



## BCSRA BUSINESS PROJECT LEADERS TO BE FINALIZED

At the time of writing, the provincial executive was set to announce the names of two members who had agreed to become Project Managers with a potential third later on in September.

Although the Business Plan has officially eight projects listed, from the discussions at the Open Forum hosted by the BC Soccer Referee Development Committee on June 13th, it became clear the main thrust of the Business Plan should be concentrated immediately into three areas: Mentor Program, Marketing and the Head Referee/League Assignor Program.

The Open Forum was held in conjunction with activities from BC Soccer's Annual General Meeting weekend. The RA was well represented at the BC Soccer Referee Development Committee with President Elvio Chies, VP Nick Hawley and VASRA Secretary Bill McNaughton attending. During the discussions the Committee was asked where the Referees Association (RA) could be of most use. Recognizing the vast collective experience of RA members, the answer was clear and concise: mentoring.

The plan for a mentoring program would not stop work that is occurring now. As with all projects, stakeholders will be contacted for input to help create the final version.

### INSIDE

- Canadian All-stars
- 2010 World Cup More Lessons Learned
- Lost In Translation
- FIFA Boss Wants Younger Officials

### CONGRATS TO MEMBERS ON APPOINTMENTS

The Flag & Whistle wishes to congratulate the following members on their recent appointments (in no particular order):

- Natasha Smith* and *Mary Katherine Battle*: National All-star Girls Tournament in Newfoundland
- Michelle Pye*- Inaugural Youth Olympics and FIFA Women's U-17 World Cup
- Darren Clark*- Assistant Referee for two internationals including Canada v Peru (Sept 4)
- Mauricio Navarro*: referee for AC Milan-Montreal Impact and Inter Milan-Panathinaikos club international friendlies.
- Marco Arruda, Andy Foster, Alain Ruch*- U18 Nationals coming this October

### RA HANDBOOK TO BE DISTRIBUTED END OF SEPTEMBER

The annual update of the RA Handbook will be distributed at the end of September to allow for contact information of the various referee schedulers to be included. With the assistance of Susan Lenio of the BC Soccer office, an email has gone out to all affiliated Leagues and Youth Clubs for this contact info. Only those referee schedulers received by mid-September will be provide the information will be included.

Also, an article from Canadian FIFA Assistant Referee Hector Vergara, of which a preview is included in this edition of the Flag & Whistle, will be included for future reference. This article is an exclusive to the BCSRA and covers lessons learned in Hector's third World Cup appointment.



# Canadian All-Stars Soccer Tournament 2010

(Ed note: Natasha Smith and Mary Katherine Battle were appointed to this year's Canadian All-Stars in Newfoundland. Here we present a report from Natasha).

I was recently invited to attend the All-Stars tournament in Saint Johns, Newfoundland. This national youth competition was held July 20 – 25, 2010.

Before the tournament commenced, there was a symposium that consisted of 3 days of training for the referees. We covered many different basic aspects of the game such as hand signals, movement and positioning. Along side the basics, we focused in on some more technical aspects such as managing the wall and the proper technique to caution and send off a player. Surprisingly I was lucky enough to be the first person to practice the proper cautioning technique in my first game – not to mention the only person!

The teams were all extremely well coached and it was entertaining to officiate. There were no real problems with any of the games I officiated. I found it added another challenge having some French speaking teams. Having been assigned to 3 games involving Quebec teams, there were some advantages and disadvantages to the language barrier. I am not fluent in French although having other officials that were fluent was great because they taught us some important soccer phrases.

Everyone was friendly and really worked well together. Seeing the other side of Canada was exciting although I think the best part was seeing the reaction from the referees that came from Manitoba and Alberta who were seeing the ocean for the first time! This whole experience was extremely fun.

I just want to say that I was super honoured that BC Soccer made it possible for me to go. This is an opportunity that I wish everyone could be a part of.



**More Beach Blast Fun !**  
(Photo courtesy of Mynor Campos)

## Know Your Fellow Members

**Name:** Natasha Smith



**Number of years refereeing:**

I have been refereeing since I was 12 (about 7 years).

**Reason to get started in refereeing:**

I started refereeing because both my two older brothers got into it. Also I thought it was cool that you were paid to exercise and to tell people what to do! Adults had to listen to you and as a youth that was pretty sweet.

