



The Flag and Whistle
Newsletter of the South Bay Soccer Referee Association
Serving the Soccer Community since 1976



Written by: Jonny Joseph and Warren Howell
 Edited by: Jonny Joseph and David Martin

January 2022

Notes from the Board

What a Year...

As we begin 2022, we can safely reflect back on 2021 and what we as an Association achieved:

- A return to refereeing soccer in the March 2021 with approximately 70% of SBSRA members, compared to less than 50% for Cal South as a whole. Both numbers have subsequently improved,
- Addition of new leagues and competitions:
 - South Bay Sports 11 v11
 - South Bay Sports 7 v7
 - Seazon Sports
 - 2 ECNL Teams
 - 1 DPL Team
- Return to In-Person meetings,
- 30 New Membership applications,
- Membership approaching pre-Pandemic levels,
- Over 5,000 games officiated as follows:

<u>League/Competition</u>	<u># of Games</u>	<u>%</u>
So Cal	1,958	38%
South Bay Sports 7v7	872	17%
Coast Soccer League	775	15%
Tournaments	629	12%
Manhattan Beach 7 on 7	260	5%
ECNL/ECRL/RL/DPL	216	3%
Seazons Sports	132	3%
South Bay Sports 11v11	117	2%
SBPSL	93	2%
State Cup	83	2%
Others	82	2%
	5,217	100%

Interestingly, it compares favorably with 2019 during which we officiated 5,174 games, but in 2021, we did so without doing any games in January, February and the first 3 weeks in March! A HUGE thank you to all of the referees who officiated these games, many of whom went beyond their comfort zone for number of games per day and/or weekend, and Assignors, Gabriel and Veto for making it all happen!

Board of Directors

President: Jonny Joseph **Vice-President:** Steve Morgan **Secretary:** Jack Desemone
Treasurer: Bruce Ashton **Member-At-Large:** Tim Martinez **Assignor:** Gabriel Goldsman



Good News!

We have been hired by the Torrance Unified School District to provide referees for their inaugural Middle School Intramural season. The season will take place in February and will include 4 match days. Please contact Co-Assignor Veto Galati if you are interested in refereeing these games.

More Good News!!

The LA Galaxy swooped into rescue the Toyota Soccer Centre in our community and it will continue to be a soccer field location. Thank you to all of our members and their families who signed the petition to save these fields. Read all about it at <https://www.dailybreeze.com/2021/12/17/toyota-sports-complex-gets-new-lease-on-life-and-soon-a-new-name-to-boot/>.

Training Opportunities

We have multiple training opportunities coming up and all members are encouraged to attend as many of them as we are able to do:

CORE Training at North High

Tuesday, February 15, 2021

Guests: **FIFA Assistant Referees Ian & Frank Anderson** (To be Confirmed)

Topic: **Law 11 – Offside** (To be Confirmed)

Please sign up any time before the course, at no cost, at

<https://cysa.affinitysoccer.com/eventmanager/public/calendarlist.asp?calguid=&eventtab=current>

What is CORE?

Center of Referee Education (CORE) is a program established by Cal South State Referee Committee (SRC). It is open to all USSF certified referees. It consists of physical trainings & lectured meetings for referees who are looking to be at some point be at the elite level of Cal South.

Emphasis is placed on both physical fitness and classroom instruction. Referees attending this event are expected to come prepared with material for physical fitness (i.e.: tennis shoes, whistle, cards, flags) as well as material for classroom (i.e.: FIFA Laws of the Game, Guide to Procedures, paper and pen).

While these trainings are for referee self-development, please note that Regional or Grassroots Elite certification or recertification require referees to attend at least 5 CORE trainings per year. The same requirement applies to instructors and assessors.

Cal South Monthly In-Service Webinar

Wednesday, January 19, 2022

Topic: **2022 State Cup & National Cup Rules Review and Expectations**

Wednesday, February 16, 2022

Topic: **TBA**

Please review prior trainings and/or register in advance at **<https://calsouth.com/referee-in-service-training/>**. Please be reminded that after viewing the presentation, live or recorded, one must take the Review to receive In-Service Training credit.



