

FLAG & WHISTLE

Official publication of the B.C. Soccer Referees Association
Winter 2006 Supplemental



Members feted at BC Soccer Awards Banquet

The annual celebration that is the BC Soccer Association Awards Banquet saw 4 members honoured in front of the soccer community on Saturday, January 20, 2007 at the Delta Hotel's Airport Inn in Richmond. Receiving honours were the following members:

Senior Referee of the Year:
Robin Woods.

Youth Referee of the Year:
Natasha Smith.

Aubrey Sanford Award for Lifetime Contribution to Soccer:
Bob Allen.

In addition, Referee Association President Elvio Chies was presented with the BC Soccer Board of Director's Referee Award. The Flag & Whistle congratulates all members on their achievement!

Last call for Hector Vergara Symposium on Saturday, February 17th.

Those members wishing to attend attend the presentation by Canadian FIFA Assistant and World Cup Official Hector Vergara should make their wishes known by reserving their spot by contacting one of the following people:

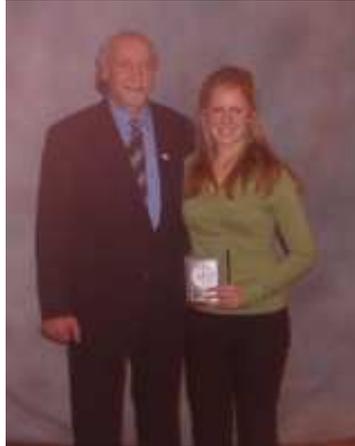
Via email to Robin Woods:
rlwoods@shaw.ca
Via phone to Richard Brownie
604-591-7621.

What's inside:

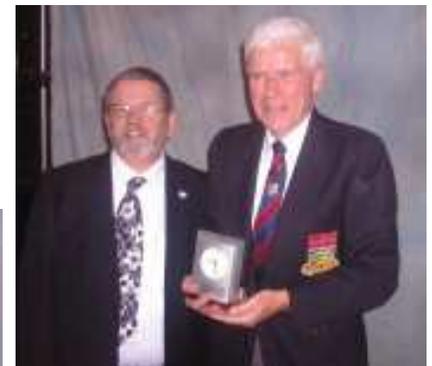
-Retention & Recruitment by Aussie Rules!

-Refs out to stop cheats

-Rule change...



Above: RA member Natasha Smith is presented with the BC Soccer Youth Official of the Year from BC Soccer Director Charlie Cuzzetto.



Above: Accepting the award for Senior Official of the Year is Robin Woods(right in photo). The honour was bestowed to Robin by BC Soccer and RA member Rob Lennox(left).



Photo Left: BC Soccer VP Ken McKenzie presents RA member Bob Allen with the Aubrey Sanford Award.

Photo Right: RA President Elvio Chies is presented with the BC Soccer Board of Directors Referee Award by Director Don Dancey.



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RETENTION & RECRUITMENT BY AUSSIE RULES!

or “Why Do So Many Class 5 Referees give up before they get past two years?” by Nick Hawley

Ed note: Nick Hawley is a member who lives in North Vancouver and is involved with referees at the very start of the refereeing ladder-Class 5. Here, he presents his observations and those he has gleaned from colleagues in Australia. This article was initially intended to compliment the Retention and Recruitment Summary in the previous issue but was delayed for lack of space. It is also presented in the spirit of “food for thought”.

I have spent the past 6 years mentoring and supporting the class five referees on the North Shore who officiate our mini soccer games. We run a “referee club” every couple of months where we discuss the laws of the game and problems they are having, we send senior referees out to mentor them at their games - providing feedback at each break, we make one on one phone calls to discuss problems they have had at games and we have established a discipline system which ensures that the coaches are punished if they are disrespectful to the young refs. But we still lose half of them after two years and the half of what remains when they get promoted up to U11 games. Why are they leaving?

One problem is that with 150 class 5 referees trained every year on the North Shore and 300 working in mini soccer, we cannot mentor a referee more than once and we can only get to 60 or so a year. The findings of the mentors are that despite having done the course, most young referees have not retained more than 10 percent of what they were taught. After the first feedback we see a massive improvement in over 50%, but often we are only able to work on the basics - this does not prepare them for U10 and off sides etc. Another problem is their lack of understanding that to be a referee you need to constantly review and train - the general response to being invited to a ref club meeting is “why should I? I have done my course”.

