



Tournament Review by Tony Turner,
Liam Smith, Tom Ross, Dean Whitwell,
Ross Joyce & Steve Rowntree



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Iber Cup Estoril 2018 Meet the Team

Ross Joyce - NRCFA Referee Development Manager (Middlesbrough)

Steve Rowntree - NRCFA CORE Coach (Scarborough)

Tony Turner - NRCFA Level 5 Referee (York)

Liam Smith - NRCFA Level 6 Referee (Middlesbrough)

Tom Ross - NRCFA Level 4 Referee (Middlesbrough)

Dean Whitwell - NRCFA Level 6 Referee (Middlesbrough)

Tournament Details:

The Iber Cup Estoril is renowned as being one of the biggest youth football tournament in the world with hundreds of teams travelling from across the globe to compete in this well-established football tournament. A multitude of professional clubs send teams to the tournament to compete including Porto, Sporting Lisbon, Bristol City & Madrid to name a few. The standard of the teams entering is extremely high and some of the participants will be future stars in some of the top leagues in the world. This year's tournament saw around 220 teams, distributed across 9 age categories, compete in a league format first to qualify for the knockout stages of the competition.

In total 160 referees from across the world travelled to the Iber Cup in 2018 which is a great achievement for the organisers and it goes to show how popular this tournament is across the world. Each official was expected to officiate in 4 games per day early in the week when the game were coming thick and fast in the league format, then going down to 2/3 games later in the week once the knockout stages started. The tournament commenced on Monday 2nd July with the finals taking place on Friday 6th and Saturday 7th July. We were expected to work in our group of 4 to start with but then alter in the week we would have the opportunity to work with other officials from other counties and other countries to give us some experience working with other officials to see what there techniques were and how they dealt with certain situations on/off the pitch.



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The 2018 tournament was held in and around the lovely coastal town of Cascais, which is around 30km from Lisbon. The area itself is a fantastic coastal town with plenty of places to eat, drink and relax on some fantastic beaches. Night life was also really good and other officials on an evening would meet up and talk about how there day had gone. Travelling in around Cascais was excellent and we were given free passes to use the train that ran along the front and also coaches as and when required which was really handy.



Preparation for the Tournament

After the selection process had been done and Tony, Dean, Liam and Tom all knew they had been selected to represent North Riding at the Iber Cup Estoril 2018, Ross and Steve came up with 4 meeting dates for us all to meet up to do some training to prepare us for the tournament. Included in this would be outside physical training, classroom bases work and gym work to fully prepare us.

These meetings gave the 4 of us valuable time together to firstly get to know each other better and secondly to see how each of us worked on and off the pitch. At the start of the meetings we would speak in the meeting room to discuss how we were getting on, what we needed for the trip, any paper work that required sorting out etc, then we would either head out side and do some physical activity or head in to the gym

Paul Stalker also appointed us some games together in the North Riding League and a Saturday County Cup game so we had some time working on games before the tournament, this was valuable time working together as again we were able to see how we all working as referees and assistant and spoke in detail about how we would communicate with each other and with the potential of dealing with players who didn't speak English and how we can use body language to get our points across before, during and after our games.



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Meeting 1 @ North Riding HQ, Stoksley:

This was our first get together with Ross, Dave, Steve, Tom, Liam and Dean to go through the itinerary for the Iber Cup, have a chat about what they and we are expecting and then do some training out on the pitch in Stokesley. Ross also handed us all of the kit that North Riding have provided, which was around £350's worth which was great and made us look really professional when travelling and refereeing out in Portugal.



We then headed out onto the Stokesley pitch which was just recovering from the snow, Dave Avent set us up to do some Assistant training which entailed side stepping and then running from corner to corner 10 times. After this session we headed back in for a shower and a drink and had a chat about the trip between us and Ross showed us a couple of YouTube videos from previous

trips to the Iber Cup. After a few questions from us we finished the meeting, going away with a great understanding of what we and NR expected of us from this trip.



Meeting 2 @ Middlesbrough Sports Village:

This session was at Middlesbrough Sports Village and was mainly about outdoor work on the 3G pitches working with Ross and Steve. We got some really good advice on positioning for free kicks, how to set a wall and moving in to give a decision (getting wide) and using a strong whistle when needed. After this session we played a 3 v 3 game where myself, Steve and Tom absolutely destroyed our opponents outscoring them by several goals!



We then headed back into the classroom and Ross went through where we were staying, what the hotel was like and the area around Cascais. Ross explained where we would be training on the sea front and went through how we would travel to our games and what was expected of us during





Refereeing and on an evening.

Meeting 3 @ North Riding HQ, Stokesley:

We were luckily enough to have Dan Meeson national Referee Manager, come along to our meeting to do some training with us and go through some real life scenarios in games that have happened and talk us through our thought process and how we would of managed the given scenarios.



Firstly we headed out on onto the pitch at Stokesley to warm up and do some training, Ross sent us out to do 10 laps of the pitch, doing 30 second sprints down each touchline with 20 seconds recovery time, it was a warm day today and the heat certainly paid its part but we all managed to get round and were certainly warmed up! Dan then took over and we did some sessions to get us thinking about movement and decision making which was really

helpful and enjoyable at the same time.

Then we headed in for a shower and back into the classroom to talk about 3 scenarios that happened in games and give our feedback s a referee what we would do. The scenarios were tough ones to discuss and a few of us had different ideas on how we would deal with the, this was good to get feedback from the other guys and Dan also. After that we had a quick chat with Ross and ordered some soccer supplements to take to Portugal along with some new equipment.



