

January 2026 - Issue 716

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Chairman's foreword

I hope those present enjoyed the December Quiz which had been carefully prepared by Steve Maguire. Thanks Steve and to Steve Watson and the Committee who made the Quiz run smoothly. Well done to the participating teams and the winners.

I also hope that you and your family enjoyed both Christmas and the New Year celebrations.



I am sure there will be other reminders in this edition of the Ray, but don't forget we are meeting at the usual venue on Thursday 8th January (one week later than our normal First Thursday) at 19.30 for 19.45 start. Steve Worsley is our guest speaker from Kingston Referees Society and I am sure he will be both educating and informative ... not to be missed.

In the Premier League, one area of the game in particular has, this season, come in for greater scrutiny than ever before: when a goal is scored and an attacking team-mate is in an offside position. This feels like the most problematic area of refereeing right now and has sparked plenty of debate. Why is it so difficult -because offside is an objective fact - a player is either offside or onside when a ball is played. But whether a player in an offside position is **INTERFERING WITH AN OPPONENT** is a subjective decision and must be left down to the referee's interpretation.

On seven different occasions televised in the past few weeks, a 'goal' has been scored with an attacking player in an offside position. Only two of those seven occasions saw the referee's original decision changed after intervention from the VAR. That emphasises how match officials are heeding the direction of the PGMOL - to only intervene if there is a serious mistake. At least now, with VAR, the final decision is based on a committee view - with the referee, referee's assistants and the VAR all involved before a final decision is made.

Of course, this doesn't help all of us refereeing on the lower levels of football, where differences of opinion will prevail when it comes to marginal judgement calls. At least we don't have endless repeats of the incident analysed in the comfort of a studio chair. But such is the game of football, which has been dominated by debate and opinion ever since it became professional in 1885!

Best regards and Happy New Year.

David Norman
Chair

Report of the December Meeting

Thank you to all those that attended our Quiz which led us into the Christmas Period. Stephen Maguire had devised a pretty tough quiz and unfortunately was unable to attend due to family matters. Dave Norman hosted the event with Steve Watson his able assistant and Tony Sheppard on the door ensuring each attendee got their drinks token.

There were 6 main rounds, comprising around 10 questions per round and one ongoing round.





The Last Yet Again team had the best score in 4 of the 7 rounds and led after each of the first 6 rounds. In the final round the No Eyed Deer team outscored all their rivals to claim top spot by 3 points. Well done Bella, Keith, Rod and Luke.

Christmas Quiz 2025 Scorecard		Last Yet Again	French Fries	Can You Repeat That No Eyed Deer		
		Dave & Hilary Roper	Gareth Mays	Alan Donovan	Bella & Keith Shields	
		Patricia Creighton	Dane Johnson	Trevor Joliffe	Rod Van Niekerk	
		Gerry Hemment	Geoff Turner	Matthew Fowler	Luke Thomas	
			Alan Hodge	Steve Tyler		
Round	Max Score					
1	TV and Films	10	9	6	5	8
2	General Knowledge	15	12	7	9	7
3	Sport	10	3	3	3	5
4	London Underground	11	2	4	8	4
5	Food and Drink	10	7	4	1	7
6	Laws of the game	8	7	6	7	5
Subtotal			40	30	33	36
Ongoing	National Flags & Dishes	40	24	25	25	31
Total		104	64	55	58	67



January Meeting – Steve Worsley

Our next society meeting is on **Thursday 8th January 2026**, 7.30pm for a 7.45 start at Croydon Bowls Club. Our guest speaker sees the welcome return of Steve Worsley.

Steve has been refereeing for the last 37 years and 14 years ago, became a referee tutor/ developer and started to teach the referee courses and other workshops. From this, he started to look for clips or anything that could assist this training and this is where these presentations fell into place.

For this season he looked back at what he had done previously and, in the past, and he asked the question “what would you do?” and also let you know what the pundit’s views or similar thoughts.

Now this has gone a stage further and he now asks – **Whats Everyone Saying?**

Steve will present to us clips (of course ☺) and we will discuss what people think of the decisions and he will let us know what everyone else thinks of them too.



