



Flag & Whistle

Newsletter for the BC Soccer Referees Association - Holiday 2009



SEASON'S GREETINGS!



MEMBERS APPOINTED TO NATIONAL STATUS



The association wishes to announce that members **Alain Ruch (left)** and **Marco Arruda (right)** have been nominated and accepted to National Referee and National Assistant Referee status respectively. They join fellow RA members Andy Foster and Martin Reid (both National ARs) on the National list. All members will be required to go to pass the National camp before being placed on the Active List for 2010. The RA congratulates our fellow members and wishes them good luck!



HALL OF FAME SELECTION COMMITTEE REJECTS WINSEMANN NOMINATION...AGAIN

On November 24, 2009 the Referees Association received a letter from the BC Sports Hall of Fame (oddly dated November 27th) courteously informing the association that former Canadian FIFA Referee and RA Founding/Life Member Werner Winsemann was not selected as one of this year's BC Sports Hall of Fame's inductees.

Werner Winsemann was a FIFA Referee for 10 years and was appointed to two World Cups (1974 W. Germany and 1978 Argentina) as well as two Olympic games (1972 Munich and 1976 Montreal). He is the only Canadian FIFA Referee to have refereed a World Cup match (i.e. in the middle) and also officiated on-the-line in the 1976 Olympics Gold Medal match.

The RA submitted its original nomination in 1993 on behalf of the Vancouver Area Association. The current nomination is still valid for two more years. Should the nomination not be accepted during this time, per the Hall of Fame's regulations, the nomination must be tendered inactive for a year after which it may be re-activated upon request. This year's inductees will be announced to the media on January 7, 2010.

RA BUSINESS PLAN DISCUSSED WITH BC SOCCER

Representatives from the provincial executive met with office staff of BC Soccer to introduce the association's draft Business Plan. Key to success of the plan will be how the association can assist with the deliver of the BCSA Referee Development Program. The meeting with BCSA Director of Community Relations Jason Elligott and BCSA Referee Development Coordinator Jose Branco was very positive and they agreed to take the plan to the BCSA Referee Development Committee for further discussion. The plan, spearheaded by newly elected VP Nick Hawley, is meant to help address two issues: maintaining membership levels and the divergence between the provincial government body and the RA itself.

Discussions had been going on in the background with Area Association/Chapter Presidents with several iterations developed before the meeting with BC Soccer staff. Furthermore, the use of "Project Managers" will be the lifeblood of the plan. Nick Hawley, who is a project manager in his profession, indicated a willingness to help coach potential project managers.



B.C.S.R.A.
1969-2009
40 Years

CSRA CORNER



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING SET FOR MARCH 27th

The AGM of the Canadian Soccer Referees Association will be held on Saturday, March 27th in Ontario. The newly elected OSRA executive will be discussing preparations and a venue at its first gathering on December 6th.

NEW ONTARIO SRA PRESIDENT ELECTED

At OSRA's Annual General Meeting in Toronto on November 15th, Frank Capizzano was elected as it's newest President. Outgoing President David Cope had stepped down after completing his term and did not wish to seek another position on the exec. The AGM was held in conjunction with the OSRA's 50th anniversary of

incorporation. The new executive is as follows:

President: Frank Capizzano

Vice-President: Basil Gill

Secretary: Lisa Laywell

Treasurer: Ed Grenda

Directors: Mike Cvetanovic, Peter Johnson, Bahrun Savarian

Immediate Past President: David Cope

OSRA NAMES NEWEST LIFE MEMBER

Eric Evans, longtime Secretary of both the Canadian Soccer Referees Association and the newest Life Member of the CSRA, was elected as the OSRA's newest Life Member. Eric, also a long-time Secretary of the Toronto branch of the OSRA and a referee instructor, suffered a stroke in 2006. Congratulations to Eric.

CALGARY SEEKS FUNDS FROM GREY CUP

With this year's Grey Cup being held in Calgary, the Calgary District SRA (CDSRA) used the event as a fundraising opportunity by selling Grey Cup pool tickets. Prizes were awarded based on the game's score at various points in the game. No word yet on how the event went.

CANSOREF EDITOR ASSAULTED

Rich Carman, OSRA Webmaster and Editor of the CANSOREF newsletter, suffered a detached retina after being assaulted in an indoor match in late October. The player, was actually playing under an assumed name. The Ontario Soccer Association has suspended the player. Rich has already had two operations to repair his eyesight with a third to come in the months ahead. Doctors are impressed with his progress and have said his eyesight will improve fast with time.



B.C.S.R.A.
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SHORT TAKES

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM INITIATIVE ANNOUNCED

At the November meeting of the Vancouver Area Association (VASRA), BCSA Referee Development Coordinator Joe Branco announced the parent body is starting a Mentor Program Initiative. He also announced that as part of this initiative a method for the Referees Association's involvement would be included.

BONUS DVD SETS COMING TO ALL MEMBERS

All paid-up members are to be on the lookout for two BONUS DVD sets being produced. Titled "In The Eye of the Whistle", the first set will contain an interview with Canadian FIFA Referee and fellow RA member Mauricio Navarro about his thoughts and feelings surrounding a heavily contested CONCACAF Champions League game he officiated. The interview is conducted by Joey Kenward, co-radio voice of the Vancouver Canucks and himself an RA member.

