

March 2008

The next meeting of the North Middlesex Referees' Society will be held at Holtwhites Sports and Social Club, Kirkland Drive, Enfield at 7.30 pm on Thursday, 13th March 2008 not on the 20th as published in last month's magazine. Members of the Training Team are organising a Quiz evening.

The Society's Annual General Meeting is due to be held at the above venue at 7.30pm on Thursday 15th May 2008; a provisional Agenda will appear in next month's edition of the Normidian. Brief details of the AGM are also included in this issue.

Also in this issue, Treasurer Gary Cobden reminds us that Membership Fees are due for next season and the winners of the NMRS 100 Club are published as usual. Gary also appeals for a second Auditor – we need to have two. Also, yours truly steps down as the magazine editor. If anyone is interested in either position please contact Secretary Robin Jagot or Gary.

For some inexplicable reason (to me anyway) Life Vice-President Peter Dace's excellent article in last month's magazine, about his being a Reserve Official on the Football League, had a couple of lines missing at the foot of the second page. After referring to George Courtney as the best referee he saw in action at close quarters, Peter concluded: "In recent years perhaps only the great Italian Referee, Pierluigi Collina has had such an effect on players before even leaving the dressing room". This sentence mysteriously disappeared into cyber space – our apologies to Peter.

"Etiquette of the Dressing Room", an interesting and amusing account of the manners of officials in the changing area, is Peter's contribution this month and another Life Vice-President, Ken Goldman, writes "Whither Justice?" which may ring a bell with some members; we also include a piece from The Chiltern Referee by Bryan Fisher, and two articles from Observer to consider.

Last month's Society's meeting coincided with Spurs playing at home resulting in the those attending being even fewer than usual thus compounding a worrying trend for Council. The few who did attend, took the opportunity to discuss anything and everything refereeing over a drink – so all was not completely lost! However, Council continue to explore every avenue in an effort to entice members to attend Society meetings. Ideas to Secretary, Robin Jagot, please.

The follow-up to "Turf war..." see last month's edition, is included elsewhere in this issue. It is entitled: "So, what is Give Us Back Our Game? (GUBOG)". GUBOG, has a website and was featured in the first issue of "Total Youth Football". Cup appointments, including those for this season's Cup Finals, have been held over to the April issue.

Looking forward to April's meeting on the 17th, guest speaker is Brian Hill. Brian, as our more senior colleagues are aware, is a former Football League, Premier League and FIFA Referee. He also refereed the 1988 Cup Final between Liverpool and Wimbledon in May of that year so it is fitting that we should celebrate the 20th Anniversary of that momentous occasion. Next month we re-print an article about Brian's FA Cup Final day written by Peter Dace and first published in the September 1988 issue of the magazine. Besides Brian and his colleagues, Peter himself played a prominent part in the proceedings leading up to the start of the match – all is revealed next month!

Contributions for the April 2008 magazine by 31 March, please.

Etiquette of the Dressing Room

It is many years since the Society had a talk from a guest speak on ‘the etiquette of the dressing room’. At that time I was in my formative years as a Referee and learned so much about the rights and wrongs of how the Match Officials should conduct themselves within the sanctity of their changing room.

Little things maybe, like only the Match Referee responds with “come in” to knocks on the dressing room door. First into the shower after the game is the Referee, unless he is nowhere near ready to wash and then as a courtesy the Assistant Referee should ask “can I get started?”

Nowadays I am rarely part of a three person team (nearly wrote a three man team) but it seems to me there are deteriorating standards which need to be addressed – and hence dear reader, the purpose of this article.

Compared with all those years ago when we had the guest speaker, we now have the curse of the mobile phone. Should the phones be taken into the dressing room or left in the car? I am in no doubt, the phone stays in the car leaving the three officials to talk about the game without distractions and the constant hope/fear that a text is about to arrive. How often though have all three got their phone with them and too often they are used to originate calls much less answer the dreaded ring. Indeed it now seems that when returning to the dressing room it is almost mandatory to check the phone for messages and even to respond immediately whilst ignoring colleagues.