What would you do?



In each instance, what do you give, what if any disciplinary action do you take and how do you restart?

Q1. The blue team have given away a throw-in. A red player throws the ball in accordance with law towards his own goalkeeper who is standing in his own penalty area. The ball bounces over the goalkeeper and as the ball is about to enter the goal, the goalkeeper dives and saves the ball which goes out of play over the goal line outside the goal.

Q2. A red defender competes with a blue attacker for the ball and commits a careless tackle outside his own penalty area which denies the opponent an obvious goal scoring opportunity. As the ball goes to another attacking players who gains possession of the ball, you allow play to continue. The blue players shoots and scores a goal.

Q3. While you are in the centre circle, the ball is played by a blue player standing 2 yards away from you. The ball strikes you and rebounds to another blue player who controls the ball dribbles past the defenders and rifles the ball home into the opponents' goal.

Q4. While the ball is in play in the centre circle, the red number 7 who is in his own penalty area takes off his boot and throws it using excessive force at his team manager who is sat on the bench in the dugout.



Photographing and Filming Children

The FA has established guidelines for filming and photographing in football to ensure the safety and protection of young players. Key points include:

- Safe Practices: The FA emphasizes the importance of managing the use of images responsibly, both in person and online, to protect children.
- Guidance Documents: The Surrey FA provides updated guidance for clubs, leagues, coaches, and parents on how to manage filming and photography responsibly.
- Best Practices: The FA's Designated Safeguarding Officer offers best practices for photography and filming youth football, ensuring that images are used safely and respectfully.
- Consent and Transparency: Clubs must clearly inform players and parents about how images and recordings will be used, ensuring transparency and compliance with data protection rules.



08.12.25

The FA Guidance on Filming and Photographing Children

Updates regarding the safe filming and photography of children in football.

For more detailed information, go to the [Surrey FA Website > News](#).

Congratulations



Congratulations to our own Dave Norman who was recently elected as Chairman of Surrey RA. Surrey RA has 5 member Societies (sadly once 12) which are: Woking, Kingston, Croydon, South Surrey (virtual society) and West London.

We hope to obtain closer ties to Surrey FA now, primarily in getting details of recent trainees in our area. Hopefully the end result will be some much needed new members for Croydon RA.

Meet the Ref (No. 5) – Geoff Turner (Reflections part 2)

I have always been a mad, passionate football lover since the late 1950's. However, my pleasure was not just confined to football. Living in Poole we had a speedway team that was bang average. Then in 1965 the format of the league structure changed and Poole Pirates gradually rose to become national champions in 1969 and many times since. Meanwhile I adopted an interest in cricket whilst being hopelessly useless at batting but could bowl a little bit. In the summer holiday Hampshire played home cricket at the lovely Dean Park ground in Bournemouth. This could become a war of attrition watching Henry Horton "race" to scoring 4-8 runs an hour or Derek Shackleton bowling maiden after maiden overs. The West Indian Roy Marshall was the delight to watch as he was capable of scoring a century before lunch.

As you may be able to appreciate, I enjoyed playing football morning, afternoon and evening on the fields and the roads as cars were scarce in my road in those days. We played 'tip and run' cricket on the sand dunes at Sandbanks and then ran into the sea. Happy memories. When I moved to London to commence work on 5 January there was snow all around. The young ladies were attired in maxi coats, hot pants or mini-skirts. My naivety of life was being lifted!

At work we had a football league and played matches in Regents Park on a Saturday morning. The standard of refereeing was, at best, inconsistent. There I played on surfaces with puddles, and where the puddles had frozen, ice. After the game ale refreshment was followed by fish 'n chips before selecting a game to attend, anywhere in London. In those days you could just rock up at any ground and pay cash five shillings (25 p) to enter. I eventually became the manager and secretary of one of the teams, as stated in my previous ramblings and how I became a referee.

Unusual Incidents

In my very early days on the Rochester and District Saturday afternoon league I was at a small recreation ground with 2 pitches. The colour of all 4 teams was red. The teams on the other pitch were correctly attired; my 2 teams only had red shirts and no alternative. Those on the other pitch also had no alternative. Turning the shirts inside out made no difference. What would you do?

