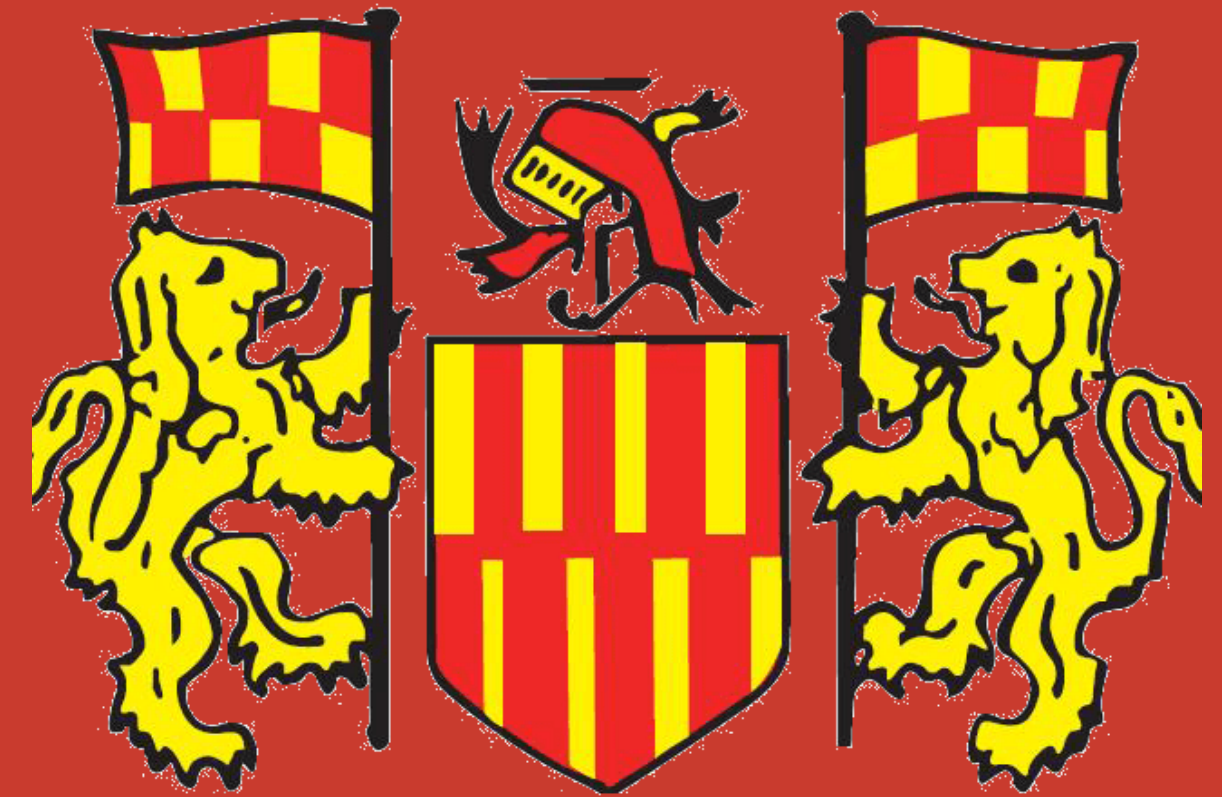


Reporting Discipline

**A Support Guide for
Match Officials**

2023-24 Season

**NORTHUMBERLAND
FOOTBALL
ASSOCIATION
LIMITED**



Key Contacts



Matt Sowerby
Referee Development Officer
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Matt is your go-to person for refereeing support, guidance and education.



Adam Williamson
Discipline Officer
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Adam is responsible for processing all cards and for investigating misconduct cases and taking action to deal with them.



Gill Upperton
Designated Safeguarding Officer
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Gill is available to offer support to parents/guardians and U118 Referees and to escalate matters that become welfare issues.



Introduction

This document is designed to outline to Referees how to report discipline from matches to the County FA as well as to provide guidance around how to deal with incidents during and after.

