

REF-A-READ

Volume 1 – Number 10

September 2006

Website: www.arlra.org.au



FROM THE CEO'S DESK

BY STEVE BETTS (CEO - ARLRA)

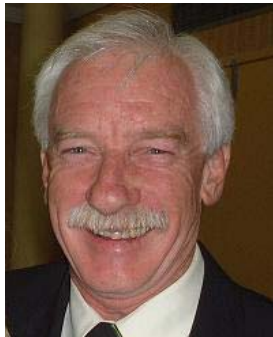
Welcome to this edition of Ref-A-Read, the official newsletter of the Australian Rugby League Referees' Association.

Firstly, on behalf of the Board of the ARLRA, I would like to congratulate ALL referees throughout Australia on your contributions to the game of Rugby League during the 2006 Season. From the U/6 & U/7 games in the local park to the NRL Grand Final, rugby league would not prosper at any level without your dedication and commitment to this great game. Special congratulations must go to those referees who reached the goals you challenged yourself with at the beginning of the season. To those that fell short of achieving your goals, I am confident that with a positive mind and a willingness to learn more about your craft, season 2007 will see an improvement in both your ability and your results on the field.

The Association has had a very active year so far.

Our Coaching Match Officials courses continue to be well attended and we now have 225 Level 1 Coaches and 158 who have progressed to Level 2 while some have also completed our Extension Course. I would like to remind all Level 1 Coaches and their respective Association officials, if you completed the course in 2002 and have not progressed to Level 2, your accreditation with the ARLRA & the Australian Sports Commission will expire at the end of this year. Please contact your State Association if you wish to continue your work as an accredited Coach in your local Association. Local Associations should ensure that your Coaches / Advisers are accredited as part of their responsibilities in this vital area of all referee development.

The Board was once again pleased to be able to provide the Officials for the various National Age Championships held this year; the Australian Secondary Schools Rugby League U/18's in Port Macquarie (NSW) and the U/15's in Perth (WA), with the National Primary Schools U/12 Exchange in Wynnum-Manly (QLD). The Board sincerely appreciates and thanks the referees for their professional conduct at these championships, both on and off the field. Feedback from the organising bodies is exceedingly positive and a credit to all concerned. I would like to particularly mention **Bruce Wallace** and **Phil Beecher** from the ASSRL and **Des Guy** from School Sport Australia for their continuing support of the ARLRA in providing opportunities for referees from throughout Australia to officiate at these elite Championships. Full reports from each Championship are contained elsewhere within this newsletter.



Board Members have been busy visiting the Affiliated States, providing both coaching and administrative assistance to the members and officials of the State Associations. This initiative has assisted the States by providing them with the direction and tools needed to improve the standards of their local officials. It has also helped to foster closer liaison and co-operation between the State Associations and their controlling Leagues. I believe that the Victorian & South Australian Referees' Associations have particularly gained great benefit from these visits. We will continue with this assistance program in future seasons. The visits have been covered in more detail later in this newsletter.

Our website continues to receive a large number of "hits". The Forum area is an ideal area to air your views on refereeing. Please take advantage of our wide circulation if you have a topic or a point of view you wish to discuss with your peers and other interested readers.

The Board has prepared its Annual Business Plan for Season 2007 and submitted it to the NRL for funding approval. The plan provides for an increase in the Association's activities next year, particularly in the Coaching & Development areas.

Please note the requirements for Nomination of Life Membership of the ARLRA are set out in the policy section of our website which can be found at www.arlra.org.au.

On behalf of the Board of the ARLRA, I would like to extend best wishes to all referees for the coming festive season and wish both you and your families a safe and rewarding new year. Finally, thank you all for your enormous contribution to the game this year, as always.

Regards,

Steve Betts
(Hon CEO)♣

Please address all correspondence directed to the ARLRA to:

Mr Steve Betts
The Honorary Chief Executive Officer
Australian Rugby League Referees' Association Inc.
32 Parnell Avenue
QUAKERS HILL NSW 2763
E-mail: ceo@arlra.org.au
Mobile: 0416 053 043

The next Board Meeting of the ARLRA will be held in Sydney on 28 October 2006. Any issues or correspondence in relation to that meeting should be in the hands of the CEO no later than 15 October 2006. ♣

Australian Secondary Schools Rugby League Under 15

National Championships – 26-30 June 2006.

