Touchline Protocol June 2010

This protocol confirms with RFU regulation 13.7 and the Society upholds its rights under regulation 13.7.4 to insist that the regulations must be adhered to by all clubs at all levels in RFU Competitions. These regulations are written to enable the referee to officiate at the match safely and to be able to carry out his duties efficiently and the players to play without risk of injury. Barriers are defined as permanent steel fabrications covered in adverts down to two pieces of timber hammered into the ground with rope tied between them as long as they keep spectators away from the playing area..

- All clubs in RFU Competitions (League and Cup) must have all spectators behind barriers
- Technical areas must be provided, both on the same side of the pitch
- Only permitted personnel are allowed in the technical area and they must stay there for the duration of the match except:
    - When medical personnel are treating injured players
    - When water carriers (with permission of the referee) are carrying out their duties
    - Replacements are warming up.
    - At half time
- Coaches cannot be water carriers, touch judges or kicking T carriers
- Replacements cannot run the touch. If they do they forfeit their right to be replacements or substitutes.
- If these permitted personnel do not want to take up their place in the technical area they must be behind the barriers
- Replacements and substitutions can only take place from the technical area.
- If there are no barriers provided then the referee may ask the spectators to stand behind the dead ball lines or if there is a continuing safety issue then the referee is within his rights to refuse to referee the match.

In all other matches clubs must do their best to conform to the above regulations but the Society recognises that there are practical issues such as:

- Matches played alongside other more senior matches with common touchlines
- Matches played alongside pitches used by other sports
- Matches moved to other pitches due to ground conditions.

In these cases the club must do everything they can to minimise any risk involved in not having pitches barriered.

- Ensure that the opposite side of the pitch has a barrier and that all spectators for that match are behind that barrier
- Technical areas should be on the non-adjoining touchlines.
- The club should ensure that spectators of the senior match are not causing safety issues on the adjoining pitch.

Other matches that must have barriers, without any leeway, are:

- All cup matches played in Warwickshire
- All U17 matches
- All Colts matches
- All representative matches at every age group.

It is also to be recognised that referee assessors and referee coaches remain behind the barriers so as not to obscure the view of spectators who may well have paid for admission.