



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY AND DISTRICT
RUGBY REFEREES' SOCIETY

CONTACT

KEEPING YOU IN TOUCH

RWC 2015 - REFLECTIONS

NOVEMBER 2015

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REMEMBER CORE VALUES

Teamwork
Respect
Enjoyment
Discipline
Sportsmanship

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

You've got to keep reassessing, keep challenging yourself.

I think that's what kept me getting huge enjoyment and what keeps that passion burning is always looking at ways to be better."

Richie McCaw

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Tuesday,
10th November 2015
Training Meeting
at Shelford RUFC
7.30 p.m.

Rugby World Cup review

Friday, 15th April 2016

Annual Dinner and Ladies
Night at Christ's College

Visit
CUDRRS website
www.cambsref.co.uk

SURPRISE, SHOCK AND SUCCESS

The party's over and that's it for another four years. But the memories will live on and there are lessons to be learned from it by all involved in the game, not least by those in refereeing. This issue contains comments from several CUDRRS members impressed by incidents and outcomes during the period when Rugby has been in world wide focus. An estimated 120 million audience viewed the final.

It will be interesting to see whether the events of the past six weeks will have any impact on Community Rugby in Cambridgeshire and the way we referee it, without the assistance of TMO's of course.

Oh! I almost forgot. The RBS Six Nations starts in three months time. I wonder whether it will provide anything like the surprise of Japan beating South Africa, the shock of England's early elimination or a New Zealand success playing running rugby. We live in hope that northern hemisphere rugby will excite us again.

The resurgent Scots, the Irish and Welsh squads restored to full strength, the French and Italians under new coaches will provide stiff challenges to the England team. Whoever is in charge of it will not win anything in this next competition unless a different style of play is adopted. Please, no more bash crash rugby.

Whilst cruising in the Atlantic when the final stages of the RWC were played out, I read books by Jonny Wilkinson, Colin Meads and Brian O'Driscoll. That shows just how much of a Rugby anorak I am. Mrs D was not impressed but forgiving.

In "How to play Rugby my way", JW says "Moving the ball gives you the advantage as defenders cannot keep pace. It allows you to create space and get to areas of the pitch before defenders can cover them—and that leads to tries. Now that's the fun". New Zealand and Australia showed us they understand this.

Colin "Pinetree" Meads, an icon of New Zealand rugby, explained their passion and drive for success in his biography. He said "I was mean in the sense that I wanted to win and thought we had to win when wearing the All Black jersey".

He said driving play characterised their game. "The nature of Rugby is such that you have to take the opposition on in the forwards and gain some ascendancy there, if you are to have a better than even chance of winning. Good clean ball and drive with it is still a sound basic tactic. There is no "bad" ball, it's what you do with it is my way of thinking. I was a great believer in that you had to do everything going forward". He managed the All Blacks in 1994 and added "I may have been inclined to try and get our blokes to run the ball too much". Running rugby enabled New Zealand to retain the Webb Ellis Trophy in 2015.

As the Oriana sailed from Portugal to Morocco, I saw the first semi-final sat with rugby fans from Leicester and Llanelli. My Welsh friend recalled the famous Scarlets' victory over the 1972 Kiwis by 9-3 when according to Max Boyce the beer flowed at Stradey, piped down from Felinfoel. We watched and supped that brewery's Double Dragon ale that won best draught beer in the world in 1976.

As we sailed home from Madeira, the two predicted finalists went head to head watched on a big screen in the Pacific Lounge by a neutral crowd. Big hits and deft breaks were applauded in equal measure. Ma'a Nonu's try from Sonny Bill's off load was cheered as was Drew Mitchell's run. Nigel Owens provided the calm in a storming encounter. He refereed with confidence, empathy and humour. "Don't swear. They will hear you on TV" said he to Dan Carter. Great boy!

The refereeing of the tournament was generally of a high standard but not without mistakes and controversy. It serves to remind us that Better Refereeing for Better Rugby must remain our goal even if we will not be quite as good as Nigel. At least we should never stop trying. It's worth the effort and is fun.

Editor

ENGLAND VOLUNTEERS

World Rugby Chairman Bernard Lapasset said "I would like to pay tribute to the volunteers and fans who got behind all 20 teams and who have made this such a special event, the best to date."