There will be three things that you will report as a Referee:

- 1) Yellow Cards (Cautions)
- 2) Red Cards (Standard Charges)
- 3) Misconduct Reports (Extraordinary Reports)



Yellow Cards (Cautions)

The following table outlines what type of yellow cards you can issue during and report after matches. Each card type has a unique charge code beginning with 'C':

C1 - Unsporting Behaviour (select one: aggressive attitude, simulation, dangerous play, foul tackle, goal celebration, handball, reckless play, pushing or pulling an opponent, tripping, other behaviour)

C2 – Dissent by Word or Action

C2 – Sin Bin for Dissent by Word or Action

C3 - Persistently infringing the laws of the game

C4 - Delays the restart of play

C5 - Fails to respect the required distance at a restart

C6 - Enters or re-enters the field of play without the referee's permission

C7 - Deliberately leaves the field of play without the referee's permission



Non-Player Cautions

As a Referee you also have the authority to caution non-playing Participants such as coaches, managers and Club officials.

When reporting these, each type of non-playing Caution has a unique charge code starting with 'SOW'. The types of non-playing cautions you can issue are detailed below:



SOW01 – Clearly/persistently not respecting the confines of the technical area

SOW02 – Delaying the restart of play

SOW03 – Deliberately entering the technical area of the opposing team

SOW04 – Dissent by word or action

SOW05 – Entering the referee review area

SOW06 – Excessively showing the TV signal for a 'VAR' review

SOW07 – Excessively/persistently gesturing for a red/yellow card

SOW08 – Gestures which show clear lack of respect for Match Officials (e.g. sarcastic clapping)

SOW09 – Gesturing or acting in a provocative manner or inflammatory manner

SOW10 – Persistent or unacceptable behaviour (including repeated warnings)

SOW11 – Showing a lack of respect for the game

SOW12 – Throwing/kicking drinks bottles or other objects

SOW13 - Other



Red Cards (Standard Charges)

The following table outlines what type of red cards you can issue during and report after matches. Each card type has a unique charge code beginning with 'S':

S1 – Serious Foul Play

S2 – Violent Conduct (select one: head to head, elbowing, kicking, stamping, striking, biting, other)

S3 – Spits at an opponent or any other person

S4 – Denies the opponent an obvious goal scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball

S5 – Denies an obvious goal scoring opportunity to an opponent moving towards the goal by an action punishable by a free kick or penalty

S6 – Use of offensive, insulting or abusive language

S7 – Receives 2 yellow cards in the same match



Non-Player Red Cards

As a Referee you also have the authority to send-off a non-playing Participant such as a manager, coach or Club official. You also have the authority to dismiss any other individual, such as a spectator, from the ground or vicinity of the area where the match is taking place.

If you dismiss/send-off any individual who is not a player, you must report this as a **Misconduct report** (Extraordinary report) so that the County FA can investigate the matter further and determine whether any disciplinary action needs to be issued against that individual or Club.



When should cards be submitted by?


You should try to ensure that all red and yellow cards and misconduct reports are submitted no later than 2 days following the date of the game where the cards were shown or the misconduct took place.

We need the information around the red and yellow cards as soon as possible because Clubs do have a right to appeal certain cards on the grounds of either Wrongful Dismissal or Mistaken Identity and there is only a short window open for them to be able to appeal by. Therefore we need the information as soon as possible.

It is advised therefore that you report your cards and write and send your reports to us at the earliest opportunity following the game whilst the matters of the game are still fresh in the mind.



What happens if cards and misconduct are not reported?



We appreciate that there may be valid administrative (such as issues with the Whole Game System) or personal reasons as to why cards or misconduct reports are not submitted to us when we would expect them to be submitted by. If for any reason you are having any difficulties in reporting anything following a match then please get in touch. We also appreciate that you may not report something as you genuinely did not witness something or did not deem something to be worthy of writing a report. We still may sometimes be in contact just to ask questions about the match as we sometimes receive complaints from players, coaches and Clubs so we often need the comments of the Match Official.

If cards or misconduct reports (where it is established that the Match Official was aware of the alleged misconduct or had matters reported to them by witnesses at the game) are deliberately not submitted or there is no valid reason as to why they have not been submitted, then Northumberland FA may issue the Match Official with a formal charge of misconduct for failure to report misconduct which, if found proven, may result in a review of that Match Official's registration as it is the duty of a Match Official to ensure that all discipline is reported to the County FA.



