

FLAG & WHISTLE



Official publication of the B.C. Soccer Referees Association

Winter 2006

World Cup FIFA official to speak in Vancouver Area, February 17th

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Christmas is a family time of year. As we enter the season I hope everyone is able to re-acquaint themselves with family and friends that we didn't quite get a chance to do so earlier in the calendar year. The fun that comes from sharing laughs and telling of stories only furthers the bonds between us. This there can be no doubt.

Is refereeing not then also a family affair? Of course it is and the Referees Association is the refereeing family's home.

Pier-Luigi Collina, the Italian FIFA referee who was in charge of the 2002 World Cup Final, in his book "The Rules of the Game", had this to say about his own experience in the Bologna branch of the Italian Referees Association (AIA):

"...By hosting referees' informal meetings, the branch transforms itself into a club and becomes something more than the place where technical meetings take place...Aside from these official meetings, almost all of the branches (cont'd on pg8)

What's inside:

-Long & Meritorious Service

-Ref Association members appointed to 2007 FIFA list.

-Retention & Recruitment

-Know Your Member

NOTE: Due to the number of articles a supplemental issue is being planned. Stay tuned!

Hector Vergara to be guest speaker at Canadian Soccer Referees Association AGM.

Members may reserve their spot by contacting one of the following people:

Via email; Robin Woods: rlwoods@shaw.ca

Via phone; Richard Brownie 604-591-7621.

Hector Vergara, Canadian FIFA Assistant Referee who was appointed to the past two World Cups in 2002 and 2006, will be the guest speaker at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Soccer Referees Association (CSRA) on Saturday, February 17th. Hector will be speaking about his experiences from the past World Cup with time allowed for questions and answers.

The venue will be the Holiday Inn North Vancouver, 700 Lillooet Rd. in North Vancouver. Space is limited for the event which will be open to all Referee Association members. Priority seating will be given to Referee Association members only until January 19, 2007.

Non-members will be allowed in for a \$10 charge. A hospitality night in which Hector will also be attending will occur in the Churchill Lounge of the hotel on the night of February 16th.

All members wishing to attend are asked to reserve their spots using the contacts listed above.

By a vote of Council at the recent Fall Council Meeting of the Referees Association in November, agreement was reached to host the event after CSRA executive's plans to hold the meeting in Newfoundland fell through at the last moment.

Who is Hector Vergara?



Canadian FIFA AR Referee from Manitoba

Major appointments included:

2006 World Cup. Five appointments including Semi-Final: Italy v Germany.

2002 World Cup. Had five appointments including:
3rd Place Match: Turkey v S. Korea
Quarter-final: England v Brazil

2004 Olympic Games in Athens

Assistant Referee: 2003 CONCACAF Gold Cup Final

BCSRA NEWSLETTER



TOM REAKES SELECTED AS NEWEST LONG & MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENT

By a unanimous vote at the recent Referees Association's Fall Council meeting, Tom Reakes was selected as the latest recipient of the Association's Long and Meritorious Service Award.

First awarded in 1989, Tom becomes the 8th member to be honoured by the society with this distinction. Tom has had a storied career which spans over 30 years and almost the entire existence of the association itself.

Tom will feted in front of his peers at the Association's upcoming Spring Council Meeting in Victoria in early May. Congratulations to Tom on an honour well deserved!

Tom Reakes Curriculum Vitae

- Became a "Juvenile" (ie Youth or Class 4) referee in 1970.
- Earned Class 1 in 1980.
- Qualified as Provincial Instructor in 1980 and Provincial Assesor in 1982 (stepped down from active service in 2006).
- Elected as Life Member of Fraser Valley Area Association (FVSRA) of the Referees Association
- Selected as 1995 ICBC Referee of the Year .
- Past member of BC Soccer Education Sub-Committee
- Former Head Referee of Golden Ears Soccer Club (honoured this year with their Long & Meritorious Service Award).

YOUNGER MEMBERS TO RECIEVE DISCOUNT ON MEMBERSHIP FEES

To remove a potential disincentive amongst younger officials to join the Referees Association , Council agreed at the recent Fall Council Meeting held in Richmond on November 18th to incorporate a graduated fee structure for younger members who are upgraded from Class 4 to Class 3 . The structure will see incremental rises in fee for younger members, starting at the U-18 level, until with age they reach the full fee for Class 3 or higher referees for either Direct or Area Association membership as the case may be. This will come into affect starting the 2007-2008 fiscal year-April 1,2007. Details to be sent out in due course.

