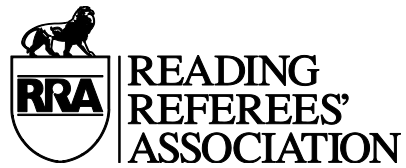


# The Reading Referee





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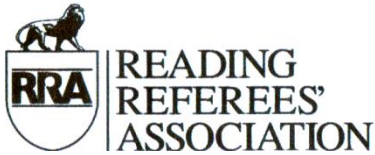
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# The Reading Referee

The Magazine of the Reading Referees' Association

December /January 2013 Vol 55 No 3

## EDITORIAL

### **Good time to be a young referee**

Could there be a better time to be a young referee? In our last issue we heard from Richard Dow about his time at the Lisbon/IBER Cup in Portugal. The season before, Stephen Williams told us of his experience of international football at two tournaments in the Costa Brava region of Spain. In our page two article this time Stephen Saunders relates his weekend at the FA's Young Referees' Development Programme in Leicestershire. Not such an exotic location but very valuable experience nevertheless that was not available in years gone past.

### **Good ideas from the RA-FA Youth Council**

The RA-FA Youth Council which was formally inaugurated at last year's National RA conference has been coming up with a series of ideas to make life better and more productive for young referees. One idea for increasing RA membership caught my eye. It was suggested that there could be a presentation to sell the benefits of joining the RA at the end of the Basic Referees Course. What a good idea, why didn't we think of that? Oh hang on, we did, we've been doing it for years. In fact I doubt if the video and pictures that are being developed could sell it as hard as Brian Wratten.

### **National conference will celebrate FA's 150 years of football**

On page eight, you will find the preliminary details of the National RA Conference, which is a little earlier this year than it has been for the last two years. It is being linked with the FA's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the RA expects it to be oversubscribed, so it is already talking about limiting applications. This is always an exciting event especially for young referees who seem to increase in number every year. This year promises to be even better so when the notice is given that application forms are available, the recommendation is to get in early. You won't be disappointed.

**Dick Sawdon Smith**

# THE NATIONAL RA CONFERENCE – Working together



## Record attendance yet again

This year's Conference was another success with a record attendance of over 450, which included an increased number of women referees. In fact there were a number of top women referees involved in the workshops. There was slight but enjoyable difference to the usual programme. Instead of high profile speakers making key note speeches at the beginning and end of the day, there were short films *Pre-match* and *Post-match* enacted by members, in particular Ray Olivier and Dean Mohab on the theme of the day *Working together*. These films were reminiscent of the John Cleese Video Arts business movies in which they showed humorously the wrong way and then the right way of a referee's interaction with his assistants and assessor before and after a game. This also involved a great deal of audience participation. It was said that they may well be available for RA branches to use at one of their meetings so it could be an alternative to a guest speaker.

There was as usual a series of workshops, interactive as always of course. It is worth noting perhaps that there were no fewer than 10 Fifa referees leading the workshops, so it was virtually impossible not to learn something. Howard Webb rounded up the day with his review of the EURO 2012 tournament and in particular his views on why it went so well, especially from the referees' point of view. One was that UEFA went to the training grounds of all nations taking part to show what was acceptable and what would not be tolerated. He was also favourable concerning the use of additional assistant referees about which many had been sceptical. He felt they reduced considerably the number of fouls in and around the penalty area. Incidentally, it was Howard 41<sup>st</sup> birthday, which showed his dedication to the RA in deciding to spend it at Conference.

There were a number of presentations to Arthur Smith who marked his retirement on the day of the Conference, after 20 years as General Secretary of the RA.

## NEXT YEAR

Next year's conference is expected to be something special, celebrating as it does, not only the 105<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the RA but the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Football Association. There is a change to the date, it being one week earlier on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> July. Make a note in your diary now as the RA hopes to reach the 500 attendance mark. Do yourself a favour and be amongst them.

## THE RA FA YOUTH COUNCIL

### First meeting at the National Conference

One of the new initiatives of the RAFA partnership is the establishment of a RA-FA Youth Council. The idea is to give young referees a voice, particularly about the future of the RA including what is needed to attract young referees to local RA meetings. 12 members were selected from over 80 applicants, to obtain a cross section and the first get-together of the council was held at the National Conference.

