

# Leicestershire Society of Rugby Union Referees

May 2016

AGM– MONDAY 23 MAY 2016 @ VIPERS RFC,  
7PM FOR 7.30PM

Have a fantastic summer and remember that the family fun day will take place at Bosworth water park on the 23 July– more details to follow.

Remember it is your individual responsibility to ensure that your personal fitness levels are up to scratch come the start of the new season, start early and work hard over the summer bbq season!

## Thinking of finally hanging up your boots?

If you are seriously considering hanging up your boots at the end of this season, for whatever reason, why don't you become an Assessor/Advisor?

Assessing can be very rewarding. It ensures a longer-term close involvement in the sport and is an invaluable help to the Society. It could also be a possible alternative route to achieving higher levels of rugby for more ambitious Members.

Don't hesitate to contact Geoff Blackburn if you would like to discuss the possibility.



Could you please inform your respective clubs that there will be a:

Level 2 Refereeing the 15-a-side Game course (it's replaced the old ELRA course) at Leicester Forest on Sunday 5 and Sunday 19 June. Sign up at RFU course finder page.

There will also be two courses in November and December 2016.

Paul Macmillan

## **‘Poacher turned Game Keeper’**

### **A look at Game Management from both sides of the fence.**

Over the last two seasons every referee I have coached or observed has required input on Game Management. My opinion is that this is a key element for referees at all levels and an absolute essential for those who wish to progress beyond Society refereeing.

What is Game Management? Control and communication, the understanding of materiality & contextual judgement, and the way critical incidents are dealt with would all merge to fit; all of which can be prepared for.

Good referees know the laws and can apply them; better ones can manage the game so that they don't need to.

If we look at the top end of the game, Premiership games, we expect around 10 penalties per game. Some games I have watched this season have seen 30+ penalties. Why? Player skill, Referee control, maybe both?

Going back to my playing days, as many of our senior referees will tell you, if you failed to manage me as a player / Captain, I would manage you and the game. I looked at referees and built up an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and used that to either challenge them or praise them depending on how I wanted to influence them. Depending on who the referee was may have also determined if we switched Captaincy for the day.

Not all players will be as prepared as I was but generally if a referee fails to manage a game 'self-policing' will take over. Players will look to deal out their own punishment for offenders who they perceive are not being managed. This could be feet on players who have failed to roll away from the tackle, to a full scale brawl following dangerous play.

I have worked with coaches who had a similar strategy. They would do their homework on both opposition and the referee and would use certain players to either positively or negatively manage the referee. Who the referee was would influence who was tasked to manage him.

If we go back to the Premiership, could you imagine someone managing Wayne Barnes or J.P. Doyle? They may try, but I would suggest they don't succeed.

When faced with a referee who I didn't know I would listen to their brief and plan from there. Generally I found those that liked to talk didn't act. White noise in the changing room led to the same on the field of play. Also those that were rushed and non-specific would make rash decisions on the field. I would also spend the first 5 or 10 minutes 'testing the water'; the reaction I got would set the tone for the game.

When I applied to join LSRUR as a referee I went along to watch a game with Ted Sewell. Pre-match we were talking over a cup of tea with the referee and Ted asked if I had refereed a game yet? My response was no. The referee laughed and said 'maybe not with a whistle but hundreds without'!

When I took up refereeing I understood player's mentality and set out to manage them. Along the way I had to develop. I began with an empathy of what players wanted to do, but found that some players would try to take advantage of that. Then I developed a harsh mentality of I was going to be in control, I policed the game! This alienated me from the players and closed off the channels of communication. Eventually I found a way to bring both sides of my game together and developed a management strategy that would stand me in good stead.

Materiality and Contextual Judgement are, for me, simplistic. They are empathy based solutions to the application (or not) of Law. Managing Critical Incidents is at the opposite end of the scale and MUST be policed. It's the middle ground, the other 90+% of the game where a Control and Communication Strategy is required that is a more complex issue.

Think about your own refereeing; do you use a clear control and communication strategy, or are you operating 'off the cuff'? As human beings we are all different, therefore we need managing differently.

As a referee I observe and profile players and look to build an understanding of how they need to be managed. Some will respond to an empathetic approach others need policing from the start. Again I have developed this over a period of time. I initially looked at the character and treated them the same in every game. So if you needed policing in the first game that was the same in every game. However no two games are the same, as human beings we are affected by many outside factors and they influence our behaviour. A player who has had a row with the wife before the game may wish to take that frustration out on someone in the game, the problem is will that be legally or illegally?

Over a period of time I have learnt to manage individuals in individual situations. I have built a strong management strategy that I practice and employ.

As a referee we have the ability of losing players from the first whistle if we get the first interaction wrong. Preparation is key; players will run through drills before the game so that they are in tune with the game from the first whistle. A referee should do the same.

I never set foot on to a rugby pitch without having refereed / managed every element of the game beforehand. So even if I am faced with a critical incident in the first minute of the game I have already managed a similar incident in my pre-match.

However poor preparation can adversely affect a game too. Turn up expecting a battle and you will get one. Anticipate one and you may have to manage it. A psychology phrase for this is 'Perception is Projection'; we could go in to it in depth but instead let's use simplistic animal behaviour.... Two rams meet; their perception is that the other is out to take what's theirs. Outcome; they start butting heads!

As the season draws to a close maybe you could look at your own ability to manage the game and make an honest appraisal of how you operate. Your strategy must fit your personality, but remember, players don't carry a whistle so they should not referee the game!

Greg Garner

LSRUR Referee Development

## Is referee abuse on the rise? Louis Massarella shares a recent experience.

On a recent exchange to Bristol where I was to cover a level six game. On arriving at the ground I was made to feel welcome and offered the usual coffee and “ can we get you anything else?” I go through my normal routine of briefings, meeting the match observer, warm up and getting mentally prepared.

