

Dear All,

Re: Respect for Match Officials and Match Day Conduct

I am writing to you regarding a matter of concern across our game. Over recent weeks, we have seen instances of unacceptable behaviour and abuse directed towards match officials, alongside reported breaches of Codes of Conduct.

Rugby in Wales is built on strong and enduring values - respect, discipline, integrity, and community. These values define who we are and underpin everything we do. It is essential that we all continue to protect and promote them, both on and off the field.

Match officials are vital to ensuring that our wonderful game continues to thrive. They are committed volunteers who give up their time to support our game, week after week. Without them, rugby simply cannot take place.

It is therefore the responsibility of every club, coach, player, volunteer, and supporter to ensure that match officials feel welcomed, respected, and safe at all our grounds.

We all carry a collective responsibility to eradicate any abusive behaviour towards match officials. Protecting them is essential if we are to recruit and retain officials in the game which Adam Jones (Community Match Official Lead) and our Welsh Referees Society are working hard to do and, equally, to retain the dedicated individuals who currently officiate across Wales.

We remind you that abuse, verbal or otherwise, cannot and will not be tolerated, and such behaviour will result in significant sanctions for both clubs and individuals under WRU and World Rugby Disciplinary Regulations.

Match Day Environment and Behaviour

It is vital that clubs uphold a positive and safe environment on match days. Club officials are reminded that, under WRU Disciplinary Regulations, they are responsible for the behaviour of all spectators, regardless of whether they are club members.

Every club must take proactive steps to ensure that match day protocols are clearly communicated, understood, and followed by coaches, players, and supporters. The new Club Investment Model (see page 3) highlights safe and inclusive environments as critical to the success of rugby.

We kindly ask that you:

- Implement the Match Day Protocols
- Ensure match officials are warmly welcomed on arrival and supported throughout their visit.
- Provide appropriate quality, suitable, clean changing room facilities.
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent and stop abuse of any kind.
- Reinforce the Codes of Conduct and match day protocols with all coaches and players.
- Promote the values of rugby at every opportunity within your club community.



Rugby thrives when everyone plays their part. By working together and upholding the principles that make rugby in Wales so special, we can protect our volunteers, enhance the match day experience, and continue to grow the game we all care deeply about.

We will continue to monitor the situation to identify unacceptable behaviours and trends in the community game. We will also work in collaboration with our clubs to ensure that there is adherence to the Discipline and Misconduct Regulations, so that we continue to maintain safe and inclusive environments.

However, if there are breaches of the regulations in relation to Match Officials abuse, we will take these matters seriously and appropriate action will be taken in line with our Discipline and Misconduct Regulations.

Social Media

1. Use social media platforms to celebrate achievements, good practices, and promote the positive aspects of rugby, and contribute positively to the rugby community.
2. Be mindful about the language used – be inclusive and thoughtful about the language and opinions expressed online – be respectful towards Teammates, Opposition Players, Coaches and Match Officials.
3. Act swiftly to report and remove any adverse and/or abusive comments via your respective social media platforms/outputs.
4. Share the WRU's Match Day Protocol and Respect the Referee campaign via your Club's Social Media platforms and share widely across the rugby community.

Please ensure that this letter is shared with all appropriate personnel within your club, including coaches (all ages), team managers (all ages), and safeguarding leads.

Thank you for your continued commitment and support.

Yours sincerely,

Geraint



Community Director

Welsh Rugby Union



New Club Investment Model:

GOFYNION - OFF FIELD ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS FIRST TWO YEARS					
OFF FIELD CRITERIA	STANDARD	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD	PLATINUM
RUGBY WORKFORCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least three committee roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least four committee roles Volunteer / Staff handbook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer / Staff Handbook At least five committee roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer / Staff Handbook At least five committee roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer / Staff Handbook At least seven committee roles
FACILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate Licensing including evidence of food hygiene Match Day Protocol Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate Licensing including evidence of food hygiene Match Day Protocol Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate Licensing including evidence of food hygiene Match Day Protocol Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate Licensing including evidence of food hygiene Match Day Protocol Plan Active Health and Safety Policy Accessibility audit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate Licensing including evidence of food hygiene Match Day Protocol Plan Active Health and Safety Policy Accessibility Audit
GOVERNANCE AND CULTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding Plan EDI Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding Plan Club Improvement Plan EDI Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding Plan Club Improvement Plan EDI Policy Active rolling programme of Self-Assessment Additional Director Insurance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding Plan Club Improvement Plan including Risk Register which is reviewed on at least a bi-monthly basis at committee meetings EDI Policy Active rolling programme of Self-Assessment Additional director insurance or fully incorporated At least one role in the committee of five are female 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding Plan Club Improvement Plan including Risk Register which is reviewed on at least a bi-monthly basis at committee meetings EDI Policy Active rolling programme of Self-Assessment Additional director insurance or fully incorporated At least two roles in the committee of seven are female