



DORSET & WILTS. RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

Treasurer
Alison Hunter

County President
Nigel Mattravers

General Secretary
Gerald Burden
8 Blackmore Chase
Wincanton
Somerset
BA9 9SD

Date: 22 September 2026

Subject: Immediate action required on touchline conduct

Dear Club Chairs and Honorary Secretaries,

On behalf of the D&W RFU Council, I am writing ahead of the new season about unacceptable touchline behaviour across our constituent body.

Most members uphold rugby's core values, but reports of verbal abuse towards match officials, players and opposition supporters are rising, particularly at Age Grade fixtures.

One club, one responsibility

Every section, from Under 6's to the 1st XV, represents one club. The conduct of parents and coaches reflects its culture as clearly as that of senior players.

Repeated incidents will not be treated as isolated. Poor discipline at youth level may signal wider failures in leadership, oversight and culture.

Potential sanctions

Where a club repeatedly fails to control touchline behaviour, the D&W RFU may use its full disciplinary remit.

Measures may include:

- **Disciplinary action:** hearings may result in fines, suspension of club officials, or league-points deductions for senior men's or women's flagship teams.
- **Grant suspension:** loss of access to D&W RFU financial support and facility grants.
- **Competition bans:** exclusion from D&W RFU Age Grade and senior competitions.
- **Touring restrictions:** consent may be withheld or withdrawn for any club team.

TEAMWORK | RESPECT | ENJOYMENT | DISCIPLINE | SPORTSMANSHIP

Dorset & Wilts. RFU Limited : a registered society under the
Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, no: 30484R
Registered Office: 8 Blackmore Chase Wincanton Somerset BA9 9SD



Action required now

Match officials, especially young and new officials, deserve a safe, respectful environment.

We cannot lose them to unacceptable touchline conduct.

Please act immediately:

- Brief safeguarding officers, coaches and parent representatives.
- Set clear standards for every club section.
- Address breaches promptly and support those enforcing standards.

Our shared goal

The Spirit of Rugby must be evident in conduct, not just displayed on a clubhouse wall. We would rather celebrate success than impose penalties.

Together, we can keep every touchline safe, respectful and welcoming.

Yours in Rugby,

Nigel Mattravers
President, Dorset & Wilts RFU