

THE WARBLER

Monthly Magazine of the Woking Referees' Society

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Season 2020/2021 February Edition

WOKING REFEREES' SOCIETY

Founded 1927

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Chairman Andy Bennett 07538 714747	President Vince Penfold
Vice Chairman Colin Barnett	Life Vice Presidents Ken Chivers ; Neil Collins ; David Cooper; Peter Guest ; Chris Jones,
Treasurer and Membership Secretary Bryan Jackson 01483 423808 1 Woodstock Grove, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 2AX	Secretary Anthony (Mac) McBirnie 01483 835717 / 07770 643229 secretary@wokingreferees.co.uk
Training Officer Pat Bakhuizen 07834 963821	Editor : The Warbler Mac McBirnie, macmcbirnie@gmail.com 07770 643229
Welfare Officer Gareth Heighes garethheighes@btinternet.com 07707118446	Supplies Officer Gareth Heighes garethheighes@btinternet.com 07707118446
R.A Delegates Brian Reader 01483 480651 Tony Loveridge	Committee Chris Busby ; Jonty Bolland ;Callum Peter Martin Read ; Paul Saunders ; Will Siegmund
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INSIDE THIS MONTH'S WARBLER

<p>Page 3: Agenda</p> <p>Page 4 :Chairman's Chatter</p> <p>Page 5: This Month's Speaker : Dave Phillips</p> <p>Page 6.: Membership & Accounts / Just a Sec</p> <p>Page 7 : Dates for your Diary /Academy News/ AGM Notice</p> <p>Page 8 : Last Month's Meeting</p> <p>Page 9 : Vital Stages in Learning Process : Ted Ring</p> <p>Page 10 /11: Mac's Musings</p> <p>Page 12 : Hand Gestures when Refereeing : Dick Sawden Smith</p> <p>Page 13: "Come on Ref"</p> <p>Page 14/15 : Improving Relations Between Referees and Clubs : Simon Parbury</p> <p>Page 16 : Adie - "He's a Lumberjack and he's OK " : Adie Freeman</p> <p>Page 17: The Observer</p> <p>Page 18 : Murphy's Meanderings : Tony Murphy</p> <p>Page 19 : Dib Dib Dib - Be Prepared : Des Morrison</p> <p>Page 20 /21 : Murphy's Meanderings : Tony Murphy</p> <p>Page 22 : Evolution of the foul, : Simon Hart in the 'I',</p> <p>Page 24/25 : Plan B for 2020/21 : Red Card Willie</p> <p>Page 28/29 : Michael Oliver : Interview in the Mail Online</p>	 <p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;">THE REFEREES' ASSOCIATION</p>
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The next meeting of the Woking Referees' Society is on Monday 1st February 2021

**Our first meeting of the year will once again be
conducted via Zoom**

Agenda

7.00pm Academy Meeting

Zoom link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82598790454>

8.00pm Guest Speaker

Zoom Link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81205338128>

Our Guest Speaker this month is

Dave Phillips

Centre Leader for the Southern Region and PGMO Observer.



**The March meeting will be on
Monday 1st March 2021
The deadline for the March Warbler is
Friday 19th February**

*The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the
Society or its' Committee*

Chairman's Chatter

Hello Everyone!!

Welcome to this month's Warbler – I hope that you're all staying safe and well.

I'm feeling quite positive about things currently, despite the (now normal) circumstances.

Chesterfield FC have got (another) new manager and have strung together an impressive set of results that sees us up to the heady heights of 13th in the National League Premier table – I told you, I'm easily pleased!!



Another positive was the fantastic start to 2021 we had as a Society with the now customary presentation from Steve Worsley. I know Mac will have made much more studious notes around the evening which will be found somewhere further within this issue but just to say, another superb presentation from Steve around VAR and the level of interaction from the 25 or so attendees on the night was spot on – thanks again Steve for your time and for putting up with us motley crew!!

It was also the first time during our Zoom meetings that I'd used the "breakout room" facility – being your ever-ready and modern chairman, I learnt how to use the function approximately 90mins before the start of the evening BUT I have to say all in all, it went well and meant that we could break-out into smaller groups to discuss Steve's clips/match incidents and then feedback as those groups to the wider audience – I'll definitely be using that again as it engendered much better debate and communication between us. And as referees, we're always willing to learn and develop, right?!!

This month's speaker promises to be another cracker – we will be welcoming ex-Football League referee and now PGMOL Match Observer (along with many other hats that he wears!!) **Dave Phillips** to our meeting on **Monday February 1st**. Dave's bio will also be further within this Warbler but just to say, please DON'T miss this one – Dave's presentation will be "the role of the Match Observer" and how referees' can look at taking their opportunities. Dave's wealth of experience and his many stories will undoubtedly be both educational and entertaining so please make every effort to join in the evening; I'm expecting a big number for this one so don't let me down!!

And as if that isn't enough, Pat will be running his Academy at 7pm for 50mins prior to the main event – we do spoil you with all this top quality so again, please support our younger (and older) members in this session as well – we all have something to add that can help and inspire others.

Finally, don't forget that our March meeting will be formed partly by our AGM. Jacko has already emailed out to all members ahead of this but if you have anything you'd like to add to the agenda, Jacko, Mac or myself need this ASAP to ensure it makes it to the "top table".



Watch out for the Zoom links dropping into your inboxes very soon from me for the February meeting and in the meantime, stay safe, well and drive/walk safely in all this snow!!

Take care and see you on February 1st.

Andy

This Month's Speaker

Dave Phillips

I am 54 years old & for the last 23 years worked as a Police Officer for Sussex Police and have been married to Debbie for 33 year where we have two Children Christopher (30yrs) & Lauren (26yrs).

I started Refereeing in January 1981 at age 14 years progressing through West Sussex League, Sussex County League, Southern League, then in 2003 a double promotion onto the Panel League as Referee and Football League as Assistant Referee. I was then promoted to The PGMO National List of Referees in 2008 until I retired in May 2014 where I took up the position as PGMO Observer which I am still active in.



