

Neon Cricket Wiltshire County Cricket League

Admin Officer: David Norman, 2 Manley Close, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 8DT. Email admin@wccl.org.uk

Notes from the WCCL Captains Meeting Held on 25th April 2022.

Unfortunately in 2021, we saw an increase in the number of disciplinary incidents, not only in the WCCL but across the region and the country. Hence as we are doing now, WEPL and its other feeder leagues will also be having a captain's meeting to cover this issue.

The Spirit of Cricket opens with the following paragraph:

Cricket is a game that owes much to its unique appeal to the fact that it should be played not only within the Laws, but also within the Spirit of the Game. Any action which is seen to abuse this spirit causes injury to the game itself. The major responsibility for ensuring the spirit of fair play rests with the Captains.

The key point to emphasise, is the responsibility for discipline rests with the captain, not the umpires.

When there are disciplinary issues, they create a lot of work for many people. The standing umpire or the captain of the non-offending side has to write a report. The League Disciplinary Officer has to form a disciplinary panel, investigate the report, and come to a conclusion. This can take many man hours of work, work that none of these people want to have to do.

Most disciplinary incidents can be nipped in the bud with good communication between the two captains. If a situation starts to develop, then it should be dealt with immediately, not allowed to build up before anything is done.

Where a disciplinary incident does occur and a report has to be written, then the league rules now require that both captains are aware of this before leaving the ground. The only exception to this will be if a safeguarding issue comes to light after the match (e.g. a junior player reporting an incident to their parent when they get home).

We also received the following information from the County Welfare Officer:

As a Captain, you have a legal duty of care, on behalf of your Club, for the well-being of all under 18s in yours and the opposition's team. You must not allow bullying or swearing at young players (or indeed any players) or any behaviour they might find intimidating.

At the time of a disciplinary incident, if the non-offending team's captain makes the situation clear to the other captain, and the situation does not improve, then the offending team's captain is then guilty of the level 1 offence of "A captain failing his responsibilities under 'The Spirit of Cricket'."

Where players are causing disciplinary issues, clubs should also think about the effect which this has on the other players in their own team who want to enjoy their cricket. Ultimately they are likely to play less, or move to another club, to the detriment of the club in question.

The captains were also encouraged to make sure they know the league rules, and the laws of cricket. The league rules are now on the league website. The Stage 1 Umpires course is now available as an online course. The feedback received at the meeting was that it was excellent, and took about 2.5 hours to complete. Captains are also reminded to send their umpire course certificates to the League Admin Officer, who will then register them as forum-trained.

In summary, disciplinary incidents benefit nobody. The player in question will be disciplined. The other players do not enjoy playing in that atmosphere, and so ultimately the club will suffer. And the umpires, captains and the league officials all have to do a lot of work to process the incident. We hope that by making their role clear, this meeting will empower the captains to take control and stop disciplinary incidents from developing.