



NORFOLK COUNTY REFEREE'S ASSOCIATION POLICY ON ADULT BEHAVIOUR

Norfolk County RA is increasingly concerned with the reports of poor behaviour in football. This includes verbal and physical threats, and violence directed towards match officials. This misconduct is being undertaken by players, club officials and spectators alike.

We are working with the Norfolk County FA and the various adult leagues to address the matter. We fully support all the due processes of the County FA and the leagues to punish any contravention of its rules.

However, so that we can better support our members, the County RA is issuing the following policy:

- The County RA will support its members who choose not to referee matches involving any given team, in any division or league, after any incident relating verbal and physical threats or violence directed towards match officials. This includes before the conclusion of any formal proceedings.

Note: This is in addition to, and separate from, a referee having a conflict of interest with a club owing to a previous relationship with that club.

- The County RA may request its members not to officiate any match involving any team, division or league after any incident relating verbal and physical threats or violence directed towards match officials. This request may be for several matches: not just one. Again, this includes before the conclusion of any formal proceedings.
- In the most serious cases, the County RA may insist that a single match official, i.e. only a referee, is not appointed to certain clubs, and that a team of three officials are appointed. Those clubs and/or the leagues will be responsible for the match fees and expenses of the Assistant Referees.

We welcome the efforts shown by the County FA and leagues to counter these incidents. This includes agreeing to share information regarding players who are banned or suspended from other leagues, and to try to discourage players from simply changing leagues to avoid a ban. Therefore, we equally request that:

- Referees use their powers within the Laws of the Game by correctly cautioning, dismissing, and reporting offenders. A league or County FA cannot act where no misconduct is reported.
- All incident reports must be factual and concise. Where appropriate, using the exact words used, and descriptions of all persons involved to assist with identification should the matter be investigated.
- Referees should ensure that they receive a correctly completed Team Sheet prior to each match.

- Referees complete all post-match feedback forms as required by the leagues.

In addition to reporting any incident through the appropriate channels, i.e. the County FA and league committee, referees are also encouraged to report any incidents to their local RA branch. This will allow the referee to be supported by their peers, and to the dedicated County RA Welfare Officer. The County FA mental health champion may also be able to assist. Another benefit of this reporting is that the national RA is able to gain an accurate position of all incidents.