



We have two meetings in November 2010

First Meeting

Thursday 4 November 2010

at

19.15 for 19.30

at

Old Salesians FC

Salesian College Playing Fields

Old School Lane, Ewell West, Ewell, Surrey KT17 1TJ

Guest Speaker

To be announced

| | |
|--|---|
| The schedule for the evening is likely to be: | 20.00: Match incidents and law queries; |
| 18.30: Bar open and delicious sandwiches galore; | 20.15: Speaker |
| 19.25: Take your seats; | 21.05: Q&A and vote of thanks; |
| 19.30: Chairman opens with routine Society business; | 21.15: Raffle and final announcements; |
| | 21.30: Meeting ends |





Second Meeting

Thursday 18 November 2010

19.15 for 19.30

at Alexandra Park FC

The Racecourse Ground Wood Green, London, N22 7ST

Our Guest Speaker will be

Steve Tate

Society Supplies Officer, Level 4 and fitness guru presents

“The Monologues of the Long Distant Referee”

One of the county's senior referees pours out his heartaches and experiences in a one man show to entertain his fellow referees in a way not seen or presented to AFA-LONSAR members ever before. To spread some entertainment before the oncoming long dreary nights spent by the fireside with only decrepit reality TV, sordid soaps, depressing news bulletins and endless European football games to contend with. The evening will throw a light hearted view on our 'profession'. A stage show never witnessed before and tailor-made for the men and women in black. This one ref show delivers a sense of purpose, an insight into the unique mind of referee - unknown to many a football fan. It covers aspects of refereeing never revealed before to the outside world. So come along for an evening packed with so much food for thought you will need to go on a diet and re-shape your ribs.

The schedule for the evening is likely to be:

18.30: Bar and restaurant open
[excellent food at excellent prices];
19.25: Take your seats;
19.30: Chairman opens with routine

Society business;

20.00: Match incidents and law queries
with John Cooke;
20.15: Steve Tate:
21.05: Q&A and vote of thanks;
21.15: Raffle and final announcements;
21.30: Meeting ends;



*Our guest speaker at
Alexandra Park:*

Steve Tate

**Society Supplies Officer,
Level 4 and fitness guru**



NEWS OF MEMBERS

Do you have news of members - including yourself?

Would it interest other members?

If so, please let the Editor know by post, phone call or e-mail and it
will be published in the next Argus.

Anything in good taste is acceptable - e.g. news of awards, promotion,
appointments, injuries or return after injury.

JOHN BANNER

It is with much sadness to announce that John Banner passed away on
Wednesday 20th October. John had suffered from emphysema for
some years.

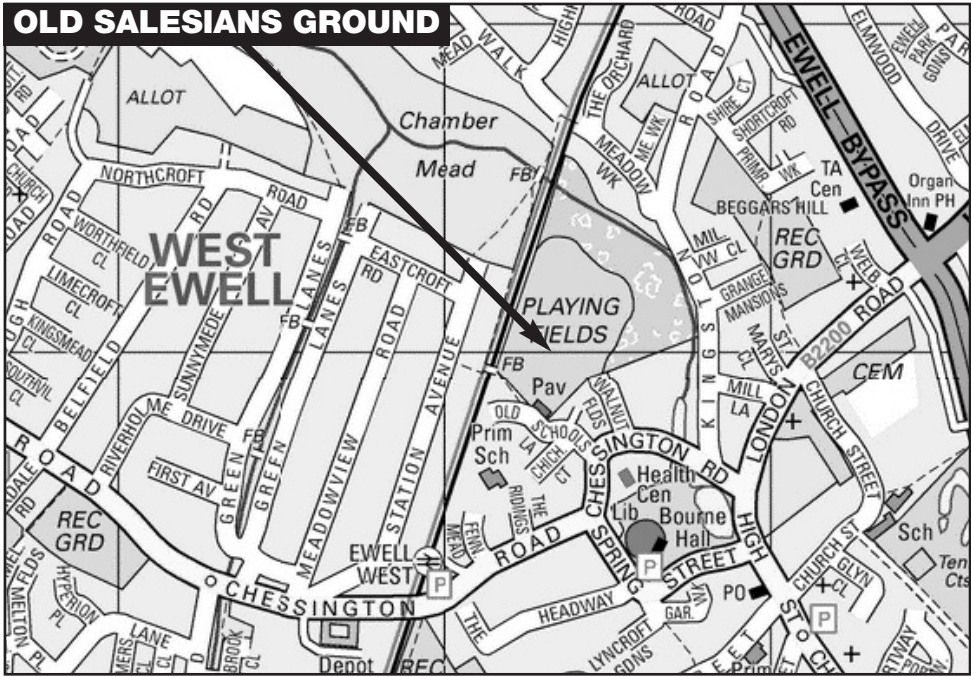
At present the funeral details are unknown.