Misconduct Report (Extraordinary Report)

Misconduct is anything in addition to offences dealt with through the showing of a red or yellow card. For example, if you showed a player a red card for violent conduct and before they left the pitch they swore at you, you would report the red card for violent conduct and then write a Misconduct report detailing the language used. The player would receive an automatic suspension for the violent conduct and then the County FA would raise additional action in relation to the language used.

You can report incidents that you did not see/hear but that are reported to you by others that you think the County FA should be made aware of.



How to write a good report

Things to include in a good report are as follows:

- 1) Details of the match such as the date of the game and the names of the teams involved
- 2) A breakdown of your observations from the game such as the tone of the game
- 3) Your observations on spectator behaviour from each team and if you had to address anything with them
- 4) Details of any action you had to take during or after the game to address poor behaviour from players
- 5) Details of any action you had to take during or after the game to address poor behaviour from coaches/managers
- 6) Anything at all that would be classed as poor behaviour from anyone in addition to what they did to receive a red card
- 7) Your observations on anything you may have witnessed after the game (such as in the car park) that was poor behaviour
- 8) Details of any poor behaviour reported to you from players or managers/coaches that you did not yourself witness or hear



9) The names of any Assistant Match Officials who could corroborate with what you have said in your report

10) The names of any witnesses from any of the teams who could also corroborate what you have said in your report.

Tips for writing a good report are as follows:

1) Stick to the **facts** - unless the offence committed has been against yourself, do not include any opinions as this may damage the integrity of your report and your independence as a Match Official.

2) Be as **detailed** as you can.

3) If you witnessed or heard any bad language used in addition to a red card offence then please state **specifically** what language was used so we can determine the severity of the language used.

4) If you cannot identify any individuals who have committed offences by their name, then please identify them by their shirt number and/or team name or a **description**. We would then ask the team to identify them by name.

5) Write the report as **quickly** as possible following the game whilst the matters are still fresh in your mind. We would need your report by 2 days following the date of the game so that we can conduct an efficient investigation as soon as possible after.



How to report Discipline to the County FA

You can report your yellow and red cards and misconduct reports to Northumberland FA via the following methods:

- 1) Complete and submit discipline forms via your refereeing Whole Game System portal.
- 2) Download, completing and returning a paper submission form found [here](#).

If you submit a paper form, it must be emailed to Discipline@NorthumberlandFA.com.



Reporting Discipline through the Whole Game System



You can login to your Whole Game portal via clicking on the following:

[Whole Game System](#)

You will need your FAN and password to enter the Whole Game System. If you are having any login issues, please speak with our Referee Development Officer Matt Sowerby.

The Match Official's manual to the Whole Game System can be accessed here:


[Whole Game System guide](#)

This will walk you through how to report cards and misconduct via your Whole Game System portal.

If you have any difficulties using the Whole Game System, please get in touch or submit your discipline via the paper document.

