



There was a time years ago when many top referees went by invitation to referee societies all over the country, and when they spoke it was usually all about themselves as personalities. We were regaled with tales about this game and that, this honour and that, this promotion and that, this top venue and that.

The exceptions to this pattern were the ones who never saw themselves as more important than the game. When **Steve Lodge** had refereed the FA Cup Final, it was only a matter of weeks before he was a guest speaker in his own South Yorkshire area. The Barnsley official spoke about refereeing and did not mention the Cup Final.

Steve was a man, like the others mentioned above who loved the game far more than the prestige it brought them. They all remember the times when they battled along in the trough of the waves and they don't boast about when they were on the crest. Refereeing is like that --- it makes you face the troughs and it occasionally lets you enjoy the crests.

And it all about having the **RIGHT ATTITUDE**, and about knowing that you will NEVER know all there is to know about match control.

Please don't ever forget it! Our top-ranking colleagues never have!



## **ANALYSE EVERY GAME, EVEN IF IT WENT SMOOTHLY FOR YOU**

**Do you have the desire and the determination to become a better referee? Of course you do, otherwise you wouldn't still be out there as often as possible with a whistle or a flag, would you?**

Whether you have been the referee, the assistant referee, or the fourth official, you must think seriously about your contribution to the game. This is one of the important ways to make progress.

You may have been fortunate enough to have an observer watching and analysing your performance and following it up with a written report. Forget about the minutiae of the marking section, because it has been recorded and in all probability it will be a true reflection of your performance.

Accept it is now in the past and you can then move on.

But --- and it is a big BUT --- read carefully everything your observer has written for your benefit. An observer, like the former assessor, has been a referee himself or herself in the past and the experienced gained may well be just what you need. Observers are there to help you, not to put you down at every opportunity. Treat them as helpful friends and you will not go far wrong.

### ***Every game has its turning points***

All of your games will throw up those instances, often seemingly very minor ones, which on your personal recall and analysis will beam out important point for you to consider seriously.

It is often an accidental oversight or an unwisely chosen decision that changes the course of the game. How often has the game been going smoothly and you lose proper concentration for a moment? The next second you have indicated a throw-in to the wrong team. Everyone else but you saw what happened, or so it seems, but you got it wrong. You will immediately take what you consider to be the best course of action and you try hard to put the wrong decision out of your *immediate* thinking as you concentrate hard on the action before you. The next decision is very important, and you need to get it right. Keeping calm right now will help you a great deal.

The wise referee, however, will put those minor incidents into the personal memory-bank, ready for analysis later, after the game and probably at home.

### ***What is this 'analysis' we are talking about, you may wonder?***

Well, speaking in the easiest terms, let us say that you will see all these minor incidents as potential turning points in your game. You will frequently be asking yourself questions like, *'What did I do at that particular moment when the attitudes of a single player or of several players went downhill?'* *'How could I have done that more*

*effectively?'* *'If something like that occurs in a future game, will I know how to cope with it better?'* *'Could it be something about the way I speak to players?'* *'Do I adopt an approach that seems to do more harm than good?'* Plus a host of similar questions with which to challenge yourself.

There will be other questions to answer at times like these --- *'That particular incident, which I immediately thought might be a problem, seemed to resolve itself well enough, so what exactly did I do to help things?'* *'That coach in the technical area responded sensibly today, when I know he has been a bit of a pain in the past. What did I say, and how did I say it, that was helpful?'* *'What I said to the captains at the toss-up seemed to work well. What did I do or say slightly differently this week compared to last week?'*

A wise referee, or assistant referee for that matter, will always learn from his or her matchday colleagues, very often picking up on one comment that saved a potentially awkward situation. Remember such moments, as it will add to your game-management stock of skills.

In conclusion, let us say that if you always adopt a self-analysis process after EVERY game, you will be well on the way to becoming quickly a better referee who earns promotion to the next rung of the ladder. You will soon leave behind the casual referee or assistant who rarely, if ever, thinks constantly about the little things that build up to better match control.



