

FLAG & WHISTLE

Official Newsletter of the BC Soccer Referees Association August 2013



Beach Blast August 9-11



Some of the referees in this year's event: Back Row (L-R): Art Duran, Eckhart Bodenbach, George Tweedlie, Iain Andrews, Joaquim Hurtado-Gomez, Cory Strohan, Ron Schaeffer, Marc Bowley. Kneeling (L-R): Iain McHugh, Mladen Herceg, Kathrine Louman-Gardiner, Antonio Hurtado-Coll, Chantelle Schwartz, Ron Hilder. Sliding into home in front: Elvio Chies

More on pages 2-3

The skyscrapers of downtown Vancouver gleamed under the summer sun in the distance. The mountains, dark shadows on the horizon. The waves, slapped gently against the sandy beach. The birds chirped joyfully, or rather, they did until an Air Horn followed by a cacophony of whistles shattered the morning peace. Welcome to Beach Blast.

Over the course of the weekend hundreds of players, as young as nine years old, kicked off at Spanish Banks for the

17th Annual Beach Blast Tournament, Canada's largest beach soccer event.

The Beach Blast is all about fun. Teams even chose to dress up with a theme. This year we had one walking around with sombreros, maracas and ponchos despite the heat. Of course the fun wasn't limited to the player, inside the officials tent the mood was light.

For many of those present it's as much of a social gathering as a tournament. Officials from all over the Vancouver area

aging 12 to prehistoric, gather at this event for a weekend of fun on the beach.

Even a brief delay due to thunderstorms couldn't dampen anyone's spirits (in fact, some officials even took it in stride, begging like small children to resume play, and then moving faster than even the lightning from a few minutes before to beat everyone back on to the playing fields.) All in all it was a great weekend, and I'm already looking forward to next year.

Chantelle Schwartz

Beach Blast a Success Story

This year's Beach Soccer Blast, the annual fundraiser for the Vancouver Area branch (VASRA) of the BCSRA, saw two big firsts. As President and main Referee Organizer **Marc Bowley** said, "It was an electrifying Sunday!"

The reason: the tournament saw a short spell of thunder and lightning! The Sunday portion of the tournament was suspended for about 15 minutes by Marc Bowley due to those weather conditions ... another first.

All in all, there was great camaraderie amongst fellow officials, sometimes at the expense of certain colleagues. As always, while the fundraiser recognizes all referees for their assistance, the VASRA executive has designed certain awards for those that have gone beyond the call of duty:

Iron Man/Iron Lady Award- given to the referee who officiated the most number of games in the tournament: **Art Duran** and **Chantelle Schwartz**

(Ed note: ironically, the suspended play had a hand in this award. The finish of those games was pushed out. BCSRA President Nick Hawley was unable to wait for his next game to start so Art stepped in to take his spot! This put Art over the top of, ironically, Nick Hawley!).

Most Improved Referee- awarded to the younger boy and girl referees who showed improved performance over the tournament. This year's recipients go to **Ezra Parker** and **Subrina Pratt**.

Thanks to all who participated in this year's Beach Blast!



(L-R) Back: Jaiden Simmons, Chantelle Schwartz; Front: Joaquim Hurtado-Gomez, Meghan Luk, Herman Sidhu, Stephanie Chen, Nina Manhas, Ezra Parker, Megan Hoy



Herman Sidhu, Subrina Pratt, Jaiden Simmons, Ezra Parker, Chantelle Schwartz



Photos: Dieter Freundt



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Lightning, Thunder, and Rain cleared the playing fields.



Nut the Matches continued afterwards.

QUICK KICKS

Wedding Bells



Congratulations to BCSRA Director **Chris Wattam** and fellow referee and member **Candace Brown** on the announcement of their nuptials. Chris and Candace have been together for about five years and intend on tying the knot during the summer of 2014.

It's Twins!

Congratulations to National Referee **Alain Ruch** and his wife FIFA Referee **Michelle Pye** on the birth of their twin boys, **Kayden** and **Emmett**. The pair were born in early July. This now, with their daughter **Andison**, makes three in the family (a trio in the making for local games perhaps?)

Local Content at 2013 Gold Cup

Former FIFA Assistant Referee and CONCACAF Instructor **John Nielsen** was recently appointed to the Gold Cup. The bi-annual tournament was held in the US from July 5-28. John unfortunately did not stay for the entire tournament as he was then re-assigned to El Salvador.

