

THE WARBLER

Monthly Magazine of the Woking Referees' Society

www.wokingreferees.co.uk

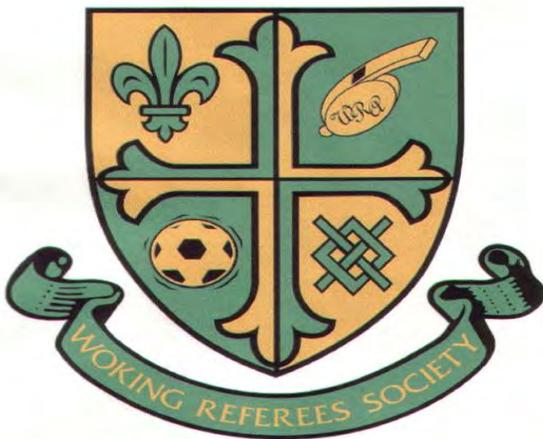
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Season 2019/2020 January Edition

WOKING REFEREES ' SOCIETY

Founded 1927

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The next meeting of the Woking Referees' Society will be on 6th January

**Meadow Sports Football Club
Loop Rd Playing Fields, Loop Rd, Kingfield,
Woking
Surrey GU22 9BQ**

AGENDA

- ♦ ***7.00 Academy Meeting***
- ♦ ***8.00 Chairman's Welcome***
- ♦ ***Guest Speaker***



Steve Worsley
“ WWDD ”

- ♦ ***Society Business***

**February meeting will be on
Monday 3rd February 2020
The deadline for the February Warbler is
Friday 24th January**

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

Chairman's Chatter

Hello everyone, welcome to the Warbler's first edition of the new decade!!

Firstly, I hope every one of you enjoyed your Christmas and New Year celebrations with your families, loved ones and friends.

36 of us had a brilliant evening on the 16th December at Hoebridge Golf Club at our annual Christmas meal. As ever, a massive thanks goes to Martin Read for all his hard work to make this happen, ably assisted by Mac and Jacko in the background - thank you gentleman, a great night was had by all (especially when Mac unexpectedly whipped out his Ukulele and got us all to join in with some group Christmas Carols!!).

For those of you who have had games over Christmas and New Year, I hope they went well. And for those of you who managed a break away from the parks and stadiums, I hope you made the most of your time and relaxed.

As we enter a new decade, we've got an exciting rest of the season ahead here at Woking Society. The quality of guest speakers lined up is second-to-none, with a great mix of people from the local football scene all the way up to PGMOL referees, observers and referee coordinators - DO NOT MISS ANY OF THEM!!

The work going on behind the scenes to continually improve our academy is already bearing fruit and I'm hearing great things about our young, not-so-young (!!) and newly-qualified referees. I'm really hoping that the forthcoming county cup emails in February will make their way to lots of our members inboxes.

Your committee is continually working to make this brilliant society better. Without the work that goes on, in the background, from all of them, we would struggle a lot more and this is why I'm proud each and every time we have our monthly society meetings to see so many of us in the room. Referees, active or retired, from all levels of the game coming together to discuss and inform each other. I really DO believe we not only have the best society in Surrey but also the best in the whole country so please continue to support us, tell us what more you want to see from the meetings and content in the Warbler and I'm determined to get 50 people in that room at Meadow Sports for a society meeting before the end of the season - help me to make it happen.

The final thanks goes to you, the membership, for doing all that you do for local football. Keep up your excellent work and please do what you can to come down to January's meeting and let's have a great start to 2020!!

Wishing every one of you and your families and happy and healthy new year!!

Cheers

Andy



Academy News

HAPPY NEW YEAR !!!!

After the small Christmas break, it's now time to start thinking about the possibility of League and County Cup Finals

The academy will start back again on January 6th at 7pm with an outdoor practical session on Position and Movement, you will need to come dressed appropriately and warm, please come along and get involved, learn something new or pass on what you've learned, or just come along and run off some of the sleepiness left behind from a week or two off

I look forward to seeing you on January 6th at 7pm for a 7:15pm start

Pat

Dates for your Diary 2019/20

6th January	Society Meeting - Steve Worsley
3rd February	Society Meeting - Tim Robinson
2nd March	Society Meeting and AGM
6th April	Society Meeting - David Phillips
4th May	Society Meeting - TBA

You must be joking



Some of the worst Christmas cracker jokes of the year?

"Christmas dinner is a lot like Brexit. Half the family were told they needed to make room for Turkey, so opted to leave Brussels."

"What do you get if you lie under a cow? A pat on the head!"

"What did Father Christmas do when he went speed dating? He pulled a cracker!"

"Which football team did Baby Jesus support? Mangerster United!"

Brian.

Membership and Accounts

2019/20 Memberships re-newed	2019/20 Current Status	
85 Full Members	General	£2,667.31
6 Friends	Supplies	£147.23
2 Affiliate Members	Belgium	£0.00
50 Referees trained in 2019/2020	Training Fund	-£174.03
	Youth Fund	£113.50
	Total	£2,754.01

Just a Sec!

A big thank you to Martin for once again organising an excellent Christmas Dinner last month. As well as enjoying good food and great company, it was an opportunity for our Society to pay a tribute to Tim Lawrence, our soon to be retiring RDO, and his good lady Celia, for his support hard work raising the standards of football refereeing in Surrey.

Jacko had once again pulled out all the stops and the mega raffle was the biggest yet, ably assisted by Tom. Thanks also to every one who donated a prize. I don't think any one went home empty handed.