John was a former Secretary of the Southern Amateur League and
was both the Hon Assistant Secretary of the Alliance and, of course,
General Secretary of the Alliance. Following his retirement as General
Secretary, John was President of the Alliance from 2001-2003.

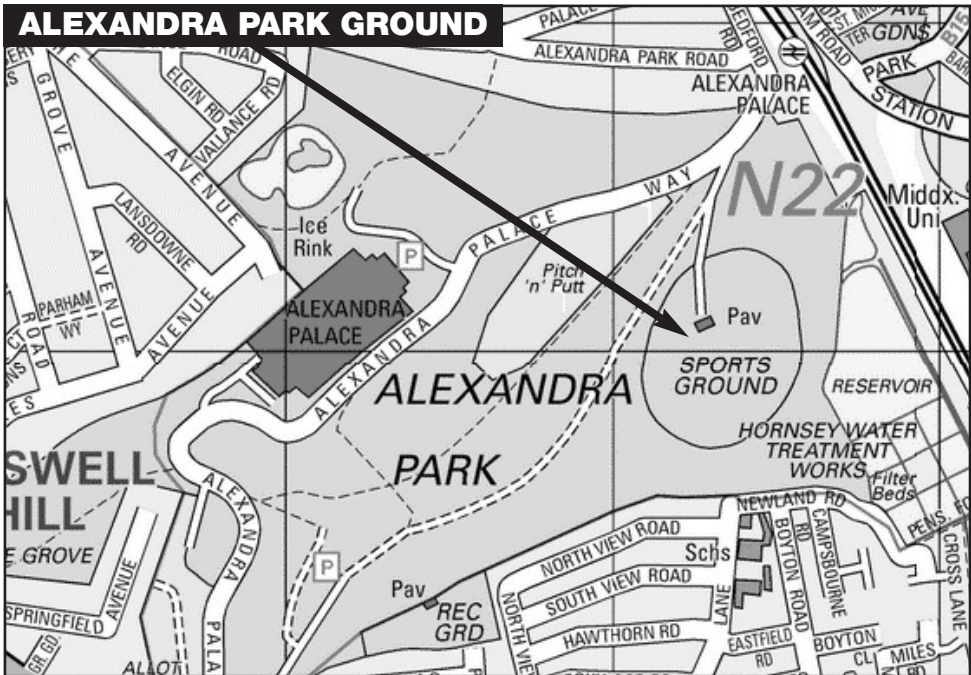
Our thoughts and sympathies go to his friends and family.



OLD SALESIANS GROUND



ALEXANDRA PARK GROUND



Dates For Your Diary 2010/11

| Meeting dates 2010 | Venue |
|--|--|
| 04 November | Old Salesians FC |
| 18 November | Alexandra Park FC |
| 9 December | CSRC[a] |
| 2011 | |
| 13 January | CSRC[a] |
| 3 February | Old Isleworthians FC |
| 10 February | CSRC[a] |
| 10 March | CSRC[a] |
| 14 April | Norsemen FC |
| <i>Note: This meeting will be in conjunction with our colleagues at North Middlesex Referees' Association.</i> | |
| 12 May [AGM] | CSRC[b] |
| 20 May | Society Annual Dinner and Presentation Evening |

Notes:

- [i] CSRC= Civil Service Recreational Centre, Chadwick Street, London, SW1 P 2EP; [a] on the third floor in the Westminster Suite, and [b] in the Greycoat Suite, Second floor.
- [ii] Old Salesians FC, Salesian College Playing Fields, Old School Lane, Ewell West, Ewell, Surrey, KT17 1TJ
- [iii] Alexandra Park FC, The Racecourse Ground, Wood Green, London N22 7ST
- [iv] Old Isleworthians FC, Memorial Ground, 22a Wood Lane, Isleworth, Middlesex, TW7 5EP
- [v] Norsemen FC, Edmonton Sports & Social Club, Church Street, Edmonton, London, N9 9HL

OUR WEBSITE

Just a reminder to members
that our website address is
www.afalonsar.co.uk
Michael Hayden is doing a
grand job keeping it up to date.
Please visit it!

