

Last updated: 29 March 2010

**Re: International Tickets, the Black Market and Sanctions.**

Whilst this letter is being addressed to you, would you please ensure a copy of it is sent to whomsoever else is relevant within your club, in particular your board/ committee/ ticket officer.

As you know the Rugby Football Union is anxious that its tickets for Twickenham should reach the hands of the genuine supporters and sponsors of the game. As a result, the RFU has stepped up its policing of the black market and this has led to a number of clubs, schools and others whose tickets have ended up on the black market being sanctioned. The current guideline sanctions which set out the range of sanctions being imposed are attached.

It has become apparent that a number of clubs do take steps to minimise the risk of tickets ending up on the black market, whereas others take few or no steps. In light of this, we thought it appropriate to write with some explanations and it is hoped assistance in relation to international tickets.

Despite the best efforts of the Union there are still a considerable number of tickets which are being sold for profit into the black market, be it unofficial hospitality companies or ticket touts. I attach to this letter a note which I hope is of assistance to you in complying with the RFU ticket conditions, suggested wording for your ticket application form, a list of official hospitality providers who are authorised to purchase tickets and a non-exhaustive list of those to whom you should not sell tickets.

A number of clubs have asked about the current returns policy. For Grade A matches, defined as 6 Nations matches or matches against South Africa, New Zealand and Australia (SANZAR), the Ticket Office will accept tickets returned from a Club and issue a refund provided the tickets are returned by the date reasonably specified by the RFU to enable the tickets to be reissued. The Ticket Office will accept tickets returned from individuals to whom the Club has issued the tickets and issue a refund provided they are returned at any time up to 60 minutes before kick-off (and exclusively on behalf of the individual concerned and not on behalf of the Club or any other person, firm, company or rugby body). For Grade A matches therefore, if a member finds that he has a spare ticket on the day of the match then it should not be resold at the ground but can be returned at least 60 minutes before kick-off to the Ticket Office which is situated in the South East corner of the stadium, where a refund less an administration charge of £5 per ticket will be issued after the match to the Club to which the ticket was issued.

If you need any assistance in relation to the RFU ticket terms or any other query in relation to tickets please address them in writing to Patricia Murphy at the Ticket Office – [tickets@rfu.com](mailto:tickets@rfu.com).

Yours Sincerely

**Patricia Murphy**  
**Ticket Office Manager**

## **RFU TICKETS-GUIDANCE NOTE**

Unfortunately there continues to be some confusion as to what organisations can do with their tickets and in addition mistakes are being made.

The RFU has undertaken, and will continue to undertake, a policing operation which uncovers instances of black market activity. The steps taken include:

- purchasing tickets for unofficial hospitality and the inspection of tickets within hospitality venues;
- the use of test purchasing in the weeks before and on the day of internationals;
- monitoring eBay and other internet auction sites; and
- sound and video surveillance of the activities in and around Twickenham on match day.

If this policing operation uncovers a breach of the ticket conditions, the organisation that was allocated the ticket concerned will be asked for an explanation and the matter may be referred to the Ticket Sub-Committee, which is a sub-committee of the Management Board. The Ticket Sub-Committee will consider the facts of each case including the culpability of the organisation concerned and any other mitigating circumstances and decide on the appropriate sanction. Sanctions have been imposed which have resulted in the reduction for a period of time of all or part of a ticket allocation.

It has become apparent when considering individual cases that tickets have ended up on the black market because of errors, lack of knowledge and in particular because ticket holders have been let down by others (sometimes innocently).

A common reason why tickets end up on the black market is that someone is let down at the last minute and then sells the ticket near the stadium at face value or even gives the ticket away free of charge to avoid it going to waste to someone they believe is "a genuine fan". This apparently genuine fan however often turns out to be no more than a "runner" for a ticket tout. Many clubs are unaware of how the touts operate on match day. It is no longer just a man on the corner of the street asking if people want to buy or sell tickets. They use runners dressed in rugby shirts who look like genuine fans asking for just 1 or 2 spare tickets. These runners appear in pubs where rugby fans are known to congregate before the game, on the way to the stadium and even in the stadium car parks. In some cases, we have even seen runners enter the ground with the person who has given them a ticket only to return outside the ground to resell the ticket at a premium.

Faced with this type of problem, we set out below a number of steps which clubs can take to minimise tickets ending up on the black market. Whilst the ticket conditions impose an absolute liability on clubs (and others) to ensure that the tickets do not reach the black market, the steps a club itself takes to prevent this are always considered by the Ticket Sub-Committee.

