



# Ah, Go Whistle!



## Rekindled Newsletter

I can hear it now, "Oh no, Jane's doing the Newsletter again!" Blame Steve Leyshon, I only suggested I rekindle it and he agreed!

For the referees who have been with the Society for a long time, you will remember I did this Newsletter about 7 years ago and badgered you for information to fill it. For those refs who are new or newish, I can promise you that you too, will be asked to contribute!!

*Jane*

## FROM THE CHAIRMAN

As we approach the end of the season Bristol Referees Society has recruited 30 new members – all benefitting from the in depth, personal induction programme covered by Tony Swash.

Looking ahead to the summer, we will be sending Andy Gibson, Ben Green and Jim Bennett to the United World Games being held at Klagenfurt in Austria. This will be a fantastic opportunity to take part in a festival with over 5,000 competitors from around the world and to be part of a match official team consisting of people from Austria, Germany, South Africa and Australia.

We are also looking forward to supporting the Amsterdam 7's. Richard Timbrell, Paul Namata and Ian Woodgate will all rub shoulders with some of the world series referees.

In July, Brad Bignall and Tony Swash will spend 2 weeks in South Africa as part of our exchange programme

with the Valke Society. They will take part in a number of local rugby competitions in addition to visiting local game reserves and experiencing the different culture.

These are massive opportunities for our members and builds on the proud traditions that the Bristol Referee Society has with our overseas connections.

Our general meetings and technical meetings, held throughout the year, have been well supported with regular attendance of over 50 people. This has allowed us to build our training and development programme led by Tony Bowers and with invaluable work undertaken by Peter Dixon, our society analyst. There is a genuine desire to develop as match officials throughout the society and this has been aided by improved availability and the capacity to put teams of three out for some games, which has gone down well with both clubs and members.

This season has also seen the introduction of 10 new referee coaches; senior members of the society who are keen to pass on their knowledge and experience to some of our young aspiring referees. This has been a significant step forward and gives a good base to build on for next season.

On 12<sup>th</sup> May we celebrate our season with the Annual Dinner where Geoff Twentyman will be our guest of honour. Annual awards will be presented by our President Ed Morrison.

The door to Bristol Referees' Society is also open; whether your aspirations are to referee the local In two seasons with Bristol I have learnt a lot from refereeing. I have

under 9s on a Sunday morning, progress to officiating at Twickenham or wanting to give back to the game you've enjoyed playing, we will support you every step of the way.

Contact us via our website [www.bristolrefs.co.uk](http://www.bristolrefs.co.uk)

*Steve Leyshon*

## REFEREES' DINNER



Following last year's Referees' Dinner, which was a resounding success, this year it will be held on **Friday 12<sup>th</sup> May** at the same location, namely:-

**The City Academy**, Russell Town Avenue, Easton, Bristol, BS5 9JH; 7.00pm for 7.30pm.

(Smart attire).

Partners and friends welcome.

Tickets must be booked and **paid for in advance** to Adrian Johnston e-mail:- [adrian@bristolrefs.co.uk](mailto:adrian@bristolrefs.co.uk)

£26.50 individual, £50.00 per couple and £250.00 for a table of 10 persons. Clubs are also welcome and can make up a table with referees. Please advise Adrian of any special dietary requirements.

This year's speaker will be Geoff Twentyman, Head of Sports, Radio Bristol.

laws and on most occasions how

**MADE IN THE ARMY, PERFECTED  
IN BRISTOL – MY LIFE AS A  
REFEREE**

As a youngster growing up in Fiji rugby was a way of life. In 2000 I left Fiji to join the British Army as a young 17 year old and just as quickly as I took to the change of accent and culture, any regrets of leaving behind such a rich rugby culture was soon a distant memory as I started playing the beautiful game yet again, albeit in a colder part of the world I now called home.

