

# HAMPSHIRE RUGBY UNION REFEREES' SOCIETY

## Chairman's AGM Report Season 2008-09

Once again, I have thank you for giving up your time, making so much effort and for the continuing improvements in your performances as referees this season. I have had more comments, emails and letters of praise this year than ever before. The majority of players, coaches and even spectators realise that without us, there is no match. However we should be careful to be part of the Game, and not the centre of it.

Rugby still retains a unique ethos & culture, and in Hampshire all the parties are working hard to retain that. As referees we must maintain our educational role, but also be prepared to take criticism when it is justified.

Keith Lewis' interesting content and self-critical DVDs has improved attendance at our Monthly Training and Development Squad meetings. The season was started with two ELV seminars with Hampshire's coaches and there were few problems as we applied the dreaded ELVs – once the IRB and RFU finished changing the fine details. Now we know that effective from 23<sup>rd</sup> May, ten ELVs are incorporated in Law (not the maul pull down & shoulder below hips and line out 'numbers' are back for next season.

Dave Hayward (the South West's top ELRA Trainer) and the RFU ELRAs have recruited over 20 new referees to the Society this season, and Dave Davies reports that half of them have done ten or more matches – well done chaps. One of them Kevin Nixon, alongside another Society member Bruce Carle appeared at Twickenham on Army Navy Day reffing the Emerging Schools. I am delighted that Lord Wandsworth College have run one ELRA already and have another planned for September and (hot off the press) Portsmouth Grammar School are running an ELRA for staff and pupils this summer.

We have a number of Young Officials in Hampshire, but need volunteer(s) to take on the successful mentoring job done by Nigel Spencer. Of them Gareth Holloway and Daisy Martinelli have both shown great progress while away at University and Ashley Thomlinson has emerged as a high potential referee, already covering challenging adult matches at 17 years old.

Hopefully you have all achieved or exceeded your goals, and whether a Panel Referee or a recent ELRA recruit, you are valued as a volunteer. We now have radio sets for all our advisers to help develop your management and communication skills, and feedback has been very positive. Jim Firth and his ever growing team of advisers and at higher levels assessors / coaches have made a massive contribution to your development yet again.

Congratulations to Keith Page on being appointed a National Panel Match Observer this season and to Paul Bridgman who continues to operate as a MO at the IRB Elite levels. Two referees, Keith Lewis & Paul Kimber, represent us on the National Panel, with Douglas Neagle and Richard James on South West Group for level 5, and James Gregory & Geoff Howells on the Federation Squad at level 6. Additionally we have two Elite TJs (Stuart Terheege & Roger Bailieff) and three panel TJs (Tim Bailey,

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Paul Burton & Mike Priestley). Competition at all the levels is fierce and only a few are selected. Also many thanks to Jim Firth for his work with our own Society Development Squad, where selected referees work to achieve their potential up to level 6, and often get beyond their initial expectations.

Hampshire has a very close and co-operative relationship with all three of the Armed Forces Referee Societies and I know they value us as highly as we value them. At the recent Army Society Dinner, two Hampshire members Trev Cutler and Colin 'Bobby' Moore were honoured by the Army Society for their contributions to refereeing. Some of our joint-members have been away in sunnier climes this season, or are due to travel in the very near future – our thoughts are always with you and we both thank you for your service and wish you a safe tour of duty.

This season we appointed again to about 1,500 matches, but we are dependant on Club Referees to appear at 3<sup>rd</sup> XV and Vets on Saturdays and U16, U15, & U14 League matches on Sundays. We also had the usual mass of changes and cancellations (many late). Dave Davies (and Paul Hobby mid-week) does a brilliant job, but at times even he runs out of patience. Please improve our communication as referees and email or call the Appointments Secretary or Dave with your latest availability or if it changes either way. Thanks to Keith Page for taking on Appointments this season, alongside his Panel Assessor and South West Group responsibilities. I thank all our Committee members, and all the others who give their spare time freely to administer and run our Society.

Richard Showan will report in detail on the finances, but we are a robust Society with good reserves in the bank. Recent measures to achieve a balanced budget were necessary and have been successful. I thank Richard for his diligent and effective work behind the scenes.

Have a great summer, enjoy what could be a classic Lions Tour to South Africa, re-charge your batteries, and come back in August for what will be a terrific 2009-2010 season. We will plan to hold a Society pre-season meeting, as this year there is no Federation meeting planned.

Yours in rugby,

*Simon*