

MATCH ABANDONMENTS



Walking away from a game could lead to significant sanctions, so it's important to understand the rules.

Any decision to abandon a match should be taken solely by the Match Referee, after consultation with both team managers, where this is appropriate.

IFAB Laws of the Game 2022-23 state under Law 5:

LAW 5 THE REFEREE

5.3 Powers and duties

The referee:

- enforces the Laws of the Game
- controls the match in cooperation with the other match officials
- **acts as timekeeper**, keeps a record of the match and provides the appropriate authorities with a match report, including information on disciplinary action and any other incidents that occurred before, during or after the match
- supervises and/or indicates the restart of play

If, in the opinion of the Match Referee a matter cannot be dealt with satisfactorily and the welfare of any participants remains at risk, in terms of the threat of continued abuse or violence, or a significant injury to one or more of the participants, they can **consider** abandoning the match.

If anyone else (for example a coach or club official or player) takes the decision to abandon the match, for whatever reason(s), then a charge can be brought against them by the relevant County FA.

While their reasons for choosing to abandon a match may be considered in mitigation (and depending on the circumstance of the incident this might lead the disciplinary commission to apply a lesser sanction), they won't prevent a charge being issued.

Whilst each case will be dealt with on its own merits, the sanction guidelines for the relevant FA Rules include a fine of up to £300 for a club charge (more details on the next page)

You should also be aware that in cases where a match has been abandoned due to the conduct of one or both teams, League rules mean the fixture will not be replayed and depending on the circumstances neither side may be awarded the points.

As such, where any party feels a situation is developing where it may be necessary to abandon a match due to the conduct of participants, it is vital that all concerned work with the match official to resolve the situation, rather than making a decision in isolation.

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Know the Rules

Below are details of the relevant FA and League rules relating to abandoned matches:

FA Rules

Rule E3:

FA rule E3.1 states that 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.

Improper Conduct (not including threatening and/or abusive language/behaviour)

The recommended sanction for this offence is:

Outside NLS Teams

- Low: 0 - 1 match suspension/£0 - £20 fine
- Medium: 1 - 2 match suspension/£10 - £30 fine
- High: 2 - 3 match suspension/£20 - £40 fine

FA Rule E20:

FA Rule E20 states that Each Affiliated Association, Competition and Club shall be responsible for ensuring:

E20.1

that its directors, players, officials, employees, servants, representatives, spectators, and all persons purporting to be its supporters or followers, conduct themselves in an orderly fashion and refrain from any one or combination of the following: improper, violent, threatening, abusive, indecent, insulting or provocative words or behaviour, (including, without limitation, where any such conduct, words or behaviour includes a reference, whether express or implied, to any one or more of ethnic origin, colour, race, nationality, religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or disability) whilst attending at or taking part in a Match in which it is involved, whether on its own ground or elsewhere; and

E20.2

that no spectators or unauthorised persons are permitted to encroach onto the pitch area, save for reasons of crowd safety, or to throw missiles, bottles or other potentially harmful or dangerous objects at or on to the pitch.

The recommended sanctions for this offence are:

Outside NLS Teams

- Low: £0 - £70 fine
- Medium: £70 - £140 fine
- High: £140 - £300 fine

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League Decisions Following a Match Being Abandoned

Once the relevant County Association has dealt with all disciplinary matters in relation to the Match the League will have the opportunity to deal with the match in question, by reviewing the competition rules, especially Rule 20 (E) (iii) and (IV)

As per Standard Code of Rules

20 (E) (iii)

In the event of a Competition Match not being played or abandoned owing to causes over which neither Club has control, it should be played in its entirety on a date to be mutually agreed by the two Clubs and approved by the Competition. Failing such agreement and notification to the Competition within [] days the Competition shall have the power to order the Match to be played on or before a given date.

Where it is to the advantage of the Competition, the Management Committee shall also be empowered to order the score at the time of an abandonment to stand. Providing gate money is taken and retained the visiting Club shall receive their actual standard class rail or bus fares or the equivalent for [] persons, or car allowance at [] p per mile for transporting [] persons, or hire charge of a coach (receipt to be submitted). The residue (if any) to be equally divided between the two Clubs after deducting the cost of advertising, printing, posting, police and Match Officials charges. The home Club shall take the whole of the proceeds of the second Competition Match.

Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

Rule 20 (E) (IV)

The Management Committee shall review all Competition Matches abandoned in cases where it is consequent upon the conduct of either or both Teams. Where it is to the advantage of the Competition and does no injustice to either Club, the Management Committee shall order the score at the time of the abandonment to stand. In all cases where the Management Committee are satisfied that a Match was abandoned owing to the conduct of one Team or its Club member(s) they shall award the points for the Match to the opponent. In cases where a Match has been abandoned owing to the conduct of both Teams or their Club member(s), the Management Committee shall rule that neither Team will be awarded any points for that Match and it shall not be replayed. No fine(s) can be applied by the Management Committee for an abandoned Match.