My life as a rugby player had its own blessings and whilst I enjoyed most, they came at a price. As a youngster playing the game, the urge to often prove yourself against the older and bigger players meant I often put myself in positions I wouldn't usually do, and sure enough, by my 20<sup>th</sup> birthday I had already had my first ACL reconstruction and it was all a downhill slope from then on.

In rugby there is always the reassurance that when one door closes another one soon opens and when it seemed like I was done with the sport due to countless injuries, I met a friend of mine, Mr John Voss, who suggested I take up the whistle. The rest is history and that conversation on Queens Avenue in Aldershot paved the way for what would become the tale of Paul Namata, the poacher turned game keeper.

I started refereeing under the guidance of the Army Rugby Union Referee Society managing the Army minor unit's fixtures in Germany and some civilian fixtures within Lippe, Detmold, Germany. This in itself presented some challenges and was the foundations of my career as a referee.

Fast forward 4 years from the day I spoke to Mr JV, I was back in the UK and plying my refereeing trade out of Bristol and what an amazing experience this last two years have been.

made new friends and travelled both domestically and internationally, I have met some stalwarts of the game and some legends of the refereeing arena, most notable our society President Mr Ed Morrison. If you're ever in any doubt who he is you've only got to Google the 1995 RWC to know who he is and when you take in the fact that he had the best seat in the house when the All Blacks took on the Springboks and Joost van der Westhuizen stopped the great Jonah Lomu to later lift the Webb Ellis trophy with Francois Pienaar and the late Madiba Nelson Mandela, I soon realised I was part of an amazing bunch of individuals all united by a love for the game and the ideal to give back to the game. It was the perfect setting to mould myself to become a better referee without a doubt.

What have I learnt since then? The greatest gift society life offered was inclusivity and teamwork and this in itself allowed for me to learn from other referees within the society. Keen to learn I blasted through the whole 15-16 XV's season straight onto a full 7's season it was challenging but a worthwhile sacrifice. From my baptism of fire being proven on the field by the legendary Tim Mahoney managing Southmead against St Brendans Old Boys to having the opportunity to referee alongside Colin Te-Pohe (NZ Panel Ref) and Rose LeBreche (Canada & World Series Women) at the 2016 Dubai Invitational 7's ; I've learnt that the opportunities within any referees' society is endless and it's your willingness to be a part of the enjoyment of the game that gives you these opportunities.

Being a referee can also be a blessing. I was asked to referee a game at the Invitational tournament in Dubai and it was between two local high school teams. The emirate players lack of understanding of the roll. (A sequel will not follow). I often wonder whether there are other

the game was played, coupled with the fact that one player out of the 14 that were on the pitch could speak English, meant the referee was going to have a field day. I was challenged to say the very least but once I understood what my role was in that particular moment, I simply reverted to managing the game in the manner that allowed for them to enjoy the game. It was one of the best 15 minutes of rugby I have ever experienced. The ability to respect their level of skill and understanding and adapt my style of game management to allow for them the opportunity to enjoy a game in that atmosphere, was as much a valuable lesson for me as it was a memorable moment for them. I'm so glad I was able to provide that for them on that day.

I have had so many wonderful experiences and I have no doubt that some of the lessons I've learnt have helped to mould my character for the better. In a nutshell, life as a referee in Bristol has taught me the value of teamwork and being a vital part of a society, respect for the game, the players and myself. It's taught me to be disciplined, to work hard, to be critical and to be



credible. To enjoy the game as a referee and most of all allow for the continuous

enjoyment of the game wherever you have to answer the call. If you look hard enough, you'll find that the characteristics within these lessons are the values that define the game and define England rugby. It has, without a doubt in my mind, defined for me the society I now call my Society.