The other bad habit which I experience too often is the boot cleaning ceremony ie one of the officials who feels the need to get out the boot polish and give the boots that final shine. What a disgusting smell from boot polish and in the confined space of a dressing room. Surely boot cleaning/polishing should be carried out at home. Next thing someone will bring an iron to ensure their jock strap is immaculate.

I am sure readers will have other matters they believe should be forbidden in the dressing room and I will be most interested to read of them.

Peter E. Dace Life Vice President



What annoys me is when Referees or Assistant Referees smoke in the dressing room – either before or after a game. Less common now, thank goodness! Ed.



“Whither Justice?” by Ken Goldman

Although I am registered with the London FA, this sorry tale could unfortunately be replicated in other Counties.

Earlier this season I had occasion to dismiss a player, who I will call “X”, for violent conduct. My report as submitted read as follows: “In the 47th minute of the match player “Y” made a rash tackle (for which he was subsequently cautioned by me). Unfortunately “X” quite literally reacted violently to that challenge by attempting to strike his opponent although I could not see if the punch or punches landed. However, “X” also wrestled his opponent to the ground before other players separated them. The opponent was able to continue although somewhat shaken up. I sent off “X” for violent conduct”.

As often happens some of these clever guys decided to appeal. The Disciplinary Committee of the London FA, without consulting me as the date of the appeal, set it for an evening when I could not attend because I was in the Midlands during the day, for a meeting from which I could not get back in time. I contacted them and said that I was perfectly willing to attend another night if they would postpone the meeting. I was told by the Officer in charge it was not necessary as my Report would suffice but I nonetheless put my offer in writing to them. Just recently I had occasion to speak to one of the members of the opposite team to Mr “X” who told me that the Committee had let Mr “X” off.

I have to say that unless there is something entirely wrong with my Report writing I find this whole situation both appalling and unacceptable. My reasons for this are as follows:

- 1) The guilt of the player in front on numerous other players.
- 2) The implied suggestion that I had not seen the incident at all or had seen it but was mistakenly incompetent.
- 3) I was lying, for some obscure reason.
- 4) Probably the worst of the lot that the person more sinned against received a fine, which he had to pay, whilst the greater sinner got off entirely. How can that be right?

It is hardly surprising, given that Graham Poll seems to have enunciated the same complaint in his book about the Disciplinary sections of the FA in regard to his complaints against John Terry, that there is such a problem about recruitment and especially retention of referees.

Of course we referees are never notified of the Committees’ decisions much less their reasons for them but I would like someone from the London FA if they read this (and I hope this article will be circulated to other Society Magazines) to give me an explanation as to how these things can happen and why they refused to allow me to attend the Hearing on another evening.

I can only say that this leaves me wondering “Whither Justice?”.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of North Middlesex Referees Society will be held on Thursday, 15th May 2008, commencing at 7.30pm, at Holtwhites Sports and Social Club, Kirkland Drive, Off Holtwhites Hill, Enfield, Middlesex.

A provisional Agenda for the Meeting will appear in next months Normidian. Any person wishing to stand as an Officer for Season 2008/2009 must be duly Proposed and Seconded – and assented by the nominee - in accordance with Society Rule 9c. Any proposals for changes to Society Rules must be duly Proposed and Seconded in accordance with Society Rule 9d. Both proposals for Officers and changes to Rules must be received by the Secretary not less than 21 days before the Annual General Meeting - i.e. not later than 24th April 2008.

Robin Jagot

Honorary Secretary
24 Tiverton Road
Potters Bar
Hertfordshire
EN6 5HY



WANTED – Auditor



As things stand at the moment, the Society only has one appointed Auditor, Ken Goldman, whereby we are actually required to have two. The position of Auditor is not an onerous task, involving no more than one evening of your time a year, usually during April or May. Ideally, you should have knowledge of accounting, although this is not absolutely necessary. If you are interested in taking up this position, please contact the Society Treasurer, either by phone on 01992 469153 or by e-mail to treasurer@northmiddlesexreferees.org.uk.



