

MONMOUTH RFC CODES OF CONDUCT

Conduct Policy Statement

The Club endorses the principle of sports equality and actively supports, promotes and takes a committed approach to the following ethical core behavioural values in sport:

Fairness

Justice

Integrity

Respect

Equality

Everyone wanting to be involved with Rugby or other activities or functions taking place at the Club, whether as a player, volunteer, referee, coach, visitor, committee official or officer, will have a genuine and equal opportunity to participate to the full extent of their own abilities and ambitions, without regard to their age, sex, gender identity, disability, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, religion, race, ethnic origin, nationality, colour, socio-economic status or sexual orientation.

Everyone is assured of an environment within the Club in which their rights, dignity and individual worth are respected and that they are able to enjoy the Club and the sport of Rugby without the threat of intimidation, victimisation, harassment, verbal or physical abuse. All children, young persons and those adults, whose circumstances may render them vulnerable, shall also enjoy the care and protection of the Club's nominated Safe Guarding Officer.

Codes of Conduct

Membership of the Club will amount to acceptance of the Club's Constitution, Codes of Conduct and Rules and that of the WRU.

The Club expects high standards of courtesy and sportsmanship from its members and visitors and for an atmosphere of social tolerance to exist between all members, volunteers, visitors and Club officials. It is the responsibility of individual Members to ensure that they demonstrate courteous and sportsmanlike behaviour and adhere to the etiquette of Rugby whether they are playing for the Club, within the precincts of the Club and the greater Monmouth community and whilst representing the Club at other venues.

Kit Policy & Code

All members, players, coaches and officials of the Club ("Club Members") are requested to adhere to the following kit policy in order to ensure uniformity of the Club brand and professionalism and to protect the integrity of our contractual responsibilities to our sponsors.

All Club Members will wear the most current Club kit as distributed and directed by the Club from time to time and in accordance with the Club's sponsorship obligations. Club Members will refrain from wearing non regulation kit when representing or supporting the Club.

No Club Member, team or individual will produce its own kit in any capacity without the express written permission of the Club Management Committee.

Members may be asked to deliver old MRFC kit up from time to time for donation to charitable causes.

Code for Players

Players are required to adhere to the following specific WRU and club player codes of conduct please:

- A Player shall accept and observe the authority and decisions of referees, touch judges, match officials and all other rugby Disciplinary bodies, subject to IRB Regulation 17, and shall not use crude or abusive language or gestures towards referees, touch judges, other match officials or spectators.
- A player shall not abuse, threaten or intimidate a referee, touch judge or other match official, whether on or off the field of play.
- A Player shall not publish or cause to be published or make any public criticism of any match official or any other Coach, Team Manager, Club Official or any player, or employee of the Club or another club,

but he will have recourse to the complaints procedure of the WRU if directed via the Management Committee of the Club.

- A Player shall not publish or cause to be published criticism of the manner in which the Club or the WRU Disciplinary Panel handled or resolved any dispute or disciplinary matter arising from a breach of the Club or WRU Codes of Conduct, Bye Laws, Regulations or Laws of the Game.
- A Player shall not do anything which is likely to intimidate, offend, insult, humiliate or discriminate against any other person on the ground of their religion, race, colour or national or ethnic origin.
- A Player shall conduct himself at all times in an ethical and professional manner and shall observe the highest standards of integrity and fair dealing and shall not engage in any conduct or activity on or off the field that may impair public confidence in the honest and orderly conduct of a match.
- A Player shall not commit an anti-doping rule violation as defined in IRB Regulation 21.
- A Player shall promote the reputation of the game of Rugby Union and take all possible steps to prevent it being brought into disrepute.

Code for Young Rugby Players

Players are required to adhere to the following specific WRU and club player codes of conduct please:

- Play for enjoyment and become part of the Monmouth rugby family.
- Respect the "Game of Rugby" and play within the laws of the Game.
- Accept the referee's decision and let your captain or coach ask any relevant questions.
- Play with control. Do not lose your temper.
- Always do your best and be committed to the game, your team and the Club.
- Be a "good sport". Applaud all good play, whether by your team or the opposition.
- Respect your opponent. Treat all players as you would like to be treated.
- Rugby is a team sport - make sure you co-operate with your coach, team mates and members of the Club.
- Remember that the goals of the game are to have fun, improve your skills and feel good.
- At the end of the match thank your opponents and the referee for the match.
- Always remember that you owe a duty of care to your opponents. Tackle hard but fairly, do not intend to hurt your opponent.
- Winning and losing is part of sport: win with humility - lose with dignity. Be magnanimous in victory and in defeat.
- As part of the team it is important that you attend training regularly and listen to your coach and help your team.
- As a team sport it is important to understand that all members are important to the team!
- Remember you are representing your team, club, family and the Game of Rugby.
- Attend at as many after match meals and events as possible to support the Club and opposition clubs and to dine and socialise with your team mates and the opposition.
- Respect and thank volunteers and employees at the Club for their hard work whenever possible.