REFEREEING ACADEMY AT SOCIETY MEETINGS

Training Officer and AFA Referee Development Officer John Cooke will be pleased to receive any problems of members at monthly meetings, and also to analyse and debate recent incidents recorded from the professional game on video. Members with video recorded incidents are always welcome to bring them to meetings and they will be examined, time permitting. If possible, please telephone John in advance.

**COPY FOR
DECEMBER ARGUS
MUST
BE WITH THE EDITOR BY
THURSDAY
25th NOVEMBER 2010
OR SOONER IF POSSIBLE.**



Chairman's Comment

Introduction: With the last Society meeting on 14 October and the next on 4 November followed by another on 18 November, plus an Executive Meeting on 20 October there has been little time to think of something about which to write. It is not only the Chairman that has find time to compose and then hit the keys, Pat Morrissey, Errol Walker and several others will have been burning the midnight oil this week to meet David Littler's deadline before the ARGUS is put to bed this weekend. Therefore, you will be relieved to learn, this will be an uncharacteristically short piece.

Meetings: Last week's meeting was an interesting and lively one when Alan Poulain, Chairman of the Referees' Association was our guest speaker and Len Randall, Middlesex County RA Secretary and Treasurer put in an appearance to hand to Chris Evans a well-deserved award from Middlesex FA. The evening had everything and we saw the Chairman variously jumping onto a high-horse and when attacked by several of the audience then taking refuge on a soap-box; a loyal member, no doubt excited by the unaccustomed success of his team of late then savaged the guest-speaker over the question of referee uniforms [see note elsewhere in this issue]; there were lively and informative debates about whether a free-kick is really free, a dialogue about club referees and unregistered referees, some discussion on lion-head logos appearing on the sides of Panzer tanks and referees' chests, and we welcomed Steve Tate our new Supplies Officer, our ARGUS jokes policy was reviewed, and finally John Cooke was all wisdom and panache as usual with an excellent training session. That, I believe is what society meetings are all about: just over two hours of enjoyment, fun, learning and interest. Thanks to all who attended [it was an excellent turn-out] and I am sorry to those who couldn't get there but please try to attend future gatherings.

Guest Speaker: Alan Poulain, Chairman of the Referees Association delivered an excellent presentation [see Errol's account elsewhere in this issue] supporting the case for our continued membership of the RA. He highlighted the tangible and intangible benefits of membership and spoke warmly about the better future that is expected following the coming together of the RA and The FA to form "RA-FA". I hope he is right. On looking at The FA's website I couldn't see anything about RA-FA and when I entered the title and pressed search I was presented with articles about the former Liverpool manager! We didn't press Alan with any difficult questions as we might have done so I presume that we are all satisfied with the arrangement [at least those at the meeting.] But we should never be reluctant to seek explanations, criticise and demand clarifications from an organisation to which we pay a lot of money each year with little tangible benefits in return. As Alan nobly added in closing, "*Remember we are there to serve you.*"

RA-FA Evening in November: In our own way the Society and the AFA under The FA's sponsorship is promoting the new organization RA-FA and will be holding a training evening at the ***Civil Service Recreational Centre on Thursday 11 November at 1855 for 1900***



when the guest-speaker will be **Jeff Pettitt**. You should by now have received an invitation from the AFA, **please** make every effort to come along. Although RA-FA is a national body replacing the divisive FAMOA we need to work with our County FAs [and here I include London County FA] to make things happen at a local level. It is at this level that so much can be achieved in recruiting new referees and retaining the ones we already have. It is vital that the refereeing community sees that counties and the societies cooperate in the same spirit as at national level. It must be a prime objective to bring together the best of The FA and RA for the benefit of all referees, and especially grassroots referees, whilst recognising the independent roles of each organisation. The focus must be on recruiting, training, informing, equipping, retaining, developing and supporting referees throughout the country with the aim of contributing to retention rates, increasing the number of referees and raising the standard of refereeing. There are important roles for societies, referees, mentors, County FA staff, assessors and most vitally instructors.

