

Sort it out referees

OFFICIAL LINES

By Keith Blagbrough
Secretary, WWOSC

AS was widely forecast, this year has seen a profusion of yellow and red cards brandished by referees.

In spite of the fact that we are nearly one third of the way through the season we are no nearer to establishing any form of consistency in the application of the laws of the game.

This was illustrated in one Sunday paper which publishes a statistical analysis of referees' performances.

The stats show at one end of the Premiership table Mike Reed who in seven matches has given 48 yellow and three red cards, an average of seven per match, and at the other David Elleray who, in six matches, has given 12 yellow and one red, an average of two per game.

What are the assessors and authorities doing to tackle this? Not a lot apparently.

It does mean that players do not know what to expect when they start a match. Irrespective of this, it is usually obvious in the first five minutes of a game if the referee is 'picky', you know the one who is more concerned with the strict letter of the law rather than keeping the game flowing, as we had against Reading.

In that case it is completely unnecessary to give him any reason to hand out cards by indulging in dissent, time wasting, backchat or throwing the ball away.

Yellow cards acquired in this way are unprofessional and ultimately, when added to those given out justifiably, result in sendings off and suspensions.

This, with the size of our squad and injury problems is something we can well do without. The remedy for this is with the players themselves who will need to exercise more self-discipline.

● The official supporters are running coaches to Northampton. You can book your place by calling Rena on (01296) 429307.

Rena will also be taking bookings, as usual, in the foyer of the Vere Suite before and after home matches.

In the event of a draw with Chesterfield in the FA Cup first round the supporters club will run coaches to the replay.