Code for Parents

Parents are required to adhere to the following codes of conduct please:

- Remember, young people play rugby for their enjoyment, not only yours!
- Encourage your child to always play by the Laws of the Game.
- Please support us in teaching our young players that honest endeavour is as important as winning, so that the result of each game is accepted without disappointment.
- Encourage rugby skill improvement and good sportsmanship.
- Set a good example by applauding good play on both sides.
- Never ridicule, humiliate or shout at young players for making a mistake or losing a match.
- Do not place emphasis on winning at all costs.
- Do not force an unwilling child to participate in the playing of rugby. If the child is to play, he / she will do so in good time through your encouragement.
- Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from rugby.
- As a spectator do not use profane language or harass referees, coaches or players.
- Do not publicly question the referees' judgement and never their honesty.

- Recognise and respect the value and importance of volunteer referees, coaches, managers and all Club volunteers.
- Identify and acknowledge the good qualities of the Game of Rugby and uphold these values.
- Remember, you and your child's contribution to the Game of Rugby is very important to the Club and the WRU and you should be proud of your contribution.
- Understand the value of team sport and encourage unselfish behaviour in the best interests of the team, both on and off the field of play.
- Please support the Club and our sponsors by ensuring that your child is wearing the correct Club kit and takes part in Club social and charity fundraising events whenever possible.

Code for Young Rugby Coaches & Team Managers

All Club Coaches and Team Managers are required to adhere to the following codes of conduct please:

- Remember that as a coach of an "age grade team" you are to act in "loco parentis" and to that extent your duty of care is more onerous than that of a coach to an adult team.
- Lead by example - young people need a coach whom they respect.
- Be generous with your praise when it is deserved. Never ridicule or shout at players for making mistakes or losing a match.
- Teach your players that the Laws of the Game are mutual agreements which no one should evade or break.
- Prepare young players for inter-class and inter-school activities and work with local schools where appropriate to ensure player recruitment into the Club and the best possible coaching environment for our players.
- Be reasonable in your demands on the players' time, energy and enthusiasm.
- Ensure that all young players participate in matches. The Club has signed up to the WRU "Half a Match" initiative to ensure that each player enjoys playing at least half a game in competitive matches.
- Remember that young players play for fun and enjoyment and that skill learning and playing for fun have priority over highly structured competition. Winning is not the only objective.
- Develop player and team respect for the ability of opponents, as well as for the judgement of referees and opposing coaches.
- Insist on fair play and disciplined play. Do not tolerate foul play, fighting or foul language. Be prepared to take an offending player off the field of play.
- Encourage young players to develop basic skills and sportsmanship. Avoid over specialisation in positional play during their formative years.
- Set realistic goals for the team and individual players and do not push young players into adult-like competitions.
- Create a safe and enjoyable environment in which to train and play.
- Do not over burden younger players with too much information.
- Make a personal commitment to keep yourself informed on sound coaching principles and methods and on the principles of growth and development of young people.
- Be aware of the effect you have on growing children.
- Never criticise the referee and touch judges during or after a match in front of players or spectators.
- Always thank the match officials and if they have made decisions which require clarification, discuss any problems after the match in private.
- Seek and follow the advice of a doctor in determining when an injured player is ready to play again and follow the WRU medical codes of conduct for the return to play of injured players.
- Ensure that proper equipment and facilities are available at all times.
- Be responsible and ensure you uphold the ethos of the game and the WRU and Club codes of conduct.
- Support the WRU codes of ethics and all policies regarding Children in Sport.
- Attend coaching courses to the required standard for your team and to enhance your coaching ability.
- Please support the Club and our sponsors by ensuring that both you and your team players are all wearing the correct Club kit and adhere to the Club Kit policy.
- Please ensure that your team takes part in Club social and charity fundraising events and objectives whenever possible.
- Ensure that you invite your players and their parents and opposition teams back to the Club house following all home matches and that there is adequate attendance from your coaching team post-match to welcome everyone to the Club.
- Ensure you and your players are proud of your team, Club and efforts during the season.