Monthly Membership Meeting

Due to the ongoing high infection rate of Covid-19 in Los Angeles County and guidance to avoid unnecessary large gatherings at this time, our first monthly meeting for the 2022 calendar year will be held via **Zoom**, on Tuesday, January 25, 2022 starting at 7:33 pm.

We look forward to seeing you online!

We still have some IFAB 21/22 Law Books available to members. Please contact Jonny to get one.

Supplemental Reports

Due to ongoing challenges, we continue to provide the following guidance for all members:

Please be reminded that whenever we have serious situations, a supplemental report is required:

- The **Cal South Supplemental report form**, on the SBSRA website, must be used,
- The report is required to be prepared ASAP, **within 24 hours** for **all serious situations**, including:
 - **Red cards;**
 - **Serious injuries** (paramedics called, player taken to emergency room/hospital), attended to by the trainer; or,
 - **Game terminations**, etc.,
- Take a **copy of the Match Report** to prepare the Cal South incident report,
- Use **simple language** and include the **facts of the incident** only:
 - **When** – date and time, point in the match;
 - **Where** – venue and specific location on the field;
 - **Who** was involved? The player's name, number and team; and,
 - **What** happened? Don't speculate, just note what you saw.

Note there is no “**Why**.” Not our job to speculate on why someone did what they did and we should not include a diagnosis of the injury, even if we have the ability to do so.

- **Do not use abbreviations**, only use **language in the Laws of the Game** to describe the applicable misconduct.
- **Call the Assignor**, after any game that requires an incident report, so he is informed when the league calls him.
- **Submit the supplemental report** to our Member-At-Large (MAL) and the Assignor (and Co-Assignor if the game was assigned by the Co-Assignor) who will review the report and possibly suggest edits.
- Following submission of the incident report to the MAL, please call him to ensure it has been received if you have not received an **acknowledgement of receipt within 2 hours**.
- **Following review and approval** of the report by the MAL and Assignor, the **Assignor submits the final report** to the applicable league.
- **If you have kept ID cards**, not required for all red cards, the card(s), together with copies of the match report and incident report must be sent to the applicable league administrator **by the end of the first business day (likely Monday)** following the game.
- The **importance of this process** cannot be stressed strongly enough! These reports are really needed by the leagues and everything we do needs to **reflect our professionalism** as individuals and as a referee association.



Two Person (Whistle) Referees

IFAB and USSF prohibit the use of the two-person referee system. While many of us may use this system for high school and middle school games, it may not be used by any USSF-sanctioned games that we do. If any doubt, unless assigned to do this by one of our assignors, please **DO NOT USE THE TWO-PERSON REFEREE SYSTEM** unless you have been assigned by one of our Assignors to be on a two-man crew.

Conversely, if you have been assigned as a **TWO-PERSON REFEREE CREW** for **non-USSF-sanctioned games**, please honor the assignment regardless of what your assigned partner may say. If there is an issue, please contact the appropriate assignor – Gabriel for weekend games and Veto for weekday games.

And Now for Something Completely Different!

SBSRA is not connected with this in any way, we are simply providing our members with this information to pursue individually, if interested.

We have been contacted about a Teqball tournament to be held on February 26 and 27 in Long Beach. The sport itself is less than 10 years old and is a combination of soccer and ping pong. You can see the sport in action by clicking on this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Onc03gEy3Bk>.

The following expectations for referees were provided to us:

- All referees must pass an online certification process at <https://www.fitegeducation.com/>. This must be **completed by January 28**. After creating an account, you'll click on the "become a referee" tab at the top. On the new page, scroll down. You can skip the first box that asks you to register. **They recommend that you watch the videos in the second box that says "learn from education videos."** Combined, the videos will take about an hour to watch. There are practice exams you can take at the conclusion of the training; you can take two per day. Once you feel confident that you will pass the exam, you must take and pass the Level C exam. After completing and passing the exam, email the certificate of completion to Elliot (see below).
- Attendance at two in-person training sessions. Those have not been scheduled yet.
- You must be 18 years or older and legally allowed to work in the United States.

