

The Reading Referee





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EDITORIAL

Richard's Portuguese Diary

Richard Dow was selected as one of three Berks & Bucks young referees to take part in the 2012 Iber Cup in Lisbon. The Iber Cup has entries from many elite clubs from around the world such as Athletic Madrid, Sporting Lisbon, Bayer Leverkusen, Juventus, Chivas de Guadalajara and many more. What an opportunity! Richard has kindly let us publish his diary for his time there, which is our page two (and three) article for this issue. As you will see there was a very busy schedule and he has also bravely included his learning points from the experience. Many thanks Richard.

Does it matter why you started refereeing?

Our guest speaker in October was the master craftsman assistant referee Phil Sharp. He told us as an aside that he was staggered a little while ago to discover that he was on Wikipedia. Put Phil Sharp in your search engine and you will find his listing. What intrigued me was that he started refereeing as part of his Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme community service. There has been some criticism in recent years by the FA of young people taking the referee course for that purpose. This is because they feel that time and money has been spent on training youngsters who will not carry on refereeing.

Our guest speaker for September on the other hand took up the whistle while she was secretary of her son's football club, one of Middlesex's largest at the time. Of course this has been another reason for many to start in refereeing. Again, although this has meant youth games get covered, there has been some misgivings as it is thought that once the son (or daughter) grows up their interest in refereeing will diminish. Here are two people who have disproved that theory, having continued their not inconsiderable service to the game for many years. Of course these sorts of records are never kept but it would be interesting to know what reason for taking up refereeing has resulted in the longest service.

Eighty Years Strong – support our club Assistant Referees' Award

Inside this copy of the magazine, I mention that it was in 1933 that the idea for a club linesman award to recognise and encourage those who fill the most difficult job of club linesman, now club assistant referees, was first put to the committee of Reading RA. Let me get in first and dispel any rumors that I was a member at that time. I was actually living in India in 1933.

Dick Sawdon Smith

RICHARD DOW'S DIARY

Lisbon/IBER Cup 2012

Sunday 24th June

A few hours after touching down and checking in at the hote, we had changed into our training kits and headed to Jamor via the train and Metro. Once we arrived at Jamor we headed for the running track where we took part in the Football League fitness test. It was made clear that we were allowed to drop out at anytime as this was just to help us adapt to the heat. However, the refs and I in our group wanted to complete the test. By the end of the 7th lap the coaches thought it was best we stop and save ourselves for the week ahead. This was our first taste into what it will be like to ref in 39 degree heat. It was hard as the heat definitely takes extra energy out of you.

When we got back to the hotel and had cooled down we met in the conference room. In this meeting we were told what games we would be doing for the first 2 days of the competition. I was told that I would be on 3 games for the first day, kicking off with a middle on the afternoon games, followed by a line and then a final game as 4th official. I knew that the heat would be hottest during the afternoon games but I was too excited to worry about that and couldn't wait to get started.

Monday 25th June

I was glad to be on the late games as it meant I was more composed and had more time to get to Jamor if I had got on the wrong train. I was on the middle for the first game of the afternoon and was raring to go. I found straight away that the playing style of the foreign teams was different to what I am used to back in England. The teams were technically better, passed the ball around on the floor a lot more and rarely resorted to the long ball game. It was also less physical as players would pressure their opponents and try to pressure them into making a mistake where as in England I'm used to players running over and jumping into tackles. Once I realised this I knew that there would be other types of fouls committed such as tapping of the ankles and pushes in the back. The language barrier was the toughest thing to overcome, especially as 4th official when trying to communicate with players who were coming off and that they must wait before going on. I found that by putting my arm in front of them as a type of barrier whilst asking them to wait in English seemed to catch on after a couple of subs.

