

Midlands Division Administrative Instructions / Rules for 2017-18

Although the RFU Regulations and Midlands Division Administrative Instructions/Rules appear each year in the RFU Handbook, it is recommended that the RFU Regulations as they appear on the RFU Website are read and noted, in order to obtain the most up to date and correctly worded version of the Regulations and Rules.

N.B. Please note that any formal correspondence between a Club and the MDOC should be on Club headed notepaper and should be from and signed by the Club Secretary and/or Club Chairman. An e-mail is not an acceptable method, although a letter as an attachment to the e-mail would suffice (i.e. no need for a hard copy).

1. Applications to join the RFU Leagues (English Clubs Rugby Union Championship)

1.1 An application from a club wishing to join the RFU Leagues (ECRUC) should be on Club headed paper, signed by two officers of the Club and should be accompanied by a letter from the Club's Constituent Body supporting its application. The application should be forwarded to the MDOC Secretary before April 1st of the season preceding the one when the Club wishes to join the leagues.

1.2 The club will need to be able to prove that a) it can fulfil a full league programme of games, by supplying its fixtures list and results of the season preceding the season in which it would like to join the leagues, and that b) the club has the organisation in place to make sure that all the RFU Regulations and Midlands Division Administrative Instructions / Rules are followed implicitly, and by supplying the full contact details of the Club Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer for the season in which the Club wishes to join the leagues.

2. Applications to join the Midlands Division RFU Leagues from another Division

2.1 An application from a club already in the RFU leagues that wishes to transfer into the Midlands Division at the same level as it holds in another Division must be made in good time. The procedure that the Organising Committee has to implement in order to facilitate this request is a rather lengthy one involving having to contact all the clubs in the leagues that will be affected, including the ones below. All clubs will need to be given at least 12 months notice of impending inclusion and of the resulting knock on effect.

2.2 The application should be made as in 1.1 above, with a deadline date being 12 months earlier than the one as in 1.1

2.3 Clubs already included in the Midlands Leagues as a result of Level Transfer will be more readily accepted on a permanent basis if they apply as in 1.1 above.

2.4 Clubs joining at the very bottom level will be able to follow the procedure outlined in 1.1 and 1.2 above.

3. Computer Print-Outs and Player Registration

3.1 Player registration can be done on-line via the Game Management System (GMS) accessed from englandrugby.com. Clubs registering on line must have a fully completed

registration form, signed by both player and club, in their possession before registering on line. This must be done within 28 days of the player signing the Registration Form. Clubs must retain all hard copy documentation for at least 12 months following the season in which registration took place, before being put into storage at the club. Registration via the Registrar is still available to all clubs. The Registrar is always willing to give help and assistance to any Midlands club requiring it.

3.2 All registration forms being sent to the Registrar for registering of players, must on completion, be forwarded by first class post to: The Rugby Registrar, PO Box 183, Leicester. LE3 8BZ. Registration Forms must reach the Registrar so that the process can be completed within 28 days of the player signing the Registration Form. Faxed registration forms will not be accepted, despite RFU Regulation 14.5.9 noting they might be. Special arrangements apply to Expedited Registrations (see RFU Registration Process under Regulation 14.5.8).

Cheques for the relevant expedition fee, made payable to the RFU, must accompany the forms.

If in need of assistance telephone the Registrar on 0116 233 2200
or e-mail :- nicola@russellsnewsandsport.co.uk

3.3 An A4 stamped addressed envelope with the name of the club in the top left-hand corner must accompany requests for registration. An up-dated copy of the computerised list will then be returned to the club.

3.4 Clubs are advised to have an up to date copy of the computerised list at hand on match day, in order to check the names of the squad against the list of registered players, to ensure that unregistered players are not chosen to play or to be on the bench, and that the names are recorded accurately and legibly.

3.5 The RFU Registrar will retain submitted player registration forms until the end of the season. These will then be sent to the RFU for storage.

3.6 Every club must appoint an officer and a deputy to be responsible for all registration matters. These officers must be fully aware of the RFU Registration of Players, Regulations and Operating Procedures. These are published annually and sent to Club Secretaries.

4. Ground and Match Management

4.1 It is the responsibility of the home club at all levels to ensure that spectators do not encroach on the playing enclosure. Suitable barriers should be erected to ensure compliance with this Rule. At Levels 5, 6 and 7 technical areas in accordance with Regulation 13.7.3 (b) should be provided. Regulations 13.7.6 to 13.7.8 should be adhered to. However, where a club Committee at Level 5 or below is satisfied that it is impractical or unnecessary for barriers to be erected this requirement may be waived. (This applies

particularly to clubs playing on school or local authority pitches) If the Home club's Referees Society insists on the use of barriers then the Home club must comply.