A trial run of the first set was given to all Direct members in the first quarter of this calendar year (2009). At the time of this writing, the DVD set has been distributed to all new Direct members and those Area Association members in Kamloops, the latter via the executive of the Kamloops Soccer Referees Association (KSRA). Some members of the Fraser Valley SRA and Vancouver Area SRA have also received it at their respective last meetings of 2009

The second set, an edited version of "Werner's World Cup Night", held by the Vancouver Area SRA to commemorate the 35th anniversary of former Canadian FIFA Referee and Founding/Life Member Werner Winsemann's match at the 1974 World Cup, is still in production and slated for late first quarter distribution. Werner Winsemann is still the only Canadian FIFA Referee to have refereed a game at the World Cup itself.

RA FEATURES IN ON REMEMBRANCE DAY

A poem written by RA member **Gina Neumann** of Vancouver, was chosen for reading at this year's Remembrance Day ceremony at Victory Square in Vancouver. Each year the committee selects a poem penned by secondary schools students to be read at the ceremony. In addition to being selected, Gina was also presented with a plaque by Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson.



This is the second time in recent years the RA was "associated" with the Remembrance Day ceremony. At the 1998 ceremony, which marked the 80th anniversary of the official end of the World War I, a poem written by Renato Parra, son of RA member Rene Parra, was chosen for the event.



Routinely vilified, verbally and physically abused, their decisions and fitness scrutinised by millions –why would anyone want to be a football referee? Jim White meets the whistle-blowers

(Ed note: The F&W thanks Nick Hawley for bringing this article to our attention, which had also appeared on the RA website: www.bcsra.com)

According to the official report, the match between Ynystawe and Cwm Albion Under-14s in the Swansea Junior Football League last spring was 'ill-tempered'. That's one way of putting it. By the time Ynystawe had taken a 2-0 half-time lead the referee, an experienced Swansea official called Clive Stewart, had already sent two players off for violent conduct. Worse, as he attempted to calm things down, he was subjected to a barrage of impassioned comment and opinion from supporters, who largely consisted of the parents of the youngsters involved. If anything they seemed to be encouraging the on-field aggression.

In the second half, tempers hardly softened, even after Cwm equalised. But it was when Ynystawe took a 3-2 lead that things erupted. On the pitch, elbows were flying, studs making regular contact with flesh and bone. Off it, the shouting and snarling increased. So much so that, concluding that the safety of all concerned was being severely compromised, Stewart was forced to abandon the game, a Sunday morning runaround for teenagers. After he had brought things to a premature halt – and red-carded two further participants – Stewart was making his way to the changing-rooms, shaking his head at the spectacle he had just encountered, when he was approached by Richard Norman, a spectator whose son had been playing for Cwm. Without warning, Norman punched the referee in the face – with such force that Stewart required 10 stitches in a wound across his nose.

For his vicious assault, Norman was later given a four-year sentence for wounding, of which, after various reports had been submitted, he was expected to serve nine months. At the time of the attack Stewart, who was 62, had been giving up his time to referee junior matches in the Swansea leagues for 23 years.

There are more than 50,000 qualified referees in England, varying from veterans padding around local parks to the elite group of 16 Premier League referees. The best practitioners do it as a full-time job, earning up to £90,000 a year, yet most do it for little more than their petrol money. Referee training has never been more rigorous, involving constant assessment. Successful candidates progress through the ranks, running out as linesmen as part of their learning progress. At the peak of the game, top refs can take part in up to three matches a week, skipping from Premier League to Champions League to international matches. Here they come under intense scrutiny, their every judgment and decision pored over by media and managers. But before they even start to engage with the very best players in the game, they are obliged to learn their craft out on the parks and municipal pitches, officiating in the nation's minor leagues. And here they face very different challenges.

The unhappy truth is that the attack on Clive Stewart in Swansea is by no means an isolated case. Every season the grassroots of our national game are spattered with the blood of match officials. Young and old referees get head butted, punched and chased to their cars in fear for their wellbeing. While it is unlikely to happen in the Premier League, in Saturday and Sunday leagues (where referees often have no linesmen to support them), assaults on match officials currently run at more than 300 a year; the Manchester County FA alone recorded 42 attacks on referees last season. That is just the physical assaults, the ones that get reported. The verbal abuse is so commonplace as to be not worth documenting, but is sufficiently morale-sapping to provoke as many as 7,000 referees in the past couple of seasons to give up. Referees often describe themselves as a breed apart. But the current circumstances are testing even their resolve.

'We are very concerned about the numbers who are leaving the game because of the behaviour of players and spectators towards them,' says Iain Blanchard, the Football Association's national head of referee development. That's why Blanchard launched the FA's Respect initiative at the start of the 2008/09 season, with the aim of reducing the abuse officials receive at the game's top level, thus causing good behaviour to trickle down to the lower leagues. The FA knows the situation won't change overnight – it is a long-term project – but with the English game's leading manager, Sir Alex Ferguson, suggesting this month that the Premier League's best officials are not fit enough to do their jobs effectively, there is some way to go. Yet Blanchard is adamant that something had to be done to protect referees.

