

# Reycup 2016

*Huh! on (N)Iceland*



A few weeks before the tournament, Europe learned at the European Championship in France, that Iceland is also a place for good soccer. This impression was approved at the Reykjavik international football and fun festival.

But before we go into details let's go back in time a little bit further ...

## Reycup 2011

I have been to Reycup already in 2011. When I came back from this tournament, I knew that I had to go there again because I made so much interesting experiences. Now, as I am back again, I still think the same. I want to go back to (N)Iceland again!

## Before the tournament

When conditions had been fixed in March 2016 and the offer was placed on the REFEX website, I applied for this tournament. At summertime, several interesting tournaments are offered at REFEX. For most tournaments, referees already applied in spring, so I tried to find someone who was also interested to go to Iceland. But I didn't only want to go there for some days on a tournament, I also wanted to see more of this fascinating nature on this island. The first person I asked was my former colleague from Deutsche Telekom, Michael Imhof. He was also fascinated of this idea and so we booked a roundtrip on iceland together.

Before the tournament I had a lot of emails with Solmundur, the head of the tournament. I was a very helpful exchange of questions and answers. Solmundur served us very well.

## Arriving at the tournament

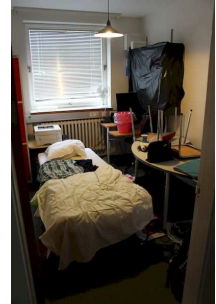
Michael and me arrived on iceland on Tuesday. Reycup sent us a ticket fort he bus from Keflavik Airport to Reykjavik. The bus driver was very kind. Normally the bus stop would have been at Hilton hotel, but he drove us directly to the sports center. Great service, thank you!



When we arrived at the sports center of Trottur Reykjavik (Trottur is the club that hosts Reycup, „Trottur“ = „Power“) I called Solmundur by phone. He was already there and awaited us. He showed us all facilities and he drove us around so that we could see the whole tournament area and anything else around it. Finally he drove us to the school where we were accomodated.

## Accomodation and breakfast

Like in many other tournaments, the participants are accomodated in schools. Our school was at Holtavegur, about 1 kilometer from Trottur, a nice walk through the Flora. In the school we didn't have to sleep in a big classroom. As we have only been few referees, we had been offered a little seperate teacher's office for each of us. There we found a good camping bed with duvet and pillow. So everything was prepared well.



The breakfast for those that slept at the school was also offered there. It was a good tournament standard breakfast, containing bread, cheese, ham, muesli, and fruits. The coffee was good, one that was able to wake you up early in the morning. The ladies, that served us at the breakfast buffet were very kind. Thank you for your kind service!

## One day in Reykjavik

As the official opening ceremony was in the evening of Wednesday, we had some time to visit the capital of iceland. Visiting London or Paris in one day would be impossible, but Reykjavik is a bit smaller. It was good to have this day, cause on the follwing days it was hardly possible to do an excursion downtown.

The tournament is located about 3km away from the center of Reykjavik, so it is only a walk for half an hour and you are there.

In the evening there was the opening ceremony and of course the whole crowd was celebtrating with this legendary „Huh!“ (see picture above). Great!

Afterwards we had a talk with Sten who is responsible fort he referees. We spoke about how we are going to proceed during the following days and talked about the „dual system“.

## The „dual system“ and volunteer referees

At Reycup they use 2 referees per game. Both referess have equal rights. This may sound strange. But If in handball or other sports it is possible to arrange with more than one (head) referee, why shouldn't we be able to arrange with this way of refereeing in soccer? E.g. in the USSF ther are some leagues where this system is used. I had some documentation from REFEX about handling a game with 2 referees that was a good help. So we were prepared well. After some games where we had to get used to it, we enjoyed it. To my mind it would be good to have it in more games.