4.2 In the interest of safety, Regulation 13.7.9 regarding the use of floodlights will apply. However, by mutual agreement of the clubs involved, lights may be turned on at half time or in a long injury break, if this will save the game from being abandoned for bad light.

5. Postponed Games

5.1 No ECRUC League or RFU Cup game may be postponed/cancelled without first having the consent of the League Secretary/Cup Administrator (or MDOC Officer if the League Secretary/Cup Administrator is uncontactable). If a game is to be postponed/cancelled, then both clubs involved in the game must inform the League Secretary/Cup Administrator(s) (RFU Registrar Nicola Russell or MDOC Secretary Roger Rees) (or an MDOC Officer if the League Secretary/Cup Administrator is unavailable) of the possibility as soon as possible. The administrator will then confirm this arrangement to Russell's Agency directly. A lack of communication with the administrator(s) on this matter will result in the club(s) being fined £25. Once the League Secretary/Cup Administrator (or MDOC Officer) has agreed the postponement then the Home club must also make sure that Russell's Agency is informed of the postponement/cancellation as a matter of normal reporting of results procedure. In the RFU KO Competitions, any club failing to honour a game will be excluded from any future RFU KO Competition to which the club would have been eligible to enter until the club has served a one season exclusion for defaulting.

5.2 Clubs will be deducted 5 Championship points if they unjustly fail to honour a league game. These games and other postponed games must be played on the next available non RFU League/non RFU KO Competition weekend. This rule will be strictly enforced. The weekends of December 23rd 2017 and December 30th 2017 will be deemed not to be "a next available weekend" unless, by mutual agreement, two clubs decide to utilise this weekend.

EASTER WEEKEND WILL BE DEEMED TO BE "A NEXT AVAILABLE WEEKEND".

5.3 Rearranged league games take precedence over all other competitions except RFU National KO Competitions. (This also means that these Saturday games also take precedence over other games that might be arranged by a Constituent Body or Domestic Union on a Sunday)

5.4 If a League or RFU Cup game is justifiably postponed the League Secretary/Cup Administrator will need to give the clubs 7 days notice of the date of the rearranged game. The League Secretary/Cup Administrator will notify Russell's of the new date for the match at the same time as notifying Russell's of the postponement. If 7 days notice of the new date cannot be given, then the clubs will play on the next available free date. The

home club will ensure that the local Referees Society is made aware of the new date, so that a referee may be appointed in good time.

5.5 A club may not postpone a League game because of lack of availability of its ground. In such circumstances the game may be brought forward, or in the first half of the season the fixture may be exchanged with the corresponding fixture in the second half of the season. In the second half of the season an attempt to seek an alternative venue should be made, and if unsuccessful, a ruling will be made by the League Secretary/ Divisional Organising Committee.

5.6 A club whose home ground is considered to be unfit to play on should arrange for an inspection of the pitch by their ground staff, preferably on the morning of the game. The inspection should be carried out with a Club Officer in attendance, and preferably with a local member of the Home side's Referees Society also present. It would help matters if the Home club also invited a representative of the visiting club to attend the inspection (where the journey is not prohibitive) in order to keep matters transparent. Photographs of the problem areas should be taken, so that the League Secretary/DOC has the evidence to refer to, if a query arises as a result of a decision to postpone. The consent of the League Secretary/Cup Administrator/Divisional Organising Committee must then be obtained if the decision is to postpone.

6. Notional wins – Insufficient players.

6.1 At Level 5 and below, if on the first occasion a team is required to replace a front row player with a replacement front row player and it cannot do so, then uncontested scrums will be ordered and the non offending team will be deemed to have won the match by 4 tries (20-0) i.e. 4 Championship points plus a bonus point. The offending team may, in addition to losing the match 0-20, be deducted 5 Championship points (see RFU Sanction Guidelines – Front Row – insufficient suitable players).

6.2 When a club at Level 8 or below is unable to select a team from its list of registered players, they should offer to play the game as a friendly, using unregistered or borrowed players, or with uncontested scrums. If the non offending club turn down the offer to play or indeed arrange to play the game as a friendly the League Secretary will then be able to award the game to the non-offending club as a notional 0-0 win and 5 Championship points added to their record. Failure to give this option of playing the game as a friendly (by the club short of players), resulting in the game not being played, will mean that the failure to play will be considered an “unjust” cancellation, and will result in the deduction of 5 Championship points from the offending club's record. The League Secretary must be informed of the possibility of this event occurring as soon as possible and certainly before the game is due to be played. The League Secretary (or an MDOC Officer if the League Secretary is unavailable) must, as soon as possible, confirm this arrangement to Russell's Agency directly.

