



6th January 2020

Ref: Respect the Referee

Dear All Parents, Volunteers, Coaches and players,

Happy New Year!

As we start the new year, I am pleased that the Mini's and Juniors have had some good successes to date. It is great to see the level of commitment from all involved in our community club. However, although we have been celebrating our successes the executive committee have also had to deal with several issues where referees have been verbally abused during matches. Having been involved in the club for the last 40 years as a player and coach the mantra has always been to respect the decision of the referee. We have several challenges; and respecting the decisions of the referee and officials is one of them.

Rugby has always prided itself in the behaviors of players, coaches and spectators on refereeing decisions and it is consistent from the smallest u6 team through to the highest level of international rugby. The few incidents we have had to deal with in the past week has resulted in some of the victims of the abuse refusing to officiate our games in the future. This is very sad on a number of different levels.

1. All our officials are volunteers and they dedicate their spare time for the development and enjoyment of our rugby youth and juniors. The club relies on all volunteers which cements the culture of our club.
2. Many officials are or have been coaches to our teams and one of the most important roles they play in officiating a match is to coach the players during the match. Something which differentiates our game from other sports. So, their input during the match is important to develop our players.
3. The club supports the development of our officials to become qualified, as we do the coaches, with the individuals investing their own time to develop their skills for the benefit of the players in all age grade rugby.
4. Many of our officials have been long time members of the club and have seen an increase of such incidents over the last few years. Their decision to step back from officiating is regrettable for them personally and to the club

I would like to remind you that the RFU and Kent Rugby have a disciplinary process and sanctions for such behavior should they get a complaint from an official that has to deal with abuse this can result in banning teams from competitions to deducting league points from our 1st XV. The consequence of such behavior goes beyond a small remark of gesture during a match.

As a club we will not tolerate these behaviors and we will be starting a campaign in the coming months to eliminate verbal abuse of the officials and apply the sanctions that are available to us.

I thank you for your support and the hope you will join me and the rest of the club to ensure that we respect the referees and officials in all future matches.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Panteli

TWRUFC Junior Chair