Canada Summer Games 2013

BC's lone representative for the Canada Summer Games in Sherbrooke, Quebec was National Assistant Referee **Alain Ruch**. He officiated in the Men's portion of the tournament which started on August 10th. The soccer portion features both women's and men's sides, each running at different times. The Women played during the first week starting August 2nd, a tournament that saw BC win gold over New Brunswick. The BC men's team lost to Ontario in the quarterfinals.

Potential Bug in Online Membership System

With the end of summer and the subsequent time to renew one's membership, please be aware that there is a potential bug in the online membership system if trying to pay by credit card. An update was applied but members are asked to be on the lookout for this bug.

Some members have found the pull-down menu for the "Soccer Area" entry doesn't allow them to see a list of areas to choose from.

The system will interpret this as no entry and will default to the wrong value for membership fee.

The system expects a choice from the menu so please do not try to type into the box.

The problem will be addressed but there is no immediate solution at this time. For the moment, if you find yourself with this problem please either submit a cheque in the mail or come to a monthly meeting to do so.

Please be aware that at monthly meetings only cash, check or money order can be accepted. Sorry, we don't have the ability to accept credit cards at monthly meetings.

Annual Instructor/Assessor Symposium

The experiment of holding this year's the annual gathering of BC Soccer-certified instructors and assessors in conjunction with Provincial A Cup was a resounding success. In the past, the symposium was held in mid-August.

Those entrusted with making educational presentations were up against an audience of fellow instructors and assessors.

An attempt at performing an assessment of a referee was done using an exhibition game as fodder.

In contrast, by holding this year's symposium in conjunction with Provincial A Cup, assessors were given the chance to evaluate referees in game situations where

the result was paramount.

Instructors could ply their trade on the audience of officials appointed to the tournament, some who may not have been privy to the information in the past.

As mentioned before, the result was a success, with the highest praise coming from the referees in the tournament.

In a communiqué to all instructors and assessors, BC Soccer Referee Development Coordinator **Jose Branco** informed he heard high praise from the officials.

This was also reiterated by one of the referees who said the inclusion of both the education sessions and assessments made the Youth A Cup "more special."

Area Monthly Meeting Dates

With the start of another Winter season comes the start of another round of monthly meetings. The following are the dates, times and venues for Area Association (branch) monthly meetings for the first half of the season:

Fraser Valley (FVSRA)

All meetings held in the ground floor meeting room of the **Langley Legion**, 20570-56 Avenue, Langley.

Meetings will now be held on the first Thursday of the month as the Fraser Valley Soccer League (FVSL) has booked up all the Wednesdays at the Legion.

The dates are:
September 5th (Pizza Night)
October 3rd
November 7th
December 5th

All meetings will start at 7:30 pm.

Vancouver Area (VASRA)

All meetings are held on the last Monday

of the month at the **Bonsor Community Center** (S. Burnaby Metro Club Room, corner of Central Blvd and Bonsor Ave in Burnaby):

September 30th

October 28th

November 25th

All meetings start at 7:00 pm.

Vancouver Island (VISRA)

All meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month at the **Gordon Head Fieldhouse** at Tyndall Park in Victoria:

August 19th
September 16th
October 21st
November 18th
December 19th.

All meetings start at 7:15 pm.

The December meeting has in the past been the annual Pot-Luck event (date to be determined later).

KICK FOR A CURE- July 20 in Coquitlam

Ed note: Fraser Valley area-based member **Phil Allen** has been the Referee-in-Chief/Scheduler for this tournament since its inception in 2008. "Kick for the Cure" put on annually by Canada Border Services. Here he gives a summary of the tournament.

The **Kick For Cure** is a childhood cancer initiative founded to raise awareness about childhood cancer and the need for increased funding towards paediatric cancer research.

Proceeds from the **Kick For Cure** benefit the **Michael Cucione Foundation** towards childhood cancer research

The first tournament took place in 2008 in Port Moody featuring only a handful of 6 vs 6 co-ed teams made up primarily of Border Services teams plus a few members of the community.

Since then, the event has grown by leaps and bounds.

In 2011 *Kick for a Cure* moved to Coquitlam Town Centre Park to help accommodate the demand needed for participants, teams, events and supporters.

