



# ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

**FOR CLUBS**

2018/19

Level: Steps 5 and below



**FOR ALL**





**FOR ALL**



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# INTRODUCTION

This guide has been prepared to provide helpful guidance to Clubs and Participants on the disciplinary procedures for the 2018/19 Season at Step 5 and below.

It will cover match based discipline, regulation changes, hearings and the appeals process, and demonstrate how the Whole Game System can assist Clubs and Leagues with their day to day administration.

Below is a short video of Mark Ives, The Football Association's Head of Judicial Services explaining some of the key changes for the 2018-19 Season.









# REGULATION CHANGES 2018-19

Below provides a brief overview of the key Regulation amendments for 2018/19 Season for all Players, Clubs & Leagues operating at Step 5 and below (County FA football). Please refer to The FA or County FA Handbook for the rule in its entirety and all other changes that may affect you. This is not intended to replace the Association Handbook.

## *Temporary Dismissals (Sin Bins)*

Following the successful Pilot across 31 Leagues for the use of Sin Bins for cautions for Dissent, The FA Council has approved the following:

Repeat Offenders who receive more than 1 Sin Bin offence in a game and/or are excluded from participation under the Sin Bin criteria will also receive a post-match 1 match ban and £25 fine plus administration fee.

*In addition Council approved the following effective from:*

## **2018/19 Season**

The 31 Leagues who used the system in 2017/18 season will continue to use the same system permanently from now on.

Some Leagues/Competitions at Step 7 and below have requested to use the Sin Bin system for the 2018/19 Season subject to CFA approval. At this moment in time 60+ Leagues have been selected.

In addition, some Counties have nominated their County Cup Competitions for Sin Bins for Dissent. This is only permitted where the County Cup consists of teams at Step 7 or below only.





## 2019/20 Season

All Leagues and all County Cup Competitions at Step 7 and below to use Temporary Dismissals for Dissent Season information, individual Player records, or the five Season summary, and can export this data into a number of formats.

The use of Sin Bins as approved from IFAB is for grassroots football only at this time.

Below is a short video of Mark Ives, The Football Association's Head of Judicial Services explaining the expansion of the Sin Bin Pilot for the 2018-19 Season.



# COUNTY FA DISCIPLINE COMMISSIONS

*The following has been approved:*

- 1.** All Personal Hearings must have an independent member (this was effective from 1st January 2018) - Independent members will provide opportunities for those not operating within CFA Councils to be incorporated into the discipline process providing their skillset and expertise on decisions. Thus, improving the diversity of the Panel and having a true reflection of the personnel within the County.  
  
The definition of an Independent member is where the member has no involvement other than the Disciplinary Panel within a County Football Association Council.
- 2.** All Wing Members will have to be qualified and pass an assessment to sit on Disciplinary cases. This together with previous directives will ensure all personnel involved in the Disciplinary hearings have received training and have been assessed assuring suitability for the role.
- 3.** Commissions are required to produce full written reasons for any serious case that has been considered by a Personal Hearing whether the case is Proven or Not Proven. A serious case is classified as:
  - Assaults on Match Officials
  - Physical Contact on Match Officials
  - Threatening behaviour towards a Match Official
  - Assault Participant on Participant
  - Any other case where sanction imposed is 10 matches/112 days or greater







# ADMINISTRATION FEE

The Administration Fee for non-caution offences (send offs and all misconduct cases) will be amended to £15 to account for the additional administration of these cases.

The Administration fee for caution offences remains at £10.

## COMPETITION SPECIFIC SANCTIONS FOR CAUTIONS

For the FA Cup, FA Trophy and FA Vase, the accumulation of yellow cards will be Competition specific. This will operate similar to the Champions League and Europa League, where a player accumulates 2 yellow cards in the competition will miss the next game in that competition.

The caution count will only apply up to and including the Quarter Finals for each competition.

Cautions received in these competitions will therefore not count in the caution tally for the 5/10/15 sanction process.

It should be noted this regulation is for cautions only and dismissals remain unaffected.

# APPEALING A COUNTY FA DECISION

A participant charged will be able to lodge an appeal against any decision of a County FA, the minimum threshold has been removed and so all decisions found Proven, are subject to appeal by the Participant charged.

All suspensions imposed following a misconduct charge commence 3 days after the date of the hearing with an intention to appeal having to be made within 7 days. (It was 3 days last season but has been increased this season to 7 days).

The full written submissions are still required within 14 days of the written decision.

Any appeal outside of these timelines will not be accepted.

## MANDATORY MINIMUM SANCTIONS

To ensure consistency nationally, mandatory minimum sanctions have been introduced, an individual who receives a charge below and if found proven, will face as a minimum the sanction below listed. A Commission can increase based upon the aggravating factors that are present.

*These are not an entry point.*

- Assaults on a Match Official – 5 year minimum sanction (2 years minimum if the player is under 16)
- Physical contact on a Match official - 84 days & £100 minimum
- Threatening a match official – 56 days/6 matches & £50 minimum





# REFEREE REPORTING

Following the introduction of the match based disciplinary system many seasons ago; clubs are only permitted to challenge a dismissal on the basis of a wrongful dismissal.

Last Season Referees across the game at all levels when dismissing a player from the field of play were required to write a detailed report of the offence when reporting the dismissal.

The requirement to report the detail of the dismissal is not necessary for the Wrongful Dismissal process that now applies at all levels of the game and has in fact contributed to confusion as to the purpose of the Wrongful Dismissal process.

The ability to claim a Wrongful Dismissal applies where a Club can demonstrate that the decision to send off a player for the offence committed was **obviously wrong**.

It has therefore been agreed to amend the reporting process with effect from the start of the 2018/19 season to operate the same as reporting yellow card offences where a specific description of the send-off offence is not required. This change will apply at all levels of the game.

*Therefore the referee is only required to report the red card offences as laid out in the laws of the game as follows:*

- S1. Serious Foul Play
- S2. Violent Conduct
- S3. Spits at an Opponent or any other person
- S4. Denying the opposing player an obvious goal scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball
- S5. Denies the opposing player an obvious goal scoring opportunity by an offence punishable by a free kick or penalty kick



REFEREE



- S6. Uses Offensive, insulting or abusive language
- S7. Receives a second caution in the same match (This offence also requires the referee to report the caution offence for each caution)

***Offences of S2 – Violent conduct will be categorised further with the following categories:***

- S2 – Violent Conduct - Head to Head contact
- S2 – Violent Conduct - Elbowing
- S2 – Violent Conduct - Kicking
- S2 – Violent Conduct - Stamping
- S2 – Violent Conduct – Striking
- S2 – Violent Conduct – Biting
- S2 – Violent Conduct – Other Unspecified Behaviour\*

(\* A free text field to capture other Violent Conduct will be available if this option is selected).





