

Development Group Report: January 2012 by Nick Brown

Former Premier League Referee and current FA Head of Senior Referee Development, Neale Barry, addressed Surrey DG on Thursday 26th January 2011. Neale commenced by describing the current referee pyramid and the challenges facing the local and national game over the coming years.

Key Attributes to progress up the refereeing ladder:- Dedication (But NOT Obsession), ability, attitude, mental strength, fitness (but do not run like a 'headless chicken'), consistency, 'bouncebackability'. Most importantly: "The All Round Package" encompassing all of the above attributes.

You also need:- Self-discipline (in all aspects of life), an empathy for the game, motivation to succeed and knowledge. "Knowledge" does not just mean of the laws of the game (although vital), but also understanding actions. Neale also stressed the importance in developing interpersonal skills; the ability to communicate with different characters for different purposes in different situations.

Important concept:- **SEE- THINK- ACT!** The best referees observe and then consider the best course of action, instead of acting recklessly, and thereby wrongly.

Neale progressed his presentation into stressing that being "fast tracked" is not necessarily good. By spending longer at certain levels enables you to develop a strong foundation of experience, often resulting in referees surviving better at the next level and maintaining sustainable progression.

Common Management and Communication techniques:- Calmness, Confidence (yet equally not arrogance!), impartiality, strength of character, flexibility, humour (if possible, if a quick witted remark naturally comes to you), as well as approachability.

Ways to improve:- Do your homework! Read up about teams/ competitions and speak with other referees. Fitness is an element of refereeing being emphasising on for the future, so improve this to reach new athletic levels. Moreover, attend training and education seminars, self-evaluate and appreciate every game is important.

Neale emphasised that the more you practise, the luckier you become. The lucky officials get promoted and demonstrate higher levels of performance and success.

Following Neale's detailed talk, the meeting progressed onto a "Q & A" session, with several issues affecting L4s discussed and debated.

Surrey DG and Surrey FA wish to thank Neale for his excellent talk and appreciate his efforts. Thank you to those that organised the event, with the location mirroring the quality of the meeting content.