The Australian Secondary Schools' Under 15's Rugby League Championships were held in Perth from Sunday, 25th June to Friday, 30th June 2006. All matches were played at Members' Equity Stadium, a first class venue, which is used by the Perth Glory Soccer team.

The Western Australia Rugby League hosted the event, and their organization was outstanding, particularly their CEO, **Bill Nosworthy** and his team of dedicated Development Officers and W.A. officials. The ARLRA, the visiting referees and I would like to particularly thank the W.A.R.L.R.A. President, **Peter Watkins**, for his hospitality.

The organization of the Championships was indeed matched by the ability of the eight referees who represented their Associations so capably. **Jason Higgins**, **Jay Farlow** (NSWRA), **Brenton Stenning**, **Tim Rutherford** (QRA), **Ken Weatherall**, **Chris Treneman** (CRLRA), **Aaron McRoberts** (Vic.R.A.), and **Greg Raftery** (WARA) should all be congratulated on their displays. Accommodation for the visiting referees at the Saville Park Suites was first class. The referees enjoyed their stay there and a sense of belonging to a team was engendered from the first night when they were introduced to each other, received their appointments up to the Wednesday and we went to dinner together. Congratulations to Chris Treneman on his performance in the Final where NSWCCC defeated Queensland.

For the first time in the Australian Schoolboys' Championships, we used our eight referees as Interchange

Officials. This was so successful, that the ASSRL Executive asked could we use this feature in future Championships. Besides getting players on to the field at the correct times, they were also able to police the trainers. The eight referees also ran as Touch Judges for the week, which meant that they had plenty to do over the seven days. All referees received written reports and DVD's of their matches.

Our squad trained with the Western Australia referees on a wet, cold and windy Tuesday evening and then had a B.B.Q. after. This was provided by the W.A.R.L.R.A. Actually this was the only cold weather encountered, as the days were quite warm, with blue skies.

On the Wednesday evening we were invited to attend the Managers' Dinner. All our referees enjoyed the night.

Fellow Director, **Martin Weekes** is to be congratulated on his organization for the week. As well as arranging our passes into the ground and lunches each day, Martin also was able to organise the Queensland bus to get us to the ground most days. Martin also ensured that the referees were wearing communications gear for all matches.

The week was an outstanding success and was an important tool in referee development, as well as exposing referees to a different first class competition. They also received the benefit of observing referees from different areas in action and experienced a completely new environment.

Kevin Riolo

ARLRA Director.



Officials at the Australian Secondary Schools Under 15 Championships, Perth - June 2006

(Standing from left to right) Kevin Riolo (ARLRA), Greg Raftery (WARLRA), Tim Rutherford (QLRA), Aaron McRoberts (VRLRA), Brenton Stenning (QRLRA), Ken Wetherall (NSWCRLRA), Jay Farlow (NSWRLRA), Chris Treneman (NSWCRLRA), Jason Higgins (NSWRLRA), Martin Weekes (ARLRA). The trainers are Vivian Rintoul and Nerida Godfrey of WARL.



FROM THE CHAIRMAN

BY NICK EUCLID OAM
(Chairman ARLRA)

Well here we are at the conclusion of another season, one which undoubtedly had some highs for some referees whilst others suffered some lows when they didn't achieve

what they set out to achieve. For those who achieved, congratulations but don't rest on your laurels. Be determined to kick off next season from where you leave this one and raise the bar a little bit higher. For those who may have disappointments (as we've all had at various stages of our refereeing careers), seek out the ones who can help you identify what has to be done between now and next year to turn the situation around.

My Board has been extremely busy during 2006 especially in relation to activities involving the Affiliated States. There are reports contained within this edition of Ref-A-Read of some of the work that has been done and it is an area that we will continue to focus on in support of our Affiliated States Board member, **Martin Weekes** and the referees who he represents. The Executives of the Affiliated State Associations have been most helpful in accommodating the various visits that we have made in response to their calls for assistance. It is through their efforts combined with those of the whole ARLRA Board that we are seeing improvements in the standard of officiating at the grass roots level throughout the nation.

