



THE NORTH WEST COUNTIES FOOTBALL LEAGUE

RESPECT: CODE OF CONDUCT

SEASON 2020/2021

The Aim is to promote professionalism and an enjoyable match day experience for players, match officials, club officials and supporters, while remembering that respect is fostered by sporting co-operation from all involved, leading to a fuller enjoyment of the whole game experience.

The key areas are Club Management, Players, Dugout Personnel, Match Officials, League Management Officers, Volunteers, Spectators.

The Characteristics we wish to promote in all participants are Self-Respect, Respect for others, Discipline, Integrity, Leading by Example, Self-Control, Accepting Results with Good Grace.

Before we go into the specific responsibilities it is relevant in this day and age to comment on the role of Social Media in society at large with specific reference to football.

We can define Social Media in a number of ways but, in this context we are considering platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Snapchat as the better known ones but there are others. Basically, any content gets out there into the public domain needs to be very carefully considered.

While Social Media provides excellent tools for helping your club engage with members, supporters and the wider public, it can also present a number of risks such as:

- Cyber bullying- through posts which are upsetting to people and often inaccurate.
- Causing offence to individuals, or other clubs and related organisations.
- Exposure to inappropriate content, or nasty comments and pictures.

How to control those risks is the key to making a Code of Conduct for Social Media work effectively to safeguard the club and the officers of the club.

Headline principles

1. Be honest about who you are.
2. Clarify that your opinions are your own.
3. Respect and humility in all communication.
4. Dishonourable content such as racial, ethnic, sexual, religious, and physical disability slurs are not tolerated.
5. Good judgement in sharing only public information.
6. Awareness that what you say is permanent – it only takes a screenshot for it to be out of your hands.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of everybody involved in your club to ensure it remains a safe place, free from discrimination, fear and where possible, risk.

Sanctions

Examples of social media content which breach the principles established above will be reported to either the relevant County Football Association or the NWCFL for consideration and the appropriate action.

Club Actions

It is a condition of registration as a player and/or technical area occupant that such individuals are appraised by member clubs of the content referred to above (and in the rest of this document).

Specific Respect Related Responsibilities

CLUB CHAIR, DIRECTORS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

The Chair and the Directors/Committee Members are responsible for every member in their club.

By working with them to establish a Club Code of Conduct, they will set the ground rules for their Club to support League Policies.

The Managers are the spokespersons for the Club during the playing of the matches, and as such, must be seen as Club Ambassadors. It is their example that is followed by players and spectators alike. They need clear guidelines as to the conduct required from them. That is the responsibility of the Club Chair.

If their co-operation falls short, as is suggested by the antics of some personnel in the technical areas, then this impacts on the Club and therefore the League.

The NWCFL will again monitor the technical areas and work closely with Club Chairs to ensure that this first point of public notice is acceptable. This potentially brings clubs into disrepute and could damage the reputation of the NWCFL brand to potential sponsors. Never engage in public criticism of the League/Match Officials/or Opponents in a public manner, or via social media – refer to Social Media section above.

CLUB SECRETARY:

The Club Secretary and, where appropriate, the Matchday Secretary is the face of the Club and should ensure that everyone visiting the Club feels welcome.

Refreshments should be made available to your Opponents and Match Officials on arrival, and hospitality should be offered at half and full time.

Confirm the match with the Match Officials and Visiting Opponents in writing as per League Rule.

Ensure that the facilities of the ground are fit for purpose.

See to the administration of the game and ensure that the appropriate information is correct and sent in the given time to the League.

Pay the Match Officials (in cash) after the game in the privacy of their dressing room.

As a Visiting Club Secretary or Matchday Secretary, liaise with the Home Club Secretary/Matchday Secretary before the game and advise how many people will be participating in half time and staying for the after-match hospitality.

Ensure that you play your part in the after-game administration.

Accept with thanks any hospitality afforded to you.

Both Secretaries should speak to those involved in the game in a courteous manner and shake hands after the game.

Never criticise the Match Officials or Opponents in public or via any social media - refer to Social Media section above. It is recognised that club's social media is often delegated to

volunteers who take on this role. Where a club has such volunteers, they need to be advised of their responsibilities to the club in the specific terms of abiding by social media protocols.

PUBLIC ADDRESS OPERATORS:

Public address operators should also be mindful of their responsibilities and never make any disparaging comments concerning players and/or match officials.

PLAYERS:

Players are role models for others who strive for first team football.

Always accept and respect the decisions of the Match Officials.

Strive to show high standards of self-discipline and control.

Speak courteously to everyone involved in your game.

Win or lose with dignity, and make sure to shake hands with your opponents and Match Officials after every game.

Accept with thanks, all hospitality extended to you by the home and your own club.

Never engage in public criticism of the League, Match Officials or Opponents in a public manner, or via social media – refer to Social Media section above.

CAPTAINS:

Remember that by being selected as the Captain on the field of play, you have a responsibility to assist the Match Officials in their management of your teammates and the game. If you are Club Captain then your responsibilities lie in enhancing a positive approach throughout the Club.

TECHNICAL AREA PERSONNEL:

Conduct in the Technical Area is the responsibility of the Manager.

Remember that the crowd is mindful of your attitude towards the game.

Ensure that the only persons in the Technical Area are those who have been authorised by the League and are named on the Official Team Sheet.

Remember that your job is to manage the players and your management team - nobody else. They will respond to the way that you treat everyone else, including your opponents.

Welcome the opponent Technical Area personnel to the dugouts with a handshake.