Meeting 4 @ North Riding HQ, Stokesley:

This was the final meeting planned before the tournament, we had all been talking on our WhatsApp group what we wanted to get out of the meeting and any final preparations and training we want to do. We decided a speed session was a good idea so we went along outside with Ross and Dave who said we were going to do the Football League fitness test! As you can image we were all really happy about this!! The session was gruelling but we all stuck together and got through all be it falling over the finishing line. All the lads did well and we knew had prepared as well as we could for





the Iber Cup, some final pieces to tidy up back in the HQ before leaving for home.

Tony Turner Tournament Review

Where do I start.....It was a Monday and myself and Geoff were travelling to Middlesbrough to one of the North Riding CORE meetings, me and Geoff were having a chat about certain things and he mentioned to me that he had put my name forward to represent North Riding at the Iber Cup. I was chuffed to have even been considered for a place and I knew a lot of other lads also had a great chance due to the strength in depth North Riding has for top quality officials.

When we arrived at the meeting Ross quickly pulled me to a side for a chat, still not thinking much of it, he went onto say I have had a really good season and Geoff has put me forward to go to the Iber Cup. Ross then invited me to join the lads for the tournament and I was a little taken a back at first, but obviously over the moon to be asked and I quickly accepted with a big smile on my face. The rest of the meeting was a bit of a blur to be honest as I was really excited to get things going and knew the real hard work was about to start in preparation for the tournament. Myself, Tom, Liam and Dean has been invited along with Ross and Steve Rowntree, I knew Steve well from being my coach the previous year in Core and of course I knew Tom, Liam and Dean from Core but not spent much time with them socially or out on the field so I was looking forward to working with these guys.



I quickly realised that July would come round fairly quickly after the meeting in November so when I got home I started to think what I would need to do to start preparing for the tournament, this would include gym session, out on the road running and nutritional changes to best prepare myself. Preparation with the lads included 4 meetings at Middlesbrough Sports Village at North Riding HQ which included physical sessions and classroom based learning. These were great meetings and further prepared me for the tournament. Dave Avent came along to a couple of the meetings and we did some specific Assistant training at

Stokesley in the snow! This was a quick realisation for myself to what the fitness levels of the Football League lads and where I need to be at if I wasn't to progress my refereeing career. Another session we did with Ross & Dave was the EFL referee fitness test, this was really tough but I got through it with the help of the other lads and really enjoyed the session. Dan Meeson also came along to one of our meetings and worked with us out on the pitch to get us thinking and set us up some drills to work on, again these got us thinking outside the box when dealing with certain situations, we then heading back into the meeting room and we went through some clips from some non-league games that have been used for training. It was really interesting to hear all of our views on these clips and then Dan went through them to give his pinions, which was really interesting to see how referees at higher levels deal with tough situations in a game.

Paul Stalker (North Referee appointment officer) was really helpful and appointed us some games together in the North Riding Premier league and a County Cup game. Firstly I worked with Tom and Dean on a Saturday County Cup game between Old Malton St Mary's and Nunthrope, this was a really good game and opportunity for the 3 of us to work together for the first time and see how we all work out on the pitch, myself and Dean supported Tom well who was in the middle, only a couple of cautions and both teams complimenting us after the game. The Paul appointed me a middle in the North Riding League between Yarm & Eaglescliffe v Guisborough United with Tom and Liam as my assistants, again this was a great opportunity to work with the lads in preparation for the



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tournament, the game went really well and again both managers and teams happy with our officiating, I was assessed on the game for my 6 to 5 and came out with a really good report from the assessor, which I thanked Liam and Tom for their support on the game.

Day 1 - Friday 29th June:

Transport had all been arranged to get us to Manchester Airport, we had decided to go the night before due to an early flight on the Saturday morning, so Tom and Steve made their way to my house with Ross, Liam and Dean travelling down together. We met up at a service station about 45 minutes from the airport for a coffee and a quick chat about our plans for the evening, what time we had to be up in the morning etc. upon arriving at the Clayton hotel we dropped off our bags and made our way down for a drink and a chat about the upcoming week. We ended up going out into Manchester to a nice Italian restaurant for a meal. This was the first chance we had socially together and I knew from the off this week was going to be awesome.

Day 2 - Saturday 30th June:

We were up and at it early on the Saturday as Ross had said in previous years it had taken ages to get through airport check in and security, unfortunately for us though we ended up getting to the check in 1 hour before it actually opened so we had a bit of time to kill before we could check in, they ended up giving us priority security passes so we sailed through check in and security and straight into the airport lounge. We had the privilege of being in one of the airport VIP lounges so we had some breakfast and then realised that our flight had been delayed by over an hour, again a bit of time to kill but we had a laugh and talked about the upcoming week.

The flight with TAP Air Portugal was superb and we made some time up in the air and landed in Lisbon later morning, Ross had a contact who sorted us out with a coach to the Eden Hotel where we would be staying in Cascais, along with some other referees we had been talking to on the flight. Once we had arrived at the hotel we sorted out the rooms and unpacked all of our gear. We then went for a wander around Cascais to see what it had to offer and it was a fantastic town with loads of places to eat and drink. We sat down for a meal and watched one of the world cup games that was on which was perfect timing.