# MATCH BASED DISCIPLINE CATEGORIES

*There are seven categories for Match Based Discipline at County FA level:*

- Saturday
- Sunday
- Midweek
- Veterans
- School
- Representative
- Friendly

Automatic suspensions for dismissals apply to one of these seven categories. If you are dismissed in a game, you are unable to play again in the same category of football until the automatic match based suspension is served. For example, a Player sent off in Sunday football would be still be eligible to play football for a Saturday team as the suspension would apply to Sunday football only.

These categories also apply with regards to continuing misconduct, receiving multiple cautions or dismissals in a Season. A Player would need to accumulate 5 cautions before the 31 December in the same category of football in order to receive an automatic one match suspension. For example, if during the same period, a Player received 3 cautions in Midweek football and 2 cautions in Sunday football, then they would not be subject to the automatic suspension for accumulated cautions.

Please note that suspensions resultant from misconduct cases (charges issued by the County FA) are from ALL football, so a Participant will not be able to play until the team they were playing for when the charge was issued serves the appropriate number of games.

In the event of non-receipt of paperwork following disciplinary sanctions being administered by the Match Official, the Club are required to contact the County Association and make them aware immediately.

If you have not received paperwork usually within four working days of the game, The FA advises that you must bring this to the attention of your County FA.

**NON RECEIPT OF PAPERWORK IS NOT AN EXCUSE!**



# YELLOW CARDS

What is the best way to check the number of cards a player has received or whether they are suspended?



A Yellow card received by a Player will be shown on the paperwork from the County as a 'Caution', and we will refer to both terms throughout the booklet.

Suspensions which are imposed for reaching these thresholds will commence automatically 7 days following the final caution.

Number of Cautions	Cut Off Date (Inclusive)	Automatic Suspension for Number of Cautions
5	31 <sup>st</sup> December	1 match suspension and £15 fine
10	Second Sunday in April	2 match suspension and £15 fine
15	End of Season	3 match suspension and £15 fine
20+		Every 5 cautions received there after will result in continuing misconduct charge

Note: These caution counts do not include cautions in The FA Cup, The FA Trophy or The FA Vase.







For Leagues who operate within the Sin Bin pilot, the cautions administered which result in a Sin Bin are also included in the total calculation.

As mentioned previously, match based discipline categories apply and to reach the threshold you must receive the particular amount in the same category of football.

Even if you have not received notification of suspension from your County Association you must contact them and inform them that there is information outstanding that has not been received.

If you are in doubt please contact your County FA who will be able to advise further.

All yellow cards have an automatic administration fee of £10.00 which is imposed by the County Associations which the Participant is responsible for (for youth players the Club is responsible for). Save for mistaken identity, there is no right to appeal against a yellow card. For Clubs participating within the Sin Bin System, a player who receives a Sin Bin will not be charged an administration fee.





# RED CARDS

A Red card received by a Player will be shown on the paperwork from the County as a 'Standard Charge', but throughout the booklet will be referred to as a Red card.

Suspensions commence automatically on the 7th day following the match in which the player was dismissed. The County will send you the charge letter, response form and a copy of the Match Officials report.

Match based discipline categories apply and therefore if a Player is sent off for a second time in the Season they will only serve an additional suspension if the red card is within the same category. Players dismissed from Saturday football can still play Sunday football and vice versa as these are separate match based discipline categories.

Qualifying matches for a suspension are based on the team the Player was playing for at the time they were sent off. Should a Player transfer, (i.e. cease to be a member of the original Club), to the satisfaction of the County Association to a team at the same level and category as the original Club, then any remaining period of suspension may also be transferred to the new Club.

If the fixtures that a Player is due to miss change for any reason you must notify your County Association.

If you are unaware of your fixtures when responding please inform the County and update them once the fixtures have been announced.

Processing discipline is now much more streamlined due to the Whole Game System. In the Club Discipline area of Club Portal, you can access the current cases for Players for cautions, dismissals and misconduct charges, and whether or not any responses are due on any of those cases. You can also review a Player's five year discipline history.







There is also the ability to download these records, whether that is current Season information, individual Player records, or the five Season summary, and can export this data into a number of formats.

**PLEASE CLICK HERE** to view the guide to accessing and using the Whole Game System portal

Dismissal Offence	Suspension	Penalty Points
Serious Foul Play	3 Matches	5
Violent Conduct	3 Matches	6
Spitting at an Opponent	6 Matches	7
Denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity	1 Match	3
Use of offensive, or insulting or abusive language	2 Matches	4
Receiving a Second Caution in a Match	1 Match	3

Please inform the County FA and update them once the fixtures have been announced.

If the team has no more fixtures remaining at the end of a Season, the suspension is lifted and commences when that teams first qualifying fixture takes place in the new Season.

The Player is free from suspension between the last qualifying fixture and the opening qualifying fixture of the new Season to participate for any team they wish to - this applies to Match Based Discipline football only.

An abandoned match will not count towards clearing a Player of suspension as it is not a completed fixture. Any Misconduct received in the fixture must still be processed by the County Association. Importantly, this is still the case even if a League decides that the result from the abandoned fixture stands. All matches must be completed in order for the fixture to count towards the suspension.

Leagues can only deal with status of the fixture once all disciplinary action has been completed by the County Association. Leagues will make a decision on the status of the game in accordance with the relevant League Standard Code of Rules.

A game that is classed as a 'double header' where teams play each other twice on the same day is classed as two matches. A Player can therefore use both fixtures as qualifying matches.

**PLEASE CLICK HERE** to view the guide to accessing and using the Whole Game System portal

## CONTINUING MISCONDUCT

Players who are dismissed on more than one occasion during the Season will receive an automatic additional one match ban.

This only occurs for multiple dismissals that have taken place within the same category of football. For example, if you have been dismissed in a Sunday football match, and are then sent off again in a Sunday football match later in the Season, then you will get an additional match ban. There would be an additional two matches for a 3<sup>rd</sup> dismissal within that category and so on.

There is no right of appeal against this punishment and it will be imposed automatically. However, if you have been sent off in Sunday football but are then sent off again later in the Season in a Saturday football match, you will not receive any additional suspension other than the standard charge.

## SENDING OFF SANCTION INSUFFICIENT

When a Player is sent off they are automatically suspended for the number of matches depending on the reason for the dismissal. If upon receipt of the match report and possible further investigation the County believe that the original punishment is too lenient they are able to raise a further misconduct charge against the individual. The Player will need to respond guilty or not guilty to the charge.



