

THIS IS OUR GAME. **THIS IS WELSH RUGBY.**
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To: Member Clubs and District Members

28 July 2023

Dear Secretary,

Sent via Email

WRU Disciplinary Regulations

Ahead of the new playing season, I would like to draw your attention to the WRU Disciplinary Regulations, which are available via the WRU Game Locker and WRU Website (<https://community.wru.wales/governance/policy-and-integrity/discipline/>), and are currently in force.

Disciplinary Regulations – Amendments effective as of 1 August 2023

Personal Hearings – Application and Fee

Regulation 9.5 has been amendment to reflect:

Should a Player request a personal hearing for a red or yellow card offence(s), this request must be made in writing to the Disciplinary Officer within seven days of receipt of the Disciplinary Notice. A payment for £100 made payable to The Welsh Rugby Union Limited must accompany an application for a personal hearing. As part of the application, the player will be required to provide written reasons as to why he or she has requested a personal hearing.

Supporting Guidance and Material

There are a number of supporting documents and material available via the WRU Game Locker, which includes the **Judicial Process document**, which will provide you with a simplified understanding of the Disciplinary Process, as well as the **Suspension Definition** document, which will provide some clarity in the manner in which suspensions will be applied next season.

Further material will be uploaded via the WRU Game Locker this coming August.

Verbal Abuse of Match Officials - Sanctions

As in previous seasons, protecting match officials within our game remains as imperative as ever. You will appreciate that we need to protect the values of our game and any abuse towards match officials flies contrary to those core values.

The recent levels and types of sanctions imposed by Disciplinary Panels included significant financial penalties being imposed on Clubs, as well as lengthy periods of suspensions being imposed upon on any person found guilty of abusing match officials.

In order to strengthen our stance on this type of behaviour, the WRU Disciplinary Committee will provide Disciplinary Panels with the discretion to further aggravate sanctions pertaining to Match Official abuse and to impose even greater and/or additional sanctions, which may include, but not limited to, points deduction being imposed, to reinforce and strengthen the message that abusive behaviour towards Match Officials will not be tolerated.

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As a Club you are responsible for ensuring that you adopt a zero-tolerance approach, whether it is your senior, age grade players, senior and age grade coaches, Club officials or spectators, you must ensure that all associated with your Club adopts and adheres to this fundamental principle.

Match Day Environment and Behaviour

Similarly, you all have a duty to create and sustain a safe and positive environment for everyone involved in the Game. Club officials are reminded that in accordance with the WRU Disciplinary Regulations, officials are responsible for the behaviour of their respective spectators (irrespective whether they are Members of the Club or not). A Community Club resource (delivered to the Club Operations Managers) will be available to assist with delivering best practice protocol and available via the WRU Game Locker.

Ultimately, we urge you to consider the following guidelines to implement ahead of the coming season:

- Where possible, the playing enclosure must be roped off and/or suitably protected.
- As best practice, Clubs should identify a designated person to act as a Match Day Marshall.

It is strongly advised that prior to kick off, the Club's designated person should make contact with the Referee, in order to ensure that measures are in place to address any adverse sideline behaviour. Early contact with the Referee in respect of providing the identity of the designated person would be strongly advisable (even via the Fixture Secretary a few days prior).

Referees will be advised to report any spectator abuse and/or behaviour to the respective Club's designated person immediately and that the respective Club must do all it can to act swiftly and appropriately to assist the Referee.

- Players and Replacements must warm up behind their own goal line.

Spectator and Parental Behaviour

The Clubs are wholly responsible for the behaviour of their respective spectators and parents. Significant sanctions will be imposed upon any Club where breaches of the Codes of Conduct are found to be proven next season, including, but not limited to, significant financial penalties, which may include automatic financial penalties and team playing suspensions. Please ensure that during the pre-season period, that you engage with your respective spectators/parents about the importance of adhering to the published **Match Day Protocol** and ensure that match day measures are in place to control behaviour and ensure that you maintain a positive and safe environment for everyone to participate.

Any adverse on field behaviour involving Players may result in the appointed Referee abandoning the match, to avoid any unnecessary escalation involving the sidelines.

Player Behaviour and Conduct Prejudicial to the Interests of the WRU and the Game

The WRU Codes of Conduct now provides an obligation for Players, Coaches, and Club Officials, not to act in a way that is prejudicial to the interests of the WRU and/or the Game. This provision also encapsulates any violent conduct, which will not be tolerated within our Game.

Player welfare must be paramount and striking or punching another player or any violent conduct (which places another Player at peril) runs risk of causing serious and grave injury.

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It must be recognised that there is a high degree of risk associated with striking/punching or any violent conduct. The risks and potential consequences reach beyond the playing enclosure and could result in the matter becoming a civil and/or criminal matter.

The WRU Disciplinary Committee will consider cases of this nature very seriously and trust that a message is driven throughout the Club of the dangers and potential consequences and implications of conduct of this nature.

Preventative Measures

During the course of the season, we will be deploying Match Day Observers (“MDO”) to attend ad-hoc fixtures. The MDO’s will have the responsibility of observing and reporting on factors such as, but not limited to, sideline and spectator behaviours, as well as the match day environment and will be submitting reports to the WRU Disciplinary Department. Similarly, as utilised last season, Referee Cameras (GoPro Ref Cams) will also be deployed during the course of next season.

VEO Camera and Match Footage

Pursuant to Disciplinary Regulation 5.9 and 5.10, a Disciplinary Panel shall be entitled to consider any footage or any visual during disciplinary proceedings and as such, the WRU Disciplinary Department will request copies of any available match footage which includes (but not limited to) the Club’s VEO footage.

During next season, please ensure that you fully cooperate with the WRU Disciplinary Department in respect of sharing visual material to support disciplinary proceedings.

If you are subject to any disciplinary matter and pursuant to Regulation 5.10, fail to provide or disclose any available visual material to the Disciplinary Department and/or Disciplinary Panel, the panel shall be entitled to infer that it is unfavourable to the Person, Player or Club.

Social Media

Please continue to utilise social media to promote your Club’s activities, to showcase the values of your Club and our Game. Please be minded about the content which you will publish and share and to ensure that Players and Club Officials are promoting the Game and your Club in a positive manner. Failure to comply with the Social Media Code of Conduct will result in sanctions being imposed pursuant to the WRU Disciplinary Regulations.

Publication of Disciplinary Sanctions

As of next season, redacted disciplinary outcomes and sanctions will be published via the WRU website, which will provide the name of the offending Club, the offence, the date of incident and the sanction imposed.

May I please ask you to ensure that all appropriate personnel are made aware of this letter.

Yours sincerely,



Bryn Parker
Chairman, WRU Discipline Committee