

WHISTLESTOP



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE HAMPSHIRE RUGBY UNION REFEREES SOCIETY



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WINTER 2007 EDITION



Edited by Mike Priestley



WHISTLESTOP

The Magazine of the HRURS * Winter 2007 Edition

Welcome to the re-launched WHISTLESTOP. In this newsletter we will aim to give you an update of Refereeing issues and Society matters, as well as news, views and comments from all around rugby refereeing. This will include some standing items from areas of the Society that will hopefully encourage responses which can then be printed. We hope to produce WHISTLESTOP at least bi-monthly but most definitely there will be at least two issues per season. This production is for the benefit of the membership of HRURS and the wider Rugby community in Hampshire, so we welcome your views and opinions on the content. I will be coaxing various people into providing information to include so watch out! Please enjoy this production and all constructive comment on content will be appreciated.

Mike Priestley, Editor

Match Appointments

All Society appointments (**and cancellations**) should go via Dave Davies to be recorded & charged for – remember our main revenue is the clubs’ match fees. Also this ensures that the Society can co-ordinate and prioritise match appointments, & fulfil the Society’s ‘Duty of Care’ responsibilities. It also ensures that you are covered by the Societies enhanced RFU insurance, which also covers your journey to and from the game.



“Don’t give me that sad eyed look !”

Key Society Contacts		
Chairman	Simon Thomas	07887 873999
Secretary	Paul Burton	07967 750203
Treasurer	Richard Showan	07768 361325
Grading	Jim Firth	01256 327526
Training	Mike Gill	07939 002127
Appointments	Geoff Paice	01420 543924
Re-Appts we	Dave Davies	02392 668275
Re-Appts wd	Paul Hobby	07909 803413
ELRA Training	Dave Hayward	02392 265697

Chairman's Message

As we rapidly approach Christmas & New Year, there is a break of a few weeks in the usual weekly routine – do enjoy it.

Looking back at this first half of the season, we continue to deliver a high consistent standard of refereeing, and cover all the key matches. Where we do not have enough numbers on a specific day, qualified Club Referees have been available for both Adult and Youth matches. The Society continues to recruit hard and my thanks go to the RFU Referee Centre personnel and Dave Hayward, working to deliver the leading edge ELRA and RFU Officials' Development courses.

We have a steady flow of new members from ELRA courses currently, so please make them welcome. Perhaps they could run touch for you to see what happens on a match day and get fully integrated as part of the Society – remember how it all felt when you first became a Society Referee (call me or Dave Hayward if you can do this).

We have some new blood on the Committee with Doug Neagle taking on a Recruitment & Retention role, helping to support our new members in their first few months.

We continue to have Hampshire RFU's support in eliminating on-pitch and touchline abuse, a common cause of a referee's retirement – if you encounter any abuse, let us know and it will be dealt with.

We offer you regular development opportunities through our Monthly Meetings, assessments and coaching (with thanks to Jim and his every growing team of Society Advisers). The aim is to add experience & skills to your ability & potential, enabling you to be a better referee at whatever level of match you might be appointed. As you get higher in the grade levels, the bigger the step up is, and we all plateau out at our ability or fitness level at some stage.

We try to plan match appointments carefully for you, but this is increasingly disrupted by club cancellations or poor admin, but also by last minute referee un-availabilities. Please keep Geoff and Dave updated on when you are, and are not available, as early as you can. We will give you all the support and development we can, when you commit yourself to regular Hampshire Refereeing.

Thank you all for your support of Hampshire Rugby, as without you the

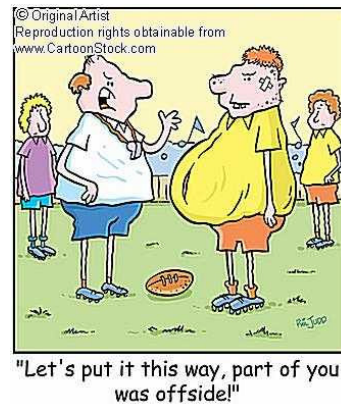
rugby matches wouldn't take place. We on the Committee always welcome your feedback, as it is your Society and we do need to hear from you.

I wish you (and yours) all a quiet Christmas and a successful 2008, with much enjoyable and challenging refereeing.

