

Last season the response of the Clubs to my letter asking for support over incidents of referee abuse was most encouraging with the result that in the end of season analysis of offences, referee abuse in our County reflected very well in comparison with other Counties. Therefore I send sincere thanks to you and to your Club members.

Sadly there has been a disturbing increase in such offences this season. Already we have heard six cases of abuse of referees, which is in excess of 25% of all the cases reported to us. This is an unacceptable number. What is particularly worrying is that these incidents involve junior as well as senior rugby, players and non players and of greater concern, physical as well as verbal abuse. We are committed to supporting the RFU in their determination to eradicate this from our game and again I ask for your support.

I am asking you to bring this letter to the attention of all of your club members advising them that anyone found guilty of referee abuse can expect serious consequences. As Club chairman, we ask you to take a lead if such incidents are reported to you. Good humoured banter has always been part of our game but so has respect for the referee and there is a line which must not be crossed.

Please feel free to use this letter as you wish to get the message across. You can copy it to your committee, captains and coaches, pin it on your club notice board or even paste it on your club website.

I look forward to receiving your support and to obtaining an improving effect as was enjoyed last season.

Yours in Rugby

**Dai Scard
Chairman,
North Midlands Disciplinary Committee**