**Most memorable moment in refereeing (so far):**

Working with Michelle Pye on a game. I thought it was awesome getting to watch/ work with a FIFA referee. Funniest memory would have to be when I was lining an older guys team and I tripped on my flag and bailed right as the ball was kicked out and hit me. Every guy saw and they even tried to help me up. This definitely wasn't funny at the time but now I can't help but look back and laugh.

**Advice you would give to someone starting refereeing:**

Smile and have fun with your games. Get everyone that your working with into the game by giving them a thumbs up or a smile so that you stay in a positive mood. There is nothing worse than thinking your not doing well and then dwelling on it the rest of your game.



# Beach Blast Vancouver 2010

(Photos courtesy of Mynor Campos)

## Prairie Invitational Tournament Winnipeg, July 2010

By Joe Ciresi

*(Ed note: Joe Ciresi is affiliated with the Vancouver Area branch of the BCSRA and is also one of their Past Presidents. Here he presents a short report on the annual Prairie Invitational Youth Tournament in his old stomping grounds of Winnipeg).*

As a spectator, when the BC Team played a team of their own age the play was predominantly one sided for our boys, I would say about 85% of the play.

From a referee's perspective, I was disappointed to find there were no AR's. On a good note, bearing the heat the referees had very good games. I had the opportunity to be with and watch Mario Perrino who is also with the CSA Referees Committee. He assessed a young referee on a 1st Division match.

I had a great time in Winnipeg. Sorry, I didn't bring any MOSQUITO'S back with me.

## Referees' Calls May Get Lost in Their Translation

By SINDYA N. BHANOO Published: July 12, 2010

Fans who angrily questioned several calls made by soccer referees in this year's World Cup won't be surprised at a report in the journal PLoS One that found inherent bias in referees.

They might, however, be surprised that the bias is perceptual. The study found that soccer experts whose languages read left to right call more fouls when the action moves in the opposite direction, or right to left.

"We are used to moving our eyes left to right so we have a preference for viewing events left to right," said Alexander Kranjec, a neuroscientist at the University of Pennsylvania and the study's lead author. Because of this preference, events moving from right to left are perceived as atypical, and referees may be more likely to call fouls, Dr. Kranjec said. Previous studies have suggested that such directional effects are reversed in those whose languages read from right to left.

"It would be interesting to do this with Hebrew- or Arabic-speaking soccer experts," Dr. Kranjec said.

He and his colleagues conducted the study on varsity soccer players at the University of Pennsylvania. The



## FUND IN THE SAND...and RAIN? -BEACH BLAST 2010

Beach Blast, the Vancouver Area's annual fundraiser, was held over the Aug 7-9 weekend with a new twist: RAIN! After weeks of hot weather and clear skies, the members had to brave colder temperatures in the quest to complete the task! All members and the invited guest referees deserve a round of applause for their efforts.



players assessed foul calls on images of plays, and were then asked to do the same on mirror images of the same plays. On average, they called about three more fouls on action going right to left.

The news is unlikely to have any application to disputed calls in soccer since the referee's ruling is absolute. It would also depend on the position of the referee and the language or languages he reads. So there's little chance that science will calm the arguments that are as much a part of the World Cup as the games themselves.

A version of this article appeared in print on July 13, 2010, on page D3 of the New York edition.

# 2010 FIFA WORLD CUP

## MORE LESSONS LEARNED

by Héctor Vergara, FIFA Assistant Referee

*(Ed note: The BCSRA was approached by Hector about this article and we are happy to include an abridged version in this edition. The full text appears on the BC Soccer website and will also appear in the RA Handbook to be distributed shortly).*

### Introduction

As I walked off the pitch after having received the medal for the third place match I had a long look at the stadium, fans, players and the pitch as I knew that my career as a World Cup official was ending. It is never easy to see things come to an end; especially when it has been awesome, but it is was also a very proud moment.

It has to be recognized that when one has the opportunity to be with the best referees in the world it is a great chance to learn. I have always believed that no matter what your level, even as a FIFA official, you should try to learn. The day you stop learning and believe "you are it", it is the day you begin the decline of your officiating career.

One of the things I have always been interested in and pay attention to is how officials do the basics of refereeing, paying attention to the small details. It is the small details that separate great officials from good officials. The refs at the World Cup have been selected after years of evaluations, seminars, tests, assessments and performances in competitions on and off the field. They are considered the best in their Confederations and therefore the world. The majority of the best are at a very high level and pretty close in ability to handle high level matches and the differences in what makes some better than others is the small details.