NMRS 100 Club – Result for February 2008.

The draw was made by Charles Lifford at the recent NMRS Council Meeting. For the February draw we pay out the full 100% of the monthly income.

First	Second	Third
18 Arthur Stewart £20.90	20 Dave Ackerman £11.40	30 Phil Bowman £5.70

Winner's cheques are enclosed with this copy of the Normidian; if you receive your Normidian by e-mail, the cheques will be posted to you. Remember to include your renewal subscription in with your Membership Fee, and indicate how many shares you wish to subscribe for.

Gary Cobden

Honorary Treasurer



Manchester United striker Wayne Rooney is ready to give up learning the guitar after struggling with the basics and complaining it "is doing my head in". The England star wants to take up the drums instead. (The Sun)

Arsenal players have reportedly asked William Gallas to start acting like a captain, after he staged a bizarre on-pitch sit-in and had a crying fit after his side's 2-2 draw with Birmingham. (Daily Mirror)



Membership Fees for Season 2008/2009 are now due!

Yes ladies and gents, it's that time of year again. Your membership subscription for Season 2008/2009 becomes due on 1 April 2008. Where the Society has an e-mail address on file, and you normally receive your magazine by e-mail, you should have received a Membership Form in this way; for everybody else, a Membership Form is included with this month's Normidian. The NMRS Membership Fee is again being held at £10.00 for further year. However, for the second year running, the Referees Association of England has again increased its subscription by £2.00.

Membership Fees payable are as follows:-

- **Full Members - £25.00.** This includes your Referees Association of England fee of £15.00 including the Insurance Premium of £4.00. If you are over 75, you are not automatically covered by the Insurance Premium, and your fee payable will be reduced by £4.00. However, should you wish to purchase insurance cover, this can be arranged for a fee of £8.00 making a total amount payable of £29.00.
- **Associate Members - £10.00.** You must pay your Referees Association of England fee through another Society, and this should be shown on your Membership Form.
- **Junior Members - £15.50.** Members under 18 years of age, including your Referees Association of England fee of £9.50.

Individual fees payable are shown on your personalised Membership Form. The Adult fees shown above are only valid until 31 July 2008; after that date they will increase by £2.00. You are also reminded that you will not be covered by the Referees Association of England Insurance after 31 May 2008 unless your fees have been paid to the Society by that date. Please complete and return your Membership Form as soon as possible. You need to bear this in mind if you will be refereeing late season or early pre-season games.

It would be appreciated if you could you all check your details shown on the Form, and amend any information that is shown incorrectly. Please also specifically check e-mail addresses shown carefully, as some that we have on file are resulting in bounce backs. Additionally, please check that the NPD Number (Registration Number) shown is correct, and complete it if it is missing from the Membership Form. The number can be found on your County FA Registration Form. If you are not currently registered with a County FA, please indicate on your form as Not Registered. Please also indicate where requested whether you are an Assessor; Examiner; Instructor; or Mentor.

As well as receiving a Membership Card from the Referees Association of England, this year every registered member will be given a 'commemorative medallion' as a gift to celebrate the centenary of the Referees Association.

Gary Cobden
Honorary Treasurer



WANTED – Magazine Editor

As of next season, we will be looking for a new Magazine Editor. Terry Wilson, who has edited the Normidian for a number of years, has decided that he would like to stand down from the post at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting. The Magazine is the lifeblood of the Society, and Magazine Editor is a position that must be filled. Should you be interested in the taking up the position, please contact the Society Secretary, Robin Jagot, either by phone on 01707 651461 or by e-mail to secretary@northmiddlesexreferees.org.uk.



GETTING A REPUTATION

How does a Referee establish a reputation, both in the long and short term that reflects all that he would wish if he could write his own reference?

