

# Leicestershire Society of Rugby Union Referees

November 2019

The next members' meeting takes place on Monday 25 November 2019 **starting at 7.30pm**. The meeting will be presented by.... **RFU Premiership Referee - CHRISTOPHE RIDLEY!**

**Please dig out your name badges you were provided with and wear them to the meeting.**

## **Dates for your diary:**

**Monday 25 November 19-** Members meeting at Vipers RFC

**Friday 24 April 20-** Annual Dinner at Welford Road. Shane Williams will be the speaker.

**Saturday 14 December 19** – Society Curry Night! Meet at the Parcel Yard from 6.30pm and then on to Chef's Flavour for a curry. Christmas hats/jumpers encouraged, let Andrew Forsythe know if you are going to attend.

We have tickets available for England v Wales and England v Ireland at Twickenham and France v England away please contact johnhill01@sky.com if you would like to make a request.

## Note from the Chairman

With Christmas fast approaching, this season is proving to be as busy as ever. You will not have noticed any differences in the way that you receive appointments etc. However, the Appointments team are working very hard in the background, trying to integrate the system that we enjoy, with the Who's The Ref system, which we are due to move onto. Watch this space for how this eventually ends up, but the critical factor is that we don't want to compromise on the usability of our current system.

Personally, I am delighted to be getting back out in the middle, after my knee surgery; it seems like a long time to be stood on the touch line. Having said that, I am still enjoying the coaching role and have helped Geoff out with a few assessments, from time to time. It is proof indeed, that there is an enjoyable role for you in the Society, once you hang your whistle up!

The Committee are currently speaking to several kit companies about setting up an online shop for Refereeing kit and Society regalia. This will be in place for the start of next season and will make obtaining your kit very straightforward and mean an end to us carrying large quantities of stock. We have sourced Society shirts locally and you will have all received an invitation to order one, at a very reasonable price.

I am delighted to welcome Christophe Ridley to our meeting on Monday and I hope everyone makes an effort to attend to give him a warm welcome. Christophe is a local lad and, after having his playing career with Tigers Academy cut short because of injury, took up the whistle. He is proof that, with plenty of hard work and dedication, the pathway to the very top of the refereeing pyramid is possible to follow. I look forward to hearing what he has to say on Monday.

This will be our last Members Meeting of 2019, so may I take this opportunity to wish yourselves and your families, a peaceful and prosperous Christmas and New Year.

Mark

Mark Elliott

Chairman

Leicestershire Society of Rugby Union Referees

## LSRUR Training Report

Much has been going on behind the scenes this last month. As well as the excellent and dedicated work of coaches and mentors on a one-to one basis with their referees and the usual session for members' meetings, we have been running further development training sessions at Leicester Central fire station.

The first, back in October, focused on the Scrum and how to recognise and address common problems such as wheeling and collapsing. The session was well attended and useful for those present.

On Tuesday 12th Nov, Andrew Forsythe gave another excellent training session on the Maul. The format was relaxed and interactive and the group discussed the aspects of law relating the maul and various clips and management techniques on how best to referee (or not!) this part of the game. The learning points and knowledge gained were then cemented in place using liquid refreshment and discussion in the Old Horse. A good evening for all!

This Members' Meeting will host a training session from Christophe Ridley – LSRUR protégé and professional RFU referee. He will be talking about Finishing off a Game and the focus and awareness needed at this crucial stage of a match. He will also host a Q&A session for members.

The next Development training session is on Tuesday 3rd Dec, 7pm at Leicester Central Fire Station. (If it is difficult to make it for 7pm, feel free to arrive as soon as you can. The sessions are open, relaxed and useful even if you miss the start). The topic and presenter will be announced via email once confirmed (i.e. I am still working on it!)

Finally, if there are any pressing matters you would like to have delivered as a training session or for general questions about law/management etc please feel free to contact me anytime – [tom@brucciani.co.uk](mailto:tom@brucciani.co.uk) or 07720 292277

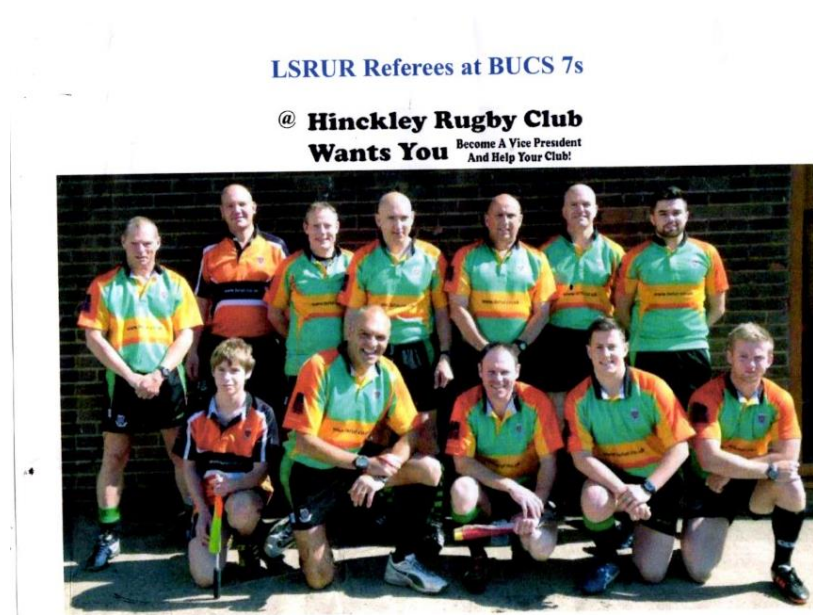
Keep Learning!