For the first time in history there are Class 3 referees who are still in high school. With increase the number of Class 3 referees in coming years, concern was raised over the steep jump from Class 4 registration/RA membership to Class 3 - an increase of over 180% upon being upgraded. Based on the latest BC Soccer list of November 17th, approximately four hundred Class 4 officials exist in the coastal region alone that could become Class 3 officials in the next three years.

Past Long & Meritorious Service award recipients

- 1989: John Meachin/John W.A. Morris (joint recipients)
- 1993: Norm Colclough
- 1999: Bob Sawtell
- 2001: Ed Hipse/Hans Clodius (joint recipients).
- 2005: Len Bridgeman

FOUR MEMBERS APPOINTED TO 2007 FIFA LIST

The CSA has announced the Canadian officials appointed to the 2007 International List as approved by FIFA, the world governing body. Joining the list for the first time are members Michelle Pye and Paul Ward whose names will appear on the Women's and Men's List of Referees respectively. Re-appointed to the Referee's List again was member Mauricio Navarro and member Simon Fearn who was re-appointed to the Assistant Referee's List.

The Referees Association congratulates all members on their appointments.

MEMBERS APPOINTED TO INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLY

Members Mauricio Navarro and Simon Fearn will be part of a Canadian crew going to Los Angeles to officiate the international friendly on January 20th between Denmark and USA. The crew which includes Canadian Assistant Referee and World Cup official Hector Vergara.

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SPRING COUNCIL AND AGM TO BE HELD IN VICTORIA, MAY 5th or 12th, 2007

The next meeting of Council will be held on either the first or second Saturday in May, pending the scheduling of Provincial Cup matches.

Following Table Officer positions are up for election (all 2 year terms):
Vice-President and Treasurer/Registrar

Following Area Association-appointed positions are up for ratification: Fraser Valley and Vancouver Island.

All members interested in running for either Table Officer position should contact one of the following members of the Nomination Committee:
Hans Clodius (email: iclodius@shaw.ca or 604-592-5402)
Fred Linz (lyku@shaw.ca or 604)

MEMBERS' NEW ADDITIONS...

The Flag & Whistle would like to congratulate the following members on their new additions to their families:

Andy Foster (VISRA) and wife Alyssa Collister welcomed a new baby girl on November 10th. Baby Charlise came in at 9lb 4oz.

Provincial VP Suzanne Flannigan came back recently from Lethbridge and announced she officially became a grandmother with the birth her grandson!

Area Association Reports (from Referee Association Fall Council Meeting on November 18, 2006

FVSRA - Volunteers have been contacting non renewers. A league in Chilliwack has affiliated with BCSA which will provide more games for members. The Executive looking to the area youth leagues to provide a venue for referee education where volunteer members can conduct education sessions at the local clubs.

KSRA - Apologies were received that reps would not be able to give a report.

PGSRA - ongoing work with the local youth clubs to provide education, identify up and coming youth referees and obtain appointments for them as assistant referees where they can be mentored and gain experience.

VASRA - Monthly meetings have been well attended in general. Holding the education session first and covering administrative matters second has helped to attract a group of young referees who attend regularly and participate with interest. VASRA volunteers are active as Head Referee in Richmond, and RRC - North Shore.. The VASRA Christmas party will be held at 6:30PM on December 9, 2006 at Lochdale Hall, 490 Sperling @ Hastings.

VISRA - The season gotten off to a good start with one challenge being to find fit fields due to the rain. Turnout for monthly meetings and education sessions is good. The quality of the up and coming youth refs is quite good. A mentoring program with the Y League has been very successful and provides help and advice to the young referees and assistant referees.

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RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

A Summary of the Discussion at the 2006 Annual BCSRA Fall Council Meeting

Suzanne L. Flannigan, BCSRA V. President

The following is a summary of the discussion held at the recent Fall Council Meeting of the Association. Members are asked to keep in mind this will be an ongoing topic for action at all future Council Meeting.

Introduction

Recruitment and retention are two priorities that the British Columbia Soccer Referee Association (BCSRA) has deemed to be critical to the future growth and development of soccer referees in British Columbia. As such, at the 2006 Annual Fall Council meeting, the attendees dedicated time to a discussion of recruitment and retention. The focus of the discussion was threefold: to look at what is currently being done around the province in terms of recruitment and retention, to comment on the challenges inherent in the current activities and as a result of the comments to provide suggestions for future alternatives to increase recruitment and improve retention. The following article provides an overview of the discussion (which focused significantly on younger referees) and ends with a warm thank you to all of those individuals who contributed their insights to the conversation.