Referees will be paid to attend both training sessions in addition to working that weekend \$120 for each day you work plus \$40 for attending both ref training sessions. If you work only one day, you will make \$160 (\$40 + \$120). They will be holding events in the Long Beach area in the future and they expect that other Teqball clubs will be reaching out to you to be a referee as well. There is a chance that you could have a career as a Teqball referee! They stated that they are always scouting talent to fly to officiate our bigger events like the Teqball World Championships in Europe.

Interested? Please contact Elliot Taylor, Education Coordinator, elliott@lateqers.com, 310-351-3270.

Membership Meeting Minutes Approval

Included below are the November Minutes for Membership approval at our next meeting.



SBSRA Monthly Membership Meeting Minutes Tuesday, November 30, 2021 North Torrance High School

Board members present: Jonny Joseph, Bruce Ashton, Gabriel Goldsman, Tim Martinez, Steve Morgan, Jack Desemone.

1. Call to order – JJ called the meeting to order at 7:35.
2. Approval of Minutes:
 - a. Larry Savell motioned to approve the September minutes, Bill Yee seconded the motion, approved by acclamation.
 - b. Kiku Annon motioned to approve the October minutes, Tim Reynolds seconded the motion, approved by acclamation.
3. SBSRA Training – State Cup:
 - a. Chris Nevil and Gabriel Goldsman explained “What is State Cup?”
 - b. State Cup is for high level of competition in each division.
 - c. Divisions; Mayors, Governors, Presidents. Presidents’ division is the only one that goes on to Regional competition.
 - d. State Cup provides players and referees and opportunity to be seen in order to advance.
 - e. GG explained the importance of completing the paperwork accurately and having a team representative sign in the appropriate places before and after each game.
 - f. GG emphasized that the player cards must be given back to an identified team agent, who is to be identified by drawing a circle around his/her name on the roster. A player card must be retained by the referee if there is a sendoff or serious injury, both of which require a supplemental report.
 - g. Guidance for completing supplemental reports in general was also discussed.
4. Treasurer’s Report:
 - a. BA reminded the membership that he needs a W-9 or at least a SS# on file for each member, or the member will not be issued checks for games worked. Three checks are currently being held pending receipt of the referees’ SS#s.
 - b. Occupations Listing - BA volunteered to be the point person on putting together a list of occupations and hobbies of our members on our website to be available to members only. This will provide our members with a new opportunity of advertising their business or skills. Members were requested to express their interest in doing this ASAP by contacting BA as we need sufficient volume to make this a worthwhile endeavor.
 - c. 1099 forms - SM reminded the membership that 1099’s will be issued electronically in January. If they need new equipment, doing it before the end of the year could be beneficial to their tax return.

BA announced that he has referee fee checks for games during the month of October