One such volunteer stationed at Milton Keynes was our Ben Whyall. Ben wrote to CONTACT "England 2015 may not have finished yet but from the eyes of one of the volunteer pack the tournament has been a success. Once again we have shown the capacity to deliver major sporting events with just the right amount of humour, organisation and chaos.

The fans from all over the world have enjoyed the experience both inside and outside the stadiums, once again acting as a great advert for the ethos of rugby and the ability of the game to unite people from all over the world. From the Japanese players who spent hours after the game in Milton Keynes talking to fans and signing autographs, to the two Fijian players' beers in hand posing for "selfies" with fans after their game against Uruguay.

Whilst England's departure from the tournament was not ideal it appeared not to dampen the enthusiasm for the tournament and we in Milton Keynes achieved three stadium attendance records that will stand for a long time (especially due to the segregation needed at football).

Talking to visitors to MK from all over the world they said how great the welcome had been and how much they were enjoying the tournament experience. A lot of the football people from MK Dons were delighted and surprised by the behaviour of spectators and the free mixing of fans and alcohol. Hopefully such positive images will help us grow the game further amongst a wider cross section of the population, who see a positive alternative to the round ball games behaviour and antics. Especially the telling comments from Nigel Owens and others to players and the respect they are shown.

Now for a few views from me as a referee. There was too much intrusive use of the TMO. As we saw on the opening weekend too many interruptions from the TMO spoil the game and for outsiders turn them off from it. I sat for 20 minutes watching a game from the back doors of the TMO van listening to the TMO working with the referee to help him, without once feeling the need to get involved and intervene.

During this time he pointed out foul play and offered advice to have a quiet word at down time. The new directives on foul play also seem not to have been fully explained to the players as too many have been caught doing things they shouldn't. I am not convinced that just before the World Cup starts is the best time to introduce change as it leads to confusion amongst all involved.

Commercialisation of the game increases as it is now possible to buy a replica World Rugby referees shirt and very comfortable they are too.

All in all I would say we have had a successful tournament which should prove to be an excellent springboard for further development of the game both here and around the world and with the emergence of stronger playing nations like Japan it only bodes well for 2019 and Japan.



SCOTLAND THE BRAVE

Jim Kennaway

The Rugby World Cup has eluded us once again. Although overall we were very pleased with the performance, maybe some things did not go our way. Now all the hysteria has died down. However, I was disappointed the way some former players harshly criticised the referee. O.K. he made a bad call (as if none of the former players made a mistake). We cannot blame the referee as there was a bad call for the line out throw.

We Scots played with lots of pride in every game. I am of a more positive nature that there a lot of young players in there and just hope they can carry on with them into the Six Nations. I do not think the SRU will have the need to replace the coach as he has done a great job from what limited resources he has to choose from. Maybe there will be some killed Kiwis joining us along the way.

Note: Jim sent CONTACT a press cutting with an article by former Scottish prop David Sole. He spoke of that quarter final as the most uplifting, passionate and competitive performance by a Scotland team for many years. Commenting on that Craig Joubert decision he said "Referees make mistakes. They always have done and they always will do". He then pointed out that Jaco Peyper had missed Greg Laidlaw's knock on just before he scored Scotland's winning try against Samoa. "Maybe Scotland would not have got that close to a semi final had the referee spotted it". No ifs, buts or maybes anymore. It bodes well for the brave hearts in 2016. Go Scotland!

JAPAN PREPARES**Hiro Miyazono**

Dear Mike,

Thank you. I can be cheered up by your CONTACT.

As holiday, I went Cambridge and join public viewing of England v Fiji.

I will go to London for Bronze and Final match again. The next RWC will be held in Japan and scheduled some games in my town, Kumamoto. I'm working on preparations for the games and Legacy plan.

I keep enjoying referee in Japan. Also, I am a member of the referee committee of Kyushu Rugby Union.

The referee management and assessment are busy for the weekend work.

Regard, Hiro.

Note: CONTACT will remain in touch with Hiro who will no doubt be pleased to meet and greet us in 2019.

IRISH BACK FAVOURITES**Tim O'Connell**

I watched the 2011 RWC final in a bar in Shanghai with about 300 friends. For the first 15 minutes, every time the French or New Zealand support cheered a bit of good play, my daughter aged 16 months, jumped in fright in my arms. By the end, she loved the atmosphere, which was just as well, because the game was one for the purist.

