



MWFRA Public Swearing Guidelines



The MWFRA has issued guidelines to all referees and MWFA clubs aimed at educating players and team officials towards reducing the prevalence of public swearing at MWFA football matches.

Public swearing is defined as the use of language by players or team officials containing swear words which is audible to people present at the ground but which does not rise to the level of offensive, abusive and/or insulting language.

The use of offensive, abusive and/or insulting language and/or gestures by a player remains, of course, an offence for which the offender should be sent off. The use of the same by a team official warrants his or her dismissal from the technical area.

Referees are instructed to act upon all instances of public swearing by players in the following manner:

- For low level public swearing (in audibility and/or content), the referee should have a quiet word with the player.
- For medium level public swearing (increased audibility and/or content), the referee should issue a public warning to the player.
- For high level public swearing (increased audibility and/or content but falling short of offensive, abusive and/or insulting language), the referee should caution the player for unsporting behaviour.

Referees retain some discretion in the application of these instructions in instances where there are mitigating circumstances including, but not limited to, an injury or self-directed swearing.

Referees who intend to caution a player for engaging in high level (or repeated) public swearing must be able to identify the offending player. Referees who have heard public swearing but cannot identify the offending player will take alternative measures in addressing public swearing.

In instances of public swearing by team officials, referees (and fourth officials) are instructed to act in the following manner:

- For low level public swearing (in audibility and/or content), the referee (or fourth official) should ask the team official to desist.
- For medium level public swearing (increased audibility and/or content), the referee (or fourth official) should tell the team official to desist.
- For high level public swearing (increased audibility and/or content but falling short of offensive, abusive and/or insulting language), the referee (or fourth official) should warn the team official that further public swearing may result in dismissal from the technical area.

The aim of these guidelines is to educate MWFA players and team officials that public swearing at MWFA football matches will no longer be tolerated and that the MWFRA is actively working towards reducing its prevalence.