'We needed to raise awareness of the issue,' he says. 'Eighteen months ago the referee dropout rate was as high as 80 per cent in places. The level of abuse is appalling. What some people don't seem to acknowledge is that the referee is vital to the working of a match. Without a referee you simply will not have a game of football.'

Listen to the abuse directed at him and it is not hard to form the belief that the referee has become one of society's handiest outlets for anger, the person on whom to unleash a week's frustration and disappointment, the nation's punchbag. Which raises a question that has a serious bearing on the future of football: these days, who would be a football referee?

see page 4 : Football referee?



Football referee? (cont'd from pg 3)

It is an early-season game between Reading Town and Wantage Town in the Hellenic League Premier Division. Three rungs below the Football League, this is a competition populated by reasonable footballers, some former professionals, young twenty- and thirtysomething men who take their weekly run-out very seriously indeed. There is a sprinkling of a crowd, perhaps 70 strong, mostly friends and family of the players.

In a portable building, behind a door marked match officials only, Oliver Dalton is preparing for the game. Over the ensuing 90 minutes he will be in charge of the 22 men on the pitch, plus another couple of dozen sitting on the benches. His decision is final. At 18 he is younger than anyone else involved in this afternoon's game. But that is the way football is going: younger referees are being fast-tracked into the system to patch up the gaps left by their departing elders.

The local FA has high hopes for Dalton and is keen to entrust him with games such as this. Today an assessor is on the touchline, checking his performance. Dalton arrived an hour and a half before kick-off and, with 15 minutes to go, is briefing the managers of the two teams on new rules about technical areas (the space in front of the benches that managers and their staff occupy during matches). 'Only one person is allowed in there at a time,' he says. 'Now, I'm not looking to enforce it. But if I start getting grief from there and I see there's about half a dozen of you in there, then I might take action. OK?' The two managers tell him he won't get any trouble from them on that score and everyone shakes hands and wishes each other all the best. It is the friendliest moment of the afternoon.

Dalton is here, he says, because he loves football. A reasonable school player, he realised at 14 that he was not going to get to the top and – following the example of his father, who was a local league official – took up refereeing because it might enable him to experience the game at a level far higher than he is now. He is now a level four to officiate Hellenic games; he hopes to level three by the end of the season and to level two by the end of the next. He would be capable of play-referee, which allows him is hoping to be promoted this season, which would standard, with only two steps to go before he is sufficiently qualified to step out at Old Trafford or the Emirates Stadium.

“Top referees have to be physically in much the same sort of condition as the players they direct. A ref can run up to 12,000m during a match”

'Anyone who's seen me play will tell you I was never good enough to play in the Premier League,' he says. 'But you never know, I might ref there.' The statistics suggest he has made a wise decision. At 16 years of age, a boy's chances of becoming a Premier League footballer are one in 100,000. But a 16-year-old who chooses to train as a referee has a one in 100 chance of officiating a Premier League game. 'Refereeing does appeal to kids,' Blanchard says. 'They find the authority it gives sexy.'

Dalton's prime motive is not that. He says refereeing is an enormous physical and mental challenge; there is no comfort zone out there on the pitch, and for him that is exciting. He says that since he has taken it up he has felt a boost in his self-confidence; his time- and man-management skills have improved enormously. He thinks it has helped him grow as a person. And then there is the money. After four seasons of refereeing, he has saved enough to head off in a car he bought for himself to the University of Warwick, where he is studying economics. 'I'd never have managed that on a paper round,' he says. Today he will receive £47 for his efforts.

Keith Hackett, a former top-flight referee and the outgoing general manager of the Professional Game Match Officials Board, which selects referees for Premier League matches and aims to improve the standard of refereeing across the board, thinks Dalton has a rocky route ahead of him. He says it has never been tougher to be a referee. It is certainly a much more imposing task than Hackett faced in the 1970s and 80s. It is not only the abuse – though that is worse than it used to be. It is that the speed and intensity of the game has increased exponentially.

'Without a doubt, it's harder now than when I did it,' he says. 'Young lads coming through into refereeing now, they're athletes, they have to be.'

To meet the demands of the game, Hackett suggests, top referees have to be physically in much the same sort of condition as the players they direct. A ref can run up to 12,000m during a match, 2,000m of which can be at pace. To check that his members are maintaining their fitness, Hackett introduced the ProZone data analysis system, in which their every move on a field is monitored and the statistics of their performance studied in great detail.

But not everyone is convinced by the findings. Sir Alex Ferguson, the country's most decorated manager, recently questioned the capacity of the Premier League referee Alan Wiley. 'He was walking up the pitch for the second goal, needing a rest,' Ferguson boomed after Manchester United's home game with Sunderland. 'He was not fit enough for a game of that standard. The pace of the game demanded a referee who was fit. He was not fit. It is an indictment of our game.' Ferguson later apologised for any embarrassment he had caused Wiley, insisting he was only trying to highlight a problem in the English game. Wiley made no public comment. (According to the ProZone stats, Wiley had run nearly 12km during the game, more than all but seven of the players.)



Football referee? (cond't from pg 4)

Several times a season the elite refs meet for a physical assessment and a bit of a get-together.