5. November Board Meeting Report - JJ reported on the following matters discussed by the Board at the November meeting:



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- a. Recruitment of new referees was discussed and ideas on how to do so were shared. We encourage members to print and hand out the recently created flyers and talk to people at the fields to encourage them to sign up. JJ added that he had Association business cards that members could take after the meeting for this purpose also. We have been receiving one or two new membership applications each week recently so perhaps our efforts are yielding results,
 - b. New Member Application page has been updated to reflect the requirements to become a USSF certified referee before applying for SBSRA membership.
 - c. Member Ratings Process and Methodology – Tim and Steve have been working on their implementation plan and we have set an internal deadline of December 15 for the plan to be presented to the Board.
 - d. Arbiter Update - JJ reminded the membership to keep their information in AS up to date – home addresses and mobile phone numbers are the critical items. SM emphasized that the only phone number listed should be a cell number. Other phone numbers can be removed by each member.
 - e. Service Failure - JJ reported that there was a service failure in the Manhattan Beach Adult League and the guilty member was fined. JJ reminded us, that if any issue comes up with any assignments, to call the assignor immediately.
6. Cal South:
- a. SM reported that 46 members are on the 2022 ROL. SM emphasized that the membership should renew their registrations ASAP so as not to be caught in a year-end backlog. To be able to referee SBSRA games after December 31, 2021, including games for leagues that are not affiliated with USSF, members must be on the 2022 ROL.
 - b. Respect the Referee Campaign
 - i. Cal South has started a Referee Respect campaign, which was discussed at the CORE training in November and we all should have received an email from Cal South on this on November 23,
 - ii. Takeaways included:
 1. Ten commandments for referees including Appearance, Professionalism, Work Rate, Humility and Compassion
 2. A paragraph stating Cal South's Zero Tolerance for Referee Abuse program which can be used to communicate our "pledge to keep players safe and the match fair" to coaches, team administrators and spectators.
- Concerns about Referee Assault situations were also discussed and JJ noted that new laws were being passed all over the country to criminalize referee assaults which demonstrates that this issue is being taken very seriously.
- JJ anticipates that Cal South will have an In-Service training on the "Respect the Referee" topic in the future.
7. New Members – Three new members introduced themselves.
8. Assignor's Report:
-



- a. Tournaments' Report – GG noted that our members had done very well at last weekend's showcase tournament at Silver Lakes and a few have been identified as candidates for the Regional Tournament which follows State Cup,
- b. Upcoming Tournaments – GG noted that we have two tournaments on December 11 and 12 taking place in North Orange County (Irvine and OC Great Park) with a small possibility of some games in Torrance.

GG reported that he had just received the So Cal schedule for the upcoming weekend and that members should open their blocks if they want games as he expected to complete that assigning by the next day

9. Meeting adjourned at 9:10.
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As noted in the above minutes, the Board has been working on revising the Ratings (AKA Rankings in Arbiter) System for the Association. Following is an outline of the proposed "New Ratings System." Certain of the details are still to be formulated by the Assessing Committee which will be chaired by the Vice-President, pursuant to our Bylaws.

Please review this document carefully. We will present this "New Ratings System" in summary format at the January 25, 2022 Membership Meeting. We will request members to submit any comments on the document on our Website following the Membership Meeting for consideration by the Board before the "New Ratings System" is finalized and implemented.

The planned timetable for implementation is as follows:

- Tuesday, January 25 – presentation of "New Ratings System" and "Objective Ratings Categories" document to Membership at Monthly Meeting,
- Monday, January 31 – deadline for Membership comments and suggestions on "New Ratings System" and "Objective Ratings Categories" document via SBSRA website,
- Thursday, February 10 – Board Discussion of "New Ratings System" and "Objective Ratings Categories" comments from Membership and finalization of Document,
- Weekend of February 12, 13 – President, Vice-President and Assignor meet with Assessors to finalize process and criteria,
- Tuesday, February 15 – publication of New Ratings System and Objective Ratings Categories Document in February Flag & Whistle,
- March 1 – Implementation of New Ratings System.

Of course, these dates may change as we move through the process, but that's the plan.



New Ratings System

Why?

- To create a transparent and fair system to ensure that all referees are assigned fairly to the appropriate level of game according to their rating.

Who?

- Observations to be performed by:
 - SBSRA members - Certified USSF Referee Assessors,
 - Paid an Observation Fee of 50% of the CR fee for the applicable game.
- Observations to be performed for (in order of priority):
 - New Members,
 - Review Requests by Member or Assignor,
 - 100 and 200 Level Members (excluding 1) Regional Level referees who have already been assessed by USSF Assessors and 2) Elite Grassroots referees who are content with a 200 level rating),
 - All Other Members.

Where?

- Observation of referees on regularly scheduled SBSRA games throughout the year.

When?

- On a weekly basis, where and whenever possible,
- Coordinated by the VP and Assignor,
- Concentrated during our "Busy Season" from September through early December and at Tournaments,
- Goal is to complete the whole membership, with each member rated at least once over a 12 month period.

