

POSTponement

Well I thought I had seen everything in football, but obviously not. On Tuesday 25th September I was scheduled to be Assistant Referee for the North West Counties Division One Match between St Helens Town v Glossop North End. The game didn't go ahead, but I witnessed something out of the ordinary.

The game was due to kick off at 7:45pm and I received a phone call at 5pm from the referee who said that there was a problem at the ground (Knowsley Road) but to carry on making my way to the ground. On arrival I was met by the referee and the other assistant referee, as well as the club secretary of St Helens Town. Immediately I was told that the match was off.

The reason was that when the grounds men went to take the rugby posts down to put the football nets up, one of the rugby posts slots (burrow) was stuck in the ground and they couldn't get it out. I quickly realised that there was no pitch markings on the pitch either and that the markings from last week's rugby match was still there.

The groundsmen stressed to us that they had been working on the pitch all day to try and remove the burrow. The burrow was about a foot off the ground and was positioned where the penalty spot would be so there was no chance of us playing around it. The away team then arrived who had travelled from Derbyshire and to say they were unhappy is an understatement. They soon realised that the rugby was due to be played on Friday and they quickly stated that fact as to the reason for the game being postponed.

St Helens then had to pay half fee and full expenses for the officials and it has already been well documented that the club is struggling financially and that their relationship with the rugby team is a difficult one.

The game could have been called off earlier in the day and that the match officials didn't need to travel nor did the opposition. The match could have never gone ahead with this burrow sticking out. Unfortunately the secretary told the local newspapers that this could put the club closer to closure which is a shame as just recently they played their 1000th North West Counties game and no other club has reached this feat.

Alan Bennett - Editor

Editor's Views

Well it's been a funny old month and I think that so far this season very few matches have been postponed due to bad weather so let's hope it stays that way.

It has been very interesting to see the FA's Chief Executive Brian Barwick outline his plans to stop referee abuse.

From January 2008 The FA will take a leaf out of Rugby's book and only allow team captains to speak to Referees. However this rule will only be introduced at grassroots level for now as Barwick believes that's where the problem lies.

However in some ways I disagree and this is why. Cast your minds back to the Man Utd v Chelsea game last month where Man Utd ran out 2-0 winners. In particular the incident where referee Mike Dean sent off Chelsea player John Obi Mikel.

As Dean produced the red card Chelsea & England Captain John Terry quickly tried to remove the card from the referee's hand.



John Terry escaped this incident with only a caution. And it was revealed this week that Terry has escaped further punishment from the FA. What sort of message does that send out to the grassroots of football?

I then read the following weekend in many papers of people writing in saying that they had seen the same incident occur in youth football where a young lad removed the red card from the referees hand after being sent off or after a team-mate had been sent off.

This is where I come back to my original point where I believe if the 'captains rule' is used at the top level then it will benefit grassroots. So when the children watch Match Of The Day on a Saturday they will then see that the captain can only speak to the referee and they will then follow this example.

If they don't see their idols doing this then will do the same. I just wonder whether Terry being England Captain saved him from further punishment from the FA.

However let's hope that this rule change will be of benefit for the game and in particular for referees.

Alan Bennett - Editor

Rotherham, Barnet, Halifax, Bradford and beyond.

Well it has been an adventurous month for our Football League Referee Karl Evans. He has travelled to Rotherham, Barnet, Bradford and most recently Halifax as the man in the middle.

His games certainly haven't been short of drama especially at the Barnet v Mansfield game last Saturday where Barnet missed a last minute penalty which would have gave Barnet all three points.

At Bradford there was a big shock as lowly Accrington Stanley ran out 3-0 victors to record their biggest away win since returning to the Football League. This however wasn't without its casualties as two Stanley players were stretched off with the Stanley keeper suffering a broken leg. I was also told by Duncan Tighe who was present at the game that Nigel D'Arcy wondered into the ladies toilet at half-time instead of the gent's toilet. An incident which left Duncan howling of laughter.