I was privy to one held in Leicestershire recently. The car-park alongside the field where some of the physical tests were to take place was full of expensive vehicles; my own looked paltry among the glittering Mercs, Audis and BMWs. A couple of the sleeker models had personalised number plates including the word ref. Given that most top officials earn less than £90,000 a year, it seemed a more ostentatious collection than might be expected. But there was a reason for the flash motors. 'If we were spotted turning up in an old banger like yours to a Premier League ground,' one referee explained, 'we'd lose the respect of the players straight away.'

Once out of their cars, the men were put through endless tests to check on their sprinting, their recovery rates, their ability to get from foul A to handball B at a lick. They were tested on their angles, the speed at which they took up a position within the preferred average of 14.5m distance from the action. As they went about their business, the banter was unending. When they had a game of football at the conclusion of the session, with me as the referee, they had much fun at my expense; their language was ripe and their dissent constant. At one point, one leading official – a household name – stood about half an inch from my nose and loudly told me that 'You really haven't a clue, have you?' I let it pass. In any case, he was too quick for me to catch him up to flourish a yellow card.

Fitness, though, is but the half of it. 'What we look for in our referees is a full knowledge of the laws of the game, plus the courage to ensure those laws are followed,' Hackett says. 'It takes some personality to do that. Some people used to say that someone like Graham Poll [England's top referee up until a few years ago] was arrogant, but a referee needs a sense of self-assurance.'

The verbal critiques of the sort Ferguson launched at Wiley are delivered weekly, in the press and on television, and are very public.

According to Andre Marriner, 38, who joined the elite list of Premier League referees in 2004, the rewards are manifest. 'For me there's nothing better than being a referee,' he says. 'I was at Everton the other day, one of my favourite grounds, and the atmosphere was amazing. Running out of the tunnel, the sound of the crowd, the compactness of it all, it makes the hairs stand up on the back of the neck just thinking about it. There is nowhere else I feel more alive.'

It makes it sound almost like fun. But then Marriner, like his fellow officials, has developed a capacity to ignore much of what is going on around him. In order to remain in the middle there is something else a referee needs: a skin apparently constructed from tungsten. As the financial stakes have grown at the top of the game, so has the intensity of the response to referees.

'A Premier League referee is taking responsibility for at least £100 million worth of assets, minimum,' Hackett says. 'His decision-making processes will be on show in front of the inhabitants of 207 countries across the world. The repercussions of what he does have never been more substantial.'

It is all too much for some modern managers, who have led the assault on match officials. When team bosses themselves are under such intense pressure to deliver results, any target on to which blame can be diverted is seized upon.

'You have to remember we are competitive people,' says Owen Coyle, the manager of Burnley, promoted to the Premier League this year. 'We expect our referees to be up to the job, and if they're not, then we are not slow to tell them.'

The dialogue, though, is entirely one-way. 'We're such an easy target, and we have to take whatever they throw at us, which usually they do to distract attention from the shortcomings of their team,' says Marriner, who worked as a postman before taking a career break to devote his energies to being a Premier League referee (all top referees are full-time these days). 'We all make mistakes, but imagine if we came out and criticised a forward for missing an open goal. We just wouldn't do that.'

It is in the immediate aftermath of a game, when emotions are still boiling, that the referee is most exposed. Coyle believes that managers should be brave enough to admit when they have made false accusations about the officials.

'No one is more critical than me of referees,' he says. 'But they have the hardest job. And we need to acknowledge that. Last season, against Queens Park Rangers, they scored when I was convinced their player was offside. I gave the linesman fearful abuse. I said to him – and I was furious – when you look at the replay I hope you ring me to apologise, because you got it all wrong. But – you know what? – when I looked at the replay I realised it was me who'd got it all wrong. He'd made a brilliant decision. So I rang the lad to apologise. And he was so decent about it, he made me feel 10 times worse for having a go at him in the first place.'

Coyle's moment of contrition, though, was private and retrospective. The verbal critiques of the sort Ferguson launched at Wiley are delivered weekly, in the press and on television, and are very public. And on the parks, amateur coaches are watching, follow that lead, picking up Ferguson's and Coyle's bad habits, casting the referee as the cause of all their troubles.

(Ed note: Not since Diego Maradona's infamous "Hand of God" have referees been so much in the spotlight. Here we present a seires of articles that surround the recent Ireland-France World Cup qualifier. The F&W thanks Research Assistant Emil Udovich for his findings and VASRA Secretary Bill McNaughton for obtaining the graphic which appeared on the London Times website.

FIFA Denies Ireland's Demand to Replay Tainted World Cup Qualifier: Irish Not the Only Victims of Blatant Fouls and Sloppy Officiating

November 20, 2009 by K K Thornton

Plenty of Luck for the French, but None for the Irish, as Wednesday's Handball Fest Throws World Cup into Disrepute
 FIFA, the governing body of international football, has officially denied Ireland's request to replay Wednesday's World Cup qualifying match in extra time against France. Ireland lost that game after Thierry Henry slapped the soccer ball with his hand to keep it from going out of bounds- an obvious foul that was missed by the referee. To make matters worse, Henry committed another blatant handball in setting up his pass to William Gallas, who headed it into the goal. But wait! There's more: both French players were clearly offsides, and TV replays show that the violation was in clear view of the official. That makes three fouls on one game winning goal and the refs missed all of them.

