

Referee's honour

BILL CLEERE, referee in charge of Tuesday night's Wycombe-Clapton match is believed to have made history by becoming the first official ever to control an Isthmian League game involving his local side.

Bill, 35, of 95 Westover Road, Downley, hit the headlines recently when he earned the distinction of being the first Wycombe referee to join the Football League lists since the late Frank Fiander — a very close friend of his family.

He has refereed Wanderers matches before, but only friendlies. Why then was he allowed to take the Clapton game?

"The Referees' Secretary in the Isthmian League considers that if they are on the first class list, any referee can referee any game, whether it's on their doorstep or not," he explained.

NOT TESTED

Bill's prowess as a referee inevitably came under close scrutiny on Tuesday, yet he was never really tested. "I thought it was a very easy match to ref. I had to speak to a couple of Clapton players, but both sides went out onto the pitch to try and play football."

It was also something of a difficult situation for Bill, who "eats and sleeps" with the Wanderers at their training sessions twice a week, and is on first



Bill Cleere, Tuesday night's referee . . . "It was an easy game to ref."

name terms with each one of them. "I appreciated the way the Wycombe players behaved," he praised.

And the 'Free Press' verdict?

A strict ref, who uses his common sense, he admits that technically he should have cautioned two Clapton players, but instead chose to warn them — under the circumstances on the night, a wise decision.

Bill kept a firm control, although once or twice did blow his whistle a little late.

● While John Delaney received treatment on a leg injury, a young Wycombe supporter walked onto the pitch. The referee calmly told him "away you go son", and he went.

"Apparently the lad had just come onto the pitch to commiserate with the Clapton players."