Some of the highlights of my career was being awarded the FA Three Lions as 4th Official at The FA Youth Cup Final 2008 between Chelsea v Manchester City and promoted to National List Referee at the same time. Refereeing Chelsea v Brighton at the first professional match at The Amex & then the official opening match v Tottenham. Both fixtures allowed me to referee Premiership International players which I feel so privileged to have been part of. There are many more memories over my career within the 438 Professional games, enjoying every moment & experience until my retirement in May 2014.

Since retiring from refereeing, although still registered as a L5 referee, I have observed over 275 matches for the PGMO which have given me a totally new experience & view of the game

.I started coaching referees 12 years ago in 2008 for Sussex County FA before being asked by The FA to assist as a Regional Coach for the South East Region (SERDG). I then took over as Regional Lead in 2010 & seeing the name change to National Referee Development Programme (NRDP). All these schemes have been replaced by FA CORE where I have been a Centre Leader for the Southern Region covering Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire & Dorset since 2016 responsible for 9 coaches coaching 50 referees from Level 7 to 2B.

My talk will be on "Insight into being a PGMO Observer" & "How to maximise opportunities as a match official"

Dave Phillips

Membership and Accounts

2020/21 Membership	2021 Current Status	
70 Full Members	General	£2288.00
10 Friends	Supplies	£189.77
3 Affiliate Members	Belgium	£0.00
76 Referees trained in 2019/2020	Training Fund	£181.97
	Centenary Fund (formerly Youth Fund)	£652.03
	Total	£3,311.77

Just a Sec!

Committee Meeting.

A Society Committee meeting was held via zoom on 13th January. Please contact Mac at macmcbirnie@gmail.com if you would like a copy of the minutes.

Centenary Club

As we are unable to meet at the moment (and for the foreseeable future I reckon) and so are unable to hold our monthly raffle, we have set up what we have called the Centenary Club, in an effort to maintain and build up funds for our 100th birthday bash.

You all should have received the information pack and application form. If not then please contact either myself or Bryan Jackson.

So far we currently have only **7members** who have signed up for our new fund raising initiative, which is pretty pathetic when you realise that we have 70 members. If you've not done so yet then please can you get your application to Bryan "Jacko" Jackson and be in with a chance of winning a prize in our first draw which will be at our March AGM Meeting.

National Young Referee Development Team

I have been contacted by the above team who are looking to help the younger referee develop, particularly if looking to promote and further their refereeing career. We will be trying to arrange for a representative to give presentation at a future Society Meeting. The group formed in August 2019 following a strenuous interview process and have been highly recognised within The FA Referees' Department including David Ellerray, Neale Barry, Dan Meeson etc. as well as working very closely with Paul Field and The RA Board.

Why not have a look on their website to see what they can do for you?

They also have an instagram and twitter account which may be of interest.

<http://www.instagram.com/thenyrdt/>

<https://twitter.com/thenyrdt>

<https://www.the-ra.org/news/national-young-referee-development-team-meeting>

Mac

Woking Referees' Society Annual General Meeting 1st March 2021

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of Woking Society, The Referees Association will take place on Monday 1st March 2021 by Zoom meeting, commencing at 8pm.

Any rules changes and nominations for officers and committee need to be submitted by email or in writing, and in accordance with the rules, to either Mac McBirnie, Andy Bennett or Bryan Jackson by the close of the February meeting (1st February 2021).

A copy of the Society Rules has been e-mailed to all members and a copy is available on the Society's website www.wokingreferees.co.uk

Academy News

There will be an Academy Meeting prior to the February Meeting starting at 7.pm. When we will be discussing the subject of "Effective Positioning".

It's all about being in the right place at the right time in order to make those all important decisions correctly.

All are welcome to join in the discussion.

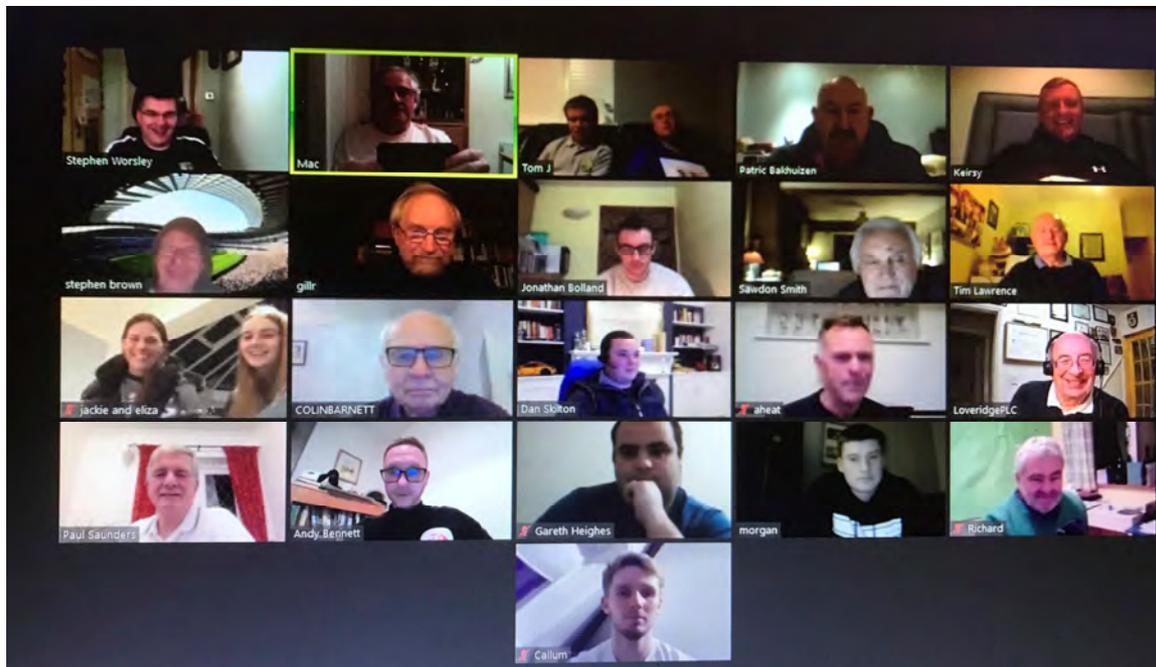
Pat

Dates for your Diary 2020/21

1st February	Society Meeting - Dave Phillips
1st March	Society meeting AGM
12th April	Society Meeting
10th May	Society Meeting - Stuart Carrington

Last Month's Meeting

4th January 2021



Chairman Andy opened the first meeting of the month and welcomed 25 members and guests, including the welcome return of our guest speaker, Steve Worsley.