Like many football fans, my mind went immediately to the infamous "Hand of God" play in England's loss to Argentina in the semi-finals of the 1986 World Cup. In that match, Diego Maradona committed a blatant handball, punching the ball into the net to bring Argentina to a 1-1 tie with England.

From the Hand of God to the Hand of Gaul? Not quite. That blown call occurred in the 51st minute, with plenty of game time left for England to recover. That did not happen, however, and Maradona followed up with the go-ahead goal three minutes later. Not just any goal, either. Diego Maradona's second goal for Argentina in its World Cup match against England was voted the Goal of the Century, one of the most beautiful goals I have ever seen.

England fans will point out, and rightfully so, that they were denied the penalty and that the referee's blown call changed the momentum of the game in Argentina's favor. Even so, Ireland was not given the same opportunity to recover because Thierry Henry's handballs and resulting double offsides goal handed the game to France.

Trap angry after Paris robbery



Giovanni Trapattoni expressed his fury after a hotly-disputed extra-time goal ended Ireland's World Cup dream at the Stade de France. Thierry Henry controlled a dropping ball with his hand before setting up William Gallas for the goal which paved France's path to South Africa. Trapattoni paid tribute to his players but was unable to keep a lid on his emotions after the final whistle sounded on a dramatic evening in Saint-Denis.

He said: "We are angry. It is a bitter evening for me. We played a great game. We deserved to win. "The referee should have asked Henry, I'm sure he would have admitted there was a handball."

Why the referee missed it

Neither Martin Hanson, the referee, nor his assistant had a clear view of Thierry Henry's handball which adds weight to the case for providing more help to officials. The use of goalline officials or a video review would have ensured Hanson made the correct decision.

Referee's view Three players block the official's line of sight

Assistant's View The goalkeeper's position means Henry's arm cannot be seen

1 Goalline officials
 In this season's Europe league an extra official has stood behind each byline close to the goal. Their purpose is to spot offences in each penalty area and one would surely have seen Henry's double handball against Ireland

2 Video review
 A replay of the incident shows beyond doubt that Henry handled the ball but FIFA refuses to allow the use of technology to change decisions



France's Thierry Henry, left, passes the ball as Ireland's goalkeeper Shay Given, right, tries to stop it, just before William Gallas (unseen) scored the goal for France during their World Cup qualifying playoff second leg soccer match at the Stade de France stadium in Saint Denis outside Paris, (AP Photo/Michel Euler)



Kilbane lays blame at officials' door

Record-equalling Kevin Kilbane blamed the match officials after Ireland's World Cup exit on Wednesday night. Kilbane and Shay Given each made their 102nd appearances for the international side at the Stade de France, taking them alongside Steve Staunton as record caps holders. The Hull City man revealed he had spoken with the figure at the centre of the extra-time controversy, Thierry Henry – but he held Swedish referee Martin Hansson and his officials accountable, and not the Barcelona star. He said: "Henry said the ball had just hit him but when I saw it on TV it did not look like that. It seemed he dragged the ball back. We are disappointed with the officials."



Kevin Kilbane

FIFA to consider adding officials Blatter says Monday that Henry's hand ball shows that referees need more help on the field; rules out using video replay

JOHANNESBURG — (AP) Nov. 30, 2009
 FIFA will consider having extra match officials on the field to help referees at next year's World Cup in South Africa. FIFA president Sepp Blatter says Thierry Henry's hand ball, which led to the goal that sent France to the World Cup at the expense of Ireland, showed that referees needed more help on the field. The FIFA executive committee will hold an emergency meeting in Cape Town on Wednesday, two days ahead of the draw for the World Cup, to discuss whether to recommend extra match officials. If they agree, the proposal will go before football's rule-making International Board in Zurich in March for a final decision. Blatter was speaking Monday at the opening of the Soccerex business conference in Johannesburg.



"There is a lack of discipline and respect in the game by the players because they are cheating," Blatter said. "This is human beings trying to get an advantage and this is not good and we have to fight against that. We have only one man on the field of play who shall intervene in this matter. He has two assistants for the time being, perhaps more in the future. He has to make an immediate decision. He has only two eyes. So match control is now is on the agenda. How shall we avoid such situations as we have seen in this very specific match?"

Henry's clear hand ball, first with his arm and then with his left hand, stopped the ball from going out of play before he crossed to teammate William Gallas to score an equalizer for a 1-1 draw with Ireland at Stade de France. That remained the score and France, which had won 1-0 in Dublin, qualified 2-1 on aggregate.

Blatter said the Irish were unhappy to go out of the competition in that way and had written to FIFA to be allowed into the competition as a 33rd team. That will also be discussed at the executive committee meeting on Wednesday. Because of the clamour for FIFA to take action to help the match officials, the debate is likely to be between using TV technology or extra referees. As an experiment in the Europa League, UEFA uses five
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As Henry shows, soccer players can't be trusted

By JOHN LEICESTER (AP) – 3 days ago

PARIS — Soccer players just can't be trusted to be honest and Thierry Henry proved that by choosing to play volleyball against Ireland, blatantly handling the ball for the goal that sent France to the World Cup. Cheating, plain and simple. More proof, if it was needed, that soccer needs far better on-field policing.

