



The Flag and Whistle

Newsletter of the Soccer South Bay Referee Association

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SSBRA REFEREES TO GET CASH BONUSES; START OF MATCH DELIBERATELY DELAYED BY OFFICIALS; MEMBERSHIP DECIDES TO LET BYLAWS BE BYLAWS

Showing an inherent sense of direction, not to mention the ability to follow instructions, 46 Members found their way to the new permanent meeting venue of SSBRA, the library of north Torrance High School at Yukon and 182nd St. on the last Tuesday of April for the General Meeting. These Members were rewarded with new, improved and pleasant surroundings, in addition to the usual attractions of our monthly get-togethers. President **Keith Gendler** was quick to give the floor to a guest speaker, **Steve Elliott** of the South Bay chapter of the High School group, an organization to which a number of SSBRA Members also belong. Steve announced that several High Schools were being added to the South Bay area for that group to cover, with many of the games going from a 2-man to the standard 3-man system. Of equal importance, some afternoon games would be moved to start after 6 PM at night, as a reward for the good job the referees did this year (the group was also given a large number of play-off games because of their performance), and as an attempt to widen the referee pool to those who can only do work-day games in the evening. Steve, who can be reached at snelliot@comcast.net, encouraged those present to consider joining the group. For new referees, 18 hours of instruction is required, but there are many games available, they pay very well, and Steve will work with each referee to get around scheduling and other issues as much as possible. More information can be obtained by contacting Steve directly or secretary@ssbra.org.

Secretary **Warren Howell** then took the floor and apologized for an error in the last Flag & Whistle that erroneously stated the location of the new location for the General Meetings. The ever popular paper roster lists were passed out to those who wanted them (Warren is always willing to supply either soft or hard copies of them to any Member who asks, usually the same day that he sees the request), as were a couple of SSBRA badges.

More interesting things were in store for the gathering when Assignor **Bill Cook** had a turn - he started with telling those AOL users who were having problems with getting into the availability system to check your computer settings, and he volunteered **Lee Jordan's** assistance (webmaster@ssbra.org) with this. As always, Bill encouraged us to get our availability in as soon as possible, accept/decline games as soon as possible, and let him know (assignor@ssbra.org or 316-0808) of any changes or issues. He said to please ignore any direct communications from the Spring League, as their system was not working well and did funny things. Bill also wants to know about any Spring League no-shows, so he can put in for the referee fees due - he is also keeping track of single games (24 % of the Spring League total) so that referees can receive the \$5 single game bonus. SSBRA has also had a lot of State Cup and National Cup games lately, and Bill reminded those present of the no hat and no (non-prescription) sunglasses rules. Several Members had comments about those restrictions, including **George Heggie** - however, no one could completely make out what he was trying to say and so, regretfully, his comments went unrecorded. Though there was one complaint at State Cup about a referee's attire, overall Bill is of the opinion that SSBRA does an excellent job overall, covering the matches with 3 competent referees and keeping the fields running on time. **Steve Brandon** spoke up to agree with Bill, as he saw other groups working games as his son's team went to State Cup finals, and so had a basis of comparison. **Gabriel Goldsman** shared his positive State Cup experiences, and commented on one outstanding game he officiated (a BU16 semi) with **Surend Menon** and Warren in Lancaster. It was also noted that **Ed Lampert** had been highly visible at State Cup venues and had made his presence known. Bill then asked for a change in the habit some A.R.s have developed to flag too many fouls (2 -3 per game is more than enough) and to flag behind the referee's back where he can not see the flag, as this only inflames the sidelines. Bill also wanted more cautions given for delaying the taking of a free kick, as he sees the defenders run up and stand in front of the ball without sanctions way too often.

Next up was Treasurer **Tom Mallen**, who reported \$3042 in the bank, and passed out a few checks to those who were willing to receive them. He also announced that SSBRA shirts were available for ordering - vital information is as follows; Any color you want as long as it is black, sizes/prices S-M-L-XL = \$23.00, XXL = \$24.50, XXXL = \$26.00. Make checks payable to Innovating Imaging. Note sizes in the memo section of the check. Mail checks to Tom (6726 W. 85th Place, Los Angeles 90045, treasurer@ssbra.org) by June 1, at which time he will forward the data/checks for processing, so that orders received by the May meeting will be sent to be filled and returned for the June meeting.

Our own **Humberto Castro** then asked to address the group in his role as SBPSL referee coordinator, and reported that we have done a good job there also. He passed on the news that two division 2 teams had been suspended from the league (SSBRA has been doing only division 3 games this year), and said that he would be pushing for SSBRA to handle some division 2 games next year too.