**Paul Namata**

## A BOG STANDARD ISSUE

Some years ago while an active referee I received three appointments in a four week period at Southmead, one being a Combination Cup game. The old Greenway Boys School complex was then a typical 1950's building, with the brick built changing rooms having an exceptionally long corridor to access facilities. The southern area was designated for soccer teams and north for Southmead RFU and opponents. Although both sections had showering facilities attached to dressing rooms, unfortunately the only toilets available were located in the south section, a considerable distance from the rugby area. A small rugby officials' changing room with a shower and separate loo was situated opposite the Southmead Changing Room. On my first game I was politely asked by some home team players if they could use the much closer toilet in my room. Being an opportunist to establish a pre-match rapport, I consented which turned out to be much to the detriment of my nose and smelling senses after a pee was not the only intended use. In fact there was still an unpleasant odour present post-match as the room had been locked during the game.

Once bitten twice shy was my motto for the following week. On arrival at the officials changing room I immediately removed a toilet roll from a detachable holder and with a spare, put them in my kit bag. When the inevitable knock at the door followed by "Please Sir can I use your toilet", my response were words to the effect it's OK if you just want a pee but there is no toilet paper for a ..... Of course the rolls were replaced on my vacating the room.

Two weeks later I carried out a similar ploy however the caretaker/groundsman poked his head in asking if all was OK. On looking into the loo he said, "The B..... have nicked the toilet rolls again". I made no comment as looking across to my partially closed kit bag I could see white tissue paper visible. My actions however again resulted in a blue flag air environment for the day. To my surprise when next visiting the ground I found that a large locked metal toilet roll dispenser had been bolted to the wall in the referees changing room containing a giant tissue

colleagues taking similar actions on match days!

Jeff Morgan



## QUIZ QUESTIONS

### Question 1

Which England player is a former national roller-skating champion?

- A: Matt Dawson
- B: Steve Thompson
- C: Jason Leonard

### Question 2

What does the Oriental tattoo on Phil Vickery's body mean?

- A: "I'll fight you to the death!"
- B: "Strength and honour"
- C: "Make love not war"

### Question 3

Which England forward has represented New Zealand Under-21s?

- A: Martin Johnson
- B: Ben Kay
- C: Phil Vickery

### Question 4

Which football team does Will Greenwood support?

- A: Manchester United
- B: Manchester City
- C: Mansfield Town

### Question 5

Martin Johnson is a huge fan of which American sport?

- A: Ice Hockey
- B: Basketball
- C: Gridiron

### Question 6

What was lock Ben Kay's nickname in the England camp?

- A: M'Lord
- B: Big Ben
- C: Gentle Ben

### Question 7

Ex-England flanker Lawrence Dallaglio was also eligible to play for which country?

- A: South Africa
- B: Italy
- C: New Zealand

### Question 8

What did Richard Hill's team-mates call him behind his back?

- A: Victor Meldrew
- B: David Brent
- C: Alf Garnett

### Question 9

Ben Cohen's uncle George played in the England side that won the football World Cup in 1966 but what position did he play?

- A: Striker
- B: Goalkeeper
- C: Full-back

### Question 10

Which Australian team did ex-England coach Clive Woodward play for during the latter stages of his career?

- A: Manly
- B: ACT Brumbies
- C: NSW Waratahs

*BBC Sports Academy Quiz*

**(Answers on Page 4)**

## Hudl

This season we as a Society decided to introduce the use of Video Analysis to our training and development using a system called Hudl. We have over 40 games on the system from all sorts of levels and from a wide range of referees. We have used the footage from these games in our monthly meetings, as well as holding, to date, three review evenings where over 60 members have been in attendance over the three sessions.

With just under 6 weeks of the season left, we hope to get more footage in, including from the up and coming Combination Cup, Vase and Bowl Finals, as well as the Bristol Varsity, taking place this year at Ashton Gate for the first time.