Day 3 - Sunday 1st July



Today Ross had a day of training planned for us out on the promenade, it was hot but we were all up for it. We started out on a run through from our hotel through Cascais to the other side and found a place where Ross had planned some sprint work. We ran around 5km in the heat it was tough but I knuckled down kept going.

We then started on some sprint work and technical work which Ross led, this again was really tough in the heat and after a run but I really enjoyed it and I knew the games were going to be tough so I cracked on and worked hard. After a short break we then set about running back through Cascais back to near our hotel, again a really good hard session before the games were going to commence the next





day.

Day 3 Monday 2nd July

So the day had arrived and we would begin our tournament, we had received our appointments late on the previous day. We had been given 4 games back to back in a place called Torre with an 8:30am start so we had to be up at 6am to go and get some breakfast and then onto Torre. We also found out that we would be getting observed on all 4 of the games so it was important that we were on it from the first game to the last. I was appointed assistant referee for the first game between a local team in Portugal and a team from the USA in the U13's category, it took me a few minutes to acclimatise to the heat but once I was in the zone we got through the first game with no real issues.

The second game and I was moved to 4th official for a game between another Portuguese side and a team from Egypt in the U134's category, another solid performance from the 4 of us saw no real issues in the game.

The 3rd game and it was my turn to referee, I was slightly nervous but after seeing Dean and Liam do really well in the first two games in the middle I was also confident I could go out there and have a good game. The game was between another Portuguese side and a team from Egypt in the U15's category. I blew the whistle and the game begun, I had been working really hard on my

fitness and positioning and I wanted to put all that practise into my games. The game started quickly and I found myself working hard to keep up with play, one thing I noticed early on with the game was the players expect free kicks and were not all for me playing advantage to often, some players were moaning a bit at me for this so I changed my game up relatively quickly to adapt to how they wanted the game officiating. No cards in my first game and a good competitive test for me which I really enjoyed. Handshakes all round from both teams and coaches so everyone was happy.



I spoke to Ross and Steve about letting the game flow, they gave me some really good feedback which I would take into my next game. The final game for us was another U15's game with Tom in the middle between a Portuguese side and a team from South Africa, this was by far the most testing game out of the 4 we had today, Tom dealt with everything really well supported by myself and Liam on the line with Dean as 4th, the Portuguese coach had to be removed from the dugouts as he was getting a bit giddy and causing Dean some issues but he dealt with it really well. The day's games

came to a close early afternoon and we made our way back to hotel Eden for a bit of chill time. We the headed out for a meal and to discuss the days games, Ross and Steve were really happy with our performances on our first day and gave us some pointers to take into our next round of games.

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Day 4
July

Tuesday 3rd

Today we were heading out to Fontainhas to do 3 games, I was first up to do a middle between Boavista U16 F and Castelo U16 F an all Portuguese tie.



I was supported by Liam and Tom on the line with Dean as 4th Official, I had taken the pointers Ross and Steve had given me in my first game and I was looking forward to using them in this game. The game got underway and it was a relatively steady game to referee with no real incidents to speak about, with that though I still worked on my positioning and movement throughout the game.

We had 2 further games at Fontainhas, the 2nd game I was assistant for Dean for another U16's F game which went really well again with no real incidents to speak about. The final game was an all Portuguese U16's local derby game and we knew that this was going to be a real test. Liam was in the middle, with Dean and Tom on the line and me as 4th. This was probably the toughest game of the week so far, we all had to be on the ball from the off and there was plenty going on throughout the game, our communication skills between each other was excellent and we trusted and supported each other throughout the game. The Portuguese team were really passionate about the game and this made it tough, along with a big crowd watching from the stand. After the game we had a sit down chat with Ross and Steve to go through the days games and reflect on how we had got on. A few minor points for all of us were given that we could take into the next day.



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Day 5 Wednesday 4th July

Today we just had the one game out at in the Dramatico stadium, this venue would also host the finals so it was a really nice set up and stadium and great to be involved in a game here. I was Assistant 1 to Tom who was in the middle, Liam was on the other line and Dean as 4th official. The game was a group stage game between a Columbian and Portuguese U14 sides, so we knew from the off we would need to be on the ball from the off as we had been told who veer won would qualify from the group into the knockout stages on the competition. From the off the standard of the football for this age group was absolutely superb and it was a joy to be involved in the game.

Tom handled the game exceptionally well supports by me, Liam and Dean.



We had an observer on the game watching and at our de-brief he gave us some great feedback and also mentioned that he has just witnessed the best referee team performance while he had been out Observing, which is a fantastic compliment to all of us.

Later on, in the day when we had got back to our hotel, Ross decided due to only having the one game we would go out and do another HI

session along the promenade, including some Core work on some equipment that was on the prom. This was a tough session personally for me but I worked through it and we all supported each other.



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Day 6 Thursday 5th July

This would turn out to be the busiest and longest day of the tournament for all 4 of us. We had all been assigned in Jamor (which was probably the furthest venue away for us), We had an early start with a 10:50 am KO so we had to leave the Hotel by 8am, we grabbed some breakfast and Ross told me I would be first up to referee a U14s game between USA and Portuguese sides. Today was knockout football so we all expected the games to step up a level and we were not disappointed. I had Tom and Dean as my assistants with Liam as 4th official for this game, along with Jes Lambert who would be observing me. The game itself was a competitive game with several



decisions for me to rule over, I had 3 cautions and I was really happy how the game went. At half time Steve had a development point for me, which was to not always protect the ball in the defensive half (I was sometimes over protective of the ball at free kicks due to several team's time wasting/kicking the ball away), so I took this on board and went out with this in mind.

