

e beautiful game ...



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You need to know everything about that specific match in terms of team tactics. For example, do they adopt zonal marking or man marking? If you are one step forward and you know what is going to happen then it is easy to focus your attention of the right place at the right moment

referees are very often verbally abused, sometimes even physically against them and this is something that everybody involved in football has to take responsibility to do something.

‘I started refereeing at 17 and making decisions is not something you normally do at that age. You are surrounded by people making decisions on your behalf: mother, father, older sister or brother, teachers at school. Normally you are not responsible for your decisions.

‘On the field of play, you are alone. Many players are older than you and you are the one

that is responsible for the decision. It is not easy.’

Collina is a role model for all aspiring referees. In the ultra-competitive world of Italian football he made his way to the top but it was a long journey to get there. It took 14 years after first blowing a whistle to kick off a local amateur game in Bologna to officiating his first Serie A game. Eight years after that, he would be at the Camp Nou, Barcelona, for Manchester United’s famous comeback victory over Bayern Munich that sealed a historic treble. He would then reach the pinnacle of the sport – refereeing

the World Cup final in Yokohama, where Brazil beat Germany 2-0. In 2005, aged 45, he retired.

‘I’m lucky. It has been a privilege and a passion. I have been involved for so long and I continue to work in this field.

‘Sometimes I dream to be back on the field of play but, unfortunately, I wake up in the morning.’

■ Pierluigi Collina was one of the most feared and revered referees in football

