

## January 2008

**The next meeting of the North Middlesex Referees' Society will be held at Holtwhites Sports and Social Club, Kirkland Drive, Enfield on 17 January 2008 at 7.30 pm. Guest speaker is Ken Coniam, former Referees' Secretary of Herts FA. Secretary, Robin Jagot advises attendance at the meeting, as Ken is a speaker not to be missed!**

The December Society meeting was a star-studded event. A number of special guests including Derek Mennen, President of Middlesex County FA, joined members and friends to enjoy a pre-Christmas social evening and to witness long-serving Society Auditor, Brian Langstone, receiving the coveted FA 50 Year Award from FA Councillor, Tony Sharples. Other presentations were also made and all had a happy time. A report on the evening is included elsewhere in this issue.

Also in this edition world traveller and Society Life-Vice President, Peter Dace, continues his refereeing autobiography, "The Career of a Journeyman Referee" – Part 5. Peter has somehow managed to record all the matches he has refereed in his 36 seasons to date – and he is still 'reffing' despite spending most of his time travelling to foreign climes helping people enjoy themselves (as I write, he is in Austria). Well someone's got to do it!

Observer gives us plenty to think about in, "Are We Training Referees Just to Take Exams?" This well-reasoned article is particularly apt at this time with County FA's taking a major part in training and examining new referees. Hitherto, Societies such as ours have taken a 'cradle to the grave' role and it remains to be seen if the new system is an improvement on the well-tried and trusted old one.

Mention the name of retired Tring referee, Graham Poll, arguably the country's best referee, to any sports person and you are almost certain to be reminded of the three yellow cards he gave to Josip Simunic of Croatia before sending him off in the 2006 World Cup. Is it possible we could get Graham to be the Society's special guest at some time in the future? A short article on Graham appears elsewhere in this issue.

Included also in this month's edition are extracts from other Society magazines including The Chiltern Referee, the official magazine of The Chiltern District Society of Football Referees and "You Must Be Joking Ref!!!" the magazine of the Cheshunt and Waltham Cross Referees' Society. From the December 07 issue of the AFA ARGUS, the journal of the AFA and London Society of Association Referees we have taken Patrick Morrissey's "President's Viewpoint" on the "Top 10 ways to avoid injury when refereeing" – a subject of particular interest to so many colleagues. Part of this article has had to be carried over to February's edition.

It is with great sadness that we learn of the passing of Reg Paine who was Referees' Appointment Secretary at the FA for many years. NMRS Secretary, Robin Jagot, reports that Reg was a lovely man and good friend for many years to North Middlesex and other Societies. Our sincere condolences go to Reg's family.

I was at Bramall Lane to see the Blades lose to Crystal Palace 0-1 at the end of December; it is the only time I've heard both sets of supporters singing the praises of the visiting manager, "There's only one Neil Warnock!" Referee Andy D'Urso and his team were well worth watching, though!

**Contributions for February's magazine by 31 January 2008, please.**

## **Are We Training Referees Just to Pass Exams?**

Are we training new recruits or teaching them to pass exams? A question deliberately dismissed by some on the basis that we have a shortage of referees and must recruit as many as possible in the shortest possible time.

As is the same with a large percentage of commercial companies, new recruits or employees are given a short instruction on what to do and then thrown out to learn the job in the big wide world. Often this is done with no further involvement from those who originally instructed them. The days of a good apprenticeship appear to have been long forgotten. With this modern policy however, we are now being faced with a nation of unskilled workers, workers that are capable of the minimum requirements to do the job. A jack- of-all-trades!

With referees in mind, the same parallels can be drawn at local levels of football. New recruits are passing examinations and are competent in the knowledge of the Laws.

It is expected and accepted that no course will prepare for the inevitable personal experience of the real thing when the first game is approached, but could this first encounter be made any less daunting by having a longer and more in depth training course.

