Protocol for dealing with discriminatory abuse aimed at Players, Managers or Match Officials by Spectators at Grassroots level

Introduction

This protocol specifically aims to deal with the match day process for match officials where discriminatory behaviour by spectators is witnessed at football matches at Grassroots level.

It is not intended to go into the wider details of what constitutes discriminatory abuse, nor the investigation process or the full procedure for dealing with other incidents of discrimination or abuse. Details on these matters can be found on www.TheFA.Com

Match day process and responsibilities

Club representatives are responsible for monitoring, reporting and acting on any abuse from their spectators.

This protocol applies specifically where incidents are heard or witnessed by players, managers or match officials on the pitch. It aims to ensure that any discriminatory abuse directed at players, managers or match officials is effectively addressed and that Participants feel protected.

Offenders should be identified and dealt with efficiently by the clubs while ensuring that the match, where possible, is not unduly interrupted.

- The incident should in the first instance be brought to the attention of the match referee during a break in play.
- The match referee should report the incident to a relevant responsible club representative. The identity of that club representative will vary game to game and the match official will determine the best person from the club to assume this responsibility and is likely to be the Secretary, Manager or other Club Official.
- The club representative should seek to identify the person/people responsible and take appropriate action while the match continues in order to stop the abuse.
- If, within an amount of time agreed by the match referee to the club representative, the problem continues, the referee may remove the players from the field and suspend the match, allowing the club representative a further opportunity to deal with the problem.
- If in the opinion of the match referee the matter cannot be dealt with satisfactorily and the welfare of any participants, in terms of the threat of continued abuse, remains at risk, the match referee should consider abandoning the match.
- Any decision to suspend or abandon a match should be taken solely by the match referee after full consultation where deemed appropriate with both team managers and captains.

Whilst this protocol is aimed at incidents of discriminatory abuse by spectators, the match referee must report all incidents bought to their attention to the relevant County Football Association as an extraordinary incident even if they themselves did not hear the abuse.

Any person that witnesses any form of discriminatory abuse should report the matter on match days immediately to the match referee and submit a follow up report to the local County Football Association. If a person does not feel comfortable in reporting the matter to the County FA they should report the matter to kick it out to info@kickitout.org or through the Kick it Out app.