



Middlesex
Hockey
Umpires
Association



BULLY FOR YOU



24th March 2009

SEASON
2008/09
NUMBER
3

An “interesting” second half of the season, to say the least – snow, ice, and perhaps more on the way – have the Weathermen forgotten it’s almost April and Easter? Despite all of this, we have ventured out on the cold, frosty morns, or in the downpours to indulge in what we (laughably) tell our other halves is “a strenuous workout”, oh yes, it’s exercise, and lot’s of it – that’s why I am such a trim and svelte Adonis, oh yes!

Colin was mentioning a new fundraising idea of his – along the lines of Calendar Girls and the Stade de France Calendar appealing, non? Well, anyway back to the hockey – for that apparently is the game we are meant to be officiating – I am sure someone said it was cheapskate, horseless polo! Hopefully, you have all had rewarding seasons, enjoyed the hockey, made some friends, learned something knew or just had the pleasure of the most rewarding vintages at the post-match hostelries – you know, London Pride 2009, Kronenbourg MMIX etc...

Speaking of “learning something knew”, a big thank you to all of those luminaries (why did I almost type “lunatics”?) who came out on a wet and cold day to coach or assess the rest of us. Their wise words will ring in our ears for minutes to come – e.g. after a 20 minute “chat” with one team chairman about how every decision we made was wrong, our assessor (NPUA) simply said “ignore everything he’s just said, he’s talking(insert your own word here).”

Or perhaps even more importantly, the crucial nugget imparted to one aspiring hopeful recently but the Re di Tutto, Capo dei Capi, about the importance of appearance – “if you are going to wear underarmor (for which read – “be a big sissy mary”) do make sure it’s the same colour as your polo shirt!”

This issue will see answers, questions and lots of hot news (well tepid maybe....)

Ciao
ITM



THE ANAGRAMS– THE ANSWERS

Not sure how much these tested and teased you – many thanks, however, to the eagle-eyed umpire (who shall remain nameless, save to say he shares his initials with a lovely Australian stubby-bottled beer!) who noticed the error (intentional of course) in the last one!

Ah, clod in row - Colin Howard (who else?)

Napalm jeer – La esteemed Presidente – Jane Palmer

Sour rash rate – Arthur Soares

A hoarse jam – James O’Hara

Endow wine – Edwin Owen

I flag Zen triad – Ian Fitzgerald

Bad Renown – Dawn Bonner (okay sorry Dawn, I stole one of your “n”s)

AGM

It’s that time of year again – “yay” I hear you shout – come on, shout “yay”!!!! A chance for us to meet up and see if we can beat Jane’s World Record for the Quickest AGM ever – subtitled “Let’s get on with it so we can chow down on the curry”!

THURSDAY 4th JUNE 2009

7.30 / 7.45

(I’m guessing – will be confirmed in due course)

At EASTCOTE H.C.

Really important we all attend – we need to keep the Association thriving and for that everyone’s input is important. If you have any Agenda items please let Edwin Own have them as soon as possible....

And who knows, maybe certain among us could be prevailed upon to produce something to eat..... (more chillies please guys and lots of hot buttery naans... Sorry starting to drool now)

COLIN’S CONUNDRUM – DECEMBER ANSWER

Q. If there is no injury or suspension, can any player be substituted during a penalty corner before it is complete?

A. YES – didn’t expect that did you!?!? Substitution can be made at an *ordinary* PC when the ball has come out of the circle for the 2nd time, even though the PC itself is still running and not actually completed. It’s different for an end of half / end of game PC!

EDWIN'S OLDIES & NEWBIES

On 28th February a quintet of *senior* umpires assembled at the ungodly hour of 9.30am on the plains of Eastcote Astro - the occasion a Middlesex U9-age group mini-tournament involving boys and girls from Eastcote, Harrow and Wycombe HCs. And why were Jane Palmer, Colin Howard, Arthur Soares, James O'Hara and Edwin Owen there? Well they claim that it wasn't for the beer.... No - five 14 year olds were also present to try their skills as umpires with our MHUA people giving one-to-one coaching in the noble art of umpiring. These youngsters had completed a basic foundation course on the rules under Colin's inimitable instruction, and now the tournament gave them the initial chance to put theory into practice. Each match was umpired with an adult club umpire and one novice. Dressed in fetching yellow umpire shirts provided by the Association, all the young umpires acquitted themselves with a remarkable degree of confidence. Some even expressed the wish afterwards to progress to Level 1 expertise.....