With best wishes

Simon

Humour Corner



A London Referee's First Match

Referees are human and can be funny, as the following article from a fellow merry whistleblower shows. Thanks to London RURS for reproduction. The events recounted are of the first game with whistle in hand. Does this seem familiar to anyone?

Saturday 18 September 2004

Kings College Hospital 2s – 67 Bromley 4s – 5

“Gentlemen, If you have any constructive criticism about my refereeing, then please discuss them with me in the bar afterwards. However, on the pitch, I am God, or as close to God as you are going to get. That means I expect to hear nothing louder than silent prayer. If I do hear anything else, you will be treated to hellfire and damnation. If you do not understand my sermon, ten minutes under the posts should give you time to contemplate

it.” And so began my refereeing career one rain-splashed Saturday afternoon in September 2004.

I’d only signed up with the London Society of Rugby Football Union Referees earlier in the week, yet at about 4 pm on Friday was asked if I could referee the following day. I’d taken my foundation exam two years earlier but only officiated when injured, preferring to play. A broken wrist had put paid to that and I had reluctantly accepted retirement. But I was determined to retire only from playing and not from the game itself.

I had an auspicious start. Kings College Hospital’s second team were hosting Bromley’s fourths in a friendly. Kings was one of the founders of the RFU in 1871 and one of only eight of the 22 founding clubs still going. Their extravagantly wide and lusciously grassed pitch had been the arena in which I had torn my knee ligaments some three years before, so I knew the ground well. I had played against both teams before.

I thought I’d treat the front row and half backs to some additional preaching from the pulpit. To the front row, I explained that I had been a prop myself so, apart from being omnipresent, I knew what I was looking for. And if I didn’t see exactly what the problem was I was going to penalise the tight-head because it is nearly always his fault. Both tight-heads seemed to think this fair. I asked the fly-halves to keep their players back ten metres, particularly at lineouts, and I asked the scrum halves if, just for a change, they could put the ball in straight.

The game was a walkover for Kings, whose backs would have outclassed higher Bromley sides with their pace, passing and support play. I was only just over bronchitis and had spent the past decade propping, which meant keeping up with the medics was a challenge. Although Bromley grumbled, they remained in high spirits and scored at the end (well I made it the end by blowing full time a few minutes early).

My howler in the first half was to give a 22-metre drop out to Bromley when the Kings winger, who had circled the Bromley defence from the half-way line, dropped the ball instead of grounding it when he tried to do it casually and one-handed. I should have awarded a five-metre scrum. I blame a playing career in which whole games could pass without ever having the ball in my hand and a five-metre trundle was the longest run I ever made. On the rare occasions I went over the try line with the ball clasped to my belly, my whole body weight touched it down. This was never a law I had needed to worry about before. The society had sent an injured but experienced ref to watch, help and assess me. At half time he

managed to whittle down his criticisms to two useful pointers. He also agreed to run the touch.

This was lucky because the lineout is such a tangle of laws that a barrister would struggle to fathom them. I had only ever been a forward, so what hope did I have? I blew for a lineout infringement, explained confidently my reasons and realised, belatedly, that I could not remember what to award. My colleague bent his arm into the free-kick sign and mouthed the words "15-metres". I duly bellowed my ruling with all the authority my refing training had invested in me.

My debriefing after the match was interrupted by the medics drinking what appeared to be almost pint glasses full of neat gin and vodka, plus races in which the opposing teams drank some obnoxious fluid through the trunk of elephant-shaped beakers, then threw up into buckets held by their supporters to the cheers of their the onlookers.

But I was hooked on refereeing. Being called "Sir" was a big improvement on "you fat b*stard!"

(with thanks to Dave Wheal of the London Society)

<u>LAWS CORNER</u>	
<p>Our resident laws guru (or failing that Martin Holloway!) has agreed to answer one or two questions and pose a teaser for you to debate as you read this in a quiet location. Here is the one for now (answers later in this edition) Jonny Wilkinson kicks a high ball down towards the touch-line on his left. The ball drops just outside South Africa's 22 where JP Pietersen of South Africa catches the ball. Immediately Mike Catt grabs him and Cueto and Simon Shaw of England are soon there. Percy Montgomery of</p>	<p>South Africa joins in and so do Danie Rossouw of South Africa, Lewis Moody of England and John Smit of South Africa. They are all on their feet huddled together. It is a maul. The maul falls to ground and the referee decides that the heap of players have rendered the ball unplayable.</p> <p>He awards the scrum to South Africa.</p> <p>Right or wrong?</p> <p>Answer on page 9</p>

What should a referee do at half time?