Forward four years and we have had an excellent battle through the group phases. Unless you support England or Samoa or Tonga. Australia and New Zealand look good. Their games against Wales and Argentina were played at pace, and showed high skill and commitment.

How can Ireland match the giants? Well they have developed a game plan with lots of accurate kicking and competition for the ball in the air. Their forwards are strong and efficient, if a little older than their opponents. They are prepared to hold onto and defend their own possession. They had a great match against France. They will have a nervy game against Argentina, which they will need to match the standards of their previous game to win. I don't think it will be enough to win the tournament - Australia and New Zealand are the favourites for me. But the greens will give it their best shot.

MY REFLECTIONS**Steve Johnson**

Steve provides us with some of his reflections on the RWC which add to the issues for discussion next meeting.

Fair justice?

When French Number 8 Louis Picamoles was sin-binned for planting a fist on Richie McCaw's face (no punch), I wondered whether the total punishment fits the crime.... Should not the first perpetrator be punished as well as the retaliator?

McCaw when on the floor had prevented the French from getting the ball. He was about to be penalised when Picamoles was mad and daft enough to take "punitive" action himself. Now, I accept that the Frenchman had to go, but was it complete justice that NZ was not penalised for McCaw's sin? Would it not have made more sense for France to have the (kickable) penalty and have Picamoles in the bin? I'm not saying that could have happened under current procedures, but asking if there should there be a change in interpretation?

Not straight (not that again!!!)

Having undergone all the serious training we did in the recent past, and the threats of how referees would be cast into eternal damnation for not blowing for a crooked feed at the scrum, how are my CUDRRS colleagues going to referee for the rest of the season following the ridiculous scrum half feeds at RWC? Are we expecting any backlash?

Too much TMO?

(Non-refereeing) Friends are asking me if there is simply too much TMO. I'm trying to remain neutral, but what do CUDRRS members think?

Australia's final try against Argentina

Wayne Barnes surely thought he had no need to go to the TMO for the final Australia try against Argentina; his touch judge could not have been nearer the play, nor better in line. Hmmm.

I thought that the refereeing quality was of the highest order throughout.



Editors note: After Picamoles dismissal, the French challenge evaporated. New Zealand put on a record score to eliminate them. Their 62-13 demolition of France at the Millennium Stadium was irrefutable proof they were building momentum at the right time.

Retaliation is no excuse nor is taking the law into one's own hands. Nigel Owens reviewed the incident before deciding Picamoles deserved 10 minutes in the bin, offering the classic line: "I don't see a punch, I just see a fist in the face."

But Steve does have a point about justice being seen to be done.

ONE HAPPY KIWI**Mike Arbuckle**

From my NZ perspective, the All Blacks up to the quarter finals lacked precision. I hoped this was an effort to make a game of it rather than putting 60 points on lesser nations. They put themselves under pressure but I had a feeling the best was yet to come and hopefully it would come soon. The All Blacks were saving themselves!

I have been to two matches so far in pool play. At Wembley for NZ v Argentina and St James Park for NZ v Tonga. Both football stadiums though different environments. Wembley was very polished ...marshals, information booths, large fan zone inside the stadium precinct, ushers, bars and a great viewing seat. A kind of "big city " feel and the exit was smooth and effortless. It was easy. This was expert management for a world record rugby crowd. And the game was OK too.

St James Park Newcastle was with my son Nick who studies property up there. I stayed the night in his flat. It was cold and messy and the shower didn't work properly. It was in Jesmond and there's a good local pub close to the metro stop which took us into the monument for a short walk to the remote fanzone. I'd love to be a student again.