# THE HOGG – BLOG

***ANDY HOGG, that well-known fitness fanatic and football refereeing addict, has been invited to write a series of articles for the matchday programmes of Gainsborough Trinity FC. He has the permission of a senior club official there to pass them on for possible publication in BENCHMARK. Needless to say, we are pleased to accept these generous offers. Here is the next HOGG-BLOG in his series for your reading and interest.***

## SPECIAL CARDS

One of the more enjoyable events over this festive period was to receive a greetings card from a friend who you had not seen for a while. I am not talking about the cards we received from, for example, colleagues we see at work every day, I will never understand why we do that. It's the surprise card from a school friend you had lost touch with. You know the ones I mean.

Talking of surprise cards, that sort of thing seems to be prevalent for me on a Sunday morning on the local playing fields in the Sheffield area. Often when I issue a yellow card, the recipient cannot believe his apparent misfortune, and he and his team-mates will attempt to tell every story in the book to persuade me otherwise. It goes without saying that their attempts are futile. I don't know of any referee worth his salt who will change his mind about issuing a card once he has committed to do so by already having the notebook is out of his pocket. So Mr Sunday Morning Footballer, why do you try?

Many column inches have been dedicated to the issue of players surrounding the match officials under the Respect programme, so I won't discuss this here. However, it mystifies me that players will object in such a vociferous manner. Why don't they just accept their punishment in a professional manner and respect the referee?

I am very much aware that grassroot footballers will mimic the actions of the professional players, so I firmly place the blame at the hands of the authorities in the senior game who should be making sure that a professional example is set. Look at the way, for example, that Rugby Union players accept the referee's decision, even if they do not agree with that decision. Why can't the same happen in our beautiful game?

If the issuing of a yellow card can cause surprise and confusion, the excrement hits the ventilator when the colour of the card is red. This is a key decision for the referee to make at any level, as it is literally 'game changing', or it certainly has the potential to be so. Therefore, as match officials, we think long and hard about the sending-off offences, replaying the incident in question on the 'virtual video player' in our head, to make sure that the colour of the card is the correct one. I am not discussing here the major acts of serious foul-play or violent conduct, the dismissal from the field-of-play for the waist- or neck-high tackle which endangers the safety of an opponent, because is a regulation decision.

I'm talking about that decision which has, in refereeing circles, become known as the 'orange' card, halfway between yellow and red. Sometimes the laws of the game give me no choice, and rightly so with many correct reasons to justify the yellow or red card decision. But please don't get me started on the Leicester City yellow card for the goal- celebration during the game immediately following the tragic helicopter crash. It's the decision that deserves more than a yellow card but is not the heinous crime of a red card offence, and in these situations the referee is damned if he does or dammed if he doesn't! Eleven players will agree with the decision; the other eleven will disagree. So, why not give the referee the option of an orange card to allow him to demonstrate to all concerned that the player in question is very close to being sent-off, and making the point in no uncertain terms that further offences turns the card from orange to red? I know versions of this have been tried in some countries and at various age-levels. In my humble opinion, the time is right to give the match officials an additional and invaluable tool to his match-control toolbox. There are too many dismissals from the field of play at all levels and this would help to counter-act it.

I'll leave you if I may with one thought. Should the punishment for the issue of an orange card mean that the player is 'sin-binned' for a time period, say 10 minutes? Now there's an idea, not a new one admittedly, but one worthy of some consideration.

