

GENERAL INFORMATION

Lead Area:	RUGBY SERVICES
Lead Procedure Title:	MATCH OFFICIAL DISSENT AND ABUSE
Date last modified:	April 2024

SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

The purpose of this document is to outline South Australia Rugby Union Referees Association's (SARURA) and Rugby Union South Australia's (RUSA) expectations of Members and Team Supporters, and the processes in relation to referee dissent or abuse.

We are all committed to providing an environment safe for all persons involved in rugby, which is free from harassment and abuse, and promotes respect, positive behaviour and rugby values.

RUSA members also have a responsibility to ensure there is a safe environment for players and match officials. We must ensure any incidents of dissent or abuse are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- World Rugby Laws (as it applies to players and those within the playing enclosure)
- Rugby Australia Code of Conduct (as it applies to all people involved in rugby, including spectators)
- RUSA Ground Marshal policy

DEFINITIONS OF DISSENT AND ABUSE

Dissent

can be described as the *repeated or continual questioning or disputing of decisions, including showing contempt for decisions of match officials.*

There will be "low tolerance" for dissent towards a match official.

Abuse

can be described as *behaviour which has the effect of offending, humiliating or intimidating, through, but not limited to insulting, rude, vulgar, offensive, disparaging, belittling, derogatory or disrespectful behaviour or language.*

There will be "zero tolerance" for abuse towards a match official

1. Managing Dissent and Abuse from players/participants in the match

The following management and process applies for dealing with players during the match for dissent or abuse towards a match official and should be read in conjunction with Rugby Australia's Match Official Abuse Directive available from <https://australia.rugby/about/codes-and-policies/all-codes-and-policies>

STEP	DESCRIPTION OF ACTION	RESPONSIBLE
1	<p>Dissent</p> <p>Noting a "low tolerance" approach for dissent, dissent should be managed through the following escalation process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Speak to the Captain for them to manage and deal with the player (if this does not work, escalate) 2. Penalty Kick (possibly including additional sanction to move penalty 10m forward) 3. Yellow Card 4. Red Card <p>Depending on the level or severity of dissent, a match official can directly apply any sanction at any time or instance of dissent.</p>	Referee / Match Officials

* This procedure has the effect of a Rule under the Competition Rules issued by the Union and terms used in this procedure and defined in the Competition Rules have the same meaning in this procedure and the rule of interpretation set out in the Competition Rules also apply to this procedure.

2	<p>Abuse</p> <p>Noting a “zero tolerance” approach, acts of Match Official Abuse should result in a send-off (red card) sanction.</p>	Referee / Match Officials
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2. Managing Dissent and Abuse from Non-Players

The following management and process applies for dealing with dissent or abuse towards a match official by non-players e.g. Team Officials, Club Members, and Spectators.

NOTE – Match Official dissent or abuse could be direct (Match Official receives directly) or indirect (e.g. family member of Match Official receives abuse) – both are equally inappropriate and will be managed in the same process as below.

STEP	DESCRIPTION OF ACTION	RESPONSIBLE
1	<p>Ground Marshal Responsibility</p> <p>Referring to the RUSA Ground Marshal policy, the Ground Marshal for each team (required for every match) is responsible for monitoring, identifying and managing instances of inappropriate behaviour towards Match Officials, without Match Officials needing to be involved in off-field activity.</p> <p>Ground Marshals are also responsible for reporting actions they have been required to take during a match, in particular for serious matters (e.g. repeated poor behaviour, removal of person from grounds, escalating situation after trying to cease behaviour).</p> <p>https://australia.rugby/about/codes-and-policies/reporting-a-concern</p>	Ground Marshals
2	<p>During a Match</p> <p>If during a match, behaviour from non-players is having an impact on Match Officials (in terms of Dissent or Abuse), then:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Referee call ‘time-off’, 2. Report the incident to the Ground Marshal/s, including (where possible): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Identify the alleged perpetrator b) Specifically describe the alleged offensive behaviour c) Describe immediate outcome the referee would prefer to be satisfied the situation has been handled. 3. Referee record the specifics of the incident on Scorecard (including what was heard, who it was reported to, and identity of perpetrator if possible) 4. When the Referee is satisfied the situation has been handled, blow ‘time-on’. 	Referee / Ground Marshal
3	<p>Before or after the match</p> <p>Speak to the Ground Marshal and request they deal with the offender / situation.</p> <p>Where appropriate attempt to obtain any information to identify the person.</p> <p>Record the specifics of the incident on Scorecard (including what was heard, who it was reported to, and identity of perpetrator if possible)</p>	Referee / Ground Marshal
4	<p>If either of 2.2 or 2.3 occur, Match Officials and Ground Marshals must report the incident to RUSA via their Scorecard Submission, or via the Rugby Australia website through “Report a Concern” before midday on the next business day following the alleged incident https://australia.rugby/about/codes-and-policies/reporting-a-concern</p>	Match Officials / Ground Marshals / RUSA
5	<p>The Three Strike Policy in Community Rugby is designed to promote a positive and respectful environment within the sport. Its primary goal is to eliminate poor or abusive behaviour, especially targeting match officials, players, coaches, and spectators, that undermines the spirit of the game. The policy holds clubs accountable for the conduct of their members and supporters both on and off the field.</p> <p>The determination of if/when to apply the Three Strike Policy is at the absolute discretion of the Member Union, or their delegate.</p>	RUSA

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OTHER INFORMATION

Members should be mindful that Judicial and Conduct Committees can only deal with an incident of match official abuse if it is reported in a timely and appropriate manner.

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