

State of Mind Sport. BeTheRef VR.

BIMA Award Winner 2022.

Best Immersive Experience.

Best Use of Digital by Not for Profit, Charity & Education.



#AppliedXR™





BIMA
Awards

Winner 2022

BE THE
REF

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VIRTUAL REALITY EXPERIENCE

STATE





| Synopsis

BeTheRef is a unique world first - a truly immersive VR experience designed to raise awareness among rugby league fans of the skills required to be a referee controlling a highly competitive SuperLeague game, making over 15,000 judgements in 80 mins, all while running up to 10km!

State of Mind Sport is a national charity that harnesses the power of sport to promote positive mental fitness and ultimately prevent suicide. One group the charity work with is match officials across sport.

The levels of abuse directed at officials has risen for years and the impact is stark. We've lost referees - not only from their respective sports - but in some tragic cases we've lost them to suicide. Yet so many fans somehow don't see the human behind the uniform nor treat them with the respect and decency they deserve.

An official collaboration with State of Mind and the Rugby Football League, BeTheRef enables fans to spend a high-octane 7 minutes in the boots of elite referee, Marcus Griffiths overseeing a clash between Salford and St Helens. Fans live and breath every moment with Marcus providing commentary - an immersive, first-person perspective positively changing attitudes and increasing empathy.

| A World-First



| R&D Test Shoot
18 March 2021
Warrington Wolves v Leigh Centurians



| BeTheRef – Teaser Trailer.

<https://vimeo.com/547506321>





| Innovation

BeTheRef was an exciting brief from the start. First discussed with my charity colleagues at State of Mind Sport in 2019, we always felt this challenge could represent the best opportunity our young company has had to truly innovate with immersive tech.

Collaboratively with State of Mind, referees societies and RFL pro referees, we started exploring the root cause of the abuse and vitriol directed the way of officials. Surveys were carried out, research completed, papers written. Ultimately, a light was shone on a huge knowledge gap among the fan population as to the role of a match referee, the unique physical and mental demands of the job and the extreme pressure under-which they discharge their duties.

We then turned our attention to how we could devise a ground-breaking fan experience that plugged that gap, raised that low level of awareness and ultimately would empower fans to "run in the boots of a top flight referee for a few minutes". Fundamentally, BeTheRef does just that, utilising fully immersive and never-before-seen 360 video. The massive challenge that came with this unique brief, was how to effectively shoot stable 360 video, from a sprinting referees' perspective, when many 360 filmmakers steer clear of fast-moving cameras and first-person perspectives for fear of inducing motion sickness in viewers. We wanted to place fans in the very heart of the action, from the most pressurised vantage point in the stadium - so we set to work researching and developing an optimal solution to this huge production challenge.

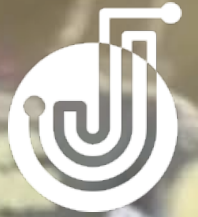


| Craft

The project team undertook a lengthy R&D process in which we explored a number of options for wearable camera rigs that would offer high levels of shock-absorption, light-weight comfort and would withstand the sharp twists, turns and sprints of an elite referee. Nothing existed in the 360 filming world so we had to spread the net wide. Eventually we found our answer from an unlikely source, albeit another sport - motocross.

Motocross riders wear equipment to protect their neck and head in case of a high-speed crash - their helmet is therefore connected to a shoulder brace offering stabilisation of the upper body, neck and head in the harshest of impacts. Once we obtained a motocross shoulder brace, securely rigged two 360 cameras to it (front and back) and carried out some early test shots with the wearer sprinting at speed, we knew we'd found our innovative solution. The test stitches, even without post-stabilisation came out not only watchable, but remarkably smooth and stable.

We presented our findings and recommended solution to the client (State of Mind Sport) and principle partner (Rugby Football League) and sought permission to film a test shoot with a SuperLeague referee at a pre-season friendly, just for the first half, to establish whether the rig was practical and comfortable for an elite referee to wear in a match, to ascertain the quality and stability of the stitched footage shot during a real game and also to observe the effect of the presence of the camera rig on the players and their behaviour towards the referee.



| Craft - continued

The results were compelling. The footage was a stunning first-person representation of the vantage point of a referee, and in particular the audio offered a surprising level of insight into what goes on 'out in the middle' during a game. It's fair to say at that point of the project, as we presented this test footage back to the State of Mind trustees and RFL referees, there was an immediate groundswell of excitement for the project and its eventual outcomes. The resulting 360 footage was so strong that we opted to use it in a 'Coming Soon' teaser video to start promoting the project to the rugby league community.

