

# THE CENTER CIRCLE

JUNE 1, 2016

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## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **The RBSRA Chapter has three events in the works for local referees to meet and share experiences.**
- **Pregame conferences help the referee team be on the same page.**
- **Youth referees benefit from making money, building a job resume and learning leadership behaviors.**

## THE BALL ROLLS ON - a word from the President

RBSRA is putting together three events that we hope you will find interesting and will want to support your Chapter by attending. The first of these is to gather and watch a Reading United PDL game. This is an annual event that the Chapter uses for a time of fellowship and also as a training opportunity. We observe the referees and discuss their performance, the decisions they make, and different ways of handling situations. It's a great opportunity to meet fellow RBSRA refs for the first time and to renew old friendships. This year's game will be Wednesday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> @ 7:00pm, with the opponent being Lehigh Valley United.

The second event in the works is for new(er) referees. If you have been a referee for three years or less, this event is for you! We are hosting the event so new(er) referees can gather to meet one another and talk about their experiences getting games, working them, and the situations they've encountered but were not sure how to handle. The RBSRA Chapter will provide pizza and beverages, as well as experienced Chapter referees to guide the conversations and answer your questions. Date,

time, and location details are still being ironed out, but we hope to have an announcement very soon. Stand by!

The third event is really a program and is also for new(er) referees. RBSRA is developing a Fall Mentor program that we anticipate will be done in conjunction with one of our local assignors, Hank Arbo. This program does not replace the Spring mentoring program sponsored by Mark Yocum and the RBJSL. It will provide additional opportunities for referees who want more mentoring than they were able to get in the Spring. Program details are still coming together, but we are excited to be able to tell you that we are working on them.

If you are looking for more details for any of these events, take a peek at our website, [www.rbsra.com](http://www.rbsra.com) or Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/RBSRA/](https://www.facebook.com/RBSRA/). That's where you'll find a better description of the events, as well as their date, time, and location. There will also be a way to submit a notice of your interest in attending an event. We can't wait to see you at one of them!

Carry on!  
Bob Geyer



Special RBSRA Chapter events are right around the corner

## THE REFEREE TEAM PREGAME *by John Perini*

Not that long ago, when I became a referee (alright, it was that long ago), Football was officiated by a Referee and two Linesmen. At that time, the primary responsibilities of the Linesmen were offside and ball out of play, with the Referee in charge of controlling the match. As the game evolved, and the players became faster and more skilled, FIFA realized the referee crew must also evolve. And so the concept of a referee team was born. The Referee remained “the man in charge”. The Linesmen became Assistant Referees (AR), retaining their primary responsibilities, but, expanding their involvement to all aspects of game control. Although ARs now provide a greater degree of input and feedback during the game, they must be able to follow the Referee’s lead and defer to his decisions and instructions. The “game plan” is

explained by the Referee in the pregame conference.

“Pregame conference?”, you say, “Oh, right, I do remember talking about that in the entry level class (not sure if I ever did it though)”. Ha! Got ya? The pregame conference or just pregame, as it is known, is a very important part of working together as a referee team. It helps insure the safety and enjoyment of everyone involved in the match. The pregame is becoming an increasingly more important aspect of the referee’s routine, as more leagues and younger age groups begin to use a three man crew.

The basic concept of the pregame is that it is a time for the Referee to explain to the ARs what he/she expects of them during the match. The experience level of the team members helps set the level of the expectations. For most of the local games that

we work, the pregame discussion can usually be done while walking the field. Topics may cover all aspects of the LOTG, such as mechanics, substitutions, positioning, how to handle fouls and misconduct, coaches and fans. Other areas of conversation might include the Referee’s preferences, the importance of the match, the experience level and playing style of the teams, or condition of the field.

A good pregame insures each member of the team can operate seamlessly with the others. It helps to avoid miscommunication, which can lead to player, coach, and fan confusion. Referee teams that are on the same page result in these groups having greater respect for the official’s abilities and decreases the difficulty in controlling the match.

