

SECTION THREE: PROVISIONS APPLICABLE TO CATEGORY 5

GENERAL

- 1 Each Affiliated Association must set out in its rules or regulations a copy of this Section Three, which is to be followed where a Participant of a Club in Category 5 commits an alleged act of Misconduct and where a Player commits a cautionable or sending-off offence in a Match.
- 2 Nothing in this Section Three shall preclude:
 - 2.1 an Affiliated Association delegating to The Association or to another Affiliated Association its powers and duties to investigate and/or adjudicate in cases where it may be advantageous so to do; or
 - 2.2 the exercise by The Association of its powers pursuant to Rule G1.
- 3 All written communications from a Player to the Affiliated Association Secretary must be sent by the secretary of the Player's Club unless the Player is no longer registered with that Club (in which case written communications must be sent by the Player or the secretary of the Club to which that Player has moved).
- 4 Where a Club receives a notification pursuant to this Section Three, it is the duty of the Club Secretary and the Player, by the deadline stated on any notification, to ensure that either (a) the Affiliated Association Secretary receives the completed player reply form or (b) ensure that a response has been provided via the electronic system operated by The Association from time to time with such information that includes:
 - 4.1 the full name and address of the Player;
 - 4.2 the Player's date of birth (and other personal identification data requested);
 - 4.3 the name of each Club for which the Player is currently registered or was registered in the previous two playing seasons;
 - 4.4 the signature of the Player concerned (where applicable); and
 - 4.5 the names of any school, college or other educational establishment currently attended by the Player.

Where the Player is not available to sign the player reply form, the Club should complete and return it indicating the reason for the non-completion together with the administration fee and confirmation as to whether or not the Player has been made aware of the contents. Where the Club provides a response via the electronic system operated by The Association from time to time, in doing so the Club Secretary acknowledges that the Player has been made aware of the contents. Any suspension order resulting from failure to comply with this paragraph 4 shall be on the Club and the individual Player, subject to paragraph 108 below.
- 5 Clubs may participate in a pilot programme as set out by Council and will be required to abide by the regulations and terms of that programme.
- 6 Payment of any fine or costs in respect of disciplinary matters must be paid in accordance with the terms set out by the Affiliated Association.
- 7 Unless approval has been granted by The Association for such suspensions to be extended across all levels of football, any period of suspension under this Section Three shall apply only to football at Step 5 and below of the National League System. For example, a Player serving a period of suspension arising from this Section Three would not be precluded from participating in a Match in the FA Challenge Cup for a Club or team participating in any League above Step 5 of the National League System.

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CHARGES

- 8** An administration fee of £15.00 will be charged to the Player through their Club for the cost of processing each Charge.
- 9** References to cautionable offences in this Section Three shall include those punished by a temporary dismissal.
- 10** An Affiliated Association may issue a Charge against a Player in relation to an incident whether or not the same incident has been dealt with by the Referee and/or pursuant to this Section Three. In deciding whether or not to issue a Charge, an Affiliated Association will have particular (but not exclusive) regard to the following:
- 10.1** any applicable Law(s) of the Game or rules and regulations or FIFA instructions and/or guidelines;
 - 10.2** the nature of the incident, and in particular any intent, recklessness, negligence or other state of mind of the Player;
 - 10.3** where applicable, the level of force used;
 - 10.4** any injury to any Participant caused by the incident;
 - 10.5** any other impact on the Match in which the incident occurred;
 - 10.6** the prevalence of the type of incident in question in football generally;
 - 10.7** the wider interests of football in applying consistent sanctions.
- 11** A Disciplinary Commission considering a Charge pursuant to paragraph 10 above shall have regard to any automatic suspension or sanction imposed pursuant to paragraphs 51 and 56 for the same incident when considering any sanction.

MATCH OFFICIALS' REPORTING OF OFFENCES TO AFFILIATED ASSOCIATIONS

- 12** Where a Referee fails to show a Player the appropriate card when communicating a caution or a sending-off, the relevant disciplinary action shall not be invalidated. However, the attention of the Referee should be drawn to the correct procedure.
- 13** Referees must submit a report to the relevant Affiliated Association within two days of the Match (excluding Sundays) stating the cautionable, sending-off offences and/or extraordinary incidents. In the case of sending-off offences and extraordinary incidents, the Assistant Referees may also submit a report.
- 14** Reports related to Players participating in Matches in County Representative and FA County Youth Cup football must be sent to the Affiliated Association of the Club of the offending Player. A copy of each such report must also be provided to The Association.
- 15** An Affiliated Association may reserve the right not to process a caution if the report is deemed to be invalid for any reason.