Speak courteously to those involved with the game.

Promote fair play and high standards of self-discipline by setting a good example.

Encourage the players to play in a sporting manner.

Accept and Respect all decisions made by the Match Officials, and speak to them in a courteous manner.

Do not use or tolerate from players, Offensive/ Insulting or Abusive Language.

Remain within the Technical Area to coach, and ensure that League Directives concerning the Technical Area are strictly observed.

Win or lose with dignity by shaking hands with the opposing technical area personal after the game.

When playing away accept with thanks, any hospitality given to you by the Home Club.

Never engage in criticism of Match Officials, the League, Club or Opponents in a public manner or through social media – refer to Social Media section above.

MATCH OFFICIALS:

Confirm the game in writing as per League Rule.

Meet with 2 representatives from each team at the exchange of the team sheets, and get to know each other.

Speak in a courteous manner to all involved in the game and in particular, the players and the Technical Area Personnel.

Referee the game using effective game management.

Always give reasons for decisions if asked in a courteous manner, but do not let the questioners affect your concentration.

The captain has no special dispensation, but is there to help you manage his players.

Challenge dissent from either the players or the Technical Area calmly, and use sanctions as a last resort.

Report ALL matters of misconduct promptly after the game as advised by The Football Association.

To the League: Indicate on the League Match Report forms, any cautions/dismissals.

Submit an extraordinary incident report for any serious misconduct that you are reporting to The Football Association.

Report any breach of League Rule to the League Secretary.

Report to the League Secretary any player who has sustained an injury which prevents further participation in the match.

Complete the League administration requirements immediately after the game, providing the Clubs with the necessary information and paperwork BEFORE the Observer (if appointed) comes into the dressing room to give the de-brief.

The League Administration is there to support you, if you need support at any point, its as good as the information you put into it. Help us to support you.

Accept with gratitude the hospitality extended to you.

Never engage in public criticism of the League or Match Officials in a public manner, or via social media – refer to Social Media section above.

REQUIREMENTS EACH SEASON

Each Club will supply a list of its Directors/ Officers /Committee, with each person's title and responsibility.

Each Club will need to detail which personnel will occupy the Technical Area, by filling in the appropriate Authorisation Form at least 7 days prior to the commencement of the season.

Any amendments made to this by the club will require 24 hours notice.

Only authorised personnel (who have been approved and are nominated on the teamsheet) shall be entitled to enter the Technical Area. All such personnel will be required to submit a DATA registration form to the Registration Secretary.

After each game, each club will submit a completed Matchday Respect Report Form within 3 days of the Match. This, together with the FA Respect Analysis and Referees' Assessments will be used to form a fair marking system towards the Respect Awards made during the season.

Players and Technical Area Authorised Personnel will also sign a Club Register to say that they have read the League Code of Conduct and fully support it. Clubs will be required to retain a copy of such.

The baseline for improvement is to look at two sets of statistics.

The number of players cautioned (C2) and sent off (S6) for dissent in season over the past six seasons is:

Season 2014 – 15	C2s = 313	S6s = 14
Season 2015 – 16	C2s = 242	S6s = 11
Season 2016 – 17	C2s = 382	S6s = 8
Season 2017 – 18	C2s = 311	S6s = 14
Season 2018 - 19	C2s = 442	S6s = 21

Data is not quoted for the curtailed 2019 – 20 season due to a lack of comparability with previous seasons.

Clearly, there is much room for improvement in these areas as we seek to record a NIL score in each area. We understand that there will be cautions and dismissals in any game, but there is no excuse for dissent, and we must all work together to eradicate it from our League. Once this has been achieved, we will be able to concentrate on the other areas of our Respect Campaign.

REWARDS:

Based upon the points accrued as detailed above:

There will be a Respect Award for each division every three months.

This will consist of a number of footballs or similar incentive.

At the end of the season, there will be a cash (if funds allow) reward for the first club in each Division.

This will be funded from the Technical Area Personal Registration Fees, any FA incentive, League Sponsorships and any fines occurring for failing to submit Matchday Respect Report Forms.

It is intended to publish a newsletter monthly and highlight those Clubs who have played their games without receiving any cautions/dismissals.

ACTION:

We have introduced substantial awards per Division at the end of the season.

Consideration was also to be given to rewarding individual players who have received no cautions/dismissals during the season. Investigations took place on this subject and it was determined at the time, it was not easy to administer. However, this point remains under discussion.

SANCTIONS:

For the reward system to work properly, it means that all reports/team sheets etc must be submitted within the specified time limit.

The Respect Committee will work with the Club Management Personnel for those Clubs who have disciplinary issues and/or development needs.

However, if the agreed strategies appear not to be working, a Club may be called to explain themselves before the League Discipline Committee who may recommend to the Management Committee Board the implementation of League Rule 2.18

“If during the course of a season the Board decide that the organisation and management or finances of a particular Club fall below the standards appropriate to membership of the Competition, the Competition Secretary shall be instructed to warn the Club at once that it may be excluded from membership of the Competition at the end of that playing season. Such a Club shall have the right to appeal to The FA within 14 days of the date of notification of the Board’s decision”.

NOTE FOR CLARIFICATION:

Due to the current coronavirus epidemic it is not possible under Government Guidelines to shake hands, therefore this will not be a requirement until further notice.

Club Chairs are required to ensure that all team management are aware of the League "Cooling off" protocol and Technical Area dismissals procedures.

There are also some possible changes to the pre-match exchange of teamsheet procedure and after-match report requirements.