As well as the usual coin toss, which gives the winner back the cost of their dinner and the balance a tip to the hard working Hoebridge staff (well done Mrs G), there was Martin's fiendish quiz and his baffling riddle. Namely :-
 "What's the best ever Christmas present?" (answer at bottom of the page)

There was also a surprise visit by some geezer in a stupid hat playing his ukulele who managed to get all the diners singing a few Christmas songs with great gusto. Probably helped by the free bottles of wine on each table!

The only minor disappointment was the lack of numbers this year. Still those of us who did make the effort were rewarded by a great evening and a marvellous way to kick off the seasonal festivities. Thanks once again a big "thank you" to Martin and Jacko.

Mac

Answer. A broken drum—you just can't beat it!



This Month's Speaker

Steve Worsley

Greetings to you and I hope you all had a great Christmas and looking forward to the new year.

I qualified as a referee in 1988 at 16 and after a number of years officiating on both adult and youth football, I have concentrated on supporting youth football.

Over the 30 years I have enjoyed refereeing on these, which has led to league and county cup finals, but wanted to do a bit more.

This has led to working closely with a couple of youth league to improve welfare and support to young referees and helping the leagues with training and advice.

The latter came from becoming a FA tutor 6 years ago (I have had the honour to work with Woking's finest tutors (& Pat))

Hopefully one of the first good things in 2020 is my presentation which will give you the opportunity to see some clips from last season and in small groups make a decision on what you would give in the same instance.

They are not all straight forward ones and with me playing devil's advocate and it being open to discussion, we can use the experience and knowledge in the room to bring up all the thoughts/ideas.

Then we can get to the answers, so for that evening I hope you enjoy WWDD.



Woking Referees' Society Christmas Dinner 2019

Monday evening of 16th December the place to be was Hoe-bridge Golf Club where a good number of members, many with their partners, enjoyed an excellent night of entertainment and reminiscence. Also attending as guests were Tim Lawrence and Adie Freeman together with their wives and Richard Adamson.

The formalities were few; brief introductions from organiser Martin Read and chairman Andy Bennett (well, briefer than usual for him!), then down to the serious business of good food, drink and banter at the tables. Also as usual, whilst the courses were being served and eaten, there was the chance to 'have a go' at Martin's legendary Christmas Quiz - even more difficult than previously - where does he get this stuff from?

As most know by now Tim Lawrence retires at the end of February 2020 from his position at Surrey FA and to mark this occasion President Vince Penfold provided a fitting tribute followed by presentations to Tim and Celia, his wife.

The rest of the evening was given over to "entertainment". The Heads & Tails game went to a penalty shoot-out with Paul Goringe's good lady triumphing. There followed the singing of a few seasonal carols introduced and accompanied by Mac on his ukelele. Then the traditional mega raffle, with many more prizes than people present, so most attendees must have gone home with something.

Even if not, it was a most enjoyable night out with good food and service at a very reasonable price, and thanks are due to the organisation, particularly Martin, for making it go with a swing. Those of you unable to come missed a real treat.

Bill Collis





Mac's Musings

Well, dear readers, it's another new year and the start of another decade, although I expect the purist will say the decade doesn't start until 2021. I struggle to believe that it is now 20 years ago that businesses were panicking over the change of date from 1999 to 2000. The thought was that all the computer systems would crash, which of course would mean that the world would come to an end and as we would have to rely on human brains rather than computers. The firm I worked for at the time, a well known supermarket chain, set up a "millennium department" with our top I.T techies tasked to ensure that all would be well at 00.01 on 1st January. I presume they must have done a good job as, as we all know, absolutely nothing happened, apart from yours truly over indulging on the bubbly and feeling much the worse for wear later that day. Well I wanted to be happy when the apocalypse hit!

My trusty Adidas Kaiser boots bit the dust last month (other boots are available). Actually it was mud not dust, which covered my left sock when I took my boots off after a very wet and windy game at Urnfield. I reckon they've lasted me nearly 4 seasons, which I reckon is pretty good value. Mind you I don't kick many balls, although one occasionally has to resist the urge to kick a few players'!!

Luckily Father Christmas has come to my rescue, heavily disguised as an Amazon delivery man, I'm now the proud possessor of a pair of shiny new footy boots. Until that is I'm back at Urnfield, or most pitches at the moment. Maybe I should have bought some flippers given the amount of rain we've had.

Last month I wrote about Walking Football and received the following from Mark Blythe who organises the monthly tournaments in Surrey.

Hi Mac,

Just read your warble! Thank you very much indeed for your kind comments much appreciated. Especially the Middlesbrough mention, we have to spread the word lol!

You shared about the challenges of all the rules very well, it certainly isn't easy. But this great game is only going to grow so the more referees we can introduce to the game and the sooner the better.

Our biggest challenge in my view is that the referees only experience walking football once a month or every 2/3 months. Yet the players are playing it once, twice or even more times a week and hence understand the game far better. It would be great if refs could join in with some weekly sessions to gain more experience, although payment could certainly be an issue with WF groups usually being just about self sufficient and not income generating.

Time for some thought....

Mark Blythe

Adie..... All for 5 inches !!

We are having some pretty inclement weather this season. December has been particularly wet and I appreciate that a lot of you have missed out on games due to match postponements. The only saving grace is that these games still have to be played so make sure you keep your availability for me up to date. I generally appoint around 2 weeks in advance so to avoid disappointment make sure you keep me updated.