A course that, in addition to the long established learning of the Laws, includes the training group to collectively attend Saturday local matches (with the agreement of the referee) under the instruction of the trainers to get a real feel' for the game. To see the sort of responses that decisions can receive, to see spectator reactions and then invite the referee to an evening to discuss the game with the class. An opportunity to see the subtleties of the advantage clause and the non-interfering clause of the offside Law in action.

The exclusion of the field test is a backward step; this should be used in an effort to establish whether an individual has the strength of character to take charge of a game of football. We should be aware of his knowledge of the Laws of the Game by his exam result, but can he cope mentally while under pressure from teams?

It is obvious that new recruits can adequately learn the Laws of the Game and probably implement them on the field of play. What a course does not tell us or test in a candidate is their ability to control their own emotions under pressure from players. If match attendances are included in the course they will at least give an awareness of what to expect, and of course, if you have encountered it once, it is likely to be less threatening second time around.

As far as field tests are concerned, the candidate is still under instruction with the knowledge that back up is available if required, and most important, if they do experience problems, then matches will not be allocated until a successful field test has been completed.

It is important that field tests should be carried out as a final stage and must not be considered as a pass or fail for the course as a whole. If the required level is not achieved then further instruction should be offered by another field test. The whole course need not be retaken.

Attitude is another area that should be investigated, this is very important as the wrong attitude or approach to a situation could spell disaster.

It is obvious that personal levels of tolerance are the main factors in this area and this is something that is gained by experience, and I would agree. Experience however, is something that is gained from a situation that has been encountered before, so you can assess and decide whether to treat or react to the same situation any differently if encountered again.

If new recruits attend local matches with their trainers then they will gain that experience that will assist in giving them both the correct attitude and approach to situations before taking control of a game.

We all know that from the days of plentiful work and apprenticeships that good quality workers and work came as a direct result of proper training and not by passing an examination alone. It may well be that the courses are extended and run only once a season, but it will be a course of greater depth and greater quality to equip new recruits to better cope with the increasing demands of modern football.

In the coming years quality and character will again play a major role in the success of a referee, and consistency will be debated more than ever before. The question of quality or quantity must be answered. Only then will the training of referees have a real direction in which to proceed.

## **OBSERVER**



### **Brian Langstone's FA 50-Year Award**

At December's Society meeting, former Society Auditor, Brian Langstone, was presented with the FA's 50 Year Award for his services to North Middlesex. In the company of his many friends and colleagues Brian received his well-earned honour from FA Delegate and Councillor Tony Sharples, who paid tribute to Brian's 39 years of long and dedicated service.

Derek Mennell, President of Middlesex, also made a presentation to Brian on behalf of the Society and gave a bouquet of flowers to Brian's wife, Clare. Denise Cobden was also the deserving recipient of a bouquet for all her efforts in organising the evening's excellent buffet.

Among other personalities attending were Life Vice-Presidents George Basten, who travelled from Ramsgate to be present; Terry Hayne; Peter Dace; Robin Jagot and Mick Osborn. Lockie Bramzell from the London FA was also a guest. During the festivities, harmonica virtuoso and Society Vice Chairman, Vince Yeudall, gave an impromptu rendition on his small instrument – befitting the celebratory mood of the evening!

At the close of this very special event, Chairman Tom White thanked everyone for attending and in particular our special guests. Tom then paid tribute to everybody who had helped in any way to make the evening one to remember.



## **“The Continuing Career of a Journeyman Referee” – Part 5. Games 2,751 – 2,850**

Part 1 - the first 1,000 games    Normidian November 1985  
Part 2 - games 1,001 – 2,000    Normidian March 1996  
Part 3 - games 2,001 – 2,500    Normidian November 2001  
Part 4 - games 2,501 – 2,750    Normidian December 2005

Over 20 years ago I started this series of articles writing about games in which I had officiated, in blocks of 1,000. As time and age moves on it seems it takes nearly as long to officiate at 500 games, and then 250 games. Now I reminisce over just 100 games and which have taken me two years since last writing.