Tuesday 26th June

The next day I was on the early set of games. Although I was a little tired I was still looking forward to the games ahead. I was down for one game as 4th official and 2 games on the line today. Today we were moved from the grass pitch to the 3G pitch. This pitch liked to absorb the heat, which made it that bit hotter for us as well as giving an unpleasant smell of melting rubber. This didn't take any of enjoyment out of the games though. In one of the games that I was assistant for, we had Salavador playing and their supporters helped me to enjoy the game even more. Their constant singing and chanting created a great atmosphere. We also got the chance to watch a couple of the foreign officials which gave us an insight into their style of officiating. Some of their techniques we found a bit bizarre.

Wednesday 27th June

For the final set of group games we were on the early shift again. It was still relatively hot at 9am but luckily for our team during the first game our pitch was almost fully in the shade, which helped to keep us all that bit cooler. There was a lot at stake for both teams in the first game as Aspire AQ from Qatar needed a draw at the least to progress through to the knockout stages of the cup and FC Vizela of Portugal had to get a win to go through. Aspire must have been feeling the pressure that bit more as not only were they the team in charge before kick off but they were being filmed with the footage being shown on TV in their home country. This was a very heated game with players feeling the pressure and I thought James had an excellent game and never looked like losing his grip. Conor also did an excellent job as 4th official as he had to constantly deal with very difficult FC Vizela coaching staff constantly nagging in his ear.

My game was the 3rd and final game of the day for me. It was a very one sided game with only 4 fouls in the whole game. I thought that this game would be a very good chance for me to put in to practice what Kieran and Corin had taught me about my positioning and being louder when talking to players during play and playing advantage.

Once our games had finished we hung around to show support for our peers as well as seeing if we could pick up good techniques and keep on learning.

Thursday 28th June

On this day we had a day to recharge our batteries ready for the semi final's the following day. We used this time to check out Lisbon and visit stadiums of two of the biggest teams in Portugal, Sporting Lisbon and Benfica.

Friday 29th June

I had one game today which was an under 13 semi final between EFM UCV Nucleo Aragua and BST Academy in the afternoon. I felt refreshed after our day off and couldn't wait for my game to kick off as the game was being played in the Olympic stadium. I turned up early with all the other refs to watch all the games. The first game I saw had a referee from Venezuela in the middle. There was a vast contrast between his style and our style of officiating. In my opinion the English refs were the best and most professional officials and disciplined from all the games I had seen at the tournament.

I was going to watch Gifford referee the Bayer Leverkusen vs PSG semi final when Corin told me to get my kit on and run the line as one referee had been double booked. I enjoyed this game as it was very competitive and neither team wanted to lose.

The time came for me to referee my semi final. The game went smoothly with no real controversy. BST were 1-0 up with less than a minute to play, when I awarded a free kick to Aragua. All the players went up including the goalkeeper. The ball was launched into the penalty area and created a goal mouth scramble with a couple shots being saved and cleared off the line before my assistant, correctly, put the flag up for offside. This was an exciting finish to a game that I had enjoyed being a part of.

Saturday 30th June

Today was the day of the finals and we all headed off to the stadium in Estoril to watch. As the stadium filled the atmosphere intensified. The atmosphere stepped up another level during the girl's final, contested by Atletico Madrid and Vasco De Gama. The other Spanish teams were all stood behind us supporting At. Madrid. Vasco De Gama scored and won the game 1-0 but the celebrations from the Vasco goalscorer enraged the Spanish supporters. This, and the other Vasco age groups entering the field at full time, caused a big confrontation at full time between players, coaching stuff, parents and the other age groups of the clubs. After this we thought it might all kick off again as the Vasco teams sat in front of us in the stand. The Vasco teams and the Spanish teams then started to have a war of chants for the next half an hour which was an incredible experience to be in the middle of.

The next game was the game we had all been waiting for as it had our English referee's officiating. The skill level of this game was much better than the previous games we had witnessed but our officials were more than up to the job. Our officials put in a flawless performance doing us all proud and I personally think it was the best performance from all the teams of officials on the day.