"Something has got to be done," says Graham Barber, a former Premier League and FIFA referee with hands-on experience of dealing with Henry.

The answer is not video replays. Video could have helped in Paris on Wednesday night, because replays clearly showed France's captain steering the ball with his left forearm and hand onto his right foot for the pass that William Gallas

Football referee? (cont'd from pg 5)

Watching Oliver Dalton from Reading Town's touchline – quick, athletic, close to the action, on top of every contentious moment – a neutral would suggest he was admirably even-handed in his decisions, getting every one right. But there is no such thing as a neutral at a football match. Apart from me and the referee's assessor (who tells me afterwards that Dalton is 'an outstanding prospect'), everyone in the ground is partial. The emotional imbalance means that, as the game reaches its climax, both teams seem convinced he is biased against them. From the crowd, whenever there is a collision or foul, comes the throaty, accusatory cry of 'ref-er-ree!'. One particularly voluble man greets every decision against his team with 'you are shit!' and every decision in favour with 'I see you've found your bloody glasses at last, then'. From the players comes a squeal of dismay when a ruling goes against them, no matter how legitimate.

'You just have to block it all out,' Dalton says of the endless noise directed at him. 'If you start to worry about it, start to take into account what they're complaining about, then you lose it. If you get a decision wrong, you just have to make sure you get the next ones right. What you must never do is try to compensate for a mistake.'

Besides, Keith Hackett suggests, the riper the language and the more hostile the players and fans, the better the learning environment. Abuse is an essential part of the learning curve for a would-be referee.

'It hardens you up,' he says. 'You can't be a shrinking violet to be a referee. You have to be able to take it. And you learn to take it in the lower leagues and the parks. I used to love going back there when I was a top official. Just to test myself. See if I was mentally strong enough.'

Andre Marriner agrees. Crikey, yeah, the abuse is untold,' he says of his experience in lower-league football. 'Far, far worse than at the top. I got a real taste of it when I was coming through the leagues. Sometimes I'd go home after a game and think: why am I taking this? But I spoke to colleagues, shared experiences, realised it was nothing personal, that's just what it is to be a ref. That is how you learn. And if you don't learn to deal with it, you'd find it very hard at the top where the intensity is so much greater.'

As Dalton's game draws to a close, the sound of the final whistle seems to dissipate the tension. The players suddenly appear to deflate, their anger oozing out on to the turf. They shake each other's hands, most shake the referee's, several slap him on the shoulder. One of the coaches – the one who has earlier accused him of being blind – trots on to the pitch and congratulates him on a good performance. 'That's what happens,' Marriner says. 'It's a passionate game. But passions soon cool once it's over.'

Well, some do. As Dalton makes his way to the changing-room, that shouty home supporter remains exercised. While Dalton walks across the pitch, he bundles round the perimeter fence, loudly suggesting that the ref should be wearing the green shirt of the opposition. The red-faced man arrives at the door of the official's changing-room at precisely the same moment as Dalton. For an instant a confrontation looks inevitable. But the referee's two assistants step in front of the man, allowing Dalton to slip inside unchecked. His accuser swears, kicks at the closing door and heads for the bar.

'I never get intimidated at this level,' Dalton explains, as from one of the dressing-rooms comes the sound of the manager yelling at his players for their lack of effort. 'It's because there's three of you. Having assistants is an enormous help. On the parks, you're on your own, and that's when it can get scary. I remember once sitting in the dressing-room, with the door locked, for a good 10 minutes while a bloke outside threatened to kick my head in. Eventually he left. But I dashed pretty smartly to my car and got the hell out of there in case he was waiting.'

Referees. They really are a breed apart.

FIFA CONSIDERS (from pg 7)

, one standing at each end of the field, to help the referee settle disputes in the area, including whether the ball has crossed the line.

Blatter said he was not in favour of using TV technology to settle such disputes. "With technology, you have to stop a match. You have a look at cameras," he said. "Now I think there should be some additional (assistants), if they can see or not see. We have to maintain the human face of football and not go into technology. I think that goal-line technology, when accurate, we can accept it in international football."

Blatter said this year's World Cup playoffs led to several disputes which would be discussed at the executive committee meeting. There was concern that such playoffs, where one team gets an advantage of playing the second legs at home, are unfair.

World Cup ref suspended for errors

Monday, November 9, 2009-The Associated Press

A referee chosen to officiate at next year's World Cup has been suspended for the rest of the Brazilian League season for repeated mistakes. The suspension of Carlos Eugenio Simon was announced Monday by the Brazilian soccer confederation.

The confederation cited a "repetition of mistakes." Simon's latest error came Sunday in Fluminense's 1-0 victory over Palmeiras at Maracana Stadium. Obina scored for Palmeiras in the 28th minute for a 1-0 lead, but Simon disallowed the goal because of a foul call on Obina. Replays appeared to show there was no wrongdoing on the play.

Top referee suspended over claims he helped fix match between Canada and Macedonia

(Ed note: the F&W thanks Joey Kenward for bringing this article to our attention).