I am very excited about the introduction of our new logo which occurred during the year and is now a feature of our website. It more formally links us with the Australian Rugby League and it is one that I'm sure that we'll all be proud to wear as referees no matter what level of the game we are controlling. I encourage everyone to embrace it and to progressively make it a prominent part of your uniform as opportunities arise.

Once again the ARLRA has overseen the appointment of referees to the various National Championship fixtures and it is pleasing to note that all officials have performed consistent with the high levels of rugby league played by the participants in these carnivals. On behalf of the ARLRA I congratulate the various groups who were charged with the organisation of these events as they appear to go from strength to strength. The ARLRA and its referees are pleased to be a part of them.

Finally, as this will be the final Ref-A-Read before year end I would like to wish all referees a safe and happy off-season and a vote of thanks for the way in which you all have represented the refereeing ranks in carrying out your duties during 2006.

Nick Euclid OAM ♣

NEW ARLRA LOGO



REFEREES' ASSOCIATION

Undoubtedly everyone will now have seen that the Ref-A-Read Banner carries a new logo and that it is also emblazoned across our website.

In a move to have the ARLRA more readily recognized as an affiliate of the ARL, the Board of the ARLRA made application to the Board of the ARL to have its logo altered to incorporate the ARL logo with the words "Referees' Association" underneath. The ARL Board authorised that change and we have since moved forward and initiated the changes to all of our documentation and official insignia.

That does not mean to say that our original logo has been discarded completely. It still holds a place very dear to us as it was under that original logo that the ARLRA was born back in August 1999. As you will see it is still incorporated into our website as a background and can still be seen on the on-field and off-field gear of many of our affiliate Associations.

We envisage that the original logo will gradually be removed from gear worn by referees throughout Australia and be replaced with the new logo as that gear has to be replaced over time.

If you have any questions relating to the new logo or its application and use then please do not hesitate to contact the CEO of the ARLRA. ♣

Association Ties Available

The ARLRA has distinctive dress ties available for purchase. They can be obtained from the CEO, Steve Betts, for the princely sum of \$20 each. Anyone wishing to purchase one can drop Steve an e-mail or give him a call and make the necessary arrangements. His contact details can be found on Page 1 of this newsletter.



AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLBOYS' CHAMPIONSHIPS - PORT MACQUARIE



Officials at the Australian Secondary Schools Under 18 Championships, Port Macquarie - July 2006
(From left to right) Kevin Riolo (ARLRA), Frank Kitcher (NSWCRLRA), James Brown (NSWCRLRA), Jeff Hartup (NSWCRLRA), Peter Anderson (QLRA), Chris Butler (QLRA), Ben Everill (NSWRLRA), David Sharp (NSWRLRA), Nick Best (ARLRA).

NSWCHS hosted the **Australian Secondary Schools' Under 18 Rugby League Championships** in Port Macquarie from Sunday 9th July to Friday 14th July, 2006. On the Wednesday, because of sponsorship requirements, they took the four matches to be played that day to Wauchope where a very large crowd was in attendance. The reason for this very big attendance would have been because word had spread about the truly outstanding game played on the Monday between Queensland Secondary Schools and NSWCC, one of the best games of football I have witnessed. The publicity from all sections of the media was very supportive and PRIME showed games each night in their News. .

As the head body, the ARLRA was responsible for liaising between the ASSRL and the various Referees' Associations and the CRLRA was given the responsibility of hosting and co-ordinating referees. The CRLRA Treasurer, **Frank Kitcher**, represented the CRLRA, whilst **Nick Best** and **Kevin Riolo** represented both the ARLRA and the CRLRA. **Chris Butler** and **Peter Anderson** from Queensland RLRA, **David Sharpe** and **Ben Everill** from NSWRLRA, and **Jeff Hartup** and **James Brown** from NSWCRLRA were the referees chosen to officiate in these matches. **Troy Martin** from Group 1 R.A. was also invited to run some touches and to referee one game on the Thursday. This enabled each of the selected referees to have some break from officiating, as well as refereeing three matches each over the week. We also used two young referees from Group 3 R.A., **Thaige Kelliher** and **Mitch Graham**, to run touches on the Sunday, Monday and Wednesday. This was a great learning experience for them. As was the case in Perth, all referees carried out Interchange duties. Because of this procedure, we had less problems with trainers on the field than ever before.

