

# REF-A-READ



Volume 1

Number 8

April 2005

## FROM THE CEO'S DESK

BY STEVE BETTS (CEO - ARLRA)

Welcome to the first edition for 2005 of Ref-A-Read, the official newsletter of the ARLRA.

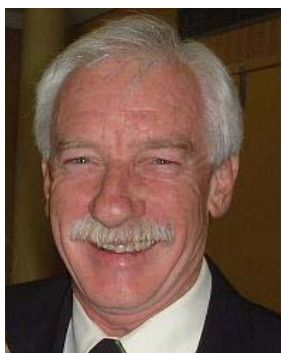
There have been a number of activities progressed by the Board since the last edition of this newsletter.

At its meeting held in November 2004 at Sydney, the Board resolved to continue its investigation into the feasibility of producing a simplified "on-line" Rules Questionnaire. This decision was based on the fact that ARL Development (formerly ARL Foundation) are still some way off producing a similar tool for use by anyone interested in furthering their knowledge of the Laws of the Game. I am pleased to announce that the quiz was launched at the Association's AGM held in Wollongong in February 2005. The quiz contains 100 questions on various aspects of the game. It can be found on the Association's website at [www.arlra.org.au](http://www.arlra.org.au) as well as a number of other sites associated with refereeing including the NRL website. Feedback has been universally positive and has come from as far afield as England and all over Australia. The Association has plans to update and increase the scope of the quiz on a regular basis.

Following the Board Meeting, our newest Life Members Mr Doug Wintin and Mr Noel Bisset, accompanied by their wives, were entertained at a dinner hosted by Nick Euclid and the Board. Mr & Mrs Mick Stone were also guests of the Board at the dinner.

The Association applied to the NRL in the off-season for an increase in its funding to help defray the cost of providing officials at all national schools carnivals which will be held in Rockhampton, Wagga Wagga and Adelaide this year. We were pleased to receive the increase which will give developing referees from all states the opportunity to participate in these prestigious events and learn from their experiences under the guidance of Level 2 Coaches.

The new CMO Level 2 Continuing Professional Development course was successfully launched late last year. The course provides coaches with the skills to present their various sessions in a positive manner. It will be necessary for all Level 2 Coaches to attend this extension course to maintain their overall accreditation.



Our AGM, conducted at Wollongong in February, saw the re-election of Nick Euclid OAM (QRLRB) as Chairman of the Association and Mr Nick Best (CRLRA) re-elected as Deputy Chairman. All other Board Members also continue in their current roles.

As noted above, the on-line rules quiz was also launched at this meeting. I would like to recognize and thank Mr Steve Younis for his excellent work in programming the quiz (and updating the ARLRA website for us). The Association also recognizes the financial assistance for the project provided by the NRL and also our board member Mr Steve Brown for his co-ordination role in the project.

Association ties can be purchased for \$20.00 from me. Simply contact me by email, phone or letter with your requirements. We also still have a limited supply of Level 2 Coach Polos available for \$30.00.

By now the season should have commenced in most Associations. On behalf of the Board, I wish all referees every success for the year and trust that your games go the way you want them to.

Regards  
Steve Betts  
(Hon CEO)



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***The next Board Meeting of the ARLRA will be held in Brisbane on Saturday 4 June 2005. Any issues or correspondence in relation to that meeting should be in the hands of the CEO no later than 15 May 2005. ♣***

## An English Perspective

Visiting English International referee, **Russell Smith**, has kindly offered the following article after an approach by the ARLRA. It is a brief overview of how he came to be running around in the NRL, his expectations and his observations.

The idea of possibly refereeing in Australia came, in some respects, as a result of being selected by Australian officials as, not only the British referee for the Tri-Nations, but more significantly, the person selected by Australia to referee the Final.



This selection, along with other International appointments (in the recent past) involving Australia, led me to believe that hopefully I may have the right pedigree to be suited to refereeing in the NRL. Following prolonged discussions with my wife, Tracey, it became evident, that if the opportunity came, there could not be a greater challenge in the twilight of my career.