St James Park stands tower above the ground. It's like being on top of the pitch and you can hear and feel the bone crunching tackles of someone like Jerome Kaino the All Black 6.. Atmosphere is hard to beat...noisy, banter, Newcastle ale...well not really that nice but for me the RWC experience ranks above Wembley. Its the grass roots feel..closer to the action, a throbbing fan zone, plenty of locals..the Geordies could be the nicest people in England?..though they speak funny..and the after-match in the city town centre added to the location

So it's onto Cardiff for the QF and this time I'm taking my wife Robyn and staying in the Ibis in Newport as Cardiff is fully booked....I hope NZ gets through ...the springboks are likely opponents at Twickenham for the SF. There's added pressure and history ..I think mentally the All Blacks will be strong ..but it's happened before ..anxiety is taking over and it's only Thursday

It's all over by the shouting...and no point to dwell..but compared to previous RWC final in Auckland, what a spectacle. To have this brand for a RWC final was always going to be special. And it was.. I made the trip there with my two boys Nick(21) and Finn (16) via the Cambridge cruiser and the overland from Waterloo. Arrived at The Eel Pie pub around 2pm for a couple of pints before heading to the ground. It was all very calm and peaceful for a record crowd.



There were many there without team colours.. a smattering of England and Irish support in their team colours... and then later two rounds of Swing Low...It looked like more Aussie than Kiwi support and with category B at £525 that's almost \$NZ1200...So a lot of money. Friends tell me the fan zone was fantastic and that's where a lot of kiwi and Aussie supporters headed...It was all good for lots of us.

Anyway you all know the result and yes the All Blacks were really the best in this tournament... I think Nigel Owens understands the broader concept of refereeing...he a marketers dream and was more acceptable perhaps than a technical referee... I guess I was impressed with the French referees..Romain Poite and Jerome Garces and less so with some of the TMOs.

Still like the rugby quality on display, the standard of refereeing in a cauldron like the QFs, SFs and Final was all very creditable. New benchmarks for 2019 have been set.

Editor's note: Mike submitted his thoughts to CONTACT in two parts. His contribution, whilst measured and modest, is written with pride and deservedly so. Congratulations Mike. The drinks are on you! Or just a muffin then.

SIMPLY THE BEST**"Happy Lapy"**

World Rugby Chairman Bernard Lapasset said: "Rugby World Cup 2015 will be remembered as the biggest tournament to date, but I also believe that it will be remembered as the best.

England 2015 has been the most competitive, best-attended, most-watched, most socially-engaged, most commercially-successful Rugby World Cup. But this special Rugby World Cup has been about much more than numbers, it has been about the amazing atmosphere in full and vibrant stadia, the excitement around the host nation and in Cardiff, the unforgettable moments played out by the world's best players and the friendships that have been created along the way – the very best of our sport has been on display.

"I am a believer that great people make great events and I would like to thank the organisers England Rugby 2015, the host union the Rugby Football Union, Rugby World Cup Limited, the host cities and venues for delivering a special tournament that has had the teams and fans at heart, but above all, I would like to pay tribute to the volunteers and fans who got behind all 20 teams and who have made this such a special event, the best to date."

Note: 6,000 volunteers formed 'The Pack', the faces of the tournament that welcomed millions of fans to England.

SILENCE IS GOLDEN

Guy Mulley

A Gown approach to Whistling

Academically, the subject that I teach and research in the Lord Aschcroft International Business School at Anglia Ruskin University, is called Human Resources Management. In everyday parlance it is often known as "People Management".

Rugby refereeing has always struck me as being largely about people management. The considerable, discretionary latitude afforded to rugby referees, coupled with the ability to go anywhere on the pitch, allows for an interaction with players that is impossible in most other sports. Hence, I cannot help taking my academic perspective with me whenever I go to referee, watch or play rugby.

What A Difference A Week Makes

As with politics, it seems that a week is a long time in refereeing. I started writing this article after being at Twickenham for the Wales v Australia Rugby World Cup pool fixture on 10 October.

Listening in on the referee radio, I had been fascinated by how little Craig Joubert had spoken during an intensely competitive game which for 75 minutes was very close. Unless my radio earpiece was faulty, I had not heard the referee utter more than a dozen words in the first dozen minutes.

This 'more is less' approach is intriguing when compared with more talkative referees, such as the conversational Wayne Barnes or the loquacious Nigel Owens. All three men are regarded by the professional rugby community and beyond as very good referees. So, I was pondering, is any one style of refereeing to be preferred over any other? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the differing approaches?

