

# Sexism in football

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Gender Discrimination (The Sian Massey Story) On the 22nd of January 2011 female linesman Sian Massey was going to officiate as a linesman in a premier league clash between Liverpool and Wolves. Sky Sports were broadcasting the match on live television, Presenters Andy Gray and Richard Keys were preparing to cover the pre game coverage, when the two named above began to talk about the female linesman Sian Massey and what they thought about her in a very discriminating fashion. The commentators, who apparently believed their microphones were switched off, were recorded. Commenting on Ms Massey, Mr Keys said: ' Somebody better get down there and explain offside to her. ' Mr Gray, a former Scottish international footballer, replied: ' Can you believe that? A female linesman.

Women don't know the offside rule. ' Mr Keys replied: ' Course they don't. I can guarantee you there will be a big one today. Kenny (Liverpool manager Kenny Dalglish) will go potty. This isn't the first time, is it? Didn't we have one before? ' Later in the exchange, Mr Keys said: ' The game's gone mad. Did you hear charming Karren Brady this morning complaining about sexism? Do me a favour, love. ' During the game, which Liverpool won 3-0, Ms Massey angered Wolves by refusing to rule Raul Meireles offside before he set up Liverpool's first goal.

The replay showed that she made the correct decision. When The Mail on Sunday put the transcript to Mr Keys, he said: ' I have no recollection of that. I have no idea what you are talking about. ' My recollection is that I wished the young lady all the best. ' When told a recording existed of the conversation, he said: ' If you have a tape then you don't need me to talk to you. It almost makes it worse that they're speaking when the microphones

are not on as opposed to when they are on, because [they have] never really had the brass neck to say it publicly, they would only say it privately.

I have heard it and I don't believe it is just banter. Former referee Graham Poll added: " It must be very difficult for female match officials to progress in men's football and any who do, do so on merit and should be held up as role models, not subjected to outdated, sexist attitudes ... (Sian Massey) is already on the FIFA assistant referees' list in women's football and at just 25 that is a magnificent achievement.

" Michaela Tabb, a snooker referee who has officiated the World Championship final, said: : " What they have done there is completely unacceptable because they have not given her her place at all as an official. They are basically doubting her ability. She has obviously passed every exam and whatever qualifications she's had to go through. " England captain Rio Ferdinand said on Twitter: " I'm all for women refereeing in football, discrimination should not happen in our game at all .

.. prehistoric views if u think otherwise. " Hugh Robertson, the sports minister, commented: " It is very disappointing to hear these comments at a time when we are trying to get more women participating and officiating in sport, particularly football. The FA released a statement saying: " The FA has made real strides in encouraging both male and female match officials to enter the game at every level, and will continue to offer every encouragement to all officials within the football family to progress to the highest levels possible. We are proud to have some of the world's best match officials, both male and female Overall the number of female referees

in England (Levels 1-8) stands at 853 and climbing, and all of our female match officials act as fantastic ambassadors for the game. They have our wholehearted and continuing support.

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