Learning Points

There are a lot of things I have learnt from my week in Lisbon. I have definitely learnt to be firmer with players in order to put, and maintain, my authority on a game. I've learnt how to position myself on the field of play, in open play and dead ball situations, more appropriately.

I thought there was going to be a lot more play acting than there actually was. All the teams I came across loved to pass the ball around for the entire game and were rarely diving in for tackles.

One thing that Kieran and Corin picked up on in all of my games was that I am too quiet, especially when playing advantage. This is something I have already tried improving on since returning home. I feel my coaches have really helped me in my development and I will be taking everything they've said and working hard to improve in the coming season.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

What our speakers have said

September – Lorraine Deschamps MBE – individuals as part of team

At our September meeting we were pleased to welcome back as for a return visit guest speaker Lorraine Deschamps. Quite a lot has happened to top Lorraine since her first visit in March 2010. The major event of course was when she was awarded the MBE in the recent honours list for services to sport and diversity. Kenyan born but brought up in Brazil and now living in Harrow, Lorraine started refereeing in 1998 when her eight year old son started playing football. She felt she could do a better job than the referees appointed to his games. She has since refereed in men's football and the women's Premier League. In 2010 she became one of only two women to qualify as a Level 4 Referee Tutor having been a Licensed Referee Instructor for nine years. She was a founding director, now trustee of Sporting Equals a charity which promotes ethnic diversity across sports and physical activity. Lorraine is also Chairman of the FA's Diversity Action Group and was part of the team for the FA's unsuccessful bid for the 2018 World Cup.

After having some members parade around the room blindfolded at her last visit we could be sure that her presentation would be something different and she certainly didn't let us down. On that last visit her topic was leadership but this time she tackled the subject of teamwork. Her aim was to show how we can improve our performance, both individually and as part of a team through self-management. She said that she didn't agree with that often quoted saying, 'there's no I in team!'. Instead she suggested that teamwork actually begins with an individual's decisions and outlook. By managing ourselves, we may be able to increase our success within a team.

Lorraine then split the meeting into four groups. She then asked each group to discuss and present ways to change our own and others behaviour and thoughts. The aim was to improve the mood within a situation, to enable better concentration and decision making. These ideas were then used in practical exercises. Everybody was asked to make themselves angry by thinking about something, which we associated with a bad mood and then shown how simple movement can remove negativity. Another exercise demonstrated what Lorraine called her four 'C's' of teamwork – Communication, Connection, Co-operation and Cohesion. Standing in a circle, we were asked to pass a ball between the group making sure that it touched twice. This ended with the ball being passed around the circle, ensuring success but not always in the way that Lorraine had intended.

Our thanks to Lorraine for another unique, entertaining and thought provoking evening. Our congratulations again on her award of the MBE and we hope she has a happy day when she goes to Buckingham Palace to receive it in December.

October - Phil Sharp – working at Euro 2012

As guest speaker for October, we were pleased to welcome for a return visit a living legend of lining Phil Sharp who has the distinction of being assistant referee at both a World Cup Final; and an Olympic Final. At the 2002 World Cup Final in Tokyo he lined to the great Pierluigi Collina, which Phil pointed out couldn't happen today as officials go to top tournaments in teams from the same country. This does unfortunately mean that some top assistants don't get the chance to go as they don't have a top referee in their country selected for the tournament.

Phil has now retired after thirty years but the subject of his presentation was the Euro 2012. UEFA obviously realised that they should make use of his talent and experience for they asked him to give some pre-tournament training to the selected assistant referees. Although he was left to devise the training what UEFA was looking for was improving the correctness of offside judgements.

There were twelve referees from twelve different countries so there were twice as many assistant referees, plus four from other countries who didn't have a referee selected for the tournament and who were going to act as reserves. Phil took the decision to form four groups and to mix up the assistants from the various nations involved. He thought this would help create a feeling of togetherness of the whole group. He recruited local players to create offside decisions for each assistant referee in turn. These were videoed and then each participant was shown the result of his decision straight away on replay.