How?

- Administered by the Vice-President and Assignor with a Ratings Committee comprised of Non-Board Association Member Assessors,
- Using a newly created Observation Checklist incorporating the following objective criteria:
 - Professionalism,
 - Game Preparation,
 - Laws of the Game,
 - Foul Recognition,
 - Mechanics,
 - Fitness and Dynamics,
 - Game Management.



- Using a Spreadsheet with a scoring system for each category, with a weighting to create a maximum score of 400 on a Score Sheet,
- Score is subtracted from 500 to create an Arbiter Assigning score from 100 (highest rated) to 500 (lowest rated),
- Assessor will review the completed checklist with the referee after the game. Goal is to provide mentoring feedback and to be transparent as to the referee's rating.
- The completed Score Sheet is submitted to the Ratings Committee the following week,
- The Ratings Committee will meet on set days/dates twice a month to review the Score Sheets received and to decide to accept the Score Sheets or recommend an additional observation for each referee.
- Referees will not be asked to pay for the initial observation or one recommended by the Committee but may request an additional observation at their own cost.
- Vice President will report results of Observations and Ratings to the Board on a Monthly Basis for informational purposes only. The Board cannot make any adjustments to the Ratings provided by the Ratings Committee.
- Referees who score well at a younger age level will be recommended for further observation at a higher level soon after their prior observation.

New SBSRA Members

- Entry Level (no experience)
 - Assignor matches a mentor for first few weeks, as needed,
 - Mentor will provide Assignor with New Referee Report to include:
 - ❖ Pre-Game
 - Professionalism - Punctuality, Dress and Appearance, and Attitude,
 - ❖ During the Game
 - Mechanics - Followed Instructions, Signaling, Positioning and Concentration,
 - ❖ Post-Game
 - Attitude - Accepted Feedback, Willing to Learn
 - Assignor will determine initial rating for assigning purposes.
- Experienced Referee (at least 1 year of experience)
 - Same process for Existing Members,
 - Assignor to initially assign new members based on prior experience and badge level(s).



Objective Ratings Categories

1. Professionalism

- Punctuality - at the field (at least 30 minutes prior to match)
- Dress and Appearance - Correct Uniform (neat, clean and tidy)
- Attitude (towards team managers, coaches and referee team members)
- Appropriate and required equipment

2. Game Preparation

- Prepared Match Report
- Knowledge of Game Fees
- League Rules
- Match Duration
- Field Inspection
- Pregame

3. Laws of the Game

- Applies the Laws of the Game properly
- Applies the Laws consistently

4. Foul Recognition

- Understands and Recognizes fouls
- Knows when to apply the foul, when to allow play to continue (trifling fouls), when to call advantage (callable foul)
- Manages misconduct appropriately and assertively



5. Mechanics

- Works well with teammates
- Good and frequent eye contact and non-verbal communication with other Referees
- Signaling - sharp and clear according to USSF guidelines

6. Fitness and Dynamics

- Positioning on the field - anticipation of play and a flexible diagonal, as appropriate
- Keeps appropriate distance from play
- Follows play and varies positions accordingly as required by play
- Maintains proper angle of view
- Keeps Assistant Referees in view at all times during dynamic play

7. Game Management

- Able to manage various levels of game based on players (age, gender, ability)
- Able to manage combative players, coaches, managers, spectators, Utilize personality to manage and de-escalate loud argumentative players/coaches
- Shows strong presence, with actions, whistle, and body language.
- Uses and administers yellow and red cards as needed to control the game and punish infringements appropriately
- Completes match paper work timely and interfaces with team managers/coaches professionally



As we wrote in the prior Flag and Whistle, the late Rick Guerin who was a SBSRA member, once shared that he believed the secret to effective officiating was good “People Management.” With that in mind, we searched for an article on the subject that might resonate with our referee group. Following is the second installment of that article:

The following article was adapted for publication here.