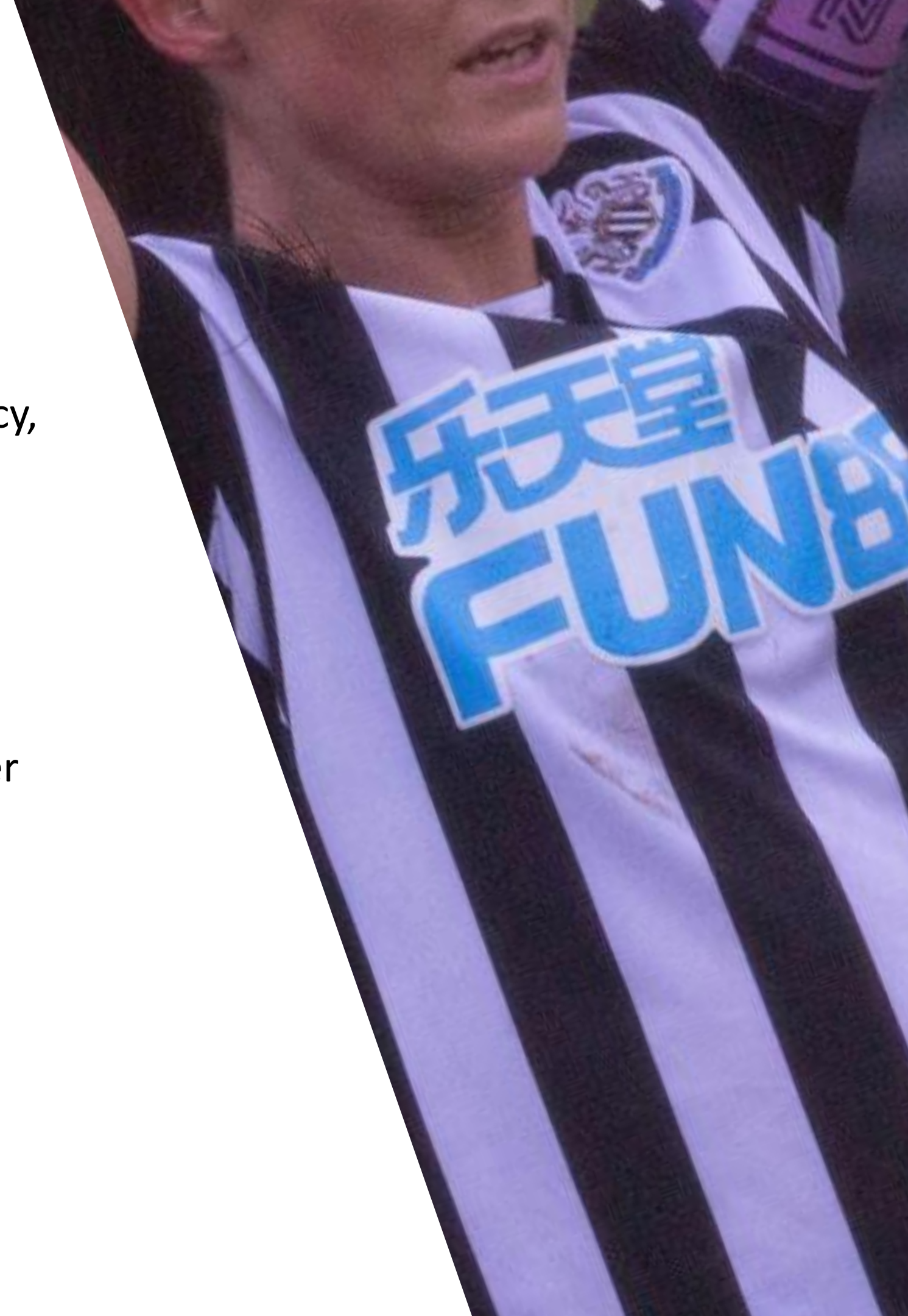


Abandoned matches



Whenever a match is abandoned, the Match Official, as a matter of urgency, should submit a misconduct report either through their Whole Game System or through completing the paper form so that Northumberland FA can begin an investigation as soon as possible.

In that report the Match Official should state exactly who's decision it was for the match to be abandoned (whether it was theirs, or a coach/manager or official from one of the teams) and details of the misconduct or event that took place that caused the match to be abandoned.



Friendly matches

All friendlies should be sanctioned by Northumberland FA and the Match Official should gain the confirmation from the home team that the friendly has been sanctioned before the match begins. The match must not take place if it has not been sanctioned.

Even for friendly matches, the Match Official should still report all red and yellow cards and matters of misconduct.



Offences against Match Officials

Unfortunately, there may come a time where an offence is committed against a Match Official, such as:

- 1) Abusive language/behaviour
- 2) Threatening language/behaviour
- 3) Physical contact or attempted physical contact
- 4) assault or attempted assault.

Where an offence is committed against a Match Official on the field of play, the Match Official may deal with the offence through the showing of a red card.

Where the Match Official deems it appropriate for their safety and for the safety of all involved in the match, they may, at their discretion, choose to abandon the match.