Referees donate their time and energy to this tournament for the day. In return they're provided with food, water and a commemorative T-shirt. The list of names

includes, in no particular order: **Ken Woo, David Tang, Ted Williams, Joe Filipelli, Phil Brown, Pete Dragan, Wes Sim, JB, Aleks Lakovic, Peter Hackett, Lisa Mather, John Jukich, Bob Lauro, Jason Leung and David Sadowski.**

Special mention must go to the **Smith Brothers (Graeme and his younger brother Parker)**. Both started refereeing for this tournament in 2012 and helped out again for the 2013 edition.

I really appreciated the commitment of some of our colleagues who have helped over the years. They always say, "See you at next year's tournament."



Referees for the BC Border Services Kick For A Cure Soccerfest 2011 at Coquitlam's Town Centre Park (l-r): Taztio Calderoni, Lisa Mather, David Tang, Sina Jamshidi, Phil Allen, Aleks Lakovic, Dimitry Dolzhikov, Bob Lauro, Stuart Olley.



The Full Volley: Shadowing the MLS All-Star referee

Zac Lee Rigg, *Sporting News*

(Ed note: this article has been edited for space purposes)

Hilario 'Chico' Grajeda watches six games a week, plus every single booking, ejection, disallowed goal and penalty in MLS. Hilario Grajeda will ref the MLS All-Star game. On his stroll around the field, he taps the breast pocket holding his phone to indicate how he gets highlights on the road. Out of uniform – wearing gray slacks and a blazer over a black polyester polo – Grajeda looks dignified in a way men in shorts cannot readily match.

It's June 23, the date of the derby between the LA Galaxy and Chivas USA. MLS refs show up two hours before kickoff and inspect the grounds. By now, they know the venues and where to double check for divots, mounds, poor lining, holes in the netting.

The StubHub Center rarely offers issues.

The crew chatted over lunch at the hotel about the upcoming encounter; they know the last SuperClasico “was ugly, was nasty.” It featured four yellows and a red, later rescinded by the Disciplinary Committee. The two assistants – **Frank Anderson** and **Mike Rottersman** – and fourth official **Juan Guzman** have poured over stats sheets. They studied who commits and suffers the most fouls on each team, who shoots from where, who takes on defenders.

In the bowels of the Hub, along the hallway between the Chivas USA and Galaxy locker rooms, they change into their uniforms in a smaller locker room specifically for referees. It has four areas, connected by a short hallway: an entrance area stocked with water and coffee, two showers, two toilets and the room with lockers and black fold-out chairs.

About an hour and a half before the match they turn off all cell phones. If there's an emergency, the referee liaison, **Carlos Hernandez**, can make a call. An hour before the game, the crew kicks out everyone besides Hernandez.

Referee assessor **Arturo Angeles** and **Michael Kennedy**, referees manager for Professional Referee Organization (PRO), head up to the press box. The four on the referee crew stay to put their game-faces on and warm up.

Soon Grajeda will walk onto the field again, point at the center circle and whistle to begin the game.

The Organization

At one point Major League Soccer had 272 referees in its pool. Now it has 21. One of the first things **Peter Walton**, PRO general manager, did when hired in 2012 was trim the number working MLS games. The idea was to identify the most talented in the current crop and give them the necessary reps to develop. In the 2012 season, U.S. Soccer handed over referee development and assignments to PRO, which works with U.S. Soccer, the Canadian Soccer Association and MLS.

Currently, PRO has nine full-time refs, 11 part-timers and one independent contractor (**Kevin Stott**, who is approaching his 250th MLS game and has World Cup experience). Over 40 assistants work MLS and U.S. Open Cup matches as well, and there are 10 fourth officials looking to join the referee pool. U.S. Soccer still runs the referees for the lower leagues. The best ones join the Platinum Group, “which are 10 or 12 referees or assistant referees that have shown to have great promise,” Kennedy told Sporting News.

Since PRO is new, it has yet to cut any referees loose into the lower leagues. However, the 21-man pool is divided into four

MLS Corner

groups, based on performance reviews. The top group gets the biggest games. The bottom group sits out weekends. A match assessor (PRO has eight to 10, all part time, and at least one watches each game live) grades each performance out of 100. Reports take four to six hours to compile the next day, according to Kennedy. They include key match incidents, offside calls, substitutions, the technical area, “positive points, fitness, positioning, application of the law, do they work well as a team,” Kennedy said.

Kennedy, who refereed from the inaugural MLS season until the end of last year, works under Walton managing the referees. Also on staff are Development Manager **Paul Rejer** and sports scientist **Matt Hawkey**.