Preparations for the upcoming Annual General Meeting (May 31 at 7 PM) were then started. No changes to the bylaws were proposed. **Stuart Winter** was nominated for Treasurer, as was Tom Mallen. **Jon Ziegler** was nominated for Vice-president. Nominations can continue to be accepted right up till just before the election.

After the elections and other business at the May meeting, the group will retire to a local pizza joint for food, beer and whatever other entertainment the Members can generate, at the expense of the Association.

New Members **James Marsalla, Larry Fuller** and **Musa Abdelshife**, and **Blake Harper**, were introduced, and then the new rankings were discussed. It was noted that **Eric Winter** and **Roger Stevenson** showed the most improvement on the new list. Keith was then happy to announce that Eric and **Michael Winter** would both be attending the CYSA-South summer youth camp. These are the first SSBRA Members to attend the camp, which is open by invitation-only, at no charge to the attendees, with a view toward training and badge upgrades for promising young referees. Those gathered were quite pleased and enthusiastic in their congratulations and encouragements to the Winter brothers, and wished them well.

Keith then turned to training, and a long discussion about the new offside clarification/interpretations, serious foul play and the distance of a defender from a player throwing in the ball. The changes are rather long and wordy (they are available on the website), but it seems that in general they may result in fewer off-side calls, but more send-offs for dangerous tackles.

After the meeting had concluded, the Board voted to accept the application for Membership of **Gene Villalva**, bringing the number of Members to 132.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, APRIL 18, 2005

- complaints by one Member about his assignments were discussed, no further action to be taken
- a complaint from another Member was also discussed, no additional action taken
- a third Member was suspended indefinitely for several incidents extending over a number of months
- an e-mail from another Member was discussed, no action taken
- two incidents at State Cup in Bakersfield were discussed, action was taken as appropriate
- the misbehavior of a State official during State Cup matches was reviewed
- the Board talked about the apparent use by State Cup officials of non-qualified/certified referees
- an issue with the presentation at the last general meeting was gone over
- Bill brought up two items he wants to introduce for discussion during the training portion of the next general meeting; too much A.R. flagging for fouls, and cautions not being given for failure to respect the 10 yard distance on free kicks
- the "new" offside ruling was discussed at length
- Lee to get with Keith, Bill and Warren in a separate meeting to figure out the details of putting the roster online
- F&W error (meetings to be held in cafeteria rather than library) noted, e-mail to be sent out with a correction
- \$3073 in the bank
- three new Member applications for membership accepted; James Marsella, Musa Abdelshife and Ike Miura
- Larry presented the new rankings, which were discussed at length
- Eric and Mike Winter are going to the CYSA-South youth referee clinic

NEXT MONTHLY MEETING

THE NEXT MEETING IS ON TUESDAY, MAY 31, 2005, AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE LIBRARY OF NORTH TORRANCE HIGH SCHOOL, YUKON AND 182ND ST. - NOTE THE SPECIAL TIME AND PERMANENT CHANGE IN LOCATION. AGENDA TO INCLUDE ELECTION OF VICE-PRESIDENT AND TREASURER, OTHER ASSOCIATION BUSINESS AND A PIZZA PARTY.

Thought of the Month: It's comforting to know you have a mother and a father when the coaches tell you differently.

OOPS !

Column by The Post's Lonnie Wheeler, contributed by Keith Gendler

There's a soccer ref I'd like to apologize to. It wasn't even my daughter's game. Our high school boys were playing, and the older gentleman, huffing to get into position, took away a goal by ruling one of our kids offside. I'm only an occasional yeller at officials, confining my loudness to the times when righteous indignation comes bursting forth, but was certain beyond doubt that the horrible man had blown it badly, most likely -- in retrospect, it was probably the least likely possibility -- out of ignorance of the rule. Choosing a moment when relative silence offered the best chance to be heard, I shouted something insightful and shrewdly summarizing, like, "You have no idea!" (The poor referee, meanwhile, was so unsettled by the barrage that he walked onto the track to face the crowd, imploring us, in a wounded tone, to get off his back.)

The following week, the father of the player I thought had been so unjustly slighted reported that he had watched film of the game and detected that, contrary to the testimonies of our collective eyeballs on high, his kid had roared past the last defender a split second before the ball had been passed. He was offside. And I, once again, was an idiot.