# QUALIFYING MATCHES

The following competitions will qualify for a Player from Step 5 and below to serve the suspension imposed by the County FA:

- FA Competitions (Cup, Trophy, Vase, Women's Cup and FA Sunday Cup)
- League Matches
- League Cup Matches
- All County Cup Matches
- League Cup Competitions
- Any Competition as designated as a qualifying competition by the sanctioning authority

If you are unsure whether a fixture qualifies for a suspension, please contact your County FA who will be able to advise you further.

Suspensions under the match based discipline system commence automatically 7 days from the date of the fixture.

If you have not received correspondence relating to a fixture within 3 working days of the red card, you must contact the County Association immediately.

Non-receipt of paperwork is not a valid defence and a charge is issued for playing whilst under suspension for both the Club and the Player.

**DISCIPLINE  
HANDBOOK**



# FRIENDLY FIXTURE SANCTIONS

Any Player who is dismissed from the field of play in a friendly fixture is suspended automatically for 1 match from the next friendly fixture for that Team, irrespective of the offence committed.

Should the County FA deem that the offence committed warrants further discipline action, they do have the ability to raise a misconduct charge if they feel that the standard punishment is insufficient.

Any Player who is sent off in the last friendly fixture of the Season will automatically have the suspension carried over to the following Season. They will not be suspended from their competitive fixtures in this instance.





# APPEAL – CLAIM OF WRONGFUL DISMISSAL/MISTAKEN IDENTITY

In all cases the appeal fee, which must be submitted with details of your appeal is £50 (Steps 5-7). For Clubs outside the National League system and Youth the fee is £30.

Time limits are strict, claims received late will not be considered

Day of Dismissal	Notification to the County FA of your Intention to Appeal by 5pm	Relevant Appeal fee, Video if available and any other correspondence to be received by 5pm
Saturday	Tuesday	Thursday
Sunday	Tuesday	Thursday
Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Tuesday	Thursday	Monday
Wednesday	Friday	Tuesday
Thursday	Monday	Wednesday
Friday	Tuesday	Thursday

*If Bank Holidays fall within this period, the appropriate number of extra days will be made available, but appeals will always be heard before any sanction commences*

# WRONGFUL DISMISSAL

Below is a short video of Mark Ives, The Football Association's Head of Judicial Services outlining things to consider when making a claim of wrongful dismissal.



Providing video footage of the incident is no longer mandatory at this level but should be made available if one exists. A successful claim will need to demonstrate that the Match Official made an obvious error in dismissing the Player from the field of play. A dismissal from the field of play for S6 (using offensive language and/or insulting and/or abusive language and/or gestures) or S7 (receiving a second caution in the same match) is not within the criteria for a claim.

Please be aware that the video footage and any other evidence submitted must show that the Match Official made an obvious error.

If a claim is successful the appeal fee will be returned and the suspension/fine will be removed from the Player's record. However, the details of the dismissal will remain on the record as it is fact that the Player was sent off.

Should a player be dismissed for denying an obvious goal scoring opportunity as a result of a challenge outside of the Penalty area, a claim will only be considered as to whether the foul committed was an obvious error. The Commission will not consider whether or not the offence







took place inside or outside of the penalty area, this is not an opportunity to re-referee the game and the Commission must only consider whether the red card for denying an obvious goal scoring opportunity was an obvious error.

Claims for wrongful dismissal will always be dealt with before the Player's next fixture and therefore before any suspension commences. The onus will be on the County Association to ensure they have arranged a Commission to consider the case prior to any suspension.

## MISTAKEN IDENTITY

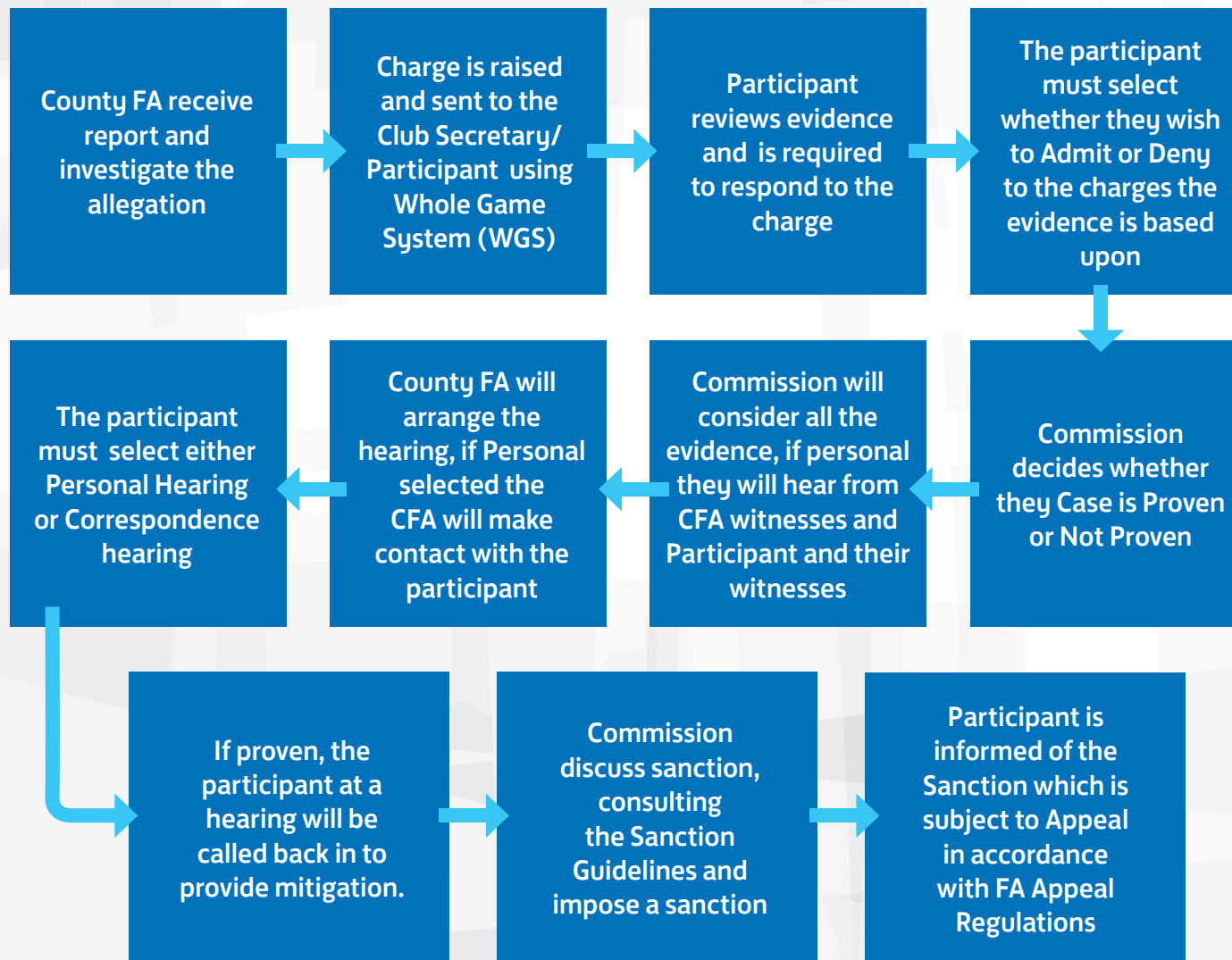
Mistaken Identity claims can be made if the Referee cautions or sends off the wrong Player from the field of play.