Tom Brucciani

Hon Training Officer

LSRUR

# CHRISTOPHE RIDLEY



Christophe was a rugby player with Leicester Tigers Academy but due to injury sustained in an LV Cup match (as it was then) he had to retire from playing. His passion for the game led him to taking up refereeing. He joined our Leicestershire Society at the age of 18 in September 2012. He refereed many games for us [and the Tigers]

during the 2012-13 Season and quickly completed his probationary games to be awarded his Society regalia and kitbag. In the picture above you will see a picture of a team of our referees (including Christophe) who had just officiated the BUCS University 7s.

His talents were spotted by Chris White, who took an interest in him and at the end of the 12/13 Season, Christophe moved to Gloucester University to study for degree and to pursue refereeing as part of Chris White's academy.

When he left us in 2013 he was a level 8 referee and by the end of the 2013-2014 season Christophe was accepted onto the RFU National Panel of Referees.

In the 2014-2015 Season Christophe refereed 21 games at Level 4 and 10 at Level 3. At the end of the season he was so highly regarded that the RFU sent him to represent them at the Under 18 World Youth Tournament in Japan where he was selected to referee the semi-final between New Zealand Schools and Australia Schools.

On his return in June 2015 he was invited to interview with Tony Spreadbury and Chris White for a position on the Professional Game Match Official Team (PGMOT). Christophe accepted the position and has not looked back since.

Christophe refereed his first Premiership game on 26 November 2017 between London Irish and Wasps and he has continued to go from strength to strength. Christophe is now a regular in the Premiership and continued to develop and progress on the international stage. He was selected to referee at the World u20s in Argentina earlier this year and will be presenting to us on Monday 25 November 2019 – fresh from refereeing Edinburgh v Bordeaux-Bègles in the Challenge Cup.

Mike Mortimer – Eulogy by Rhys Davies

Mort lived his game of life like he played his rugby – with passion, commitment and with little or no compromise.

The playing side of his life has been well documented with his 132 first team appearances for Leicester and subsequently with Stoneys RFC, but Mort played in an era when a Berni Inn steak was pre-match nutrition and a few beers on the way home was post match hydration. He used to tell a story of the team walking into a pub on the way home, Paul Ring walking up to the jukebox, pulling the plug out and saying right boys, we're singing.

But it falls to me to talk about Mort the referee, the arbiter of high integrity, and we've heard him described as a poacher turned gamekeeper already, but his refereeing style had echoes of his playing career and I was told recently that he saw a player get punched in a game and told him he could have one back as a free one, but that would be it. His pre-match talk included something along the lines of two player fighting was a cuddle and it wouldn't be a fight until someone else joined in.

The ethos of having a beer after the game stayed with Mort and he used to advise referees he coached to buy the front row players a beer after the game so they'd tell him where he'd gone wrong reffing the scrum that afternoon. It was good advice, and it's advice I give to new referees now as well.

It even stayed with him later when he was president of the referees in Leicestershire. He considered it his role to go to each club and present them with a commemorative pint pot, which he would then drink from all night.

As my coach, Mort did what he could to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, introduced me to whiskey macs, to many of my boyhood heroes. One of his former team mates, Nick Joyce was introduced to me as "Plod" because he couldn't remember his proper name. He also told me very early on that the referee is the least important but the most influential person on the field.

That pearl of wisdom is one that all referees would do well to remember.

He was recognised as a good coach – many of his charges went on to referee at higher levels than just in Leicestershire – Mark Elliot, Richard Tudor went to group level, Rob Debney to fully professional refereeing and more recently someone for whom Mort had a lot of regard and high hopes, George Richardson who is already starting his career as a RFU referee.

Not that *that* relationship started well. George called me one day to tell me that he and Mort had had a spat and that it had ended up with Mort binning him off, so

I advised George that if he wanted Mort to carry on as his coach, to knock on Mort's door with a bottle of scotch in his hand. In fairness he did, and Mort and I had Whiskey macs that night.

His passion for developing referees came from his love of educating and even as training officer for the society, Mort was always looking for ways to spread the rugby love. He would organise referee development evenings and use his contacts in the game to invite professional players and referees to talk to this group of young referees.

Under Mort's guidance, Leicestershire was the first society to introduce a law test for referees, something the RFU recognised as the way forward and adopted it themselves.

The social aspect of the game was important to Mort and if he could tie rugby in with a few beers, he'd be all for it.