The full-time referees meet in Dallas' Cooper Center every two weeks. The part-time refs attend once a month. (**Dr. Kenneth H. Cooper** came up with the Cooper Test, one of the first fitness tests for referees.) Throughout the week, Hawkey sends tailored fitness regimes which includes miles to run each day and specific heart-rates to reach per mile. He monitors each referee's condition from across the country.

“Everyone is trying to improve their fitness, which is so critical to getting a good viewing angle,” Kennedy said. He pointed out that even a yard difference along the sideline can prevent an assistant from making the correct offside call.

Essentially, a referee tries to move around the field in a way that creates triangles with the assistant and the ball (and doesn't obstruct traffic). This provides two sight-lines on the play, one from the middle and one from the sideline, to inform any decision.

“We have very good referees – some of them are excellent, some of them are learning,” Angeles, who refereed in the 1994

Continued next page

Referee's Explanation

Below is a picture of the explanation given to the media for the awarding of the tying goal in the July Whitecaps-LA Galaxy match by referee **Chris Penso**. Upon further review, it appears the officials got the call right.

The interesting point is there is a reporter at every game who is allowed to ask the referee 3 questions. Referees have to make themselves available for this.

2. WHAT MECHANISM DID THE GAME OFFICIALS USE TO DETERMINE THE GALAXY'S GOAL IN THE 29:44 MINUTE SHOULD COUNT?

THE ASSISTANT REFEREE CALLED THE REFEREE OVER TO DETERMINE IF #29 ZARDES HAD TOUCHED THE BALL WITH HIS HEAD BEFORE #33 VILLAREAL KICKED THE BALL INTO THE GOAL. THE REFEREE DETERMINED THAT ZARDES HAD NOT TOUCHED THE BALL, THUS NOT MAKING VILLAREAL OFFSIDE. THE GOAL WAS AWARDED.

World Cup, told Sporting News. "As far as fitness, they are very fit. ... They have the training, the technology. Maybe we have to learn the game a little bit, maybe. The playing, the intuition. We're not used to that level of thinking."

Kennedy talks of a muscle memory. "Certain hot spots" on the field trigger instant referee reactions: long balls, two players coming together, snap shots. "Refereeing isn't a science," he said. "It's an art."

The main aim of PRO is to raise the level of professional refereeing in the USA and Canada and produce professional-quality refs at younger ages. More tangibly, PRO wants to place a referee in the 2014 World Cup. The United States supplied a ref to the World Cup from 1982 through 2006. However, no American officiated in the 2010 World Cup. Returning to whistle the most important international tournament in soccer would provide evidence that PRO has improved the talent pool.

The Motivation

A boy, barely a teenager, leaned over the lip of the wall in the StubHub Center and asked the referee for his cards after the game. Grajeda chuckled and assented with a wave.

Not everyone hates referees. Just, you know, most people. In the last several decades, **Pierluigi Collina** is perhaps the only referee to wriggle his way into the widespread good graces of fans. So why would any sane human want to become one?

The garrulous Angeles lists off several reasons: the satisfaction of completing a match, pride of officiating big games, helping the community, fitness, travel, etc. Both Angeles and Grajeda fell into refereeing on accident. Angeles, a goalkeeper, showed up for a league meeting at 17 and found himself volunteered to ref the next day.

"I became a referee by mistake," Grajeda told Sporting News. "I wanted to be a coach, so I ended up going to what I thought was the coaches' clinic, but I was too embarrassed to leave. And then I just went to the classes and before you know it I got a badge."

He giggles, telling of his mishap. Despite large biceps and a cut build, Grajeda's voice has a softness, a tenderness to it. He has boyish features and short black hair.

Grajeda started with the U-9s in his hometown of Marin, Calif. "Then you start doing higher level games, some high school," he said. "You get invited to different camps, and you get lucky sometimes."

He moved to Dayton, Ohio, in the '90s and joined MLS in 2002, first as a fourth official. Then he ran lines in Columbus. At the time, MLS only flew in a referee and one assistant, so they had to find the other linesman locally. In 2004, he graduated to the center circle.

"You don't start on the line and move to the middle anymore," Mike Rottersman told Sporting News. "You track early on. Well before MLS you've already decided."

Since there are twice as many assistant spots as referees, the competition is thinner. Grajeda is part-time. He works as a nurse in Dayton, Ohio.