## **MONTHLY MEETINGS**

### **What our speakers have said**

#### **November – Dean Mohareb – Team Work**

Dean Mohareb, who is a Football League referee but more importantly is the FA National Referee Development Manager – Workforce, was our guest speaker for November but it was an evening with a difference. To illustrate his theme of teamwork, Dean showed us a video that he had been responsible for producing for the National RA Conference back in July, in which he also played the leading role as the referee. The video which was used to begin and end the conference, concentrated on two aspects of the match as far as the referee is concerned, the pre-match and the post-match. We all have a responsibility for controlling the game, Dean said, but it is up to the referee to get the best out of his team. In this case the team consisted of the referee, who was looking to make sure the game was free of controversy as he was in need of good marks, an assistant referee officiating at this level for the first time and an irreverent old timer running the other line. We also saw the assessor before and after the game.

The new assistant referee arrived early and was waiting in the dressing room when the referee appeared talking into his mobile phone, indicating at the same time that the assistant had taken his changing spot in the dressing room. When he came off the phone he complained to his assistant about being given an inexperienced assistant for what was an important game for him and told him to forget making any decisions on the field of play. The second assistant referee arrived some time later in a garish t-shirt and also talking on his mobile phone during the briefing. When the assessor came in the referee tried to butter him up to make sure his markings were what he required.

Dean then split up the meeting into smaller groups to discuss what they had seen and make suggestions how it could have been improved. After everyone had had their say, the second half of the video was shown. This started with the three officials coming off the pitch at the end of play and there were boos from the crowd which seemed to indicate something had gone wrong. The referee had also distanced himself from the inexperienced assistant referee as if to show where the fault had been. Once inside the dressing room, he went off to find the home team manager to make his excuses for what had been an apparent game changing decision. On his return he rounded on the young assistant referee and blamed him for a controversial penalty particularly after he had told him before the game that he didn't want any decisions from him. When the assessor came in to discuss the game, the referee put the blame on his assistant for making the mistake and then after some criticism of his own part in the affair he accused the assessor of being a hatchet man sent down to ensure he didn't receive decent marks. The assessor stormed out saying he would report him for his attitude.

This episode was then discussed in the smaller groups before recommendations for improvements were aired to the whole meeting. In this, the discussions were led by Dan Meeson of the FA who had come along to support Dean Mohareb. Our thanks to Dean and his colleague for making this an enjoyable and entertaining evening, something a little out of the ordinary and an excellent use of a resource from the National Conference.

## **DECEMBER MEETING**

As no one came forward this year to run our annual Christmas Draw, one of our events to keep the subs down and which was normally the main activity at our December meeting, this year it became a social evening. A splendid buffet was laid on and members spent the evening talking about our favourite subject, football.

There was however a larger than normal raffle, tickets up from a £1 to a fiver but with some excellent prizes including a holiday villa for a week kindly donated by Dave Fisher and a fourball at Windlesham Golf Club. It was good to see such a good attendance as has become the norm since moving to our new venue. We hope that this continues especially as we have some good speakers to come.

### **January 17<sup>th</sup> - Ray Olivier**

Ray has always been an entertaining speaker but now he is the Training and Development Manager for the elite referees of the PGMOL he is going to be even more worth listening to. Don't miss it.

### **February 21<sup>st</sup> – Jeff Pettit**

Jeff is a former Premier League assistant referee who gave up officiating to concentrate on running his referee-outfitting business, A&H International. We have had the pleasure of welcoming Jeff in the past and he always has something challenging and individual. We doubt this visit will be any different.

## **FAREWELL TO CORIN READETT**

It seems to be only a year since we welcomed a new RDO for Berks & Bucks FA. In fact it was only a year ago but Corin Readett is now leaving to take up a position with Birmingham County FA. Look at what he said in this magazine when he arrived.

*I believe there is an excellent workforce of referees, tutors, assessors and mentors in Berks & Bucks and my role is to develop and extend this workforce in line with the FA's National Game Strategy and the Berks & Bucks County Development Plan.*

It seems however that he was quickly disillusioned for this is what he said when he left.

*When I came into this job on 6<sup>th</sup> December, it is fair to say I encountered an administrative nightmare. I had hundreds of people who believed they were qualified and trained referees – but they weren't. I had a non-existent training programme. I had assessors who acted as a law unto themselves causing referees to lose faith in the system. I had a team of Tutors who never really worked together outside the local area. I had an academy in Milton Keynes in complete disarray.*

We are sure his successor, Chris Carter who starts in February won't be able to say the same.