The lads supported me really well in the game, Jes had a de-brief with us all and overall was very pleased with our performance, he did mention my over protecting the ball and I took his comments on board and will use his advice going forward.



The second game was a 12pm KO with which I was 4th Official for and the game went well and we worked really well as a team again, then we had a few hours off in the afternoon to rest until we had 2 knockout games in the afternoon. You could tell these were knockout games as the intensity of the players/coaches had certainly stepped up. I was personally really happy with my role as Assistant in both of these games and the lads did really well to bring both games to a safe conclusion.



Day 7 Friday 6th July

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Today we were split up for the day with Liam and Dean heading out early doors for 2 games and myself and Tom heading out to Jamor for 2 games in the afternoon with officials from Lincolnshire. The 4 of us were privileged to receive a final in the evening which I was really chuffed about after a really successful week, I was assistant and Tom was in the middle. But the first game mid-afternoon was a knock out game between a side from Portugal and a team from France, with Trent from Lincolnshire in the middle and myself and Alastair also from Lincolnshire assistants and Tom 4th official. Being a knockout game we knew this was going to be a real test and it certainly was, the pace of the game was quick and the weather was into the 30's. I had a lot of rowdy Portuguese fans behind me who were very vocal all game and made it interesting for me. The game itself was a great game that ended up going to penalties, I supported Trent on the goal line and the game came to a conclusion with the French team winning.



We then had a long wait in Jamor until our U14's final, due to how far Jamor was away from our hotel we opted to stay in Jamor and relax in the complex and watched some other games that were going on. Our KO for our final was 7:15pm, so around 6:15pm we headed to the pitch to take a look around and take it all in. Once we had done an extensive warm up we were ready for the final, the weather was cooler as well which made it



a little easier for us as it was later on in the day. Tom took charge with myself and Alastair on the line and Trent as 4th Official. The game was between a Portuguese side and a side from Egypt. It was a relatively one sided game with the side from Egypt running our comfortable winners in the end. I had some tight offside decisions to make and I was happy I got them all correct and gave Tom some assistance with several fouls in my proximity. All in all personally for me just being part of the Iber Cup was an excellent achievement but to then be assigned a final just topped off an absolutely amazing week with the lads.



We then headed back to hotel to catch up with Liam and Dean to see how they got on and had a chilled out evening.

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Liam had a final early door on the Saturday as a 4th official and his game went really well and he did an excellent job. After Liam's game the day was ours to do what we pleased so we chilled by the pool and went for a swim. World Cup games were also on again on the Saturday so we went out to meet up with some other referees for a catch up and to watch the games. This day was needed after 5 days of refereeing and it was nice to relax. We sat around our favourite table in an Indian restaurant to reflect on the games we had been involved in the week. We all had big smiles on our faces as the feedback from the coaches, observers and players was all really positive and we all knew we had learnt a lot



new football season starting in August.

that we could take into the

Day 9 Sunday 8th July

The final day and time to travel home, we were all tired from what had been a hectic week of refereeing. Early pick up at the hotel for an early flight back to the UK. We got straight through check in and security and had time to chill in the airport lounge. Most of us were that tired we just sat and relaxed waiting for our flight which again was slightly delayed. The flight was fine, apart from a bumpy landing back in Manchester. We got our cases relatively quickly and headed back to the Clayton hotel to pick up our cars. After a good run home we were back mid-afternoon. I literally slept for 12 hours solid when I got back to recover.

Tournament Reflection

For me personally being part of the Iber Cup 2018 has massively enhanced myself as a person and as a referee, the support, coaching and other lads was superb and I learnt so much over the course of the week. I would like to thank Ross and Steve for their support throughout the week, tweaking parts of my game that will enable me to push on and continue my refereeing career. Also, to the lads, Tom, Liam & Dean who were a top set of lads on and off the pitch and we bonded really well from the off. Huge thanks to the tournament organisers and all the observers that came to watch us, their time and efforts were superb all week and to the guys at North Riding for supporting a group of referees once again to gain valuable experience.



Liam Smith Tournament Review

Firstly, the IBER Cup 2018 was one of the best experiences I've had not just in football but in my life too. The experience gave me the opportunity to officiate teams from all over the world, something that fulfilled an ambition of mine in refereeing. The trip was made by the fantastic company of all the lads that were chosen and the coaches, thank you for an amazing week and one that I won't forget.

After receiving the call from Ross about being chosen, I was incredibly proud that I was about to represent my county abroad and privileged that I was one of the lucky four to be chosen. Right from the start, the training and development we received from Ross and Steve was brilliant. We met every couple month prior to the trip which included outdoor training sessions and theory workshops around mainly our communication and body language. All the meetings were really helpful not just for the training but to get to know everyone a little bit more before we travelled to Portugal!

We travelled to Manchester Airport on the Friday night, where we stayed over at the Clayton hotel before our early flight the next day, we all really just wanted to get there now and were so excited for the week ahead.

Day 1:

We arrived in Portugal for our first day and we were actually quite surprised at how cold it was, it was the first time that we all left England in blistering heat and landed in cooler weather in Portugal! Not that we were complaining for the gruelling HI session that Ross had planned for us along the promenade, that was very tough but it definitely got us in to gear for the following day. After training we met for the referee briefing meeting and then had a rewarding team meal before our big games the next day!