NOTIFICATION OF CAUTIONABLE AND SENDING-OFF OFFENCES

- 16** A Player who has been cautioned or sent off in a Match will be notified by the relevant Affiliated Association, through their Club, of:
- 16.1** the cautionable and/or sending-off offence reported by the Referee to the Affiliated Association;
 - 16.2** in the case of a cautionable offence, the total number of cautions accumulated by the Player under this Section Three during the current playing season; and

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- 16.3 any automatic suspension, fine or other consequences resulting from an accumulation of cautions, sending-off offence and/or multiple temporary dismissals pursuant to paragraphs 51 and 56 below. Any automatic suspension will take effect regardless as to whether the notification is received by the Club from The Association before it is due to take effect in accordance with this Section Three.
- 17 Save for single cautionable offences also punished by a temporary dismissal, a fee will be charged to the Player through their Club for the cost of processing each notification made in accordance with paragraph 16 above. The applicable fee is £12.00 for each notification of a cautionable offence and £15.00 for each notification of a sending-off offence. It is the responsibility of the Club to collect the fee from the Player and forward it to the Affiliated Association upon request.

MISTAKEN IDENTITY (CAUTIONABLE OR SENDING-OFF OFFENCES)

- 18 Where a Player has been cautioned or sent off in a Match but claims they have been the victim of mistaken identity, that Player or their Club may make a claim of mistaken identity in relation to that cautionable or sending-off offence in accordance with the procedure set out at paragraphs 19 to 20 below.

Making a Claim of Mistaken Identity

- 19 To make a claim of mistaken identity, the Players concerned and their Club must submit to the Affiliated Association:
- 19.1 written particulars upon which the claim is founded (which must include identifying specifically the name of the Player responsible for the relevant offence);
 - 19.2 any evidence in support of the claim; and
 - 19.3 the relevant fee as set out in paragraph 36.
- 20 The relevant timings for a Player or their Club to make a claim of mistaken identity are as follows:

	TIMINGS	GENERAL GUIDE*
Claim / Evidence	5pm on the third Business Day following the incident	Wednesday
Disciplinary Commission	To be determined prior to the suspension being served.	Friday

*based on a Match taking place on Saturday or Sunday

Disciplinary Commission Procedure

- 21 If the Affiliated Association is satisfied that the claim of mistaken identity warrants further investigation, a Disciplinary Commission shall be convened and will meet before any automatic suspension is due to take effect.
- 22 The Disciplinary Commission shall determine the matter on video and/or written evidence only, and parties shall not be present or represented in person. For the avoidance of doubt, none of the Match Officials nor the Club or Player are entitled to be present or represented in person at the Disciplinary Commission established for such purpose.
- 23 If the appointed Disciplinary Commission is satisfied that the claim of mistaken identity has been proven, the record of the offence will be transferred to the appropriate offender, who will be subject to any applicable disciplinary consequences in accordance with this Section Three.

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WRONGFUL DISMISSAL (SENDING-OFF OFFENCES)

General

- 24 Where a Player has been sent off in a Match but claims that the dismissal was wrongful, that Player and their Club may seek to limit the disciplinary consequences of that dismissal by making a claim of wrongful dismissal in accordance with the procedure set out in paragraphs 26 to 28 below. In order to demonstrate that the decision was wrongful, the Player and/or their Club must establish that the Referee made an obvious error in dismissing the Player.
- 25 A Player and their Club may make a claim of wrongful dismissal for any sending-off offence under the provisions of Law 12 of the Laws of the Game, save for where the Player is sent off for a) receiving a second caution in the same Match or b) using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures.