*Hoggy*

## **HERE IS A CHANCE FOR FRESH IDEAS IN 'BENCHMARK'**

***The next Annual General Meeting of the Sheffield and Hallamshire County Referees' Association will take place in April 2019 when, of course, all positions on the Committee are open for either endorsement or replacement. Sometimes, someone wants to stand aside after years of service, as was the case not so long ago for our then Secretary Phil Woodward, and our Treasurer Bob Ayre, both excellent officers.***

***By the time of the next AGM in April 2019, our Publicity Officer Ted Ring will be looking to stand aside after fifty years of editing RA magazines. He started with a duplicated 'Sheffield Referee' in September 1969, before being Editor and then Assistant Editor of the national 'Football Referee' for over twenty years. He also produced a County RA publication called 'Share' and in the last two decades the current publication 'Benchmark'.***

In the interests of our on-the-field match-officials, we really do need to move healthily into the future under new editorship. 'Benchmark' is now only published as an e-mail magazine, and the County Committee has been and still is very flexible and generous in its expectations of its Publicity Officer/Editor.

*So, there really is nothing to fear in having a go at this pleasant task. If anyone is even mildly interested, please feel free to get in touch with Ted via the contact details at the head of this newsletter. Unless you want it to be known at this stage, Ted promises to keep the contact confidential. There is no obligation when making an enquiry about what is involved.*

**OVER TO YOU READERS FOR YOUR SERIOUS CONSIDERATION**



## **IDENTIFYING THE CULPRITS IN A BRAWL**

**If you are a seasoned referee, do you remember the first you were ever faced with a mass confrontation or a mass brawl? Of course, you do?**

**What's betting your heart missed a beat and then it quickly started racing. It was NOT a simple occasion when you could just stand back and only look on.**

Pity the newer referee faced with a mass confrontation for the very first time. There is a strong likelihood that he or she will be out there refereeing without anything more qualified as assistance than a club volunteer on the line. Being all alone at such a time is probably the most stressful situation the referee will ever have faced so far. And to make matters worse, mass-confrontations usually happen without much prior indication. A wise referee will do the most sensible thing he or she can think of and, some time after the game, self-analysis kicks in strongly.

Sometimes, but not always, the flare-up settles down almost as quickly as it began. That is the time when the referee has to sort it out and get the game underway again as soon as is sensible. The culprits, or at least the main ones, need to be identified and properly punished. The player who runs in from a great distance and deals out some physical kind of attack on an opponent has certainly had time to think what he is going to do --- so he must certainly be logged firmly in the referee's memory. So must be the two who started it all going. There is also a need to keep an eye out for a player

who joins in the mayhem in a strong manner and then tries to hide in the crowd around him. It is certainly not at all easy to cope with all this! Some referees use a pen to job numbers and colours on their hand, like R5 and B9.

The lonesome referee can only do the best things possible to ensure two things --- that a powerful kind of justice is meted out by detecting the main culprits, and getting the game underway again when it is safe to do so.

If the decision is reached that both red and yellow cards need to be used, deal with the red card offences first, making sure that the two main offenders do not leave the field together. If you have to wait to ensure they are apart, then so be it.

Don't immediately react to the player who tells you which opponent to send off. Do your own thing as calmly as you can.

Do not enter the fray to stop players fighting. You may be injured, and you will certainly be too close to be a good viewer of the fracas. Keep calm and wander slowly around the outside of

the main group, watching and noting important numbers on shirts.

Keep an eye fleetingly on anyone in the technical area, and if necessary deal with this person after you have dealt with the players.

Never forget that you will be submitting more than one disciplinary report, so make quick but meaningful notes.

Should the mass-confrontation take place when you have an observer present, try not to worry. Your observer will have experience first-hand a mass confrontation, so take note of any post-match comments. He or she is your friend at a time when you most need one.

We have mentioned self-analysis being very important some time after the game, but don't just carry it out once. Repeat the process several times over several days, for your own benefit.

Never forget that there are always several very experienced colleagues in your RA society who will offer you sound advice and real understanding. That is one of the real values of being a member of the Referees' Association.