Steve had entitled his presentation "You are the VAR". Which included a selection of video clips from last season's Premiership games.

Although the clips had been emailed out prior to the meeting it would appear that many didn't receive them. However we managed to watch them via Zoom which is not always ideal but apart from the last one (goalie punching a forward) we were able to see the incidents.

We were then, by the clever trickery of Zoom put into breakout rooms of 3 or 4 people to discuss and report our opinions. As the Laws of the Game state, in many instances it is "in the opinion of the referee" and in all of the clips we viewed there were differences of opinion.

As Steve said it was a good job that there were, as it would be very boring if we all agreed on the same outcome or sanctions. So we discussed a foul (red? Yellow? Or even "orange"?), offside and as previously mentioned, potential fouls by keepers.

After much discussion and reasons for the various opinions we were then showed what the referee gave at the time and then what the VAR decided. The video clips Steve had cleverly picked could all be called contentious and engendered much debate and raised points of law which I'm sure we all appreciated.

Andy thanked Steve for once more providing a very interesting and entertaining evening. Steve thanked Woking RS for inviting him and said how much he enjoyed our meetings and the interaction with the members.

Society Business

Mac informed the meeting that there was a committee meeting scheduled for Wednesday 13th January and would members please let him know if they had any issues that they would like raised.

Pat B informed the meeting that he would be standing down as Training Officer at the next AGM which is at the March meeting.

Andy informed the meeting that he would be sending out details of the fund raising Centenary Club initiative later that week and thanked Bryan "Jacko" Jackson for putting the plan together.

He thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 10.20pm

Mac

Vital Stages in Learning Process

There has for long been a way among teachers of looking at the learning-processes that they offer to their students which wisely blends together the theory and the practice.

Seen from a learner's angle it goes something like this ... I hear and I forget; I see and I remember; I do and I understand.

If we apply this little idea to the education of Referees, some of it becomes quickly apparent.

It would be fair to say that most of us find our ongoing 'instruction' as Referees comes in our society meetings, where we listen to the words of wisdom of our colleagues and our guest speakers. But that is where the first problems often arise, I believe. When speakers are offering their knowledge for others in meetings, how often do you see the Referees present do anything except just listen? It has long been a habit of mine to make the odd note at such times. Colleagues, I'm sure, think it is just because I have a journalistic streak. It isn't. It is that I want to remember certain things said.

With my notes, I can then successfully negotiate stage 2, 'I see and I remember'. By reading notes later I can recall the good points easily. This is not far removed from a Referee reading the good points made in writing by his Assessors. The wiser Referees in our Association often read through their past assessments. The less wise don't, I suspect.

In the third stage, the 'doing' leads to the 'understanding'. By trying out the good ideas suggested by his Assessor...or the society's guest speaker...the match-official often starts to really understand what it is all about.

There is no doubt that the more thoroughly you approach the learning process, the more likely you are to really understand the skills of refereeing. If you don't believe me, just ask a few people who have become Assessors, for they will often tell you that after years as Referees they have now come across new ways of looking at the art/science of refereeing.

REALLY UNDERSTANDING. That is what it is all about!

Ted Ring

This first appeared in the 2nd Edition of the Referees Digest June 1994

Mac's Musings

Willie "Red Card" Referee, missing his regular games has been practising his art by issuing red and yellow cards to intransigent supermarket shoppers. See page 24.

Personally, I've been avoiding supermarkets and shops generally like the plague or should I say pandemic, but having spent most of my working life in retail, I feel sorry for the shop assistants. They are on a hiding to nothing with the abuse they receive for daring to ask a shopper to wear a mask. And what's all this about "medical exception". I'm sorry, I'm no medical expert, but what on earth could wearing a cotton mask possibly be injurious to one's health? I'm sure someone will probably tell me.

My pet hate, to whom I would like to hand out red cards, are those joggers and cyclists who have absolutely no regard for walkers. I'm out every day walking the dog (Rolling Stones circa 1964 ?) and they come puffing and panting towards us, or from behind, often two abreast taking up the whole of the path leaving me to drag the dog into the bushes and turn away to avoid being panted on.

The majority of walkers are very safety conscious and will step aside or even cross the road, as my wife and I do, but as always it's the idiot minority who seem to think the rules don't apply to them that cause us all grief.

Bit like footballers really !

So having decided to give our usual footpath and canal towpath walks a miss due to the above mentioned unmentionables and our usual fallback location of Barley Mow Woods having turned into a swamp and a possible venue for a bog snorkling event we looked for a safer walk.

This took us across Waterer's Rise playing fields, home of Knaphill Athletic, and on to Goldsworth Park and around the football and hockey pitches, where there is plenty of space to avoid people.

I did see a bunch of football players, about 12 or more, actually having a game last Saturday morning, which I thought was against the Covid Rules, but of more interest was the fact that Woking Borough are still taking their pitch maintenance seriously.

There has been over the last week a tractor pulling a very noisy contraption which makes holes in the ground, obviously to aerate the grass and help drainage. Over the week the tractor made its way extremely slowly around all the football fields at both Goldsworth Park and Waterer's Rise.

The problem was that as the ground was very soft with all the rain, it left big tractor tyre marks cutting up the pitch, particularly on the large one at Knaphill.

Never the less, along comes the linesman, not the flag waving kind, but the fellow with the white paint, who has painstakingly and very accurately I might add, marked out the pitches.

Now I'm sure that Woking Council are aware that there is a pandemic going on

and that we are in a Lockdown with all grassroots games on hold, so I can only surmise that rather than furlough the groundsman, they've kept them on to maintain the pitches. Presumably they are continuing to carefully mark them out to avoid having to measure them all again, as the white lines would have disappeared by the time we start playing once more.