Following this successful R&D, we worked with the RFL to identify a full competitive Super League match at which we could rig up a willing referee and capture the full game. This came in the form of Salford Red Devils vs St Helens RLFC at the conclusion of the 2021 season and the man-in-the-middle wearing the 360 cameras was young referee, Marcus Griffiths. Again, the footage captured was more than we could have hoped for and the fixture itself provided a blood-and-thunder match with plenty of incident, controversy and even the first pitch-invasion Marcus had had to manage in his career!

In post-production, we selected the match highlights to feature in the VR experience, collaborating closely with State of Mind presenter and former referee, Ian Smith. With the linear rough stitch edit complete, we revisited Salford's stadium with standard 2D cameras to film a retrospective interview with Marcus Griffiths in which he self-analysed and commented the selected plays from the game, this audio going on to become the in-experience commentary users hear throughout, perfectly supplementing the in-game audio.



Impact

BeTheRef VR officially launched at the biggest fixture in the SuperLeague calendar - Magic Weekend at Newcastle on 9th/10th July 2022 - a weekend where every SuperLeague team play at one stadium attracting all rugby league fans to a single venue. State of Mind were granted a high-value pitch in the official Fanzone at St James' Park offering the perfect showcase to launch BeTheRef and put high numbers of fans through the experience in a short timeframe.

Across those two days, we saw approx 150 supporters, amateur referees, former players and coaches put on the headset and experience the BeTheRef VR piece. We surveyed over 40 of those users to gather important data on both the user experience and the impact of the VR piece on their outlook and attitude towards match referees. The results of this survey are included in this submission and are overwhelmingly positive - over 86% had a much better understanding of being a referee - evidencing the client's KPIs being hit even at this early stage of release.

Since launch, requests have been flowing in for us to take BeTheRef into referees societies and clubs across Super League and the amateur game as word spreads about this incredibly unique opportunity.

| BeTheRef Launch – BIMA Awards Film.

<https://vimeo.com/731735185>





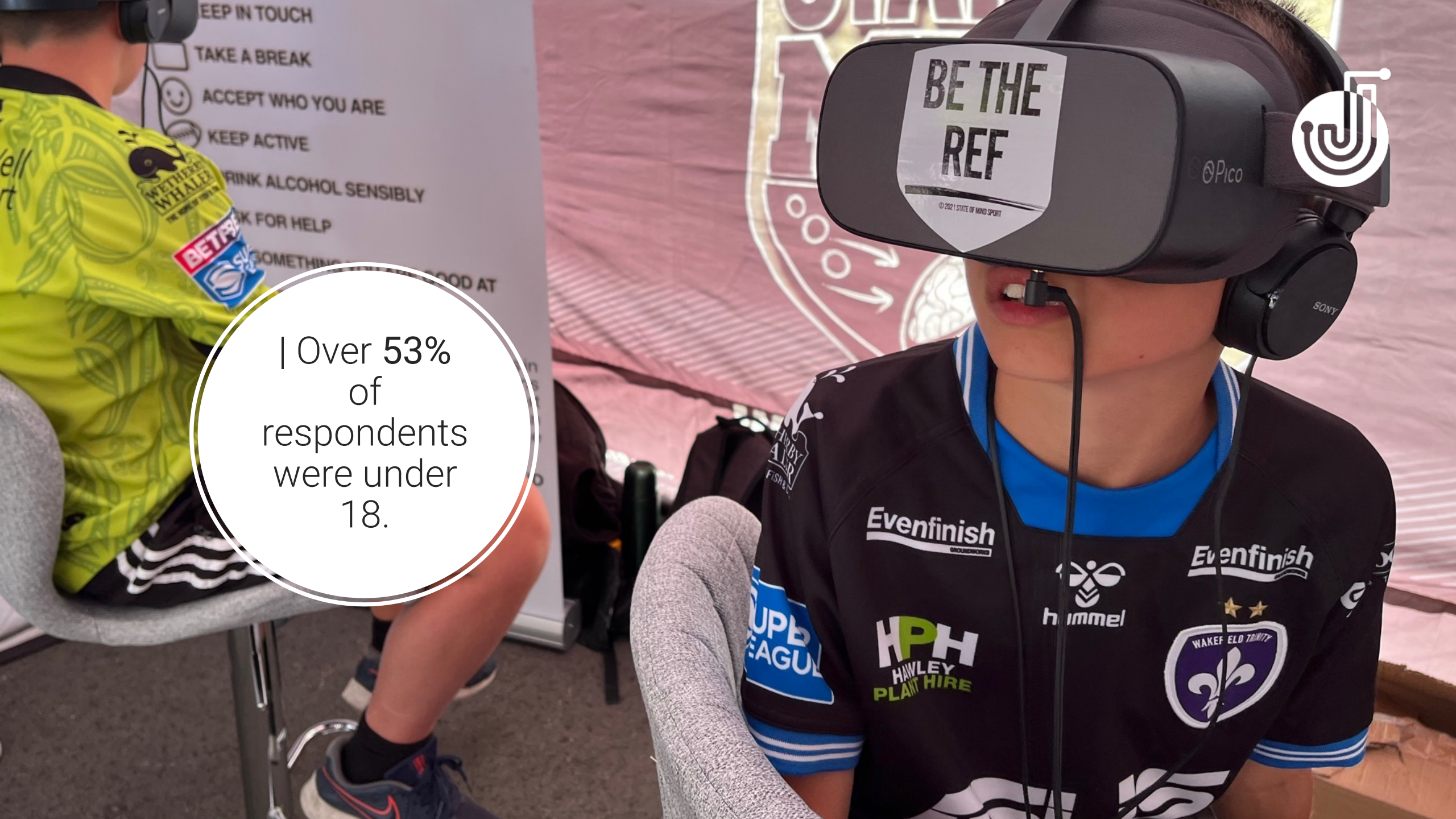
| Magic Weekend Survey Results.