A Club should identify the name of the person who was responsible and submit to the County FA any supporting evidence along with the appeal fee, within three working days of the match. If a claim is successful the appeal fee will be returned and the suspension/fine will be removed from the incorrect Player's record and transferred to the correct Player.

All disciplinary commission decisions for Wrongful Dismissal or Mistaken Identity cases are final and binding on all parties and there is no further right to challenge.



# DISCIPLINE FLOWCHART - MISCONDUCT CHARGES



**PLEASE CLICK HERE** to view the Board of Appeals Information





# MISCONDUCT CHARGES

A Misconduct Charge will be issued for a reported incident which does not fall under standard dismissal offences or is a serious offence.

A Discipline Commission will convene to consider all Misconduct Cases, whether the response to the charge is accepted or denied. A Player can be charged with Misconduct following being sent from the field of play. For example, a Player is sent off for violent conduct (will receive the standard three match ban), and before leaving the field of play used abusive/insulting comments towards a match official.

The latter would be dealt with as Misconduct and subsequently the Player will have a second charge that they need to respond to, having the options to accept or deny the charge.

A Club, League or any Participant in football can be charged with misconduct (for example, Manager, Coach, Physio, Club Secretary, Chairperson).

If you receive a Misconduct Charge and it is found Proven, any suspension will be from ALL Football at County level (Step 5 and below) and automatically commences 3 days after the date of the hearing. If you are issued with a Misconduct Charge you will receive a charge letter, response form and any evidence that the County have based their charge upon. You must ensure you respond to the charge within 14 days.

## NON RESPONSE TO A MISCONDUCT CHARGE

When a County Association raises a misconduct charge, paperwork is generated to the Club and on some occasions will be sent directly to the Participant. For each charge the Participant is invited to respond, selecting whether they accept or deny the charge and how they wish for the case to be heard (e.g. Personal or Non Personal Hearing).

If the County FA fail to receive a response to the charge the matter will be passed to a Disciplinary Commission for them to consider.

They will consider the case as a not guilty plea and review all the correspondence in relation to the case. No late fine or reminder will be sent to Participants who fail to respond to a misconduct charge however the Participant forfeits the right for a Personal Hearing.

# RESPONSE TO CHARGE

*On the response sheet Participants will be offered four options, one of which must be chosen:*

- A.** I am pleading guilty to the charge and I wish the case to be dealt with in my absence. I request any correspondence that I have submitted to be considered and I await the decision of the Disciplinary Commission as to my punishment.

*A Discipline Commission will consider the case, taking into consideration the Participants/Club discipline record from the previous five years and all documentation that has been sent to them in relation to the case. The Commission will come to a decision and Participants will be notified in writing by the County FA.*

- B.** I am pleading guilty to the charge and I wish to attend a Discipline Hearing to enter a verbal plea for leniency. The hearing fee in addition to the administration fee of is enclosed where applicable. I am aware that I am accepting the charge and I will not be able to question the basis of the charge and that the match officials will not be in attendance.

*The appellant, having already accepted the charge, will put forward verbal mitigation in relation to the case, which could include previous discipline history. A Commission will consider the appellant's submission and impose a punishment that they deem appropriate.*

*The charge has already been accepted so the Match Officials report will not be able to be contested and neither will the Match Official/s be in attendance.*

- C.** I am pleading not guilty to the charge, and I wish the case to be dealt with in my absence. I request any correspondence that I have submitted be considered and I will await the decision of the Disciplinary Commission.

*The Participant/Club must submit the documentation that they wish the Commission to consider. If the Commission find the case not proven the case is concluded, with no further action taken and the details being removed from the Participant's record. If the Commission decide the case is proven, they will consider the Participant/Club's previous five year history, and decide on an appropriate punishment.*







- D.** I am pleading not guilty to the charge, and I wish to attend a Disciplinary Hearing. The personal hearing fee and the administration fee are enclosed where applicable, together with written reasons as to why I am requesting a personal hearing and the number of witnesses I intend to represent me, along with any other documentation to be considered.

*A full list of witnesses who will be attending and the reason why the hearing has been requested needs to be submitted to the County Association (and any other documentation the Participant wishes the Commission to consider at the hearing). The County Association will arrange the hearing.*

*If the Participant denies any aspect of the charge and report on which it is based they must select option C or D.*

*Should the misconduct charge be found proven, Participants are permitted to lodge an appeal against a decision of the County FA. They are required to adhere to FA Regulations for Appeals – further details can be found by clicking on the link below.*

*A Participant who receives a match suspension as a result of a misconduct charge is unable to participate in any football including refereeing, until the team they were playing for when charged serves the qualifying amount of fixtures, as imposed by a Discipline Commission.*

**To download a guide to appealing a decision, [PLEASE CLICK HERE](#)**

# SANCTION GUIDELINES

The Disciplinary Sanction Guidelines have been produced to improve consistency in the application of sanctions for misconduct charges across all County Associations.

In an ever changing world of football it is important that the processes of The Football Association and County Associations evolve to provide a safe, enjoyable environment for Players, Referees and Participants alike, whilst maintaining the need for a fair and transparent disciplinary process for all involved.

As well as sporting sanctions and fines, a Commission is also able to order Participants to attend various workshops or seminars to help improve poor behaviour. Discipline is not a matter of just issuing match bans and financial sanctions but is also a process to help educate people and encourage best practice.

To view the full Sanction Guidelines document including background to their introduction and guidance, [PLEASE CLICK HERE](#)

## EDUCATION SANCTIONS

As football evolves, new ways in which to educate rather than punish (in appropriate circumstances) are increasingly on the agenda.

There are several alternatives to the traditional sanctions that may be used if a Disciplinary Commission considers they will be of benefit to the Participant.

Educational sanctions are a great tool when dealing with younger Players and the Club Welfare Officer can play a key role by discussing the 'rights' and 'wrongs' with the Participant during or following a disciplinary investigation. Only a Disciplinary Commission can enforce such an order on a Participant.







*There are a variety of education sanctions that are available and they are:*

- RESPECT Courses
- Safeguarding Children Workshop
- Laws of the game course/presentation
- Mandatory Equality Education (Online & Face to Face)

## GROUND BAN

What is a ground ban? In simple terms, it is a ban from attending the ground during any match that a particular team participates.