Long term in the sense that when his name is mentioned by players and officials, his capabilities are spoken of with respect and understanding.

Short term in the context of the actual game which he is refereeing in which one controversial incident seems to follow another and all in all the pressures on him are rather heavy, to say the least.

There is no easy answer, but it is a question which you should all be aware of in your refereeing experience and one to which you may never find the true answer at all.

Reputations within the context of one match are easily attached to us. This usually has little true justification, because club officials and players view the performances from a very narrow position.

How easy it is to be strong and courageous when awarding a penalty to the visiting team in the last minute from which they score the winning goal. One small problem - the home team viewpoint is totally opposite; you were incompetent and you were conned because the forward took a dive. One game, one decision, but two diametrically opposite opinions concerning the referee's performance in the same game.

Do we react?
How do we react?
Should we react?

Should we ignore it all and look forward to our next game?

The matter should be given more than just a little thought, not too much but enough to ask yourself one straight question: "Was my decision given honestly, firmly and without fear?" If, as it should be, the answer is YES, then you have gone a long way towards establishing a long-term reputation that has been mentioned above.

You see, football is a very emotional game and in the heat of the moment, when we have made controversial decisions, albeit honest ones, you are bound to please and displease in one and the same action. This must not worry you and you must accept it. Generally, initial anger of an aggrieved side will fade. It may not fade completely, but sufficiently for the long term view to be expressed that "We didn't agree with him last time he was here, but at least he was always fair, firm, fearless and consistent, and you can't really ask for more than that."

THAT'S HOW LONG TERM REPUTATIONS ARE BUILT.

OBSERVER





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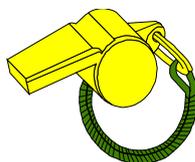
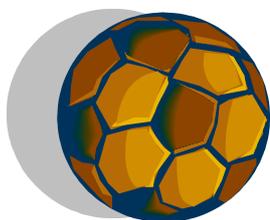
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What They Said – from The Chiltern Referee

“We ended up playing football and that’s not our style.”

Alex Macdonald

“It looks as if I’m trying to stab Dave Bassett in the back but I’m not holding a gun to anybody’s head.”

Micky Adams





All purchases through our webshop at
www.buy.at/nmrs
and help raise money for
North Middlesex Referees Society

Match Programme, Arsenal v Wolves 27th November 1954 – taken from “Yesteryear 28” in The Chiltern Referee by Bryan Fisher.

Voice of Arsenal

... we received a letter from Mr F Bennett of London N18, who says:

“I note with interest the article by Mr E. T. Wilson on the “stopper” and the offside tactics in football. While agreeing mainly with what he says, I find he omits some very important factors. Prior to the 1925 change in the Law the crowds were diminishing and goals were scarce. Some football grounds were being used for other competitive sports, which were drawing the crowds.

A great personality introduced offside tactics, which effectively penned his opponents in their own half of the field, which resulted in the game becoming dull and uninteresting. That was McCracken of Newcastle United. Bill and his goalkeeper would be the only defenders in their own half when three defenders were necessary for an attacker to be in an “onside” position, and as soon as the attacker moved across the halfway line, McCracken would gesticulate wildly and yell “Offside” to the accompanying moans from the crowd.

Goals are essential to football and the change of Law at that particular period was an effective “shot in the arm” and prevented the further dwindling of crowds. I heartily agree that players can, by clever combination and timing of passes, beat offside tactics. The difference between “being in an offside position” and “interfering with the play” does not appear to be understood, and in support of this I quote a discussion I had with George Allison and the late Joe Levi after a match which was lost by forwards getting offside. We all agreed that players of talent and experience after traps would, on match days, appear to forget all about their schemes and fall into the trap time and time again.

In closing I would like to say that my football years are equal to Mr Wilson’s. I was a player, club and league official, London FA Referee for 12 years (first class) and now watch Arsenal – home and away”.