After arriving on 21st February, I very quickly came to understand the physical demands expected of me. All I can say is, thank the Lord I've grafted my backside off in the English close season! I thought I trained hard having a personal program at home where I did one session a day for three consecutive days followed by a rest day and then back to three days on again. Over here I did three sessions the first day!

The contrast in training though has been the most refreshing during my entire 15 years senior refereeing career. For a lad born in a working class mining town (the home of rugby league .... Castleford) to be training on the

beach in Cronulla by a good (now former) friend of mine, Bill Harrigan (I wondered why he kept laughing to himself each time he handed me another Guinness the night before the sand dunes).

Coming to terms with the many different interpretations and technical differences have, without doubt, been the most difficult aspect to adapt to. There are so many new aspects to refereeing here. The rucks have numerous different 'Key Indicators'; the vocabulary is completely different; positioning; tolerance levels on dissent and foul play. The only thing I can say is the same is that you still play thirteen against thirteen! Having said that for all it's going to take a little time to adapt; I've got a totally new outlook to refereeing which just adds to the challenge.

Along with the added physical demands, as a group we spend numerous hours each week working on other vital areas of refereeing including mental preparation, reviewing performances, working as a team, communication, laws understanding, striving for consistency, and so many other things. Unfortunately, neither the budget nor the resources permit the same preparation or coaching to exist in England at present. My main disappointment is I wish I could have had such intense coaching 15 years ago.

I've now got my wife and two children over (daughter Kloe aged 13 and son Jordan aged 8) and it's great to be together having done the initial four weeks here on my own. We're very fortunate to have a house with a pool on the water. It was snowing in England the day they left so all in all their first impressions are so positive. It will be a great comfort to put my mind at ease once they've finally settled in and equally when I've adapted to all the new on-field changes.

I can only hope that patience prevails, because longer term I am confident I can contribute positively to the NRL. It's a huge challenge and one which would give me immense pleasure, providing only, that I make it a success personally and for my family.

**Russ Smith** ♣



Participants of the Level 2 Referees' Coaching Course held at the Surf Leisure Resort (Wollongong) 4-6 March 2005. Course presenter, Mick Stone, is in the front row second from left.

## FROM THE CHAIRMAN

BY NICK EUCLID OAM  
(Chairman ARLRA)



As we enter the new rugby league season of 2005 it is extremely pleasing to report that the ARLRA has really made its mark in the area of refereeing development throughout Australia. 2004 saw the emergence of the Association as the coordinator of refereeing activities surrounding the National Schools Championships at three locations and that process will continue for the fixtures set down for 2005. With the elite members of schools rugby league scheduled to play this year in Rockhampton (Under 15's), Wagga-Wagga (Opens) and Adelaide (Under 12's) it is fitting that our Association is involved through the participation of not only its active referees to control the fixtures, but also its registered coaches as coordinators and mentors to those active referees. We now have in excess of 320 referee coaches from whom we can draw significant knowledge and expertise to train our younger referees. The NRL has recognised the value of these people to the game and has accordingly afforded us an increase in funding to carry out this most important work. We sincerely thank the NRL for thus enabling us to further develop our activities in this area.

One of the most valuable attributes of a referee (if not THE most valuable) is a thorough knowledge of the Laws of the Game. It is also an area that has probably not kept pace with available technology over the years. Well, this year has seen a significant development in this area with the launch of the ARLRA On-Line Laws Quiz which was officially launched at the ARLRA Annual General Meeting on 4 February 2005. More can be read in this newsletter about the quiz but as Chairman I must sincerely thank those responsible for its implementation. Firstly, a huge thank-you for the financial support from the NRL without which we would have found it extremely difficult to achieve what we have. The quiz itself came from the combined resources of Richard Johnston of the QRLB, Steve Toms of the NSW CRLRA and Michael Stone of the NRL and for this we thank them sincerely. Finally, our thanks to Steve Younis, who we contracted to do the programming, for his professionalism and speed of service. Feedback on the quiz has been exceptional and for those of you who have had a go at it I think that you will have found it to be a very valuable tool.

Finally, I hope that 2005 proves a successful year for all of our members and that our individual and collective goals are all achieved.