**Pete Dixon**

### **WHEN THE PLAYERS GET ABUSIVE**

Firstly, the main thing is not to over-react. You must stay calm otherwise you will lose any respect the players have for you. In other words -

### **DON'T GO DOWN TO THEIR LEVEL AND STAY CALM AND IN CONTROL.**

Is it really abuse or is it banter? If you think it is abuse, stop play, unless the non-offending side have gained an advantage. If they have, try to make a mental note of who the culprit is and where he was when he hurled the abuse/dissent your way. You can then go back and deal with it appropriately

Once play has stopped, separate the 2 teams, I suggest at least 10 metres apart. You walk away about 10 metres, forming a triangle, take a deep breath to calm down (you will probably have an adrenalin rush if you have been abused) and call over the captain and culprit.

TALK TO THE CAPTAIN! Point out that the player has been abusive and you will be re-starting with a penalty. Also tell him that he is responsible for the discipline of his team and that, if he doesn't control them, you will take over and that means applying sanctions. Let him worry about what that may mean. It never hurts to put seeds of doubt into their mind – they are trying to do it to you!

It also doesn't get you into a corner you can't get out of. If the offence happened in the first 10 minutes and you said "The next time it's a red card". If everything went smoothly up until 2 minutes from the end of the game and somebody says something, depending on how bad it is, think 'does it warrant a card?' If it is something like "what about the f\*\*\*\*\*g knock on?" you can always say something like "I saw it as good, but then I'm using 2 eyes, not just one". Players, coaches and spectators only see the opposition's offences and rarely see their own. I always think that every penalty

Wales are given when they are playing England is a terrible refereeing error!! You always want your side to win and a pass that is just legal suddenly becomes a forward pass to them. They don't mean to cheat but it's just the way their brain works. They see what they want to see. You see what actually happened – you are neutral! Some comments are also born through frustration at their skill levels, or lack thereof! A little comment of "cool it", said with a smile, can work wonders.

You, the players and spectators are there to enjoy yourselves. When things start to go wrong, we all look for excuses as to why it isn't our fault. It's human nature.

If spectators are continually shouting dissent, again it can be frustration in what the 15 idiots from their team are doing wrong. Normally though, it is because they don't know the laws! Try to ignore it. It's part of their fun. If it gets too bad, at the next stoppage, tell the relevant captain to have a word with the supporter. If that doesn't work you can ask for the spectator to be removed and that the game will not continue until he/she has left.

### **ONLY DO IT IN EXTREME CASES.**

During a pre-season trial between St Mary's and St Bernadette's, the Bernadette's coach was continuously moaning about the referee's decisions against his players. He was particularly verbal when he yellow carded a player for persistently offending. On the following Monday, Steve Leyshon rang the coaches to get feedback on the referee. Everything both coaches came back with was positive. The Bernadette's coach even said the yellow card was the best thing that happened! They coach their teams on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and it all goes smoothly. Then Saturday, the players forget all that and play like donkeys.

I know the feeling. I go out to watch a referee we are trying to get on to the South West Group and he/she makes a stupid mistake even a referee doing their first game probably wouldn't make. Nobody is perfect. Mistakes happen and people get irate and let anybody around them know it! It's spur of the moment and, often, afterwards they will say what a great game you had, especially if their team won!

Relax and enjoy yourself. Smile. It will rub off on to the players and spectators. At level 10 or 12, why do you think the teams are at that level – purely because they aren't that good, but they don't realise it (or don't want to). If you make a mistake I know you take it personally. Once it's done there is very little, if anything, that can be done to undo it! Put it behind you and carry on. Worrying about it only makes things worse. Learn from it and move on. The same applies to the players.

Do the best you can and try to be consistent. If you do that nobody can complain. Remember, the man who doesn't make a mistake, doesn't do anything!

I had an uncle in London who took up refereeing but never got further than Level 10. One day he was getting nothing but grief from one of the players. He stopped play and called the player over. His words of wisdom were –"If you were a better player, you would have a better referee. If I was a better referee, I'd have a better game. As it is we're stuck with each other". The guy shut up!

**Tim Mahoney**

### **QUIZ ANSWERS**

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. B | 2. A  |
| 3. A | 4. B  |
| 5. C | 6. A  |
| 7. B | 8. A  |
| 9. C | 10. A |

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