

The Wicklow & District Football League regrets the decision of the Wicklow Branch of the Irish Soccer Referees Society to ignore a directive by the President of the ISRS to resume refereeing forthwith in accordance with the Society's Agreement with the FAI.

The Branch took the decision at their meeting on Monday night having rejected a proposal put forward by the FAI and ISRS which would have resolved the dispute.

Negotiations between the ISRS Executive and the Wicklow Branch on Wednesday night at the FAI's headquarters in Abbotstown also failed to resolve the issue and resulted in the Executive of the Society issuing a directive to the Branch to resume refereeing because they are in breach of the Agreement between the Society and the FAI.

Under this Agreement, members of the Society must adhere to an agreed dispute resolution mechanism and are not allowed to take any action which would have the effect of interfering with any game played under the jurisdiction of the Association.

Following the incident at the centre of this dispute the Wicklow League has banned the player involved for 25 years and written to clubs warning them of the consequences should any member assault a referee. The Wicklow League is also prepared to work with the Wicklow ISRS Branch to minimise the threat to referees of physical or verbal assault.

In addition the Wicklow League has introduced referee liaison officers at every club and has offered to set up regular meetings with representatives of the Branch. This is in line with key recommendations of the Agreement between the FAI and the ISRS.

The Wicklow League Disciplinary Committee is responsible for disciplinary matters in the Wicklow League and had already ruled in this case when the Wicklow Branch wrote with their suggestion for a trio of officials to be appointed to all games involving Arklow Town B.

The Wicklow League is appreciative of the on-going efforts by the Irish Soccer Referees Society and the FAI to attempt to resolve this matter.