We were honoured to be invited to the Woking RA Christmas dinner this month. It gave me a chance to catch up socially with my fellow Match Officials, to meet their 'better halves' and generally put the world to rights. Diane had the opportunity to meet all those Referees who have phoned during my absence and put a face to them. There are several she has previously met and was also delighted to meet the other 'football widows'. The splendid meal was enjoyed by all of us and an excellent facility. I know how good it is at Hoebridge as I used to organise the company golf society matches and we had a match there every year.

As most of you are aware I keep extensive records of the discipline in the Leagues. One of the most interesting comparisons for this season will be the dissent. Currently it is running slightly lower than past seasons as a percentage, however, at this point the C1 offence is noticeably higher. I am a little concerned that the 'sin-bin' may not be everybody's 'cup of tea' but we must ensure we comply with the Laws of the Game. I will continue monitoring and will give you the final figures.

Thankfully, earlier in the year the weather was more favourable and I was able to cut up a large pile of logs. The garden is so wet at present that I have no inclination to be out in the wet. Not only is it dangerous with a splitting maul but the existing lengths of wood are saturated. I have turned my attention to my woodcraft and working on the rear bedroom. I have now got the laminate floor laid and the skirting back. I had to move the storage heater 5 inches to the left. Reason? The long haired General reckoned that the curtain did not hang correctly. If any of you have ever worked on one of these you will know the heating bricks are downright heavy and it caused a lot of swearing, all for 5 inches!!!! The good news is the sewing box for my son's fiancé is complete (see pictures) – hope she likes it as I spent a lot of time perfecting the finished item.

Wishing you
all a very
peaceful
and prosperous
New
Year.

Adie



Aggressive Goalkeeping

I must return to the matter of aggressive goalkeeping. A number of recent incidents make it clear that slamming into an opponent, often making violent contact with his head, remains part of the goalkeeper's repertoire. An important, trusted part, I would say.

Obviously -- and I mean *obviously* -- that should not be the case. Violent assaults on opponents, which accurately defines these collisions, are not permitted by the sport's rules. Yet goalkeepers, for reasons that no one can explain, are allowed to get away with them. I have yet to find anyone with an acceptable explanation of this and, believe me, I've asked a lot of people over the years, including goalkeepers and referees.

Consider what happened in Tuesday's Champions League game between Borussia Dortmund and Barcelona. At the 35th minute, Barcelona was given a free kick out on the left flank, maybe 25 yards from the Dortmund goal line. Arthur Melo took the kick, swinging an aerial ball into the Dortmund penalty area. The ball was played, awkwardly, by a defender who headed it more or less straight up in the air. Dortmund goalkeeper Roman Burki, saw his opportunity and raced forward to punch away the dropping ball. There were two players, trying to head the ball, in his way. No problem. Burki simply flung himself at them and did manage to punch the ball away (though not very far) with his right hand.

But there was a problem. Burki plowed into one of the players, knocking him to the ground, and as he punched the ball, his elbow made hefty contact with the player's head. The referee did not call a foul, but he did quickly signal for medical help and the game was held up for nearly 2 minutes as the player was treated on the field.

He then left the field, but quickly returned to the action. As this looked like a concussion issue, one is bound to wonder if the much-touted "concussion protocol" was applied. But that is not the point I want to make.

Suppose it were not the goalkeeper, but a defender, who decided to race into the fray and get his head on that dropping ball? To get to it, he would have to jump vigorously into the other two players, knocking at least one of them down. And we can further suppose that, in the act of jumping, he raised his arms and that his elbow made contact with a head.

I feel pretty confident that most referees would see that as a serious foul ("jumping at an opponent in a reckless manner" for starters) and award a penalty kick (maybe not every referee, giving penalty kicks does not come easy to some). Yet what the defender did was pretty well exactly what the goalkeeper did. And for which goalkeepers are rarely, if ever, penalized.

In the case cited, I am not criticizing the referee (the Romanian Ovidiu Hategan). He was faced with a tricky decision, because the player injured by goalkeeper Burki happened to be his Dortmund teammate, Paco Alcacer.

Awarding a penalty kick when no Barcelona player was involved? I can't see a ref doing that (even though I think it would have been justified).

So I'll be content with the incident as an example of what goalkeepers do, and -- quite inexplicably -- are allowed to do. More than allowed to do -- they are praised for so doing. Here are three recent examples of goalkeeper violence greeted with acclaim by TV commentators.

MLS: Red Bulls-Colorado, Aug. 31 (19th minute). Colorado keeper Tim Howard races to the edge of his area to confront a Red Bull player who has broken through the Colorado defense. Howard simply blocks his process by standing in his way and, of course, knocking him down. No foul is called, but Howard is praised by TV guru Shep Messing (an ex-goalkeeper) for "making himself big."

English Premier League: Chelsea-Sheffield United, Aug. 21 (19th minute). Chelsea scores as Sheffield goalkeeper Dean Henderson bobbles the ball. TV guru Tony Gale (an ex-defender) criticizes Henderson: "the goalkeeper has to be attacking that ball -- taking everything out of his way."

EPL: Aston Villa-West Ham United, Sept. 16 (39th minute). As the ball is played long into the West Ham penalty area, Villa forward Anwar El Ghazi races to head it as West Ham goalkeeper Fabianski stretches to punch it away. The inevitable collision is violent and ugly. Fabianski stretches to punch the ball, also making solid contact with El Ghazi, who goes down. From the TV commentator: "Great goalkeeping by Fabianski!" From TV guru (ex-midfielder Leon Osman): "Fabianski knew he has to get there, knew he has to be brave and strong ... unfortunately for the Villa player, who's come off all the worse for it."

