



**Rugby Illinois & Chicago Area Rugby Union Referee Society
Joint Statement on Referee Abuse**

Apr 1, 2024

Dear Members of Rugby Illinois,

We hope this letter finds you and your teams well as you make your final preparations to begin the 2024 XV's Season! We are excited to see all teams make it back to the pitch and take part in another exciting year for Youth & High School Rugby in Illinois.

This year, Tim Sheridan has been elected to serve as the President of the Chicago Area Rugby Union Referee Society (CARFU). Additionally, Sal Carfagno has been elected to serve as the Disciplinarian for Rugby Illinois (RIL). Please know that both of us and our teams are ready and willing to assist you and your teams in conducting safe, exciting play. We encourage you to contact either of us if you may need any assistance.

Being true to the rugby values of Integrity, Passion, Solidarity, Discipline, and Respect, both organizations feel compelled to address our stance on Referee/Match Official Abuse.

Referee/match official abuse can be seen in a number of different forms and sources. This can be verbal, by gesture, or even (in very rare cases) physical. It can be exhibited by players, coaches, parents, or spectators. It can also occur at any point before, during, or after the match.

In order to progress the game of Rugby in Illinois, to maintain the Game's ethos and core values, and to protect the integrity of our players and referees alike, it is essential that we do our part to understand the seriousness of referee abuse and work as best we can to eradicate it from our game.

Understanding what referee abuse is the first step. First off, a Match Official as defined by USA Rugby is any center referee, assistant referee, #4, or any other field marshals/coaches appointed by the Referee Society. Furthermore, match official abuse is summarized as:

A verbal statement or physical act, which may or may not result in bodily contact, which implies or threatens physical harm to a referee, referee's property, equipment, or creates interpersonal conflicts with the referee in an attempt to influence future refereeing decisions which is against the spirit of good sportsmanship.

World Rugby Law 9.12, 9.27, 9.28 also include match official abuse in which



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- 1) Repeated instances of on-field player dissent (as defined in the World Rugby Laws);
- 2) Repeated questioning of calls during ongoing match play. The policy covers abuse to the center referee or to an AR, by those otherwise permitted to be in the playing enclosure (replacements, coaches, trainers, e.g.).

For a more detailed definition of USA Rugby’s Referee Abuse Policy and Guidelines, please consult the attached [policy](#).

Understanding the severity and consequences of referee abuse is the next step. Per World Rugby Policy & Regulations, Law 9.28 carries the following sanctions:

9.28 A player must not disrespect the authority of a Match Official.

Low-end: 2 weeks/matches	Mid-range: 4 weeks/matches	Top-end: 6+ weeks/matches	Max: 52 weeks/matches
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9.28 A player must not verbally abuse a Match Official. Verbal abuse includes, but is not limited to, abuse based on: religion, color, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation.

Low-end: 6 weeks/matches	Mid-range: 12 weeks/matches	Top-end: 18+ weeks/matches	Max: 52 weeks/matches
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9.28 A player must not make physical contact with Match Officials.

Low-end: 6 weeks/matches	Mid-range: 12 weeks/matches	Top-end: 18+ weeks/matches	Max: 52 weeks/matches
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9.28 A player must not use threatening actions or words towards Match Officials.

Low-end: 12 weeks/matches	Mid-range: 24 weeks/matches	Top-end: 48+ weeks/matches	Max: 260 weeks/matches
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9.28 A player must not physically abuse Match Officials.

Low-end: 24 weeks/matches	Mid-range: 48 weeks/matches	Top-end: 96+ weeks/matches	Max: Life
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*** Please note, other sanctions may be imposed by Rugby Illinois as appropriate. These can include but are not limited to financial sanctions, competition based sanctions, and more. This may be based on severity of offense, role of offender, and number of offenses, among other deciding factors. ***

While we hope that sanctions never have to be given for referee abuse, we hope you will take this opportunity to discuss with all involved in your program the severity and what this could mean for a player or club's future. In addition to suspension, RIL has the right to impose other sanctions including but not limited to fines, probations, additional referee allocation, game/competition forfeits, and more.

This statement is intended to educate all members of Rugby Illinois on what referee abuse looks like, the severity of referee abuse and the sanctions, our absolute zero tolerance policy, **and to serve as a blanket warning that referee abuse will not be tolerated in any Rugby Illinois Sanctioned Match.**

The CARFU Referee Society has instructed its referees and match officials to follow the sequence below when dealing with referee abuse:

1. This letter to all RIL Membership serves as an initial warning and statement of no tolerance against referee abuse.
2. Should an instance of referee/match official abuse arise in a game the referee will issue a penalty. A verbal warning will then be provided to the captain(s) and/or coach(es).



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3. A second occurrence in a single match will be penalized with a card. It is the recommendation of the Referee Society that - regardless of severity at the time of infraction - a red card be given to the offending player. Because multiple warnings have at this point been given, it is appropriate to refer straight to a red card. If the offender is a coach or other person off the field, they will be asked to leave the grounds. Failure to leave will result in the forfeiture of the match.
4. File all pertinent reports as established by CARFU Guidelines and Policy.

We understand that referees are humans, and they too make mistakes. Many are also new and developing their skills. To help provide insight and direction as to referee performance, the Society eagerly asks for feedback. They ask that you utilize this [referee feedback report](#) after every game to provide a clear, objective review. This allows for CARFU Leadership and Referee Coaches to work directly with referees to improve their officiating. It is also encouraged to share game film with the on-field Referees, Referee Coaches, and the Referee Society to further allow for the growth of individual referees.

We hope all members of RIL understand the importance of eradicating Match Official Abuse. This helps encourage more people to referee, helps further develop rugby in the state, and helps provide opportunities for young boys and girls to learn about treating others properly through the sport - which is a life lesson we so desperately need.

Should you have any questions, comments, or concerns please do not hesitate to contact Sal Carfagno, RIL Disciplinarian, at scarfagno@rugbyillinois.us. You may also contact Tim Sheridan, CARFU Referee Society President, at carfurs.president@gmail.com.



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Thank you for your work and understanding on this matter. We look forward to the success of all members of Rugby Illinois this season!

Sincerely,

Sal Carfagno

Disciplinarian, Rugby Illinois

Tim Sheridan

President, Chicago Area Rugby Football Union Referee Society

Sean Bracken,

President, Rugby Illinois