So as I reflect on game 2,850 in this, my 36<sup>th</sup> season, since starting it all on 7<sup>th</sup> October 1972 in a Southern Amateur League game between Old Stationers 4<sup>th</sup> X1 and Winchmore Hill 4<sup>th</sup> X1, I have to wonder where all the time has gone and to ask ‘Has it been fun’?

My Refereeing career has always had a gauge in front of me with the needle moving between the green side, for pleasure, and the red side, for aggravation. Without a doubt for the vast majority of these 36 seasons the needle has been very much on the green but nowadays it hovers between the two and I suspect is fast becoming permanently lodged on the red.

Whilst I go onto the pitch with every good intention I find it does not take me long to be aggravated by the bad behaviour, lack of sportsmanship and generally poor conduct from the players. Winning is now important to the point that even at the most humble level throw-ins on the half-way line have become critical; to give a foul produces a discussion group from the side awarded against; and to award a penalty is just too major to even contemplate. Indeed a simple free kick awarded anywhere on the ground produces yards of dialogue from the offending player offering an explanation why I, the Referee was wrong. How rich I would be if I charged a pound to each player telling me “I got the ball” whilst they ignore the poor, crumpled heap of opposition player lying on the ground nursing some form of injury.

How easily footballers go down, and how ridiculous they look when compared with Rugby players seen in the recent World Cup Tournament in France. It seems to me Rugby players refuse to show they have been hurt so not to give the opponent any moral advantage – whilst footballers go down fast to say, “look at me Ref, I have been sinned against”. As for goal kicks; corner kicks; and throw-ins, both sides immediately appeal, half of who well-know they are being dishonest. However that fraudulent

appeal helps in some ways because the goalkeeper appealing for a goal-kick is usually an indication it must have been a corner and to that extent my main fear on the football field – an outbreak of honesty, would leave me without these very indications which help make my decision.

So perhaps the foregoing is a sure sign I have been refereeing for too long and no doubt what I witness on the pitch are the standards of today but they are not my standards in which I believe and formed over many years. Maybe the boots should be finally hung up and I leave the officiating to a new generation of Referees who have equally high standards, but different standards from my own.

Was there a memorable game between my matches 2,751 and 2,850? Well game 2,850 was a line at Spurs Lodge for the under 18's versus Watford, and how nice to be temporarily off the park and around a Professional Club. That apart I remain forever grateful that at age 66 'somebody up there' continues to allow me to get on a football pitch and to still salvage some enjoyment out of the ninety minutes. I feel I 'run' as well as ever bearing in mind as a thirty year old I moved as though in my sixties (indeed one of the most noticeable features of my performance is 'rapid deceleration' ie coming to an abrupt halt after prolonged high-speed running – and without anyone noticing!).

I very much enjoy the camaraderie of being on the list of Assistant Referees on the good old Capital League, on which I have served since its formation in 1984 and with over 300 games under my belt I remain well ahead of my colleagues. Indeed I have been on this League so long I have been appointed to two Cup Finals in 1985 (yes 1985 not 1885) and 2004.

On Sundays I continue to Referee, and provide other Referees for QPR, games now played at the main training ground in Harlington. Despite an 80-mile round trip it is a nice standard in which to be involved with boys from under 9 to under 14. Also once a month I get a game with the Spurs Academy at Myddleton House.

On Saturdays I have largely retired and this enables me to watch 'The Bees' ie Barnet Football Club to continue their struggles in Coca Cola Division 2, with by far the worst ground and smallest support in the League. But of course as a football supporter you always believe in your team and know that next game everything will come good and the points that escaped us last week will next time be firmly in the bag. As a Barnet supporter the level of expectation is far different from the Premiership and I have huge pleasure from following them around, knowing what to expect and not getting cross or disappointed when results go against us.

*Continued overleaf*

This season I have attended most home games (often exchanging views with former Society Secretary Adrian Bland who is still torn between QPR and Underhill) and have travelled away to Morecambe, Chesterfield and Lincoln City. How sad though to pass the Bees training ‘ground’ close to my house – a field they rent from the local girls school. The Players park in the school car park, walk across the road, through the fence and into the field. Although Beckingham Palace is not too far away I suspect the great man might find this training facility is ‘a ground too far’ and insufficient to tempt him from the delights of Los Angeles.