The bigger picture: As I write the rolls of thunder continue to echo around Anfield and Old Trafford. Liverpool may have cast off the heavy burden of massive American debt only to be saddled with another relatively unknown US citizen who hopefully will not bring his debts with him. Any psychological damage has seemingly not diminished with lack-lustre performances last Sunday and earlier this week. Where do all these foreign investors come from and what are their motives behind buying our football clubs? It can't be profit and if it is personal aggrandizement then there is always the possibility that when they become bored and disenchanted they might just walk away. Recently a young, rich, aggressive player stood up to, and if we are to believe the press, overcame a rich, aggressive old man to get his way. And who foots the bill for this stand which was resolved by a vastly increased salary, why the spectators of course? No doubt his new contract signed so very soon after declaring that his present club didn't match his ambitions will be worth zillions and where does the money come from? When the system of showing live football on television via satellite changed around 20 years ago it was heralded as bringing football into our living-rooms and giving higher wages to players and lower admission prices to loyal fans. Well part of this has come true!

The chant was almost "RIP Pompey" as the south coast club again teetered on the brink of extinction. But by last minute deals and payments the club is secure for the time being.

Show Some Respect: I mentioned last month that I perceived a change in the behaviour of players and their attitudes to referees [based on the dozen or so games I have done so far.] This view was reinforced during a recent game between Civil Service and Old Hamptonians in the AFA Minor Cup. It was a terrific contest played in the highest sporting spirit and with a real competitive edge; and both teams showed the referee the greatest respect even when in rapid succession he denied Hamptonians a goal and a minute later gave the Civil Service a penalty! The game lasted 127 minutes and unfortunately someone had to lose. But I was pleased to be able to report to the AFA on my electronic match-card my positive thoughts about the players and later to the FA's Respect Programme website about which you have no doubt all received a recent reminder. **Please** try to complete these **FA Respect** returns regularly as The FA is going to a great deal of trouble seeking the views of grass roots referees about the treatment



they receive from players, club and club officials alike. Please support this worthwhile initiative. I cannot close this account without mentioning the wonderful post-match hospitality I enjoyed at the Civil Service despite their current difficult circumstances.

I am sure you all share with me the sentiment that respect is a two-way street. Disrespect by a referee is as bad as that by a player of a referee. Lack of fitness, being late for the kick-off, turning up looking scruffy, failure to carry out pre-match inspections, poor knowledge of law, lack of respect towards the players through attitude, body language and poor management all contribute towards referees being held in low regard. Alan Poulain cited a case of a referee who having allowed a player to leave the FOP to be substituted saw the player take off his shirt as he neared the touchline and promptly cautioned him. And I witnessed recently a middle-aged referee who looked as though he had been poured into his uniform [and somebody had failed to say "when"] officiate a match from a band 20 yards wide on either side of the centre-line. From this strategic position he disallowed a vital goal for offside from a distance of around 35-40 yards. As there had been a coming together of bodies during the incident the attacker asked the referee what the offence had been. Amazingly our colleague moved with uncharacteristic speed and whipped out his yellow card and cautioned the player for dissent. When he complained a second yellow was brandished plus a red and his game was over. Did this referee show respect? If we are prepared to take the fee we must earn it as the failure of just one referee taints us all.

100 Club: I apologize for the delay in making the *"100 Club Plus"* draws for September and October but this is designed to give you all a little longer to buy more shares in this worthwhile and imaginative scheme. However, to keep faith with the spirit of the new *"100 Club Plus"* the September draw will be made at Old Salesians on 4 November to include all subscribers [but only those who were present at the September meeting will qualify for the winner's bonus]. The October draw will be made at Alexandra Park on 14 November [but only those who were present at the October meeting will qualify for the winner's bonus.] Finally, to bring us up date and as a Christmas treat, both November and December draws will be made at the Chadwick Street meeting on 9 December [the November winner's bonus going to those who were present at either November meeting.] The objective of the *"100 Club Plus"* is to offer an incentive to members to attend Society meetings by offering them an additional £15 if they are present when their numbers are drawn. The 9 December meeting promises to be a good one with lots of prizes on offer and we have Jeff Pettit as our guest speaker.