The one on one feedback works well - but again, we probably only hear from 1 in 25 instances that need feedback. The discipline system is working well with the coaches that are reported. However, we know that most young referees would rather give up refereeing than report an adult.

This year we made a change in policy on the North Shore - all new class five referees will be used as ARs for U16 - U18 games. This way they get to work with and watch a senior referee. A large amount of support is required from the senior referee - a good pre-match, a debriefing at the half and again after the game. In addition the referee must be aware of any heckling the AR may be getting from the sidelines and must deal with it immediately. The senior referee must be able to make all the calls - ie not rely on a green AR for the offside call for the first few occasions.

After the young referee has taken AR duties, we allow them to take mini-soccer assignments if they wish. Note that a mini-soccer assignment means that the 12 year old is in the middle of the game, surrounded by 30 adults and expected to “do their job” whether or not they have ever done it before. This brings

me to my final point - what use is a class five certification? It does not cover offsides - so theoretically is no use for training assistant referees. It does not differentiate between direct and indirect free kicks - so is no use for U11. It only gives 8 hours classroom training so does not have time to reinforce the teachings and the students are generally 12 year olds who have trouble remembering all they are being told. To be frank - any one of the adults around the edge of the mini-soccer game could manage the game in a way that keeps the players safe and having fun. The referee should only be there for their own education.

I recently entered into a correspondence with a referee in Australia who runs a training program for class five referees in Australia - this is what his program does:

“The association I belong to operate(sic) a system very similar to your ‘Class 5’ referee set up, for 12 and 13yos. They are trained similarly to yours and then let loose on the non-competition games (U6-U9). However, that’s only the beginning. Our branch has about 50 senior referees (over 18), 40 juniors (14-18) and 10 cadets. (See “AUSSIE RULES” on pg 4)

Errata...

In the Winter 2006 issue a mention was made in the “Know Your Member” column referring to BCSA Assessment Committee Secretary Neil Ellett. Although Mr. Ellett is still a BC Soccer-certified assessor the Assessment portfolio is currently being reviewed by the BCSoccer Referee Development Committee under the guidance of Committee member Roy Branco.

Rule change would reduce injury time

(from The Telegraph's website www.telegraph.co.uk)

By Graham Taylor Last Updated: 12:50am GMT 20/01/2007

Players, managers and referees are discussing a change of law to prevent out-field players feigning injury resulting in the game being stopped unnecessarily to allow the player to be "treated".

The idea being floated is that football should follow the example set by rugby, where the physiotherapist enters the field to treat the player while play continues. In this way a team's physio can decide whether an injury is serious enough to warrant the player leaving the pitch.

Personally, I think that this has great merit. If it can be thought through carefully, then the least I would hope is that the International Football Association Board would recommend to Fifa that a trial season be held in professional football in this country.

I think we have all become sick and tired of the player who goes to floor as if pole-axed, rolls for 15 yards in agony, has the game stopped, receives 30 seconds of treatment, and then sprints full out for the next pass.

Now what I will say in defence of some players is that the initial contact can be extremely painful, but that without treatment it can – and often does – wear off very quickly.

It is difficult for a referee to decide whether a player needs treatment or not. He is not medically qualified and therefore it is usually best to play safe, stop the game and summon the physiotherapist.

There are players who cheat – there really is no other word for it – but if the law was changed, or a new one introduced, they would gain nothing by their actions. Their team would be down to 10 men while they received treatment, so it would not be in their interest to feign injury, and spectators reactions to an injured player would be much more sympathetic than they are now.

In rugby it is interesting how players are sometimes treated on the pitch as play continues (see "RULE" pg 5)

Referees out to stop the cheats

(from The Telegraphs' website www.telegraph.co.uk)

By Henry Winter Last Updated: 12:50am GMT 20/01/2007

Players, managers and referees are to discuss a radical new idea to speed up matches by allowing physiotherapists on to the field to treat injuries without play being stopped. Already deployed successfully in rugby union and league, the rule would address some of the time-wasting and gamesmanship currently scarring football.