"I am having a blast," Grajeda said. "I enjoy the training, when we meet every month. It's fun, the training is good, even though it's like a military thing." With his three kids grown and out of the house, he runs with his four-year-old black lab, Bella.

He's 45, the age referees previously hit mandatory retirement, but he's one of the upcoming referees in MLS. He was the fourth official in each of the last two MLS Cups. He'll officiate the 2013 MLS All-Star Game on July 31 in Kansas City, Kan.

Kennedy stressed the competitive nature that takes over anyone who rises to the professional level.

Several weeks prior, Grajeda refereed the Cascadia clash between the Seattle Sounders and Vancouver Whitecaps. CenturyLink Field brimmed with 54,000 fans in attendance.

"As we were walking out – the chills, the goosebumps walking

out," Grajeda said. "It was a good feeling. It was like, 'Ooh! I love this.' I don't want it to end anytime soon. It's a good passion. It's not a hobby anymore."

The Game

Grajeda whistles to begin the match. PRO assigns matches three weeks in advance, though it only makes them public a week beforehand. That gives referees plenty of time to do research. Grajeda knew the prior derby had been a slog.

"We came in trying to make it really easy, call simple fouls, and just keep it under control really quick, not give them a lot of advantages where players are going to come out and start hacking," Grajeda said. "You could just feel the first couple decisions that are the moment of truth. Then you just feel everything falling into place."

In the 18th minute, Grajeda whistled to halt a Galaxy corner after some shoving in the box. He came over and tapped the arms of Dan Kennedy and Landon Donovan before letting the set piece commence. At the half-hour mark, Oswaldo Minda threw an elbow across Marcelo Sarvas's face. Grajeda pushed his open palms downward, indicating to settle down, but didn't book Minda, who led the league in yellows last year with 13.

"You don't card him there, but you make sure to be a hard-ass on him later," Frank Anderson told Sporting News.

In the 34th minute, the crew made their biggest decision of the night. Robbie Rogers drilled a low shot from outside that beat the goalkeeper, but Robbie Keane blocked Kennedy's view from an offside position. Anderson, the near-side assistant, held up his flag. Grajeda whistled and went over to discuss the call.

"It was one of those things," Grajeda said. "I wanted to make sure there were no deflections from anyone else. I want to make sure everything's clean. I know what he's calling, and he's already telling me."

"If we're pulling the ball out of the back of the net, we just want to make sure," Anderson said.

Donovan, naturally, disagreed when Grajeda ruled out the goal and gave him an earful. "Somebody's going to be upset, regardless of the decision," Grajeda said. Donovan ended up supplying the assist on Gyasi Zardes' winner a minute before the half.

The first booking didn't come until the 82nd minute. In the buildup, a Galaxy counter, the Goats fouled in midfield.

"I chose to play the advantage and take a risk," Grajeda said. Walter Vilchez eventually ended the play with a tackle deeper in his half. "There was a foul for No. 4 for Chivas, so we booked that one, but not the first one." Grajeda pointed out that in his game a week prior, a physical match in D.C., he would have carded the initial foul. Because this match was less gritty, he chose to take a risk on the advantage.

A booking to Todd Dunivant in stoppage time rounded out the officials' duties. With three short blasts on the whistle, Grajeda called the game to a close and headed back to the locker room.

The Voice

In the clamor and chatter surrounding sports 24/7, one voice remains silent. Players, agents, coaches, team owners, fans – everyone else can moan and gripe publicly. Referees don't talk. MLS officials have more of a voice than in any other league. Reporters may submit written questions following MLS matches, and the referee can return a written response. Given the formality of the exchange, answers don't tend to be particularly forthcoming or illuminating.

Additionally, the PRO website breaks down calls, explaining the rule and thought processes that went behind specific decisions. It embeds video from MLSsoccer.com. The league's website does something similar, with Simon Borg analyzing the bigger calls of the week in a video feature. PRO referees know who Simon Borg is. They all use the MLS MatchDay app.

Continued next page

Continued from previous page

"We open ourselves up to criticism by becoming referees," Anderson said. "Like the players, they scrutinize our calls. If you don't want to be scrutinized, if you can't take the pressure, it's not for you. It's all on video replay. It's all there to be digested, talked about."

Though they don't participate in the conversation, referees follow along. "Referees read a lot," Angeles said.

