

The Man in the Middle

The Referee

Can you imagine how difficult it **must** be to **referee** a major sports event like a World Cup or European Cup Final?

Millions of people are watching you and every decision you make is analysed on TV and Radio all over the world by commentators and **viewers**.

This man could!

Pierluigi Collina

Date of birth: 13th February 1960 in Bologna, Italy

Nationality: Italian

Education: Degree in Economics

Referee: 1977-2006

Famous for: Being the best football referee in the world and having no hair.



Background

Pierluigi Collina is **widely** considered to be the best football referee the World has ever seen.

The players in Serie A voted him 'best referee' for six consecutive years.

His distinctive looks (he has no hair) are the result of a medical condition called 'alopecia'.

Little-known facts about Pierluigi

He's a truly international figure. He's Italian but he speaks three languages: English, Spanish and a little French.
He doesn't like eating chicken.
His last international match was Portugal vs Slovakia in the 2006 FIFA World Cup.
He loves basketball. His favourite club is Fortitudo Bologna.
His image was used on the cover of the video games Pro Evolution Soccer.



must = deve
referee = arbitrare / arbitro
viewers = spettatori
widely = in gran misura
little-known = poco noti

glossary

1 Read the information above, mark true (T) or false (F) then correct the false sentences.

- 1 Pierluigi Collina was born in Milan. T F
- 2 He was a referee for twenty-eight years. T F
- 3 He suffers from a condition called 'alopecia'. T F
- 4 He speaks some Portuguese. T F
- 5 Collina's favourite hobby is baseball. T F
- 6 He prefers not to eat chicken. T F

2 Match the English words for the referee's equipment with their Italian equivalents.

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| 1 long socks | a fischietto |
| 2 rulebook | b casacca |
| 3 stopwatch | c bandierine |
| 4 referee's jersey | d monetina |
| 5 whistle | e cronometro |
| 6 cards | f calzettoni |
| 7 flags | h cartellini |
| 8 coin | i regolamento |



F 20 years ago a football match was covered by only six or eight TV **cameras**. **Nowadays** games are filmed by up to 24 cameras. TV cameras show things that the referee can't possibly see. This makes it very **challenging** and difficult.

A Nowadays, you have to prove that you **deserve** your authority, you have to **earn** it.

E Only a stupid person can think he's perfect and never makes mistakes.



Referees and players are not **enemies**, we just have different jobs.

B

D I became a referee at 17 years old. Working with players older than me helped me to be more mature, to **build up** my personality.

What does Pierluigi say about the difficulties of being a referee?

C Making a decision under stress is something no one can teach you ... you have to learn it for yourself ... It's like being a top manager in a big company.

glossary

deserve = meriti
 earn = guadagnare
 enemies = nemici
 build up = sviluppare
 cameras = telecamere
 nowadays = al giorno d'oggi
 challenging = impegnativo

3 Read the interview with Collina and match questions and answers.

- 1 What do you think about the influence of TV?
- 2 What do you think about making mistakes?
- 3 What do you think about the character of a referee?
- 4 What do you think about making tough decisions?
- 5 What do you think about your relationship with the players?
- 6 What do you think about showing your authority?

4 Read the interview again. Which of these adjectives describe a good referee?

- passionate
- calm
- understanding
- impulsive
- firm
- decisive
- flexible
- open-minded

5 Work with a partner. What qualities do you need to have to be a good football player? Make a list and talk about them. Are they the same or different to the qualities you need to be a referee?



A: I think you need to be fast.
 B: Yes and you need to be physically fit.