6.3 At all other Levels clubs are expected to be of a standard that should not require the use of non registered or borrowed players. A fixture cancellation through lack of players will be considered “unjust” and 5 Championship Points will be deducted from the

offending club's record. The game will be played on the next available weekend. Repeated offences under this rule will result in further disciplinary action. (See RFU Regulations)

6.4 Any club which gives away more than 20% of its league games as notional wins to its opposition during the season may find that it will be sanctioned by the MDOC with disciplinary action taken / a possibility of being relegated by one or more leagues / a possibility of being expelled from the leagues / the Club's record being reported to the RFU

7. League free weekend

7.1 Remember: In season 2017-2018, the weekends of Dec. 23rd & 30th 2017 will be "free" and will be deemed not to be "a next available weekend". Easter weekend WILL be a "next available weekend", so please remember to claim it in time if you want it to be "free" of any rearranged league games.

7.2 Clubs in 12/11 club Leagues may request that 1 specific non League Saturday be not designated as "a next available Saturday" for rearranged league games. Clubs in 10/9 club Leagues may designate 2 such Saturdays. Clubs in 8/7 club Leagues may designate 3 such Saturdays. Clubs in 14/13 club Leagues will not be able to request any such Saturdays. (Note that this only applies to league matches and does not apply to RFU KO Cup matches and Playoff matches.) This request must be made officially in writing, on Club headed notepaper, by the Secretary of the Club, to the Secretary of the MDOC at least 8 weeks before the non- League Saturday so designated. An e-mail is not an acceptable method, although a letter as an attachment to the e-mail would suffice. League Secretaries are not empowered to grant requests of this nature.

8. RFU KO Cup Competitions

8.1 The RFU National Cup Regulations apply in general to the administration of these competitions by the MDOC. The number of replacements allowed in the KO Cup Competition games, whilst the MDOC administers the proceedings, will be three (3), as in league matches at the same level. (In the Junior Vase only teams will be able to select 'up to five (5) replacements', as they are permitted to do in the leagues) In the Midlands Finals however, seven (7) replacements will be allowed.

8.2 The MDOC will administer the RFU KO Cup Competitions at Level 7 – Intermediate Cup, Level 8 – Senior Vase and Levels 9 & below – Junior Vase, up to and including the Quarter Finals stages (Midlands Finals). The RFU will administer the Competitions from the Semi Finals through to the Finals of the National Competitions at Twickenham.

8.3 The National Cup Competition games will take precedence over rearranged RFU League games and all Constituent Body Competition games.

8.4 Match Result Cards will be sent to the Home and Away clubs by Russell's News & Sport Agency. The filling in of the details on the card and handing it on to the referee before the match will be as in Instruction/Rule 10.1. The method of returning the Match

Result Card to the Registrar for checking and verification of details provided will be as in Instruction 10.3. When the RFU takes over the administration of the Competitions from the MDOC, arrangements may differ. Duly completed Official Match Result Cards not arriving electronically for checking, may result in the club being disqualified from the Competition.

8.5 The use of unregistered players will be as allowed in Instruction/Rule 10.5
RFU Regulation 13.4.1 does not apply in the RFU Junior Vase KO Competition National Semi Final & Final matches as these are under RFU jurisdiction.

9. Kick-off Times for League & RFU KO Cup Matches

9.1 The MDOC has decided that the normal kick-off times for RFU League and RFU KO Cup Competition matches will be 2:15 pm. in November, December, January and February (the default time), and 3:00 pm. at all other times (the default time). Either kick off time may be earlier, or later, by mutual agreement between the clubs.

For clubs which have informed the MDOC Secretary and League Secretary in writing prior to the start of the season of the availability of suitable floodlights and the club's wish to use them for Saturday kick offs at 3:00 pm throughout the season, the MDOC's agreement to do so will be given.

RFU Game Regulations 13.6.4 (b) (Times) and 13.7.9 (Floodlights) must be adhered to.

9.2 In RFU KO Cup Competition matches, earlier kick off times may be necessary in the event that after 80 minutes of play the result is a draw and extra time of 10 minutes each way needs to be played. Clubs need to mutually agree to have an earlier kick off time to cover this eventuality.

