

Southland Football Referees Annual Report 2011

A change in how referees are assessed was implemented this year under the guidance of Referee development officer Chris Boyd.

Assessments were carried out by experienced referee's Terry McNamara and Peter McAnelly. This has proved to be very productive, and although a bit of a learning curve for all, it has provided positive feedback and development suggestions for each referee.

Despite the ongoing niggle of discontentment that appears to be 'part of the game' for some, I believe great strides have been made in the culture of the referee's organisation.

Interestingly, we are not alone in these issues, and recruitment and retention of referees is a critical issue for the South, and we hope to be an attractive organisation for new recruits and many of our valued members.

I refer to comments below regarding recruitment and retention of referees in NZ made at the National Federation meeting recently.

First and foremost was strong discussion on abuse of referees and the effect on recruitment and retention. A campaign is being launched by New Zealand Football to address the issue: some of the things they are looking at include clubs being refunded affiliation fees if they have the least points for misconduct in a league (yellow cards and red cards would be assigned points), and also talking to federations about more consistent penalties for misconduct against referees.

NZFR Chair, Mark Aspden, says: "*I suspect that the number of referees that we lose because of abuse is actually the tip of the iceberg. What we can't measure easily is the number of people who see what happens to referees week in and week out over their playing career and decide they don't want a bar of it. If we can change this dynamic I think the number of referees would increase dramatically. It is important that this is fully supported by NZF as it shouldn't be up to referees to protect themselves from abuse, but any ideas from this group as to how to do it will be very worthwhile. I don't think we can red card our way through this though – there need to be carrots of some sort as well.*"

With the growing numbers playing football in the South, a recent strategic planning meeting confirmed that we might require as many as 40 referees in the 2012 season.

I do hope many of the players contemplating a move into the middle will make that decision in the early part of the year and join us for our planned pre-season training, and courses that are scheduled in February.

Congratulations to Nobby Clark, and Dean Seagar for their outstanding achievements this year, and grateful thanks to Terry McNamara and Peter McAnelly for their assessor roles this season. A special thanks to Peter is also due for his efforts in making the roster work.

Have a safe and happy Christmas, and we look forward to a great season in 2012.

Bernie McKone (Chair)