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Day 2:

Monday morning arrived it was time for our first round of fixtures, we couldn't wait to get going. We had a very early start and travelled to our first venue via train. The teams that were involved on this day were from Egypt, Portugal, Spain and the USA. My first middle was an U13's match between a team from Portugal and Egypt, the moment finally came, and I wanted to be on top of the game from start to finish. To add to the challenge, we all were being observed so it was really a chance for all of us to impress. The game was very convincingly won by the Portuguese team and there were little major decisions in the match apart from a nailed-on penalty. So, to be given all the incredible fine-tuning advice from Ross, Steve and the observer really helped me develop. This was a trend in the week, even if we didn't have games that were as challenging, the advice we were given was second to none and it really helped me to tweak little things to make me a better referee. After completing four games on our first day, we were quite exhausted so now it was time for some rest and recovery!



Day 3:

At breakfast, we all sat down and spoke about the games the day before and looked forward to today's games. This day probably included my hardest middle of the week, a local derby between two Portuguese teams – and typically the sun came out, so it was scorching! The game had points where I thought it could escalate to the point where there might have been a mass confrontation, I tried my hardest throughout the game to get on top of free kicks by moving in quickly and stopping any player from potentially delaying the restart of play, which for me could have been the catalyst for an argument between the players. The tempo of the game was sky high, I felt as though I dealt with it very well and it was my first real opportunity to showcase my positive body language and engagement with the players whilst having the language barrier. I got some fantastic support from the three lads, we all helped each other through the game and in the end got some positive feedback from the players and managers which is always a good sign!



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Day 4:

We all had 1 game together on this day, Tom in the middle with myself and Tony assisting, and Dean as 4th man. It was an U14's game between a Colombian and Portuguese side, it was a tight affair and Tom handled it extremely well. After a tough game on the first day he bounced back fantastically, and we were all so happy for him. The observer said after the match that it was the best team performance he has seen yet, and I think that was a real testament to us and the friendship we grew over the week helped us put in such a good performance!

Later that day we had another HI session along the promenade with some core work, we were all feeling our legs aching at this point, but we pushed through together.

Day 5:

This day was probably the longest of them all, 4 games in total over a period of 12 hours with extensive travelling to two different venues. I had a middle on the morning and two lines on the evening, every game was played in good spirits and was a great day for all of us in terms of development.



Day 6:

This was the first day that we were split up. Myself and Dean had games early in the morning, whereas Tom and Tony had games later in the evening. I was first up with a middle between Portuguese and Brazilian sides. This was certainly a unique experience for me. At this point it was very early in the morning around 9am, and the team's parents/fans had banners, flags and were singing loud and proud for each team. I couldn't believe it, this certainly wouldn't have happened in England! We also had a Norwegian referee who had coms, so we got to use them as well which was fantastic! The game went really well and again was played in good spirits, I received some great advice at half-time/full-time from Ross as he travelled with us in the morning. Later that night, myself, Tony and Tom all received a cup final appointment for the next day, we were ecstatic at this point and couldn't wait for the following day!



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Day 7:

It was an early start for me at Jamor, the final was a fantastic occasion and I was extremely proud that I was about to be an assistant on such a prestigious final. The match was between Portuguese and Colombian sides. It was certainly a difficult and tight affair but one that the referee handled extremely well, and it finished 1-0 to the Portuguese side with a late goal! It was now time to watch England beat Sweden in the quarter-finals of the world cup with all the other officials from



the tournament, its coming home (well that's what we thought).

Later this night we spent some quality time together before heading back to England, reflecting on what was an unforgettable trip. We were all extremely sad to be leaving Portugal, but we knew the memories were going to last a life time.

Again, I would like to thank the coaches Ross and Steve for all the effort they put in not just over this week but before hand in the meetings too. You have both helped me become a better referee over this whole experience, and I can't thank you enough for all of the support and advice you given me. To not only my colleagues but my friends Tom, Tony and Dean, it was an absolute pleasure to spend this week with you lads and I couldn't have asked for a better group to share this experience with! Lastly, thank you to the NRCFA for giving me this opportunity and I am really looking forward to my future in refereeing.

Overall, I have learned so much about myself as a referee and as a person from this experience. It has made me fall in love with refereeing even more and given me the opportunity to referee teams from a wide variety of countries. Looking back on this trip I really wish I could do it all again!



Tom Ross Tournament Review

Saturday 30th:

Early start 6:15am leaving the hotel to get airport as Ross had said it had been a nightmare to get through the security in previous years. This back fired as our gate wasn't open until 7:30am & we were at the Airport at 6:30am, so back to bed it was for Liam who decided to get some kip whilst the rest of us got a coffee. We then got through and found out we were delayed but we weren't too fussed as we had the VIP lounge to relax in. We flew with TAP Air who made up some time and got us there safe & securely.

Later on, in the evening we had a Referee meeting which was where we got a lot of information about the tournament. There were some ridiculous questions getting asked at the end of the meeting to which Ross's patience had worn thin and made some funny remarkable comments, to then we left and went for tea.



Sunday 1st:



No games today but Ross had planned a gruelling training session down the front which started near our hotel Eden and finished at the other side of Cascais, after a short recovery, Ross had planned a sprint session for us. Both sessions were very tough but he had informed us beforehand that it was never going to be easy out there specially with the high temperatures.

Monday 2nd:

Early start again 6am, after receiving our appointments late on Sunday evening, we had 4 games back to back to officiate on. These games were at a place called Torre. We were joined from an Observer from Manchester who was to observe all 4 games.

