



Uganda Rugby Union

Member, World Rugby
Member, Rugby Africa
Member, Rugby Football Union of East Africa (RFUEA)
Member, Uganda National Council of Sports
Member, Uganda Olympic Committee

Tuesday 6th May 2025

The Chairman
Walukuba Rugby Club
Jinja

Dear Sir,

**REPRIMAND AND FORMAL WARNING - BLACK PIRATES VS WALUKUBA BARBARIANS GAME
ABANDONMENT ON 12TH APRIL 2025**

Reference is made to the Nile Special Rugby Premiership game between Black Pirates and Walukuba Barbarians that was not played to its conclusion on the 12th of April 2025 at King's Park Arena.

Further reference is made to your submission to the Union on the matter, the day's Match Commissioner report, and day's Match Official's report.

From these, it was noted that the game was played up to the 69th minute at which point the Walukuba Barbarians team opted to walk off the pitch before the scheduled 80 minutes of regulation time.

The Uganda Rugby Union Technical Committee met and deliberated on the matter on 1st May 2025, a meeting where the Barbarians were invited to submit on the events. This deliberation was based on the Premiership Manual for 2025, written submissions from your club, the match day Referee, as well as submissions from playing members (captains) of Walukuba Barbarians.

From your submissions, you presented the need to preserve your team's mental health as the justification that led to the game abandonment. You further stated that the frustration your team was experiencing on account of match officiation posed a safety risk for both Barbarians and Pirates players.

The Technical Committee reviewed these submissions among others and came to the following conclusions:

- I. The Premiership Manual does not explicitly provide for sanctions against game abandonment, only requiring notification to the Union as per section 4.5.5.
- II. World Rugby Regulation 18.2.1 (f) states that Misconduct includes but is not limited to failing to complete a match or fixture without reasonable justification. This is not treated lightly because it affects the integrity of the competition. The specific sanctions are not rigidly fixed and are at the discretion of the relevant disciplinary body, but they can include:
 - Fines – Monetary penalties on the team or union.

- Forfeiture – The match is awarded to the opposing team, usually with a fixed score.
 - Points Deduction – Loss of competition points or standing penalties.
 - Suspensions – Bans on team officials, players, or even the team from future matches or competitions.
 - Reprimands or Warnings – Formal notice of misconduct.
 - Expulsion or Disqualification – In extreme or repeated cases, teams can be removed from a tournament.
- III. The abandonment of any game is not in the spirit of the sport. Precedence has shown reasonable justification to include cases of severe weather, security threats not foreseen, and or racism/tribalism as acceptable examples.
- IV. The safety and mental fortitude of teams is the responsibility of referees and captains respectively. Abandonment is not a remedy as Rugby teams in history have been on the end of worse scores and still finished the games safely and honorably.
- V. The refereeing standards of a game are not for a team or club to judge conclusively during the game.
- VI. Despite your efforts to raise grievances regarding match officiation after the game, as is the right of any club, the Barbarians did not provide any submissible evidence to support your claim as is necessary for review by referee assessors.
- VII. The Technical committee recognized from Captain's testimonies and referee report that the Barbarians Captain on the day was not accorded due courtesy by the match official of the day prior to the kickoff of the game. A regrettable incidence.
- VIII. The actions of your team brought the game of rugby into disrepute.
- IX. The URU grievance handling channel for match officiation is not fully in place, and previous grievances with requisite permissible evidence have not been disposed of adequately.

Considering the above, the Technical Committee of the URU came up with the following resolutions.

- A. The URU Technical Committee strongly condemns the actions of the Walukuba Barbarians for abandoning the game before full time and issues the club stern reprimand and warning as per this letter.
- B. Acknowledges a gap in the premiership manual to prescribe sanctions for game abandonment, despite World Rugby Regulations provisions.
- C. Will review and update Premiership and other manuals to manage this and other emerging tournament incidents.
- D. Acknowledges the gap in disposing of match official related grievances from clubs.
- E. Will expedite the setting up of the Uganda Rugby Referees' Board to manage referee performance appraisal and grievance handling.

- F. Requests Walukuba Barbarians to engage with their players to discuss ways of enhancing mental fortitude during games to see them finish games despite reasonable challenges.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Eric K. Butime', with a stylized circular flourish at the end.

Eric K. Butime
Chairman, URU Technical Committee

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ramsey Olinga', with a stylized circular flourish at the end.

Ramsey Olinga
Secretary, URU Technical Committee