

DEALING WITH UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

For some time we have been concerned about unacceptable behaviour coming from the players, coaches and managers on the benches, indeed there is evidence that this is often worse than on the field of play. Examples of such behaviour would be abuse of umpires/players, persistent questioning of decisions, dissent, bad language etc.

We know that you each have different tolerance levels and manage situations accordingly. However the fact is that at best it is a distraction we could do without, and at worst it can mean a substitute going back onto the field in a high state of emotion, or players being 'whipped up' by comments from the benches, thus making your life even more difficult.

This was discussed at our executive meeting on 1st September 2009 and hopefully you will find these guidelines helpful. This will not stop until we send a clear and consistent message that we are not prepared to accept such behaviour.

There are several areas of concern where you will need to use your skills as a people manager. Before the game make certain you discuss with your colleague pitch-side management. Obviously the umpire with the benches has the main responsibility but the other umpire needs to be aware of wandering players or coaches, and spectators.

Firstly you should be aware that you do have the authority to temporarily or permanently suspend (yellow/red card) any player or official from the bench for ill discipline. In these circumstances, if it were an official who was carded we are able to remove a player from the pitch in their stead. If it is a bench player that is suspended, Rule 14.1c states: the offending team plays with one less player.

1. Bench - Not always applicable in MRHUA, but most teams now have coaches, substitutes, and maybe medical assistance on the bench. All of these will have their views on umpires' decisions. We should not allow this to get out of control and can manage it in a selection of ways.
 - a) Politely ask them to refrain/stop.
 - b) If they do not refrain, stop the game, and talk openly, advise them that the captain will be spoken to next and further punishment may follow. Make it very clear that you have the authority and what the consequences will be.
 - c) Stop the game, call the captain over, and ask him/her to manage the bench. Again advise him/her of the consequences.
 - d) Stop the game, call the captain over, and ask them to remove the said offender before the game will continue.
2. Supporters - probably the hardest for us to deal with as we generally do not know club members etc. Be very careful about what is banter and unacceptable abuse. Again use the captain to deal with this, and generally do not get involved. If you know there is a senior member of the club there, ask them to resolve the problem.

Our first step must be to separate supporters from the bench area. Also, avoid sending any suspended players into a crowd. We now have a directive from England Hockey that players should not be sent behind the goal so agree in your pre match chat where any suspended players are to be situated and stick to it bearing in mind that letting them sit with their own bench is not necessarily a good idea as this may only increase the animosity towards the umpires.

Should the behaviour of a spectator become unacceptable, and they are within the 'cage', advise them of the consequences and then remove them. If you think it necessary, advise MRHUA, who will contact the club and the league to remind them of their responsibilities.