It is recommended that all those who receive an allocation of tickets:

1. Keep a full record of to whom they are issued and retain those records for at least 12 months as they may well be asked for by RFU.
2. Advise in writing all recipients of Tickets that tickets are transferred subject to the RFU ticket terms and conditions (see the form of wording below).
3. Allocate tickets only to club members and sponsors and except for sponsors and other special circumstances, only allocate a single ticket or a pair of tickets to a member. In the event that you do allocate more than two tickets to a member ensure you are aware as to who will be using the tickets to attend the match.

4. Make the RFU ticket terms and conditions available on request and ensure that ticket recipients understand them.
5. Tell members that the tickets are for their personal use and should only be used by the member together with their family, friend or colleague and specifically warn members about not giving or selling spare tickets on match days to “genuine fans”.
6. Consider asking the ticket recipients to sign a declaration confirming that the tickets are for their personal use only. This could form part of your ticket application form.
7. Warn members that if their tickets end up on the black market they will not be allowed to receive international tickets for a period of time and the club may be penalised by a loss of allocation. In addition, in particularly serious cases you may want to consider suspending the member from the club.
8. Make sure you are selling tickets to genuine club sponsors, that there is a proper agreement, that the sponsor is not a “restricted person” as defined by the ticket conditions and that the sponsorship agreement is not in effect a “ticket sale agreement”. Please see the [RFU precedent Sponsorship Agreement](#), which we advise is used by all clubs.
9. Ask members to retain the tickets they were allocated for a month after the match.

If you have any query about the ticket conditions or as to what you can do with the tickets, please seek advice from Patricia Murphy at the RFU ([tickets@rfu.com](mailto:tickets@rfu.com)). If you find out or suspect that any person to whom you have issued tickets has or may have parted with them, make immediate enquiries, tell the RFU immediately and if you are satisfied there has been any breach of the ticket conditions TAKE ACTION yourself.

It is suggested that on any ticket application form or when you send out tickets you use wording such as:

*"All tickets ordered and supplied are subject to the RFU ticket terms and conditions a copy of which is available on request.*

*In particular, no member may sell or dispose of their tickets to anyone if they are not required for the member's personal use. They should be returned to (the Club, me). If you are allocated two (or more) tickets the Club may want to know who will be accompanying you or accompanied you to the game and request back the tickets after the match.*

*If any of the Club tickets are discovered on the black market the RFU may sanction the Club which may lead to a loss of allocation.*

*If you have any query as to what you are entitled to do with the ticket(s) issued to you please speak to Mr (name Tel No )."*

Finally, please note that only the following Official Hospitality Providers **are permitted** to purchase RFU tickets from you:

1. Twickenham Experience Limited
2. Mike Burton Group Limited
3. Events International Limited
4. Eventmasters Limited
5. National Sporting Club Limited
6. Lucid Direct
7. Tigers Events Limited

The following is a non-exhaustive list of organisations that are **not authorised** to purchase the RFU's tickets:

1. Sportingclass
2. VU Limited
3. Pall Mall
4. Racing and Ball Hospitality Ltd
5. Watchfromabox.com
6. Galleria Box Office Ltd
7. 19th Hole events
8. Sportmans Choice Limited
9. UK Ticket Brokers
10. Event Co
11. Britannia Events
12. Grandslam Events
13. Twickenham Hospitality
14. 4 U Hospitality
15. Front Row Promotions
16. Winning Rugby.com
17. Paragon Sports Management
18. ATM Corporate Events
19. WF Entertainment
20. Ticketstosee.com
21. International Sport
22. No. 1 Events Ltd
23. Executive Club Sports Limited.

In addition, the RFU is aware of two individuals who have joined a number of clubs in order to get access to tickets and those tickets have found themselves on the black market. These are Mr Jim Eadie and Mr AJ Law.

As the official hospitality licensed operators can (with the RFU's consent) use sub-agents to sell packages, the simplest guide as to whether hospitality is official or not is often the facility in which it is being offered as each licensed operator is licensed to operate at a named facility.

The following lists show which facilities are official and which are unofficial under the new agreements. If you are in any doubt about whether a package you are being offered is official, please contact Twickenham Experience on 020 8744 9997 or email [twickenhamexperience@rfu.com](mailto:twickenhamexperience@rfu.com).

#### **Official Hospitality Venues:**

##### **Within the grounds**

1. Wakefield's
2. Obolensky's
3. St George's
4. Six Nation's Suite
5. South Stand Facilities (including The Rose Suite)
6. The Players' Lounge

##### **Outside the grounds**

1. Kneller Hall
2. The Orchard Enclosure
3. Chase Bridge
4. Cardinal Vaughan
5. Richmond College
6. Cole Court

**Unofficial Hospitality Venues:**

1. Twickenham Stoop
2. Syon House