THE CANADIAN PRESS NYON, Switzerland

UEFA has suspended a top referee while it investigates him for allegedly helping to fix a recent Canada-Macedonia international friendly in a betting coup. UEFA said Tuesday it will not appoint Bulgarian referee Anton Genov to a European match, an international, Champions League or Europa League fixture, while further investigations are carried out. The European soccer authority said there were "obvious irregular betting patterns" during a Nov. 14 friendly match between Macedonia and Canada. Genov awarded four penalties, two to each side, during Macedonia's 3-0 victory in Skopje. Canadian coach Stephen Hart said his memory of the officiating was that the Bulgarian called a "tight, tight" game, "Anything was really a foul. It was along those lines, any sort of contact was a foul," he told The Canadian Press on Tuesday. "The penalty situation, it was just odd that four penalties would be called.

"But having said that, other than that I didn't really pay much attention to it. I just thought we're playing away from home and you're getting these calls that are consistent with playing away from home."

Iain Hume and Simeon Jackson took the Canadian penalties. Hume shot wide and Jackson was stopped by the Macedonian 'keeper. Goran Pandev converted both Macedonian penalties. German police are conducting Europe's biggest ever match-fixing probe, involving more than 200 matches in at least 11 countries. UEFA said last month it was investigating three top referees.

St Ledger: Henry has robbed my World Cup dream

Ireland's rising star Sean St Ledger admits Thierry Henry's handball has cost him his dream of appearing at the World Cup finals. St Ledger has quickly become a fixture in Giovanni Trapattoni's side since winning his first cap just six months ago, and was just one of several phenomenal performances by Irish players at the Stade de France. Robbie Keane's first half goal cancelled out France's win at Croke Park on Saturday and sent the game to extra-time, but William Gallas headed a controversial winner after Henry's handball created the chance. St Ledger, 24, said: "We got robbed, you can tell by the boys' reaction it hit his hand blatantly. We feel cheated – we were the better team over the two legs, every football fan in the stadium will say we were the better team tonight.

"It's cost a lot of us our dreams – as a boy I used to dream of playing in the World Cup, and now I'm not."

The Middlesbrough ace also expressed the opinion that the incident should bring forward the introduction of video refs, which are now the norm in sports like rugby and cricket. "I don't understand why we haven't got replays in this day and age," he said. "You can get replays within 10, 30 seconds and it would have helped today."



B.C.S.R.A.
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In praise of... football referees

Editorial -The Guardian, Tuesday 10 November 2009

Unfit, unfocused, unprofessional – it has already been a season of ceaseless brickbats for football referees. Martin Atkinson yesterday became the latest to feel the force of Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson's almost weekly apoplexy, and the pressures of the game increasingly manifest themselves in rage against match officials. From the Manchester United manager to those fearing the sack at the bottom, they have a common trait – if in doubt, blame the ref.

Too often, they become the focal point for the mind games, justifications and obfuscations that are professional football's basest currency. Inevitably, behaviour seen on Match of the Day filters down to lower levels and referees of Sunday league and underage football report increasing hostility, rising to outright violence, from players and supporters alike. The culture of instant judgment aped from reality television and radio phone-ins now transmits its least attractive traits to ordinary occupations.

At £57,000, a Premier League referee's wages are not inconsiderable, but it is rarely embarked upon as a career choice. Indeed the willingness to accept such regular abuse for love of the game is evidence of a particularly forgiving mindset.

But the number of young officials coming into the game is dwindling and ex-players, cosseted by more lucrative careers, show little appetite to take up the whistle. Football will always need referees, but why they should need football is becoming less obvious.



Football Committee backs five-ref trial (from uefa.com)

Friday 13 November 2009

Executive Office

The UEFA Football Committee met this week in Nyon

(©UEFA)

The experiment featuring two additional assistant referees – aimed at helping to facilitate the referees' decision-making process during a match – continues to gain positive feedback from within the European football family.

Positive backing

The UEFA Football Committee, chaired by Franz Beckenbauer (Germany) and comprising other distinguished former players, expressed its positive backing for the experiment at its latest meeting in Nyon this week. The experiment involving five match officials is being undertaken at fixtures in the 2009/10 UEFA Europa League on the proposal of the UEFA President Michel Platini, following the FIFA Executive Committee's approval at its meeting in Nassau, Bahamas, in the summer, and after previous experiments in the UEFA European Under-19 Championship in autumn 2008.

Penalty area focus

In addition to the match referee and two assistant referees on the touchline, two extra assistants are placed behind the goalline, with the mission of focusing on incidents that happen in the penalty area, such as fouls or misconduct.

The committee agreed that the benefits of the experiment were already clear at this stage. In anticipation of final analyses, two extra pairs of eyes were already providing valuable assistance to referees and not only helping to minimise refereeing errors, especially in the penalty area, but also helping to improve players' conduct.

Players' behaviour

In other matters, the committee discussed efforts to improve players' behaviour on the field. The influence of the players' associations, the responsibility of coaches, and an overall sense of professional respect are felt to be aspects that can help bring about a situation whereby players conduct themselves in an appropriate manner.