On such a sunny day I took the only option, the away team played in skins. Matter resolved we played the game. Did it break league rules? I do not know. Did it comply with the laws of the game? I imagine not. Did we get a game played that the players had all week been looking forward to? Yes, we did. Unthinkable today.

On another occasion in my early career, I was refereeing a Medway Sunday league game when two opposing players were having verbals. At one point, one of the players said "go on hit me then." His opponent duly obliged with a head butt on the nose. The reshaped nose was a sorry, bloody mess. I quickly moved the offensive player away and brought the sponge man on. This was in the days before the players escalated into mass confrontation. I sent off the offending player. The other player was only going in another direction – hospital. However, before he had time to leave the field of play, I brandished him with a yellow card for his part in the confrontation. Not his day.

Years later in a Combined Counties league match, Westfield v Ash Utd I seem to recall I awarded a goal kick to Westfield. The look I received from the attacking Ash Utd player could be described as a murderous scowl or as if I was a piece of sh*t. He said nothing but it did not prevent me from cautioning him. I was quite pleased with that one.

When I was thinking about this article I looked through some of my archive collections. Consequently, I have some questions for you; -

1. What was the title of the B side on Dave Clark Five's hit record "Glad All Over"?

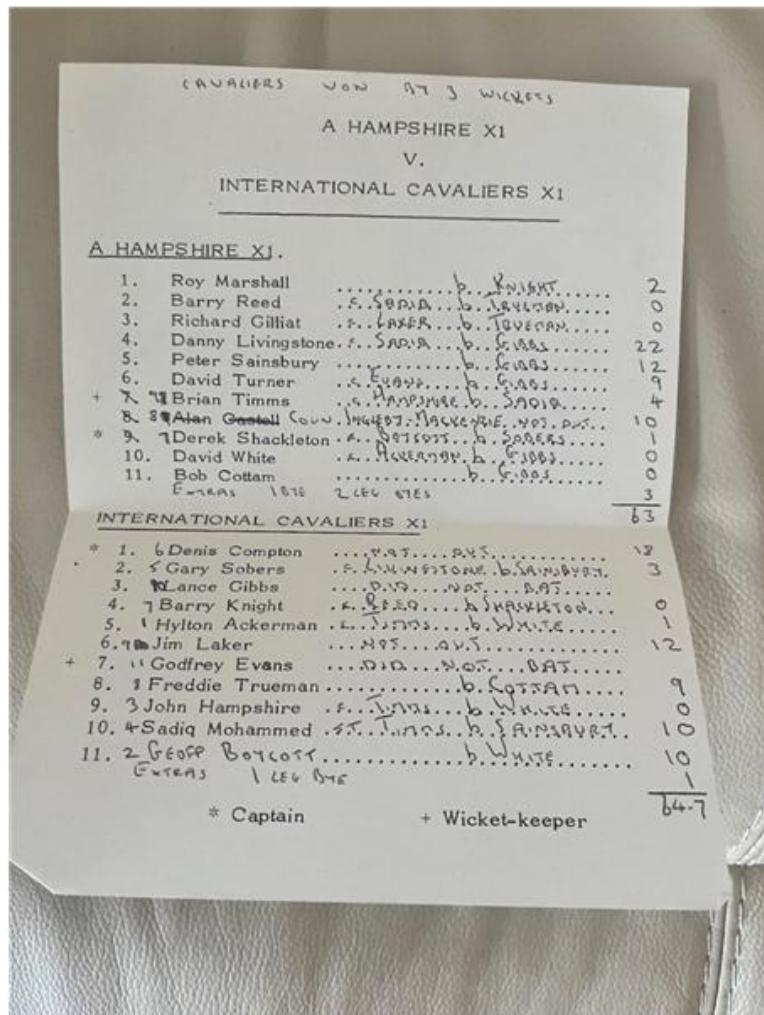
The 1966-67 season was the first ever season in the top flight for Southampton.