Making a Claim of Wrongful Dismissal

- 26 Where a Player and their Club intend to make a claim of wrongful dismissal, they must notify the Affiliated Association that they intend to make such a claim. Notification can be provided to the Affiliated Association by fax or email. If confirmation is provided via email it should be sent to discipline@[insert name of county]fa.com – for example discipline@kentfa.com.
- 27 To make a claim of wrongful dismissal, the Player and their Club must submit to the Affiliated Association:
- 27.1 written particulars upon which the claim is founded;
 - 27.2 any evidence in support of the claim (this must include video footage showing the incident if available); and
 - 27.3 the relevant fee as set out in paragraph 36.
- 28 The relevant timings for a Player and their Club to make a claim of wrongful dismissal are as follows:

	TIMINGS	GENERAL GUIDE*
Notification of Intention to Submit a Claim	5pm on the second Business Day following the incident	Tuesday
Claim / Evidence	5pm on the fourth Business Day following the incident	Thursday
Disciplinary Commission	To be determined prior to the suspension being served.	Friday

*based on a Match taking place on Saturday or Sunday

- 29 Upon receipt of a claim of wrongful dismissal by the Affiliated Association, it will determine whether the claim is capable of acceptance by determining whether the claim complies with the requirements set out at paragraph 27 above and the timings set out at paragraph 28 above.
- 30 Claims of wrongful dismissal accepted by the Affiliated Association will be placed before a Disciplinary Commission for consideration as soon as possible but no later than the date upon which an automatic suspension is due to take effect.

Disciplinary Commission Procedure

- 31 The Disciplinary Commission shall determine the matter on video and/or written evidence only, and parties shall not be present or represented in person. For the avoidance of doubt, none of the Match Officials nor the Club or Player are entitled to be present or represented in person at the Disciplinary Commission established for such purpose.

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- 32 After considering the evidence, the Disciplinary Commission will decide whether the claim of wrongful dismissal is rejected or is successful. A claim will only be successful where the Disciplinary Commission is satisfied that the Referee made an obvious error in dismissing the Player.
- 33 If the claim of wrongful dismissal is successful, the automatic suspension will be withdrawn the fee is returned to the Player and their Club. If the claim is unsuccessful, the fee is not returned to the Player and their Club.
- 34 Where the standard punishment is withdrawn, the sending-off offence shall not be counted for the purposes of paragraph 58 below.
- 35 Notwithstanding the outcome of a claim of wrongful dismissal, the relevant sending-off offence will remain on the record of the Club and the Player.

FEE FOR CLAIMS OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY OR WRONGFUL DISMISSAL

- 36 The following fees apply in respect of claims of mistaken identity or wrongful dismissal proceeding under this Section Three:

LEVEL OF CLUB	FEE
Steps 5-7 of the National League System	£50
Outside of the National League System	£30

CLEARLY INSUFFICIENT CLAIMS (SENDING-OFF OFFENCES)

General

- 37 In truly exceptional circumstances, an Affiliated Association may seek to increase the disciplinary consequences of a sending-off offence by making a claim that the standard punishment is clearly insufficient. An Affiliated Association may bring such a claim where it is satisfied that the standard punishment otherwise applicable to the sending-off offence would be clearly insufficient. Such claims may only be made by an Affiliated Association for the following sending-off offences: (a) serious foul play; (b) violent conduct; or (c) spitting at an opponent or any other person.
- 38 The ability for an Affiliated Association to bring a claim under paragraph 37 above is provided only so exceptional cases may be rectified. It is not intended to lead to the systematic, regular review of standard punishments. Disciplinary Commissions will be instructed to approach such cases with these principles in mind and it is envisaged that, for the vast majority of sending-off offences, the standard punishments applicable pursuant to paragraph 57 below will be appropriate and will be applied.
- 39 Where an Affiliated Association brings such a claim:
- 39.1 a Referee's report showing that a Player was sent off for a) serious foul play; (b) violent conduct; or (c) spitting at an opponent or any other person shall be conclusive evidence that the Player committed the relevant sending-off offence under Law 12 of the Laws of the Game and shall not be subject to challenge, save for where a sending-off is subject to a claim for wrongful dismissal pursuant to paragraph 24 above; and
- 39.2 the Player will be provided notice of the claim together with any evidence in support of the claim and will be invited to submit a written reply to the claim together with any evidence and submissions in support of that reply.
- 40 A Disciplinary Commission that considers a claim of wrongful dismissal is concerned with only the question of whether any sanction of a suspension from play is one which should be imposed in view of the facts of the case. This role is not to usurp the role of the Referee.