At the time of writing this, the ground is covered with loads of white cold stuff but the best news of the day is that I've just received my invitation for my Covid job.

We have a top speaker at our next meeting, Andy Phillips PGM Observer, so it would be great if we could give him a big Woking welcome. We have 70 + members and as its via Zoom, you can relax at home with a beverage of your choice and simply switch on your laptop, pc or tablet and sit back and enjoy an evening of all things refereeing. So no excuse then?

See you on Monday evening

Mac



"Your hair's out of place Harry"
Del Laing

"I can see you're praying for a penalty. But you've got a corner kick instead."

or

"I think your car was parked somewhere over there"
Brian Reader

"The testing kit for corona virus is that way"
Paul Gorringe

"No, it's 2nd half . You're kicking that way now"

OLD PROVERBS UP-

- ◆ A fool and his money are welcome at any bank.
- ◆ In for a penny and don't forget to wash your hands for 20 seconds afterwards.
- ◆ What you lose on the swings is what you had in the Indian restaurant before you got on the swings.
- ◆ Red sky at night, shepherds delight red light at night, Shepherd's Market.
- ◆ It's an ill wind that blows but the silent ones are always the worst.
- ◆ If you want a thing well done leave it in the microwave overnight.
- ◆ You can't teach an old dog new clear physics.
- ◆ Don't try to run before you can pull your trousers up.

Radio 4's "I'm sorry, I haven't a clue". Via Brian Reader.

HAND GESTURES WHEN REFEREEING

Recently in the newspapers, there was an article about new research into the use of hand gestures. It suggested that when used whilst talking, made the listener more attentive and put the message over more powerfully. It made me think about their use in refereeing.

I'm not talking about hand signals, although I think they are very important as well. For instance, I've always said to new referees that if after you have blown with a nice sharp whistle for a foul, the players look up and see your hand out straight showing which way the kick is, it will cut out a lot of dissent.

I was thinking about the session we used to run in our practical training, which incidentally we started in 1975, with own branch training team. We covered the subject of hand gestures; it was only a small part of the course but was it enough? I say this because I mentored a new referee, an adult male, and watched him call a player over after he had committed a foul. He pointed at the player and then quite dramatically pulled his arm back and pointed at the ground in front of himself.

I compared this with watching a member, who was a football league referee, call a player to him. He didn't point but he did extend his arm towards the player, palm on top but with fingers curved slightly upwards in a beckoning manner. He then pulled his arm back but took it to the side of his body with his palm showing. The new referees gesture said, 'Oi you, get over here'. The experienced referee's gesture said, 'I would like you to come over here and join me'.

As a small boy, I was told, as probably you were, that to point at someone is rude. There is no doubt that it does annoy people and this is a time when you should be trying to diffuse emotions and calm people down rather than annoy them.

Research shows that hand gestures are a form of second language and a powerful aspect of communication. They enable you to get your message over quicker with less speech. An example in refereeing might be that you only need to say something like 'yes please number 7' to call a player to over you and using an appropriate hand gesture.

It's well known I think, that if you want players to stay where they are, and keep away from you, putting your hand out in front of you with the fingers raised gets the message over. To get them to move back, arms down the side with palms forward and a little ushering moveout. A little up and down movement with the palms downwards means 'calm down'. I noticed how successful some professional referees are when challenged over a decision, put their arms down by their side with palms facing outwards and giving a little shrug. It seems to say to players 'what can I do, he committed the foul and now must pay the penalty'.

It is always a good idea when warning a player that he is getting close to being cautioned for persistent misconduct, to point out to him where the other

infringements have taken place. No one is then surprised when he gets a yellow card for yet another foul. In Futsal, where at free kicks, kick ins, and goal clearances, players only have four seconds to play the ball, we put our hands above our head and call out 1, 2 . 3 and raising a finger at every count. No chance of a misunderstanding.

These gestures, unlike referee and assistant referee signals, don't appear in our copy of the Laws of the Game, or to the best of my knowledge anywhere else. However, I think they are worth learning, as they can contribute greatly to our control and management of a match.



Dick Sawdon Smith

"Come on Ref"

How do you stop players from constantly questioning your decisions ?

- ◆ Don't say too much to them, it leads to having to listen to their opinion, which probably won't be yours.
- ◆ Just signal your decisions as the chart tells you, don't start going in for actions or miming an offence.
- ◆ Keep the game moving when the ball is in play. Players as a rule will not stand and argue with you, but you must play your part. Do not let yourself become flustered, act confidently during those stressful moments of the game. Players will soon learn that you are not in control, your troubles will soon multiply and up will go the dissent.
- ◆ Try to learn the times when it pays to watch carefully a troublesome player, and when to keep your distance from him. Your close presence at times when he is angry can lead to a lot of trouble.

You will also find that all players spend long periods of time "out of the game" not involved with play at all - you will find that this time will allow players to calm down.

Use this knowledge to your advantage, passive refereeing if you like. Don't go looking for trouble - it will find you soon enough.

Graham Twaits *writing in the 2nd Referee's Digest 1994*

Improving Relations Between Referees and Clubs

It may be human nature for officials to look at their appointments and look forward to what they perceive as the 'big' games at the well-appointed, modern stadia with large crowds. Just as some players complain about certain referees, I am sure that many colleagues have overheard other match officials bemoaning their appointments or the reception that they have received at some clubs, particularly when club marks form part of the merit table criteria at many levels of the game.

At a recent RA Zoom Night led by Bobby Madley, he urged all referees to show more empathy to clubs, especially the army of volunteers that work tirelessly to ensure that clubs throughout the pyramid have competitive football. He used the analogy of the owner of a house employing an electrician to complete a repair: the worker is paid an agreed amount to complete the work and he or she should ensure that he leaves the rest of the house in the same state that he found it. The electrician would not complain about the quality of refreshments; in fact, he would probably be grateful for any hospitality. The owner of the house may leave a review of the work and may complain if the work is not carried out to the expected standard. Applying the above to refereeing, it may be wise to consider the following advice:

Before the game

- ◆ Consider the tone of correspondence to the club secretary when confirming the fixture. Timely, polite and formal communication will convey a professional image. Furthermore, as mentioned in last month's piece on pitch inspections, providing relevant contact numbers and a sense of anticipated arrival times has the effect of illustrating that the match referee is keen to work towards the smooth management of the match day event.
- ◆ Having also reviewed post match club reports as an appointments officer, it is vital to ensure that a referee is not seen to pre-judge a fixture or the participants with verbal or written comments such as, 'Should be a real blood and thunder local derby,' or, 'Let's hope for a quieter game this time round!'
- ◆ Alert the home secretary if any of the officiating team will not be staying for post-match hospitality.