The Law 14 Two-step: I always stick up for referees when I hear supporters and TV pundits criticising a member of the band of brothers. Usually, the criticism is based on a fundamental ignorance of the Laws of the Game. However, there is little or no excuse for referee inconsistency and flouting of the Law. Recently while watching a game the home team conceded a penalty, a correct decision for which there can be no complaint. The kick was taken and the goalkeeper saved magnificently which brought. But wait, the AR has raised his flag and is pointing toward the goalkeeper and when he has the referee's attention he makes little shuffling motions with his feet. After a brief consultation between the pair the referee awards a retake and of course the penalty was scored. OK so far so good. But next time you



are being briefed by a referee ask him what is his tolerance regarding goalkeeper encroachment from his goal line at a penalty kick. He is likely to say something along the lines of "Well, one step is OK but not two." I invariably then ask whether we should allow a player taking a throw-in to step onto the FOP by just one step, but not two. Of course this doesn't go down well and I wouldn't advise you to follow my example if you value your markings. But should we not opt for total consistency for something as critical as a penalty kick? Footballers can only understand simple concepts and what could be simpler than suggesting *"the goalkeeper must remain on his goal line facing the kicker, between the goal posts until the ball is kicked."* Just a suggestion but I think it is written down somewhere.

. . . **and finally:** Trevor Weaver has regularly reminded us in ARGUS of the fun we OAPs can have now we have so much time to spare and are regarded by many as being batty and eccentric. Recently on returning from my daily jog [yes, folks the madness is still upon me] a passing motorist seeking directions around Chiswick-upon-Thames's quaint streets shouted to me *"Oi, oi, you in the shorts, is there a B and Q in Chiswick?"* I thought for a moment and replied *"No, I don't think so just a C, an H, then an I, then S, W, I, C and a K."* Modesty forbids me from reporting his less than cordial reply; some people have no sense of humour.

Have a good one, and see you all on 4 and 18 November at Old Salesians FC and Alexandra Park FC respectively.

Gordon Kirby, Chairman

Once again our Continental correspondent based in deepest France picks up on Peter Tadman's piece about free kicks

ABOUT FREE KICKS

Peter Tadman makes a valid point (ARGUS October) – the "wait for my whistle" procedure at free kicks is a negative factor in the game. Any delay, imposed by the referee, is unfair to the offended team wanting to put the ball into play quickly.

A reminder of the definition of a free kick, when first written into the 1863 laws;

A FREE KICK is the privilege of Kicking the Ball, without obstruction in such a manner as the Kicker may think fit.

In the early 70s the Football League match officials were required to visit the players' dressing rooms for the referee to brief the teams about the manner in which the game would be conducted. One standard comment was, "Quick free kicks are on for both sides. Indicate to me if you prefer the 10 yards - which means wait for my whistle."



Although the pre-match briefings were soon abandoned that was one comment which worked like a charm.

For several years West Ham insisted on the option of a 'quick free kick' to employ rehearsed tactics which caught out unprepared defenders. Bobby Moore was often seen to nod to the referee to indicate his choice - having advised the referee of this sign in advance. A "ceremonial free kick" was then not required.

The referee has the opportunity, at the toss-up, to advise the captains of their right to a quick, or a ceremonial, free kick – a practical example of applying the spirit rather than the letter of the law.

Stanley Lover



Whistleblower's Opinion

When our reputation is on the line

Possibly the most frequent decisions a referee has to make in the game is whether a ball has crossed an external or internal line on the field of play.

Watching games on TV, I often see touchline decisions on ball out of play given by Assistant Referees that look questionable. And refereeing games without Assistants in grassroots football, the most loud protests from players and spectators are generated by decisions to allow play to continue despite their claims that the ball was "a yard over the line".

Much of the confusion and controversy comes from that unassuming sentence in the Laws - "*These lines belong to the areas of which they are the boundaries.*"

For followers of the various codes of "Football", the confusion often originates from the difference in Law between Rugby Union and Association Football whereby in Rugby if the ball or carrying player touches the line, then the ball is out of play. In Association Football, the whole of the ball must cross the line before a goal is scored or the ball is out of play. The lines belong to the field of play.