**Star Letter – Reading Post – 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2013**  
**ABUSE OF REFEREE RUNINED FOOTIE GAME**

*My family and I visited Calcot last Sunday and as my two lads are mad on football, we went to Linear Park to watch a local match.*

*For most of the time it was enjoyable, however, it was all ruined by the barrage of foul language aired at the referee by one of the substitutes and manager when several decisions went against them. The level of bad language was totally over the top as the decisions did not produce a goal or even a shot at goal.*

*No wonder referees are giving up if they have to endure this barrage of abuse.  
It would be interesting to get the league's side of this and know what action the league took against the offending team.*

*Sam Hughes  
Oxford Road  
Reading*

This is an actual letter which the Editor of the paper considered interesting enough to make it the Star Letter of the day. What it doesn't say of course is whether the referee took any action against the manager and the substitute.

Were you refereeing that game at Linear Park? If so perhaps you could tell us whether you took any action against the team manager. If not, why not? Is it because you don't think you can do anything about club officials or that they are entitled to have their say about your decisions, despite the fact that the law only permits them to give tactical instructions to players and nothing else. Your jurisdiction covers club officials, before, during and after the game.

If you ignored the substitute was it because you didn't think you could take action against him as he wasn't on the field of play? Surely not, the law says that the referee has authority over substitutes whether called upon to play or not. If he used abusive, insulting or offensive language you could show the red card and prevent him from taking part in the game.

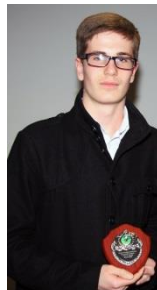
What about Sam Hughes and his sons, do you think you have any responsibility to protect them from offensive language when using a public recreation ground? Are you aware that several parks have been closed to football after complaints about foul language from other members of the public using the park?

Do you think that Mr Hughes is right and this form of behaviour makes referees give up the game or does it not bother you as it was all below your tolerance level? Have you heard the short poem by Ogden Nash, the American humourist, *I often wonder which is mine, tolerance or a rubber spine?*

But of course you did take action didn't you, and reported it, not to the league as Mr Hughes suggested but to their County Football Association.

Dick Sawdon Smith

## FAIR PLAY AND CLUB ASSISTANTS AWARDS



### Last Year's Winners

Don't forget that if you are refereeing on the Reading (Saturday) Football League or the Reading Sunday League we are relying on you to help select this year's winners of our Fair Play and Club Assistants' Awards. This is our opportunity to recognise those clubs who play the game in a sporting manner and those club stalwarts who carry out what can sometimes be the most thankless task in local football, the club assistant referees. If you haven't already got marking forms or want more, these can be picked up at the monthly meetings or from Jim McDougal at [jim-mcdougal@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jim-mcdougal@hotmail.co.uk) or 9835603.

These awards should not be confused with any that are awarded by the leagues.

### IS RESPECT WORKING?

We reported in our last issue that referees were being asked to mark clubs on the response to the Respect Programme. The results of these markings have been made public by the FA.

Referees Respect marks were collected from some 24,000 games from 4,500 referees. The average mark given was 4 out of 5 and most match officials said that they had an enjoyable experience of refereeing and were treated with respect by most participants. 56% of respondents reported that their experience of the game had improved as a result of Respect measures. 854 leagues have signed up and bound themselves to Respect.

The total number of referees was 28,405 which was an increase of 5% over 2010. 25% of these however are in the age range of 14 to 19 years of age. There had been a decrease in cautions for dissent of 16% over 2008/9 season across 15 leagues but cautions for other offences show an increase. The number of misconduct charges such as surrounding the match official and Technical Area offences fell in comparison to 2010/11.

Although there has been a decline in the most serious cases of assault by 15%, the number of incidents of improper conduct towards referees has risen by 25%. The FA feels this may reflect the increased number of referees and reports being made.

The FA has launched a rewards scheme to help tackle what they see as the ugly side of the game, for which they accept nominations from the footballing public.



# THE NATIONAL RA CONFERENCE



**SATURDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> JULY**  
**Barceló Hinckley Island Hotel**  
**Leicestershire**

This year's theme  
**HONOURING THE PAST – BUILDING THE FUTURE**  
**A Celebration of Refereeing**

**2013 is the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the**  
**FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION**  
**This will be one of their major celebrations**

This is a great development day, particularly for younger referees in company with and working with not only the top referees in this country but also this year some senior refereeing figures from abroad

We hope that Berks & Bucks FA will again provide support for young referees, which will mean that there will be no cost and transport will be arranged by the Society

**Also that weekend**  
Friday 5<sup>th</sup> July  
**The Annual General Meeting of the Referees Association**  
Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> July  
**Conference Dinner**  
Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> July  
**Finals of the National RA Quiz**

*I would recommend it to other young referees and I really appreciated being funded by Berks and Bucks FA. I thoroughly enjoyed the day and I know I learnt a lot. It was good to refresh my knowledge from the original referee course and I know I will return again next year.*

**Juliette Forgham**