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Game No.1 Assistant Referee Portugal v USA U13's. This game was played in good spirit and we all worked well as a team and eased through the game comfortably.

Game No.2 Assistant Referee Portugal v Egypt U13's. This game was fairly easy and again we all worked well together and had no real issues.

Game No.3 4TH Official Portugal v Egypt U15's.

Tony refereed this game very well as we jumped up from the U13 age bracket we were expecting it to be more physical and faster tempo. The game went well and everyone was happy at the end of the game. ¾ Games nailed so far.

Game No.4 Referee Portugal v South Africa U15's. Final game of the day, I would say this was the most testing game by far to which I did my best to keep a lid on it. It soon escalated when I wasn't giving what you would call 'Soft fouls' and the tempo was rising towards the end of the game with the Portuguese manager giving Dean (4th) some grief after I didn't give a foul on his player who shot himself on the floor rolling around & then for South Africa to go through and score. End of the game Portuguese striker comes over and slaps Tony's hand then attempts to slap my hand with complete disrespect so I cautioned him to which he and his manager started to call me a mother puta. The observer also reported the manager for the way he condoned himself throughout the game.

Steve had good for me game.

Ross & some feedback after the



After completing 4 games in hot temperatures we went back to Eden Hotel to relax and reflect on these games.

Tuesday 3rd:

Another early start, we all went for breakfast and reflected on yesterday's games. We had 3 games to officiate this time and I was an Assistant Referee for all three. All the lads performed really

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well in these games especially Liam who had a tough exchange between local 2 Portuguese teams (U15's) the game was very high tempo and also very physical. The sun was obviously out and it was beaming.

Wednesday 4th:

Just the 1 game for us all today an U14 game between Columbia & Portugal. I was in the middle for this game and we were being observed again. After my last middle I needed to park what had happened because if I didn't it would affect me for the rest of the tournament. I get pumped up for the game and said to the lads lets go out and nail this game. I feel like we did that and after the game the observer & Ross/Steve had nothing but praise for us all. After putting in some hard work in this game Ross rewarded us with a HI down the beach and sprint work up and down stairs. All in all a good day!



Thursday 5th:

A very long day ahead with 4 games to officiate and in total a 12 hour day. 2 games as assistant referee and 1 game as 4th official and the last game as Referee between U15 knockout game Portugal v USA. We were at the ground in good time & before the teams. Shortly the away team arrived USA and then the Portugal team arrived. It soon got brought to my attention that it was the same team I had refereed on the Monday. At this moment I knew I needed to be switched on and ready from the get go.

Shortly before KO I needed the toilet, whilst leaving the toilets to walk back to the pitch.

I was confronted by the Portuguese manager at this point there was some tension. So I decided to try and get him on my side by simply cracking a few horrendous jokes about my hair which made him laugh and grab me in a head lock. It worked because we had no issues at all throughout the game and we all got handshakes after and had no drama. (Unlike before)

Friday 6th:

Another long day ahead with 6 games in total for us to officiate on all at Jamor. We got split up into 2 groups on this day so me & Tony got a lie in. Dean & Smithy had an early start. I had a 4th official for my first game then after this I had picked up the B final for the U14 Boys, working with 2 lads from different counties I was nervous for the game. With it being a final and also working with colleagues I didn't know or trust, unlike working with our CORE lads, we had all learnt to trust each other throughout the week.

Before the game me and Steve had a 1 to 1 chat and he had told me that he wanted me to go



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out and smash this game and to be confident within myself.

France v Egypt

The game itself went really well after the first 5 to 10 minutes my nerves had worn off and had no issues.

Supported by Tony & the 2 lads from a different county. They were very good and their performances were top notch. After the game we travelled back to Eden hotel & went in to Cascais to meet Ross, Dean & Liam to grab some tea and catch up on a very long but fantastic day!



Saturday 7th:

No game for me today as it had come to the end of my week in Portugal. After picking up a Final I was pleased with myself and my achievements throughout the week. Time to celebrate and watch England beat Sweden! Later on, in the day before travelling back to England we all went for some food and reflected on an unforgettable week refereeing the IBER Cup. What an experience!



Tournament Review:

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After a fantastic week with the lads, I would like to thank Ross & Steve for all the support and efforts throughout the week, they have made me a better referee and gained a lot from the experience!

I would also like to thank the North Riding County FA for giving me this amazing opportunity to go to Portugal to be part of the IBER CUP football tournament.

Dean Whitwell Tournament Review

Firstly, I am hugely grateful for this opportunity and would like to thank coaches Ross and Steve and the whole North riding team for making it possible and more importantly, so enjoyable and beneficial for everyone involved. I think I can speak for all the lads when I say it was an unbelievable experience officiating in this international youth tournament as it was all of our first time officiating abroad. This brought challenges that we hadn't previously experienced and although we were more than prepared for these, it still didn't make it any easier come game days.

The IBER cup 2018 was an experience I will not be forgetting and one I can take so much from in many different ways.

The trip started when we travelled down to Manchester airport on the Friday night as we had a very early start on the Saturday morning catching our flight. Which some of us would struggle to get up for more than others.



Day 1:

The first day was very relaxed as we settled into our new surroundings. Thankfully, the weather wasn't as hot as we all expected. This was just as well as Ross wasted little time in delivering his first HI session of the trip. Although I have trained in worse locations it has to be said. We trained along the promenade and we all encouraged each other and therefore got the most out of each other. Everyone put in maximal effort as we did throughout the entirety of the trip and I surprised myself as to how much I enjoyed this session.

