

Letter From the Disciplinary Committee Season 2023-24

To all players, coaches, team managers, parents, and spectators

We are sure that like the disciplinary committee you are all looking forward to the new season and the World Cup. Hopefully the World cup games will be exciting and draw more players and spectators to the game.

In recent years the Club's disciplinary record has been excellent, and we hope this continues.

However, at the start of the season there are certain areas that we wish to highlight.

Please be aware:

TACKLE HEIGHT LAW CHANGE

At all levels of the community game referees will be enforcing the new tackle height law. Players must not **"tackle an opponent above the base of the sternum"** and this includes tackles which start below the sternum but slide upwards. This is to avoid the risk of head-to-head contact.

All teams across the club senior, junior and minis are being trained to tackle targeting the belly or thighs. However, it remains the responsibility of the tackling player to ensure the tackle is made correctly and within the laws of the game.

Ball carrier

To enable a fair tackle to be made and minimise the risk of head-to-head contact **ball carriers must not lower their body height or dip down just before contact with an opponent and their shoulder and head must be above the hips**. In old money, dropping the shoulder and driving low will be penalised.

Referee Interpretation

We are sure that the new Tackle Height law will potentially give rise to some issues of interpretation by referees as they adapt to these changes. **However, it is imperative that at all times the referee's decision is respected and accepted.**

ABUSE OF MATCH OFFICIALS




This remains a key focus across all levels of the game and abuse of match officials will be dealt with harshly. The verbal and physical abuse of officials can lead to bans from 6 weeks to life. This applies to players, coaches, team managers, parents, and spectators.

It is essential that at all times we uphold the RFU Core Values: **Teamwork, Respect, Enjoyment, Discipline and Sportsmanship.**

Abuse of referees whether on the pitch or from the side lines will not be tolerated by the RFU nor by RAMS RFC. We would like to remind you that at the levels at which we play none of the referees are full-time professionals. This applies to referees at any match from our 1st XV to the minis. Without referees there would be no game.

Old Bath Road, Sonning, Reading, Berkshire RG4 6TQ
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Match Officials have been asked to take a firmer position with players, coaches, team managers as well as supporters/spectators or parents, indeed anyone who disrespects or abuses any Match Official whether verbally or physically. The Club's disciplinary committee will support the RFU in dealing with cases of abuse.

APPROACHING MATCH OFFICIALS

No person (other than the Match Officials' team or Match Officials' coach) should approach the Match Officials at any time during the half-time interval nor in the period **up to 30 minutes** after the match to discuss any issue arising from the match nor should any person enter the referee's changing room unless, in either case, invited to do so by the referee.

ENTERING FIELD OF PLAY

NO spectator, parent, coach, substitute, or physio should enter the field of play unless given permission by the referee. This is particularly relevant to minis and juniors when individuals can become "emotionally involved." It is important that coaches and team managers de-escalate potential situations quickly

PLAYER MANAGEMENT – All Levels from 1st XV to Minis

Should it become obvious that a player has "lost their head" or "lost personal control" it is better to make a substitution rather than risk a Red card. All coaches, team managers and captains should be aware of this.

RED CARD

If a player is sent off coaches, team captains or managers should ensure that the player apologises to both the referee and the opposition (either their captain and/or the opposition player involved). Players sent off should not get involved in a discussion with the referee no matter how aggrieved they feel.

An apology normally reduces any sanction that is applied for the sending off offence. All red cards must be reported immediately after the game to the Disciplinary Committee Chairman, Mike Gorman and the Club Secretary.

THE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE

The committee, which comprises former players, is appointed to uphold both the letter and spirit of the Laws of Rugby. As a committee we are committed to supporting and advising anyone who needs to appear before the RFU, Berkshire or Rams disciplinary committees.

We would like to wish all players, coaches, team managers, parents, and spectators an enjoyable and successful season.

Kind regards

Mike Ian Chris Bill

Mike Gorman, Ian Duncan, Chris Carter (Rams Disciplinary committee) with legal advice courtesy of Bill Gornall-King




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