There is also one organization called FIFA that has certain expectations and is constantly, at every competition and training session, attempting to communicate those expectations to the officials and instructors.

It is therefore important that when referees are trained, at any level, FIFA's teachings are followed. It is critical in the development of officials that the basics and small details are taught early so that they quickly become second nature. This can then free up an official's concentration for other demands during the match.

I have been involved in Canadian Refereeing circles for 28 years and I have been a student, a teacher as well as an evaluator and I have to say that for the most part our provincial associations have done a good job of teaching the ba-



*Above: Hector in the middle with his fellow crewmates from the 3rd Place match-Boris Minkovich photo*

sics. There have been times in the past where we have not followed FIFA and we have also seen this in the last few years. It is troublesome when we are being given instructions that do not follow the FIFA instructions, particularly when we should be giving our referees, from the very young to the elite, the proper tools so that they may have every opportunity to aspire to be the very best that they can be. Some of them will become National officials and some FIFA officials that will represent Canada in CONCACAF and FIFA competitions. It is essential that they have the tools of what CONCACAF and FIFA expects in order to perform at their best and get more opportunities to show their abilities. Experience is key to teaching

One of the things that has been changing over the 18 years that I have been refereeing at the FIFA level, has been the number of ex FIFA referees that have been getting involved in teaching about refereeing. This has happened at the Committee level but also very much at the instructor level.

The people that are now involved, as staff and instructors, have been FIFA officials. This brings instant credibility to the programs and to their teaching.

*See "LESSONS" page 6*

# Back from World Cup, decorated official has plenty to say

By: Avi Saper 29/07/2010 1:00 AM | The Sou'wester Winnipeg Free Press - ONLINE EDITION

(Ed note: The BCSRA thanks the Winnipeg Free Press for allowing the reprinting of this article).

What does the busiest official in World Cup history do when he returns home from a 44-day stay in South Africa? He puts on his cleats and gets back on the pitch, of course. Héctor Vergara has officiated more World Cup games than anyone in history. At the recently completed 2010 edition of the world's biggest sporting spectacle, he was patrolling the sidelines as an assistant referee for the Italy-Paraguay and Brazil-Portugal first-round matches, and the third-place match between Germany and Uruguay.

That brought Vergara's total to 14 matches in the last three World Cups. One might think the 43-year-old father of four from Whyte Ridge would want some rest when he returned home. But Vergara was back on local fields asserting his control over senior men's league games and provincial championships.

"There's a slight difference in skill level and speed," he quipped.

As for future international competitions, Vergara's time is running out, as FIFA forces referees to retire at age 45.

"I'm not sure I even want to continue after 18 years of doing this," Vergara said. "After 18 years your body starts saying to you that enough is enough."

The executive director of the Manitoba Soccer Association when he isn't travelling the world with his whistle in tow, Vergara has no regrets about the role he played in World Cups on three different continents.

"I never had any issues during any of my games," he said. "I may have had some tight calls, but I never really had an issue at that level."

That's more than can be said for several of his colleagues, who became international punching bags after some controversial missed calls in South Africa. As far as Vergara is concerned, none of those calls handed victory to the wrong team, and no one feels worse about a mistake than an official.

"No one is as critical on the referees as we are on ourselves," he said. "We're our worst critic. We'll watch the tape over and over to see where we could do better." Vergara said FIFA studied all the critical decisions — goals,

offsides and penalty area plays — made during the tournament, and found the referees were correct 97% of the time.

"You compare that 97% to the number of penalty kicks that were taken, and they're percentage of success was 67%" he said. "Yet we're hammering the referees... but we're not saying anything about the fact the players aren't scoring from free kicks or penalty kicks."

As long as human beings are calling games, mistakes will be made, Vergara said. But that doesn't mean he's in any hurry to give technology — such as instant replay — a role in officiating.

"I'm not a proponent of technology in soccer," he said. "To me, there is a natural flow to soccer. I think it takes a lot away from the momentum as well as the game itself by putting a stoppage in to do a video review."

Vergara said he would support the idea of having extra officials on the goal lines to determine whether a goal is scored.

## Héctor Vergara speaks...

### On South Africa as a host:

"I think the South African people worked extremely hard to make sure this World Cup went off as best as possible.