Importance of national teams

The committee addressed the importance of national teams, who are the flag-bearers of a country's football style and identity. In the face of increased globalisation, it was felt that the national associations played a key role in maintaining national football identity, through national team promotion, player development and coach education programmes.



UEFA Football Committee

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Pulling Attention With a Yank of a Pony Tail

By ROB HUGHES (as published in The New York Times)
 Published: November 10, 2009

The Major Soccer League playoffs may be in full swing in the United States, but it is a female soccer player who has been appearing coast to coast on television this week. But even David Beckham might not want the publicity and the notoriety that has the United States fixated on Elizabeth Ann Lambert.

ABC's "Good Morning America" program on Monday described her play as "despicable losership." ESPN Sports had Julie Foudy, one of the icons of America's world and Olympic winning women's soccer teams, call Lambert's version of the Beautiful Game as "going over the line." And once video of Lambert's seven deadly fouls during a college semi-final last week hit the Internet, a Facebook page titled "Ban Elizabeth Lambert from college soccer" has attracted 3,605 members in a couple of days. The video is pretty damning. Lambert kicks, slaps, punches and finally yanks an opponent to the ground by her pony tail. "Sure, there is jostling off the ball, that's part of the game of soccer," said Foudy, now herself a mother and an advocate for women's and children's rights. "And yes,"

Foudy added, "there's even some hair pulling. But, oh my goodness, if you're going to pull someone's pony tail and about snap their head off with it, that is going over the line." It cannot be long before Lambert is drawn to the attention of Sepp Blatter, the president of FIFA, world soccer's governing body. As one member of the president's inner circle who did not want to be named said of the video: "Mr. Blatter is fond of saying 'the Future is Feminine.' This won't impress him." This was the Mountain West Conference Women's Soccer semi-final last Thursday between Brigham Young University and University of New Mexico. B.Y.U. scored the only goal during the first half, and it is perhaps significant that New Mexico's Lambert perpetrated her series of fouls on the scorer, Carlee Payne, and the game's outstanding player, Cassidy Shumway, after the half-time break. There was some provocation: Payne's sly dig into the rib cage of Lambert.

That, as the video sequence emanating from Mountain West TV runs, was the first act in the spiral of violence. Lambert retaliated with a punch between Payne's shoulder blades. What followed would chill the blood of some of soccer's so-called hard men. Scything tackles from behind, kicks up to waist high, simultaneous punches with one fist into the face and the other behind the neck, cleats aimed into the inner thigh. And finally, that violent jerk on Shumway's pony tail, yanking the six-foot, or 1.8-meter, tall striker to the grass.



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In the cold light of the following morning, Lambert issued a drafted apology. "I am deeply and wholeheartedly regretful," it read. "I let my emotions get the best of me in a heated situation. This is in no way indicative of my character or the soccer player that I am. I am sorry to my coaches and teammates for any and all the damages I have brought upon them, and especially sorry to B.Y.U. and the B.Y.U. women's soccer players personally affected by my actions."

The apology did not quite cut it. The university banned Lambert immediately and indefinitely from training, playing or even kicking a ball until the Mountain West Conference has reviewed the situation and "acted accordingly." The thousands of contributions to the Facebook page range from the lewd to the properly concerned Soccer Moms of the U.S.A. The suggestions hover from counseling to a lifetime suspension for Lambert, who will be 21 next month.

But too few ask what blame should be borne by Lambert's coach, Kit Vela, or the referee, Joe Pimentel, and assistant referees. How could it be that Vela did not remove her player when the emotions quite clearly were getting the better of her?

How could Pimentel, a referee of some standing locally, stand by when such appalling and deliberate foul play was afoot? He issued one yellow card in the match, for possibly the least of Lambert's misdeeds, a trip on Payne. He took no action against Lambert's team mate who in that same incident kicked the ball into Payne's face as she hit the ground. He ignored, or perhaps he and the other officials did not see the punches, slaps, high tackles and pony tail yank. As FIFA's head of medicine, the Belgian doctor Michel d'Hooghe said here two weeks ago, it is time referees were made to know the laws and to protect players from deliberate violence by opponents.

He had men, not women in mind.

But responsibility is not simply for the referees. It is in the first instance the duty of players, and then those who instruct them. Vela has been in her post for eight years. She was as inert as the referee during this unacceptable malevolence. And maybe Vela should examine her own leadership.

She said the morning after the contest: "Liz is a quality student-athlete, but in this instance her actions clearly crossed the line of fair play and good sportsmanship."

Further questions that need examining relate to what was said in the locker room at half time. New Mexico was by then struggling to cope with higher-ranked B.Y.U. New Mexico's players knew it would be tough, but on Lobo TV, New Mexico's own university station, Vela said on the eve of the game: "I love this group of players. They are fiery and they're just excited to go play." The coach lights the fire and stands back while one of her players goes out of control. The world is watching on through the new digital communication that, for a week, makes Elizabeth Lambert more of a celebrity than Beckham.



**Do you have a submission for the
Flag & Whistle?**

Please email all material to either

jonsee@telus.net or *lvo@direct.ca* or *F&W Staff Writer -
stdy@telus.net*

**Note : Deadline for submissions in the next issue
will be Feb.28/2010**

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