All six referees acquitted themselves exceptionally well and we had an extremely difficult task in choosing the referee for the Final between Queensland and NSWCCC. **Chris Butler** was selected and he performed very well. All referees received written reports and discussed their performances with the three refereeing coaches after every match. They also received DVD's of their games at the end of each day. The Australian Secondary Schools' Rugby League also presented all referees and touch judges with ASSRL towels.

Three of the referees were guests of the CHS at the Players' Dinner on the Monday night whilst all seven referees together with refereeing officials attended the Managers' Dinner on the Wednesday. We were also guests of the Group 3 Referees' Association at a dinner on the Thursday night. As well as Group 3 R.A. President, **Tony Hardy**, his wife and several other referees, Group 3 R.A. Treasurer, **Kevin Rayment** and his wife journeyed from Taree Old Bar for the occasion.

All visiting referees and officials were extremely grateful to **Tony Hardy** for his assistance over the week. He was ably supported by CRLRA Development Officer, **Wayne Wilson**, who travelled to Port Macquarie from Newcastle for the week at his own expense. Tony also drove the Queensland referees to the airport on the Saturday morning after the Championships.

The Australian Rugby League Referees' Association paid for the motel accommodation and meals for all the referees for the week whilst the three individual Associations paid for their referees' travel. The ARLRA is grateful to the CRLRA for subsidising part of the Officials' costs.

Kevin Riolo,
ARLRA Director ♣

ARLRA AFFILIATE STATE DEVELOPMENT

This year has seen the Board members and Consultants of the ARLA heavily involved in assisting the affiliated states with their referee development programmes. At the request of affiliate state Executives, members of the Board have visited State Associations and participated in meetings with Association members, executives of the state leagues and even club representatives as well as conduct coaching clinics for state referees.

Western Australian referees have been fortunate in having both **Nick Best** and **Kevin Riolo** visit them on different occasions, both of whom worked in close liaison with **Martin Weekes**. Nick's visit was at the invitation of WARLRA and whilst there he participated in their meetings and training sessions and presented lectures on practical refereeing and also assisted Martin in conducting a Level 2 NRAS course involving 10 participants.

WARLRA took the opportunity of involving Kevin Riolo in some referee assessment and development during the time that we was in Perth co-ordinating the referees for the National Under 15's Championships. He and fellow ARLRA Board member, Martin Weekes, attended matches in the WARL and both were impressed with the standard. They also arranged for the visiting representative referees to join in one of the WARLRA training nights after which they all enjoyed a BBQ together.

CEO **Steve Betts** and Board Member **Tony Danks** visited the Northern Territory referees at the invitation of **Glen Creamer**. Similar to the WA visit, Steve and Tony participated in meetings and training sessions as well as viewed some of our Northern Territory fellow referees and provided constructive feedback on their performances and development needs.

Victoria saw a visit from CEO Steve Betts accompanied by ARLRA Consultant **Mick Stone**. The Victorian visit laid the foundation for a similar visit to South Australia shortly thereafter. Both Steve and Mick met with the VRLRA and the VRL and were able to come up with some very constructive solutions to some common problems that were being encountered in that state. Mick took the time to view some referees and came away very impressed with the foundation that exists in that Association, not only from an active refereeing perspective, but also in the area of referee development.

The final visit was by **Darren Wunningham** and **Steve Brown** to South Australia. The Friday night saw written assessments completed on three Under 18 referees followed by a meeting with all members and a drills and skills session on the Saturday followed by written assessments being issued to six referees and numerous touch judges on the Sunday. The SARL did a magnificent job in scheduling all games at the one ground on the Sunday so that we could watch as many referees as possible. It is interesting to note that of the nine referees that we watched on that weekend two are local First Grade coaches, one is a local First Grade captain, one is a local club president, three are lower grade players and

another is the CEO of the SARL in **Bruce Walker**, a former Australian, Manly-Warringah, North Sydney and Brisbane player who can handle himself very capably as a referee as well. We also took the opportunity to talk with the local club coaches about any concerns that they had.