Arrival at the ground

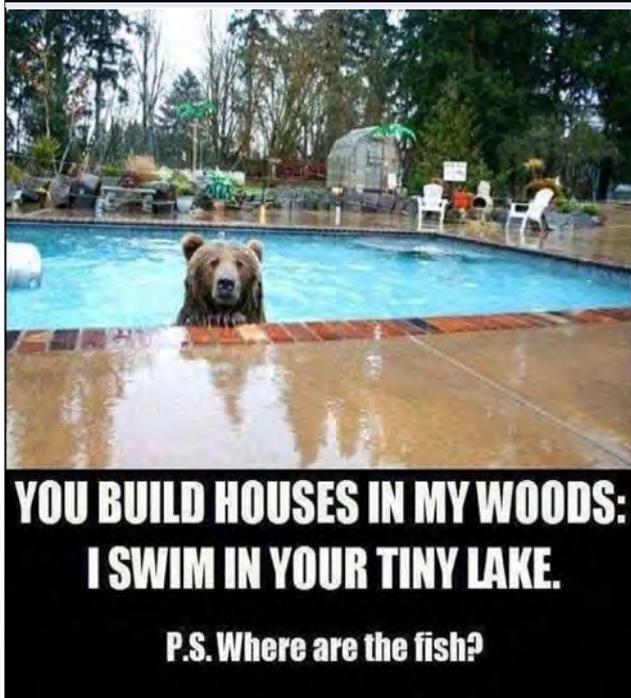
- ◆ Once at the ground, it is proactive to identify the match secretary (and the equivalent post-holder of the away team once that person arrives). At this point, all parties can agree the timing, venue and requirements of the team sheet exchange. For example, if a captain or member of the technical area is required to be present, this can be established in advance and prevents tension later on when the players warm up.
- ◆ The other key concern prior to the game can revolve around the playing surface. An early inspection can flag up potential problems and provide the maximum time possible for the groundsman to resolve any issues.

- ◆ At the team sheet exchange, it is wise to indicate when any post-match administration is going to be completed and how it is conveyed to both secretaries. Furthermore, it is worth confirming how any queries may be handled after the game; for example, in some leagues referees permit the manager to speak to them in the presence of a club secretary 20 minutes after the final whistle. This ensures that any interaction takes place in a controlled manner and may help to defuse any potential post-match tension.

After the game

- ◆ Prompt completion of the post-match form is often appreciated, especially if the away club has a lengthy return journey after a midweek evening game.
- ◆ When responded to queries, it is generally best to focus on what the officials have seen and what the law dictates for such incidents. Whilst it is polite to acknowledge that others may have different opinions, lengthy discussion and debate is unlikely to alleviate any immediate sense of injustice.
- ◆ Leave the changing room in the condition that you found it.
- ◆ It is vital to stay professional in the boardroom, avoiding any implied criticism of players or managers or other clubs that have been visited previously throughout the season.
- ◆ It is basic manners and costs nothing to thank anyone who has looked after the match officials, regardless of their status within the club; this includes dressing room attendants, the groundsman, bar staff etc.

Simon Parbery writing in *The Chiltern Referee*



Adie "He's a Lumberjack and He's OK"

Hopefully not too many of us are twiddling their thumbs with the lack of officiating but every cloud has a silver lining and we are not expected to accompany our better halves on shopping trips!! Please rest assured, your management committees are in constant contact with each other as well as County and when we hear something we will announce it.

Unfortunately I have to pass on the sad news that Daryl Williams, a member of the Guildford RA passed away recently. Daryl was a real stalwart Referee in the G&WAFL, the SCILW as well as the Referee Academy. Many of us worked with Daryl on matches and he will be sadly missed. Our thoughts are with his family and there is a link to a 'Tribute to Daryl'. <https://darylwilliams.muchloved.com/>

I have been finding plenty of time, when the weather permits, to perform my logging skills. About 3 months ago we inform the respective local Councils that an old willow tree that was on the border of my property but on Council land was rotten and was in danger of falling. We were given the usual run-around and two weeks ago it toppled only to be held up by a close proximity branch of an oak tree.

Last week it fell and again ignored by the local authority so yours truly, armed with his trusty Stihl went to work on it over the weekend. Most of it is now cut up and in my log pile – fortune favours the bold!!

I still have plenty of logs in the garden to keep me occupied for a while but I found time to manufacture two new Blue Tit Nesting Boxes and have fixed those to the ash trees at the lower end of the property.

Diane and I set about polling these two trees earlier to keep them manageable, shredded all the small bits and put them in the garden waste wheelie-bin. Then the Local Authority sent an email stating they would not be collecting this type of bin for the foreseeable future due to the Coronavirus. Typical, best laid plans and all that!

I have been very fascinated in all these 'apps' we are supposed to have on our mobile phones. I think if I downloaded all the ones I am advised to I would have more apps than the channels I have on my TV. As most of you are aware I live in a 'dead area' for the signal (hence you use my land line) so I see little point in me having them.

My phone works well in the car so I am OK with that if I need to take a call when I am out but an email came through last week attempting to pry over £1300 from my wallet to pre order the latest phone with bells and whistles on it. Yeah, right that's going to happen – I don't think!!

Stay safe and look after your families.

Adie



The Observer

Dear Observer,

Can you advise as to where is the best position for me to be for the taking of a corner kick. The recent Observer told me I need to see any holding and pushing and to also have a good view to see if the ball has fully crossed the goal line. Is there a perfect place to stand? Regards, Promotion candidate Level 7-6



Dear Promotion Candidate,

As you highlight a recent observer informed you that you need to take up a position that will enable you to monitor for holding and pushing offences at the taking of a corner kick, also to be in a creditable position to see if the ball has fully crossed the goal line, which I would totally agree with.