Day 2:

This was the first day of fixtures for me and the rest of the lads. It was a very early start however; we all seemed full of energy as this was the day we had all been looking forward to for weeks! We were all at the same venue and took turns being fourth official, running the line and obviously refereeing. I was up first refereeing and straight from kick off I could tell the difference in football from back home. Moreover, you have to adapt your refereeing style somewhat as the players expect a lot more 'soft' free kicks to be given. I felt like my games and all the lad's games ran

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smoothly and officiated with confidence; even if we were feeling the nerves slightly. The teams involved on this day were from Portugal, Egypt, Spain and the USA. As you can tell, the language barrier was a challenging aspect from some of these teams so we had to use body language fairly often in order to sell our decisions and to sometimes explain our decisions to the players.

With the early start I mentioned and the four games we all had, it was fair to say we were all very tired and some well needed rest and recovery was in order for the evening.

Day 3:

This day involved my first under 16 girls game and it was an all Portuguese affair so it had potential to be a feisty contest. Moreover, we were all aware of this and prepared for whatever action we would potentially need to take. However, the game was a very close affair and although the game was enjoyable to be a part of, it went really smooth with little for us all to do. These types of games can be the most challenging as you can go 5 minutes without making a single decision and then all of a sudden something could happen and you need to be alert to make the appropriate decision. Tony and Toms games were similar to mine and they both kept control throughout the games. Liam's game was last and was by far the most challenging game to be involved in. It was a competitive under 16 game between two Portuguese teams. This was made extra challenging as the sun came out so physically at this point we were all very fatigued but had to keep full concentration throughout. I felt as though Liam and the rest of the lads kept control throughout as there were times where the game could have got out of hand.

This game was an example of the excellent teamwork we showed all week and we all received positive feedback from the coaches and managers of the teams also.

Day 4:

On this day we had just the single game with me been fourth man, Tony and Liam on the line and Tom refereeing. This was a quality game between a Colombian side and a Portuguese side. On the first day I had some difficulties been fourth man as the coach was very irritable and I wasn't sure how best to deal with that situation. Therefore, on this day, I was determined to deal with the benches in a calm and collected manor. For the few complaints the coaches had, I felt like I dealt with it in a calm way and I believe the coaches respected for explaining the decisions Tom and the lads were making and therefore calmed down immediately.

Similar to the previous day, I believe this game showed an incredible amount of teamwork and this teamwork defiantly improved as the week progressed as we built stronger friendships off the pitch and this defiantly improved team work and cohesion on the field of play. On this game there was an observer there and he claimed that it was the best showcase of teamwork and match control he had seen all week. This was a comment we were all extremely pleased with as it showed



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to us that our togetherness and hard work had paid off so far in the tournament.

Day 5:

This day in particular was in my opinion, the most challenging of all. We had four games in total, two on the morning and two on games on the evening. It was again a very early start which I am defiantly not a fan of! I had two lines for Liam and Tony at Jamor which took 45 minutes in total to get there. Again, on the morning we received positive and constructive feedback from Ross and Steve and the observer again commented on our professionalism throughout both games which was obviously great to hear because we all took this tournament very seriously so this comment was fantastic to hear! We then went back to the hotel and got some food and rested a little before we were back out again at a different venue for another two games. First up I had an under 16 girls game which was between two USA teams and was also a Semi-final which I felt was a big occasion for me and the lads. I really enjoyed this game and it was played in great spirit and little need for me to get involved. The main aspect I took from this game was my fitness levels, this is because it was an end to end game in searing heat and I felt really fit throughout the match. The final game of the day was Toms game and I was fourth man, the coach of one the teams was very vocal towards me on a previous day so I was wary of this and was determined to deal with the situation in a professional manor. However, I have to say, Tom maintained control throughout the match and the coach had little to complain about! As fourth man this made me very happy. Rest and recovery was defiantly in order after this busy day!



Day 6:

This was the first day of the tournament where we split up into two groups. Me and Liam had the early start at Jamor and had four games whereas Tony and Tom chilled on the morning and had games all afternoon. Me and Liam were working with a Norwegian official who had coms so that was a great experience and I actually think it aided mine and Liam's performance as it made communication so much easier throughout the games. We each had two lines, a fourth man and got to referee a game. My game was an extremely close game that went all the way to penalties between a Portuguese team and a Canadian team. In this game I was complimented by the observer about my relaxed style and he claimed that in this game it defiantly worked as 'I was the calmest man on the pitch.' In the words of the observer.

After this me and Liam were very tired because of yet another early start and rest and recovery was defiantly in order for us both.

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Day 7:

For me, my games were all done and me and the rest of the lads got to watch England beat Sweden with lots of other match officials from the tournament also. This topped off an unbelievable week and again one I will not be forgetting, I think I can speak for the other lads when I say that also.

I would
again
Ross and



like to
thank
Steve



Steve

Rowntree



Tournament Review

The journey started back in late October when the CORE Group coaches got a phone call off Ross asking names of Referees I think should be considered to be nominated to attend the Iber Cup. Ross then went on to ask if I would be able to get time off work in July 18 to go as a coach to the yet to be chosen Referees. I think it took me a total of 3mins to e-mail my boss (as I were off shift) to request time off which thankfully I got.