This should be elementary stuff to referees. But players at all levels appear not to understand the Law. And I have a sneaking suspicion that some Premier League Assistants react to player appeals and the roar of the crowd to give balls over the touchlines when in fact the ball is still technically in play.

IFAB Meeting : 20 October 2010

Obviously the most critical line on the field of play is the goal line between the posts. And the controversy over Lampard's England 'goal' in the World Cup game v Germany is causing a rethink on the use of goal-line technology to assist referee decision making. The IFAB statement after the October Business Meeting listed the following principles for the review:

1. The technology would apply solely to the goal line, and only to determine whether a goal has been scored or not;
2. The system must be accurate;
3. The indication of whether a goal has been scored must be immediate and automatically confirmed within one second;
4. The indication of whether a goal has been scored will only be communicated to the match officials.



A deadline of the end of November 2010 was set for companies to initially present their technologies to FIFA. A proposed testing period will then take place with a selected number of companies, prior to the IFAB Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 4-6 March 2011, when the next steps of the process will be determined."

Research shows human eye deficiencies

While the debate about the need for technology rages on in newspapers and on-line blogs, research indicates that the human eye does need technical assistance to get more decisions correct - particularly where the decision has £multi-million consequences.

Research published by the University of California in the Journal 'Current Biology' in October 2008 reviewed line calls by tennis judges at Wimbledon in 2007 and 2008, and demonstrated the tendency to misjudge balls close to the line.

Also known as 'perceptual bias', this error occurs because our brain's perception of reality lags a few milliseconds behind what is actually happening.

"Visual information to the eyes takes 100 milliseconds to reach consciousness" said Whitney, Associate Professor at the University of California Center for Mind and Brain and the Development of Psychology.

In order to compensate for this lag in reality, the brain anticipates (i.e. guesses) the object's location, based on the speed and direction of the object. The result is that we mistakenly perceive moving objects as shifted in the direction of their motion, so that at any moment they appear to be farther along their path than they actually are.

Whitney and his team studied 4,457 random sets of points from the 2007 Wimbledon championship and focused on cases where the ball landed on or near the out-of-bounds line. Whitney predicted that the Wimbledon referees would more likely assume the ball went out of bounds than in when close to the line. His prediction was correct, as 84 percent of these wrong decisions were made because the referee had called the ball out when it was actually in.

An additional analysis of the 2008 Wimbledon championship showed similar results - 69 percent of the balls were called out when they were on the line or in.

In order to combat bad calls, the International Tennis Federation put in place the Hawk-Eye ball tracking system in March 2006.

The problem with Hawk-Eye is that its manufacturer, Hawk-Eye Innovations, reports that the average error of the machine is 3.6 mm. This essentially means that it could be wrong by more than 3.6 mm, which could possibly be the difference between in and out.



Conclusion

I believe that goal line technology that meets FIFA's specification will be an asset to the professional game. The human eye, while extraordinary in so many ways, has some deficiencies. And the more that research demonstrates these deficiencies, the more will be the incentive to supplement human judgement with technical aids. Meanwhile, we grassroots referees', with our reputations on the line, devoid of any support whether human or technical, conscious of our human weaknesses, relying solely on instinct honed to the sharpest degree by experience, must continue to make life or death decisions, confident only in the knowledge that the Law says that regarding facts connected with play our decisions are final. And many of us would prefer to keep it that way.

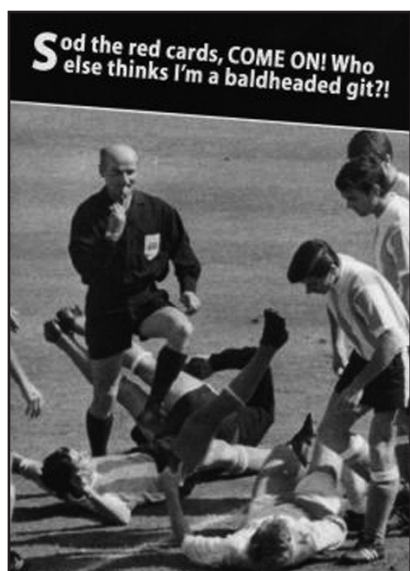
And Another Thing

One item on the IFAB Meeting agenda went unreported by the media:-

"In addition, there will be a resumption of the discussion regarding Sending-Off offences and the so-called 'triple punishment' (goal, red card, player suspension), as well as a review of a number of current Laws of the Game, to prepare a clearer definition of text in order to avoid any misinterpretations of the Laws."