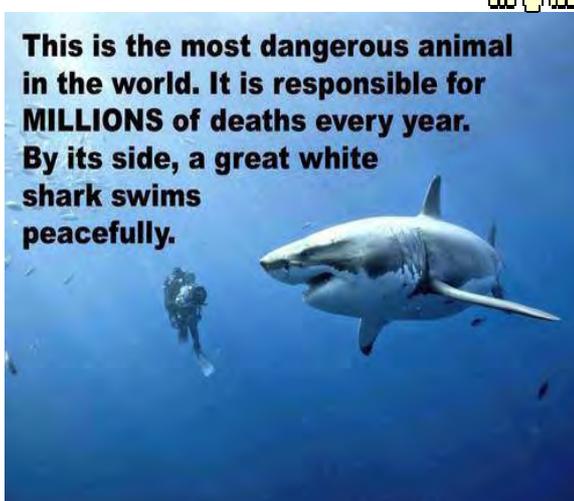
However, to help you with what I consider is the best position that you should take at the taking of a corner kick, I would advise you take up a position at the back post initially, which would enable you to firstly monitor the flight of the ball. Then, once you have monitored the flight of the ball and are happy the ball has stayed in play, I would suggest you move out towards the edge of the 18 yard box, without getting involved in play, to monitor for any infringements of the Laws of the Game from a more advantageous position.

Then you can vary your position and movements accordingly as play develops, which will also allow you to be able to follow any subsequent breakaway moves without getting caught up with players.

To answer your question "is there a perfect place to stand", the best position to take up "is the position that gives you maximum optimum viewing of incidents", so there is no hard and fast rule for where you should stand; you need to adapt your positioning and movements accordingly for each corner kick.

I hope this is of some benefit to you. I wish you well for the future.

The Observer *writing in The Normidian*



MURPHY'S MEANDERINGS

I saw the following article in the March 1973 issue of League Football issued by The Football League:

Old-Timers who complain that the game is not what it used to be, that it lacks the colour of by-gone days are in for a surprise if an experiment being carried out by The Football League proves successful. For part of the game will be brightened up ... although not in the tactical sense. League soccer's move for brighter football is taking place down the touchlines where linesmen at selected matches are wearing brightly coloured fluorescent jackets to test whether the jackets - similar to those jackets worn by motorway workers (I think they mean sleeveless-TM)-enable linesmen to be more easily seen by the referee, particularly at grounds where linesmen tend to merge into dark backgrounds provided by the crowd or advertising boards around the perimeter of the pitch. Reports to the League from referees, linesmen and clubs in the experiment indicate that the jackets could be the answer to the problem. To obtain the best possible comparisons, the coloured jackets are only being worn for half the match so that everyone can see what difference they make.

The jackets made their debut at the Tommy Lawton testimonial match and the referee reported that "the jackets caught his eye all the time and were a great help in picking out my linesmen against the crowd." Since that first match the experiment has been tried at half a dozen league matches at grounds where referees in the past have reported difficulty in instantly spotting their linesmen under floodlights.

Spectators have been asked for their comments and Mr W Huckfield of Trentham, Stoke-on-Trent, said, after the Port Vale-Chesterfield match, "that the linesman could be easily seen but that the brightness of the jackets tended to obscure the flags when they were raised," and suggested that "it would be better if linesmen wore fluorescent armbands instead of jackets so that the referee could instantly see when the flag was raised." It was also said that the jackets were clashing with the player's shirts. Presently, the jacket manufacturers are only able to offer a limited number of colours and a referee must ensure that there is no chance of linesmen's jackets clashing with players' shirts. The Football League are carrying out further experiments and are still to decide what to do. Apparently, however, the most common crowd chants are, "Where's your lollipop?" or "You'll never control this traffic."

Tony Murphy

Dib Dib Dib - Be Prepared

Have you heard the one about a well-known experienced local Derby Society who ran out of petrol on the motorway whilst travelling to an important r in the Central Midlands League.

What about the three experienced members who met at a well-known rendez-vous on the M1, dismissed the smell of burning coming from the car as rubber or something had fallen onto the exhaust manifold, left one perfectly fit alternative car at the meeting point, only to limp off the M18 some 30 minutes later into a garage still 5/6 miles short of their destination and only half an hour to repair the fault (oil leaking from the engine) and get to the ground?

Heard the one about a newly qualified referee en route to his first match, calling into a sports shop to buy some linesman's flags (he'd checked the shop had some flags by phone earlier that morning) to find out that the flag sticks/handles came separately and they didn't have any in stock.

Or the official getting changed for an important game, dipped into his kitbag and discovered he had no socks.

Or the official who gets to the furthest pitch on the racecourse without the match ball - it's a long way back for a clear vision technician!

Then there's the referee who asks his wife to buy him a new whistle, doesn't test it out and plays for 45 minutes with a whistle that can't be heard beyond the centre circle.... a dash back to his bag at half-time saved the remaining 45 minutes (and then extra time!).

Or the Football League referee whose pre-match preparations were interrupted by problems regarding a late discovery of a clash of strip, which led to a late kick-off (FA Cup competition), then reaches to his back pocket at the toss-up and finds no coin!

Oh, and then there's the linesman in a cup final who proudly pulls his Scotch-guarded, super-duper, quartered flags out of their cloth bag and deposits half the pitch onto the floor from the previous mid-week excursion.

MATCH PREPARATION - GET IT RIGHT!

Des Morrison . *This first appeared in the second Referees Digest 1994*

I remember turning up for a game once and the "Tupperware" box I keep all my whistles, cards and spare watch etc etc was not in my bag. I remembered checking box contents before setting off, but must have left it beside my bag. I ended up borrowing a whistle from the home manager plus a bit of paper and a pen I had in my car. Luckily no cards required. It's very weird not using ones usual whistle though. What have you forgotten dear readers? Mac

MURPHY'S MEANDERINGS

Looking back over some old referee magazines I came across some interesting bits and pieces.