| Over 150 headset activations across Magic Weekend.



| Equating to over 17.5 hours of total play time.





| Over 53%
of
respondents
were under
18.

KEEP IN TOUCH
TAKE A BREAK
ACCEPT WHO YOU ARE
KEEP ACTIVE
DRINK ALCOHOL SENSIBLY
ASK FOR HELP
SOMETHING IS ALWAYS GOOD AT

BE THE
REF

© 2021 STATE OF MIND SPORT

Pico



SONY

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WAKEFIELD TRINITY



| Over 86%
of
respondents
were male.



STATE OF MIND

It's important to take care of your mind and make the most of life. Mental fitness is the way you think and feel and your ability to handle ups and downs. Here are 10 practical ways to improve your mental fitness.

1. Make simple changes to your routine or take up a new hobby to make a big difference in your life.

2. Take a break after you work.

3. Listen to your feelings.

4. You are what you eat.

5. Drink alcohol sensibly.

6. Ask for help.

7. Do something you are good at.

8. Care for others.

State of Mind Sport deliver mental fitness sessions in sports clubs, schools, colleges, universities, prisons and businesses by former sportspeople and experienced mental health clinicians. State of Mind Sport also deliver tailored mental health sessions about a range of mental fitness issues in the workplace.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN A STATE OF MIND PRESENTATION GO TO OUR WEBSITE
www.stateofmindsport.com



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| Over 95% of respondents were white british.

WHAT'S YOUR...
STATEOFMINDRUGBY.COM





| Under 7%
of
respondents
were
referees.



STATE OF
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| This was
48% of
respondents'
first VR
experience.

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| 100% of respondents found the VR easy to use.





| Less than
5% of
respondents
experienced
any form of
motion
sickness.





| Over 62% of respondents found BeTheRef a very realistic experience.