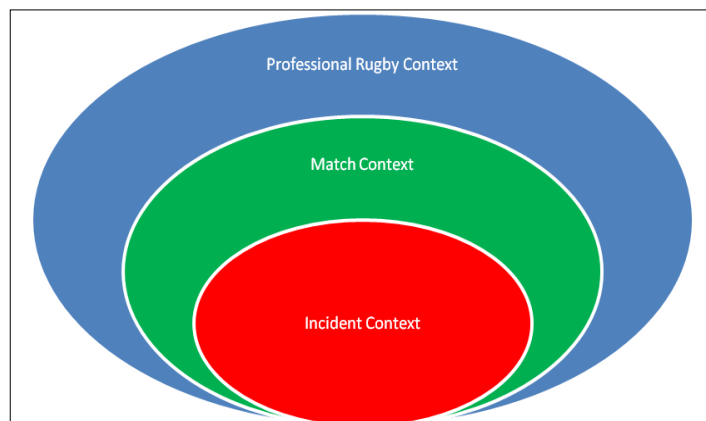
A week later, after Australia had snatched last-minute victory from Scotland, I was reminded of an essential academic principle for asking such questions: identifying the context. Thus, for example, silence may be golden in some circumstances, but not in other circumstances.

What was said or rather not said, following the controversial knock-on decision – by Mr Joubert nor by his Assistant Referees (Glen Jackson and Pascal Gauzere) and by the Television Match Official (Ben Skeen) – becomes instructive in helping us all to learn about the people management aspect of rugby refereeing.

Context

Of course, it is not only academia where 'context' is important? Basic referee training introduces all referees to the concept of 'Contextual Judgement' and encourages us to reflect after each match on our use of it.

I would posit that there are three levels of context which need to be taken into account, when discussing Craig Joubert's unfortunate decision in the Australia v Scotland quarter-final.



Firstly, there is a broad context, being the way in which officials are required to referee professional rugby. Herein lies a problem, because the minority activity that is professional rugby is not refereed in the same way as the majority activity that is amateur rugby.

(Yes, we are – as Contact so often highlights - talking about simple, objective matters such as not putting the ball into the scrum "straight along the middle line".)

So, immediately we are faced with differences of interpretation and of adjudication. In other words, the rugby world is not all speaking the same language.

For the purposes of this article I would cite four ways in which professional rugby is refereed differently. The first is a matter of adjudication and the other three are matters of interpretation.

The game is refereed with the aid of a TMO;

Any spilling of the ball by a player tends to be treated as a knock-on, regardless of whether the ball actually "goes forward";

Any failed interception tends to be treated as an "intentional knock" (important to note here that the relevant Law uses the term "intentional knock" and not "intentional knock-on");

A professional player is rarely regarded as "accidentally offside"; it is inevitably regarded as deliberate.

Secondly, there is narrower context of the match itself. A variety of factors contribute to the match context, such as: the teams and how they want to play; the weather; the nature of the fixture; and, of course, the referee himself or herself. Some factors may be incapable of measurement.

For example, a week earlier Mr Joubert had reduced the Australian team to 13 men. Was that treatment lodged somewhere in his subconscious during the Scotland game?

SILENCE IS GOLDEN (continued)

The match context is not necessarily fixed; it can change as the game progresses. When Curtley Beale drops the ball in a tackle just before Australia's first try, it is not automatically treated as a knock-on. It was the TMO, not the referee, who makes the (surprising) adjudication that Sean Maitland deliberately knocked the ball on. A few minutes before the big decision, Mr Joubert determines that a Scottish knock-on subsequently played by another blue shirt was an accidental offside, not a deliberate offside.

Thirdly, there is the specific context, which concerns the relevant incident. Because the incident happens in a very short time period and often suddenly, it is easy to overlook the fact that it has a context – albeit that any contextual processing happens very quickly. After a dry start to the game it is now pouring with rain, the players are exhausted both physically and mentally, just two points separate the teams and there are barely two minutes left.

The Incident



The incident which lies at the heart of this article has been replayed countless times on TV and on social media, so I will not describe it here. Suffice it to say that Mr Joubert thought that he had seen the ball knocked on by a Scottish player, and then picked up by another Scottish player, who was in an offside position. He adjudged the incident to be a case of deliberate offside.

As the replays revealed, both in the seconds after the incident and in the hours of analysis afterwards, it is far from clear that any Scottish player committed a knock-on and it is clear that an Australian propelled the ball towards the supposedly offside Scottish player.