Peering over referees' shoulders is the Disciplinary Committee. The anonymous five-man panel made up of former players, coaches and one former referee reviews all major incidents, doling out fines and bans. It has come down especially hard on diving and dangerous tackles.

Do Refs like the extra oversight?

"I think some do, some don't," Anderson said. He mentioned subtle elbows or stomps that the crew misses from time to time. "They can go back and police the game a little bit more. I think it helps." But Anderson bristled at D.C. decisions when the referee had a clear view. "You're like, 'Hey wait a second. I had a good look at it.'"

The crew didn't seem particularly uptight about the Disciplinary Committee, perhaps aware that the body is necessary, but none gave a full endorsement.

"There are so many factors for me," Grajeda said. "Something probably happened 20 minutes ago that that particular clip doesn't show, or it didn't show on camera at all. Maybe they were talking smack or something, as players do, and then the incident happens. All the other factors, the Disciplinary Committee doesn't take [into account]."

Since referees are separate human beings, they unsurprisingly have different opinions.

When asked about technology, Anderson holds out his hands with a device in each. One is a beeper. The other is the battery pack for his headset. "We already have [technology]," he said. "We have beeper flags with pagers. We have the radios. This is all technology that helps."

On the hilt of the flags assistants wave (and the batons fifth officials use in other leagues) is a button that activates a buzzer strapped to the referee's arm. They use it predominantly when making offside calls. And the four officials are in constant radio communication.

Luddites arguing that technology should not alter the game have already lost. Do refs want more technological assistance? Again: each has a different opinion.

"I think goal-line technology needs to be implemented," Anderson said. "A shot from 30 yards away, the A.R. has no chance to get to the goal line to make that determination."

FIFA has already approved goal-line technology, and it first

appeared in the 2012 Club World Cup. The English Premier League will introduce it starting in the 2013-14 season. However, Anderson's not a fan of instant video replays, available to officials in the NFL and NHL, among other sports leagues.

"I don't think there should be replay," Anderson said. "The beautiful thing about this game is that it's free-flowing: 45 minutes, quick break, 45 minutes. No stop, no break to commercial."

Though they all have opinions – some strongly held – the referee crew doesn't seem particularly eager to broadcast any to the world on a consistent basis. Their actions speak for themselves. Grajeda recently asked his girlfriend how a game was going. She replied, "Boring." "And I said: 'I like boring. It means no controversy, no my name's going to be in the paper.' I like that."

The Locker Room

After the match, Angeles holds a brief chat with the crew in the locker room. "The referee after working an MLS game is exhausted and tired and still trying to get the body – bringing it back to its norm," Kennedy says. While they're meeting, three stadium staff members stand outside the door, arms crossed intimidatingly in front of them.

A man walks up with a clear plastic case containing a DVD of the match. One of the guards knocks, and Hernandez pokes his head out to collect the disc. When Kennedy exits, he bumps into Galaxy associate head coach Dave Sarachan and they begin chatting. Eventually LA GM and head coach Bruce Arena trickles by and joins the conversation. Sarachan and Arena agree that refereeing has improved substantially since PRO began.

"I think we have come a loooooooong way," Angeles said earlier. "A long way."

Arena, perpetually grumpy, makes sure to add that it still has a considerable distance to go. The chirpier Sarachan offers any assistance if PRO needs a coaching perspective.

Inside the locker room, Grajeda is drinking gatorade. He's back in his blazer.

"I liked it. The game was fun," he says between sips. "It didn't feel too bad. It was very predictable. It had a good flow. You could read it really nicely."

The group has already discussed any missed calls. Together, they will compile a report on Excel and send it in to New York. "We copy each other when that report is submitted, so there's a backup," Grajeda says.

Soon, Hernandez will pile the crew into a car and drive them to LAX. Grajeda has a red-eye to Dayton. He doesn't mind heading straight home: after games he's on such an emotional high it takes hours to fall asleep anyway. Besides, he has a dog, a job and fitness training waiting for him.

"I've always loved the game," he says. "I love the game more than anything."

MLS Referees and the Concussion Problem

By Paul Gardner, Soccer America, June 25, 2013

I was thinking that the sport of soccer had surely, by now, come to understand that head injuries are dangerous. Just that – a simple understanding that concussions cannot be dismissed lightly, that they must be treated with great seriousness.

MLS, quite definitely, knows about the problems caused by concussions. It has had several players who have had to retire prematurely from the game because of concussion injuries – and in more than one case there is a strong suggestion that lack of proper treatment has been a contributing factor.

