

Match Secretary Report 2017

There were some close battles for top spots in the league tables this season, notably divisions 3 and 5.

Rainford continue to climb the divisions without losing matches and the set difference of 200 FOR and only 24 against eclipsed most other teams this season.

Particular issues this season included a number of matches in division 9 not being played because of player unavailability. I know how much some clubs struggled to fulfil fixtures in this division as a result of player shortages. There were a lot of concessions in this division. Two teams being withdrawn from the league at very short notice was disruptive. The bank holidays and rain delays proved troublesome again. Rain cancelled every Monday night match twice in 2017. Thanks to everyone who did their best to get those fixtures played. I appreciate how hard it is to organise and that match secretaries have done their best.

A few clubs were penalised quite heavily for being short of players this year. It is one rule I personally hope to see changed – I disagree with penalising teams lower down at clubs where there is no intent to seek advantage, and it was a really unpleasant part of being match secretary.

There are a lot of changes being proposed, both to the rules and also to the way that the league is administrated. I understand the need for a change to the way things are currently managed. Being match secretary with the way things currently stand is no picnic and I had to offer my resignation this year. The proposed changes, should they be voted through, will change the complexion of the league.

The new match secretary will be starting from scratch either way, whether with a new system or an amended rule system or with the rules and system as they are. Please give Jeanette support. She is giving up her time and her energy and had she not come forward, the league would not be continuing in 2018. There is no doubt about that. It was down to the wire and the committee were days away from having to consider drastic action had no new match secretary been found.

I would ask everyone to support the league as it moves forward, regardless of how the members at the AGM vote on the proposed changes. There must be people willing to give up their time in order for the league to continue. It takes commitment, dedication and action from a lot of people to make the league run.

I would like to extend my warmest thanks to Hilary B and George C for their time given so freely to helping me. George has quietly worked behind the scenes for many years. His input has been invaluable, and his friendly, positive attitude when I have asked for help or guidance was a real tonic. Hilary, with her years of experience, has been a real support to me as I learned the ropes, and I still feel somewhat amazed that she stayed in her role as match sec for 16 seasons.

I would like to leave this role on a positive note. I have met some lovely people along the way, made some good friends, got to know lots of people over many phone conversations, and have enjoyed the sense of achievement when the league tables got updated on Mondays.

Good luck to everyone running the league and to the hundreds of players who participate in all weathers, on all surfaces, in lots of different places for 14 weeks each year. I hope that you all enjoy the Southport and District League for many years to come and wish you all the best.