Code for Spectators

All Club supporters are required to adhere to the following codes of conduct please:

- Spectators can and should contribute positively to the overall experience and enjoyment of the event, both during and after a match, for all involved.
- Be on your best behaviour and lead by example. Do not use profane language or harass referees, players or coaches.
- Verbal abuse of players or referees cannot be accepted in any shape or form.
- Applaud good play by the visiting team as well as your own.
- Show respect for your team's opponents.
- Condemn the use of violence in all forms at every opportunity.
- Players, referees and opposition supporters are not targets for ignorant behaviour.
- Encourage all players to play by the Laws of the Game.
- Remember that although young people play organised rugby, they are not "miniature internationals".
- Please welcome all fellow supporters and visiting supporters, players and officials to the Club house before and after the match and ensure that they are comfortable and well looked after as best as possible.
- Be proud of your club and the Game of Rugby.

Code for Club Officials – Committeemen / Coaches / Team Managers

Club Officials are required to adhere to the following codes of conduct please:

The term Club Official includes all Committeemen, Coaches, Team Managers, Steward and Stewardess, Safe Guarding Officer, Senior Team Captains and all individuals who represent the club in an official capacity from time to time.

Club Officials shall comply with: the Laws of the Game, the Regulations of the WRU, the Rules of any Competition in which the Club participates and the Club rules, codes of conduct and constitution and shall not encourage or incite any Club Member or person to act in breach of the same and shall take all possible steps to ensure that they are fully complied with.

Club Officials shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that Players and/or other employees under his or her control accept and observe the authority and decisions of match officials.

Club Officials shall not publish or cause to be published or make any public criticism of any match official or any other Coach, Team Manager, Club Official or any Player, and/or employee of his or another Club but he or she will have recourse to the complaints procedure of the Club and the WRU and which procedure should be adhered to.

Club Officials shall conduct themselves at all times in an ethical and professional manner and shall observe the highest standards of integrity and fair dealing.

Club Officials shall take all possible steps to promote the reputation of the game of Rugby Union and to prevent it or the Club being brought into disrepute.

Club Officials shall not:

1. Abuse, threaten or intimidate a referee, touch judge or other match official, whether on or off the field;
2. Use crude or abusive language or gestures towards the referees, touch judges or other match officials, spectators, Club Members or visitors;
3. Do anything which is likely to intimidate, offend, insult, humiliate, degrade and discriminate against any person or on the ground of their religion, race, colour or national or ethnic origin.
4. Ignore, turn a blind eye or in any way condone or support acts of intimidation, bullying, assault or victimisation.
5. Do anything that is likely to incite poor behaviour or cause undue stress or hardship to others.

Monmouth RFC Complaints Procedure

We most sincerely hope that you will not have cause to complain but if you do, we will look to resolve and deal with the issues raised as quickly and fairly as possible.

All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the following procedure. The seriousness of the complaint will determine the complaints escalation procedure, with the final recourse outlined as the Disciplinary Procedure below.

Complaints Procedure

1. Complaints in relation to a breach of the Club's codes of conduct or in relation to any other matter, should be taken up in the first instance with the Club Officer – Team coach, manager, official or officer - who is directly involved with your issue within the Club, who will look to resolve all issues and complaints as quickly and effectively as possible. Club Officer contact information can be found here: www.monmouthrfc.com/contact
2. In the event that this form of action has been exhausted or is not appropriate, please address the complaint to info@monmouthrfc.com. A Senior Officer of the Club – the Club Senior Chairman, Young Rugby Chairman, Vice Chairmen, Secretary, Treasurer or Club Safety Officer (if appropriate) will review the complaint and contact the complainant, or advise the Club Officer concerned with the matter how to proceed. We will look to resolve all issues and complaints as quickly and effectively as possible, in accordance with the WRU and Club rules and codes of practice.
3. In relation to complaints involving serious breaches of conduct or Disciplinary Sanctions, as outlined below, the Senior Officers will recommend if the Club Disciplinary Procedure is to be implemented by the Club's Management Committee.

