



The South Wales Referees Association



RAW Report

September 2017

I represented the SWRA at the September 2017 RAW meeting. The SWRA area, as with football, is the largest for referees in Wales and it is hugely important on what we, as an Association, as Local Societies and individuals, have input on how we want the RAW to function and act on our part.

The RAW is gradually failing apart and, unless it moves into the 20th Century (let alone the 21st) then it will eventually cease to exist with it the opportunity of national representation for referees in Wales as a group will be lost.

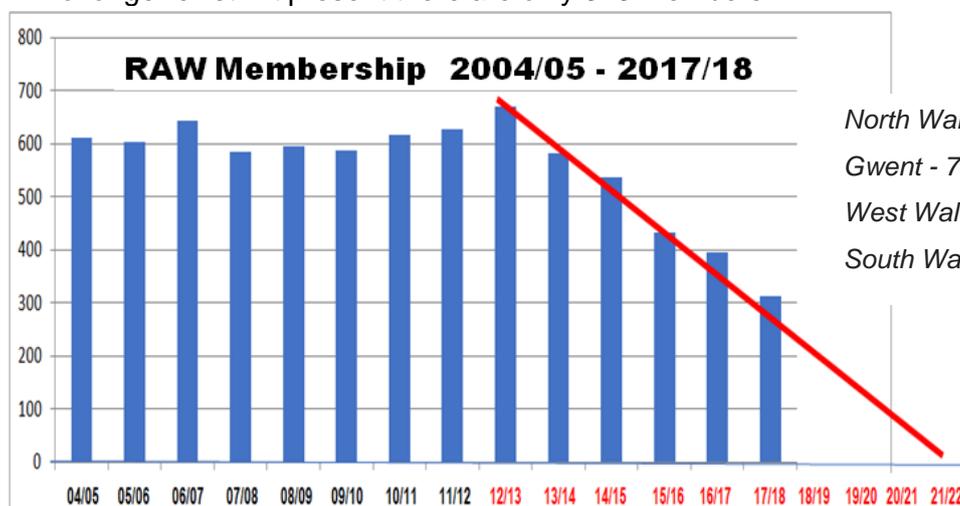
I addressed the meeting on several main factors, that I believe, need to improve. Not all were agreed by the representatives presents however it is what, you, as the SWRA, want to bring to the table. I am always open to suggestions. The issues I raised are as follows:

RAW Website:

The present website is 3 years out of date. The RAW Committee have been waiting for someone to come forward to run the site unfortunately this has not happened however with a healthy bank balance it was finally proposed and agreed that the RAW spend £350 on having a new website designed with an additional cost of £50 to maintain the site. However, as of October 2017, we are still waiting.

Recruitment & Retention:

All Associations, Societies, Leagues are struggling with referee numbers however the RAW needs to be more dynamic on how it's to recruit and retain members. If the trend of the past 5 years continues the RAW will no longer exist. At present there are only 313 members.



North Wales 120 referees / 24 members
 Gwent - 78 members
 West Wales 229 referees / 97 members
 South Wales 290 referees / 68 members

I raised several points one of which the RAW has no idea of the demographics of the RAW ie what members are what grades? - for example it is quite possible that 50% of the members were non-active - no one knew. Without this basic baseline what areas/grades do we look at first - where is our membership? Parks, County, Welsh League referees? All County Referees Associations have around the 35-40% of the registered referees at best. This is an area we need to improve.

I also feel that the higher the percentage the stronger we are - "Together Stronger" (recall this slogan?) is a the opportune phrase. With a stronger membership we can legitimately demand representation on the FAW - after all they have a representative on the RAW!

Is it time we insist the FAW Referees Panel accept that colour kits is the future? Plenty of teams wear predominately black or navy blue kits without the respective Leagues doing anything about it.

I suggested that the RAW membership fee is reduced to a basic £3 with an option of taking up the RAW insurance. I stated I would rather have 1,000 members at £3 than 300 at £9.

The insurance is not a major factor. Some Societies have their own. Many members don't need the insurance - for example are fortunate enough to be paid sick pay through their company schemes. Others have insurance for lost kit etc via their household policies and, therefore, it should be optional.

It's quite simple

- The FAW want referees
- County Associations want referees
- Leagues need referees
- RAW want referees / members
- Societies want members

Media:

I have also been disappointed in the reaction of the RAW to recent media reports on referees being assaulted. The reaction of pretending it never occurred in the vain hope that it goes away is not working. It shows us as weak and meek. It is my view that the RAW should make bold statements reiterating the fact that, by sticking together, **we are one**. This lack of media statements is NOT acceptable as this negative/lack of media coverage has continued since the September meeting.

Training:

Another fact is every County that has arranged training sessions for its affiliated referees have found the attendance minimal. You only have to read the RA County reports therefore, again it may be that a change of policy is made by County Associations and accept their present system does not work.

We all know the best training is at Society meetings whether its from speakers, trainers or simply talking through problems. Is it time County Associations accepted this situation? However, in my experience with the SWFA, they feel that by supporting Societies they are not supporting all their referees. Another good reason to reduce fees, recruit and retain members and give ourselves a stronger position. I don't believe we will have utopia and 100% of all registered referees becoming members but we can improve on the present situation.

All Leagues want informed, trained, knowledgeable referees and, unless everyone pulls together this will never be achieved.

The Way Forward:

This is not a simple solution but change is inevitable. The time-old tradition of 4x RAW meetings a year and talking about - but not reacting to - problems is no longer sufficient. We need to move forward now before it is too late!

The RAW refunded Societies £3 per member last season. I will be honest that there was a concern with the committee that the funds will soon run out with around £21,500 in the accounts therefore refunds or training subsidies would drain the account. With this said the Chairman recently emailed the committee with his idea that the RAW will pay for any assaulted member to appeal to the FAW should they feel the suspension/fine given to their assailant was not sufficient! I, personally, believe that it is wasting money as Associations undertake these hearings under rules and regulations and we, as the RAW, would be unsighted on what was discussed and the reasons behind it. I would prefer referees to be more aware of dealing with issues and how to act before anything may happen and be more conversant on misconduct report writing.

The basic question is what do YOU want from - and how can WE improve - the RAW. Remember:
CHANGE IS INEVITABLE BUT TOGETHER - STRONGER

The next meeting of the RAW is on 10th December 2017

Please let me know if you want anything raised.

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