A football team thought they had a bargain when they leased part of a cemetery as their new ground, until parts of bodies began coming to the surface. "It is particularly bad in the rain. We have found everything from a skull to false teeth on the ground," said Ion Radu, manager of Astra Ploiesti club in Romania. "It's impossible to play there, and one team suggested we take the skull and cross bones as our emblem." The club were given the land by the local council and officials were so keen to take it they signed a contract before finding out its former use. "We are not likely to be one of the most popular away games for most teams," Mr Radu added.

In Bulgaria, a cup final got a bit out of hand. The game ended in a mass brawl in the player's tunnel after fans threw a live snake at the referee.

You couldn't call Witham Friary soccer referee Brian Philpin "rubbish" – but he does step inside a dustbin liner for his matches. Brian has discovered that he keeps warmer by wearing the liner under his kit. "The only problem is that if it is windy, I rattle like an empty crisp bag," he said.

In Peru, referee Felipe Compinez, was stoned to death after awarding a last-minute penalty in a crunch match.

Bernie Marsh, the goalkeeper with Mid Sussex League strugglers Balcombe Reserves, had already earned a reputation for eccentricity by letting in 100 goals for the bottom of the table outfit in the 1992-3 season. But he surpassed himself in a match at Hartfield by managing to collide with a Ford Sierra in his own goalmouth. In fairness to the hapless custodian, it wasn't exactly his fault. After all, how many goalkeepers expect to encounter a car being driven along the six-yard line whilst the match is in progress? It happened five minutes from time with the game delicately poised at 1-1. As play moved to the half way line, spectator Tony Nana decided it was safe to back his car onto the pitch to turn around since his exit was blocked by other vehicles. Alas, his manoeuvre coincided with a high lob being hoisted towards the Balcombe goal. As Bernie raced back, he was blissfully unaware of what was happening behind him, and crashed his head into the side of the car, knocking himself out. Recovering from his ordeal, he reflected, "The ball went up high and all I could hear was my mates shouting at me. I thought they were egging me on to save the shot and I was really determined not to let another goal in. But they must have been warning me about the car. I touched the ball over the bar and the next thing I was out cold." The match was abandoned and from now on Bernie will be ultra-cautious in case future teams send the dormobile up for corners.

That old soccer saying, play to the whistle, was never more relevant than during a match in Argentina. Four parachutists blown off course by the wind interrupted a district league game between Regional and Estudiantes when they made an unscheduled landing. A surprised Estudiantes defender reacted instinctively by picking the ball up, whereupon the referee blew his whistle and pointed to the penalty spot. The protests of his team-mates at the exceptional circumstances were in vain. "Hand ball in the area is a penalty even if flying saucers are involved," said the referee.

Tony Murphy

Dumb Britain



The Chase, ITV

Presenter: Which US President is said to have cut down his father's cherry tree?

Contestant: Donald Trump.

Celebrity Mastermind, BBC1

John Humphrys: What traditional gift is given by Norway to London every year early in December?

Jessica Regan: A cuckoo clock.

Fighting Fit quiz, Radio Devon

Presenter: A blunderbuss is an obsolete variety of what?

Caller: Butterfly.

Richard Osman's House of Games, BBC2

Osman: In 1931, which famous American gangster was sentenced to 11 years in prison for tax evasion?

Contestant: Al Cappuccino.

Supermarket Sweep, ITV

Presenter: What is the name of Sherlock Holmes' sidekick?

Contestant: Inspector Morse.

Cash Trapped, ITV

Presenter: In 2010, which African nation became the first to host the FIFA World Cup Final?

Contestant: Albania.

I run like the winded.

The older I get, the earlier it gets late.

To me, "drink responsibly" means don't spill it.

Evolution of the foul, by Simon Hart in the 'I', 7th January 2021

The post-match interview is not an easy platform for measured analysis yet Fulham manager Scott Parker, speaking after his side's draw at Newcastle United just before Christmas, offered a clear summary of why what constitutes a foul in today's football can lead to so many sighs and shaken heads. "Any time a shot goes into the box and it ricochets off a hand [or there's] a little slight nudge, everyone screams and shouts because that's the world of football we're in now," he told the BBC's John Murray.

This is a world where what is fair or foul has never been as surgically enforced and yet, at times, has never felt less right. A world where the question of intent, once a determining factor, no longer applies. Even Howard Webb, the former Premier League and World Cup final referee now overseeing refereeing in the MLS, admits that, as with Parker, there are times when his natural sense of fairness is affronted.

Citing a recent penalty he saw awarded when a shot bounced off a goalkeeper and against the arm of a helpless defender, he tells *The 'I'*: "I thought, 'How can that possibly be a penalty?'. He had no intention to handle it, he had no incentive to handle it, he didn't know where the ball was going to go. But it's a penalty as it's written into the laws that way and I understand why, so as to gain the consistency that people have always demanded."

According to Webb the "last two or three years" have brought multiple changes to the game, from the handball rule to even "kicking the ball backwards at kick-off or being able to play the ball to a colleague in the penalty area from a goal-kick or free-kick. The fact we've got VAR on top of that means more evolution now than ever."

And the great irony, he adds, is that the "tighter parameters" introduced to "gain that level of consistency" mean "you then take away a bit of the feel and some of the spirit if you're not careful." This was the context for Liverpool's James Milner's recent declaration that he was "falling out of love" with the game though it would be naive to imagine there has ever been a golden age of fairness.

Courtesy of The Chiltern Referee

A Penny For Them?

Referee Jack Taylor

Not that Taylor didn't possess a sense of humour, as he demonstrated after being badly cut in the face by a penny thrown from a bank of Luton Town fans at Kenilworth Road. When Eric Morecambe, the comedian and national treasure who also happened to be a Luton director, asked him if he was going to report the incident, the referee said he wasn't, and Morecambe replied: "Good, now can I have my penny back?" Taylor roared with laughter, and recounted the story for the rest of his life.

Spotted in The Normidian.