(Ed. Bryan remarks that even in those days the offside Law was not understood. Other pieces in this programme involved a discussion of boot-studs ... “metal studs – even if covered with rubber or leather – are not permitted... when a referee discovers nails to be protruding from a player’s boots he shall order the player off the field to have adjustments made ... there is no punishment for having protruding nails in boots” (Ed. It’s much the same with modern bladed boots, isn’t it!!!)

The piece ends... We should all remember that the referee has a hard and difficult task to perform and he should be supported by everyone interested in the game – players, supporters, officials, Press alike. The referee is a human being like yourself but usually he is much nearer an incident on the field than those watching the game.



Well!

Alan Shearer, TV pundit and all-time Newcastle Utd top scorer (206 goals), had a trial with the club as a schoolboy, but they played him in goal, and failed to spot his talent.



THINKING ABOUT THE GAME

The more you put into the game, the more you will get out.

Every referee has potential but not everyone is achieving that potential because they are not thinking enough about the game. For instance: where is the best position for the referee to stand at a penalty kick? The referee needs to be able to see both the kicker and the keeper at the same time. Surely then, the best position is behind the kicker.

THINK ABOUT IT.

Problems:

1) Referees have total power.

They need to *THINK ABOUT* how they exercise their power during a game. They should use the power with empathy, understanding, courage and good humour.

Make sure the power works for you.

THINK ABOUT your relationships with the players. There are different ways of dealing with trouble; try to be good tempered. Having blown up for foul play never run towards the offender:

- a) He knows he is wrong, let him stew about what action you will take.
- b) The walk gives you time to calm down.
- c) The walk gives you time to *THINK ABOUT* what needs to be said.

2. Automatic mentality

Referees should not go into every game on "automatic pilot". Every game is different and referees need to *THINK ABOUT* their approach to each game.

For instance, where does the referee stand at a corner?

He needs to *THINK ABOUT* the standard of football, the weather, the size of the pitch and the state of the game.

Always *THINK ABOUT* your position.

You should know *why* you are *where* you are. *THINK ABOUT IT.*

The referee needs to *THINK ABOUT* how to use aids such as the *whistle* and *signals*.

Whistle; use it to express how you feel. BE FIRST AND BE FAST!

Make the players believe you know what you are doing.

Do not be monotonous in the use of your whistle

The rule, BE FIRST AND BE FAST should always be used except when the ball goes in the net.

When the ball goes in the net you should do four things.

1. *THINK.*
2. Consult the assistants (usually visually)
3. Decide, the outcome
4. Announce, the result

However, do not let the whistle absolve you from taking the appropriate and proper action with a player.

Signals should be definite and authoritative. Use a straight arm. *THINK ABOUT* your demeanour.

Continued

Two other problems: -

1). Penalty Kick, in particular a penalty kick of the second kind, i.e. one in which there is a certain amount of disagreement.

THINK ABOUT the position you should take to minimise the protests of the players; on the edge of the penalty area, level with the 6-yard line? *THINK ABOUT IT*.

2) Self-Induced use of advantage.

THINK ABOUT the maxim "Never use advantage to your own disadvantage."

As a general rule never use advantage for a serious physical foul and for a foul on the goalkeeper.

As referees we should all *THINK MORE ABOUT* the game, our performance, our fitness, our positioning, and our relationships with our colleagues, club assistants, the players, our training, and our future.

The more you put into the game, the more you will get out of it.

OBSERVER



REFS ON STRIKE! – from the AFA Argus

One day in November 2007, 40 referees in Warley RA downed their tools wreaking havoc in Birmingham's Warley and District Sunday League to express their concerns about player/club behaviour. In an added twist, nobody was informed in advance – leading to a cold, miserable and frustrating wait for countless players and managers.

Andrew Cartwright, Secretary of the WRA and co-organiser of the strike was reported as commenting, "A player doesn't give us prior warning if he's going to be aggressive".