Current Recruitment and Retention Activities

The following section summarizes in a thematic way, the variety of activities that different associations around the province are undertaking. While each association retains its own unique personality and focus in its recruitment and retention activities, the Annual Fall Council meeting did highlight the fact that every association engages in one or more forms of recruitment and retention.

In terms of recruitment, a key theme that emerged was the identification of young, potential referees. Whether it was referees, club administrators, parents or others who encouraged youngsters to begin refereeing, it was clear that there are people in our soccer communities who endeavor to encourage young people to try refereeing. Youngsters are encouraged to take their class 5 and begin refereeing within their soccer clubs. Once involved, kids are encouraged to progress to their class 4 and eventually class 3 status. Some area associations will identify and champion small groups of young referees who display noticeable potential.

Many comments about mentorship complemented this theme, including the notion that whenever young referees have a 'champion' or a mentor or even a senior referee present at a game, they seem to be more aware of and more involved in the game. Young referees who know they are being watched tend to carry out their duties "more crisply" and with more 'accountability'.

When a senior referee champions or mentors a young referee, the young referee's development can become much more effective. For example, when a senior referee identifies a young referee with potential this helps both the young referee and the senior referee focus their attention on devel-

opment. The senior referee can intentionally work with the youngster and the scheduler on a developmental plan for the young referee.

Having a scheduler who is aware of individual referee talent also helps to keep young referees interested by giving them access to more challenging game situations. In some cases, there are opportunities to run lines on senior games or participate as fourth officials at college or premier level games where young referees can see senior referees in action and can participate in the pre- and post-game debriefings. As young referees become more comfortable running lines on senior games, they are given more challenging games at their own levels.

Also, education plays a significant role in the retention of young referees. Although a significant challenge as discussed below, when education can be delivered to the young referees in forms that they understand and relate to, these referees gain invaluable knowledge that can help them to deal with on and off field challenges. Standardization sessions are another retention tool for young referees. When they have occasional informal assessments which are benchmarked against annual standards, they have access to feedback on their performance in a non-stressful situation.

Current Challenges

A common recruitment and retention challenge is the fact that kids take up refereeing because they believe they can make money. While they do make money, it is often not as much as they thought it would be and, when they are faced with difficult situations on the field, the monetary motivation is not enough to keep them coming back.

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Another significant challenge facing many young referees is geographic in nature. Young referees who cannot drive need their parents to drive them to games and to referee association meetings. When parents and kids are faced with a choice, kids often make it to the games, but often not to meetings. Furthermore, a reality of the situation is that games involve payment and occur on weekends when parents are generally not working while association meetings do not involve payment, generally occur during the week when it is more difficult for parents to drive and often include a business agenda which can be very dull for a youngster to sit through.

A third challenge is the sheer amount of choice that youngsters have these days in terms of the activities they access. Many referees still play soccer, are involved in other school-related activities and may even have other part-time jobs. Given the vast number of opportunities, refereeing can often end up on the bottom of the priority list.

A final recruitment and retention challenge is what appears to be the lack of accountability among young referees. It would appear that some youngsters are keen to do a good job, while some seem to be lost on the field, not quite understanding the game or the laws, and not appearing to care about how they perform their duties. When this is combined with the shortage of referees, the unfortunate reality is that for a scheduler any referee is better than no referee. Sadly, this action can often negatively affect the game and the young referee's experience.

Future Directions

As a result of hearing the comments at the Annual Fall Council meeting, we can come to the following conclusions. Human connection seems to be a key factor in successful recruitment and retention activities. When individuals feel that there is someone championing their activities, helping them understand the bigger picture, being honest with them about their strengths and their shortcomings, and caring about their successes and failures, these individuals usually develop

a greater sense of accountability. Their accountability is no longer just to themselves, but also to their champion or their mentor. And, when they are involved with a group of individuals led by a champion or a mentor, they also become accountable to the group.

Left to their own devices, young referees will participate only so long as it serves any one or more of the following: themselves, their parents, their friends, and/or their peers. Connected to a champion, a mentor and/or a group, young referees often find reasons beyond their own needs to stay involved with refereeing.