What you should do when you blow the whistle for the half time break ? Well renowned whistler Andre Watson has come up with a suggested list of do's and don'ts.

Most referees use this time to reflect on how the first half went. They discuss the game with their TJs (if you have any !); some do this in order to hear how well they are reffing, others will try to justify the mistakes they made or even cover themselves by making excuses. I guess there is no specific way to spend the time but there are certainly things that we should and should not do :

Don'ts	Do's
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not get involved with discussions with coaches. • Do not change your clothes, especially your shorts, in full view of the crowd. • Do not talk to an assessor or have him talk to you. • Do not fish for pats on the back from your TJs (if you have any !); they will compliment you, if applicable. • Do not replay the first half in detail, or the mistakes you made. This is negative and need not enter your thoughts at this stage. • Do not ponder on what went wrong in the first half for the same reasons as above. Do not think about the game at all, if possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If in the changing room, sit and get the feet up. • Have an energy drink. • Talk about things not game related, in fact, crack a joke or two if possible (if only to yourself). • Run through your game plan thoughts to prepare for the next half. • If you have to think about the first half, then concentrate on the good calls you made and the positive rugby that was played. <p><i>The message is fairly simple in that we should not exhaust ourselves by concentrating on the game for too long. Take a break and, if you feel like it, have a Kit Kat</i></p>

RFU Match Levels		
Level	League Level	Appointing Authority
1	Premiership	Elite Panel
2	National 1	National Panel
3	National 2	National Panel
4	National 3 N/S	National Panel
5	London1/SW1	Level 5 SWG Group
6	London2/SW2	Federation/ Society Appointments & Exchanges
7	London3 SW	Society Appointments & Exchanges (Devon, Somerset, Eastern Counties, Sussex, Kent, etc)
8	London4 SW	
9	Hampshire 1	Society Appointments & local Exchanges (Berks/D&W/Sussex)
10	Hampshire 2	
11	Hampshire 3	

- 2nd & 3rd team matches are graded at up to 3 & 6 levels below 1st XV
- Vet are usually graded at 10/11, and Colts / School at 8/9
- If there is a mix of levels i.e. cup matches the match level is equal to the highest-level team.
- Cup Matches in later rounds are up-graded one or two levels

HRURS policy is to appoint a referee to a match at or one level above his current grade, for a specific re-grading need. Society members should not accept direct approached through clubs and must contact Dave Davies or Simon Thomas for approval, and thus be covered by the Society's RFU insurance cover.

IRB LAWS UPDATE 1

The GRU has requested a ruling with regard to Law 16.6 Successful end to a ruck. A ruck is formed and the ball is playable for Team A. All players in Team B now leave the ruck and step back. Is there still a ruck or has the ruck ended ?

The Designated Members have ruled the following in answer to the question raised:

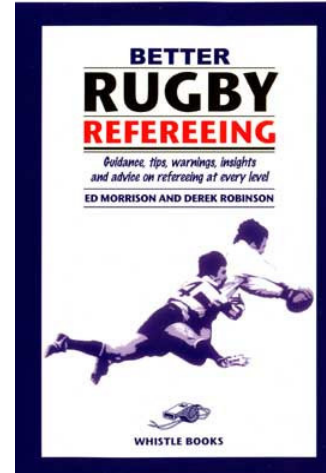
1. A ruck ends successfully when the ball leaves the ruck or when the ball enters in goal ie. on or over the goal line.
2. A ruck ends unsuccessfully when the ball becomes unplayable.
3. As there has been a ruck formed initially, AND the criteria for a successful or unsuccessful ruck have not been exhibited, then the ruck has not ended.

Book Review

BETTER RUGBY REFEREEING by Ed Morrison & Derek Robinson

I was sent an email by the secretary of my civilian society, advertising this book. So as I was just about to start my second season, I sent off for it, hoping that it would consolidate on the training I had received and the experience I have gained.

Ed Morrison and Derek Robinson put this book together because they wish they'd had something like it when they began refereeing. It's not a manual - it's an illustrated conversation, a discussion of how best to solve the many problems that today's referees face.