This can also be applied to teams playing on public playing fields as the Participant charged agrees by their very participation to abide by the Rules and Regulations of The Football Association and therefore to any orders made by a Disciplinary Commission.

It is The FA Policy that all County FA's issue ground bans instead of touchline bans as at grassroots level a touchline ban can be difficult to enforce given that games may be played on public playing fields and there can be uncertainty regarding the distance required to be away from the touchline.


To view the full Sanction Guidelines document including background to their introduction and guidance, **[PLEASE CLICK HERE](#)**

FA Rule	Charge Description	Step 5 -7 Teams			Outside NLS (Except Youth)			YOUTH TEAMS		
		Low	Mid	High	Low	Mid	High	Low	Mid	High
(1) E3	<i>Improper Conduct against a Match Official (including Abusive Language/Behaviour)</i>	0/2 £0 - £40	1/3 £15- £60	3/6 £20- £100	0/2 £0 - £35	1/3 £10- £50	3/6 £20 - £70	0/2 £0 - £25	1/3 £10- £30	3/6 £20 - £50
(2) E3	<i>Improper Conduct (Not including Threatening and/or Abusive Language/Behaviour)</i>	0/1 £0 - £25	1/2 £15- £40	2/3 £20- £50	0/1 £0 - £20	1/2 £10- £30	2/3 £20 - £40	0/1 £0 - £15	1/2 £10- £20	2/3 £20 - £40
(3) E3	<i>Improper Conduct against a Match Official (Including Threatening and/or Abusive Behaviour)</i>	Recommended punishment for Threatening Behaviour against a Match official carries 112 days/12 Matches plus up to £100 fine but minimum is 56 days/6 matches & £50 fine								
(4) E3	<i>Improper Conduct (Including Threatening and/or Abusive Language/Behaviour)</i>	1/2 £15 - £30	2/3 £20 - £50	3/4 £30- £60	1/2 £10 - £25	2/3 £15 - £40	3/4 £25 - £50	1/2 £10 - £20	2/3 £15 - £30	3/4 £25 - £40
(5) E3	<i>Improper Conduct against a Match Official (Including Physical Contact, Violent Conduct and Threatening and/or Abusive Language/Behaviour)</i>	Recommended punishment for Physical conduct against a Match official is 182 days plus up to £150 fine but minimum 84 days & £100 fine								
(6) E3	<i>Improper Conduct (Including Violent Conduct and Threatening and/or Abusive Language/Behaviour)</i>	1/3 £30 - £60	2/4 £50 - £100	3/10 £75 - £150	1/3 £20 - £50	2/4 £40 - £80	3/10 £70 - £125	1/3 £15 - £30	2/4 £20 - £50	3/10 £40 - £80
(7) E3	<i>Improper Conduct (including foul &amp; abusive language)</i>	1/3 £0 - £25	2/4 £15- £40	3/10 £20- £50	1/3 £0 - £20	2/4 £10- £30	3/10 £20 - £40	1/3 £0 - £15	2/4 £10- £20	3/10 £20 - £40
(8) E3	<b>Assault by Participant on Participant</b>	140 Days £150	1 to 2 Years £150	5 Years £150	140 Days £150	1 to 2 Years £150	5 Years £150	140 Days £150	1 to 2 Years £150	2 to 5 Years £150
(9) E3	<b>Assault on a Match Official</b>	Minimum 5 Year	7 Year	10 Year	Minimum 5 Year	7 Year	10 Year	Minimum 5 Year	5 to 7 Year	7 to 10 Year
(10) E4	<b>Discrimination on Grounds of origin/colour/race/nationality/religion/sex/sexual orientation/disability etc..</b>	5 £30 - £60	5/7 £50 - £75	6/10 £60 - £150	5 £20 - £50	5/7 £40 - £65	6/10 £50 - £125	5 £20 - £40	5/7 £30-£50	6/10 £50 - £100
(11) E10	<i>Failed to comply with a decision of the Association (Player Charge)</i>	1/2 £0 - £25	2/4 £15- £40	3/5 £20- £50	1/2 £0 - £20	2/4 £10- £30	3/5 £20 - £40	1/2 £0 - £15	2/4 £10- £20	3/5 £20 - £40
(12) E12	<i>Failed to comply with a decision of the Association (Club Charge)</i>	£0-£40	£40 - £125	£75-£200	£0-£30	£30 - £100	£75-£200	£0-£30	£30 - £75	£75-£150
(13) E20	<i>Failed to ensure Players/Spectators and/or Club Officials conducted themselves in an orderly fashion</i>	£0-£75	£75-£150	£150-250	£0-£50	£25-£75	£75-£150	£0-£40	£25-£60	£60-£100

#### Notes

- 1 A case can only be included as low level in these instance where abusive language is not present:
- 2 In the event of any breach of Rule E 3(1) including a reference to any one or more of the following: ethnic origin, colour, race, nationality, faith, gender, sexual orientation or disability (an "aggravating factor") (resulting in an E3(2) charge), a Commission shall follow the guidelines as outlined below. In all cases where an aggravating factor exists, save for those which fall within E3(4), the minimum sanction of 5 matches and £75 fine must be imposed. For a first offence, the minimum is a 5 match suspension which will be increased if aggravating factors are present, a £75 fine and FA Education course must be imposed by the Disciplinary Commission. For a second offence, a suspension of more than five matches with an entry point of 10 matches, a £150 fine and an FA Education course must be imposed by the Disciplinary Commission. Any further such offence(s) shall give rise to consideration of a permanent suspension. Disciplinary Commissions must also give consideration to FA Rules E3(5) and E3(6) when considering sanctions on youth players. Disciplinary Commissions will consider ground bans for non-playing participants.
- 3 In such circumstances that the offence relates to playing whilst under suspension, the sanction imposed must be in addition to the number of matches the player participated in whilst under suspension.
- 4 Social Media Offences should carry sporting sanctions in line with the guidelines outlined above.
- 5 Offences committed by Participants where it is inappropriate to impose matches, then appropriate period sanction should be imposed in its place. Such positions include Match Officials or non-playing Club Officers



A close-up photograph of a hand holding a black referee's whistle. The whistle has a silver ball and a yellow cap. The hand is wearing a black sleeve with a white logo that says '@RAFAY'. The background is a blurred green field.

There may be occasions when Participants are asked to attend to a County Disciplinary Hearing – either as a Player charged with misconduct, or attending as a witness to misconduct, or as a Match Official giving evidence.

