



October 2025 - Issue 713

Officers & Committee

President - D.Roper

Life Vice Presidents -, A R Day, P L Gauntlett MSA, L Johnstone, D J Norman MSA, V K Skilton MSA, G Turner, S Tyler MSA, S J Maguire MSA

Vice Presidents - AJ Hook, D. Roper



Chairman	Dave Norman	07977-498273	dnorman54@gmail.com
Secretary / Welfare Officer	Geoff Turner	07810-356694	geoff.turnerlbw@gmail.co.uk
Treasurer / Membership Secretary	Stephen Maguire	07808-481278	stephenjmag36@gmail.com
Vice-Chairman	Tony Sheppard	07929-868963	tony.sheppard@engie.com
Supplies Officer	Gareth Mays	01372-744094	gmays2458@hotmail.co.uk
Training/Development / Social Media	Jamie Beal	07450-681969	jamesbeal93@gmail.com
Editor / Website / RA Delegate	Steve Watson	07791-112583	stephenwatson1616@gmail.com
Press Officer	Steve Tyler	07796-554350	tyler672@aol.com
Social Secretary	Dave Roper	0208-6545510	dj5725@googlemail.com
RA Delegate	Peter Crichlow	07305-929848	ppcrichlow@yahoo.co.uk

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and on our [Website](#)

Chairman's foreword



Well, the first of the seasons meetings got off to a great start, with Jamie Beal presenting the changes to the Laws of the game for this season followed by a series of match incidents as video clips. The discussions that followed I think were both informative and helpful for all.

The next Society meeting also promises an interesting presentation by Damith Bandara who was trained by Croydon Society in 2005 and now operates as an Assistant Referee on the EFL since 2019. Further detail later from Geoff.

The FA has recently published an update on its 2023 to 2026 Grow, Guide and Govern Referee strategy, I have put together a summary of the information below: -



- The number of referees registered is now 39,000 up 2,000 from the same time last year and expected to rise to 42,000 this season, which would be a record.

- Most of the growth is from young people with 57% aged under 24 and 40% are under 18. Improved retention of 82% in the last year was a record and seen as the key to these numbers.

- The FA continues to improve its' Centre of Refereeing Excellence (CORE) with new training and development schemes. Within the CORE activity a new initiative has begun called the National performance Centre (NPC) with the goal of being a central hub for the top 30 referee prospects and providing a structured high performance training environment. - There is a continued push to achieve diversity at all levels of refereeing with a new pathway with diversity is the norm.

- Referee abuse remains a challenge and the FA recognises the need to change attitudes and perception through education. The Bodycam trial continues and has been seen to act as a strong deterrent and will be continued.

The full review can be accessed on the FA website.

We are still trying to persuade the Surrey County FA to streamline/expedite the flow of information to the local Refereeing Societies. This clearly is limiting our chances. We know that in other Counties they are achieving it, but Surrey is not. I am sorry that I will be unable to attend the next Society meeting due to a family funeral but will be delegating the chairmanship to one of my colleagues.

I hope your season has got off to a good start but if you need any help or advice please call on your colleagues or Committee members/Officers for support.

David Norman
Chair



September 2025 - Guest speaker Jamie Beal

As has become tradition in recent seasons, we welcomed one of our own to provide an update on the Law changes effective for the 2025/26 season. Jamie has been an FA Referee Developer for more than 10 years now and we as a Society are fortunate to be able to tap into his knowledge and experience at the beginning of the season.



Law changes 2025/26

A summary of the key 2025/26 Law Changes in Football that impact officiating, match management, and player behaviour are as follows:

- **Law 3 – The Players**

‘Captains Only’ Communication - to prevent players surrounding referees competitions may adopt a rule where only the captain can approach the referee for explanations. Once invoked, this allows the referee to create some space and take some heat out of the situation and is intended to improve on-field behaviour and to enhance cooperation and strengthen the rapport between the players and the referee.

Please note, if the captain is a goalkeeper, a designated outfield player must be nominated.

Jamie reiterated the expectation that if players do not respect this they should be sanctioned with at least one player being cautioned or sin-binned.

- **Law 5 & Law 12 – The Referee & Fouls and Misconduct**

Eight-Second Rule for Goalkeepers: If a goalkeeper holds the ball with hands/arms for more than 8 seconds, a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team.