The match kicks off , it was a very scrappy game with numerous knock on’s , mistakes and poor decision making, especially by the home side, in total we had 27 scrums and 28 lineouts. At half time the home side were down by 14 points, with the visitors taking both of their chances , but if the home side had taken their two opportunities and not knocked on twice! 2 meters out from the line with just the full back to beat it could have been a different score line. I could sense a frustration creeping in that I needed to manage. On the re start it was pretty much the same and on 50 minutes the visitors scored their 3<sup>rd</sup> try in the corner, the home coach who was now making his way up the touchline to bring water approached me to say” you need to start reffing the scrum” at which I replied “ Not now” at which he turned and in front of his team said” you know what ref you are incompetent” and then continued to walk off I called him back at which point he told me to “F... off” I called him back to me again asking for his name which he continued to walk off, which I told him then to carry on and remove himself from the playing area. The captain was already in the bin so I asked the vice captain for his name which he apologised for his behaviour, but could not give me his name. I decided to carry on playing and deal with the matter after.

As you can appreciate this made the next 30 minutes a very difficult one to manage, as I now have a team that are playing very poorly , the coach has implied that they are losing this game because of the ref and not their inability to hold on to the ball and making unforced errors; but we got through it. This was a game that was full of set plays so it did not flow, surprisingly there were only 14 penalties and one yellow for a cynical foul 2 meters out from the line. As I came off the pitch with the home side losing the supporters were not happy, but I could not tell if this was for the players performance or “lets blame the ref”.

The match observer who had also witnessed the coaches abuse , told me I had to find him and get his name, which I had to find the chairman to retrieve the information, but the coach was nowhere to be seen. As it turned out he is a professional player with a premiership club doing his coaching badges!

I had my briefing ,and a quick drink in the clubhouse as at this point I was not being to feel welcome anymore ! and was going to leave to pick up my two colleagues.

On getting into my car there was a knock on the window, the coach had made an appearance ! he proceed to profusely apologise for his behaviour and agreed that it was totally unacceptable, and could I accept his apology and not put a formal report in as it was heat of the moment comments. I responded that he should have thought about that before he did what he did.

It does seem that there is more of the football mentally creeping into our game and we need to set the standards as referees at every level, players, coaches and supporters should not be allowed to get away with verbal abuse, so we must make sure we report it if it happens and not ignore it.

The report went to an RFU hearing, and he received a suspended coaching-ban.

		<b>Referee Grades April 2016</b>			
<b>Name</b>		<b>Grade</b>		<b>Innactive</b>	<b>Apr-16</b>
			No17 - 26.4.16		
Nick	Bartlett	9			
Ray	Bates	9			
Mick	Birchall	Pres			
Jonathan	Bird	7		Y	
Peter	Bower	7			
Jeremy	Brooks	7			
Tom	Brucciani	6			
Josh	Burgess	6DF	Greg Garner ©		
Jenny	Burrows	7			
Rupert	Burton	10			
Roger	Cairns	Pres		Y	
John	Carr	10			
Duncan	Chandler	8			
Tim	Clamp	Prob			
David	Clarkson	RFU		Y	
Paul	Clayton	9			
Peter	Connor	7DF	Nick Houghton ©		7
Elliott	Coombs	8	Tony Gardiner ©		8
David	Cox	8			
Karl	Craig-West	10			
Rhys	Davies	RFU			
Mark	Elliott	Pres			
James	Fairbourn	9	Kerrel Wills		9
Keith	Fisher	9			
David	Flick	Pres			
Andrew	Forsythe	9	D.Edkins (M)		9
Stephen	Gammage	RFU			
Tony	Gardiner	7			
Greg	Garner	RFU			
Guy	Gasper	Pres			
Rob	Haines	9			
Myles	Halley	10			
Peter	Harris	12			
Chris	Haywood	10	T.Brucciani		
David	Henderson	12			
Richard	Henson	8			

Gavin	Hill	9			
Jason	Hill	Prob			
John	Hill	Pres			
Simon	Hincks	7	Peter Bower (M)		
Nick	Houghton	6			
Mark	Hunt	Pres			
Thomas	Hurdley	8		Y	
Mike	Ingram	10			10
Chris	Jackson	12			12
Charlie	Jefferson	8			
Alistair	Kesby	Prob			
Sam	Kincaid	8			8
Rob	Knapp	7			
Jeffrey	Knight	Pres			
Paul	MacMillan	7			
Louis	Massarella	6DF	Greg Garner ©		
Barnie	Matthews	9			
Jonathon	McGrath	12			
Andy	Miller	9			
Ross	Murray	Prob			
Jaswinder	Nagra	11			
Ross	Neale	7D			
Jim	Parsons	12			
Jon	Petzing	RFU			
Ian	Pollock	9			
Martin	Prince	10			
George	Richardson	6DF	Mark Elliott ©		6
John	Ryan	8			
Ben	Sawyer	Prob			
Edwin	Silkstone	10			
Nigel	Smith	9	Kerrel Wills (M)		9
Wayne	Spencer	RFU			
Alan	Steane	9			
Colin	Storry	9			
Paul	Tilley	7	N.Houghton (M)		7
Vernon	Turner	11	N.Houghton (M)		11
Joseph	Wain	12	Gammage (M)		12
Kieran	Walters	9	D.Edkins (M)		9
Dave	Williams	8			
Martin	Williams	Pres			
Kerrel	Wills	Pres			
Duncan	Wilson	Pres			
Julian	Wise	9			

79 Total

75 Active

4 inactive

Y	Innactive
	M = Mentor
	C = Coach