Disciplinary Sanctions and Procedure

The following narrative outlines those actions and behaviours that may lead to the implementation of Club's disciplinary procedures. The following narrative should be read in conjunction with the Club's Codes and Rules of Conduct, non-compliance with which, form the basis for disciplinary sanctions.

In accordance with Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights and best practice for sporting groups and organisations, the Club disciplinary procedure aims to satisfy the requirements of the well-established common law concept of natural justice. This means "fairness in all aspects" of the process and ensuring that the Club's disciplinary procedure is fair, clear, transparent and consistent in its application.

Disciplinary Sanctions

Disciplinary sanctions for playing matters will be regulated and upheld by the Club in accordance with the rules, guidance and sanctions enforced by the Club and the WRU from time to time. The following behaviour will lead to the Club's Disciplinary Procedure coming into force:

Unacceptable Conduct and Inappropriate Behaviour

Any unwanted conduct affecting and violating the dignity of an individual or which creates an intimidating or hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person, including but not limited to:

- Unwanted physical contact, insulting or abusive behaviour or gestures, physical threats and assault;
- Unwanted verbal conduct – offensive / abusive language / aggressive verbal threats;
- Unwanted non-verbal conduct – of an offensive, abusive, demeaning, degrading or intimidating nature on social media or other communication platforms or medium;
- Any form of bullying or intimidation, whether in person or via any form of media communication. For the avoidance of doubt the term "bullying" relates to any form of conduct which is intended to intimidate, demean or undermine the individual - victim. The "burden of proof" as to whether an individual has been bullied will at all times take into account the feelings of the individual - victim as well as the intent of the individual(s) who are accused of bullying.
- Interference with property without permission belonging to the club or another individual;
- Theft or embezzlement of money or property belonging to the club or an individual.

Substance Abuse

- Possession or use of controlled drugs as defined by Misuse of Drugs Act and performance enhancing substances as defined by the World Doping Organisation, unless on prescription from a registered Medical Practitioner
- Failure to undertake a drug test / making oneself unavailable if called to provide a sample for drug testing.

Misconduct

Any criminal activity or breach of the Codes of Conduct, Constitution, rules and ethics of the Club and the WRU and any form of conduct, act or omission, which, in the view of the Club's Management Committee, is or was detrimental or injurious to the reputation and interests of the Club and bringing the club into disrepute, may give rise to disciplinary action.

Disciplinary Procedure

When a serious complaint or allegation is made or where a Senior Officer escalates a complaint to the Club Management Committee, the following procedure shall take effect:

The Management Committee shall make such enquiries as it considers appropriate;

Anonymous complaints will not be accepted or considered;

In the event that the complaint or allegation involves a member of the Management Committee then the matter will be considered without the presence of that individual.

In cases where it is clear that there is a prima facie case which requires immediate disciplinary action, the Club Management Committee may vote to take all necessary action without further recourse, provided always that it acts in the best interests of the Club and in accordance with the Club Constitution, rules and codes of practice.

Matters which are regarded as serious enough and require adjudication and further investigation will justify the implementation of the Club Disciplinary Procedure and the appointment of a Disciplinary Panel as detailed below.

Disciplinary Panel:

A Disciplinary Panel shall be made up of three Management Committee Officers elected by the Management Committee to form an independent Disciplinary Panel. The Disciplinary Panel will be chaired by the Senior Officer of the Club who has dealt with the complaint in the first instance, if there is no conflict, failing which a Chairman for the Disciplinary Panel will be elected from and by the individuals making up the Disciplinary Panel.

The Disciplinary Panel must be independent and impartial and have no material involvement with the matter in question or the individual(s) involved. In the event that there is any doubt concerning the impartiality or independence of any member of the Disciplinary Panel, then another independent Management Committee Officer will be appointed and substituted to sit on the Disciplinary Panel by the Management Committee.

Investigation:

The complaint or allegation will be investigated promptly and thoroughly to establish the facts and circumstances surrounding the matter and to gather all verbal and written documentary evidence. The Disciplinary Panel may appoint an investigating officer from its ranks, or from Officers of the Management Committee, to undertake an independent investigation on its behalf. The investigation should be conducted as expeditiously as possible and within 14 days of appointment of the Disciplinary Panel, except in exceptional circumstances or if the matter is of a complicated nature.

Once the investigation has been completed and all relevant evidence, statements and information has been collated, the Disciplinary Panel will decide if there is a case to answer and if the matter needs to proceed to a formal Disciplinary Hearing.