Yes, MLS does know about that because it has seen one of its players, Bryan Namoff, bring a \$12 million lawsuit against D.C.

United for alleged mistreatment of his concussion injury. The injury finished Namoff's soccer career.

Clearly, then, MLS knows the serious results that concussion injuries can have on a player's career. And it has been given stark warning that there may be legal and monetary consequences if such injuries are not given the proper medical attention.

Proper – and prompt – attention. The first man called upon to make sure concussions receive medical attention is the referee. It is his job to stop play immediately when he sees players go down with head injuries – whether from a clash of heads, from head-to-elbow, or head-to-ground contact.

Concussions *cont'd from page 8*

And I have been believing that MLS would get that right. I was wrong. On Sunday, at the end of the first half of the Portland-Colorado game, referee **Silviu Petrescu** was confronted – literally, the incident happened right in front of him, he was staring straight at it – with a serious clash of heads. Two players, one from each team challenged for a high ball. Both players went down, each clutching his head.

Petrescu ignored the clash, allowed play to continue – and **Will Johnson** raced forward to score for Portland. As the Portland players raced over to Johnson to celebrate a remarkable goal, both the injured players were still lying on the ground.

Yes, had Petrescu blown his whistle to stop play when the heads clashed – as I believe he should have done – there would have been no goal from Johnson. As it happens, that would have made no difference to the result. And – so far as it appears – the head-clash injuries were not serious, for both players continued in the game. It is not surprising that it should be Petrescu involved in this incident – he is the most permissive of MLS referees, the one most likely to ignore what he evidently considers minor infringements.

He is also rated highly by **Peter Walton**, the head of the MLS referee group, PRO, who chose him to officiate at last year's MLS Cup final between the Galaxy and the Dynamo. A respected referee then ... but he got this one badly – and dangerously – wrong.

A statement from Walton would be helpful here, letting us know what is MLS policy on head injuries. What does PRO tell referees to do after a clash of heads like this? I would be surprised if the advice is anything other than an instruction to halt play at once. The only alternative would seem to be letting the referee “use his judgment.” Which, given what we now know about the dangers, both overt and hidden, of concussions is obviously not a good idea.

Who was at fault here? If MLS, or PRO, has no spelled-out instructions telling referees to halt play when head injuries occur, then they are responsible if delayed treatment leads to serious problems.

As for Petrescu, he seems to me to have got his decision wrong however you look at it. If there exists an instruction telling referees that they should not play around with head injuries, that play must be stopped at once, he clearly ignored it. If there is no such instruction, then he used his own judgment which, predictably and wrongly, was to ignore the head clash.

In this case, Petrescu got away with one, because a splendid goal was scored, and there were, apparently, no lasting injuries. Though that last point is the tricky one: we still don't know enough about concussions, which is why we need to be super-cautious and super-quick when it comes to dealing with them.

A simple question for MLS, then: what instructions does it give its referees for dealing with head injuries?

Lebanese Soccer Referee: I learned Match-Fixing from watching YouTube Videos

Posted by Ed Carrasco on Monday, July 15, 2013 on newmediarockstars.com

Ali Sabbagh, the jailed referee who testified against Singaporean businessman **Eric Ding Si Yang**, who is charged with bribing soccer referees to fix matches

YouTube is a tool used by many to learn how to cook meals, perfect dance moves and even just to vent frustrations. It can also be a tool for corrupt officials to cheat the system.



Ali Sabbagh

During a Singaporean businessman's trial on charges of providing women to three soccer officials in exchange for

them rigging soccer matches, one of the referees involved claimed that he learned how to fix games through YouTube.

The AFP reported that Lebanese referee Ali Sabbagh, who is currently serving a six-month sentence for accepting bribes from businessman Eric Ding Si Yang, testified in Ding's trial that in a series of email exchanges, he received between 20 to 30 YouTube links showing him bad referee decisions. This would influence Sabbagh to make decisions that worked in Ding's favor.

Sabbagh said: “The videos had too many decisions where the decision made by the referee is not the right decision.”

He added that through the series of emails, Ding explained that the best way to rig matches is to award penalties.

Alan Loh, the prosecutor responsible for Ding's case, explained the charges to Bloomberg: “In every football match, game officials are key to ensuring a fair result based on the abilities and skills of the football teams. In this case, the very officials who were meant to uphold sporting excellence and sportsmanship bartered away their professional integrity in return for free sexual services.”

