

Blackpool, Fylde & Wyre Districts Referees' Association

Correspondence

Within a week or two of become a qualified referee you will hear someone mention correspondence. The instructors will keep reminding you of its importance time after time, year after year. If there is one quick way of creating a good impression of yourself or worse creating the wrong impression, this topic is it.

What we mean by correspondence are all the letters, e-mails telephone calls, match reports, misconduct reports etc that a referee receives from the leagues he officiates on, the Lancashire Football Association and later on from the Football Association.

THE GOLDEN RULE IS TO ALWAYS REPLY TO EVERY COMMUNICATION IMMEDIATELY

That means at once, not later that day, not tomorrow, because once left it will be forgotten. It is amazing that so many referees fail to do this simple task. They then wonder why the League Secretaries never give them the special games or they don't get end of season finals. In fact there have been instances when a bad record of replying has meant that a referee missed out on promotion.

Replying immediately to any correspondence must be the easiest way ever of standing out from the crowd. Do it and the leagues and appointment officers will love you.

Closing dates

When you first apply to a league to take games, you will find that they will ask you for any free dates in the following month. As you progress up the ladder the system remains exactly the same, although perhaps you may have to commit further ahead.

This system is to allow the league appointment officers to know who and who isn't available on a particular match day. If you are not available, you merely have to tell them. It might be that you are working or it is a family celebration, the leagues don't mind as long as you tell them. This is what is meant by closing dates. It will mean that the league will not give you a game on that date. If you don't close dates it infers to the league that you are free for the rest of the dates and they can appoint you to games.

But once you say you are free and have been given a game, then you have promised to be there. Failing to turn up because you don't feel like it is not an option. There may be occasions when you have said you are free and something really urgent happens or you get injured, you must then let the appointments officer know as soon as possible. He is not a mind reader and can't keep track of every referee. Again not turning up without notice is not an option and in fact might make you having to appear before the league committee to explain yourself.

This also applies to Disciplinary Hearing at the Lancashire Football Association. Some referees have failed to appear and found themselves having to pay a fine!

Match Reports

After every game, you will be expected to complete a Match Report. The Leagues will send them to you and they contain all the relevant details about a game, such as the result, the substitutes used etc. They are easy to complete and should be completed and sent to the League Secretary as soon as possible after the game.

Misconduct by the Club Officials, Spectators or any other unusual occurrence at the game.

The Leagues want to know about anything unusual that happens. If the manager or spectators cause problems then you should write a letter to the League explaining exactly what has occurred and what your actions were. It could be that the League will take action against the club or in certain more serious instances they will pass it to the Lancashire Football Association for formal disciplinary proceedings.

If you have to abandon a game, for adverse weather conditions, a serious injury, or indeed for crowd problems, then this should also require a letter to be sent to the League.

In either of these cases it is also polite to ring the league immediately after the games to let them know what has gone on and then follow this up with the letter.

Cautions and Send Offs

These MUST be sent to the Lancashire Football Association within 48 hours of the game finishing. There can be no excuses for not sending them within the required time.

NEVER EVER fail to send Caution and Send Offs reports to the LFA. If you caution a player you must submit the report. Sometime you may be under pressure from teams or individuals not to send the reports in. If you caution a player you must submit the report. Sometime you may be under pressure from teams or individuals not to send the reports in. You may hear all sorts of tales of woe to try and persuade you. Ignore them. Always politely tell the person that you have no option. If they persist or become abusive, tell them that their behaviour will be added to the report and may increase any resulting penalties.

You will never know who may be watching that game and should you fail to submit misconduct forms, it might be you who has to appear before the LFA to explain why!

The best advice

No one expects a new referee to be perfect right at the beginning and to be able to submit flawless paperwork. If you have had an unusual incident or a particularly difficult game with multiple cautions and send offs, please, please seek advice from someone before you submit the reports. That way everything can be sorted out properly.

The people to ask are perhaps your Mentor, or a senior member from our Society. They will be happy to help. If you join the society you may well find that unusual

incidents are discussed and analysed at a Training Meeting, when everyone can benefit. You will then not be surprised that having listen to something being dissected at a Training Meeting, that when it happens to you, you find yourself coping easily.

JOIN THE SOCIETY AND THERE WILL ALWAYS BE SOMEONE TO HELP YOU