

## DEALING EFFECTIVELY WITH PLAYER DISSENT

*Below is a summary of this session.*

**Dissent** can be divided into three different categories: low-level, medium-level and high-level. What follows is a brief explanation of each and a table which shows indicative player behaviours and referee action.

*Please note: this session is designed to help you to deal effectively with dissent. Dissent is rarely a 'black and white situation', so take the following as a guide in how to respond to dissent.*

*Furthermore, for the purposes of this session, general swearing which is not deemed to be foul or abusive is included.*

**GENERAL PRINCIPLE: DON'T LET PLAYER BEHAVIOUR INFLUENCE YOUR ATTITUDE NOR YOUR BODY LANGUAGE!**

**Low-level dissent** is a reflexive response to frustration or disappointment. It may vary from minor complaining or whining to mild, quiet swearing. Since it is usually a private or non-public reaction to an event, it is considered low-level dissent which is refusing to accept the referee's decision without a public display. It will usually pass quickly if you ignore it or give a brief, informal warning.

**Low-level dissent** also involves a player speaking to the referee privately to express dissatisfaction with a call. As long as it is private and polite, don't caution it. Instead, ignore it if it is a one-off or give an informal warning. Players who indulge in *ongoing* private dissent should be warned and then cautioned upon a further repeat.

**Medium-level dissent** may involve an emotional display which is an reflexive reaction to an incident. When confronting a player whose emotions are starting to get the better of him, try to calm him down. And, since he's starting to get close to the edge, make a special effort not to provoke a response that would have to be cautioned. Deliberate, calm body language and non-verbal signals often work well for this kind of dissent.

**High-level dissent** should be cautioned. It is clear, public dissent: loud verbal dissent or strong, dissenting body language or actions that can be seen by most or all people at the ground. It cannot be ignored without undermining the referee's authority or sacrificing match control. Also, in this category is a player who continues to publicly dissent a call after being told to stop by the referee.

**"Offensive, abusive or insulting"** conduct or language must result in a send-off. It is no longer a question of dissent and should be dealt with according to Law 12.

Referees need a thick skin and need to be discerning in handling dissent. They should be confident enough in their decisions to ignore minor displays, handle not-so-minor ones, and sanction any high-level display appropriately.

## SUMMARY OF INDICATIVE PLAYER BEHAVIOURS AND REFEREE ACTION

Type of Dissent	Indicative behaviour	Referee Action or Sanction
<b>Low-level dissent</b>	Minor complaining or whinging. Private dissatisfaction. Expression of frustration or disappointment. Quiet swearing not directed at officials (and not deemed foul or abusive).	Ignore or quiet word (informal warning)  Calm, clear verbal communication and/or body language
<b>Medium-level dissent</b>	Emotional displays and reactions to an event. Impulsive responses to a decision which can be handled without too much fuss. General swearing which is a reaction to an event and not directed at officials. Public complaining/whinging which does not seek to belittle or mock the referee.	Quiet word or public warning.  Calm, authoritative verbal communication and body language
<b>High-level dissent</b>	Public swearing not deemed foul or abusive. Loud, public dissent designed to influence or belittle the referee. Public gesticulations which belittle or mock the Ref or ARs. Ongoing or continued Low-level or Medium-level dissent after a warning.	Yellow Card.  Calm, authoritative body language. Use verbal communication too if required.
<b>Foul or Abusive Language</b> (may or may not be directed at the match officials)	Foul, offensive language (normally public). Abusing officials verbally or through foul body language. Verbal abuse of an opponent, teammate, club official or spectator. Threatening physical harm to an official, opponent, club official or spectator. Calling the match officials a "cheat" or similar insult.	Red Card.  Calm, authoritative body language.