To witness so many youngsters playing, and that some are interested in umpiring as well, is a credit to all the hard work done by the club officials engaged in developing the young players, and, in this instance, to those at Eastcote for organising the event. Many thanks also to the "oldies" there; they say it was a pleasure to be able to assist the "newbies".

NEW RULES ARE A-COMIN' IN, LOUDLY SING CUCKOO

Yes, here they come, over the hill, and they're a monster. Spring brings renewal, Spring brings Easter eggs (yum), Spring brings some warmth (ha ha, see above) and Spring brings some *interesting* new "Experimental Rules". These will take effect for International Hockey on 1st May 2009, and for us mere mortals in domestic hockey D-Day is 1st September 2009.

The two most startling developments are in Rule 13 concerning Free Hits

Firstly – a player can pass to himself from a free hit; if doing so the ball does **not** need to travel 1 metre. If the ball is played to another player then the ball **does** need to travel 1 metre.

Secondly, and perhaps controversially or unclearly, dependent on your reading of the drafting of the rule – *"[t]he HRB is concerned that the ball is often played hard, indiscriminately and therefore potentially dangerously into the circle from free hits in the attacking 23 M area. In future, these free hits must not be played directly into the circle."*

The rule changes actually state (for free hits to the attacking team within the defence 23M)-

- a) The ball **MUST** be at least 5 metres from the edge of the D;
- b) The ball **MUST** travel at least 5 metres before being played into the D.

This, apparently, means that an attacker cannot simply hit the ball straight into the D. I, for one, humbly cannot see that the wording achieves the aim. However, we have it from on high (Roger Webb) that this is how the new Rule should be applied – so now we are all clear, aren't we....

COLIN's CONUNDRUM – a.k.a. COLIN's COMPLAINT

This issue's Conundrum is numbers based....

What do these numbers mean for us umpires?

385 316 22 47 15 9 20 14 20 to 25

Unfortunately, this is slightly less amusing and more depressing than our normal fare:

385 names of umpires on MHUA books

316 of which are L1 taking own club appointments only

22 either unqualified or completely inactive (not just a bit inactive like the rest of us)

47 graded L1A or higher and eligible to take MHUA appointments directly

15 continuously active umpires on circuit

9 further partially active umpires taking occasional appointments

20 years ago we had **14** on the South List alone, and a further **20 to 25** on the County circuit.

We need more active umpires, able to take regular (or any) appointments within the County. The number of UTA's that Gurmit has been left with is a real worry! Coupled with that we have had a more than one occasion when one of our number has been pillaged at the last minute by South leaving his colleague and two teams in limbo – do remember the new Protocol emanating from the Exec. Committee - *“Please note that at the last Committee meeting it was decided that it is the appointed umpire's duty to make telephone contact with the club and his colleague if called up by the South at the last minute to do a game”* (and I would venture to suggest in the circumstances of any last minute “cry-off”).

Further, have you heard about the umpire who overslept and did not turn up for his appointed match on the 28 Feb. 2009, game abandoned and to be rescheduled – no names, no shames, but you know who you are. To turn horrendously modern about this – we all need to take ownership and responsibility – have all the phone numbers and contacts we need, and put a bit more effort in to make everyone's lives easier....

AND Finally....

Where do we come from? What do we mean? No not some existentialist, Cartesian discourse, but what is the etymology of that great word “umpire”? Is it a) because early referees wore black and were nicknamed “vampires” and the name got corrupted but stuck, or b) because early referees gave players the “hump” and caused “ire”, or is it simply that we are the best and “noumpere” – without peer – sans pareil! I leave you to make up your own mind (one of them is true!)

Have a great Easter! Your humble scribe and his team of censors look forward to seeing you at the AGM in June!

Any comments on this or info for next Newsletter – itsmoustache@btinternet.com

Toodle-pip

ITM ☺