We may see more than one significant Law change in March 2011.

Patrick Morrissey



As the Argus seems to have offended some people with our jokes we print this with apologies to any bald-headed referees in advance!!!



REFEREES' TALKBACK

Ever wanted to talk through an incident with another referee after a game but found no other colleagues available? A number of highly-experienced referees within the Society invariably return to their club houses on Saturday evenings and will be pleased to meet and greet you. If you're in their area, just call in after about 6.00 p.m. This scheme provides a network of AFA club locations around London where referees can expect a warm reception and a friendly chat after receiving club hospitality. The following clubs are currently available:

NORTH

Latymer Old Boys
Botany Bay Cricket Club
East Lodge Lane
Enfield
Middlesex

Tel: 020 8363 4482

Referees:

Trevor Syms, Ian Kerr
Tony Hemmings,
John Cooke, John Faithfull,

NORTH

Old Finchleians
Southover
Woodside Park
Finchley
London N12

Tel: 020 8445 7406

Referees:

Robert Hanison
Society Friend:
Danny McConnell

SOUTH WEST

Old Salesians FC
Salesian College Playing Fields
Old School Lane
Ewell West
Surrey

Tel: 020 8393 9820

Referees:

Pat Morrissey, Peter Kosciolk
Peter Georgiou, Brian Mallins
Phil Cook, Treavor Weaver
Stephen O'Sullivan, Chris Phillips
Bart O'Toole

NORTH EAST

Old Parkonians, Oakfield Playing Fields, Forest Road, Fairlop, Ilford, Essex IG6 3HD
Referees: Bill Taylor, Peter Robbins, Clive Last, John Dixon

West

Polytechnic FC, Chiswick Sports Centre, Cavendish Road, Chiswick, London W4 3UJ
Referees: John Keane, Terry Hillier, Gordon Kirby

Can you add your club's name to the list? If so call Gordon Kirby 020 8995 7529.

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The AFA and London Society of Association Referees Society Meeting, 14 October, 2010 CSSC, Chadwick Street, London

Introduction

Gordon Kirby, welcomed members to the meeting. GK welcomed guests: Alain Poulain our main speaker, Robin Jagot, North Middlesex RA and Len Randall, Middlesex County RA.

Chris Evans Presentation

Len Randall attended the meeting to make a presentation to Chris Evans to recognise his appointment as an official at the 2010 Middlesex Senior County Cup Final. Chris was also congratulated on his promotion to Level 3, and on his achievements as a Futsal official.

100 Club

It was agreed that the draws for September and October will be made with that in November. Members are urged to support the Society by taking up 100 club shares.

Argus

Regular contributors to the Argus were thanked for submitting articles. Members are encouraged to write a short note about their experiences to share with other referees. The magazine is for members and it is through member's articles that the Argus continues to provide a good read and add to the debate in the game.

Referee Registration

It was noted that many referees are not registering with their Counties. It is to be noted that there are benefits to registering with the County FA, not least the insurance cover that it offers to referees.

However, it was also noted that AFA football could not survive without the service of those who may not be registered, simply want to referee for their local club and so make a positive contribution to the game.

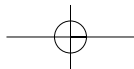
Referee Courses

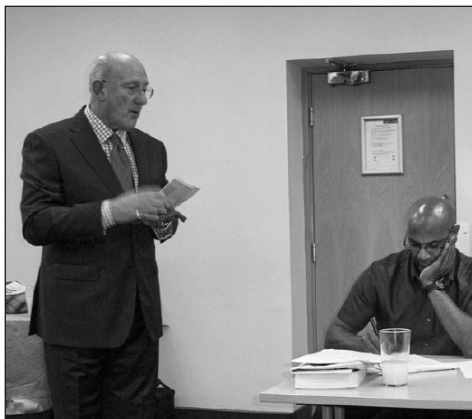
John Cooke, in his capacity as the AFA RDO, brought to the Society's attention that basic referee courses were being set up at: Kew Association FC, Wanstead, Winchmore Hill and for the Maccabi League. It was hoped that the Society (and others) could be provided with the opportunity to encourage new referees to join their local RA society.