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- 41** Notwithstanding the outcome of a claim made by an Affiliated Association pursuant to paragraph 37 above:
- 41.1** the Player will be suspended for at least one Match, save where a successful claim for wrongful dismissal is made pursuant to paragraph 24 above; and
 - 41.2** the sending-off offence:
 - 41.2.1** will remain on the record of the Club and the Player;
 - 41.2.2** will remain the subject of the administration fee set out in paragraph 17 above; and
 - 41.2.3** will still accrue the applicable number of penalty points as set out in paragraph 90 below.

Disciplinary Commission

- 42** A claim made by an Affiliated Association pursuant to paragraph 37 above will be determined by a Disciplinary Commission on the basis of video and/or written evidence only, and parties shall not be present or represented in person. For the avoidance of doubt, none of the Match Officials nor the Club or Player are entitled to be present or represented in person at the Disciplinary Commission established for such purpose.
- 43** Claims pursuant to paragraph 37 above will be placed before a Disciplinary Commission for consideration prior to the commencement of the automatic suspension (if possible) but in any event no later than the date upon which an automatic suspension is completed.
- 44** A Disciplinary Commission will be convened to decide the matter on any relevant video and written evidence submitted.
- 45** The following procedures will be used at a Disciplinary Commission unless the Disciplinary Commission thinks it appropriate to amend them:
- 45.1** the Disciplinary Commission Secretary will produce:
 - 45.1.1** the Referee's report, reports from any other Match Official and any other evidence supporting the Referee's action;
 - 45.1.2** any video and written evidence provided in support of the claim.
 - 45.1.3** the written reply and all evidence and submissions provided by the Player in response to the claim.
 - 45.2** after considering the evidence, the Disciplinary Commission will decide whether the claim should be successful or rejected.
 - 45.3** The claim will only be successful where the Affiliated Association satisfies the Disciplinary Commission so that it is sure that:
 - 45.3.1** the circumstances of the sending-off offence under review are truly exceptional, such that the standard punishment should not be applied; and
 - 45.3.2** the standard punishment would be clearly insufficient.
 - 45.4** in considering the matters at paragraph 45.3, the Disciplinary Commission shall have regard to those factors set out at paragraphs 10.1 to 10.7 above.
 - 45.5** in the event the claim is rejected, the Player shall serve the standard punishment.
 - 45.6** in the event the claim is successful, the Disciplinary Commission will then decide on the additional punishment to be applied to the Player in respect of the sending-off offence. In deciding on such punishment, the Disciplinary Commission shall have regard to the matters at paragraphs 10.1 to 10.7 above.

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- 46 The decision will be subject to appeal only:
- 46.1 in the event that the additional suspension imposed (over and above the automatic suspension) is in excess of three Matches; and
 - 46.2 on the single ground that the additional suspension is excessive; and
 - 46.3 in respect of that part of the additional suspension in excess of the additional three Matches, not accounting for any additional Matches included in the penalty as a result of a Player having served a suspension earlier in the same playing season.
- For example, where a Player is suspended for 8 Matches following a sending-off for violent conduct, they may appeal only in respect of the two Matches in excess of the three automatic and three additional Match suspension.
- 47 Appeals shall proceed in accordance with Part C: Appeals - Non-Fast Track.

STANDARD PUNISHMENTS

Friendly Matches

Cautionable Offences

- 48 An Affiliated Association shall only impose standard punishments in respect of cautionable offences committed by Players during Friendly Matches where Participants have agreed, for example as part of tournament rules, that such punishments apply. Any such punishment may only apply to Friendly Matches.

Multiple Temporary Dismissals

- 49 Where a Player is the subject of more than one temporary dismissal during a Friendly Match, that Player will receive an automatic suspension of 1 Friendly Match and a fine of £25.00.

Sending-Off Offences

- 50 The commission of a sending-off offence by a Player in a Friendly Match will result in that Player receiving an automatic suspension from Friendly Matches until such time as their Club has completed its next Friendly Match, as decided by the relevant Affiliated Association.