This should be accompanied with a Visible Countdown Gesture with referees now signalling the final 5 seconds of the goalkeeper's control time to aid enforcement.

Jamie emphasised the need for the ball to be under the "control" of the goalkeeper and the need for more tolerance in youth football.

He also provided some tips to help better manage such situations along the lines of:

- Prevention - pre-match briefings used to ensure goalkeepers are aware of protocol
- Pro-activity - early shout to get on with the game
- Presence - lingering nearer the penalty area so you are seen to be managing
- Practical - no two saves are the same to don't be too rigid in your approach

▪ Law 8 – Dropped Ball Procedure

- Inside Penalty Area: Dropped to the defending goalkeeper.

There are times when the ball would clearly have gone to an opponent of the team that last touched the ball. In such instances, it is fairer for the ball to be dropped for the team that would have gained possession, as long as this is clear to the referee.

- Outside Penalty Area: Dropped to the team that would have gained possession—if clear to the referee. Otherwise, to the team that last touched the ball.

▪ Law 9 – Ball In and Out of Play

Accidental Contact by Off-Field Personnel: If a coach, substitute, or sent-off player touches the ball unintentionally as it leaves the field, play restarts with an indirect free kick—no disciplinary sanction unless persistent misconduct occurs.

▪ Law 14 – Penalty kick

Although NOT a Law change IFAB clarified the rules on penalty kicks in July 2025 so that at the taking of a penalty:

Once the ball is kicked and clearly moves, it's in play.

- The kicker must not play the ball again until it has touched another player (including the goalkeeper).
- If the kicker deliberately touches the ball a second time before that happens, the referee awards an indirect free kick to the defending team.
- If the kicker accidentally touches the ball twice (e.g. slips and hits it with both feet), and the ball goes in, the penalty will be retaken.
- If the accidental double touch doesn't result in a goal, the defending team gets an indirect free kick.

This change aims to be fairer in cases where a player loses footing or balance—especially in high-stakes moments like shootouts.

Why did you become involved in refereeing?

Jamie was interested to know why those who attended the meeting had started to referee and sought answers to this basic question.

In general the responses received were as follows:

- Staying Active & Involved
- Love for the Game
- Money
- Giving Back
- Developing Transferable Skills
- Progression & Opportunities

Practical application of Law

To get attendees moving Jamie then provided a few quiz questions with members having to move to different sides of the room dependent upon the answers (akin to Run-around, a children's quiz show hosted by Mike Reid in the 1970s).

Jamie ended the evening by showing a selection of videos involving challenges of varying degrees and those present had to judge whether the challenges were careless, reckless warranting a caution, or acts of serious foul play.

The Vote of thanks was given by Stephen Maguire.



October Meeting – Damith Bandara “The Specialist Role”

Damith Qualified as a referee in 2005 trained by Croydon RA!!



In his early days he officiated on the Redhill District & South East Combination. Later he was on the Surrey Intermediate League and then the Combined Counties. While at Redhill he was Referee of the Year.

He has officiated on the Surrey Lower Junior Cup Final as Referee, Surrey Junior Cup Final Referee, Surrey Premier Cup Final Referee, Surrey Senior Cup Final AR, Combined Counties Challenge Cup AR and Combined Counties Premier Cup Referee. In 2019 he was promoted to the National List as an Assistant Referee on the English Football League.

Damith is an Assistant Head teacher in South London, specialising in Leadership, coaching and mentoring.

Article by Geoff Turner

WhatsApp Group



If you would like to be added to the **Croydon Referees Society WhatsApp** group then please contact Jamie Beale on 07450 681969 or at james.beal93@googlemail.com.

Their Final Whistle

My sincere apologies for omitting the following section from the September Ray – Ed

We are very sad to report that **George Herbert Dickson** passed away in June aged 88.

George was born in Belfast adopted. He was 20 years old when he moved to England. Around 1960 he met a midwife, Angela, and they were married in 1964. Apparently they got on so well because they were like chalk and cheese! They had 2 sons, Christopher and Matthew.

George worked in a Merchant Bank but at the age of 58 he suffered a heart attack and always thought that he would be the first to pass. However, in 2004 Angela was diagnosed as having bone cancer and in 2011 she passed away.

George was Treasurer of Croydon Referees' Society for many years and was meticulous in his book keeping. He could be a little stubborn but was happy to voice an opinion in his inimitable Irish style and manner. He possessed a sense of humour accompanied by a twinkle in his eye.