A Guide to People Management: Definition, Tips and Skills

June 9, 2021

By: Indeed Editorial Team

<https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/guide-to-people-management>

This article has been approved by an Indeed Career Coach

[CONTINUED]

[As noted in the prior issue of the Flag & Whistle (November 2021), we promised to share the details of the eight management skills listed:]

1. Empowering employees
2. Active listening
3. Conflict-resolution
4. Flexibility
5. Patience
6. Clear communication
7. Trust
8. Organization

1. Empowering members (members of your referee team for us)

Empowering members helps them develop new skills and be more productive. It’s important to train new employees well and give them the knowledge and resources they need to perform assigned tasks and continue learning on their own.

Other important aspects of empowering employees include:

- Offering constructive feedback to encourage skill-building
- Being available for questions or additional training
- Allowing them to adjust workflow or standard processes if it improves their productivity
- Encouraging them to take additional skill-building courses and learning opportunities
- Supporting them on or manage challenging projects



2. Active listening (members of your referee team, coaches, players)

Active listening is the practice of listening to the speaker to fully understand their perspective, question or concern before responding. Active listeners remove distractions, maintain eye contact and offer verbal or non-verbal cues to indicate their engagement and understanding.

When a member of your referee team comes to you with a question or issue, use nonverbal cues such as nodding to demonstrate your engagement while they're speaking. Respond thoughtfully by repeating a summary of your understanding of their message. If you have understood, you can then ask follow-up questions to learn more about what they need. You can also express that you empathize with their experience to further assure them you understand and respect them. These active listening techniques lead to quality people management that promotes positive interactions in the workplace.

Read more: [Active Listening Skills: Definition and Examples](#)

3. Conflict-resolution (Perhaps with coaches?)

Good conflict-resolution skills can help address interpersonal challenges. You can analyze the situation and identify what the causes of the conflict might be. If there's a miscommunication or differing opinions, you can mediate between opposing parties and help them make a compromise or reach a collective understanding. After mediation, monitor the situation to ensure the conflict is fully resolved and to prevent it from occurring again.

Read more: [Conflict Resolution Skills: Definition and Examples](#)

4. Flexibility

Knowing when to be flexible and when to more firmly direct others is an important aspect of effective people management. You can demonstrate flexibility in your management style by accommodating individual employee needs—such as adjustable schedules or remote work options—and allowing employees to adjust their individual workflow so they can be as productive as possible. You should assess the results of the employee's process to ensure its efficiency and to help them revise the process if it can be optimized.

5. Patience

Patience is an important people management skill that uses kindness, respect and empathy while helping others overcome obstacles. You can use patience when training new referees, teaching new techniques, handling conflicts or solving problems. For example, when Assistant Referees can trust their Center Referees to be patient, they are more likely to ask for clarification to ensure they understand directions and to increase the quality of their refereeing.

Use patience to encourage others to always ask for help if they need it.



6. Clear communication

Communication is a necessary people management skill that enables team members to work together in solving problems, brainstorming new ideas and adapting to new changes. Your ability to clearly communicate with your co-referees can help you be a better team member.

Practice effective communication by using clear and simple language so every recipient understands your message. Consider revising the way you give your message to [avoid common barriers](#), such as too much information at one time or complex terms. Allow your employees to ask clarifying questions, and directly confirm that each member of your team understands the information so there is no miscommunication.

7. Trust

Trust means believing that you can rely on someone's abilities, assistance or advice when you need it most. Building trust helps your team work together more efficiently and productively. Teams should be able to trust that their leader supports them and believes in their hard work. Leaders should be able to trust that their team can complete tasks correctly.

You can build trust by reliably performing your tasks and demonstrating technical skills when employees ask for help. You can also promote trust when you provide constructive feedback that helps team members improve their skills and work quality.