It was important he said when you run the line to have done your preparation and go out in the right frame of mind. Look at the whole body, the defender might for instance be keeping the player onside with his legs. If you have an attacker nearest to you when players are in a line, which he illustrated with members, he may be blocking the defender who is actually keeping him onside leading you into making a wrong decision. It can help in these circumstances to take a step backward which can give you a clearer view. Also sometimes when play is close to you it also helps to spot offences if you move away slightly. When lining he had trained himself not to flag for very minor offsides. Videos had shown that players moved so quickly that it was impossible to be that certain and again he illustrated this with members showing that players could easily be four metres apart in a second.

SPEAKERS YET TO COME

January 17th – Ray Olivier

In January we can look forward to a New Year treat, when we welcome for the second time Ray Olivier. When Ray visited us last time he was a Football League referee and Royals fan will have seen him perform at the Madejski Stadium. Since then he has taken up the position of Training and Development Manager for the PGMOL, in other words he is responsible for the training and development of Premier League referees.

Those who remember Ray's last visit or have seen him in action at the National Referees Conference, particularly with his 'Deal or No Deal' a fun way of looking at the laws of the game, will be expecting a lively and instructive evening so don't forget to join us at the Earley Home Guard Club to hear what Ray has to say.

February 21st – Jeff Pettit

In February we will again have the pleasure of Jeff Pettit, a former Premier League assistant referee who gave up officiating to concentrate on his referee-outfitting business, A&H International. Jeff is also known as the Renegade-Ref because he has his own individual and original way of looking at refereeing. Jeff was greatly involved in setting up the Charlton Athletic Referees' Academy one of the first referee's academies so he is sure to have much to say that will be of interest to our younger members.

CLUB ASSISTANTS' AWARD NEARLY 80 YEARS OLD

It was in 1933 that Charlie Kears proposed to the committee of the Reading Referees Association that they present annual awards to the club linesmen, as they were then of course, in the local Saturday Leagues (there were two Saturday Leagues but no Sunday football) who received the best recommendations from its members.

This has continued ever since, although the form of recommendations was changed in 1966 and we hope that members will continue to support what is now the Club Assistant- Referee Awards. We all know how valuable it is to have a good assistant, one who is keen to do the job properly and one you can rely on. This is our way of recognising those who we consider the best and we hope of encouraging others that running the line that it not just a chore to be endured but something that can be enjoyable, helps the game and most of all is appreciated. The fact that you ask club assistants for their names can itself be beneficial when they realise why you require them.

The Fair Play Award by comparison is a relative newcomer but we have been awarding it for over 45 years, to show to clubs in the Reading Football League (Saturday) and Reading Sunday League that sporting conduct and fair play on the field is both encouraged and recognised.

Some members will have picked up marking forms at the monthly meetings that covers both these awards but to make sure that all our members refereeing on these two leagues can take part and support the association, forms have been e-mailed to all members to be downloaded. The forms are simple to complete and extra copies can be obtained from Jim McDougall on 9835 603 or Jim-mcdougall@hotmail.com. These awards are not to be confused with any that are run by the competitions themselves.

Please help up keep this long tradition of acknowledging those who help us enjoy our refereeing that little bit more.

THE FA CARLSBERG REFEREE AWARDS

Rewarding those in the national Game

You may have seen the new awards scheme especially for referees who perform in the lower echelons of the game, often referred to as the National Game or grass roots football. The aim is to recognise and reward the contribution, referees and those supporting referees, make to football in the National Game.

There are six awards which cover all referees, tutors, mentors and referee coaches aged 18 or over. These include awards for young referee (18 t 25) and women referees.

Nomination forms can be downloaded from the FA website, thefa.com and nominations must be made by 8th February.