He had been a lunch time regular attendee at the weekly Croydon Clock tower jazz sessions with fellow Croydon referees', Dave Gower and Roy Topp. We sorely missed his attendance at meetings because of his declining health. He did however attend to receive his 50 year award at our centenary event (see pic below).



We are also very sad to report that **Richard Ireson** passed away in August, aged 77.

Richard was trained by Croydon RA and qualified in 1996. He was a member up until the end of the 2016/17 season. As he was increasingly doing more around the administration of Leagues he stepped back from refereeing however he remained heavily involved with Referees. He became the Surrey County FA Referees Secretary under David Crick. He served on the SCFA Referees Committee for a number of years and elected as a Vice President in 2001.

Richard was born in December 1946 and was an actor and writer. He had a variety of roles including episodes of Inspector Morse, Poirot, The Bill, EastEnders, Minder and Doctor Who.



-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0--

STANDARD BUILDING SERVICES – Established 1985

All building work undertaken:-

Plastering	Carpentry
Bricklaying	Electrical
Plumbing	Roofing
Painting & Decorating	
Extensions	
Kitchens /Bathrooms fitted	

Free Estimates, Insurance work undertaken, **NO JOB TOO SMALL**

Discount for Croydon RA Members

Contact PETER CRICHLLOW at our Society meetings
or telephone 07305 929848
or email Peter at Standardbuildingmaintenance56@gmail.com

Meet the Ref (No. 4) – Alan Donovan

I started to referee just over 45 years ago, I had a friend from Scouting who was already a referee and my wife thought that as I enjoyed watching football I might enjoy it as well, as I am still doing 3 games most weekends I suppose that was a good prophecy. I remember going to a local school one night a week being coached through the laws of the game by instructors Peter Stracey, Ray Hearn and Joe Chambers, They managed to make the learning of the laws interesting and most people went on to pass the exam at the end of the course. In those days the Referees Association organised the courses and most people on the course automatically joined Croydon RA, I have been a member of the RA ever since, mostly with Croydon but took a break for a few years and moved to Sutton RA, it was just as near and to be honest at the time possibly had more active referees, with the closure of Sutton RA, I'm now back in Croydon.

I still remember my first game on the Thornton Heath league and how nervous I was. I refereed on the Thornton Heath league on Saturdays and the South London Youth League on Sundays the league that my friend was on. It was some time after qualifying that I past my driving test so in the early days my wife used to drive me to my matches and stay and watch, it was not long before she stopped staying as she could not stand the comments from the players or spectators, after that I either travelled by public transport or she would take me and pick me up afterwards, I would never have been able to do the amount of refereeing I have without her support.

A while back there was sufficient referee societies in Surrey for there to be annual 5 a side competitions and quizzes between the various societies, I enjoyed being a part of the quiz teams trained by Peter Stracey. I think the main reason there are only 4 societies left in Surrey, goes back to when the county took over running referee courses rather than the societies. As then the majority of new referees joined the RA, whereas now referee societies find it difficult to know about new referees.

I had a few seasons where work commitments allowed me to do some assisting on the Southern Youth League in the evenings. I had some good time and learnt a lot going out midweek assisting with some very experienced referees I would recommend doing some assisting if referees have the chance. I also assisted at AFC Wimbledon academy.

One of the games I will always remember and was possibly the highest level I had refereed at was when I went to Croydon Arena to be assistant referee at Croydon v Millwall Ladies and the referee did not turn up and I took the middle with an assistant we got from the crowd. These were two of the best ladies teams at the time and a local derby. The Croydon team was eventually taken over by Charlton. I cannot remember all of the players but I am sure that the future England manager Hope Powell was playing for Croydon. Almost 30 years ago I was able whilst holidaying in USA to Referee at a tournament there, where referees were called SIR and this was one of my earliest encounters with Women's Football, a part of the game I still have great interest in and now share with my daughter and granddaughter.

I also served on the committee as social secretary organising annual dinners which included the President and others proposing drinks with guest and members. I was also County RA delegate.

I was referee secretary for the Tandridge league for nearly 20 years and would like to thank all the referees who did games for me during this period. I eventually left to take a break and do more refereeing as I found I could not referee on Saturdays due to sorting out Sunday fixtures. I have now returned to the Tandridge League as referee Development officer.