*The FA has produced a series of guides to help Participants prepare for the Hearing and let them know what to expect covering topics such as:*

- What should I bring with to the hearing?
- What should I wear?
- Can I bring witnesses with me?
- How long do Personal Hearings normally last?
- What happens if I am not happy with the result of my Hearing?
- Procedures for young people

*These can be downloaded from the links below:*

**PLEASE CLICK HERE** to Player and Club Guide to Personal Hearings

**PLEASE CLICK HERE** to Match Officials Guide to Personal Hearings

**PLEASE CLICK HERE** to County Witnesses Guide to Personal Hearings

# MULTIPLE / ALTERNATE CHARGES

A County Association may raise a multiple or an alternate charge against a Participant where required. A multiple charge is raised when there are several charges relating to a Participant on the same day. An alternate charge occurs when a Participant is charged, and there is also an alternate charge which is within a lower threshold than the original charge that was issued.

## MULTIPLE CHARGE

A multiple charge occurs when an individual has been reported for more than one offence in a game which constitutes misconduct.

For example, this could be whereby a Player is reported for refusing to give a name but also will be charged with playing whilst suspended.

This would be raised as a multiple charge as both incidents arise from the same game. Each charge is dealt with on its own merit and therefore two responses are required and are both separate cases. For example, a Participant could admit the first charge, but deny the second charge.

To download an example of the paperwork, [PLEASE CLICK HERE](#).





# ALTERNATE CHARGE

An alternate charge is where an individual has been reported for a matter of misconduct and the County has the opportunity to raise an alternate charge (second charge) which is a lesser charge.

For example, if a Player was charged for making offensive comments, aggravated by a reference to race, the County would have the opportunity to raise an alternate charge which would be for offensive/insulting comments. The Participant would be required to respond to the higher charge (first named charge) and if pleading guilty the lesser charge is not considered.

If the higher charge is denied the individual must respond in writing or attend a hearing. If the higher charges is successfully denied, the alternate charge (lesser) is then considered and depending on the Participant's response, the outcome is decided. The alternate charge will only be considered however if a commission find that the main charge is not proven.

To download an example of the paperwork, [PLEASE CLICK HERE](#).



# MULTI PLAYER MISCONDUCT CHARGE

Any Club who has six or more individual Players cautioned or dismissed from the field of play in the same match will be automatically fined as per the table below. Please note that the team must be playing at the level detailed below to be subject to the fines.

For each time you have more than half of your Team disciplined in a game the fine will increase.

	1 <sup>st</sup> Occasion	2 <sup>nd</sup> Occasion	3 <sup>rd</sup> Occasion	4 <sup>th</sup> Occasion
Step 5 & 6	£150	£300	£450	£600
Step 7	£75	£150	£225	£300
Outside National League System	Warned as to future conduct	£25	£50	£75

## EXAMPLE

Players 1,2,3,4 and 5 are cautioned and Player 6 is sent from the field of play.

The Club (depending on the level) will be dealt with as detailed above for 1<sup>st</sup> Occasion in a Season.

Players 1,2,3 and 4 are cautioned and Players 2 and 3 are then sent off for persistent Misconduct.

The Club would not be fined as only four Players have been disciplined during the match. For the above fines to be enforced you must have six different individuals disciplined in the game.

# MITIGATING A MULTI PLAYER MISCONDUCT CHARGE

There is no appeal process against a Multi Player Misconduct charge. However, in exceptional circumstances a plea of mitigation can be put forward to a disciplinary commission who will consider the evidence before them.





# RESPECT SANCTIONS

Over recent years The Football Association has been promoting Respect both on and off the pitch with the aim to improve discipline and promote good behaviour from Players, Clubs and all Participants who are involved in the game.

Respect Sanctions have been introduced for Clubs with automatic punishments to try and deter bad behaviour.

The Respect Sanctions will affect all teams who operate at Steps 5-7, Outside the National League system, including youth football. An administration fee of £10 is applicable for all cases.

*Offences that will contribute to the automatic punishments as detailed below in the table are as follows:*

- Caution for Dissent (C2)
- Sending off for Use of offensive, or insulting or abusive language (S6)
- Misconduct charges (E3)

*The table below provides further details on the sanction that will be imposed if the thresholds are reached by a team throughout the Season:*

	<b>STAGE 1</b> (Accumulation of 6 offences)	<b>STAGE 2</b> (Accumulation of 10 offences)	<b>STAGE 3</b> (Accumulation of 15 offences)	<b>STAGE 4</b> (Accumulation of 20 offences)
Step 5	Warning as to future conduct	£150	£300	Charge under FA Rule E20 – Failure to control Players
Step 6 & 7	Warning as to future conduct	£75	£150	Charge under FA Rule E20 – Failure to control Players
Outside NLS (including Youth)	Warning as to future conduct	£50	£100	Charge under FA Rule E20 – Failure to control Players

(N.B. Any team exceeding Stage 4 will receive an automatic charge of FA Rule E20 – Failure to control Players for each subsequent 5 qualifying offences)

# APPEALING A SANCTION

A team is permitted to lodge an appeal in writing if they receive a sanction at Stage 2 of 3 of the process. The team is only permitted to enter a plea in mitigation and to present extenuating circumstances that a Commission may consider in a non-personal hearing.

The decision of that Commission is final and binding.

# MULTIPLAYER MISCONDUCT CHARGE

E20 charges will be issued to Clubs with a poor disciplinary record based upon the number of discipline cases, abandoned matches and repetition of particular offences. To ensure an appropriate process is in place, each offence will have an automatic standard penalty point attributed to it.

*The penalty points for each offence are set out below:*

## **Caution**

- 1 point

## **Send Offs**

- S1 Serious Foul Play – 5 points
- S2 Violent Conduct – 6 points
- S3 Spitting at an Opponent – 7 points
- S4 Denying an obvious goal scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball – 3 points
- S5 Denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by an offence punishable by a free kick or penalty – 3 points
- S6 Use of offensive, or insulting or abusive language – 4 points
- S7 Receiving a Second Caution in a Match – 3 points





# MISCONDUCT CHARGES

- 5 points each unless increased by the Disciplinary Commission

*A charge under FA Rule E20 would be raised against a Club in any of the following circumstances:*

- Any Team's points tally reached 75
- Any Team within the Club reaches Stage 4 of the RESPECT sanction process
- A Club has been charged and the cases proven where 2 games have been abandoned as a result of misconduct. (The number of teams within a Club is irrelevant for charging purposes but could be considered as a mitigating factor when considering the sanction)
- A Club has four or more incidents of violent conduct across all its teams, (the number of teams within a Club is irrelevant for charging purposes but could be considered as a mitigating factor when considering the sanction). Violent conduct includes all S2 charges and any charge of Assault on a Match Official or physical contact on a match official and Assault Participant on Participant.
- A Club has two or more E3(2) charges raised against any Player in a 12 month period
- A charge under any of the above conditions can be raised at any stage during the Season and the Sanction for any charge would be at the discretion of a County Disciplinary Commission and is subject to appeal in accordance with the FA Appeal Regulations.