If convicted, Ding faces a five year prison term and a fine of \$80,000 for each charge of corruption.



The referee counted this as a goal ... in the German Bundesliga

EA SPORTS GETS IT RIGHT

You may recall the report we printed in the August 2012 edition whereby **Chantelle Swartz** took EA Sports to task for their poor implementation of match officials in the FIFA 12 video game. Chantelle schooled the video game giant on all the corrections they needed to do in order to show officials in a proper light. At the time EA Sports acknowledged her input and promised to send her a complimentary copy of their new FIFA 13 release when it went to market.

So, one year later, did EA live up to their word? Happily we can report a big “yes” on all fronts. “Yes they did send it to me and yes they made all the changes I mentioned,” beamed Chantelle.

“The assistants are holding the flags in the correct manner and holding the flag in the right hand.” Many thanks to EA Sports for recognizing referees are part of the (video) game as well.

Girls Provincial “B” Cup



Photos: Paul Van Buekenhout

Nations Cup in Richmond

It was the 34th annual Nations Cup in Richmond, BC. The various ethnic communities select their teams from BC's finest soccer talent and name it accordingly by their country's name. The interesting part is that lesser known "soccer powers" like India and Ireland have also won this prestigious tournament, which usually takes place in July.



Photos: Dieter Freundt

Hawk-Eye Goal Decision System Introduced

From Goal.com Aug 17, 2013

Fabian Delph's shot came off the post and rolled along the line, prompting **Anthony Taylor** to use newly introduced Hawk-eye system for the first time on the opening day of the season

The Premier League's new goal-line technology was called upon during Aston Villa's 3-1 opening day win over Arsenal at the Emirates Stadium.

The visitors had already cancelled out **Olivier Giroud's** opening goal through **Christian Benteke** when **Fabian Delph** almost netted their second in the 52nd minute. The midfielder beat goalkeeper **Wojciech Szczesny** but saw his long-range effort strike the inside of the right-hand post and roll across the line.

And the **Hawk-Eye Goal Decision System** – which was used for the first time in English football during the Community Shield last Sunday – came into play.

Television replays shown in the press box confirmed that referee Anthony Taylor had been notified that the ball did not cross the line at any point.

Premier League chief executive **Richard Scudamore** believes the GDS system will improve the Premier League this season, after revealing there were 31 occasions that could have benefited from it last term.

“The most important thing in football is a goal – was it scored or wasn't it,” he said. “That is what the whole object of the

game is and therefore it's important because we've now got the technology and got the resources that work, that we've been able to introduce it.

“I'm absolutely confident of its accuracy, 100 per cent. It's quick, which again is very important. That decision needs to be an instant decision. It will be less than a second.”

The Premier League is the first football division in the world to introduce the system but **Franz Beckenbauer** has called for the German Football League (DFL) to follow after Hoffenheim were controversially denied a goal during their 2-2 draw with Nürnberg in the Bundesliga last Saturday.

Working of FIFA's Goal Line Technology

By Sam Laird (as appeared on Mashable.com)

FIFA was using goal-line technology for the first time in international competition during the Confederations Cup tournament in Brazil.

The move, allowing officials to review did-he-or-didn't-he shots on goal, comes to the relief of many soccer fans after a growing number of media and critics called for its implementation at the international level.

Goal line technology will be used again at next summer's World Cup, also in Brazil.

But just because it's finally here doesn't mean most futbol aficionados understand how goal line technology actually works. Here's the quick rundown of how this slick system functions:

A German company called **GoalControl** sets up 14 cameras around the rim of each stadium hosting matches.

Seven focus on each goal, and cables connect each camera to a central mainframe computer. The seven cameras all track a shot on goal, sending precise data back to the computer, which then triangulates the ball's position in relation to the goal line.

If a ball crosses the goal line, a vibration and visual signal is then transmitted within fractions of a second to watches worn by referees on the field.

Most goals, of course, won't require such precise analysis, but the new technology will certainly eliminate situations like the controversy surrounding a disallowed goal by **Frank Lampard** of England against Germany in the 2010 World Cup. Further analysis showed the shot, which would have tied a match England went on to lose, should have counted.

The infographic below, which comes by way of the Dell-supported blog Tech Page One, goes into further detail on FIFA's new goal line technology.