See Page 28 For Full Story by Michael Oliver



FALL GUY:
Pickford
clatters into
Van Dijk in
the Mersey
derby

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Willy the 'Red Card' Referee **'Plan B' for season 2020-21**

It was back in August last year, it was summer and we were all looking forward to the prospect of a new season with no interruptions. Surely we would not be having any more lock downs and we would be back to 'normal'.

I refereed four pre-season friendlies and all went well. Not even one yellow or red from me.

Okay, so the club house was closed and there were no changing rooms to use but at least my season was starting with regular football. I should add there were no toilet facilities for the first available for the first match but we managed. In fairness many of the players went behind the bushes behind the goal. Fortunately there was no shaking hands due to covid. I had no intention of making any contact with anybody at any of the matches!

A few weeks later and the new season began. Each week I was being appointed to a match and this was wonderful but as we all know another lockdown was to follow and unless you are one of the top referees we were back to no football.

Match day Saturday is usually the highlight of the week. There is no substitute for it. With no matches no one has received a yellow or red card from me for months now, not even a sin bin! I have missed football so much.

But I have been fortunate. I have discovered a 'Plan B' for Saturday afternoon.

This is how it works -

Go to the nearest supermarket. As all referees need to be dressed accordingly we need to do the same as per government guidelines for covid i.e. wear a mask.

Sin Bin: Any customer not wearing a mask is a sin bin. What is the point of wearing a mask not covering the nose or pulled down under the chin. Might as well not be wearing one!

Yellow card: Any customer who encroaches into my personal space i.e. closer than two metres. Why can't these people make an effort to walk around me and not within six inches!

Red card: Yes, you are right! You must have guessed what I am going to say. No mask has to be a red card. Absolutely no excuse not to wear one. If there is a medical reason and they are unable to wear one then obviously no red but please appreciate I am not actually going around the supermarket approaching customers and producing red or yellow cards. All of this is a score I keep in my head! Did you really think I have been sending customers to the sin bin.



Sorry Sir, that mask has not fully covered your nose so it's the sin bin for you and your wife as well. Off you both go and put those masks on properly. That's it, off you go the sin bin. It's over there between the delicatessen and the bakery. I let you know when you can carry on shopping in ten minutes. No shopping for you 'till then.'

This just keeps me occupied whilst I am pushing the trolley around the supermarket.

On a serious note I hope the grassroots football will commence again for the remainder of this season in some format.

Will it be only league matches, maybe all 'double headers' to make sure all league fixtures are completed, maybe only cup matches to be played so at least there will be finals to look forward to at the end of the season whenever the end of the season will be.

Will this be another season when leagues and cups are not completed? With all the uncertainty no one can predict what will happen. The most important thing is for us all to adhere to the government advice and guidelines to keep safe and stay well.



Willy in action and appears the players are all two metres apart.

Willy "Red Card" Referee



Apparently Mac supports Windows now.



A police officer called the station on his radio. "I have an interesting case here. An old lady shot her husband for stepping on the floor she just mopped." "Have you arrested the woman?" "Not yet. The floor's still wet."

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Michael Oliver

https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/football/article-9129777/Michael-Oliver-backs-VAR-says-Pickford-seen-red-against-Liverpool.html?ito=native_share_article-masthead

There is an excellent interview in the Mail Online with Michael Oliver written by Oliver Holt.

Unfortunately its rather long for your favourite refs magazine but I have picked out a couple of excerpts which I thought were of particular interest

The above link should take you to the article if you'd like to read it in full.



Mac

REAL REASON WE MESSED UP PICKFORD'S TACKLE ON VAN DIJK

1 FABINHO plays the ball to the back post towards Van Dijk. Oliver: 'It was a big game. Both teams were flying. The assistant has given offside and there is the delay in the flag, as we have had this season. Jordan then comes out to Virgil.'

2 PICKFORD takes out the Liverpool defender but Oliver blows for offside after seeing the assistant referee's flag. Oliver: 'The thought initially was, "it can't be a penalty because it's offside so we need to check the offside first". I think I said to the VAR, "If it's not offside, I'm going to give a penalty". I have watched it back so many times. I genuinely don't think Pickford has done anything apart from try to spread himself but he did it the wrong way, as the injury has shown.'

MICHAEL OLIVER found himself at the centre of one of the biggest VAR controversies of the season. He was the on-field official when Liverpool defender Virgil van Dijk's season was ended by a shocking challenge by Everton goalkeeper Jordan Pickford. VAR official David Coote deliberated for so long on whether Van Dijk had been in an offside position that Pickford's challenge went unpunished, which led to Liverpool making an official request for the Premier League to review their use of VAR. For the first time, Oliver reveals what it was like to be at the heart of the decision and explains what went wrong.

3 DAVID COOTE, the VAR, spends over a minute on the offside decision, drawing lines, before deciding that Van Dijk was marginally beyond the last defender. The Pickford challenge is then not looked at. Oliver: 'We have all, myself included, not thought about the challenge as much as we should have done. We could still have given offside and sent Pickford off. What I was surprised about looking at it

afterwards was that nothing was expected on-field in terms of a red card. None of the players were asking for that. 'We got sucked too much into going step by step as opposed to thinking of the bigger process, which was considering the challenge as well and not just the fact it can't be a penalty. We should have restarted with the offside, as we did, but with a different punishment for Jordan Pickford.'

THOSE BIG CALLS I GOT RIGHT... AND WRONG

Good decision

I REFEREED the FA Cup final between Manchester United and Chelsea in 2018. It is still the biggest single domestic cup game in the world and it finished 1-0 to Chelsea, who won the match with a penalty that I gave when Phil Jones brought down Eden Hazard (right). It was the first FA Cup final with VAR but the only goal came from something that I gave myself with no intervention and which was proved correct. You only referee the Cup final once. It helped to make it a good weekend.



Bad decision

I WAS the referee for Birmingham against Plymouth on Bank Holiday Monday in April 2009 when I was hoping to get on to the Premier League list the following season. The No 2 in command of the referees' organisation came to assess me. After about 20 minutes, I awarded Plymouth a penalty for a challenge by keeper Maik Taylor that happened outside the box and wasn't a foul, and I sent him off (right). It was the end of my bid to make the list for another year.





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