8. Organization

Managing a team involves handling several different ongoing tasks simultaneously. Organization is an important people management skill that helps you track and maintain your team's productivity. Signs of effective organization include:

- Promptly responding to emails, texts and questions
- Keeping a calendar to actively track assignments
- Properly assigning tasks to team members

How to develop your people management skills

If you can demonstrate your people management skills, you can become a stronger candidate for future leadership roles. Identifying your strengths and areas for improvement can help you decide which distinct skills to grow. Consider using these strategies to develop specific people management skills:

1. Choose individual skills to focus on

People management is a broad skill set. Select a specific skill from the list above, such as conflict resolution, and learn more about the skill, its benefits and how to apply it in the workplace.



2. Enroll in professional development courses

You can find courses online or through an educational institution.

3. Find a mentor or coach

Specialized or targeted attention is a great way to develop people management skills quickly. [Mentors](#) can give you personalized feedback and specific, actionable strategies.

4. Ask other referees for feedback or advice

Ask senior referees for advice on how to develop your people management skills and potential leadership opportunities where you can demonstrate and practice those skills.

Warren's Howellers and Some Things to Think About

Warren had to have surgery recently and he really wanted to share that experience with all of us:

SBSRA Member Finds New Use for Red Card

Time had taken its toll on the referee many may know as the **Large Member**, and the cartilage being all worn away, surgical repairs of his right shoulder were needed. The day had come, and the L.M. found himself in the controlled chaos of the pre-OP room, wherein they asked him why he was there (he answered "hysterectomy"), and the words "cut across dotted line" were scrawled on the shoulder with a magic marker. But then low and behold our own former member **Howard Chait** steps in wearing full PPE gear and ready to assist. Better yet, Howard reached into his back pocket and pulled out a red card, explaining that he was willing to contribute that good plastic material to replace the cartilage in the L.M.'s shoulder, adding new, if hidden, empathy to any future send-offs. Alas, the Head Surgeon was not amused, and sent Howard packing, declaring that the surgery would not begin until he was out of sight and sound of the O.R. Finding a named substitute from the bench to take Howard's place (or maybe just grabbing some random guy wandering the hallways), preparations continued, till the L.M. had a question - he wanted to know if he would be able to play the violin after the surgery. Already suspicious, the head surgeon determined that the L.M. had never played the violin in his life and ordered an early application of sleeping salts to end the nonsense.

Using an extra-large gurney, the L.M. was wheeled into the O.R. at last, where enthusiastic application of a hammer, chisel and hacksaw got the job done, with the cracks being stuffed with old plastic shopping bags from Target, or something (post-OR x-rays were inconclusive as to the material used). Awakening some hours later, the L.M. was informed that he would get to enjoy the hospitality and fine cuisine of the hospital during an over-night stay. But it proved to be a long, unpleasant and sleepless night, and by morning the hospital staff had had enough.



Eager to see the Backside of the L.M. (so to speak) and his cohorts, they supplied him with enough narcotic pain killers to ensure that he would party like it was 1999, and discharged him from the hospital at the earliest opportunity that morning, hoping to never see him again. This was just fine with the L.M., who is at home eagerly awaiting visits, phone calls and texts from well-wishers as he recovers.



Those Irish Girls are Tough (recent news article)

Hundreds of youth soccer matches in Ireland were canceled in November after officials withdrew their services in protest against abuse and threatening behavior from the sidelines from the North Dublin Schoolboys and Schoolgirls, Metropolitan Girls and Eastern Women's Football Leagues.

On the Other Hand, It Is Not Any Better in California (recent news item)

A 34-year-old Sacramento man faces criminal charges for knocking down a referee during a BU16 soccer game in Roseville. Video of the incident shows a man running from the sideline and delivering a blindside hit to the AR, who was knocked to the ground. The assailant then stands over the AR and shouts at him before he is pulled away.

This is Why I Always Stay in the Referee Containment Area, i.e., Center Circle (attributed to Holiday Mathis)

"Position yourself in the middle of the action and enjoy the sense that it's where you belong."

Quote of the Month (unknown source)

"You alone must do it but you can't do it alone."

----- Keep 😊 Smiling! -----