

Leicestershire Society of Rugby Union Referees

August 2015

NEXT MEETING-24 AUGUST @

VIPERS RFC 7.30PM

Dates for your diary-

24th August– First members meeting of the 2015/2016 season. Vipers @ 7.30pm

30th August– Flavours of Rugby Festival @ Victoria Park, Leicester

2nd September– Society Fitness Test, Syston RFC @ 7pm

Dear Member

Your annual membership is now due. There are no changes to the fee so it is £12 for full/active members and £9 for all other members.

I will be at the first members meeting on the 24th at Vipers from 7pm to accept your payment and distribute the handbooks.

If you want to pay direct into the bank the sort code is 12-20-26. Account number 01875248. Name LSRUR. Please make sure you put your name as reference.

If you want to send by post please make sure you have my address in Yorkshire.

Nick Lacey.



26 ...

days until RWC Kicks off
on the 18th September
2015!

FEATURED REFEREE OF THE MONTH...



JOHN HILL

JB: What is your current level?

Hilly: Level 6 (P)

JB: Why did you start refereeing?

Hilly: Refereed a few games at Club level and found out I could do it so took it up from there.

JB: Best thing about refereeing?

Hilly: Coming off the field knowing you have contributed positively to the game.

JB: ... and the worst?

Hilly: Being injured and unable to referee.

JB: What do you do for a living?

Hilly: Run my own business selling Coaches (with curtains) and Buses (without curtains).

[There you go Mark Elliott, mystery solved...]

JB: Where would you most like to referee (country and/or stadium)?

Hilly: Twickenham– but that will never happen...

JB: Which referee do you admire most and why?

Hilly: After Mark Elliott it has to be Nigel Owens, at the moment he is the best referee around and has a good rapport with the players, but he has to be careful not to be too familiar Wayne Barnes is up there too.

JB: If you could– which one law would you alter/amend and why?

Hilly: I think at the moment the laws are about right if they are applied correctly, everyone tries to bend them all the time and get away with it, referee consistency is the biggest problem. The only law I would possibly look at is the Scrum, too much time is wasted at the top level on this element it is supposed to be a method to recycle the ball however, I would not want to see rugby league style scrums.

JB: What would your tour nickname be?

Hilly: Hilly? It is probably the only printable one.

JB: Tell us an interesting fact about yourself.

Hilly: Scuba Diving and Skiing are my two favourite holidays.

Training

There has been a slight change to the set up of the LSRUR training for the season 2015-16 with Greg Garner taking on a training role in cooperation with me. Greg will take responsibility for the Development Referees, Referee Coaches and some Assessor Training whilst I will focus a little more on Society Training and the referees with mentors. In practice however, it's likely that we'll be working together closely and will be team-delivering a lot of the training.

I have not been notified of any law changes or directives about law interpretations for the forthcoming season. If I do I will pass them on straight away via the website. The only one I have received is that for RFU league and cup games, when a team cannot field a front row it is the team's responsibility to drop a player and not the referee's. The penalty for getting this wrong will be a 5 point deduction.

As always, training is open to anyone. The programme will go on the website and if anyone wants to be included on the training email list then please get in touch. Wednesday 2 September there will be fitness test at Syston RFC, 7pm start.

FYI below are the current referees with coaches/mentors:

Development	Coaches
Josh Burgess	Mike Mortimer
Ross Neale	Mark Elliott
George Richardson	Greg Garner
Jenny Burrows	Greg Garner
Peter Connor	Mike Mortimer
Louis Massarella	Greg Garner
	Mentors
Barnie Matthews	Dave Edkins
Paul Tilley	Nick Houghton
Kieron Walters	Nick Houghton
Nigel Smith	Kerrel Wills
Simon Hincks	Pete Bower
Richard Henson	Tom Brucciani
Elliot Coombes	Tony Gardiner
Duncan Chandler	Dave Edkins

BEING A GAY RUGBY REFEREE HAS BEEN TOUGH, BUT COMING OUT WAS LIKE BEING BORN AGAIN— NIGEL OWENS

EVEN THOUGH I'VE RECEIVED ABUSE SINCE GOING PUBLIC, IT'S THE BULLIES WHO SHOULD BE AFRAID

As a referee, I'm used to dealing with anything that gets thrown at me. If I can't deal with the flak and abuse, then I wouldn't be able to do this job. But as a gay man, I've unfortunately had to experience homophobic abuse during my career.