No need to stop? In the future referees could just wave play on while the player is being treated "It's a good idea, and worthy of debate," said Keith Hackett, the general manager of the Professional Game Match Officials Limited, yesterday. "I will bring it in front of the technical committee when we meet in two weeks."

The debate is particularly pertinent after a World Cup that was ruined for many people by the frequency of faked injuries. Empty seats in the Premiership are being put down to supporters' frustration at simulation, as well as high ticket prices. If the proposal finds favour among Hackett's elite referees, the Professional Footballers' Association and League Managers' Association in their forthcoming get-together, the idea will then go before the Football Association referees' committee.

If approved by the governing body, the proposition would be presented to the law-makers of the International Football Association Board at their annual gathering being hosted by the FA in Manchester in March. The reaction of Fifa's president, Sepp Blatter, a driving force behind the campaign for "fair play", may be key to the "good idea" becoming established law. Blatter will be present in Manchester.

Another rule used in rugby, blood substitutes, will also be debated by Hackett's officials and representatives of the PFA and LMA with the possibility of eventually becoming law. The managers are particularly keen on this proposal as it would allow teams to remain at full strength while a player is being stitched up.

But it is the plan to carry on playing while a footballer either hobbles to the touchline, or is treated on the field, that will arouse most interest. Many people in football are concerned about the decreasing amount of time that the ball is in play nowadays, currently down to 25 minutes a half in stop-start Premiership games.

It is hoped that the new rule being considered by the PGMOL technical committee would cut out players feigning injury to waste time or take the momentum out of an opponents' attack. Referees often have to stop play to check whether a player is injured. After cursory attention from the physio, the player jumps up and sprints back on, much to the opposing fans' anger.

The carry-on-playing rule would take the onus off referees having to weigh up how injured a player might be; physios would just sprint on to attend the "injured" party and work overtime to get a player to rejoin his depleted colleagues. Although players are now not supposed to kick the ball out to allow a physio on, (see "CHEATS" on pg 5)

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AUSSIE RULES (from pg 2)

We have a dedicated 'Cadet' team who look after these younger members. The cadets are clearly identified by their fluoro yellow referee shirts and each club knows that these are cadets.

The Cadets are given centres and generally will have a more senior referee with them on their first few weeks on the field. This is followed up by inspections by the cadet team. In addition, they are encouraged to train with the rest of the association on a weekly basis. Here they will gain valuable experience as 'proper' referees as well as having some break out sessions of their own. Each referee in the Branch is encouraged to chat to any cadets they see and spend some time observing their game and providing positive and constructive feedback. If there are any major issues, then these will be brought up with the cadet team or the Director of Coaching.

Are these cadets ready to run lines? No, I don't think so; not in their first year. But I have to say, the kids that stick with a couple of years of the cadet program make good junior referees. They have to sit through the whole training required for a Class 4 referee (under 18) and again do a field test at the beginning of the season. But after a year or two of training, learning the nuances of being on the field and dealing with parents and coaches, they really make outstanding young referees.

Would I want a cadet on my line? No, they simply aren't equipped to understand the off- side law or correctly identify the type of fouls that older players get up to. But would I want them on my line once they finish their Class 4? You bet!! They are disciplined, well trained and confident.

The weekly training sessions are run by our Director of Coaching. The sessions run for 2 hours. The DOC will generally have one of the older or more experienced guys helping out here so he can call aside each ref and talk thru any issues he sees. For the major issues he will wait until half way through the exercise, explain the issues he sees and then get us going again.

The last 30 minutes or so is a technical indoor session. We may watch a video of a recent game and discuss the refereeing. We may watch a FIFA training video. Each week is mapped and builds on the week before. We cover things like the hierarchy of disciplines, what is the difference between careless, reckless and excessive force etc. Lastly, we cover off any issues we may have encountered or seen in the previous week's games. "

So to answer the question posed above – "why do so many class five referees give up"? In my opinion the answer is two fold. But first I will say what it is not - I do not believe that these young people leave because of harassment and abuse. As we have reduced the amount of abuse on the North Shore, the level of atrophy has not reduced at all. In fact it increased when we insisted that these young refs only spend two years in mini-soccer and then must go up to U11, they did not want to progress.