All of the visits conducted by the ARLRA Board have involved follow up with the Associations with some naturally requiring more assistance than others. We have been able to help with restructuring where needed, budgeting and business planning and even in the provision of draft articles and constitution. Already we are seeing the benefits of the relationships with positive feedback from the state leagues and the Associations themselves. It is intended that these types of development activities will continue so that the Affiliated States can be offered the same kinds of training available to the Eastern state associations.♣

WEB TRAFFIC

Back on 1 April of this year we installed a visit counter on the ARLRA website and since then we've had over 10,800 visitors which equates to over 2,100 per month or nearly 500 visitors per week.

As well as the counter we installed a source tracker which tells us where the hit came from. It's interesting to know that we have regular visitors from New Zealand, Great Britain, USA, Sweden, South Africa and even Poland. We also know that there is a significant amount of traffic comes to us through the sites of the ARL, QRL, ARL Foundation and various individual Association sites.

Within Australia 21% of visitors originate from NSW, 10% from Victoria, 9% from Queensland with remainder not identifying their state. 20% of visitors stay for less than 5 seconds and these would be the ones who merely use the entry screen to reach our Forum area. 8% stay for 1 to 20 minutes while 9% stay for 20 minutes to an hour and 11% stay longer than an hour.

11% of visitors go to the Coaches' Corner while 9% go to the links page, 4% go to the NRL Development pages and 6% go to the quiz.

The quiz still receives a lot of attention from visitors.♣

FORUM FANS

The Forum Area of the ARLRA website has become the place to be seen lately with countless entries by a plethora of people wanting to exchange ideas and views on refereeing in general. It's pleasing to report that there are very few occasions where the moderator has to delete an entry before it becomes visible to forum visitors and even then it usually relates to a specific incident in a recent NRL game on which most people have an opinion but only one or two want to air theirs with derogatory comments. It's great to see the constructive comments offered by the majority.♣

SCHOOL SPORT AUSTRALIA RUGBY LEAGUE EXCHANGE

The Under 12 Rugby League Exchange was held recently at Wynnum-Manly Queensland and once again School Sport Australia requested that the ARLRA appoint to the Exchange referees who are still attending school. Just as School Sport Australia sees the Exchange as part of the development programme for up and coming players, they along with the ARLRA see it as part of the development programme for up and coming referees and supports the concept of using referees who are still at school.

The 2006 Exchange saw referees from Queensland and NSWCLRA officiate and the standard was very high. The Queensland referees were **Tyson Brough** from Sunshine Coast/Gympie, **Aaron Geddes** from Rockhampton, **Matthew Goldsmith** from Brisbane, and **Adam Bartolsic** from Brisbane while NSWCLRA was represented by **Jackson Oultram** from Newcastle and **Aaron Moller** from Illawarra. Capably supporting these guys was **Ben Bellay** from Brisbane who ran touch for some of the fixtures.

Accommodation was not an issue as Aaron Geddes and Aaron Moller were billeted by the Goldsmith family and Jackson Oultram stayed with his family.

Richard Johnston reports that the overall standard of officiating was very high with some referees coping better with the National Rules than others eg 3 and 5 point tries, no movement at the play-the-ball etc. Richard believes that it is important that there be one set of rules used by all States as the Modified game with its variations across States certainly challenges even the most talented of our young referees. Whereas in previous Exchanges the officially recognised Mod Laws Book was applied in all games there was a departure from those Laws in this Exchange in relation to the held up in-goal scenario where the International Law was used. Richard raises a very good point and hopefully the powers that be will take it on board to insist that the Mini and Mod games are controlled as per the recognised Law Books and whatever laws are included in them at the time.

In spite of these concerns, the feedback from all coaches and those involved in the organisation was that the standard of officiating was outstanding and a credit to all involved in their development.

Nick Euclid OAM,
ARLRA Chairman♣



Officials at the Australian Primary Schools Under 12 Exchange, Wynnum - August 2006
(From left to right) Aaron Moller (NSWCRLRA), Adam Bartolsic (QLRA), Jackson Oultram (NSWCRLRA), Tyson Brough (QLRA), Matt Goldsmith (QLRA) and Aaron Geddes (QLRA).

CONGRATULATIONS to all referees, touch judges and referee coaches who participated in the National Primary Schools Exchange, the Under 15 and Under 18 Championships.