He would organise tours and exchange visits, West Wales was one, and I think we eventually exchanged with the Scotland, the USA, France and South Africa. The Welsh one was the first, and he had someone in the know who owned a hotel on the A5, just by Lutterworth. It has a slightly different use these days, but maybe that's how the strip club gig came about. Just saying.

He recognised that the referee wives put up with quite a lot, and he introduced a ladies night dinner which, in typical Mort style, was sponsored, so it cost little to attend and every lady received a gift for letting us referees do what we did on a Saturday afternoon. And any other time we could get away with it.

As times moved, those evenings became BBQ's and, like many, we were regular visitors to Warwick Rd.

In my case the visits were probably more frequent than most because while Mort embraced technology and advance, he wasn't very good at it, and I'd often get a call to fix his computer when he broke it, which was couple of times a week at one point. Such was his ability with technology that when I called in a couple of months ago – to fix his computer – he told me the TV hadn't been working for 3 days and that he and Roanne had run out of things to talk about. I turned the satellite box on and it was fine. He just laughed and swore a bit, but he loved technology.

My first visit there was to buy a copy of Mort's book and , basically, that's how I learned the laws, but Mort was a stickler for rugby law knowledge probably based on the fact that in \*his\* first game as a ref, he'd blown the whistle to stop the game and realised he had no idea how to re-start it.

That passion for educating people about the game moved across or back to supporters, and we delivered Rugby Law Explained courses at various clubs, but most often at Northampton Saints.

The club would often send squad players along to meet the supporters, and we'd get them to do some demonstrations if it was practical. Scrums were the topic that night and Dylan Hartley and a guy called Piggy Powell came along. Well, Dylan was the England hooker at the time, and Piggy had played against Mort back in the day, so when we tried to get them to go two on one and demonstrate binding, Mort and Piggy started punching each other.

That wasn't the first time we got in trouble at Saints to be fair. The very first one we did had Alli Hephher and Paul Grayson there, and the audience were after blood because of the way that Buck Shelford had them playing they gave the boys a really hard time.

We enjoyed it though. It was Northampton and we were Leicester, so it didn't matter.

Mort was a strong character – I don't think anyone would disagree with that - and he was always right unless you could prove him wrong. We still argue about Mark Cueto's foot being in touch (it was) when England lost the world cup final against South Africa in 2007, but if you challenged Mort's views, you had to be able to back it up, and he'd – mostly – accept that. I'm hoping for a different result tomorrow.

In fact, that non-try nearly got me into a fight in the Bulls Head in Cosby. Leicester City had played prior to the world cup, so there were a lot of footies in there afterwards, and the ones opposite us started abusing Paul Sackey, the other winger. I challenged him about his views in a fairly robust manner as you would, and the two of us were almost nose to nose when he looked sideways and suddenly sat down. I thought I'd scored a moral victory but actually Mort and Trevor – about the same size as Mort – were both standing behind me.

Yeah. Mort was a strong character with strong values.

I choose to remember him for that, for the summer BBQ's; the tommy tuckers singing at events for their dinners; his generosity, knowledge, strength of character and his friendship.

Full time has been called for Mort and his game is over.

Well played, mate.

Well played.

## **SUNDAYS**

Due to the heavy rainfall, the Cup games on Sundays 10<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> November were badly disrupted and most have now been rearranged for Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December; thank you to everyone who offered their services.

Consequently, there will now be a lot of games on 1<sup>st</sup> December and if you are available (morning or afternoon), then please let me know.

Looking a little further ahead, the last of the 3 Super Sundays is taking place on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December, which will encompass U14, U15 & U16 Cup games and here is the very excuse you were looking for to get out of Christmas shopping or decorating the Christmas tree.

There are very few games for the next two Sundays after this date, so this is probably the last opportunity to have a run out.

As mentioned in the Newsletter last month, there is an increasing number of games on a Sunday afternoon and if you are looking for a gentle run out, your services would be most welcome.

As ever, I can be contacted by call/text to 07896 202382 or by email to [sunday@lsrur.co.uk](mailto:sunday@lsrur.co.uk).

Duncan Chandler

Sunday Appointments



## President's Lunch 2019

On 27 October 2019 Kerrel and Terri Wills hosted our party 45 as we all sat down to lunch at Longcliffe Golf Club for the President's Lunch – and what a tremendous lunch it was!



The President's Lunch for those that were not there, or have not been for a while is a casual gathering where our members can relax and enjoy a delicious three-course meal (with wine!) and catch up with each other without the need to run around a field with a whistle before-hand! Traditionally, the lunch has been an opportunity for our members to treat 'the other half' and thank him or her for allowing us to nip out of the house for a few hours so that we can do what we all love which is to referee rugby. This year's lunch was very well attended by a vibrant and diverse mixture of society members, with the youngest being 24! Those attending were also entertained by David Flick and Terri Wills who performed a musical number from Oliver (left).

Some pictures of the lunch are below. Kerrel has done a fantastic job of organising the Lunch throughout his presidency and next year will hand over the mantle to a new president. It would be great if, as soon as the date is published, you helped support the new president by attending the Lunch in 2020.