So thank you Barnet FC for the pleasures of a winter season, my life would not feel right unless I was on some distant football field at 3 o’clock on a Saturday afternoon. And as always continued thanks to the Council and Members of North Middlesex Referees Society for that rock and support that remains here for us all to enjoy, learn from and exchange memories.

Will there be part 6 of this article for you to gloss over or probably ignore? Yes I am sure there will be as I already have game 2,852 under my belt, so even if the phone no longer rings there will be at least 2 more games on which to reflect.

Peter E Dace  
Life Vice President



**Graham Poll – TV Pundit**

It had to happen! The media despite of, or because of, his infamous three-yellow-card-trick during the Australia v Croatia game in the 2006 World Cup now fetes retired top referee Graham Poll of Herts. Graham now has a regular column in the Daily Mail, is a regular guest on BBC Radio 5 Live’s Saturday morning show and guests on TV.

While referees in particular will consider it about time that the usual TV commentators are given the benefit of having an experienced official in their midst, Graham could easily find himself in a cleft stick when, with the hindsight of numerous replays, he has to tell viewers that the referee does at times get decisions wrong. Some would say this is a healthy state of affairs and a way of educating the masses on the Laws of the Game and their interpretation. On television recently, Graham was called upon to discuss and explain controversial refereeing decisions seen by viewers on encroachment, offside and other incidents, which he did very well. However, it is not clear whether his continued presence as a pundit endears him to his former colleagues who officiate on the televised games he now comments on but it would be a pity if ex-players and TV commentators were the only ones given the opportunity to express their unfettered views on the screen. Time will tell.

In the meantime, it is an unusual and enjoyable experience for referees to see one of their own having a say on the “box” and also to read his expert comments in the press. Graham’s autobiography “Seeing Red” is out now.





E-mail:-:

[office@ackerman.co.uk](mailto:office@ackerman.co.uk)

[sales@ackerman.co.uk](mailto:sales@ackerman.co.uk)

[accounts@ackerman.co.uk](mailto:accounts@ackerman.co.uk)

15/16 Hickman Avenue, Chingford,  
London, E4 9JG, England

[www.ackerman.co.uk](http://www.ackerman.co.uk)

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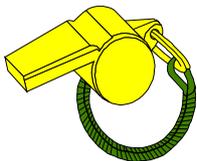
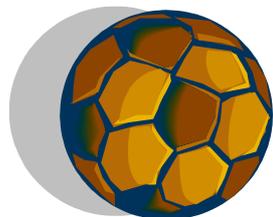
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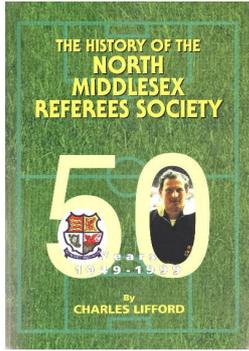
The advent of the new multi-caution report form has made life a lot easier for the referee, but I cannot stress enough the importance of making sure all sending off reports are completed accurately and in time.

Ian Blanchard

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[www.buy.at/nmrs](http://www.buy.at/nmrs)  
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North Middlesex Referees Society



## **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Book**

In 1999, the Society celebrated its 50th Anniversary. To celebrate this, the Society published a book charting its history over the years including profiles; facts; and photographs. The book was written and compiled for the Society by Charles Lifford.

If you would like to purchase a copy of this book - **NORTH MIDDLESEX REFEREES SOCIETY - A CELEBRATION OF 50 YEARS FOOTBALL** - contact **Society Treasurer, Gary Cobden**, on 01992 469153 or by e-mail – [treasurer@northmiddlesexreferees.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@northmiddlesexreferees.org.uk)

### **What Would You Do? From the Chiltern Referee December 2007**

**Q1.** An attacker runs towards the penalty area. A defender grabs his shirt. But he manages to continue into the penalty area, where, still being held, he falls to the ground. What would you do?