## **EVER GOT RAIN IN YOUR EYES?**

*When it is a really rainy day for your game, try putting a good quantity of Vaseline strategically on your face. Start near your hairline, bring the Vaseline down the centre of your forehead and then continue with it outwards through both eyebrows, finishing below eye-level. Much of the rain will then find its way past your eyes and away safely.*

*You may not look your most handsome, but you'll certainly see things easier during heavy rain on match-days.*

## CLUB ASSISTANTS AND OFFSIDE

At a recent meeting of Kingston Referees' Society, I was surprised to learn that some of my colleagues never ask club assistants to indicate potential offside offences. These referees must surely be much fitter and much cleverer than I am, because, from my position on the field, I cannot possibly make correct and credible offside decisions.

I always ask my assistants to help me. On meeting them, I smile, shake hands, thank them for their help and give them the following instructions:

*Please take a position on the touchline next to your own left back. Please concentrate and stay in line with the last defender apart from the goalkeeper. Make a mental note of any player in an offside position and then wait and see where the ball goes. If it goes to that player or that player goes to the ball, please hold the flag above your head until I acknowledge you either by blowing the whistle or with a wave and/or a word.*

Before handing them the flag I demonstrate the required signal and also show them how to indicate whether the penalised player is on the far, middle or near side of the field. This last request is important because, knowing that they have to give this indication, will encourage them to take more time in making the decision.

I finally thank them again, saying that I can't do my job without their help.

Even before the kick off I'm beginning to estimate how helpful my assistants are likely to be by checking that they are in the correct position. I also quickly discover whether they are fit enough and committed enough to keep up with play, and whether they are taking up the correct position at dead ball restarts. The first time a possible offside decision might be required I learn whether the assistant is following my request that they should "*wait and see*".

If they flag too soon I try to make an opportunity, perhaps ahead of a goal kick in that half, to have a quiet word to remind them of my instruction. I also make a point of getting close enough to thank and encourage those who are doing a good job.

Always the final decision is mine: it's the whistle that stops the game, not the flag.

If the assistant flags too quickly or is not in the correct place when flagging I'm likely to over-rule the decision unless the offence is so blatant that even I can make an accurate judgement from my less than perfect position.

If, as sometimes happens, one assistant is very reliable and the other one much less so, I can to some extent try to compensate for that by changing my own positioning both in open play and at dead ball situations.

In the final analysis, it's in a team's own interests to provide a reliable assistant. In my experience, they usually do.

**Jim de Rennes**

*(Kingston on Thames RA)*



## CREATE THE RIGHT IMPRESSION

You only get one chance to create a first impression, no matter who you are, where you are or whichever person you are meeting.

Never forget this in your refereeing.

The RA has dozens of benefits for its members.

Membership will cost you less than 5 pence a day!

## FITNESS SESSIONS FOR ALL

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LOOKING TO LOSE WEIGHT, GET FITTER, OR BOTH ?

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Carlton Club,  
868 Gladless Road, Sheffield. S12 2QF



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Towel

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(if you have one)  
Water Bottle

A positive attitude

### WHAT TO EXPECT

A warm welcome

No swanky gym, wear what you want

Achieve YOUR fitness goals

Training advice

### MORE INFO?

Contact Andy Hogg :  
07785 536261  
hoggref@gmail.com  
@hoggref

# VOLUNTEERS

## WHERE WOULD REFEREES BE WITHOUT THEM?

In terms of football other than at the very top level, our national game would be at best in a very sad state and at worst non-existent without a *huge* army of volunteers.

*In fact, let us be more to the point for those who read “BENCHMARK” --*  
**Where would we be in refereeing without a huge number of volunteers?**

We value and respect those brave souls who VOLUNTEER to referee when there is no qualified official available. They surely go a long way to being included in the category of ‘the salt of the earth’.

