

World Cup Referee Howard Webb welcomes young Wiltshire referees

Howard Webb, alongside his team of Mike Mullarky and Darren McCann, from the 2010 World Cup Final, met 4 young referees from Wiltshire, Leigh Simkins (Corsham), Ben Williamson, Olly Ballinger (Chippenham) and James Welsh (Salisbury) during the annual Referee Association conference in Coventry.

The team completed a talk regarding their World Cup experience culminating in the World Cup Final. Leigh said 'What a tremendous talk, all 3 of them were fantastic and such a great opportunity for all of us'. James added 'As a young referee, I do look up to Howard, but meeting him was very impressive, he was so down to earth and was prepared to talk man to man to you. He seemed interested in my achievements so far and took the time to discuss my ambitions. He is definitely an inspiration.'

The 4 young referees are all members of the South West Referee Development Group as part of the Football Associations new Referee Development Programme. George McCaffery, the group coordinator who took the young referees to the conference, says 'Whilst meeting Howard, Darren and Mike was the highlight of the day, the remainder of the day was also packed with Senior members of the FA, including the FA Chairman David Bernstein and several other Premier League Referees who gave workshops on refereeing topics. The referees were all very excited and motivated afterwards, and they are all looking forward to the start of the new season.'



The picture from left to right shows
Olly Ballinger, Darren McCann, Ben Williamson, James Welsh, Leigh Simpkins, Howard Webb, Mike Mullarky