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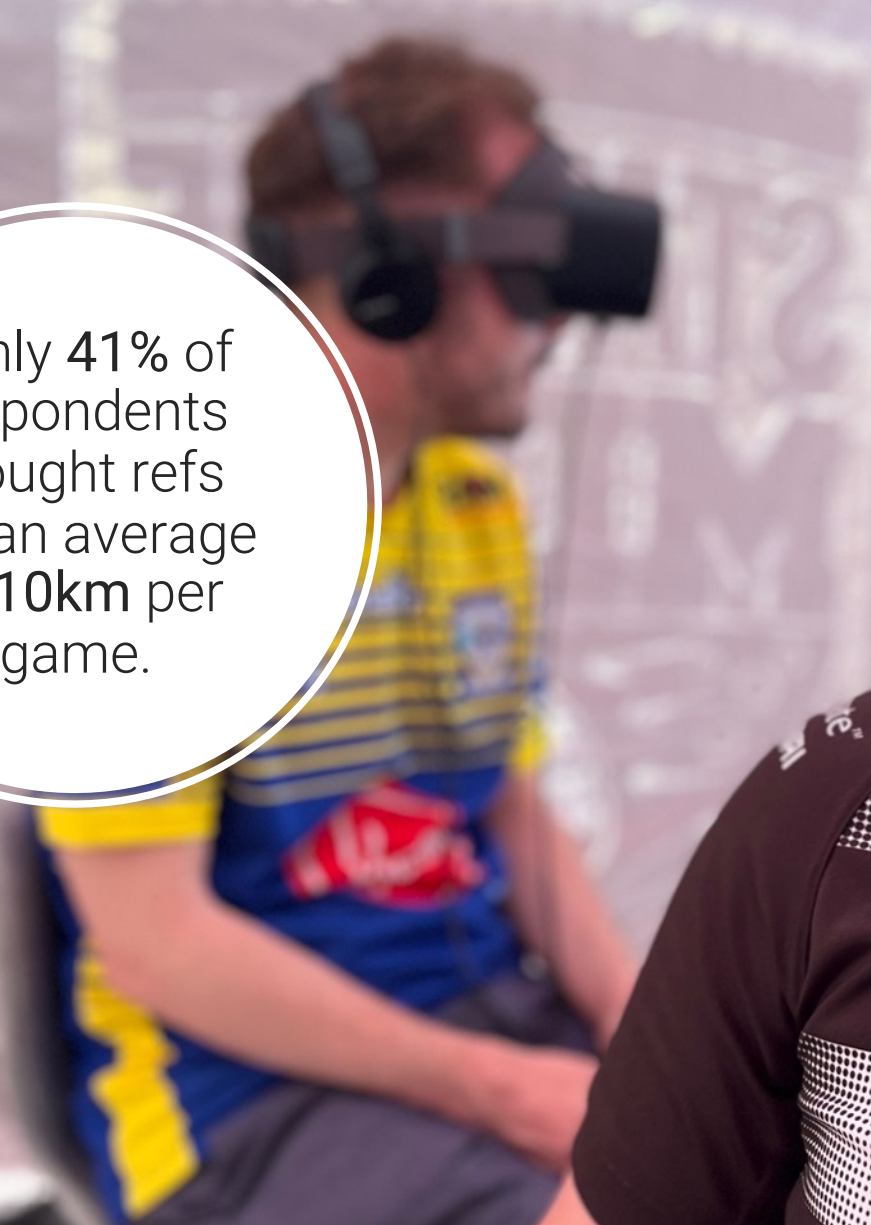
FF CONCEPT
PO: 635796
Netherlands
C/No. 9/95
MADE IN CHINA

FACEBOOK LINK



| Over **86%** of respondents felt BeTheRef gave them a better or much better understanding of being a RL ref.

| Only 41% of respondents thought refs run an average of 10km per game.



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STATE OF MIND

| Only 18% of respondents thought refs make an average of 15,000+ judgements per game.





| Over 86% of respondents felt BeTheRef will change their attitude towards refs.



Making simple changes to how you live doesn't necessarily cost a fortune or take up loads of time, but it can make a big difference.

10 ways to look after your State of Mind

- 1. TALK ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS
- 2. EAT WELL
- 3. ...
- 4. ...
- 5. ...
- 6. ...
- 7. ...
- 8. ...
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CANCER



“It felt like I was the ref!”



“It was just brilliant being that close to the players and the action!”

BE THE REF
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BE THE REF

“It was so in your face and all the off-the-ball incidents are so hard to spot! They get so much abuse.”





“I probably do mouth off at refs – but at the end of the day it’s harder for them than for me!”



“When fans shout abuse they don’t appreciate what it’s like on the pitch for the ref – this is a **great** way to educate fans!”





| Magic Weekend Launch Team



| BeTheRef on Oculus / Meta Quest.

<https://www.oculus.com/experiences/media/1064540217769333/>

Over 140 plays since publication on Oculus / Meta Quest global platform 15.07.22 (as at 26.10.22)



State of Mind - BeTheRef

Juice Immersive

Length 7:00

WATCH IN DEVICE

✓ WATCH LATER

You can watch the media by selecting a device or later when you are in VR.



| BeTheRef on YouTube360.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XAPWvHA2o8I>



Work with us.

Consultancy. Curation. Production. Strategy. Project Management.

To speak to us about how your brand can leverage the power of immersive storytelling and technology, please get in touch.

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