RESPECT PROGRAMME

Monitoring Respect

What is your experience with the Respect Programme? The FA is seeking to monitor the programme to see if it is having a positive impact on the game. If the league to which you are appointed uses the FA's league administration system, Full-Time, you will be asked to provide feed back on matches at which you officiate. This is said to be a simple task that will only take a few minutes to complete.

The FA has now worked alongside A&H International and the Referees' Association to provide a Respect Referees Kit which is available on their websites.

Respect Information Workshops

Have you attended a Respect Information Workshop? This will explain what you need to do to be part of the programme and will answer any questions that you have. Details from Berks & Bucks FA.

REPEATABLE SUBSTITUTES

What are your views?

Don't forget that repeatable subs in men's football is an experiment. The 11-a-side game is diminishing rapidly in this country and it is claimed by the FA that repeatable subs will retain more players in the game and attract new players. After two years they will have to make a report to FIFA to substantiate that this has happened. If you are asked to make any comments it is worth bearing this in mind.

Do you stop your watch for repeatable subs?

The Laws of the Game say that referees should allow lost time for substitutions. One referee that does this for repeatable substitutions has reported that his games are lasting over ten minutes longer than before. Has anyone else had any other unexpected results?

Check whether Repeatable Subs are permitted in your games

As all competitions have not accepted repeatable substitutions you should make sure you know the situation before you get to the ground. We had one club complain to us that the referee of their County Junior Cup tie wrongly would not allow them.

GOAL POST KILLS BOY FOOTBALLER

A young boy was recently killed when a goal post fell on him. He was keeping goal and his boots got tangled in the netting and as he tried to get free he brought the posts down on himself. He is the tenth player to be killed by falling goal posts. It is essential that as part of your pitch inspection routine, you check that the goals are safe and not likely to collapse.

COUNTY QUIZ ON THE LAWS OF THE GAME

Despite the limited turn-out for the quiz last year it has been decided to continue in the hope that it will be better supported. The date selected is Monday 7th January. Once again we will hope to enter a team Those who have entered previously taken part (some of whom are now away at university) will tell you that it is not only good fun but useful in making you swat up on the Laws which is never a bad thing. If you would like to have a go and test your knowledge then contact Derek Reigate.

THIS YEARS LAWS OF THE GAME ARE NOW AVAILABLE

We all received a copy of the Laws of the Game from the Berks & Bucks FA but of course it only has half of the story as it doesn't contain the Interpretations and Guidance for Referees from the International FA Board. This year's FIFA authorised Laws of the Game, complete of course with this year's changes, are now available and can be purchased at the monthly meetings priced £5. You can also pick up a variety of refereeing accessories such as record card, wrist lanyards, whistles and a whole lot more.

Simon Lee

23/9/66 – 12/10/12

We were greatly saddened by the tragic death of our colleague Simon Lee on 12th October. As well as being always an extremely cheerful and well liked person, Simon was also a popular and well respected referee. He refereed on the Reading Saturday and Sunday and Hellenic Leagues. He was due to referee an FA Vase on the Saturday. Simon was our secretary from 2006 until 2011 and had also been appointments secretary for the Reading Football League. A minutes silence was observed at games in the two Reading leagues as well as the Hellenic Leagues and there was a large attendance at his funeral not only of referees but others involved in football in the area showing how highly regarded he was. Simon was a passionate supporter of Reading Football Club.

Our deepest condolences go to his family.

Peter Stream

We are also sad to record the death of one of our Vice-Presidents, Peter Stream. Peter, who refereed in the local leagues, regularly attended our monthly meetings until prevented by age and incapacity. He was made a Vice-President in 1993

Harold (Jeff) Jeffries

Another of our former Vice Presidents, known only to older member, Jeff Jefferies has sadly passed away this month. Jeff was a member of the committee and Vice Chairman until business and personal reasons forced him to give up refereeing at which time, in 1979, he was made a Vice President of the Society.