

## Michael Priestley

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Referees Union

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To:

**SOCIETY SECRETARIES - for immediate distribution**

**GAME VALUES - ZERO TOLERANCE APPROACH TO PLAYER APPEALING / QUESTIONING DECISIONS / GENERAL BACKCHAT**

At Premiership and Championship level, a concerted effort has been made over the last 2 years to enforce Game Values and the Rugby Core Values (Teamwork, Respect, Enjoyment, Discipline and Sportsmanship). Core Values that should translate in to Game Values and are what we hold as setting our game apart from others.

Unfortunately, at levels below the elite end of the game, a dramatic increase has been seen in players appealing (throwing arms in the air to seek a decision / generally backchatting or challenging and questioning a Match Official when a decision has been made. It is now time to enforce a **ZERO TOLERANCE** approach to this activity and we ask that you ensure that this important message is relayed to all of your Match Officials. These principles should be applied with immediate effect. The approach to stop this type of behaviour will also include the Coaching Pillar.

Please see the link below to clips from a National League game (refereed by a Match Official with Premiership experience) to underpin the approach that we wish to be taken at all levels of the game.

Please copy and paste the link in to your browser for the clips

<https://we.tl/we.tl/t-XLV21MOm2B>

Clip 1, is of particular interest as you can see a player 'waiving arms' on 2 occasions during the first couple of minutes of the match.

I would encourage you to listen to the Referee communication in all 3 clips

Please direct your Match Officials to engage Captains (and where possible Coaches) before a game as part of the pre match brief and make it completely clear that they should encourage players to avoid;

- Waiving arms during live play – appealing
- Calling for decisions 'e.g. holding on'
- Giving the referee backchat following a decision

## **PROCESS TO FOLLOW**

The Referees process to be applied at all levels is simple;

1st occasion: a player will be spoken to, this could be during 'Live Play' as in Clip 1,

2nd occasion: the captain will be warned',

3rd occasion: will see a team penalised.

If the incident is serious enough, the player may be penalized on the first occasion.

If this does not solve the matter then clearly sanctions can be escalated accordingly.

Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact either:

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*Michael Priestley*