CHANTS OF THE WEEK – taken from the Barnet Town FC programme

"We'll race you back to London!"

Arsenal fans to United supporters during their 4-0 fifth round defeat at Old Trafford.

"Where are ya?"

Millwall fans to their Huddersfield counterparts at a fog-bound McAlpine Stadium.

"Taxi for Driver!"

Celtic fans to Hearts player Andrew Driver after he fluffed two clear chances in quick succession.

"You're supposed to pay the bills!"

MK Dons fans to Swansea after a brief floodlight failure during the Johnstone's Paint Trophy southern area final at the Liberty Stadium.

"There's only one Gordon Ramsay!"

Hull City fans while playing Delia Smith's Norwich.

"Where's your burger van?"

"Have you ever seen a salad?"

"Have you ever seen your **?"**

QPR fans to Sheffield United goalkeeper Paddy Kenny.





So, what is Give Us Back Our Game (GUBOG)?

GUBOG are concerned that the 'beautiful game' is in decline. Football for children is now very different from earlier generations when the only adult involvement was a call from your mum that your tea was ready. Football is no longer beautiful for our kids anymore: it's ugly. In a world where children can no longer play outside without supervision, parents and coaches have taken over, and the competitive drive adults bring to the game means youngsters no longer have time to fall in love with football, to play for fun and thus truly to develop their skills. Today's

children learn from the adults. Without the freedom of the streets, their early experiences of football are organised, supervised and coached. They have no real say in what happens, and they don't have time to develop and learn.

The problem areas are:

- No longer the children's game - it is controlled by adults
- The same children on the bench or omitted every game
- Coaches and parents screaming from the touchlines
- Winning before fun and development
- Not enough free play where children can solve their own problems
- Children are not encouraged to express themselves
- Children no longer learn about the spirit of the game for themselves

Pioneers of small-sided soccer, GUBOG have announced plans for a worldwide 4v4 Fun Day in July 2008 following on from the success of the 2007 event. The events will be run by independent football coaches, clubs, soccer schools and associations, as in 2007. The 2008 Fun Day will take place from July 6th to July 8th. In 2007, clubs, schools, councils, soccer schools and play groups took part in 12 different countries, and it is hoped this year's event will be even bigger and better.

GUBOG are producing special packs, including leaflets, posters and guidelines which will be sent out to prospective event organisers. If you are interested in running an event, please contact GUBOG via email at giveusbackourgame@gmail.com with details of what you'd like to do, which age groups it would cover and whether it is an in-house or open invitation event.

This burgeoning trend in relaxed, player-led football, (where kids referee themselves; scores are not important; there are no leagues), as opposed to more traditional soccer, can, in part, be traced back to one of the biggest football clubs in the world, Manchester United. In 2002 the academy directors at United wanted to investigate the possible benefits 4v4 games could provide for their younger players, in comparison to the standard 7v7 or 8v8 mini soccer formats. At the start of the 2002/2003 season they commissioned Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) to conduct a research project, in conjunction with their own 4v4 pilot scheme, on which United could then base their future academy plans. The results helped produce a revolutionary new approach to youth football, and gave birth to an international 4v4 campaign.

It was the man behind the MMU project, together with a fellow football coach, who came up with the GUBOG campaign, and, since its inception in October 2006, awareness of GUBOG has grown to such an extent that it is now officially endorsed by the Football Association. The skills coaches at United sat down at Carrington, and thought about the best players in the world and tried to work out how they had learned the skills they had. Initially introduced for their Under 9 team, instead of playing 8v8 they wanted to try 4v4 – and the MMU had open access to the academy for a full year, eventually producing a 200 page report of its findings. Some of the reports findings are as follows:-

135% more passes	250% more scoring attempts	500% more goals
325% more 1v1 encounters		280% more dribbling skills (tricks)

GUBOG was featured in Issue 1 of Total Youth Football. For more information on GUBOG in general, or the Fun Days, see the GUBOG website at www.giveusbackourgame.co.uk.

