show, we have a guest – who is a really busy person, who has gone out of his way to come to our meeting, to give us a really good informative talk about football.

Nigel Burns submits a copy of his letter to the Referees Secretary of the NL & SH (north London and south herts?) league tendering his resignation following his arrival at a game ACI v The Duck which did not exist.

Mark Mardon writes ‘a new start (looking ahead)’ and refers to the referees’ course he attended at Old Owens in January. Two things stick in his mind – pacing 10 yards only to find he had gone back 4-5 yards, and learning about charging an opponent, from which he still has bruises as he was the course guinea pig.

Peter Dace reminisces – the Normidian of December 1993 (continued)



The photo to the left was unfortunately left out of the reminisces by Peter - December 1993 - in last months Normidian due to a technical hitch.

Pictured are Tom Watt (guest speaker), together with Society Chairman Dave Ackerman and Training Officer Robin Jagot. See also the comment from the January 1994 reminisces above.

Ed.



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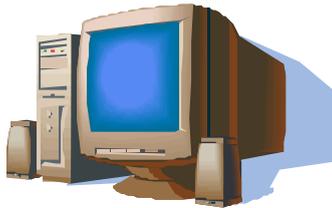
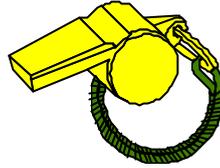
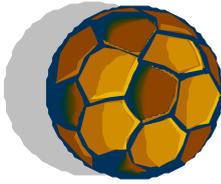
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Are again pleased to support North Middlesex Referees Society in Season 2003/2004



DO YOU HAVE A COMPUTER PROBLEM?

Has your PC stopped working? Does it need upgrading? Do you need a program or database written to help you carry out a task? Have you some new software that you do not know how to install? Your worries may be over. Give Gary a call on 07760 422223 for assistance.
Reasonable rates.

E-Mail Addresses

A number of Members have elected to receive their Magazines by e-mail; and others have advised us of their e-mail addresses – which will help the Society get in touch with you quicker if there is something that needs to be advised quickly. If you have an e-mail address, and have not yet told us about it, please let Gary Cobden know – e-mail garycobden@nmrs.freeserve.co.uk



Want some Kit?

Our supplies Officer is Percy Brown: Telephone 01707 851365 or e-mail:-
brownfamily70@cwctv.net

- Referees Kits
- Matchday Accessories
- Assistant Referees Flags
- Socks
- Other Accessories

From, **“YOU MUST BE JOKING REF!!!”** the Cheshunt & Waltham Cross magazine – the Ken Grant Column.

The devil was continually challenging St. Peter to a game of football, but St. Peter refused, until walking round heaven one day he discovered that a large number of international footballers had entered the “pearly gates”.

“Now I’ll arrange to play you that soccer game”, said St. Peter. “How about it?”

“You’ll lose”, said the devil, “You’ll lose”.

“Oh don’t be too sure”, replied St. Peter. “We now have in heaven a great number of international football stars from which to select a winning team”.

“You’ll lose, you’ll lose”, repeated the devil.

“What makes you so sure we’ll lose?” enquired St. Peter.

“Because”, laughed the devil, “we have all the referees down here!”

We wish Ken the best of good health after his recent operation. Ed.



From the Leamington and District RA magazine – originally taken from the Eastleigh RA magazine.

We are what we eat. So what should a referee eat after a match? Within two hours the FA suggest 100grams of carbohydrates. This may be contained in two Bananas or a Mars bar, or eight slices of bread, or six Jaffa Cakes and two cans of isotonic drink, or a nine-inch Pizza. You will need re-hydration so it’s no Alcohol.



50 Years of History – Charles Lifford

In 1999, a book relating to the 50 years History of the North Middlesex Referees’ Society was published. Whether you purchased a copy is neither here nor there; what is important, and it should be to you, is that I have been keeping the History up to date.

What have you sent me since that date? Have you had a County Cup Appointment? Does the Society know? Have you done a local Cup Final during this period, about which you can send me details? Have you had a photograph taken whilst refereeing, or been part of a group photo of referees that may be of interest to anyone in the Society?

A full record has been kept of the 50 years up to 1999. If you don’t do your bit –and it only needs to be a little bit – the History will not be maintained. Please send me as much or as little as possible.