2. Who was their top goal scorer?
3. How many league goals did he score?
4. Which team was their first ever opponent?
5. Which Southampton player was in the final squad for the 1966 World Cup tournament?
6. Which 6 teams in that season, no longer play in the top division (Premier League)?

1970 football team – back row, 2nd from right!



1967 Cricket scorecard – Hampshire v International Cavaliers - what a line up!



Answers to Geoff's 6 questions > next month

STANDARD BUILDING SERVICES – Established 1985

Puzzle Corner – Who am I?



As we kick off the new year, we want to know if you can name the referee from these clues?

- Based in Solihull, West Midlands and a member of the Birmingham County FA
- Was a football league referee from 2003 to 2005
- Promoted to the Select group of Referees in 2005
- He was a FIFA referee between 2009 and 2017
- Took charge of the 2013 FA Cup final
- His final Premier league match was Arsenal v Wolves at the end of the 2022/23 season
- Officiated in 391 premier league matches
- Became a full-time VAR official from the 2023/24 season.

From the Archives

This press cutting dates back to Feb/Mar 1973 in the days when the Croydon Advertiser group was a newspaper and gave proper coverage to all things in the area. It's thanks to Jim Mercer who would provide weekly cartoons.



Article by Steve Tyler.

The Early Years of Football (Excerpt 2)



Hallam FC (Sheffield) became the second football club to be formed. That was in 1860 by Thomas Vickers & John Charles Shaw. They had both been members of Sheffield FC (see last month's issue). Hallam FC still play at Sandygate in the Northern Premier league and this is the oldest football ground in the world. By the following year there were now eight teams in the Sheffield area.

Uppingham school (Rutland) football started in 1861 with 15 players a side (see pic below).



The school later became members of the FA. School headmaster Edward Thring and his brother John Charles Thring were involved in the first set of Cambridge rules and some years later in 1862 issued a code "The Rules of the Simplest Game". This combined the best features of the 2 forms of football being played, the other being the Rugby / public schools version. Those rules were:

1. A goal is scored whenever the ball is forced through the goal and under the bar, except it be thrown by hand.
2. Hands may be used only to stop the ball and place it on the ground before the feet.
3. Kicks must be aimed only at the ball.
4. A player may not kick the ball whilst in the air.
5. No tripping up or heel kicking allowed.
6. Whenever a ball is kicked beyond the side-flags, it must be returned by the player who kicked it, from the spot it passed the flag-line in a straight line towards the middle of the ground.
7. When a ball is kicked behind the line of the goal, it shall be kicked off from the line by one of the side whose goal it is.
8. No player may stand within 6 paces of the kicker when he is kicking off.
9. A player is out of play immediately he is in front of the ball and must return behind the ball as soon as possible. If the ball is kicked by his own side past a player he may not touch it, kick it, or advance, until one of the other side, having followed up, has been able, when in front of him, to kick it.
10. No charging allowed when a player is out of play, i.e. immediately the ball is behind him.

Ed's & tales

In my pre match instructions I tell the teams what I expect at restarts, “please take it from where I indicate or tell you”. “At throw in's I will be level where I expect it”. It was the red team that got the first warning. Having started at the correct place he must have run up the pitch by 5 yards, that was past my tolerance level. I blew and told him this is a warning next time it will go the other way. He complained he needed a run up. I suggested to start your run up further back. For the rest of the match every throw was taken from the correct place by both teams. Shame they don't do this at the top level.

If you would like to make a contribution to the links on the website or have an article you would like to share then please let me (the Editor) know. Articles by 27th Jan please.

Have a happy and healthy 2026.

Steve

Stephenwatson1616@gmail.com

Scan this for the Croydon Referees Society Website >>>



Answers

What would you do?

Q1. No disciplinary action, award an indirect free kick to the blue team on the goal area line 6 yards from goal.

Q2. Award the goal to Blue, Caution the red defender, Kick off to the red team.

Q3. Stop play and disallow the goal, No disciplinary action, drop ball to blue in the centre circle.

Q4. Stop Play, Send off the red player, Indirect kick off to blue team the where the ball was (centre circle)