**Q2.** At the start of a match you order the kick to be retaken due to encroachment into his opponent's half. While you prepare for the kick off to be retaken the Red No. 5 punches Blue No. 9. You dismiss the Red player for violent conduct. How would you restart play?

**Q3.** Following the same incident, and before you have restarted the game, there is a loud argument between the managers. The Red manager insists he can substitute his dismissed player, while the Blue manager insists he can't. What would you do?

**Q4.** You stop the game to caution the Red No. 5 because despite your previous warnings to him, he continues to show you dissent. He even continues to dissent as you caution him. What would you do?

**Q5.** You stop play for an injury and want to restart play with a dropped ball. There are five players who want to contest the ball and jostle for position. What would you do?

**Q6.** Can play be brought back for a free kick after an advantage if the fouled player has retained possession and taken a shot at goal? (from Graham Poll's Referee's Clinic. D Mail 29.9.07)

**Q7.** After the Red goalkeeper has taken a goal kick, but before the ball leaves the penalty area, a Blue opponent enters the area and is chased and tripped by a defending Red player. What would you do?

**Answers overleaf.**



## **What Would You Do – Answers (see previous page)**

- A1.** Award a penalty kick. Caution the player who pulled the shirt. It does not matter that the offence started outside the penalty area.
- A2.** Re-take the kick off, the match had not started.
- A3.** Allow the replacement (it's not a substitute) – a player dismissed before kick off may be replaced by a named substitute.
- A4** If the continued dissent warrants a second caution, dismiss the player for a second caution. Restart with an indirect free-kick from where the offence occurred.
- A5.** Allow them to go for the ball. You cannot decide who may or may not contest a dropped ball.
- A6** Yes there is nothing in the Laws that prevent this, if the referee feels the player was disadvantaged by the foul. However, credibility is vital. Having allowed play to continue, it is very unusual to allow a second chance.
- A7** Issue a red/yellow card depending on the severity of the offence. Restart with a re-taken goal-kick – the ball never left the penalty area and was never in play.



### **Observations From Dave Baker – You Must Be Joking Ref!!! – the Cheshunt and Waltham Cross RS magazine.**

#### **October 20, Everton v Liverpool – Referee Mark Clattenburg**

It has always been a source of annoyance to me to witness the amount of what I call illegal use of the hands and arms. I anger when I see so much of it goes unpunished, especially in the upper strata of our game. I understand, as do most of us, that it is impossible to have your eyes everywhere when a corner kick is being taken. However, I am saddened when I see blatant holding offences not being penalised as I noticed in the above game. The two incidents we saw really warranted a penalty kick in both cases. I am sure that all members must have seen them.

I have no special liking for David Moyes, but I did understand his disbelief at the lack of action on the part of Mark Clattenburg. I am always telling the kids to stop holding and pushing each other, something they do not seem to understand.

That said, I was pleased and interested to see the position of this referee at a penalty kick situation... He stood on the corner of the penalty area for the express purpose of cutting out encroachment and I was pleased to see how well it seemed to work.

This is another of another of my dislikes. I have seen examples of rank encroachment going unpunished at the top level of the game, making a mockery of the Law. The wording allowing us to let the kick 'proceed' sometimes causes problems and on one occasion I did stop a penalty kick from being taken in order to stop the encroachment, and to have the kick taken in accordance with the Laws.



## **President's Viewpoint – Patrick Morrissey in the December 07 edition of the AFA ARGUS**

### **Top 10 ways to avoid injury when refereeing**

As the pace of football at all levels increases, so does the incidence of injury both to players and officials. There are many causes of injury – some internal to the individual (mental/physical fitness), some external (surface, weather, duration of activity, degree of physical contact). Most player injuries in football matches are caused by physical contact (up to 85% in some studies) but there is also a comparatively high incidence of training injuries where the body is being pushed to its physical limits.