The Silent Treatment

And so we come to the subject of silence. To begin with, it seems that the AR's did not contribute anything between the time that Mr Joubert blew his whistle and Bernard Foley's winning kick passed over the crossbar. Secondly, Mr Joubert did not consult the TMO and thirdly the TMO did not intervene, because – we are told – the relevant protocols do not allow it. And then came the ghastliest of the silences. With Foley still preparing for his kick, the big screen at the stadium replays the incident. At that moment the TV picture shows a Scottish player in the foreground, his astonishment and exasperation evident in his gesture. Meanwhile, more tellingly, in the background wordlessly both of Mr Joubert's hands involuntarily start rising.

As has often been mentioned at CUDRRS meetings, a key thing to do at times of difficult decision-making is to buy yourself time. Mr Joubert chose not to do so on this occasion – presumably because he was certain about what he (thought he) had seen. He could have bought himself time by, for example, consulting his ARs in accordance with Law 6.A.7(a). The ARs, who have the technology to communicate quickly and efficiently with the referee, remained equally silent. The TMO, who had in the first half been willing to adopt the primary decision-making role about a (supposed) knock-on, remained silent, while the many screens in front of him replayed the error. (Sharp observers have also mentioned that Greg Laidlaw, the Scottish captain, was silent in one crucial respect: he should have alleged to Mr Joubert that there had been foul play, so that the TMO could come into play.



The obvious line would have been to suggest – albeit wrongly in this case – that his player would not have been offside if a shirt-tugging Australian had not held the player back. To this he could then have added “and anyway, sir, it wasn't a knock-on”.)

None of this quite gets us to a point where Mr Joubert is allowed to change his decision. A narrow reading of Law 6.A.6 suggests that a referee can change his decision only in a couple of specific instances. But, for example, what if a Referee and an AR cannot agree about an incident or where neither of them got a clear view of it? What happens then?

I suggest that what happens then depends on the referee's style. By that I mean, coming back to the subject of silence, to what extent a referee encourages dialogue. How do you think that those fateful seconds between the awarding of the penalty and the taking of the kick would have played out, if Wayne Barnes or Nigel Owens had been holding the whistle? Might their style have led to a discussion about the incident or even to an altering of the initial decision? It would not be academically robust for this article to offer an answer.

This article can offer only a hypothesis: that how a referee behaves does affect his interaction with the ARs, the TMO and, of course, the players.

SILENCE IS GOLDEN (conclusion)

If You Do Not Say Anything, It May Harm Your Defence

The media made much of the fact that at the final whistle Craig Joubert allegedly rushed from the pitch, not waiting to shake hands with the captains and their players. Whatever the reason, that was certainly an unfortunate silence. Perhaps he did not want to get into discussions about his inability to refer to the TMO, because he would end up having to say "I voz only obeying orders".

That said, silence would have been preferable in the case of World Rugby. Firstly, its Chief Executive, Brett Gosper made the ill-judged, facetious remark that Mr Joubert might have rushed from the pitch because he needed the bathroom. Then its review panel made the astonishing announcement that Mr Joubert's decision had been wrong.

So much for World Rugby's "Values" of Integrity, Passion, Solidarity, Discipline and Respect!

My own view is that the culpable silence, if any, lies elsewhere. I got my love of rugby from the most fair-minded person I have ever met – my father. From him I learned that, in any match, one of the winners should always be Rugby itself. The lack of common sense in the Australia v Scotland game left Rugby as a loser. And the person who could have prevented it was not so much the referee, Craig Joubert, but more the TMO, Ben Skeen.

Deus ex machina (translation - any artificial or improbable device resolving the difficulties of a plot) in breach of TMO protocols he might have been – and a bit unpopular 'down under' – but it would have meant the right decision. It may occasionally favour a team in gold shirts, but silence is not always golden.

Guy Mulley

AGELESS



Last month's issue carried a report from John Hanlon claiming that he and Luigi Murton had on 20th September created a society record.

They had been the oldest and youngest active refs in the Society, teaming up to referee the U14s Tens tournament at Saffron Walden.

The age difference between them was 56 years. John is on the right.

At this time of Remembrance, it is appropriate to quote "Old soldiers never die, they just fade away" and hope John will not fade away yet.

Luigi can look forward to sixty years of officiating if he has ambition to beat John's achievement.

I made a note of the following advice given by Jonny Wilkinson in his book mentioned on the front page.