While young referees may not seem to have the same degree of personal accountability that older, more seasoned and senior referees may have, these young referees may simply be looking for role models—someone to look up to and to aspire to be like. Therefore, a passion and a respect for the game is also part of the recruitment and retention process. Every referee who steps onto a field to ref a game should communicate in his or her demeanor a strong sense of respect for the game. He or she is on the field to maintain fair play and good competition and should therefore always carry out his or her duties with dignity and professionalism. In this way, players, coaches, fans and future referees see that the referee's role is not only significant, but pivotal to the future of the game.

What the above comments suggest is that we might consider youth referee-centric groups within our referee's society-groups whose sole mandate is to recruit and to retain and to develop younger referees. Involved in this process could be parents, schedulers, senior referees and sponsors, every one of which is interested not in the players, but in the development of the referees. This would address geographic issues, competing activity interests, and future ambitions of young referees. Our association could also develop one-on-one mentorship programs, group mentorship and coaching programs as well as champion programs wherein senior referees and soccer administrators advocate for youth referees. While not the only solution, this does recognize the young referee as different from seasoned and older referees who have different recruitment and retention issues.

Conclusion

Although by no means exhaustive, the intent of this article was to provide a brief summary of the thoughts of those who participated in the Annual Fall Council Meeting. The aim was to bring to light some of the recruitment and retention activities that are ongoing, to highlight some of the challenges that face young referees and as a result of the comments to present some thoughts on future directions. It was also to say thank you to all of the participants who shared their thoughts at the meeting and who reinforced that fundamentally, recruitment and retention are about meaning. (cont'd pg 6).

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KNOW YOUR MEMBER



Name: John Visser (affiliated with FVSRA)

Resident of: Coquitlam, north east sector.

Number of years refereeing: I am not a master yet, so, I still on occasion ask myself, "Why am I putting myself through this?" 4 years in Soccer though I have refereed about 20 Rugby Union matches

and spent 2 seasons refereeing on the hardwood, officiating Y.M.C.A. Junior Grizzlies Basketball. 3 & 4 combined).

Most memorable moment and advice to those starting refereeing (run together): I was running lines for the B.C. High School Boys Provincials two weeks ago. One A/R opted out for the 3rd/4th place game and I replaced him. I got to watch Arnar Bernhardtsson, who was just requested to run the middle. Arnar is a National level referee who teaches in Kelowna and was down with the boys team for the finals. He was always in the right place! And I never saw him arrive! He just moved almost effortlessly through the players to where he needed to be. Amazing really. I have been to Whitecaps games and watched a lot of soccer on T.V. but this was my first exposure to what how a top-notch referee looks and acts.

This is important because 2 days earlier I received "considerate and sensitive" feedback from Mr. Neil Ellett, Referee Assessor and Secretary of the Assessment Committee. It was a reminder that referees are paid professionals who must be prepared to do the best that they can for that contest. That, while mistakes happen, every effort must be made to eliminate them. That good habits takes work, to improve as an individual and so improve the sport.

RETENTION (from pg5)

People are inspired to become involved and to remain involved with activities in which they find meaning that transcends their own lives. While they may not be able to verbalize the connection, they do know that they remain for reasons that are bigger than themselves. We need only ask our senior referees why they have refereed for more than 30 years, or why they have worked so hard and aspired to the highest levels they could achieve to know that it had little to do with the money or the aggravation on the field and much, much more to do with fair play and the love of the game.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER (from pg1) have recreational activities from card games to dinners - all of which brings cohesion to the group and gives each referee a sense of being part of a larger society.

"And now, years later, I can confirm that many of the friendships born back then in the branch, continue today."

How can you argue with someone who has refereed the World Cup final?

This bonding does not come out of thin air. Only hard work will create a warm atmosphere in our abode and a culture of "it's fun/cool/neat/awesome to be a referee." We can't leave the job to any government or regulating body to create this - it's our home and culture and we alone create it. We need to reach out to each other and welcome our fellow colleague, despite our differences of opinions on the Laws and refereeing mechanics, into the fold, encourage them to come to gatherings of our clan at our home. Don't let shyness stop us- we can't be shy on the field so how can we be shy about making the effort to "go home" to meet up with our fellow colleagues?

In closing, I wish each of you a Happy New Year, the year of the 2007 FIFA U-20s.

Sincerely,
Elvio Chies, President

Flag and Whistle- BCSRA Newsletter

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The material presented is from contributors and the BCSRA assumes no responsibility for their contents.

All submissions may be edited for reasons of clarity, brevity and taste.

Thank you to all who've contributed articles and apologies to those whose submissions never made it in this edition.