

Introduction

For matches at Rotherfield we all must be aware that the Recreation Ground is a public space & as such we must follow our own COVID procedures for matches (see web site for document). We will have sent these procedures to the opposition & to the appointed referee for all home games.

So what happens if the opposition fail to abide by our procedures to such an extent that you as the manager or coach of the Rotherfield team in control of the match feel very uncomfortable with the risk presented?

We asked the Sussex FA to clarify on this point. The following is their advice (italics denote)

Procedure for abandonment of competitive fixtures

In terms of abandoning the fixture, the Club does not have authority to do this. The only person who can abandon a match is the Referee. In addition, the guidance for Referees states:

If referees feel there are matchday breaches of The FA's Covid-19 Guidance on re-starting outdoor competitive grassroots football, even if they are not a discipline matter, these must still be reported to the competition and County FA. Referees are not responsible for clubs, players or spectators complying with The FA guidance

Essentially, if there are any breaches of The FA COVID-19 Guidance, then these need to be reported to County FA for us to deal with. (Reference Ollie Powell, Sussex FA August 29 2020)

Interpretation of this advice

You will need to make a note of the following:

- *Nature of your concern (eg failure to wear the required PPE when treating a player (not a matter of life or death)*
- *Failure to maintain social distancing between participants & spectators to such an extent that it is clear that persons from a number of different households are mixing for significant periods of time*
- *Any other similar concerns*
- *Approximate time in match of the concern*
- *Send an e mail to P Ford (petegford@outlook.com) as COVID officer for the club including the above details. Please do this within 24 hours of the end of the match & include RFC/RJFC COVID-19 procedures in subject along with Date of fixture & name of opposition club (include age group/Firsts/Reserves/Veterans*
- *Copy e mail to Mark Sumner if this relates to a RJFC competitive match (markrsumner@outlook.com)*
- *PF will then liaise with coaches/Club Secretary etc over reporting of the matter to Sussex FA.*

Hopefully we will never have to do this.

Although primarily this applies to home matches there is no reason why similar significant concerns in respect of away games cannot be reported in the same way.

Every club is having to review procedures as we all work out how best to continue with football whilst ensuring we are implementing our own procedures to reduce the risk of spread.

It is hoped that a quiet word with the opposition coach can avoid any repeat concern but this is the procedure to follow should common sense not prevail.

*Pete Ford
Chairman RFC
COVID officer RFC (including RJFC)*