"If you work hard at your job and what you do, then you should be able to do whatever you want to. No matter how painful, how much there is to lose, how difficult it may seem or how impossible the situation on the

field, it is important to attack with a totally positive mental outlook. Never give in! " Go Luigi.

KEEP OUT OF THE CLOUD

Last month, Steve Johnson posed the question "Can we referees be turned off a team?" It got a response.

Louis Biggs wrote to CONTACT.

Another very interesting read. Just one thing that I picked up from the "In my View" article was the suggestion that we should use phrases such as "You are beginning to irritate me".

My issue with this is twofold. First, it suggests that the referee is letting his emotions get the better of him and cloud his judgement. Second, and this is something I have talked about before with CUDRRS members, it is an "I/Me phrase" rather than a "You phrase".

"I/Me Phrases": These are phrases such as "I have had enough" "This is beginning to irritate me" etc.

These phrases put all the focus and pressure on the referee and suggests that the indiscipline of the team is in some way the fault of the referee.

"You Phrases": These are phrases such as "Your team's discipline needs to improve" These put the focus on the players and emphasises that it is their responsibility to change.

Editor's comment: Referees are human, believe it or not, and there is a limit to their patience just as there is to that of players. CONTACT has identified options for dealing with trouble. Use what works for you. Referees must exercise discipline to the highest level they expect players to keep and that discipline applies to themselves. Referees have the ways and means to establish and keep control. (See Positive Refereeing on our website)

SADNESS MIDST THE JOY

The post tournament celebrations were tinged with tears as news of the deaths of two friends in Rugby were announced. Their names may not be familiar to all in CUDRRS but those of us involved closely with University Rugby and with RFU Referee Development over the past 15 years have cause to regret the passing of Doctor John Owens and Alan Biggs.

Dr John Owens RIP



Doctor John was a retired GP from the Trumpington Street Medical Practice in which he served from 1963-2000.

Many players and members of the University club will recall the sterling service that John gave as its Medical Officer over many years ensuring their care and not only here in Cambridge. He accompanied many tours to venues in Japan, Thailand, Taiwan, Korea, USA and South Africa. He continued a long line of distinguished medics caring for our Club. His son, Simon, is the current club doctor.

The funeral service and celebration of John's life took place on Monday 2nd November 2015 at St Mary and St Michael Church, Granchester Road, Trumpington. Doctor John will be missed particularly by those CUDRRS members who have done the Varsity match trip to Twickenham.

Alan Biggs RIP



This notification from the RFU was received a few days ago.

Dear Friends,

I been asked to send out this message on behalf of Biggsy and Clare. It is with a very heavy heart I have to tell you that Alan lost his hard fought fight with cancer on the afternoon of Sunday 25th October 2015, passing away peacefully at the Sue Ryder, Leckhampton Court Hospice, Cheltenham, surrounded by family and friends.

We all know Biggsy, touched so many lives and would ask that you share this message far and wide to ensure that his friends and colleagues in the far flung corners of the sporting world are made aware.

As you can image Clare and family need time to come to terms with Alan's death. Particulars for the funeral arrangements will be circulated later.

Society websites in the Midlands Division including the Central Federation carry this same reflection -

Here's taking a moment to smile and think of Alan (aka Biggsy) and his family.

Our Honorary Secretary David Tyrrell has sent condolences on behalf of CUDRRS.

Editor: I first met Alan at Grange Road when he came up from Gloucester to referee a Blues game. We had several referee acquaintances in common, including a young Wayne Barnes. I mentioned Chris White who had refereed a Bodger's match and asked me to look after his mother and brother who had come with him. "He's my brother in law" says Alan. He was appointed to quite a few Blues matches and we chatted a lot on these visits.

Later he became the Referee Development Officer for the Central Federation taking over from David Rose.

He was well respected in Gloucestershire and at a debate on English Rugby directors of rugby at Hartpury College, Cirencester and Cinderford paid tribute to him.

He was a guy who has driven forward referee development," said Nic Corrigan of Cinderford. "He changed the portfolio of rugby referees and, with the work being carried out by Chris White (the former international referee) and it is important to mention their influence."

Chris White heads a "unique" rugby academy at the University of Gloucestershire, where aspiring officials study under this former Premiership and World Cup referee's tutelage.