The latest incident came during the Six Nations finale between England and France a couple of weeks ago, where I was targeted on Twitter because of my sexuality. I'm thick-skinned, but things like this still get you down. However, if you're gay and want to go into sport, it's the bullies who should be afraid, not you.

I first started refereeing rugby matches when I was in school. I played as a full-back, but after missing a crucial, match-winning conversion, I was told by a teacher to consider becoming a referee. He was half-joking, but I thought, 'Why not?' Since then, I've had the chance to oversee some of the biggest rugby games going. However, it hasn't been an easy journey.

When I became a referee, it became clear that there was nobody in the sport who was gay. The rugby world is very heterosexual and masculine, and this made things difficult. Although that's not to say that the sport is openly homophobic. It was just never an environment where I felt like I could be myself.

I was 18 when I started realising something was different about me. In school I had girlfriends; when I was in my early twenties I had a girlfriend for a year. But I always knew something wasn't right. I thought, "I will make myself fall in love with this girl", but that never happened and never would. Eventually I thought, "I can't do this anymore."

In 1996, I tried to take my own life. I was 26 years old. A police helicopter had to be sent out to look for me. I had overdosed, and if they hadn't found me when they did, then it would have been too late.

For the next nine years I tried to hide it away and never told anyone why I had tried to take my own life. But again it was too much. I wasn't able to carry on with my refereeing because I wasn't happy with who I was.

It got to the point where I thought: do I carry on with my life, or do I try and hide it and continue with refereeing? Or do I come out and risk my career? There was no one who was openly gay in the world of rugby then.

In 2005, I told my mum and then my friends. Two years later, I discussed it with the Press. I was so worried but I actually got a lot of support, especially from the players and the Welsh Rugby Union.

It's impossible to try and describe how this felt. It was great to realise it made no difference to your family and friends and the people in rugby. It was like being born again.

Rugby players may seem very macho but I've had no problem with them at all. Some are curious and ask questions about me and my partner and some players who I know quite well will joke around with me.

I remember refereeing the Ospreys once, and their captain Ryan Jones was in the changing rooms. I walked in and he said, "Hang on, Nigel, let me put some clothes on" and I said "It makes no difference to me, Jughead [his nickname], you're too ugly anyway". He laughed, I laughed, and all the other players laughed.

We shouldn't lose our sense of humour and our ability to laugh at ourselves sometimes. If we get to the stage where people are scared of shouting a bit of banter from the terraces, then sport and society has found itself in a sad place.

However, people have to see that some things are unacceptable. Discrimination of any kind has no place in our sport or society. I have been accepted by 99 per cent of people in rugby, but there will always be that one per cent. They need to know that they're completely wrong and sometimes all this takes is for someone to go, 'hang on, you can't do that.'

At first I didn't see the abuse that was directed at me during the England v France match, but people reported it to me. I could have got the police involved but instead I decided to meet my abuser. He was only 18 years old. What would be the point in ruining his life? He apologised online and in person. The most important thing is he realised what he had done, and the people who reported him helped him do that.

There are always going to be a small number of bullies out there. They're in the minority, yet they have a huge impact on people's lives, and they shouldn't. What people need to know is that they shouldn't be afraid.

So if I could speak to anyone in the same position I was when I was younger, I'd say, "Trust me, everything will be OK. There might be a friend or family member who won't accept it, but things will be OK as long as you have some people around you who support you."



Leicestershire Clubs, which league are they playing in?

Aviva Premiership

Leicester Tigers

National 1

Loughborough Students

National 2 North

Leicester Lions

South Leicester

National 3 Midlands [5]

Hinckley

Syston

Midlands 2 East (North) [7]

Coalville

Market Bosworth

Stamford

Midlands 2 East (South) [7] *[May as well be known as the Leicestershire league!]*

Belgrave

Leicester Forest

Lutterworth

Market Harborough

Melton Mowbray

Oadby Wyggestonians

Oakham

Vipers

Midlands 3 East (North) [8]

Ashby

Aylestone St James

Loughborough

Midlands 3 East (South) [8]

Old Newtonians

Midlands 4 East (South) [9]

Birstall

Sileby Town

Stamford College Old Boys