10. Match Result Cards

Please note that in season 2017-2018 clubs at Levels 5 & 6 i.e. Midlands Premier, Midlands 1 West and Midlands 1 East will be using the RFU's Electronic Match Cards system. This will be a compulsory requirement and is a further extension of the trialling of the system, for introduction to the game as a whole in the future. Clubs will not be required to supply all the details requested of clubs at the National Levels, just the basic information of names of the squad, number of tries and points scored.

10.1 The Official Match Result Cards are the responsibility of both clubs. The cards must be completed FULLY and legibly in capital letters and record the names of the squad showing surname first, followed by the first name. The names should be recorded as they appear on the official RFU Senior Player Registration Computer Listing (neither abbreviations nor nicknames should be used unless registered as such). Clubs are also responsible for making sure that the names of both teams appear in the Result Declaration box. The cards from both the Home and Away clubs, already countersigned by the opposition official, must be passed to the Referee no later than 15 minutes before Kick Off. Any alterations on the cards should be initialled by the referee to show that they were done pre and not post match. The referee should sign the cards after recording the

official match result (and on league cards the number of tries scored by each team), and after the game hand the appropriate card back to the club official of both the Home and Away teams for returning to the Administrator (League Secretary for League games/RFU Registrar for RFU KO Cup Competition games).

10.2 The sanction for failure to follow the instruction on the Official Match Result Card will be a fine of £25. A club not passing the Official Match Result Card, already signed by both Home and Away Officials, to the referee before the match may have 5 Championship points deducted.

10.3 For League Games it is recommended that FULLY completed, signed and checked Official Match Result Cards are scanned or photographed and forwarded by e-mail attachment to the League Secretary within two days of the game being played, otherwise a £25 fine will be issued. The hard copy cards should be filed by the club for future retrieval or for further forwarding to the League Secretary if necessary. They must all be kept until the end of the season and only discarded at the end of June. **DO NOT POST THE CARDS.**

Duly signed checked Official Match Result Cards will be considered free of any errors.

For RFU KO Competition Games the cards are sent back to the Registrar's e-mail address, which is printed on the reverse side of the card. **DO NOT POST THE CARDS.**

10.4 Clubs will have up to 14 days from the playing of a league game to query any "missing" bonus points in the published League Table of their League. After that period any omissions will be "timed out" and League Secretaries will not be able to amend the figures. Bonus points awarded incorrectly will be deducted as soon as the error is brought to the League Secretary's attention, with the affected club having the same 14 day period in which to request a review of the decision by the MDOC.

10.5 The Regulation allowing 2 unregistered players to be on the card will only apply at Level 9 and below, subject to the conditions in RFU Regulation 13.4.1 being followed. This Regulation states that 2 unregistered players may be selected provided they are eligible for registration and do not play on a second or subsequent occasion until correct papers are lodged with the Registrar or in the case of online Registration the procedural obligations have been fulfilled; and such players are not Effectively Registered with another club and are identified on the Official Match Result Card as not having Effective Registration and with their date of birth. The sanction for not complying with this Regulation will be a deduction of 5 Championship points for a League offence (or disqualification from the RFU KO Junior Vase if the Regulation is broken in the Junior Vase Competition). RFU Regulation 13.4.1 will also apply in RFU Junior Vase matches up to and including the Midlands Final. This rule treats League and RFU Junior Vase matches as one and clubs will not be able to use this Regulation once for the League and once for the RFU Junior Vase.

RFU Regulation 13.4.1 does not apply in the RFU Junior Vase KO Competition National Semi Final & Final matches as these are under RFU jurisdiction.

10.6 (a) A club will be deducted 5 Championship points when an unregistered or an ineligible player appears on the Official Match Result Card (Rule 10.5 excepted). The sanction of a 5 Championship points deduction will be applied, whether it is a single player default or whether it is a default of more than one player, on the same Official Match Result Card. In RFU KO Competition matches the club will be disqualified from the current season's Competition.

(b) A club shall be deducted at least 20 Championship points on each occasion that deliberate false information has been provided on the Official Match Result Card. This will be in addition to any points which may be deducted if the players in the squad were ineligible to play. Under this rule 5 Championship points will be deducted for each unregistered/ineligible player a club has on its Official Match Result Card (Rule 10.5 excepted). In RFU KO Competition matches the sanction will be immediate disqualification from the current Competition and probable further sanction decided by the Organising Committee.