Thus the ingrained attitude in soccer is that it is praiseworthy for goalkeepers to knock opponents (and maybe teammates) out of the way, without any regard "to the danger to, or consequences for, an opponent." The phrase is taken from the rulebook. And it's not unusual to hear that line about it being "unfortunate" for the player who happens to be in the way.

This is evidently a deeply ingrained attitude, one that surely needs to be grained out as soon as possible.

Paul Gardner
Sept 18th 2019

Via Mal Davies V & A



THE THROW IN CONUNDRUM

There is one Law change this season that has taken me some time to understand what it means. This concerns the throw-in so let me tell you what the Law said before this season.

"All opponents must stand at least two metres (2 yards) from the point at which the throw-in is taken,"

And now let me give you the Law as it now stands

"All opponents must stand at least two metres (2 yards) from the point on the touchline where the throw-in is to be taken."

So what's the difference? Before explaining it, let me mention the change to the throw-in law last season. I'm sure you remember it but it went from,

'At the moment of delivering the ball, the thrower must face the field of play,' to

'At the moment of delivering the ball the thrower must stand facing the field of play'.

You could be forgiven for thinking that the IFAB Law makers are having a little running joke amongst themselves but looking closer you will see that the key word is 'stand'. I will leave you to speculate why anyone would want to sit or kneel down to throw the ball in but someone, somewhere in the world of football, must have done just that, and the law makers wanted to make sure it didn't happen again.

So what are they trying to prevent this season? It all revolves around the fact that not all players step up to the touch line to throw in the ball, some throw it standing well back, usually to take it quickly. As the law stood, if you read it literally, opposing players could also go and stand off the field of play, providing they remained less than 2 metres from the thrower.

So now they can only stand where the throw-in is to be taken and the law says the ball must be thrown in from the point it leaves the field of play. However, it doesn't say that the thrower has to stand there. In fact, providing the thrower has part of both feet on the ground and stands facing the field of play, the law accepts that the ball can be thrown in from any distance behind the touch line as it says that if the ball bounces before it reaches the field of play, it must be re-taken.

At a previous change to the Law, I asked my then contact at IFAB, Neale Barry, former Premier League referee, how far from the touch line a throw-in should be allowed. Ideally, he said, we would like it to be not more than 1 metre from the touch line but there is no limit.

Perhaps a way around this is for the Law to say that the opposing players must not be closer than 2 metres from the point the ball went out, as of course that is where it must come back in. The only problem, as I see it, is that seldom, particularly in senior football, do we see the ball get thrown in at the point it went out.

When we think about this part of the law, what is it actually trying to prevent? It is, of course, aimed at stopping opponents attempting to block the throw-in. So perhaps the Law should make it a must that the thrower is standing with at least one foot on the touch line. This is allowable, so make it compulsory.

Alternatively, the law can say, 'not nearer than 2 metres to the point the ball enters the field of play from the throw in'. This would allow for the throw that's way back from the touch line and for the ball not coming in at the exact point it went out, without actually legalising it.

Want to bet that there won't be another change to the conundrum next year?



Dick Sawdon Smith

PlumTree

AFA Middlesex/Essex Senior Cup
Winchmore Hill First-v-Old Manorians First,
Assistant Referee 1: Keith Hiller;

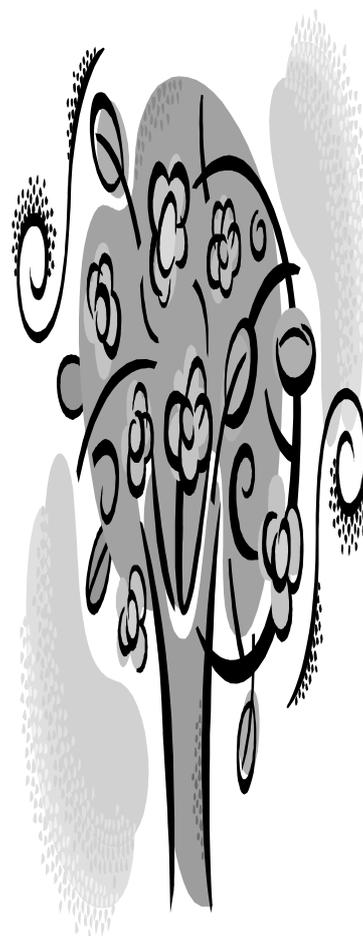
Surrey Senior Cup First Round
Woking v Chertsey Town
Assistant Referee : David Payne

Surrey Senior Cup First Round
Leatherhead v Raynes Park Vale
Assistant Referee : David Payne

FA Trophy First Round
Maidenhead United v Hemel Hempstead Town
4th official : David Payne

National League Premier
Ebbsfleet Utd vs Dover Athletic
AR1 - Andy Bennett

National League Premier
Yeovil Town vs Solihull Moors
AR2 - Andy Bennett



The best referee ever? Why I love... Pierluigi Collina

The introduction of VAR may be undermining trust in officials these days – but Jack Beresford writing in FFT still makes an exception for one fearsome, enigmatic Italian

Long before the days of Mike Dean memes, another follicly challenged match official was busy revolutionising refereeing for the better. No, Manchester United fans, this isn't an ode to Old Trafford penalty specialist Howard Webb, but rather a tribute to the world's first celebrity referee: Pierluigi Collina.



