



## **Dorset County Football Association Approach to Match Officials Trial**

### **Information to clubs and leagues (Targeted leagues DPL, DFL U18 division, DYFL U15, U16 boys and U17 girls' divisions)**

#### **Background.**

Following the increasing number of disciplinary cases in Dorset as well as in other counties across the country this season, the Dorset FA intend to take some simple steps to challenge poor behaviour on match days.

We are implementing a trial within some of our leagues regarding the actions of players, coaches, and spectators towards match officials.

Within the trial period, following the half time or final whistle, no one, will be allowed to communicate with the referee with the exception of paying the match fee.

We hope this will combat several issues, and potential misconduct charges, which are frequently caused at half time, or post-match with negative communications towards the referee.

Whether this be at a moment when the referee is leaving the field of play, or in the changing room area, or even outside of the ground makes no difference. Once the officials finish the match at either half time or full time there is no option to speak with them and question any decisions. We hope this will improve the image of the game and encourage respect to our match officials, we also believe that a more positive image will encourage a greater number of people to become referees and support the game and Dorset clubs.

It is important to note that the trial is not aimed at those who merely want to thank the officials or pay them.

The trial will begin for all games starting on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> January and continue until the end of February 2024 as an initial period.

#### **Information to Referees.**

As seen above the trial we are looking to implement will be within the specific leagues and divisions listed. We hope this will discourage players, managers and spectators approaching you at half time or final whistle. This is a trial and along with the new directive this season around participant behaviour, we need a buy in from yourselves around this to protect the image of our game in Dorset. If you are approached at half time or post-match by any individual(s) other than to pay your match fee, we will require you to complete a misconduct report stating who approached you at the end of the match. We are not expecting you to report those who merely shake your hand and thank you, but those who question you and potentially your performance.

Please remember the tools you have during the match, whether it be a player or named technical area occupant, you have the power to caution or send off at half time and after the final whistle on the field of play. During the game we encourage you to use the 'sin bin' as a deterrent for acts of

dissent for players on the field of play. For either option, any misconduct you sanction should always be reported in the appropriate fashion through the Whole Game System. We really hope this initiative will help you avoid unnecessary challenges at the end of games, but not discourage those who just want to thank you.