It has taken me about a dozen tightly wrapped years to figure that out, the current participating child being our third. Actually, my wife arrived at that conclusion two kids ago. My general approach has been to wax sarcastic -- you know: exaggerated, clever -- when refs screw up at our expense, but somehow the mother of our children has never appreciated the manly wit. She finds it embarrassing, which I of course write off to women just not understanding. (It has been more difficult to dismiss the objections of our since-graduated son, who hated it when parents yelled at referees -- largely because they were usually wrong.)

To protect and encourage respect for the intrepid souls they've hired to oversee the competition, many high schools have lately adopted the practice of delivering sportsmanship speeches before every event. At our distant basketball game the other night, the announcer went so far as to introduce the officials and recite their qualifications. Within a minute of the jump ball, the couple across the aisle, parents pertaining to the home team, had objected vociferously to two calls and four non-calls.

It went on like that, across the entire section. If one of our players discreetly hand-checked, one of their parents would scream to the refs that "somebody's going to tear an ACL!" There were about three or four venomous hollers every trip down the floor. We can only assume that most of them were first-time parents. (I have no explanation, however, for the grandparents, including the lovely lady who yelled a gruff goodbye -- by name -- to our 5-foot-3 guard who fouled out with the clock running down, as if the little teen-ager were Ron Artest.) It's fans like those who enrich our experience, who show us what it sounds like when we do the same. Over the course of child-rearing and child-cheering, I've gradually learned from them -- also from the soccer gaffe, etc., and the weight of Mrs. Wheeler's rebukes -- to not go there.

It isn't an easy lesson, or one that biased instincts -- the emotions and partisanship of parenthood -- don't violate now and then. But an interesting thing has occurred during the difficult act of tongue-holding. In the quiet throes of tolerance, I've discovered that most referees don't really have an agenda, after all. They really don't hate our team. And although there are bound to be a very few with some unseen personal interest -- did you hear about the German soccer official who admitted to throwing games? -- the vast majority actually do call it both ways. They're pretty good people.

So, no doubt, are the kid-lovers who give them so much grief. Their breaches of decorum are profoundly human in nature, and need not be answered in kind, although it's sorely tempting. (Suggestion to high schools: If at all possible, don't put the home and visiting crowds on the same side of the gym.) In trying hard, I've found it possible, when aspiring to sportsmanship, to simply smile at their rabid rudeness, if not to ignore it entirely.

After all, most of us have been there and regrettably done that. Many times.

Sorry, soccer ref. I wish I knew your name.

It's All About the Money, by Warren Howell

It was a fine day for a soccer match at one of our favorite pitches, Nansen in P.V., with two of our favorite teams, FRAM and Northrop of SBPSL III, to supply the action. Referee Gabriel Goldsman, his able and willing assistant **Dave Dillard**, and his willing assistant Warren Howell, were on hand to do what they could to ensure that the proceedings went according to the Laws of the Game. All was ready to begin, except that Northrop (which only had 8 players) had not paid the usual referee game fee. Warren, as often happens, was assigned the task of handling the money; this is something he likes to do, as the mathematics of the job allows opportunities to turn a tidy profit - just ask Bill Cook, who will endlessly tell the story of the one and only time he allowed him to handle the payments at one of his matches. Anyway, Warren, with the support of the Referee, insisted that the match not start until this deficiency had been rectified - his position was that this is standard procedure, the Team Manager might not be in the proper mood to make the payment after a half of soccer had been played, etc. It went unspoken that he knew of the Manager from past dealings, wherein late/short payments had previously been a problem. Nonetheless, the Manager was indignant about the matter, and still wanted to pay later. When Warren continued the argument, the Manager became even more unpleasant, and said that, since he was Vice-president of SBPSL, the referee team could trust him till the half. Though trying to be polite about the matter, the stubborn, mean-spirited current SSBRA Secretary would not budge from his evil, Bluto-like position, letting the Good of the Game suffer in the pursuit of the Almighty Dollar. Eventually, the two teams were on the field ready to go, while the referee team was standing in the center circle refusing to start the match. Amid questions from the players as to why the match was not starting, the Manager finally sent over a player/messenger with the cash. Alas, a quick count showed that the referee team had been short-changed, and the player was sent back to the sideline to secure additional funds. After a time, the full amount was finally supplied, and the match began. As it played out, the position of the referees was probably justified, as, with the lopsided score 9-0 in favor of FRAM, the match was terminated after 40 minutes of the first half due to lack of interest on the part of all those present. This was acceptable to the referee team, which already had cash-in-hand, and Gabriel made a full report of the termination to SBPSL as required.