A distinctive 6ft 2in presence, known for his bald head and piercing stare, Collina had the look of happy hardcore raver from one of those 90s night-club promo videos on YouTube – but he was no joke. Few are naturals to the rigours of elite level officiating, but Collina defied convention with a combination of brains and brawn.

The Italian's match preparations were meticulous. Graham Poll once recalled Collina's pre-game presentation to his fellow match officials before one fixture at the 2002 World Cup.

"He drew their line-ups on a board," Poll said, "told us how they would play, who the fiery characters were, where the likely flashpoints would be, what each assistant might expect to happen on his part of the pitch.

"He covered everything. It was incredible... And, furthermore, he wasn't wrong."

The Italian understood the importance of communication too, learning multiple languages to better relay his orders to players – but he also knew that, on the pitch, actions often spoke louder than words.

Everyone from Edgar Davids to Duncan Ferguson tried to bend the Italian's ear down the years but Collina feared no man. He confronted issues quite literally head on in a way that left players in no doubt as to who was in charge, fixing his steely gaze upon them at close quarters, before explaining his reasoning firmly and fairly.

You must realise how players feel when the pressure is high," Collina said. "Sometimes I understand." In a sport where referees were often harangued by players, Collina's approach was refreshingly forthright.

"I am a man of the rules," he said. "Probably a consequence of my strict upbringing."

Born in Bologna to a mother who was a teacher and a father who worked for the Italian Ministry of Defence, Collina was educated at a Catholic school run by nuns. His formative years were spent in the Italian military and at Bologna University where he studied a degree in economics and enrolled in a refereeing course at the age of 17.

A passionate football fan who started out playing as a centre half, Collina had the foresight to turn his intimidating physical presence on the pitch to effective use as a match official.

Rising up through Italy's myriad lower divisions, the next 15 years saw Collina hone not only his craft but also his distinctive look, which came as the result of an extreme bout of alopecia suffered prior to his Serie A arrival in 1991.

Italian football was at its peak then, and with analysis and discussion in demand, it was common to see refereeing performances dissected and critiqued by fans and pundits alike.

However, despite standing out in a physical sense among Italy's pool of elite-level match officials, Collina's fair and even-handed approach to the game made him absent from such criticism, and won him fans both on and off the pitch.

"You have to be accepted on the field of play," Collina explained. "Not because you are the referee, but because people trust you."

The Italian wasn't overly officious. He believed in letting the game flow and never made himself the centre of attention.

He was the sort of referee who had the wherewithal to resist booking a player for jumping into the crowd after scoring in an emotionally charged fixture. Collina was also one of only two officials in Italy to avoid any sanction following the 2005 Calciopoli match-fixing scandal, with infamous former Juventus president Luciano Moggi branding him "too objective".

Placed on FIFA's Referees List in 1995 after taking charge of just 43 Serie A matches, the next decade saw the Italian become synonymous with a hard-but-fair stance reminiscent of that one teacher you hated at school but now look back on with fondness.

In a sport where referees are all too often remembered for their mistakes rather than their triumphs, Collina was in a class of his own – try to think of a memorable Collina blunder and you are likely to draw a blank.

It helped that some of his best games came in games involving English teams. If any nation has a complex about biased or incorrect officiating, it's England. Yet time and time again Collina came through with flying colours.

Collina's stellar showings brought him unrivalled celebrity status in refereeing circles. He starred in a string of television adverts, was the cover star of two editions of Pro Evolution Soccer and even released his own autobiography.

The fame would come at a price though. Collina's refereeing career was cut short in 2005 after the Italian federation withdrew an offer of special dispensation that would see him referee beyond the mandatory retirement age of 45. The reasoning was frivolous to say the least: Collina had starred in an advert for Opel, who were sponsoring AC Milan at the time. A conflict of interests was cited. Collina nevertheless resigned telling reporters: "People must believe in a referee."

Regardless of the decision, plenty still believe Collina was the best of the best. Voted FIFA 'Best Referee of the Year' for six consecutive years between 1998 and 2003, he was inducted into Italian football's Hall of Fame with his favourite player, David Beckham, one of many to describe him as "best referee in the world".

Despite hanging up his boots long ago, Collina still serves as a refereeing consultant and told one FIFA interviewer: "I still dream about refereeing matches." He's not the only one.

Courtesy of Mal Davies' V&A Newsletter

MURPHY'S MEANDERINGS

As I progressed up the refereeing ladder the amount of kit I took to each game increased as I tried to cover all eventualities. My kit included four pairs of boots, trainers, astro, moulded and long studs, three pairs of socks, one all black, one with white tops and one hooped, several pairs of black and white laces, a long sleeved and a short-sleeved shirt, two pairs of shorts, a competition, a county and in later years, an FA badge.

During my time on the Football League linesman's list they decided that, in addition to the traditional black Umbro kit, we could wear Bukta mauve or yellow kit, which they supplied, so I took these as well. You may think that I was a bit over the top but there were two occasions when one of the other officials went out wearing my spare shorts and there were several referees on the Football League who insisted that all three officials looked the same and that the linesmen wore the same type of shirt, long or short, as them. Anyway, I always thought it looked professional if both linesmen looked the same.

However, probably the funniest incident happened when we had to wear the coloured Bukta kit on the Football League. It was a normal Football League match and I knew both the other officials well. Our instructions were to wear the mauve Bukta kit. When I walked into the dressing room I saw the black Umbro kit hanging on the clothes hook.