People sometimes tell me that if you receive a fee for your work, then you are not a volunteer. That may well be true if you are talking of ‘*at the point of issue*’, but what a lot of people fail to acknowledge is that **everyone who receives a fee for their contribution to refereeing was originally a volunteer**. Nobody at all *forced* them get involved in refereeing. If they hadn’t volunteered to become involved in the first place, they would never have become referees. They would never have become instructors. They would never have become society officers. They would not have served at county-level, or a national level. Why? Simply because **it was only by volunteering to even try to qualify as a referee that the various stairways to success eventually became available to them**.

Some people have told me that people like *Howard Webb, Craig Pawson, Darren England* and Tom *Bramall*, to name just four of our own County’s top referees in recent years, should be financially secure because of their high match-fees. True enough at least for the present, but one day in the past, they and many others took the first *voluntary* step towards become referees. As the old Chinese proverb says, “*Every walk of a thousand miles begins with one step.*”

The underlying statement is true, if you go back to basics --- **‘no volunteers’ means ‘no referees’!**

Have you ever thought about the many hours of selfless voluntary work that a lot of people put in to make your own referees' society a competent and respected organisation?

Have you ever experienced those days that from time to time blight all societies --- too much apathy? If so, how did your society drag itself out of the doldrums? Simply by having someone around to volunteer and put in a solid effort to help others! Did YOU volunteer, or did you leave it to someone else?

*One of your great acts of volunteering, in certain circumstances, could simply be to persuade those who are 'takers' and not 'givers' to become 'givers'.*

**The Referees' Association** is a tremendous force for the good of all referees who care ---and that means '**volunteer**' to join its ranks. For a few pounds a year, can any referee worthy of the name really be doing his very best for the game we all love by not joining the RA?

I, for one, very seriously doubt it. **How many non-members do YOU encourage to join our ranks?**

**GET INVOLVED! GET INTO HELPING OTHERS! GET ACTIVE IN THE VERY BEST SENSE! GET LOTS OF PLEASURE FROM YOUR REFEREE INVOLVEMENT.**

**GET VOLUNTEERING!**



**ADVICE IS AVAILABLE VIA THE REFEREES' ASSOCIATION**

**LEE MARKWICK** of Essex, an avid RA Member, gave a valuable presentation immediately after the close of the National RA AGM last summer. He pointed out that all kinds of advice were available to members, including matters concerning '*legal journeys*', which were not always pleasant.

There may be a need for psychological support, which could involve professionals. Lee willingly arranges matters like this, if they are

necessary. Sometimes there may be conflicts of interest between certain bodies within the game, about which he will offer very useful advice.

Referees can find themselves implicated in charges brought by the FA or the County FA, and here again, Lee Markwick could well be a useful contact to ease the way forward.

***He advises that social media can easily become a 'minefield'. On Facebook, for instance, it is easy to click 'LIKE'. Does doing that mean that you just like what you have read, or does it perhaps imply that you agree with the comment? Any use of comments on social media by referees must be carefully considered before they are posted. Indeed, do they really need to be posted?***

The RA Welfare Board has developed seven major points for consideration, so perhaps using one per month for a season might make sense for any local society in discussion time. As you might expect, Lee Markwick is a RA Qualified Welfare Officer, a role which he recommends for Societies and County RAs.

**CONTACT THE RA OFFICE IF YOU SEEK FURTHER ADVICE ON THESE MATTERS**



**MAKE SURE THAT ENJOYMENT IS ALWAYS YOUR TOP REFEREEING PRIORITY EVERY SEASON. ENJOYMENT, ALONG WITH COURTESY AND A POSITIVE AND DETERMINED ATTITUDE WILL ALWAYS HELP YOUR PROMOTION PROSPECTS.**

**WHEN REFEREEING, ALWAYS EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED!**

FOLLOW THE ADVICE OF THE REFEREES' ASSOCIATION AT ALL TIMES

# RA Development Weekend 2019

6th and 7th July  
De Vere Horwood Estate  
Mursley Road, Milton Keynes  
MK17 0PH

Practical Sessions take place  
6th July at Mursley FC, MK17 0SA



