

It is difficult to relate the high esteem with which Derek was regarded within football circles.

My own experiences of Derek were his off field activities but I have little doubt that his abilities on the field of play were as high as his talents off the field; I know he was an excellent match official, highly respected and extremely able. Essex FA must have agreed when they appointed him to Referee the Essex Sunday Intermediate Cup Final in 1969, an achievement of which he was rightly proud.

As an assessor, you would want him to watch you – you valued his opinion.

As a mentor – not just to a select few as I originally thought, but to many, very many as it transpires – his advice was invaluable and those he took under his wing invariably progressed and very often achieved at the highest level.

As a Referees' Association member his record was second to none within our organisation. Derek was an RA member for 48 years and a Basildon RA stalwart for 38 of those. Always willing to contribute he occupied many seats at our Committee table and was both President & Chairman (twice) during that time. Alongside Jim & Ken, Derek formed a formidable panel of wise old heads – I could never make up mind if they were The Three Amigos or Three Wise Monkeys – or which monkey was which come to that!

I have tried hard to find a single phrase which sums up just how highly we regard Derek:

First Among Equals – perhaps, but were we ever his equal ?

Best of a bad bunch – possibly, but that says more about us than it ever would about Derek!

Leader of the pack – maybe, but I never saw Derek in leathers or anywhere near a motorbike!

It is simply impossible to encapsulate every level on which Derek affected his footballing so I will sum it this way:

As a Referee you set the example.

As an Assessor, you gave us your knowledge.

As a Mentor, you gave us guidance & support

As an RA member & colleague, you gave us your wisdom

As a Friend, you gave us everything we could ask for

Thank You, God Bless You & Farewell