**Nick Euclid OAM** ♣

## NATIONAL SCHOOLS MATCHES in 2005

The ARLRA will be asked to provide referees once again for the various National Schools' Carnivals in 2005. These matches commence with the **Australian Schoolboys' Under 15 Championship** to be held in Rockhampton from Sunday, 26th June to Friday, 1st July, 2005. The ARLRA has asked the Queensland Referees' Association to appoint a Referees' coordinator for the week. This person will be responsible for appointing and assessing referees and eventually choosing the best performed referees for the Finals. One member of the ARLRA will also be in attendance. It is likely that the NSWRLRA, the QRLRA and the CRLRA will be asked to select at least one referee from each Association. It is also possible that the Victorian, Northern Territory and Western Australia RLRA's may be asked if they can select a referee each.

The **Australian Schoolboys' Under 18's Championship** will be held in Wagga Wagga, NSW, from Sunday 3rd July to Friday 8th July. The ARLRA, on advice from the CRLRA has appointed Pat Walsh, the NSW CRLRA South Western Development Officer, as the Referees' coordinator. The ARLRA through the CRLRA will be requesting the NSWRLRA, the CRLRA, the Queensland RLRA and possibly the Northern Territory and Victorian RLRA's to nominate at least one referee from each Association to officiate. Both the President of the CRLRA and the Secretary of the CRLRA will be representing the ARLRA and the CRLRA in Wagga Wagga.

The third School Carnival is the **Under 12 Primary Schools' Championship** to be played in Adelaide from Saturday 30th July to Saturday, 6th August. A Board member of the ARLRA will be in charge of appointing referees to the various matches. In accordance with the wishes of Australian Primary School Sport, it is intended that the referees chosen to officiate at these Mod League matches will be Secondary School students between the ages of 15 and 17. It is hoped that the NSWRLRA, the CRLRA, the QRLRA and the Victorian RLRA will nominate a referee from each of their Associations to attend. Of course, the NSWRLRA will have to ask for nominations from its affiliated District Associations. These referees will be billeted by families in Adelaide.

Although not a School Carnival, the **International University Rugby League Championships** will be played in Brisbane from 2nd July to 16th July. The first week of this two week Carnival is on at the same time as the Schoolboys' Under 18's in Wagga Wagga. Again the ARLRA will request the nomination of referees from the previously mentioned Associations.

All these Championships will give selected referees the opportunity to officiate at a high level of Rugby League.

**Kevin Riolo** ♣

## LEVEL 1 COURSE FEEDBACK

### **A Report on the Level 1 Referees' Coaching Course By Glen Rose of NSW Group 10 Referees.**

I thought the course was great and I got a lot out of it. I was particularly interested in the "art of counselling" session and I just wish that this was around in the late 80's when I was coming through and was subjected to some pretty rude and arrogant assessments of my performance.

I thought that the "structure of the game" really didn't need to be covered that well as I feel that most of us are aware of how it works anyway. Also, it is a bit hard for us here in the bush to get together for the drills practice as our area is about 300km across and our comrades in Group 11 is about 600km. Here at Bathurst we can only get six blokes out of 25 members to training as the others are at least one hour away.

In summary, I thought that the course was overall well presented with people who were experienced and knew what they were talking about. Talking to most of the people in our group at the course and they felt the same as me.

We were also very impressed on how the Illawarra Association is run and we all wish we had a set-up like that. The course will allow me to develop our younger blokes in our association and set them up for bigger and brighter things. One of the things I got out of the "goal setting" session is that I intend to give you Illawarra blokes a run for your money in the rep squads in the not to distant future.

All the best and thanks for a great course.

**Glenn Rose**  
**Senior Vice President**  
**Group 10 Referees Bathurst**

## COACHING COURSE UPDATE

On 4th, 5th, 6th March both the NSWRLRA and the CRLRA ran Level 2 Referee Coaches' Courses at Narrabeen and Wollongong. **David Jay** presented the Level 2 Course at Narrabeen for eighteen participants from a wide area of Metropolitan districts. From all reports, the weekend was a success.