The Match Official should complete a misconduct report and submit this to Northumberland FA. The report must contain the following:

- 1) Details of the offence committed: for any language used specify what specific language was used; for any physical or violent contact please specify what motion, direction and force was used by the offender and any level of injury caused.
- 2) Confirmation of the identity of the offender including their name and what team they were playing for.
- 3) Confirmation of any action taken by the Match Official to address this, including confirming if any cards were shown as a result of the offence, if a warning was given or if the match was abandoned.
- 4) Details of any further incidents following the offence against the Match Official that the County FA should be made aware of so that they can be addressed.



If you are ever subject to any offence then please report these to Northumberland FA as soon as possible after the game so that we can ensure that the necessary further disciplinary action is taken.

If you are ever the victim of assault at a match then we encourage that as well as reporting the matter to us, you report the matter to the Police. We would deal with the matter from a footballing point of view, the Police would handle it from a criminal point of view.

Our Referee Development Officer is Matt Sowerby and he is available at Matt.Sowerby@NorthumberlandFA.com. If you are ever the victim of an offence and need further refereeing support or guidance then do not hesitate to reach out to Matt.



Procedures for when discriminatory language is witnessed or reported

During games that you referee, you may hear language used by players towards each other or to yourself, or from spectators, that is discriminatory. Moreover, whilst you may not yourself hear this language being used, you may receive reports from players or managers/coaches that discriminatory language has been used.

Discriminatory language may be defined as language that is aggravated by a protected characteristic such as the following: Ethnic Origin, Colour, Race, Nationality, Faith, Gender, Gender Reassignment, Sexual Orientation or Disability.

The following procedures outline what you as a Match Official should do whenever you hear discriminatory language or if it is reported to you by a Participant in a match that you are refereeing:



Where the Match Official hears discriminatory language

- In any case, where a Match Official hears discriminatory language from a player and can identify the offender, they must issue a red card for S6 (Using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures) and report the card to the County FA through the Whole Game System. The Match Official must also report the matter as an extraordinary report through the Whole Game System or in an email to the County FA Discipline Officer.
- In the extraordinary report, the Match Official must name the player that was issued with the red card, must state what team they played for, what language they used that resulted in the red card, and what action was taken by the Match Official (i.e. a red card was shown).
- Where discriminatory language is used by a non-player (such as a manager/coach or spectator), the Match Official is entitled to eject that non-player from the match. The Match Official should then send an extraordinary report to the County FA for further investigation.



Where the Match Official does not witness discriminatory language but it is reported to them – during the match duties

- 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 (could be a player or a spectator belonging to their club) 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.
- All abandonments should be reported by the Match Official in an extraordinary report to the County FA for further investigation. In that report the Match Official should identify alleged offender (by name or their shirt number if their name is not known), their team, the language alleged to have been used and what action had been taken by the Match Official to address this.
- Where the Match Official has to go through any of these procedures during a game, they must send an extraordinary report to the County FA for further investigation.



What if a team alleged to have been the victim of discriminatory language decide to walk off the pitch?

- The Match Official should report in an extraordinary report to the County FA all instances where individuals from Clubs fail to follow the above procedure or instructions from the Match Official.
- Where a team (or individuals from a team such as Managers) feel as though they have been the victims of discriminatory language/behaviour and take the decision to walk off the pitch without the consent or instruction of the Match Official, the Match Official should again report this in an extraordinary report to the County FA for further investigation.



Match Officials under the age of 18: A note to parents and carers

If you are a parent or guardian of an U18 Match Official, we completely appreciate that reporting cards or misconduct (especially after a negative match or a match where the Match Official has been subject themselves to an offence) will be a stressful experience for the Match Official and for yourself.

If your son or daughter who refereed the game makes you aware that they had a negative experience during their game or if you witnessed the negative game yourself, we would ask that you encourage them to write a report as soon as possible. Of course feel free to sit with them to help them construct the report. If you witness any misconduct at games yourself, we would also encourage that you too write and submit a report to Discipline@NorthumberlandFA.com.

If you need any support at all during the report writing process please feel free to contact any of the 3 Northumberland FA Officers shown at the start of this document.



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