There was a lot of pride in what they were doing. They were very friendly. They went out of their way to get things done for you. It was the first World Cup in Africa after all, so from that standpoint they wanted to put on a good show.

In general I think the organization went off pretty good, considering that everybody was so concerned about stadiums not being ready and transportation and security. At the end of the day they proved that they were very good hosts."

### On refereeing with vuvuzelas buzzing:

"When you're a referee, you're so concentrated and focused on what you need to do that there's a lot of things that happen in the periphery that you don't pay attention to. Vuvuzelas is one of those examples.

I've been in Azteca Stadium in Mexico City with 114,000 people, and when you're there the humming sound sounds like a pack of bees and you also tune that out. During our daily training, which was two to three hours most of the time, we taped the vuvuzela sound in a match and then it was played over the loudspeakers while the training was going on so we could get used to it and also tune it out. Even with the vuvuzela sounds, we started to be able to differentiate between the kick of the ball or conversation between people. We became very

*see "Hector Speaks" pg 7*

**LESSONS (Cont'd from pg 5)** It is often very easy to say or expect something, but if you have not lived it, breathed it, suffered through it, etc, you will never really know what is like.

Unfortunately for us in Canada, we don't have many that can say "I have been there and done that". Being there is not just having the badge; you must also have done the difficult matches. It really means having people that have been under the great pressures of competitions. FIFA has taken this to heart and they have adjusted to incorporate the people that can best help the officials. This is something that was very evident internally in this World Cup.

### **Goal Kick Signal**

Not long ago it was brought to my attention by a colleague that the signal for goal kicks instructed to entry or provincial referees was with the palm down. I have been informed that this is a UEFA instruction and that many UEFA referees do it. I know that not everyone supports this concept so I investigated further at the World Cup. Like I said, to me, what FIFA wants is what we should be teaching.

### **General Signals**

Obviously when you attend an event like the World Cup and you have the opportunity to interact with instructors and referees for 45 days there are many discussions that you are able to have.

The same concerns were expressed regarding the signals by some of the UEFA ARs that carry the flag in the wrong hand or signal with the wrong hand. Again, the instructors want to see this come in line with the rest of the world and with what the RAP program teaches. No one will ever argue against the concept that the most important things is to get the calls right. However, when you get beyond the point of getting the calls right, which most of the officials at the World Cup level are capable of doing, the way you signal, the way you move, how you look is all important part of being a top notch official.

### **Yellow and Red Card Presentation**

In Canada we have lately been instructed to talk to players before issuing the yellow or red cards. This is a new direction that has not been the case even before I even became an official. At the World Cup the process of talking to players before issuing the yellow or red card was not used by the majority of the referees. I would be taking an educated guess as I have not tallied every caution or red card but it appeared to be less than 20% of the referees that used this approach. FIFA appears to be more receptive to the immediate showing of the yellow or red card instead of the talking first. There were in fact many people

that mentioned that perhaps there was too much talking by the referee to the players in the final of the World Cup and that may not have been the best option.

### **AR Flag position inside penalty area**

The RAP (Referee Assistance Program) has been teaching that the ARs should carry the flag in the right hand while moving laterally within the penalty area. At the World Cup, this was again emphasized by some of the instructors as something that if it is being taught by the RAP program then FIFA will expect it from the ARs.

Now, there is another challenge, to teach the young referees to carry the flag in the right hand inside the penalty area when moving laterally. This is what FIFA wants and if we can get the referees to learn it and practice it now it will become second nature and it will not have to be taught differently when they get to the top.

### **Importance of Body Language**

For the 18 years I have been involved as a FIFA AR, body language, signals and movements, although basic, have been something that I have been conscious of doing correctly and as FIFA has instructed. It has assisted me in concentrating in other important areas as well as it has helped me establish a profile that I have been told is highly regarded in the world. I don't need more than that evidence to prove that this is critical to one's performance and career.

All of the basic gestures and techniques listed can be connected to the referee's body language. FIFA had a professional work with the WC referees from about two years before the WC in order to develop these techniques so that they had a significant impact on the referee's performance.

I know for a fact that in Canada we have not spent sufficient time talking and teaching body language to the referees. This is something that needs to be taught from a very young age. It is a critical element that gives referees confidence and an image that yields respect from everyone

It is important that we teach what 80% of the world is learning and following, which is what FIFA is teaching. We must be part of that number if we want to give the Canadian referees the best opportunity to be prepared for the challenges they will face in their careers.