Fifteen nominees attended the Wollongong Level 2 Course which was run in conjunction with a Level 1 Course which had fourteen candidates. **Mick Stone** presented the Level 2 whilst **Barrie Keenahan**, with help from **Mark Crampton** and **Alex Mangovsky**, handled the Level 1. Two referees from Northern Territory travelled the long distance to participate in obtaining the Level 1 Coaching Certificate.

David Jay is interested in running another Level 1 Course for NSWRLRA members during the middle weekend of the July School Holidays, which would be about **8th, 9th, 10th July**. As it would be difficult for enough candidates from NSWRLRA to attend, the NSWRLRA has been asked if it has any possible participants. At this stage seven have shown interest. Perhaps some of the emerging States may have some candidates.

If so you could contact either **Les Matthews**, **David Jay** or **Kevin Riolo**.

To date there have been 328 participants in our coaching courses. Our current database shows the following numbers for each level:-

<u>Assoc.</u>	<u>Level 1</u>	<u>Level 2</u>	<u>CPD</u>	<u>Total</u>
NSWRLRA	45	16	20	81
QRLB	91	15	19	125
NSWCRLRA	69	18	24	111
NTRLRA	5	-	1	6
SARLRA	2	-	-	2
VICLRA	1	-	-	1
WARLRA	0	1	1	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>328</b>



Participants of the Level 1 Course held at the Surf Leisure Resort (Wollongong) 4-6 March 2005. Presenters were Alex Mangovsky (Back 6 from Left), Mark Crampton (Front Left) & Barrie Keenahan (Front 4 from Left).

## WEBSITE FACELIFT & ON-LINE QUIZ

Anyone who has paid a visit to our website at [www.arlra.org.au](http://www.arlra.org.au) in recent times will have noticed that we have given it an extreme makeover. This coincided with the launch of our new On-Line Laws Quiz at the February Annual General Meeting. The navigation is much the same as before due to the fact that many visitors have commented on how easy our site is to navigate so we decided to leave well enough alone. The major change is merely cosmetic but does result in a fresher new appearance for the overall site. However, having said that we have added a couple of features not the least of which is a forum area where people can visit to post any comments or questions that they have relating to refereeing. We have moderated the forum which means that any postings must be reviewed and authorised before they are released to the world. In this way we are able to eliminate any unsavoury contributions before they are published. It is great to see that Mick Stone has been playing a major role for us in this area. He regularly reviews the forum and responds to any posted queries which appears to be much appreciated by the participants. Where else can people have direct access to someone so heavily involved in the administration of the game they watch on the telly every weekend!

Our on-line Laws Quiz has exceeded all expectations. In fact it has gone international. Apart from the on-line version we have so far distributed over 150 versions on CD-ROM throughout Australia. The feedback has been tremendous and has come from afar field as Great Britain where not only referees are having a go at it but rugby league fans as well. It has made its way onto many a rugby league related website including the front page of the new NRL website itself. The "redvee" site of the famous St Helens Club is also publishing it and their fans have been in touch with us to commend us on what we have supplied.

However, not all feedback has been positive. There are some who have been in touch with us to advise that some of the quiz questions or answers are incorrect. An example of one of these says *"hey mate just letting you know you might want to have a look at your questions on your quiz. Quite a few of them are wrong. I'm not just some yobo (sic) that thinks he knows all the rules and is upset cause he just found out he doesn't. I'm a very involved league player and fan (and) my father is also a referee and agrees that there are quite a few faults in you (sic) questions."* We responded to thank the author for his feedback and respectfully asked if he might be able to provide the specific questions that are incorrectly answered along with the correct answers so that we can get back to the Lawmakers and let them know but so far no reply.

On the other hand the following e-mail more accurately represents the communications we are receiving:-

*"Great quiz even though, to my shame, I only got 70%. And that's despite being a fan of the game for 40 years! It was posted over here in Pommyland on the Saint Helens supporters website redvee.net and has had quite a few fans having a go. Some of the questions would be great to put in match programmes to test the fans or even for Sky TV to use for prize competitions. Many thanks for your superb effort!"*  
JOHN GRAHAM

*P.S. Do Aussie fans do any better?"*

Unfortunately we couldn't give John a definitive answer on whether Aussies did better than Pommies except to advise him that we haven't come across anyone yet who had achieved the perfect score.