Referee Academy – The Ceremonial Free Kick

John Cooke as Society Training Officer offered a presentation in response to an article in the Argus on the topic of the Ceremonial Free Kick (CFK).

The Argus article sought to argue that the CFK was 'invented' by senior referees, in part in order for them to control the process. The referee would mark out the distance, order the kick





not to be taken until they signalled. This was in contrast to the 'quick' free-kick, which was argued by some provided, the attacking team with an advantage, and that this should not be taken away by the referee. While the quick free kick is an option, it may lead to bigger problems, particularly where it threatens the match control of the referee. It was noted that the FIFA guidance stated that where distance is critical it was incumbent on the referee to blow the whistle.

It was pointed out that law 5 states that: referee indicates the restart of the game when stopped; enforces the law; and controls the match. So, only the referee has the power to restart the game – this is not devolved to the players. The referee can do this in a variety of ways – hand signals, voice and use of the whistle which is the main way for communicating the restart to all.

During the process of the CFK the referee has to control a host of elements from the placement of the ball, position of attacking and defending players as well as positioning himself to see the next phase of play and any infringements that may occur.

At the CFK the proximity to goal gives a 'free-kick' to the attacking side as they are entitled to an unchallenged attempt at goal - a 'punishment' for the offender and 'benefit' to the 'victim'. This leads to a heightened tension in the game. The referee needs to control the game, as is his responsibility under the LOAF.

In conclusion, the referee can allow the quick free-kick but this should not be at the expense of his/her control of the game which is his responsibility under the laws of the game. In many cases in the professional game the teams want the CFK; and it also allows the referee to maintain control.

'Why bother to be a member of the RA, what's in it for me?'

Alan Poulain, Chairman, the Referee's Association.

Alan made provided an impassioned presentation on the benefits of the RA.

After 102 years he felt that it was still relevant to referees.

He splits the benefits of the RA into those that were visible and those less obvious. Visible benefits included such things as the annual conference, the eve of final rally, the national quiz



and the news digest. The RA has been successful in obtaining sponsorship, from Volvo cars for things like the conference, so reducing the cost to members.

The magazine 'Refereeing Today' was a joint venture with the FA, but is now being produced by the FA. The FAMOA incentive scheme will now be an RA-FA incentive scheme, which will only be available to full RA members. And the RA also provides high quality kit at a reasonable price to referees.

The new basic training courses provides an opportunity for societies to encourage newly qualified referees to join up and so become members of the RA.

The RA also provides awards for societies and counties to recognise long-serving referees and members. Alan encouraged Societies to make more use of this.

The less obvious benefits to members are things such as representation at the FA, with a body able to speak up on behalf of referees at the top of the game. With the development of the RA-FA this linked is strengthened. Members for a cost of just £4 also gain insurance to cover them while refereeing for loss of property or injury.

Currently being negotiated is the possibility of physiotherapy cover with the provision of a telephone consultation service to obtain advice on injuries and treatment.

Also being developed, in conjunction with the FA, is a series of DVDs and other training materials to support societies in the development of referees.

The RA also offers a benevolent fund to support those referees who find themselves on hard times.

Going forward the RA is looking to develop a customer relationship management (CRM) system to allow it to know more about its members and to communicate directly with them. Currently communication is through the local societies.

The RA is looking to strengthen its working relationship with the FA, to have more direct communication with its members and to grow its membership among referees. In this way it hopes to remain relevant to referees for a further 100 years.

Dave Cunningham, on behalf of the Society, offered thanks to Alan for a passionate and interesting presentation.

Errol Walker, Hon. Secretary

Heavy Rain

A match between two non-league teams took place last winter in the North of England. It had been raining heavily all week and the ground resembled a swamp.

However, the referee ruled that play was possible and tossed the coin to determine ends.

The visiting captain won the toss and, after a moments thought, said "ok, we'll take the shallow end!

See you about

Trevor Weaver