I believe that we give these young refs false expectations. Our approach to train more and more, to allow for atrophy means we are taking on kids who do not understand what being a referee means. They have no understanding of the commitment, nor do they have the dream of becoming a FIFA referee one day. Generally, they just heard it was a good way of making \$45 in a weekend. The more we take on, the less time we can spend training, mentoring and coaching them. With less support, they will never see the mistakes they are making and so never work out how to improve and get enjoyment from refereeing. The Australian example shows how, with a small number of "cadets" you only need a small number of seniors to help them through.

The Australian example also talks of attending weekly training sessions – compare that to the lack of attendance we get at our bimonthly ref clubs. It's obvious they have selected the keeners, youths who see they can achieve a lot from being a good referee, who see the challenges and are prepared to work their way up. Referees who enjoy learning from others at training sessions and who are proud of their abilities. Youth who are worth spending a lot of time on. We need to make it clear, before accepting their registration money, that they are expected to attend regular meetings, undergo training, work as ARs to learn the job, pass a refresher each year and upgrade to class 4 as soon as they turn 14. If they don't they should not be used by the leagues.

Finally we need to ensure that the clubs and districts are aligned with our principles. If they aren't, then they will continue to hire anyone to do any match – regardless of their skill, their knowledge of the laws and training. And while youths that refuse to train, to improve and to wear the uniform are offered payment for standing in the centre and watching a game; any attempt to initiate a more professional system will be totally undermined. That means that a) more players will get injured, b) referee's reputation will suffer and c) we will not have sufficient referees taking Class four, three, two and one training.

**KNOW YOUR MEMBER
WILL RETURN NEXT ISSUE**

CHEATS (from pg 3)

they still endure the wrath of fans when desisting. The new rule would take the heat out of the situation.

The technical committee comprises senior figures at the LMA, like John Barnwell and John Duncan, and at the PFA like Mick McGuire. Also involved are leading lights from the refereeing world, David Elleray, Ray Lewis and Neale Barry, the FA's head of senior referee development, as well as Hackett.

Many aspects of the new rule require careful thought by the technical committee, the FA and IFAB, such as the enduring need to stop play for injuries to goalkeepers or to anyone in the penalty areas. If the injury was serious, the physio would signal to officials that a stretcher was required, and only then would play be halted.

One obvious concern is that the ball could hit the physio or prone player, though rugby union and league sides manage to avoid such incidents. Much would also depend on the integrity of the physios not impeding opponents when running on (one referee confided yesterday that he feared some clubs could pull such a stunt). To avoid offside controversies, the "injured" player would still be required to return to action from the halfway line.

Hackett's technical committee has proved a good launch-pad for some of the game's improvements. The better behaviour of Didier Drogba and Cristiano Ronaldo has partly been credited to the technical committee, which voiced officials' concerns about the players' diving to managers and the players' union. Hackett's technical committee has also been involved in easing tensions between managers and fourth officials, who have toned down their fussy approach to policing technical areas.

RULE (from pg 3)

and I see no reason why that should not happen in football. The ball would be in play much longer and the annoying habit of players deliberately looking to waste time by going to ground would be ended.

Apart from injured goalkeepers, the referees would no longer have to be concerned about adding injury time at the end of each half and I do believe it would give the game a much cleaner image.

More than that it, would show that the authorities really have the good of the game at heart and appreciate the frustration that thousands of fans, whether they are at the game, watching on television, or listening to the radio, feel when they know that a so-called injured player has conned them all.

This has to be a step in the right direction and I hope the discussions lead to changes. There should be nothing to be gained by feigning injury, and this alteration to the law should help to achieve that.

EDITORIAL DEADLINE FOR SPRING 2007 ISSUE IS MARCH 21st

COMING NEXT ISSUE:

-HECTOR VERGARA SPEAKS IN BC.

-TOM (Staff Writer Babic) SPEAKS

-CHRISTMAS TREAT IN ENGLAND

NEXT ISSUE READY FOR DISTRIBUTION APRIL 1st (NO FOOLING!)

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.