Thinking it had been left there by mistake I jokingly said to the referee, "I see we're using the old kit tonight then." He looked a little confused and said, "Yes, don't we always?" Thinking he was winding me up I said, "That's no problem I've got my Umbro kit." The other linesman was looking a bit worried and said, "But I've only got my mauve Bukta kit. That's what we're wearing, aren't we?" We looked at the referee. It was his turn to look worried. "But I've only brought my black kit," he said, "I've forgotten my mauve kit,"

The thoughts between the other linesman and myself must have been telepathic. How could a league referee forget to bring the right uniform? "No seriously," he said, "I've only brought my black uniform." We had a problem and sat down to discuss it. Either the referee wore black and the linesmen mauve or the referee and one linesman black and the other linesman mauve.

Then salvation arrived in the form of the fourth official. He only had a black Umbro uniform and he was the same size as the linesman. When we went onto the pitch the other linesman was wearing the fourth official's kit. The only problem was what the fourth official was to wear. In the end, he wore only his vest and pants under his tracksuit and if he needed to come on then the officials would change uniforms.

Fortunately, it never happened.

Tony Murphy

INDIA : Mumbai City FC's U18 side has been suspended for a whole season and fined a million rupees (£10,500) after spitting at and abusing an AR

The Islanders' youth players and team officials had allegedly abused and spat on assistant referee Umesh Patel after their defeat against Karnatak SA.

Mumbai District Football Association's (MDFA) disciplinary committee has suspended Indian Super League (ISL) side Mumbai City FC's U-18 side for the entire season and slapped them with a Rs. 10 Lakh fine following an ugly episode which saw their players and officials manhandling an assistant referee after an MDFA Elite Division league match between the Mumbai City colts and Karnatak SA.

The match happened on December 11 at the Neville D'Souza ground in Bandra where Karnatak SA won the tie 1-0. After the game, the Mumbai players and their coaching staff were seen getting involved in a tussle with the match officials.

10 Mumbai City FC youth players were handed a season-long ban along with Rs. 5000 fine each. Besides the players, goalkeeper coach Abdul Kadir, physio Jay Singh, coach Mohan Dass (who incidentally has an AFC A coaching license) and assistant coach Suprith Jathana have also been suspended and fined.

Kadir and Singh were heavily punished with 5-year suspensions and Rs. 25,000 fines for each. The other two officials were handed one-year suspension each along with Rs. 25,000 fine.

The report submitted by the match officials suggested that the players and the club officials had allegedly abused and spat on 26-year-old assistant referee Umesh Patel after the game.

The referees then went on to stage a protest in the next MDFA Elite Division league match, demanding action against the club.

This was the first time that Mumbai City's youth team were playing in the MDFA Elite Division League after being given direct entry in order to promote Mumbai youth football. But now the actions of the grassroots development team and the staff has turned out to be a negative influence.

Thanks to Mal Davies and his V& A newsletter



A Pirate goes to the Doctor to make sure that the moles on his back weren't cancerous. "Don't worry" said the Doctor, "they're benign.". The Pirate replied "Check 'em again matey, there be at least ten..."

Dad, can you tell me what a Solar Eclipse is please?" "No Sun"...

MURPHY'S MEANDERINGS

I was appointed to run the line at West Ham. I liked going to West Ham as, along with Watford, I found them the most hospitable club of all the Football League clubs I visited. All the staff were very friendly and there was always a good East End welcome for the officials and their guests who were met by a club representative and taken to the canteen where there was a buffet of cakes, sandwiches and tea available. Across the road was a market where you could buy packets of frozen pie and mash (with liquor) and I used to buy a dozen packets before the match, leave them in the canteen freezer and collect them after the game. This made me the butt of jokes and banter from the ladies running the canteen, who called me the pie and mash referee, all done in good spirit.

I was the first official to arrive, closely followed by the other linesman, and we waited in the dressing room for the referee who arrived just before one-thirty. I knew the other linesman but neither of us had ever officiated with the referee. When he arrived, he was not very friendly and apart from introducing himself and saying that it was his first visit to West Ham said little else but busied himself with his kit. Knowing the routine, we suggested going to the canteen. However, he replied that he thought it was wrong to get too close to the clubs and we were to stay in the dressing room and have refreshments brought to us.

At our non-arrival in the canteen the West Ham official came looking for us and, entering the changing room, scolded us for not taking the referee to the canteen. The referee replied that it was his decision and he didn't agree with accepting hospitality before the match in club's lounges or canteens because he felt it gave the wrong impression. Therefore, he asked the official to arrange for tea and sandwiches to be brought to the changing room. The official was surprised and although not happy, did as he was asked.

For the remainder of the time before the kick off we stayed in the changing room and it was a long hour and half. There wasn't a very good atmosphere and the referee said little most of the discussion being between the other three officials. At half time the changing room was like a morgue, there was no discussion on the match and after the game the referee quickly changed, took his fee and went. Fortunately, that was the one and only time I worked with that official.

#####

Talking of changing rooms, I well remember my first game as a referee on the Football Combination. It was at Crystal Palace and I was extremely nervous. Fortunately, I knew one of my linesmen very well having officiated with him on many occasions. Not only was he an excellent linesman but he was a bit of a character, an extrovert. He had a strong sense of humour which brought a lighter atmosphere to the changing room and we got on well together. It was about twenty past two and the team sheets were due to be exchanged at two thirty.

