

**** IMPORTANT ** - Use of Obscene and Offensive Language**

All clubs, players, administrators and spectators should be made aware of the following "Note to the Game" which has been released by the RFU. Please note that this extends not only to the abuse of match officials but also player to player exchanges and the behaviour of spectators. Referees have been instructed to implement the directive strictly and the Yorkshire RFU supports both the directive below and the instruction to referees.

The RFU would like to remind all those who participate in the game that the use of obscene or offensive language is contrary to the spirit and ethos of the game as set out in the iRB Playing Charter and the RFU codes of conduct for players and spectators (page 446 of the RFU Handbook).

Verbal abuse of match officials by players has always been dealt with firmly through the disciplinary process under law 10.4(k) and breaches can carry severe sanctions. This same law, which covers all acts contrary to good sportsmanship, can be used by referees for incidents of unacceptable player to player abuse.

Any player who is regarded by the referee as having breached law 10.4(k) is liable to a severe warning by the referee as to his conduct and/or suffer the sanction of a penalty kick. In extreme or persistent cases he may be dismissed from the field of play and attract sanctions ranging from 2 to 24 weeks (see RFU Handbook page 366). Such conduct, if not dealt with by match officials at the time, may also result in disciplinary action under Rule 5.12 (conduct which is prejudicial to the interests of the Game or bringing the Game into disrepute).

All players should be aware that the RFU intends to take steps to tackle the use of excessively profane language on the pitch and has asked its referees to enforce law 10.4(k) henceforth on a strict basis within the playing enclosure.

Match Officials will also report any unacceptable abuse or offensive language by coaches, spectators or others from the touchline against Match Officials. They will also deal appropriately with any unacceptable abuse of players from those on the touchline to players.

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