"The guys that have been on that course are the best referees," Andy Deacon, the former Gloucester prop and current Cirencester director of rugby, said. "Referees have a trend in their mind about what they will pick up on in games, so it is important that referees are trained to be open-minded." Craig Maxwell - Keys was one of them.

Calls have also been made for referees, including starters, to seek invitation to work with local rugby clubs to invest time in the game at closer quarters. "I don't think referees have helped themselves, at all," Corrigan added.

"Referees need to move forward with the game more than ever before. They used to be attached to clubs and we should make them feel more encouraged to come and do sessions at the club. If they came back at club level, we could work with them a bit more. If we don't have them, we won't have a game."

CUDRRS has long recognised the benefits of close links with the our affiliated clubs. It is how Alan wanted referees societies to work. We do so happily and it is a fitting tribute to Alan's contribution to refereeing.

AND FINALLY**Mike Bragg**

You asked members for their comments on the RWC. Here are mine, produced before the Finals weekend. They are just a list of refereeing issues which hopefully will provoke discussion at the next meeting. They should also provoke us to check our knowledge of law and study that book again

Preventive communication?

Romain Poite was calling "Use it" when the ball was deliberately being held at the feet of Number 8 in a scrum. Craig Joubert also called "Use it" telling Greg Laidlaw not to delay and to pass the ball out from the base of the scrum.

This call when the ball is readily available to be played applies only to ruck and maul (see Laws 16.7 (c) and 17.6 (g)) but not to scrums. Perhaps this is seen as good game management by the top guys or are they baulking at teams deliberately playing for the award of a PK in their favour?

Error?

On one occasion an attacking player drove over the line but was held up. The 5 metre scrum was awarded to the defending side (See Law 22.10).

Professional interpretation?

Law 22.4(d) defines a Momentum try. The tackled player's momentum must carry him over the line in a continuous movement. This is being interpreted liberally with players being permitted to make a second movement provided their momentum is considered to have carried them over.

Line out practice?

Are we all up to speed on what to watch out for if a side does not contest a lineout? (RWC apart, I have seen this ploy tried recently at Level 7).

The lineout ball was usually going in straight but why were teams permitted to form up off-centre with one team, usually the team throwing in, in line with the AR?

Hand signal needed?

Law 6.A.8(c) requires the referee to blow the whistle to indicate a score. A hand signal to indicate that a dropped goal has been scored would be helpful.

Put in (not the Russian one)

Every year it seems we are told that there will be a drive on ensuring that the ball is thrown into the scrum correctly. And yet nobody takes any notice – certainly at top level. I wonder why!

Off stage prompt

Within minutes of the start of the tournament, the TMO and the protocol became influential. The protocol can be read at <https://www.rugbyworldcup.com/news/96575>

I agree with Sir Clive Woodward that if the referee makes a decision and signals it then that should stand unless he has failed to see something. So the Fiji try should have stood as awarded – and England may then have lost to Fiji too!

For us I suggest that we should have our own instructions for TO3 at our levels – with and without comms.

P.S. What is the unisex word for gentlemanly conduct? Unladylike?

Editor's comments: There were 271 tries scored and 224 penalties converted. The ten top try scorers were all wingers except for Wales No 9 Gareth Davies. Do these statistics tell us anything about the refereeing? The fact that the wingers were fed the ball to score could indicate that the match officials contributed to the open rugby.

The number of penalties kicked indicates just how important it is for them to get their decisions right. With kickers like Pollard (RSA), Sanchez (Arg.), Foley (Aust.), Laidlaw (Scot.) and Biggar (Wales) on the pitch, the potential for a wrong refereeing decision to alter the course of a game was enormous. Craig Joubert knows that only too well.

Discipline in all matches was very good and only one red card was shown. The way players respected the referee's decisions, right or wrong was exemplary. Despite the language barriers on occasions, the match officials were understood, unbiased and unshakeable. Good job done but no room for complacency.

CONTACT is compiled and edited by Michael Dimambro, Honorary Member of CUDRRS and member of this Rugby family since 1975. Contributions from all in the Society and its customers are welcomed and invited.

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Readers are asked to share this newsletter with non members who might be interested in knowing more about our Society. SMACs are asked to forward CONTACT to officials of the clubs they are assigned to.