10.7 In the event of a game being deemed to be abandoned under Regulation 13.6.7 (a) or (b) and also when Regulation 13 Appendix 2 (Uncontested Scrums) comes into play, it is the responsibility of the clubs to state on the match cards the exact time of abandonment, the match score at the time and the reason for the abandonment. This is particularly important for games abandoned because of uncontested scrums. These cards must be signed by the referee. The clubs must also telephone the League Secretary on the day of the match, to inform him of the circumstances causing uncontested scrums or any abandonment of the game.

10.8 At any time, whether due to weather conditions or for any other reason, when an English Clubs Rugby Union Championship (ECRUC) League game or an RFU KO Cup Competition game finishes earlier than the stipulated full 80 minutes of play (or 100 minutes in the case of extra time) timed by the referee, then the game is deemed to be abandoned and RFU Game Regulation 13.6.7 applies.

10.9 RFU Game Regulation 13.6.8 (a) and (b), regarding Notification to the League Secretary, must be followed by the two clubs involved when 10.7 or 10.8 occur.

11. "Rolling" Substitutions (Replacements) at Levels 5 and below

11.1 Rolling Substitutions are governed by RFU Regulation 13. Appendix 2 (See RFU Website and Handbook for further clarification of what is and what is not permitted).

11.2 Clubs are reminded of their responsibility to help manage such replacements within the Regulations.

11.3 At Levels 5 to 8, up to a maximum of 3 players may be named as replacements and players will be allowed to "roll on and roll off" to the maximum of interchanges allowed by RFU Regulation.

11.4 At Levels 9 and below, up to a maximum of 5 players may be named as replacements and players will be allowed to "roll on and roll off" to the maximum of interchanges allowed by RFU Regulation. This will mean teams will be able to maintain

15 players a side on the field of play at all times (unless a red or yellow card has been issued), other than when the game has moved to uncontested scrums when the side causing the uncontested scrums plays with 1 player fewer.

11.5 At Level 9 and below there is no compulsion to have 5 replacements and sides do not have to have equal numbers of replacements.

11.6 Replacements will be made, with the referee's permission, at stoppages of play, with players entering the field of play from the halfway line.

11.7 The requirement to have one replacement front row player within the squad is still necessary, so that at the first time of asking a side can replace a front row player in order that the game carries on with contested scrums.

11.8 Rule 11.4 is not intended to encourage clubs to pick the maximum number of replacements for league games to the detriment of turning out a second or third XV.

12. Notification of Results

12.1 Club Secretaries are responsible for their Club's compliance with the rules regarding notification of results (to include W/D/L, bonus points where applicable, postponement or cancellation).

12.2 Home clubs must telephone Russell's News and Sports Agency. Tel: 0116 233 2200 with the result (to include W/D/L, bonus points where applicable, postponement or cancellation) as soon as possible after the game, before the 5:00 p.m. deadline on the day of the match. When a game is played at any time other than Saturday afternoon the result must be phoned through within 30 minutes of the end of the game. If an injury or extra time is likely to delay the result being reported on time, then a telephone call to notify Russell's before the deadline will help to prepare them for a late result, and probably keep your Club off the fines list.

12.3 Home clubs must not only comply with the rules and regulations, but must also, when telephoning in the result to Russell's, give any bonus points won by either side scoring four or more tries on the day of the match. [Four points are awarded for a win. Two points are awarded for a draw. A bonus point is awarded to any side scoring four tries and a bonus point is awarded to any losing side that loses by seven points or fewer.]

12.4 Failure to telephone results (to include W/D/L, bonus points where applicable, postponement or cancellation) to Russell's News and Sports Agency Tel: 0116 233 2200 by 5:00 pm, or to forward the Official Match Result Card by e-mail within the time limits specified, will incur an immediate fine of £25. Championship points may also be deducted. Cards that are not forwarded by e-mail will mean that vital information is not reaching the League Secretary/Cup Administrator. Vital information not reaching the League Secretary/Cup Administrator(s) (RFU Registrar or MDOC Secretary within the time scales notified in 10.3) will be deemed not to have been sent, A copy of the card will still need to be forwarded by e-mail, following notification of non arrival, so that the

checking process is not compromised. Offending clubs will be notified by the League Secretary/Cup Administrator of the fine imposed and of any further sanctions applied for the non arrival of the card.

13. End of season “dead rubbers”

13.1 Unplayed and rearranged league matches up to and including the month of April must be honoured.

13.2 The League Secretary has the ultimate responsibility and discretion to decide which game, if any, may be considered a “dead rubber” in the month of May. It is NOT for the clubs involved to decide between themselves without involving the League Secretary in the decision making.