Just this past Tuesday Karl was in charge of the Live Conference game between Halifax Town v Grays Athletic which was live on Setanta. The game ended 0-0 and this was a result that didn't help either team. It was the first time this season Karl was refereeing in front of the cameras.

However Rotherham brings Karl the most drama and I firmly believe that every time the words Rotherham are uttered to Karl it will bring a smile to his face. Rotherham played out a 1-1 draw with Notts County but it wasn't the game that Karl will remember but what happened after it. It was only when Karl arrived home that he realised what had happened. Of all the things to forget Karl had left his kit back in Rotherham.

I'm sure that we will all ask ourselves how he managed to leave his kit in the changing room. Karl simply told me he thought he had put it in his laundry bag but he quiet clearly hadn't. So the following Monday he had to make the trip back up to Yorkshire to pick his kit up. I'm that this is a story that will creep up time and time again and is certainly a story that brings a smile to face, especially after my kit going missing at Bacup last month.

As for this weekend Karl has been appointed 4th official for the Championship game Stoke City v Sheffield Wednesday where the referee is Bolton's Lee Mason.

Alan Bennett - Editor

Members Appointments

Fixture	Referee	Assistant Ref	4 th Official
21st September U13's County Cup Eastleigh Jnrs Blue V Aston F.C.	Duncan Tighe		
U13's County Cup AFC Hindley V Knuzden Jnrs	Alan Bennett		
U13's County Cup Shevington Strikers V Radcliffe Jnrs	Paul Haworth		
U13's County Cup Eastleigh Jnrs Red V Wigan Jnr Latics	Frank Mort		
U13's County Cup Ladybridge F.C. V Burnley Utd Jnrs	Lewis Clarkson		
27th October Lancit League Woodley Res V Hyde Utd Res	Alan Bennett		
L.A.L. Mostonians V Old Mancunians	Danny Hibbert		
L.A.L. Thornleigh V Failsworth Dynamo	Gary Finch		
L.A.L. Oldham H Res V Ashtonians Res	Keith Swindell		
Unibond Premier League Cup – Mossley AFC V Skelmersdale Utd		Alan Bennett	

Referee World

POLICE TO TACKLE SUNDAY LEAGUE VIOLENCE

POLICE today said they would attend Sunday league football games to stop gang violence. The ECHO yesterday told how spectators watched in horror as a man was knifed at a Sunday league clash between Croxteth-based Western Approaches and Oyster Martyrs.

The game was abandoned after a fight broke out between two men and one was stabbed in the hand near the Scargreen Sports Ground, Norris Green.

Liverpool and District Sunday League officials said only a visible police presence at the games would deter "the idiots determined to cause mischief".

Secretary of Western Approaches Steve Edge said a police presence was essential.

"This is nothing to do with football or the clubs as we are all friends.

"The police are the only ones who can control what goes on and we are only asking for a uniformed presence for an hour and half at the game."

League secretary Glyn Jones insisted the police were approached two days before Sunday's clash.

He added: "If it is the only way to stop the unduly element then yes, we should have a police presence."

He said when officers policed a game between The Lobster and Western Approaches two weeks earlier it passed off peacefully

LIVERPOOL ECHO

VIDEO REPLAYS WOULD KILL THE GAME

Using video replays during games would kill the flow of football matches and end traditional refereeing forever, UEFA President Michel Platini warned on Thursday.

However, Platini backed plans for extra goalmouth officials, an idea which the world ruling body FIFA is to experiment with at the Club World Cup in Japan in December.

"Video is a big problem for me. You would have to stop the game every 10 seconds, for every decision that is questioned.

"Football is a human game and the mistakes are human. We need to help solve the mistakes, but we must not lose the human feeling of our sport," Platini added.

"We need to help referees to stop making mistakes and these two extra referees will focus on the two 18-yard boxes, so this will help solve this.

"Ten eyes are certainly better than six."

REUTERS