

WORKING WITH REFEREES BY ED MORRISON

Ed Morrison, RFU Elite Referee Development Officer, who will become Elite Referee Manager in June, 2008, gave a lecture at the International Coaching Conference at Twickenham in October, 2007. This article summarises his main points.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY.

My personal objectives are to:

- Maximise referees' potential.
- Increase referees' game understanding.
- Improve referees' mental skills.
- Assist referees in becoming a more enlightened person.

MY EXPECTATIONS OF A REFEREE.

- He must be totally committed.
- He must show an ability to learn.
- He has to be smart, intelligent on the field.
- He must be self-analytical.
- He has to be a problem solver.
- He must understand his responsibilities *on and off* the field.

WORKING WITH REFEREES.

(At this point in the lecture, the audience was invited to work with a nearby delegate to prioritise a short list on, 'Where referees need most improvement in their relationships with coaches.' This would make an interesting little exercise for Technical Journal readers and you are invited to send your thoughts by email to the Editor, keithrichardson@therfu.com).

We are working with referees to achieve improved relationships with coaches by:

- Holding regular interface meetings.
- Improved understanding of coaches' roles and responsibilities.
- Becoming more self-analytical.

We would like to see coaches improve relationships with referees by:

- Referees attending regular club sessions.
- Improving coaches' knowledge and understanding of the referees' role.
- Using referees to assist players to develop a clearer understanding of the game's laws.

CONCLUSION.

It might be possible to bring about improvement(s) by trying to develop some/all of the following.

- Coaches to gain a refereeing qualification.

- Referees to gain a coaching qualification.
- An obvious requirement for referees and coaches to respect each other's role.
- Improve dialogue between coaches and referees.
- Make it possible for referees and coaches to share their expertise.

The title 'Working With Referees' can, of course, have two meanings. Ed Morrison works with elite referees in his job. There is, though, another implication – should coaches work with (as opposed to against) the man with the whistle? And if the answer is yes, is it a realistic option away from the professional game?

What can be done by coaches and referees away from full-time rugby? Time is important, especially when there are usually only two training sessions a week. Can Ed Morrison's suggestions be implemented into your club's training regime? Would it be a step forward if it could be used? Or might it be just one more thing for your players to cope with when they are struggling already?

As ever, your views will be welcome.