When circumstances are considered serious i.e. physical assault, intimidation, bullying, theft or possession or consumption of controlled drugs or failure to comply with a drug test – the Disciplinary Panel or the Management Committee will consider and decide if the individual(s) concerned will be suspended immediately and lose all Club privileges until all formal disciplinary proceedings have taken place.

Disciplinary Hearings:

The Club Secretary will inform the individual(s) of the investigation, in writing, that they are to appear before a Disciplinary Panel and outline the reasons for their attendance within 7 days of the investigation results being made available to the Disciplinary Panel.

Individuals who are the subject of the disciplinary matter will be informed that they may present evidence to the Disciplinary Panel and may be accompanied by another club member, who was not involved in the proceedings, if they so wish.

Any formal action, sanction or penalty the Disciplinary Panel decides to implement will be conveyed to all parties in writing within 48 hours of the decision being made and recorded in the formal minutes of the Club at the next Management Committee meeting.

Any party aggrieved by the decision or ruling of the Panel has the right of appeal, in writing within 14 days to the Club Secretary as detailed below.

Sanctions and Penalties:

After due consideration the Disciplinary Panel may impose any of the following sanctions or penalties, having regard to the relevant facts of the case and whether the sanction can be reasonably imposed and is proportionate to the circumstances and in accordance with the rules of the Club and the WRU:

- Dismiss the complaint with no action to follow;
- Issue a written warning regarding the issue;
- Suspend the individual for a defined period of time;
- Expel and terminate membership of the club.

All Matters pertaining to incidents occurring on the field of play will be dealt with in line with the guidance published by the WRU.

In serious matters such as physical assaults, drug possession or consumption the Club will consider the need to report such matters to the relevant civil authorities and the WRU.

Any member who is suspended or expelled shall automatically lose all the privileges of the club, until reinstated, and shall not

- *be eligible as a visitor to the Club*
- *be eligible to compete in any competitions or friendly fixtures played against other clubs*
- *be entitled to use the facilities of the Club except as a representative of another club in Welsh or other National competitions.*
Actions taken by the club do not prevent individuals or members taking appropriate action should they wish to through civil and criminal remedies.

Appeals

In order to reduce the risk of unmeritorious appeals, carefully drafted grounds of appeal should be clearly specified and the mere fact that the decision and outcome of a disciplinary hearing are not liked are not grounds for appeal.

Appeals should reflect objections such as the disciplinary process was not followed correctly or that relevant or new evidence was not taken into account by the Disciplinary Panel.

An appeal against the decision or ruling of the Disciplinary Panel must be made in writing to the Club Secretary within fourteen days of the outcome of the Disciplinary Hearing having been communicated in

writing to the appellant. The appellant must provide and submit written grounds for appeal, together with any accompanying documentary evidence.

The Disciplinary Panel will consider all written correspondence and any new evidence and will make a formal and final decision as to whether an Appeal is to be permitted.

In the event that an Appeal is permitted the Disciplinary Panel will ask the Club Management Committee to appoint two new independent Committee Officers to join the Disciplinary Panel to form an Appeal Panel of five Officers.

The Secretary of the Club will notify all concerned of the date, time and venue for the Appeal hearing, which will be decided having due regard to the urgency of the matter and to the availability of all concerned and should, wherever possible, be within 28 days of the date the written notice of appeal was lodged with the Club.

The Chair of the Appeal Panel will update the new members of the Appeal Panel on the following:

- The circumstances surrounding the allegation or alleged offence;
- The decision taken in the original hearing and the appropriate justification;
- The information that was considered in reaching the original decision such as the rules, regulations, reports or correspondence;
- The new information or grounds that led to the Appeal being granted.

The Appeal Panel will convene and review the case looking at whether the original Disciplinary Panel decision was fair, reasonable and proportionate in all the circumstances without re-hearing all of the evidence. The Appeal Panel will decide if witnesses are required or additional information is required to make its final decision. The Appeal Panel will not interfere with a decision by the Disciplinary Panel unless it was clearly wrong and shall have the power to review, set aside and amend any penalty or sanction imposed by the Disciplinary Panel.

A majority decision of the Appeal Panel shall uphold, vary or dismiss the Appeal.

All parties will be bound by the decision of the Appeal Panel and any sanction or penalty shall be implemented with immediate effect.