

WMSRA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE-SPRING 2009

R. SCOTT RYDER, PRESIDENT

Even though many of us are not actively refereeing over the winter months in Michigan, the WMSRA Board has been very active. We have adopted three new policies dealing with issues that we believe are fundamentally important to our membership. These new policies cover:

- (1) Membership-defining what is meant by the phrase "member in good standing";
- (2) Fitness-delineating who needs to take the annual fitness tests and the benefits and consequences of taking or not taking the fitness test;
- (3) Evaluation and rating-the creation of a Referee Evaluation and Rating Committee (RERC) to develop standards for rating and evaluation of WMSRA referees and the creation of a process whereby individual referee can question their ratings.

These new policies speak to issues that have continually been sore spots with various members for a long time. It is the Boards desire that the processes and procedures followed be "transparent" to our members so that the perceived era of the "good old boy" network is ended. You should have received copies of these policies for your review. If not, they are posted on the WMSRA web site. Your comments and ideas are always welcomed.

Stepping away from the administrative area for a moment, I want to talk with you about what I consider to the three "Fs" of officiating: FUN, FITNESS and FAIRNESS. I have been a soccer referee for well over 20 years and I am proud of my longevity, but I realize as I have gotten older that the key to the three "Fs" is FITNESS! When I started refereeing I did not have to worry about fitness, but now at age 60, I have to closely watch my weight and make certain that I exercise regularly.

I love this game and I enjoy refereeing as much as I did when I started, but if I cannot keep up with play, then I cannot call what needs to be called which makes it UNSAFE and not FUN for the players. It is not FAIR to the players, coaches or fans if I cannot get to, on the field, where I need to be to control the match. It is wrong to take other peoples money to officiate if I cannot get into position to make the call. One of the few, if any, valid criticisms of a referee is that they are not fit enough to keep up with play. No one likes to be publically criticized, but if we are not fit then we make ourselves defenseless to that complaint, and that is not FUN!

Let us all dedicate ourselves to the three "Fs" for this spring season! Lets make certain that we are all FIT so that we can be FAIR and everyone, including us has FUN!