Our changing room door was open and the linesman, saying, "You don't want the door open, do you," slammed it shut.

As it closed there was a loud shout of surprise and pain from behind the door. There was silence as we all looked at each other and then the linesman got up and slowly opened the door. There was nobody there.

Ten minutes later the away team manager and the home team assistant manager presented their team sheets. "The manager usually does this," said the assistant manager "But he's receiving some treatment. He was going to present our team sheet early but he walked into a door." It was said with a completely straight face and I didn't know whether he was being serious so I went along with it. In the background, I could see the linesmen trying not to laugh. When the two managers left, we couldn't hold our laughter back. From then on, the incident was never mentioned again.

Not the way I expected to start my refereeing career on the Football Combination but it helped to dispel my nerves.

Tony Murphy



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The Men In Black

If football is to remain governable, it must forcefully remind itself of the obvious and immutable reality that the most we are entitled to expect from a referee is *dedication to make the best of an impossible job*.

The list of demands that can legitimately be imposed on match officials is daunting enough. Their work's basic requirement is that they be honestly objective, intelligent, fiercely alert, fit and, of course, able instantaneously to apply an encyclopaedic knowledge of the laws of the game.

Yet the man who succeeds against the odds in fulfilling all of those obligations, is still likely to be bombarded with the grossly subjective criticisms and accusations of players and managers, whose scrutiny of his endeavours will have an unforgiving intensity they are seldom in danger of turning on themselves. Referees are especially isolated these days in a marauding swarm of dubious motives, prey to constant attempts to con, bully or belittle them.

All right, so that's not an image to melt many to sympathetic tears (boohoo, if they are sufficiently weird to want such a job, let them take the consequences, is a more probable response). However, nobody should imagine that to show sneering indifference is simply to indulge a healthily subversive appetite for seeing powerful authority figures discomfited. Referees are barely clinging to the status of authority figures, and their grip may be terminally loosened if the current campaign of disparagement is not effectively answered.

Men who are straining every mental, physical and emotional resource to engineer a winning result are almost bound to express bias as automatically as they exhale breath. So the protests and allegations of injustice that fill the air after nearly all significant contests wouldn't evoke much concern were it not for the suspicion that, certainly where managers are involved, they are often associated with efforts to affect the handling of future matches, either by infiltrating the thinking of a specific referee or by swaying those responsible for allocating games to individuals.

Playing with minds in that way may be less blatantly offensive than the sickening extensive repertoire of skulduggery to be encountered on the pitch - the shameful feigning of falls and injuries, the mass hounding of officials and the childish but malevolent miming of bookings in the hope of putting opponents at risk of dismissal - but all are elements of a pattern of behaviour that sinisterly under-mines any prospect of maintaining acceptable standards of discipline.

Admittedly, referees are sometimes prime contributors to such destabilisation. There are games in which incompetence reaches seriously damaging levels, with important offences allowed to go unpunished and passages of action culpably misinterpreted to the detriment of the innocent parties. And it is depressing when a referee is so astonishingly intent on being centre stage that there is a temptation to suspect the cards that he carries may include one from Equity.

Yet, although such exhibitionism is always deplorable, there is substance in the argument that unobtrusiveness can lose its charms amid an engulfing clamour of deviousness. Overall, it seems to me that *referees in this country, whatever their failures and foibles, are probably due rather more tolerance than they have recently been granted.*

Perhaps their chances of being looked upon with a kindlier eye would be improved if a simple procedure were developed to let them explain after matches how they arrived at some of their more controversial decisions, though it is simplistic to suggest that being publicly accountable means the same for them as it does for managers and players. For the latter group, a mistake is just a mistake and reactions to it are usually short-lived, but a referee's error is liable to be deemed a miscarriage of justice and the repercussions could rumble on indefinitely.

Still, that possibility may merely be another of the crosses that referees have to bear and the case for explanations is strong, as was made plain once again when a couple of Graham Poll's rulings at Stamford Bridge last Sunday puzzled and upset many people less prone to indignation than the chief complainer of the day, Jose Mourinho.

When Poll was promptly embroiled in another dispute at Goodison Park, he couldn't be blamed. The furore was caused by the Everton insistence on using laughable linguistic quibbles to underplay manifestly crude and aggressive remarks by James McFadden. Those who rant about the need for the men in the middle to own up should consider doing more of it themselves.

Encouragingly, *there appears to be a groundswell of backing for referees* as they seek to withstand the sustained assaults on their independence. But the resistance movement was hardly helped by the alacrity with which Keith Hackett, head of the Professional Game Match Officials' Board, acceded to Mourinho's request for a so-called peace summit.

Sir Alex Ferguson's ridiculing of the meeting might have been even more scathing if he had picked up on the fore-lock tugging tone of one quote attributed to Hackett: "Mr Mourinho is a world-class, top manager and I will be privileged to speak to him, and I'm pleased he wants to do that with me. It shows he cares and wants to understand."

Mr Hackett, with whom I've always had pleasant dealings, may choose to be ever so 'umble when he is representing himself. But when he is representing the integrity of the laws of the game, his talk of privilege is lamentably inappropriate.

