



Tomlin Ground,
Angley Road,
Cranbrook,
Kent TN17 2PN
Tel: 01580 712777
Email: info@cranbrooksportsclub.co.uk
www.cranbrooksportsclub.co.uk

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Dear All Players, Parents and Spectators

Match Official Abuse & Poor Touchline Behaviour

Following an email received from Kent RFU regarding Match Official Abuse (MOA) and poor touchline behaviour, the club feels this is an appropriate time to write to the *whole* club as a reminder that the club has a zero-tolerance policy on any Match Official Abuse, or poor touchline behaviour.

MOA is becoming more prevalent within the game, at all age groups and levels, and only a month into the 24/25 season, there have already been at least two incidents within Kent of referees being physically and verbally abused- this is wholly unacceptable and simply cannot continue. During 2023-24 season, the Kent Adult Discipline Panel dealt with 157 cases, representing a 67% increase on 2022-23. Of these, almost half related either to MOA or conduct prejudicial to the interests of the game, including those MOA cases that were passed from the Age Grade to the Adult Panel for consideration.

Kent have reminded clubs that any such sanctions that may be imposed for proven breaches may not be restricted to a particular section or age group. Discipline is regarded as a 'whole club' issue. Therefore, sanctions may include financial penalties, docking of 1st XV points, suspension of coaches and expulsion from competitions, **even if the proven offence(s) was perpetrated by a club's youth/minis section.**

I am therefore bringing this situation to the whole club's attention, including all officials, players, volunteers and spectators (be it parents/guardians or others) and to remind everyone of the good behaviour and respect directed at match officials, and each other, that is expected, and which is the very essence of the game we love.

I trust that we all continue to enjoy playing, supporting and spectating the game, at all ages and levels, and that the club will not become part of the above statistics. I reiterate that any club member or associate found to be guilty of MOA or poor touchline behaviour will no longer be welcome at CRFC.

See you all on the touchline very soon!

Best wishes

Michelle Forknall
Cranbrook RFC Chair



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