Just before our November CORE Group meeting it was announced to the Coaches who the four chosen Referees were and they were duly told on their arrival at the meeting. This became the start of a bond which totally amazed me, as I now feel I have known these lads for years (and the grey hairs to prove it).

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The four training sessions we had leading up to departure went really well mainly due to Ross and Dave Avent who put in a lot of work organising them to which I am sure the lads are very grateful. The time flew by before we knew it we were putting in place the final arrangements.

So, the journey began on the Friday 29th when we met up and then travelled in two cars to Manchester Airport, all the way Tom was on his phone using the what's app group chat to the lads in Ross's car, I should have guessed then that this was just the start of the miss use of phones and lack of normal conversation. The theme seemed to carry on even while we enjoyed an excellent Italian meal in Manchester.

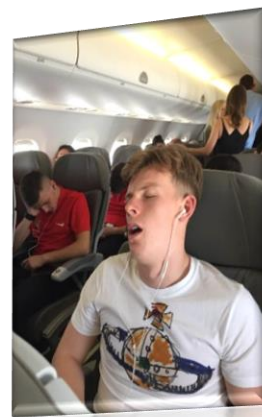
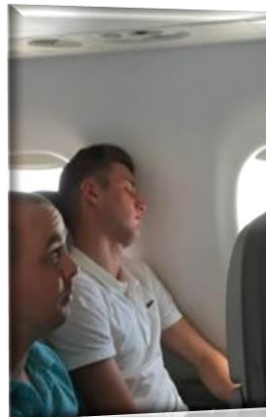


The following day we enjoyed a bite to eat in the departure lounge at the airport where we learned that our flight was delayed by an hour. In a way this was a God send as Liam then showed us some of his food supplement he had with him which was in a plastic bag and looked like something that you see been found on the television program border control. Hence, he didn't take it



with him.

When on the plane and even before take-off the lads got comfy and all but Tony were fast



I had to talk to Joycey.

asleep great company they were so

So, on arrival at Lisbon airport we were promptly picked up and taken to The Hotel Eden which was to be our base for the duration of the trip, and we couldn't of asked for nicer place to stay.

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We quickly got unpacked, due to the delayed flight our plans had to be changed as the lads were meant to of been having a quick training session to help acclimatise, but due to it been cooler in Portugal than sunny England's North East coast (hard to believe I know). We decided to change things. So we got changed then went out for a walk along the promenade and into the Town of Cascais to get our bearings and find a restaurant where we had a meal and watched the Portugal v Uruguay game.

After an early night the following morning Ross took the lads for a training session along the prom, a gruelling session including some sprinting sessions (so I'm led to believe as I carried the water bottles), then back to the Hotel to get showered and changed a quick meal and then on to the pre-tournament Referee's meeting.

So, the first match day was upon us a nice early rise at 6am which I think was a bit alien to Dean, Liam and Tom as they are used to the student life. Once they woke up we had breakfast and travelled to the first game all a bit nervous as would be expected. As soon as they got into the dressing room they were fine and went straight into auto mode.

Ross and I were very pleased with the lad's first day performances and pleasing to say so was the Observer from the Manchester FA. Who went onto complement our Referees saying that their performance and teamwork displayed by them was excellent and they have already set the benchmark for other Referees to try and match.

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The following days followed a similar suit with early starts and long days, the lads performed very well and were getting very high praise from Observers and Club Officials alike even though some especially the Portuguese do get very animated during the games. A strong point I feel that should be mentioned is the way in which the lads gelled and shared different experiences with each other regarding little scenarios that happened in their games, and how in future games they could perhaps deal with such scenarios if they were to occur again.

Although the temperatures never got to what we were expecting it was still warm, so again it was pleasing to see how the lads coped with this by been prepared for the heat and using the energy gels etc. they had purchased during our preparation meetings in snow covered Stokesley.



Considering the amount of games that followed very quickly over the short period of time the lads developed how to communicate to the players and officials in a more confident way, mainly by using hand gestures and even picking up the occasional phrase, For the Teesside lads we call it English.

The lads were all rewarded for their hard work by been appointed to a final which again to their credit performed superbly. On the Friday the lads were split up with Ross going with Liam and

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Dean with an early start and I went with Tony and Tom for the (graveyard shift) afternoon games. It was a long day as we got back to the hotel round 9.30 pm but very rewarding for all concerned.

On Saturday which was unfortunately our last day we had a downtime day and it just coincided with England's 2-0 World Cup win over Sweden, It seemed all of Portugal wanted England to win the competition once their own team had been eliminated so after watching and joining in with the terrific atmosphere we headed back to the hotel, showered, changed then out for our final meal.

One of the many things I did learn over the week was how much some people rely on mobile phones, so much that I had to try banning them at meal times so we could have an actual conversation, this then became a fines policy whereas I would ban them from looking at their phone for half an hour and if I caught them using a phone it was a Euro fine. The kitty did quite well out of this with Ross generous. And our expenses night.



been the most
it did lighten
for our last

Overall it was an amazing week for which I would like to thank Dean, Liam, Tom and Tony for working as hard as they did and conducting themselves in the manner they did, and also for making Ross and I so proud to be your Coaches for the adventure.

Many thanks must go to Ross for his organisation of the trip (his excuse for been on his phone so much).

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But obviously very special thanks to the North Riding County FA for giving another four of our CORE Group Referees the chance to experience, and to take part in such a prestige tournament as the Iber Cup as well as expanding my experience in Coaching our Referees.

I am sure I am speaking for all concerned when I say the experience, friendship and even life skills gained will last forever.