

## **AN ABSURD PUPPET PUSHED TO AND FRO**

Sunday on the green. Twenty two kids running about in a football match with me trying to control them in the awkward middle.

## **IN SAECULA SAECULORUM**

They cannot be older than twelve, but they treat me with a kind of visceral hatred, even a type of outright contempt. Any decision is the wrong one. All actions are ill-informed. All choices are skewed. All rules are the wrong rules. So why do I do this? Probably to get out. Or live a vicarious life through the game instead.

## **MUST**

I signal a goal kick. The attacking team calls me *a cunt* for this. The ball goes up. Two players jump for it and collide heads sickeningly. Both come down hard, one clearly unconscious. The boys run to the stricken child, pleading for me to *do something*.

- Mister! They need help!

But I don't know what to do. I just stand and panic.

- Mister! Mickey's out cold!
- Do something!

Imploring eyes. All on me. *I'm useless*.

## **ONE LONG STRUGGLE**

A medically-trained parent standing on the sidelines runs on to help. Another parent calls for an ambulance. Order and calm restored. Another quickly abandons the game.

- So, I remark jovially, - we on for the replay?
- Oh piss off, Simons. You're fucking *useless*.

The boys regard me with the same shattering disdain.

- Yeah, Mister. What's the *point* in you?

In a job like this you get to see the dirty work of the Taplow Lower Amateur District League at close quarters.