Another interesting thing at ReyCup is, that they don't only use referees like us with regular educations and tests and championship games on each weekend. They also use volunteers with a „junior license“. Players from the 1st male and female team (playing in icelands top league) are obliged to act as referee. Something, we may think it cannot work, it will result in a chaos. No it doesn't. Respect to all, it really worked out fine. They do a really good job, it was a good experience to work with them together.

So maybe some „strange“ situation, not our usual referee business, but I liked it. It was an interesting experience. It is always good to make new experiences and it is always and important challenge for each referee to adopt new situations in each game. So also a test for your flexibility in handling a game.

## The tournament games

If someone would have said to me before the tournament I would to 21 games in 4 days I would have called him insane. Now I have to confess that I may be insane ...

As you see there is a lot to do at ReyCup. The special problem is, like I wrote above, that many games are done by volunteers. And sometime it is difficult for them to arrive in time (e.g. when they take a break at work) or sometimes it happens the one cancels on short term. So the advantage for the tournament is, that there are some referees that are only there the whole day for refereeing. That is the REFEX-crew ☺. Sten tries to arrange that it doesn't get too hard for us and that we also have enough breaks. But in the end I've been 1050 minutes on the field. It is like running a marathon taking 4 hours each day. At least every one that likes to participate there should be able and should be willing to do at minimum 4 games a day. Sounds hard? Maybe. But on the other hand you have to look upon the character of the games.

It is very impressive how different soccer can be in different countries. In iceland the players don't have any problem with physical contact. It is a normal part of the game for them, they accept being touched or even being pushed a little bit. One german player of Trotur told me, that in senior leagues it is somehow like a mixture of rugby and soccer. So as a referee you have much less work than you are used to. Sometimes you blow the whistle for an encroachment and all players stare at you and don't know what's going on. Strange ☺

As they accept physical contact there are hardly any discussions on your decisions. Yes, it is possible to have games where you don't have complaints during the game or afterwards. What a great experience!

Although it makes your job much easier, you always have to be very concentrated and read what is going on. You still have to follow the scene, you still have to decide if the contact is still OK or if it was too much. But in the end you have to use your whistle much less than you are used to.

The behaviour of the teams in general is a very fair and respectful, e.g. in my first game it had to wait until 40th minute to blow the whistle for an encroachment.

At the end I always had a handshake with the teams and coaches and I thanked them for their good and fair game and they thanked me for a good job.

In total I had a lot of U13 or U14 games, male or female. But in the end it was OK to also have games that are easier than U16 games. You cannot do only U16 games for 4 days.

A highlight was the game of Liverpool FC U16 females. Wow, that was really good soccer also from their opponents. I was lucky to do this game together with Gunnar Oddur a high class referee and nice guy from Iceland. After the game, Andy, the coach of LFC said we were the best tournament referees. As he is a professional in soccer I trust in his judgement and won't oppose to his point of view 😊



So I enjoyed each of my 21 games. If you are on the field (together with a 2nd referee) in such an atmosphere, than you can take such effort. That's better than 12 games in 4 days where you always have complaints or even trouble.

Thanks to all participants for this great attitude and wonderful experience.

## Organizational matters



In the club house of Trottur there is a special area for the referees. It is not only a small corner it's an whole area with room enough. It has walls of glass so that we can look outside and see what's going on on the „centre court“. In this area you

also find the legendary red sofa (those who have been there know what I'm talking about) a place to rest between you games.

There you'll always find something to eat or to drink. In 2011 there was a lot of pizza, this year we always had subway sandwiches. And there were always some chocolate snacks too ☺. So supply with food and beverages is very good.

We got there in the morning at about 7:30. Then Sten gave us the 1st 2 games. Most oft he times 2 games in a row. When you get back from your games you first give back the game card with the result to Sten and then you take a break and some sandwiches. You have a talk with other referees and some time later Sten will call you for the next games. It is not like we are used to in other tournaments where you get a complete schedule for the whole day. Of course Sten has some plan, but if one of the volunteers does not show up, your whole plan breaks down. But that's no problem. In the end it works out fine when everyone is trying to serve the tournament as good as he can. In total it is an absolutely relaxed atmosphere although sometimes it is not easy for Sten to arrange all.