### **Conclusion**

The lessons that I have learned are applicable to every level of referee and the information that I gained at the World Cup is important for all referees to know. Learning is never complete and the more we can share experiences of this nature amongst referees, particularly those that have been to high level competitions, the greater the chance of success.

Enjoy your games!

**HECTOR SPEAKS (cont'd from page 5)**

see accustomed to it, and at the end of the day it didn't bother us at all.

**On whether the referees were aware of the outside criticism:**

“We were aware. There are hundreds and hundreds of media that go to the event, and we have four days where we actually meet with the media officially. When some incidents would happen, then everybody would want to ask questions. To be right to the point, how many incidents are we talking about? The incidents were a big story because it happened to be England-Germany, and it happened to be Argentina-Mexico, so there's two incidents right there. United States (played in a game) where a goal was disallowed in the last minute. I don't recall many more other than that that were of major consequence. When you look at them individually and the countries that were involved, everyone makes a big fuss because it is what it is. A mistake's been made and nobody can say otherwise.”

**On England's 'goal that wasn't' against Germany:**

“To be quite blunt, the assistant referee was exactly where he was supposed to be, with the second-last defender at the moment the ball was kicked. By the time the ball was kicked, travelled to the net, bounced twice and came out of the net, 2.15 seconds went by. They actually timed it. Within two seconds there's no way he's going to run 10 metres and see that ball. It's just humanly impossible to do that. Nobody feels worse than him.”

**On whether controversial calls affected outcomes of games:**

“We're talking about two incidents in two games where the other team absolutely dominated the game. In other words, whether that ball goes in or not, England was not the better team. Germany was the better team. Germany deserved to win the way they won. If that ball goes in, Germany would have come back and won 4-2. Germany was just that much better than England. The same thing with the Argentina-Mexico game. Argentina totally dominated the game; Mexico is not the same quality.”

**On what he would change if he were president of FIFA:**

“Everybody complained about that handball by (French striker Thierry) Henry (that sent France to the World Cup and eliminated Ireland) and the fact that he was able to participate in the World Cup. I would say that people that cheat the game and it can be proven — this is where I would use technology, after the game is over. If you did that, I believe there's a lot of things that players wouldn't do. If Henry knew that by him doing that he wouldn't go to the World Cup — that he'd be suspended for a year and wouldn't be able to go to the World Cup — I guarantee you that if the referee didn't call it, Henry would've been the first one to put up his hand.”

**On his thoughts on Canada not being at the World Cup:**

“It's frustrating. People tend to call us a rich country. It's true. We have a lot of resources, but our sport hasn't re-

**FIFA boss wants younger referees**

Last Updated: Tuesday, August 10, 2010 | 10:18 AM ET  
The Associated Press

FIFA president Sepp Blatter believes top international referees should be younger. Blatter said in an interview posted on the German football federation's website on Tuesday that a plan regarding top referees will be released in October or November and “there will be a rejuvenation.”

“The World Cup shouldn't be there so that someone the other side of 40 has to quickly get another game,” Blatter was quoted as saying.

FIFA has a mandatory retirement age of 45 for referees. Blatter did not give any details of what changes might be made. The World Cup's two most-criticized refereeing decisions - the failure to award England a goal for a shot by Frank Lampard that crossed Germany's line, and a goal awarded to Argentina even though scorer Carlos Tevez received the ball in an offside position — involved referees in their 40s.

The two youngest referees who officiated matches in South Africa, both in their early 30s, were rated highly enough to be given control of the two semifinals. The final was handled by England's Howard Webb, then 38, who took extended leave from his job as a policeman to be a professional in the Premier League.

“I am also for professional referees, even though I know that there are other opinions on that,” Blatter said.

As for technical support measures, that issue is “a bit more complicated,” he was quoted as saying. “Every system must be carefully checked for its practicability.”

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ally been soccer, although it's starting to change a little bit. There are things we don't have in Canada that we eventually need to have, and a lot of financial resources need to be put into this. One thing we don't have enough of is good quality coaches. We need to work hard with our grassroots, and put our best coaches at that level to develop the young players in the country. We need to have resources provided so that our players begin to compete at a high level at a younger age. We need a professional league somehow. It would be nice to have some sort of Canadian league that our kids can aspire to play in.”

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

Please email all material to either

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**Note : Deadline for submissions in the next issue  
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