We are about to embark on ARLRA Quiz #2 and Richard Johnston has already gathered all the questions so stay tuned for more Laws brain-teasing.

**Steve Brown**♣



### Association Ties Available

The ARLRA now 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.

### L2 Polo Shirts

There are also available a limited number of Level 2 Coach Polo Shirts which can also be obtained from the CEO for \$30 each. Just give him a call if you would like to acquire one.



## TWO NEW LIFE MEMBERS

On the 20th of November 2004 we saw two more refereeing legends presented with life membership of the ARLRA by Association Chairman **Nick Euclid OAM**.

**Noel Bissett** of the Canberra District Rugby League Referees' Association has had a long distinguished career both on the field as a representative referee and off the field as an administrator. He has controlled 275 NSW Country First Grade centres and over 100 Winfield Cup fixtures as well as matches involving visiting international teams before becoming an NRL video referee in the late 1990's. Noel has been awarded life membership of Group 8 Country Rugby League, Canberra & District RL Referees Association, Canberra & District Rugby League (Raiders) and the NSWRL Referees Association in recognition of his tremendous contribution to refereeing.



**Doug Wintin** is from the Cronulla-Sutherland District Rugby League Referees' Association of which he has been a member for 40 years and a life member for 29 years. He is also a life member of the NSWRLRA, NSWRL and Cronulla-

Sutherland Junior Rugby League. He was a recipient of the Australian Sports Medal in 2001. Doug's refereeing resume reads like a who's who with enormous involvement as an active referee, an administrator and a coach, all at both local and NSW level.

Both of these gentlemen are truly worthy recipients.

### Report – Sydney Based Level 2 Coaches

*By Noel Bissett*

The Inaugural Level 1 Coaches' Course developed by Michael Stone & Richard Johnson was conducted at Narrabeen by Michael Stone in May 2001. Selected Members from all Regional Sydney Based Associations attended and the weekend proved to be most successful.

This group went on to attend the Inaugural Level 2 Coaches' Course in February 2002 & again were successful under the guidance, once more, of Michael Stone with Chairman Nick Euclid OAM in attendance.

Since then this group has held meetings on a regular basis and has added to our membership personnel with others who have been successful in completing their Level 2 Courses.

The objective of these meetings is to actively engage in aiming to create team cohesion within all Associations and to assist in producing consistent high quality Referees.

Meeting Venues have varied and have included Goulburn, St. Mary's, Harbord & Marrickville.

Many items have been progressed over the course of these meetings. Following are details of a few of the group's Agendas & Objectives which have proven beneficial to our Associations.

- *Reviewing & updating Business Plans.*

The first Level 2 Course had a requisite to prepare an effective workable Business Plan. At each meeting members give an updated summary of the progress of their own individual Association's plan. Some of the objectives include – Recruitment & Retention – Providing Capable Referees – Promotion of the Game – Sponsorship & Networking

- *Skills Training*

After identifying the importance of consistency within Associations & NSWRA concerning skill training, a session was organized at St. Mary's with the assistance of Dennis Spagarino & his Coaches.

The goals set for this program were :

1. To relay knowledge & experience of Senior Members ( NSWRA Coaches )
2. To ensure all Association's Directors & Trainers are consistent in their approach when applying the set drills.
3. To give an important insight in what candidates can expect when selected for Grade & Junior Representative Duties.

- *Video Projects*

At the inaugural meeting our members viewed a prototype Coaching Video prepared by Michael Stone. All present agreed this was a major concept for use as a Coaching tool. Since then Level 2 Coaches have contributed to many Coaching Videos under the guidance of coordinator Michael Stone who, with David Jay, has recently completed a Mini Mod Coaching tape. The contribution given by Michael Quailley, Stan Watson, Jon Stone, Jack O'Sullivan & Rob Peard is also acknowledged in the preparation of the first Mini Mod series.