*(Ed. This perceptive piece was taken from the Sunday Times 12.11.06, written by **Hugh McIlvanney**. I admired Hugh a great deal and found his style and views matched my own. So, I have exercised editorial privilege, and in order to mark his death in January, I have included this piece which I first included in February 2007)*

The above including the Ed comments appeared in the Chiltern Referee April 2019. Mac

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Willy the 'Red Card' Referee

The New Year's Referees Resolutions

I pledge to be honest and award what I see
All decisions awarded will be dealt honestly
For the ninety minutes and extra time if need be
For all the players I will show empathy

There are no short cuts so no surprise
Go to the gym it's good for exercise
Peace of mind, focus and quiet
Sensible food so no need to diet

Be prepared and take nothing by chance
Learn by experience so you can advance
Improve your movement for better vision
This will help with your decision

The best person on the pitch will be me
For ninety minutes consistently
Dress to impress to make those first impressions
If you're not looking good it will be lost in seconds

Arrive early to prepare in good time
Inspect the pitch is looking fine
Corner flags in and the goal nets
Have a look now to prevent any regrets

I pledge to have good administration
I pledge to be good in preparation
I pledge to give my all
I pledge to be nobody's fool

My talk to the captains is brief and to the point
I certainly do not want to disappoint
'Play to my whistle and show no dissent'
I talk from the heart and all words are meant

I pledge to be in the best position
That will help to award the right decision
Was it careless, reckless or excessive force?
That will help when I blow my whistle of course

In the local parks there is no VAR
So we really need to raise the bar
Award every decision with conviction
If players disagree there will be an eviction

For players there is nothing scarier
When you tell them to go to the sin bin area
Ten minutes of quiet, ten minutes of rest
The sin bin gives the referee a rest

Be calm and collective
When you are wrong you are right
The players around you do not know the laws
The players around you can be bores

Festivities over and a new year here
Avoid the wine and the beer
Set the standard and be consistent
Don't allow the players to be persistent

Don't give up and never stop
Head up high don't let it drop
Now is your chance to be trend setter
This is the year that you will be

The new year's resolution for all referees is simply be better!

Willie the 'Red Card' Ref



Pages From Yesteryear

The Referees' Association Wastage of Referees

When registration and classification figures were made available by The Football Association they showed that in each season over the past three years, the numbers of newly examined officials merely replaced those lost to the game. The numbers involved averaged 3000 a season, some 12% of the approximate total complement of registered officials.

Accepting the fact that there will always be a turnover element for the normal reasons grave concern was expressed by The Referees' Association and the matter was brought before the Referees' Committee of the Football Association. The Committee agreed that they, through their National Training Officer would conduct a survey through County Football Associations and the RoA, would undertake a similar operation through its membership. Both results would be considered and put before The Referees Committee of The Football Association,

In February 1960 the following letter was sent to all Council Members, Executive Members and Society Secretaries representing almost eighteen thousand members of The Referees' Association*

"Referee Wastage."

*A recent survey taken by The Football Association on the numbers of registered referees over the last three years together with the numbers of those trained over the same three years, produced one definite conclusion. Every referee is merely replacing one lost, so the numbers of qualified referees remain unchanged, despite the hundreds that are found, coached and qualified each year**

There are many reasons for this wastage, but before it can be discussed with The Football Association, views are required from our Membership

Would you, therefore, let me know your views and what reasons you think are the main causes for so many referees leaving the game.

I would like the information as soon as possible so that the facts can be analysed and collated into defined reasons which can be presented.

Many people view the problem with the utmost concern and if you could kindly help with information it would be very much appreciated."

The initial response was slow, but then it became very evident that the subject was being seriously discussed by Societies, some devoting a whole meeting and in some cases obtaining the written views of every individual members.

At Conference held in Cardiff on 4th July 1980, Council and Executive Members were advised of the response and findings of the enquiry with replies totalling 139 representing 6363 members (35.7%)

The prime reason expressed in the replies was indiscipline of players, lack of respect to the referee by both players and club officials. In general the referee was being abused resulting in the person concerned considering whether it was really worth the trouble taken to qualify, to attend matches under all conditions just to be abused.

Coupled with these sentiments was the complaint that referees were not receiving the support from County Foot-ball Associations when dealing with Disciplinary matters. Whilst it is not the duty of a referee to question punishment of players, a general feeling was that many Commissions went out of their way to assist players even to the detriment of the referee and his report.

Players guilty of serious offences, assaulting referees were being reinstated after very short periods of suspension.

The attention paid to newly qualified referees in their early years was another reason which should give cause for concern by both the governing body and ourselves because feelings were expressed that having once trained a potential person to examination standard, seeing that person qualify and in many cases obtaining his registration and subsequent membership to the Association, care seems to lapse and when at a very vulnerable time in a career help is needed, none is available.

Assessing and Advisor Schemes at this level are very sparse and inadequate, as services in this direction are generally concentrated on promotion.

Promotion was another reason given for wastage, in many cases it was the lack of promotion or the manner in which it is made. Many felt there was a lack of incentive to achieve higher standards with the age restrictions (*obviously no longer applicable Ed*) so became disillusioned when realising that there were no prospects for a higher standard of match to control.

Many of the replies received commented on the unsuitability of the individual who after officiating for a season or so, found that they could not cope or that it was not their scene.

It was recommended by many that closer attention should be given to those trained as to their suitability bearing in mind that all too easily, the excessive demands for referees seems to outweigh the care for qualities of an individual who wants initially to become a referee.

There were numerous other reasons given which included Assaults on Referees, Domestic Reasons, Appointments, Television, Poor facilities of Club and Pitch, Fees and Assessment Scheme.

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The Warbler October 1980

It would be interesting to know if the situation and reasons for "wastage" are the same today. Mac



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