Try it – you will like it

“The basic concept of the pregame is that it is a time for the Referee to explain to the ARs what he/she expects of them during the match.”

## FC REVOLUTION PLAYS INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLIES

In early May, the FC Revolution U16B and U18/19B teams had the special opportunity to play the AFC Sudbury Academy team in two International Friendly games. AFC Sudbury Academy hails from Sudbury, Suffolk, in the United Kingdom. Their teams are made up of players from

all over the east and south coast of England and they participate in the Thurlow Nun Youth League, where they are currently top of the table. Many of their U19 players also represent the reserve team on a Saturday. The Academy team consisted of 21 total players who have

had experience playing in the Football Association (FA) youth cup, FA college cup and some having been on trial at a number of Premier and Championship clubs. What a great experience to be able to play against such high level, competition!



U18/19 Boys International Friendly  
AFC Sudbury—Jordan Blackwell  
RBSRA AR—Nick Hozza  
RBSRA Referee—Keith Rauenzahn  
RBSRA AR—Jeff Rothenberger  
FC Revolution—Omar Guzman



U16 Boys International Friendly  
AFC Sudbury—Joe Copping  
RBSRA AR—Ed Mayer  
RBSRA Referee—Brad Brelje  
RBSRA AR—Shane Anton  
FC Revolution—Ethan Laverdure  
FC Revolution—Brian Garay

**WECKEL INDUCTED INTO HALL OF FAME** *by Brad Brelje*

Berks County's own Len Weckel was inducted into the Eastern Pennsylvania Soccer Association Hall of Fame in March of this year. The honor was bestowed upon him for his 30+ years of work with amateur soccer in Berks County and the surrounding area.

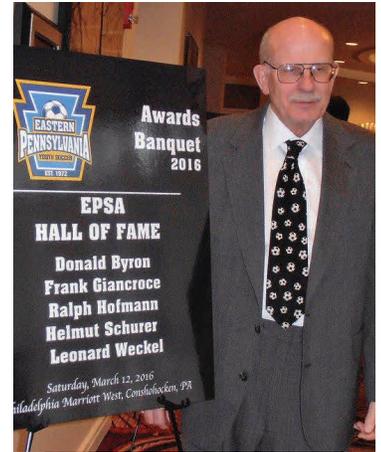
Len started coaching his sons while they were in grade school in Massachusetts, and he has been involved in the sport ever since. He was involved in the start of youth soccer in Berks County, in the

early 1980's. In 1989 he became the President of the Eastern Pennsylvania Amateur Soccer League and continues in that position today, with the support of his lovely wife, Bryn. The EPASL league has been the home for local Men's teams, including Open, Over 30, and Over 40 Divisions. Currently, the organization has an Over 40 Division, made up of teams from Berks and Lancaster counties.

Len has been a referee for 32 years, working USSF, PI-

AA, and college games. At his induction ceremony, Len commented, "I saw so much passion from the kids and adults. We have people playing from 6 years old to an Over 50 Division, and they allow me to continue my passion".

On behalf of the soccer community in the Reading-Berks and surrounding area, I and the Reading Berks Soccer Referee Association want to thank Len for his years and years of dedication to the sport that we all love with a passion!



Len Weckel  
Easter PA Soccer Association  
Hall of Fame Inductee

**YOU MAKE THE CALL** *by Hank Arbo*

It was a game between two ethnic teams that were intense rivals. Many of their games were filled with bickering and chippy play. The field was in a beautiful setting in a park with trees nearby, families picnicking, and a river about 25 yards away from one touchline. During the coin toss, both captains brought out a game ball. The home team's ball was worn, but definitely okay to be used. The visiting team's ball was brand new and was top of the line in quality. The visiting captain was insistent that his ball be used, referencing its quality and newness. The home captain said they wanted to use his ball.

Call #1: Does the referee make the decision as to which ball will be used?

Answer: No! The home team gets to supply the game ball. The referee should accept that ball as long as it meets the requirements for a ball and is safe to use.