Charles



From YOU MUST BE JOKING REF!!! The Cheshunt & Waltham Cross RS Magazine

A new book of Beckham jokes appeared in October. Here are samples.

*Why did David Beckham get so excited when he finished his jigsaw after just three weeks?
The box said 2 – 4 years!*



On his first flight to Madrid, David is told that chewing gum is a good way to stop his ears popping. As they land, he calls over the air stewardess and says, “The gum worked a treat, but do you know how I get it out of my ears?”



THE NORTH MIDDLESEX REFEREES SOCIETY 100 CLUB NEWS

The draw for the December winners was organised by Robin Jagot, and there were 48 shares subscribed resulting in payouts of £33.60.

December

First	22	Steve Wildgoose	£29.15
Second	14	Mike Sibley	£15.90
Third	26	Terry Hayne	£7.95

Cheques for this months winners are enclosed, together with those for the October and November winners, which were omitted from last months magazine.

If you would like to subscribe to the 100 Club, please complete the form below, and return it with your remittance to me at the address on the inside front cover of the magazine.

NORTH MIDDLESEX REFEREES SOCIETY 100 CLUB

I wish to purchase.....share(s) in the North Middlesex Referees Society 100 Club at £8.00 per share for the remainder of the season

Please find enclosed my cheque/postal order for £...00 to cover the subscription for 9 months.

Renewal information will be included with next seasons Membership Form

Name..... Signaure.....

Society Use - Numbers Allocated.....

Gary Cobden
Honorary Treasurer



North Middlesex Junior Referees and Promotees

CAN YOU MAKE USE OF THIS INFORMATION?

The whole essence of a good match is that it is near continuous as possible. So any stoppages should be dealt with as quickly as possible. So with 'normal free kick' situations, unless they request "ten yards Ref.", 'give and go' must be your motto. The speed of taking up your new position will encourage the free kick to be taken promptly. Organising the 'wall' without wasting too much time will come with experience. In the meantime, practise your estimate often yards. It's further than you think.

With injuries, the old adage, that a player will not move if he is really hurt is generally true. As also with any head injury, get the trainer on quickly. Otherwise, the law requires that if a player can be moved, he should leave the field for attention, then await your permission to rejoin the game.

Finally, you have the last word on all stoppages and alleged time wasting. Your watch should reflect this and time should be added. Needless to say, that after all your efforts to keep the game flowing, someone deliberately time wasting, will be cautioned. Another problem is the lost ball. After a goal attempt or boot out of play it goes way down the hill or over the fence etc., what to do?

Do you add time or not? Your pre-match walk about will alert you to such local problems. You have time enough now to prepare, extra balls checked, tested and ready for use, co operation from the home side to retrieve the lost ones. This will help to have a continuous game, with no extra time needed.

The 'advantage' is one of the most difficult decisions to make. I remind you that it is a decision and not a 'duck out' from making one. There is a lot of difference between talking your way through the game and shouting "Advantage". It is so good to see a perfect advantage played, but so often it happens that a player will be aggrieved because he believes the decision to be wrong. It is a must that the offended sees the offender spoken to as soon as possible after the incident.

It is a wise move in the earlier days of your career to give a foul and learn gradually the difference between a careless, reckless, clumsiness or excessive force tackle. On the park the line between what players will accept and that which they won't is a fine one indeed -between a good enjoyable flowing game and one with continuous niggling and ill feeling. Having given your decision then let everyone know the players, spectators and the assessor. Use the correct hand/voice combined signals(See LOAF) and shout.

It is essential that you let the linesman know his part in the match. Learn a set pattern of instructions that are as brief as possible, so that the pre match talk with them is not too long and they forget what you said first!

Try different diagonals for a few matches, and then use the easiest to run, always remembering you are supposed to keep the linesman always in view.

Having seen their signal, then you can either blow the whistle or acknowledge and play on. Remember it is you who give the decision and not the linesman, so do not point at him if someone argues.

Deal with the unhelpful as well as the over helpful as quickly as possible. The players expect you to be the authority. It may mean you having to dispense with their services. With neutral linesmen, who are also referees, you should ask for, and expect to receive a lot more helpful co-operation.

Observer