13.3 Unplayed and rearranged league matches in the month of May, which do not have a bearing on promotion or relegation issues within that league will be those matches identified as “dead rubbers”. Only these matches need not be played, unless both sides mutually agree that they wish to play the outstanding game(s).

14. Sanctions & Fines

14.1 The MDOC is able to sanction any club that does not comply with or adhere to the RFU Regulations and the Midlands Division Administrative Instructions / Rules. Although not an exhaustive list, the following are some of the sanctions the MDOC are able to impose on defaulting clubs :- a fine / payment of compensation to an innocent party / deduction of points in the current or following season / ordering a game to be replayed / awarding the match to the non offending side / determining the result of an abandoned match / removal of a result from the league table / awarding of points to a non offending club.

14.2 RFU Regulation 13.10.11 Sanctions and RFU Sanctions Guidelines give a more comprehensive list of the sanctions available to the MDOC to impose. However the words, “The Committee (or its delegate) may impose any sanction which it considers appropriate in all the circumstances”, are written in as a rider.

14.3 Failure to pay fines within 28 days will result in the fine being increased, and may result in the offending club also having 5 Championship points deducted.

14.4 A club with any fines outstanding at the end of the season will be reported to the RFU, with a recommendation that the club be suspended or expelled from the League for the following season.

15. DOC Reviews

15.1 Any club wishing to seek a review of a decision made by a League Secretary (or the MDOC Secretary in his/her absence) must do so to the Chairman of the Midlands Division Organising Committee in the first instance, and if still not satisfied with the review decision, appeal to the RFU in the second. Any request for a review must be signed by the Club Secretary (or an authorised deputy) and one other Officer of the Club.

It must be in writing and on Club headed notepaper and should be sent as an e-mail attachment or/and posted as a hard copy via the Royal Mail. A request for a review by one person from a club will not be considered. The request should state the grounds on which the review is sought.

15.2 The review request must not only be in writing but should be accompanied by the review fee, in the form of a cheque for £50. Cheques should be made payable to the Midlands Leagues Organising Committee. The fee will be refunded if the review changes the original decision. A request for a review should be made within 14 days of the receipt of the decision made. Clubs not happy with having their review dealt with in their absence (i.e. by e-mail) must request a personal hearing. If, however, they lose the personal hearing, they may be liable for the expenses incurred in holding that hearing, in addition to the review fee already paid.

15.3 Chairman :- Paul Kaminski, Green Paddocks, 21 Kingsway, Whitchurch, Shropshire. SY13 1EH
email :- paul.kaminski049@btinternet.com

The MDOC (MLOC) recommends that RFU Game Regulation 12.1.3 (b) in the current RFU Handbook needs to be emphasised and [explained further].

RFU Game Regulation [Explained]

Confirmation

Save where a cup match is held on a neutral ground (in which case the RFU has responsibility), it is the responsibility of the home club to confirm, at least 48 hours before the match with (as appropriate) the RFU, its Referees Society, or the Federated Society of which the home club's Referees Society is a member, that a referee (and in National Leagues, the touch judges) has been appointed.

It is the home club's responsibility to liaise [make connection] with the appointed match official(s) directly [not involving a third party] to ensure that the match official(s) is (are) aware of the arrangements [confirmation of appointment, time of kick-off, colours of teams etc.] and have the appropriate directions to the venue for the match (or any change of venue).

Leaving a message on a telephone answering machine, or with a family member, or indeed with any other person who may answer the call, is NOT regarded as making direct contact with the official(s), neither is sending a text message or an e-mail acceptable (without getting a positive response from the referee), and a further call within the appropriate time scale is required in order to make direct contact.

If direct contact cannot be made with the match official(s) within the time scale provided for in 12.1.3 (a), then the home club should make direct contact with their Referees Society Reappointments Officer to seek a replacement official for the game.

Referees Societies have been asked to make sure that their clubs are aware of this document and its contents, and to emphasise that appointed referees who do not have this direct contact from a club administrator may not turn up to referee the game at their club. Under these circumstances the club will have to face the consequences of this failure to make the necessary direct contact that is required by RFU Regulation.

The appointment of referees to games is a contract between the clubs and the Referees Society that normally supplies those clubs, therefore Referee Societies need to make sure that clubs conform to their procedures of how and when direct contact with the referee to confirm appointments is made, adhering within their procedures to the RFU Regulation 12.1.3 (b) on Confirmation, and not undermining it.