The visiting captain returned to his bench muttering under his breath and glaring at his opposite captain. About 4 minutes into the game, the visiting captain was under mild pressure getting to a loose ball at mid-field. He kicked the ball over the touchline to stop play, but not gently. Instead, he hammered the ball well into the

river, went to his bench, rolled his new ball onto the field, and said, "Now, can we play with a decent ball!" The home captain placed the new ball on the ground, backed up several yards, then kicked it even further into the river.

Call #2: What should the referee do?

Answer: Send both teams to their bench for a cooling off period. Get both captains together to discuss team control by them, sportsmanship, and why they were playing the game. Finally, a yellow card to the home captain for unsporting behavior for delaying the restart of play.

"Berks County's own Len Weckel was inducted into the Eastern Pennsylvania Soccer Association Hall of Fame."



We're on the web, mobile devices, and Facebook!

<http://www.rbsra.com/>

<https://facebook.com/RBSRA>



BE INVISIBLE...  
UNTIL YOU'RE NEEDED

## READING BERKS SOCCER REFEREE ASSOCIATION

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## THE YOUTH REFEREE by Mike DiGiacomo

As many of you already know, the business and “profession” of refereeing has expanded its demographic. Nowadays, referee crews can range from someone pushing their fifties or sixties to someone who may not even have their GED, but really, there’s nothing wrong with that. Younger people, especially those in high school, want to make money to pay for things like cell phones, cars, shopping and food, but don’t want to have to spend their weekends and school nights pushing shopping carts around a parking lot or asking 100 people a day, “Will that be paper or plastic?” Refereeing is a great first job for those who don’t want to work around the clock, but want to get actual work experience before they enter college or a profession, and for those who don’t mind making a nice chunk of change. As someone who is still in high school and who knows a handful of other student referees, deciding to become a referee is one of the best choices I have made so far and it’s kind of like a gift that keeps on giving. No matter how long someone works, they’re always going to meet new people. Whether they know the rulebook inside and out or only feel comfortable as an AR, they will always learn something new. These connections and experiences help the newer, younger referees to grow and may encourage them to stick with refereeing and try new things like tournaments or traveling to new places to see different styles of play. Plus, the older and more experienced referees get the chance to help out younger referees by answering any questions they may have, mentoring them on proper techniques and calls and introducing them to different tournaments and assignors. The job of being a referee has branched out to all different age groups, especially the younger generation, which is very promising for our chapter and the future of soccer officiating.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- ◆ **June 22:** Annual Reading United Get-Together @ 7:00

Reading United will face Lehigh Valley United. Free admission (\$10) and concession ticket (\$5) for RBSRA members. Join the Chapter at the event (\$5) and still get free admission and a concession ticket. Al Cross will be just inside the gate with the concession tickets.

- ◆ **Coming soon:** New(er) Referee Meet and Greet (see page 1)
- ◆ **Fall 2016:** RBSRA Fall Mentor Program (see page 1)

The RBSRA mission is to increase the knowledge and performance level of all Association members through training, mentoring, and assessing. We seek to promote, foster, and perpetuate the game of soccer and its officiating. As we interact with members, coaches, players, and fans, we strive to instill a spirit of good sportsmanship, honesty, respect for authority, and fair play. We actively develop, teach, promote, and regulate soccer for individuals of all ages. Our members generally come from Berks County, but are not limited to living in that area.

The RBSRA is affiliated with the Reading-Berks Junior Soccer League (RBJSL), the Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer Association (EPYSA), the Eastern Pennsylvania Soccer Association Referee Committee (EPSARC), and the United States Soccer Federation.

**PA CHILD ABUSE CHECK**

**PA STATE CHECK**

**FBI BACKGROUND CHECK**

Three background clearances must be obtained and **mailed** to EPSARC before you can register.

Remember, you can email any chapter officer if you have any questions about the Laws Of The Game, registration, game reports, or any other situation you need assistance with.