# FOOTBALL DEBT RECOVERY

Except for the recovery of Discipline monies from a Player, this is limited to a £50 minimum claim.

If a Participant has left owing money to the Club or League, the County FA may be able to assist in the recovery of the debt. A Participant must have accrued the debt in open aged football in order to go through the debt recovery process.

Debts that Counties can assist with (but not limited to) are match fees, playing expenses and League costs. Counties will not be able to retrieve monies owing from kit/equipment, Club subscriptions, and Club trips.

The County Association should be approached as soon as it is clear there is a problem. In all cases this must be within 28 days of formal payment being requested and 112 days of the debt being incurred.

The creditor must pay the County FA an admin fee of £25 per debt to be recovered when submitting a claim. This will be added to the total debt being claimed and will be refunded upon the monies owed being received from the Participants.

The creditor must supply the full name, address and date of birth of the individuals responsible for the debt. They must also provide all relevant correspondence showing the debt has been incurred and proof they have tried to recover the monies from the individual.

Leagues will be able to apply a £2 administration fee on all applications to the County FA.

The County Association, upon receipt of a claim will investigate to verify whether the claim is valid and will notify you of the outcome.

The debt would be apportioned on a pro-rata basis to all individuals concerned and they will be notified in writing of the debt owing.

Failure to pay the debt within 21 days will result in a suspension from all football and football activities. The suspension will only be lifted on receipt of the payment in full.







On an annual basis, any debt created more than 7 years ago will be deactivated and removed from the system. All monies & suspension will be cleared and removed. Any debt whereby the entity did not affiliate in the previous Season will be written off and any suspension imposed will be lifted.

The Standard Code of Rules have also been amended so any debts being used to prevent a transfer must be part of the Football Debt recovery system.

Please contact your County Association for further information on the full procedures or refer to the FA/County FA Handbook.

## LEAGUES

Leagues form an integral part of the football family, which allows Clubs to play football under strict rules and regulations. All Leagues are formed by a League Management Committee (LMC) and the members are voted in at the AGM by the Member Clubs.

Leagues are governed by their County Association or The Football Association, who affiliate the Leagues each season and sanction the rules for their competition.

## POWERS & DUTIES OF A LEAGUE

A League's responsibility is to enforce their competition rules and allow Players to participate in the correct environment and ensure that it is fair and equal for all involved within the League. Should a Club breach a competition rule the League may charge the Club and hear the case following their response. The League is not permitted to deal with matters of misconduct, which are the responsibility of the County Association or The Football Association.

The LMC can make an application to refuse or cancel a registration of a Player if they have received suspensions in excess of 10 matches/112 days in a period of 2 years or less from the date of the first offence. The punishment must be across at least two offences.

# WHAT ACTION CAN LEAGUES TAKE AGAINST POORLY BEHAVED CLUBS AND INDIVIDUALS?

The League is able to take a number of steps to assist Clubs/Individuals with improving their behaviour in football. Working with Clubs/Individuals is crucial in addressing what the problem is and working together in rectifying the problem.

A Player who has previously had their registration removed is permitted to compete within the League again upon completion of the punishment the League imposed.

However, the Player is only registered to compete within the League under probation period of 12 months, and should the Player receive further act of proven misconduct (excluding Standard dismissals) the League are empowered to consider a further charge of bringing the Competition into disrepute.

## APPEAL

Clubs, Officials, or Players have a right of appeal against a League's decision to the relevant sanctioning authority (The FA or County FA).

Within 14 days of the posting of written notification of any decision by the Management Committee or the Competition, a Club, Official, or Player against whom such action is being taken must appeal against such decision by lodging particulars with their relevant County FA, along with any required fee, for the adjudication of a Board of Appeal.

The grounds of appeal shall be in accordance with FA Rules.





# STANDARD CODE OF RULES TEMPLATE

The Standard Code of Rules are provided by The Football Association for use of competitions and are mandatory for all competitions outside the National League System and at Step 7 and below. Competitions seeking sanction must draft their rules in conformity with this code, putting them in the correctly numbered rule and showing standard headings.

**PLEASE CLICK HERE** to download a copy of the Standard Code of Rules template.

**PLEASE CLICK HERE** to download a copy of the Standard Code of Rules template for Youth.

## LEAGUES

*The League can:*

- Call the Club/individual in for a meeting to account for their behaviour and outline how to improve
- Refuse the Club entry into invitational Cups
- Refuse to offer fixtures to the teams or Club if there are outstanding debts with the League or there has been a failure to reply
- Require multiple adult teams to operate with fewer teams if they encounter continued poor administration
- Vote on future membership with the league at an EGM or AGM, but the League must ensure it is a fair process
- Draw the attention of lenient sanctions by CFAs to the attention of The FA

Leagues should always be willing to work with teams and individuals in order to improve behaviour on and off the field, and if they believe that further training or help is required they should address this to their County Association who could assist.



# HANDLING DISCRIMINATION

The FA and County FA's are determined to provide an inclusive football experience for anyone who wishes to play, coach, officiate, administer, support or be involved in any role in English football.

An experience that is reflective of our diverse communities, safe for all and free from abuse and discrimination. As part of The FA's commitment to deliver English Football's Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination plan, we have enhanced the way in which discriminatory cases are heard at grassroots level.

County FA's are responsible for all cases arising from Steps 5 and below and the details of these cases will also be reported centrally to The FA.

Investigations will be managed by the relevant County FA (if the case has not already been escalated to The FA), and where appropriate, charges will be raised upon completion of a thorough investigation.

To support these changes, The FA has an administration officer based at Wembley Stadium, and also an Investigations Manager who will work with the County FA's to assist in the investigation of these matters.

The FA has also established a diverse independent central Chair's panel for those who will be selected to chair grassroots discrimination cases - This panel which was chosen for its skills, knowledge and experience, has undertaken the same mandatory training that The FA requires for all its Commission Chairs, and includes members who are male, female, disabled, from ethnic minorities, identify as gay, and those who come from different faith backgrounds.

Most County Associations have now an established local football anti-discrimination football panel (LFADP), with at least one member sitting on cases when they are heard. The other members appointed to the Commission are from the Chairperson list by the Association and the County FA will appoint a Council member. This is the policy for all cases as a minimum standard, however, we do also have cases where all members are independent or where we have two appointments from the LFADP list.





# SANCTIONS FOR AGGRAVATED BREACHES

Discriminatory behaviour is unacceptable and there is a mandatory minimum 5 match suspension and education programme for those found guilty of an “Aggravated Breach” of FA Rule E3.