I have spent my whole time refereeing at grassroots football, from leagues, county cup fixtures and school matches. I have had some bad experiences but many good ones. I have found the last few seasons refereeing on the Wimbledon league (now the Wimbledon and Kingston) some of the most enjoyable mainly because of the player's behaviour.

Finally I would like to say that I have enjoyed my time attending RA meetings have listened to a lot of great speakers and had very good discussions on games which I think have helped my refereeing, my biggest disappointment is the drop in numbers of referees attending RA meetings especially active referees.

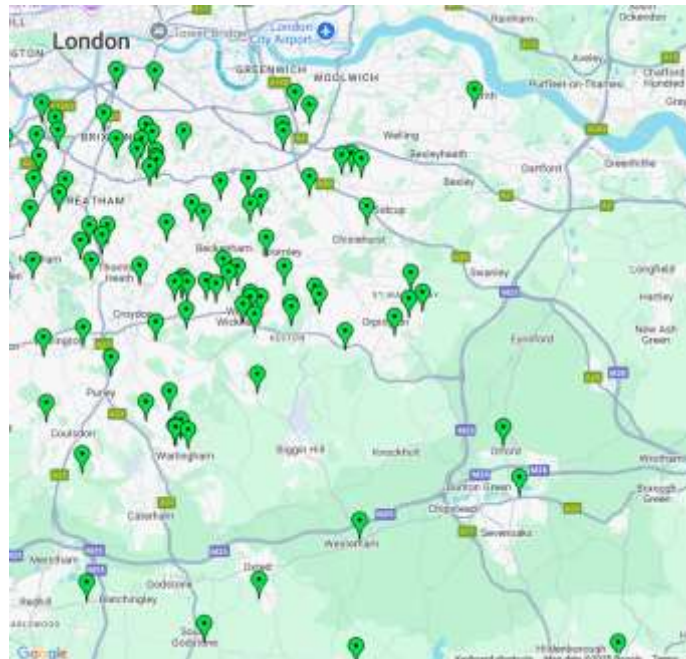
Having completed 45 years I look forward to reaching 50 years of active refereeing.

Alan

Tandridge Youth League



This is a large Sunday Youth league covering a large area. I have recently joined the committee as referee development officer, as the league is at present very short of panel referees. It is to my knowledge, the only youth league in Surrey that operates a panel, as most clubs outside the league supply referees for the home games, this as well as the panel is also the system in the Tandridge and will always be due to the large number of games each week.



I am aiming to increase the number of referees on the panel through referee societies and working closely with London and Surrey FA in regard to new referees. I am also looking to assist new referees and club referees to support them and improve their game.

I will be trying to encourage both panel and club referees to come along to Croydon referees society and to join the RA.

I would ask if any of you would like to join the panel and occasionally referee on a Sunday to let me know and to let anyone that you know the same. I am also working with Geoff Turner to see what Croydon RA can do to assist young or new referees and we are looking for volunteers to go out occasionally and watch and support a referee if you are interested in this please contact Geoff or myself.

Article by Alan Donovan

Puzzle Corner – When did that happen?



Here are six teasers for you, can you get the year:-

1. When did the rules change from 2 points for a win to 3 points in the football league?
2. When was the first ever referee society (in London) formed?
3. When were substitutes first used in the football league?
4. When was the law changed so that a goalkeeper could not pick up a ball from a deliberate back pass?
5. When were red and yellow cards first used in the English league?
6. When was law changed so that it was a caution for removing your jersey when celebrating a goal?

Answers on page 14.

Ed's & tales

I watched part of a woman's game recently at a local park when there was an aerial clash and the referee blew to stop play to ensure that both players were OK and that there was no head injuries. With both players fit enough to continue, he then gave a contested drop ball? Due to a later injury to one of the goalkeepers there was a long delay and I couldn't stay until half time. If so, I think I would have mentioned to him that all drop balls should be uncontested. What would you have done?



If you have any content (e.g. Anecdotes picked from previous games or your views on the game we love) that you would like me to include, then please email it to me by 25th of the month which will hopefully then give me enough time to include it in the forthcoming edition. If you have any comments on the *Ray* too, then please let me know, anything will be gratefully received.

Steve Watson

Stephenwatson1616@gmail.com

Scan this for the Croydon Referees Society website



Answers When

1. 1981, 2. 1893, 3. 1965, 4. 1992, 5. 1976, 6. 2004