The football referee should be able to avoid the majority of contact injuries (although serious accidental collisions do occur – as happened to Phil Crossley, our last Annual Dinner Guest speaker, who broke a couple of ribs a few days later). But the modern emphasis on referee mobility and positional play, with distance running during a game being far in excess of most players on the pitch means that common sense “avoidance of injury” should be high on the list of priorities, whether in match or training situations.

### **Summary**

1. Allow lots of time for warming up and cooling down
2. Never do vigorous exercise when stiff
3. Check training and pitch surfaces beforehand
4. Use the right footwear
5. Shower and change immediately after exercise
6. Travel in comfort and in good time
7. Avoid infection
8. Look for signs of fatigue. If in doubt, ease off
9. Don't let minor strains become major injuries
10. Develop and stick to a regular exercise and match routine

#### **1. Warming up and cooling down**

I see many referees at grassroots level who do no warm up at all. They may do a few stretches in the dressing room. But that's it! They risk an early injury in the immediate game, and an early retirement from their refereeing career because of the damage they are doing to ligaments, tendons and joints. Warm muscles stretch much better than cold muscles. Ligaments and tendons are much more likely to tear when the muscles are cold and inflexible. The warm-up procedure helps in several other ways, too, both physically in diverting the blood flow from non-essential areas to working muscles, and mentally, in focusing on the approaching match.

A warm up of at least 15 minutes is recommended before every game or training, starting with 5-10 minutes of gentle movement, gradually increasing in pace, followed by stretching and progressive increase to faster strides and eventually to short sprints.

The cool-down is even more neglected than the warm up by referees. But even if you do not do the 10-15 minutes recommended to help the body return to normal temperature and help flush out the fatigue products in the muscles, you should do some basic stretches immediately after the game to help reduce later stiffness.

**Continued overleaf**

## **Ten Top Ways... continued**

### **2. Never do vigorous exercise when stiff**

I am always surprised at referees who do a game in the morning and then do another (perhaps more senior) game in the afternoon. There are obvious risks – both physically and mentally. But the physical risk in the second game is that running is less rhythmical, movements are not as well co-ordinated and injuries are more likely.

### **3. Check the ground beforehand**

Whether as a referee or Assistant, it pays to closely examine the pitch before the game for both the players and your own welfare. Check for holes, undulations, slopes, wet or slippery areas. Training runs on pavements in the dark are not recommended. Train on grass if at all possible.

### **4. Wear the right footwear**

We have just experienced one of the driest autumns on record. But as we go into December that is likely to change rapidly. Carrying a choice of boots to fit the pitch conditions is vital for the referee. And making the right choice before the game is much helped by doing a pre-match warm up on the pitch.

My own experience is that heavier conditions and changing to boots that fit the conditions is a danger time for injuries. It makes sense therefore to try the switch before it is necessary, using studded/blade boots for short periods during training.

Moving between grass and artificial surfaces puts differing strains on feet, ankles and legs. Interestingly, FIFA surveys show a significantly higher proportion of non-contact injuries suffered by players on artificial surfaces compared to grass.

### **5. Shower and change quickly after exercise**

This reduces the likelihood of stiffening up and your chances of catching a cold.

### **6. Travel in comfort and in good time**

This may sound unimportant, but a long drive or sitting awkwardly on a bus or train before a game will increase your chances of injury. It is recommended that where possible you get up, walk around and stretch often while travelling.

By getting to the ground early, you have the opportunity to walk off the journey.

### **7. Avoid infection**

After hard training or matches sessions, the immune system is definitely vulnerable. It is important to restore energy levels with carbohydrate as soon as possible. People in hard training are particularly susceptible before a big event. So if you have a big match coming up, stay away from crowded rooms, schools, and people with bad colds.

### **8. Monitor fatigue**

In hindsight it is usually possible to trace the cause of an illness or injury, and there is usually a point where you should have eased off, but you didn't. You should be aware of the early signs of over-tiredness. A raised resting pulse is a sure sign.

**Continued in next month's edition of Normidian. Ed.**