## E. CONDUCT GENERAL BEHAVIOUR

3 (1) A Participant shall at all times act in the best interests of the game and shall not act in any manner which is improper or brings the game into disrepute or use any one, or a combination of, violent conduct, serious foul play, threatening, abusive, indecent or insulting words or behaviour.

(2) A breach of Rule E3(1) is an “Aggravated Breach” where it includes a reference whether direct or indirect to any one or more of the following: - ethnic origin, colour, race, nationality, religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or disability.

For a first offence of face-to-face discriminatory abuse the sanction will be a mandatory minimum five match suspension in all cases. This sanction may be increased depending on the specific facts of any case and any further such offence will carry a mandatory minimum suspension of more than five matches, with an entry point of ten matches.

The mandatory minimum sanction will not apply to offences committed in writing or via mobile phones, the internet or TV (though it is likely a form of match based sanction will apply).

It will also not apply where the discriminatory term relates only to nationality (again it is likely a form of match based sanction will apply).

Club will be liable to be sanctioned if two or more of its Participants commit an act of discriminatory abuse in any twelve month period.

In all cases the Participant may be fined as well as suspended, and will be required to undergo an education programme.





# HOW DO I REPORT?

We recognise that there may be under-reporting of incidents of discrimination in the game and we encourage those who feel that they have been discriminated against to report their concerns.

We hope that the changes outlined above will help increase confidence in reporting discrimination cases.

Should Participants wish to report an incident of discrimination at level Step 5 and below, in the first instance, please contact the relevant County FA.

Should Participants need to contact The FA, please use the details below:

Tel: 0800 085 0508\* E-mail: [FootballForAll@TheFA.com](mailto:FootballForAll@TheFA.com)

The contact details above are strictly reserved for those wishing to report allegations of abuse and/or discrimination such as incidents of racism or homophobia.

\* If calling from a mobile telephone there may be a charge for this call.

Incidents can also be reported to Kick it Out via their reporting app or E-mail: [info@kickitout.org](mailto:info@kickitout.org)



# REPORTING DISCRIMINATION FILMS

The FA has launched the Reporting Discrimination videos - a series of short films to show Players and fans of the game how to play their part in eradicating discrimination from football.

While giant leaps have been made to end discriminatory language and behaviour from the beautiful game, the authorities still rely on the help of the thousands involved at the grassroots level.

In parks and playing fields up and down the country we need you to carry on the good work and remain proactive in the battle against discrimination.

After all, if an incident goes unreported, it cannot be dealt with.

So Players and fans are being encouraged to 'See It. Hear It. Report It.'

The animated films explain how to go about reporting incidents of discrimination – and this has to start at the grassroots level.



Reporting Discrimination Grassroots Players



Reporting Discrimination Grassroots Supporters





BODMIN  
TOWN  
F.C.

qu pos

PLYMOUTH  
KOLTS JFC  
WARRIORS

BEES CARTS AND  
FLOORING



012724515

Small, We lay them all!

f Find us on  
Facebook



# FAQS

## *How much is the Administration Fee?*

- The Administration Fee is £10.00 for Cautions and £15.00 for Send offs and misconduct charges

## *A Player received a Sending Off and a Misconduct Charge but there is only one Administration Fee?*

- If in the same game there is a need to raise two charges from the same report only one administration fee shall be included on the response forms. Therefore should you have a charge with no fee you still must respond to the County Association for this to be dealt with by a Discipline Commission.

## *A Parent was refereeing a fixture and discipline occurred in the game. Are we able to receive discipline from that game if they are unregistered or not a qualified Referee?*

- A person acting in the capacity of Referee on a Match Day has the same powers and duties as those that are registered officials. Therefore should any discipline sanctions be imposed on the day, a report must be submitted to the local County Football Association for the appropriate charges to be raised.

## *If a Player is sent off or cautioned, who is liable for the Fine/Administration Fee?*

- If the Player is in youth football the Club are liable for the fees. If the offence is in open aged football it would be the Player's responsibility to pay the fine, but the Club are responsible to ensure this does get paid in the first instance.

## *A Player participates for two teams on a Sunday, a youth team and an open aged team as they are above the age of 16. If they are sent off for one of these teams can they continue to play for the other?*

- From the start of the 2013-14 Season, this rule was changed – the Player would now be suspended and would not be permitted to play. In this instance the Player would be suspended from all Sundayfootball until the team they were playing for when dismissed has served the appropriate number of games.

## *I have recently signed a Player and I need to check if they have any suspensions. How can I check this?*

- County Associations provide weekly statements of Participants who are currently serving suspensions or have a suspension pending on their website. There is also a facility within Whole Game System to search for the Player and attach to your Club which will show the status. If after checking you are still not sure or unable to find them you can contact any County Association, provide the name, address and date of birth for the Player, and they can inform you of the current status.

## *If a Club plays a Player who is suspended, who gets charged?*

- It is both the responsibility of the Club and Player concerned to ensure that Player does not play whilst under any suspension. Therefore both the Club and the Player would be charged.



### *What happens if a Referee or Club are unable to make a Hearing which has to be heard within 28 days?*

- If the County FA has a case that needs to be dealt with within 28 days it is in the interests of all parties that you assist the County by attending on a day that they advise. If you are unable to make the hearing please contact the County who may be able to re-arrange the hearing.

### *When will a suspension start for a Player who has been sent off?*

- All suspensions commence 7 days after the date of the sending off. If the Club have not heard or had confirmation within two working days they should make contact with the County FA.

### *I was sent off in a friendly fixture, what happens next?*

- A player who is dismissed in a friendly fixture is automatically suspended for 1 match from the next friendly fixture for that team. Should the team have no friendly fixtures left, the suspension is held over to the next game but the player is permitted to resume playing competitive football as it is a separate category.

### *How do I join a County FA's Local Football Panel?*

- Individuals wishing to join a Local Football Panel and act as a Commission member will need to contact the Chief Executive of the local County FA. Please email the County FA with the request and details and they will be able to provide further information. The email is [info@countyfa.com](mailto:info@countyfa.com) e.g. [info@essexfa.com](mailto:info@essexfa.com)

### *Do I need my own Player Insurance?*

- It is mandatory for all 11-a-side grassroots adult Players to be covered (through their Club) by personal accident insurance. This was introduced at the start of the 2013-14 Season. For more information on this rule change please click on the Video below.



Player Insurance

# YOUTH FOOTBALL

Why do County FA's issue fines in youth football if it is the Clubs that are responsible for the debt?



# IMPROVING GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL

I've got an idea to help improve County football, what should I do?







**FOR ALL**



**TheFA**



**FOR ALL**