When the job is done at the end oft he day, we went down to Laugardalslaug, a big pool near Trottur. There you find several pools, especially some hot tubs and also one with icewater. That's a good thing, wonderful for relaxing and refreshing your tired muscles.

## Some special remarks

### ***We are lucky it is warm***

It was Friday, a rainiy day with about 13 degrees and a bit windy. I guess at home it was about 30 degrees. So it wasn't nicest weather conditions and I felt a bit cold. In the halftime of the game my referee colleague from iceland said „We are lucky it is warm“! ???

Yeah, OK! Now I also recognized that it was warm. Of course, at 13 degrees in July. What else?

But when do you get cold? And what would you say If I invite you in my garden for a BBQ in summertime? I guess he would melt

But thank you, youre statement helped me thrugh that rainy – but of course not cold – day ☺

### **Mats, the guy from Sweden**



Mats is one of those volunteers. I met him first time in 2011. This was the first time for him as „referee“ at Reycup. In 2011 he was unsecure in many decision and in his complete behaviour on the field. But he he came back each year. Now as I saw him again I saw how he has developed as referee. Great Mats, that's awsome! Mats was very happy to meet us to. We had good talks, he is a nice guy. Thanks Mats for this nice contact we had.



### **Sten, the man (for the referees)**



I wrote above of the job he has to do. Additionally he also went on the fields for refereeing. But, what is very important for us, Sten is always in a good mood and helps you when you need it. Thank you Sten!

### **Solmundur, the head of the tournament**

I also wrote some words to Solmundur above. He is a great tournament head, he arranges everything fine. He is very relaxed but he also knows exactly what to do. That's good if you know that the organization is in good hands. Solmundur has also been in the field as a referee, so he is also a (volunteer) colleague at the whistle. Unfortunately I didn't have the pleasure to be together with him in a game. Thank you Solmundur, it was a pleasure to meet you and to cooperate with you. And a very special remark for you: your white referee socks are great too! Legendary ☺

### **Michael Imhof**

I wrote above that I know Michael from business. It was the right decision to ask him. We understood each other very well, we had a good time together. Like me he also enjoyed each game. He showed the right attitude. Thank you Michael for having such a good time together on Iceland!

### **Final games**

Well, here we may find a little minus point. ReyCup has an agreement with the Iceland soccer federation that KSI provide some referees too. But the deal is that they will do the major finals. So no major final for us. ☹️ As each sportsman we are also looking for the final and if we don't get there it is a little disappointment. Like I wrote above I enjoyed each of my games, even if it was no final. And I had my highlight with the LFC-game. So for me there was no big disappointment. And, to be honest, on the last day, after so many games I was tired, my muscles and also my mind/concentration. A final deserves a referee that is in top condition. So I guess it was OK this way.

### **After the tournament**

It is up to yourself what you do when the last tournament day is over. Michael and me (including family that arrived after the tournament) made a roundtrip on Iceland. That was great. Fascinating nature. And people on Iceland are so relaxed and helpful. Wonderful experience.

I can only recommend, if you are going there, don't only get on the fields also take time to explore Iceland. It is worth it. But travelling on Iceland isn't cheap. As many things have to be imported from far away, the level of the prices is much higher than in central Europe. If you want to make some holidays on Iceland after the tournament, you should apply as early as possible to also book your hotels. It is also good to have the right guys with you to enjoy the journey.

## Bottom line

If you are interested in making some special new experiences as a referee, this may be the right tournament to go to.

You find a good atmosphere everywhere, fair play and respect on the fields, and an organization that cares for you very well.

Thank you Reyocup for a wonderful time! Iceland is Niceland, I am *Íslandsvinur*



*Jörg Irle*