The authors know these solutions are workable because they've worked for them, at every level of the game, from a pick-up 3rd XV match to a Rugby World Cup Final. (Ed took the Final in 1995, and 37 major internationals besides. Derek spent 30 years refereeing at the grassroots.) The conversation is brisk, sometimes funny, often challenging. It seeks to see the game from the players' point of view as well as the referee's. It covers the hot spots (scrum front rows, tackle, repeated infringement, dissent, obstruction, tribal warfare, and so on) but also things that some referees might never consider - such as how you can lose the game before the kick-off, and whether or not to apologise during play, and what to do when nobody speaks English. Plus much, much more.

BETTER RUGBY REFEREEING is a non-profit, self-published operation - Ed and Derek financed it. That's why the price is low - only £7.99 inc. p&p; and also why it's only available by mail order from: Torbay Mailing Services Ltd, PO Box 11, Paignton, Devon TQ3 2BF. Make cheque payable to Torbay Mailing Services Ltd.

LAWS CORNER – THE Answer Martin Holloway says.....

Correct decision. Law 17.6 Unsuccessful End to a Maul (h) refers. The key phrases being '...the player is immediately held by an opponent,... and the definition of 'Direct from an opponents kick'.

News From Around the Society

The usual pleas from our Appointer and Re-appointers for weekends and midweek. **Please make yourself as available as often as you can, and let them know with a quick phone call.**

There are 'some absolutely cracking' midweek schools and University games that will challenge you, or some great Youth matches on Sundays. It's not just the London and Hampshire Leagues, and Merit Table matches that need you.

New score cards should be available at the December Meeting.

2007-08 HRURS Shirts in Lime Green and Purple plus Canterbury short sleeve armour fit tops and touch judge flags add to the ever growing haberdashery. Get yours while stocks last and look as smart as this referee !



Another Law Poser for you

Red player kicks the ball from the field-of-play towards his opponents' goal-line. Blue player, with one foot in the field-of-play and one foot in in-goal, catches the ball on the full and touches down.

Question: What is your decision and why?

Let us know at hrurs@yahoo.co.uk



IRB LAWS UPDATE 2

No doubt you are all aware of this by now but it is worth giving the official line

IRB Council Decision – Dangerous Tackle

Council at its Interim Meeting held on October 19, 2007 considered a recommendation from the Rugby Committee on dangerous tackling. Please find below the decision of Council in relation to dangerous tackling

*The Council had before it a report from the IRB Judicial Chairman who had expressed serious concern with regard to a decision of an Appeal Committee based upon an interpretation of Law 10 4(e) which relates to high tackles. The interpretation suggested that the tackle would have to start at a level above the line of the shoulders for it to be dangerous and in contravention of Law 10 4 (e). Following discussion it was **AGREED** that the following interpretation be applied:*

“A dangerous tackle is effected whenever there is contact above the line of the shoulders whether the contact is the first or a subsequent point of contact. To be clear, a tackle which involves arm contact below the line of the shoulders and thereafter contact is made with either the neck or the head of the tackled player is a dangerous tackle within Law 10.4 (e).

A Picture Paints a Thousand Words!

Just a quick one, no names – either individual or team – to save embarrassment (and legal action!).

What would you do if **YOU** saw this in a game?



Perhaps just a few questions you should be asking yourself :

was there intent in the action (would appear to be a no brainer that one really?)

was it ‘near’ the ball or was it purely on ‘body’

has a law been broken, and have you had cause to penalize similar incidents before

have you had reason to speak to individuals (player or captains) about similar incidents in the game previously.....

What would you do at the time, and subsequently, *and why?*

Let us know at hrurs@yahoo.co.uk

RUGBY UNION REFEREEING IN HAMPSHIRE

You don't have to join the Society to enjoy refereeing.
You can simply do a course and then referee for your
Club or School.

The **ENTRY LEVEL REFEREE AWARD** is your starting
point – see our web site for full details of the next course
near you.



To get on the road to be the next
Wayne Barnes,
contact Dave Hayward HRURS ELRA
Trainer on
02392 265697
or see www.hantsrefs.org.uk

Hampshire Rugby Union Referees' Society

“Better Referees, Better Games”



Join the Best Referees in the
County

see www.hantsrefs.org.uk