Competitive Matches

Accumulation of Cautions

- 51 The accumulation of a set number of cautions by a Player in the same Football Category or Competition during a playing season will, subject to any applicable cut-off points, result in that Player receiving an automatic suspension and/or fine.
- 52 The relevant automatic suspensions and/or fines, the applicable cut-off points and the Football Categories or Competition in which the automatic suspensions are to be served are as set out in Table 7. Unless otherwise stated, such automatic suspensions shall only be served in the Football Category or Competition in which the cautions were accumulated.
- 53 Where a Player accumulates 20 cautions in the same Football Category (as set out in Table 7) during a playing season, that Player shall be required to attend a Disciplinary Commission within seven days of the date of the last caution. The Disciplinary Commission shall have the power to deal with the Player in such manner as it deems fit. The same procedure will apply for every further five cautions received by that Player during the same playing season.
- 54 For the avoidance of doubt, the accumulation of cautions by a Player in relation to Matches in the same Football Category shall include those that are punished by a temporary dismissal.

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- 55** Where a Player is the subject of more than one temporary dismissal during a Match in a Football Category, that Player will receive a fine of £25.00 and an automatic suspension of 1 Match to be served in the same Football Category in which the temporary dismissals were incurred.

Sending-Off Offences

- 56** The commission of a sending-off offence by a Player will result in that Player receiving an automatic suspension and/or fine.
- 57** The relevant automatic suspensions and/or fines arising from a sending-off offence by a Player and the Football Category and Competition(s) in which the automatic suspensions are to be served are as set out in Table 8.

Additional Sending-Off Offences

- 58** A Player who, in the same playing season, has previously been sent off in a Match, will be automatically suspended for one extra Match for each such previous sending-off offence in addition to the automatic suspension applicable to the latest sending-off offence as set out in Table 8.

Commencement of Suspension

- 59** Any period of suspension arising from an accumulation of cautions, a sending-off offence or multiple temporary dismissals will commence on the seventh day following either the date of the last offence (in relation to an accumulation of cautions) or the date of the relevant offence(s) (in relation to multiple temporary dismissals and sending-off offences), irrespective of whether paperwork has been received from the relevant Affiliated Association.

Period of Suspension

- 60** During a period of suspension, a Player will
- 60.1** be suspended from operating as a Match Official:
 - 60.2** will remain eligible to play in Matches in a Football Category (or Competition) other than that to which the suspension applies.
- 61** If the suspension is as a result of a Charge, during the whole period of suspension the Player is suspended from playing all football (including Friendly Matches). The Football Categories affected by this paragraph are Saturday, Sunday, Midweek, Veterans, Further Education and Representative Football. This will be deemed to be a suspension from playing only, unless specified otherwise by a Disciplinary Commission.
- 62** A period of suspension will be complete once the Player's team has completed the appropriate number of Matches in the Football Category or Competition in which the suspension must be served as set out in Tables 7 and 8. In respect of suspensions arising from County Association and League Representative Football, any such suspension will be from Representative Football only and not any other Football Category unless a Disciplinary Commission has specified that the suspension is to be from all football.
- 63** In exceptional cases, the Player may make a claim to the Affiliated Association that a suspension from all football is disproportionately harsh due to the period taken to serve the suspension. In such circumstances, The Association may at its absolute discretion amend the suspension so that it applies only to a single Football Category.
- 64** Where a Player has to serve more than one suspension at the same time the following criteria will apply:
- 64.1** any suspensions arising from this Section Three and due to commence on the same date will result in the total number of Matches involved running consecutively.
 - 64.2** any suspensions that overlap (i.e. where a suspension starts before the previous suspension ends) will also run consecutively.
 - 64.3** Matches cannot be used more than once to cover two or more suspensions.

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Payment to Players Under Suspension

- 65** During a Player's applicable period of suspension, Clubs must not pay a Player more than the basic wage payable under the Player's contract (where applicable).

Outstanding Suspensions

- 66** Subject to paragraph 67 below, any period of suspension or part thereof arising from this Section Three or as a result of a Charge which remains outstanding at the end of playing season must be served at the commencement of the following playing season.
- 67** Any period of suspension or part thereof arising from an accumulation of cautions in relation to the FA Cup or FA Vase which remains outstanding at the end of the playing season will be repealed and need not be served at the commencement of the following playing season.
- 68** Affiliated Associations will impose split suspension periods where suspensions have to be carried over to the following playing season. The last day of the first suspension period shall be the Player's team's last competitive Match of the playing season. The suspension will recommence upon that team's start of the following playing season.

Players Moving Between Clubs

- 69** Where a Player moves between Clubs at a time when that Player is subject to a suspension, the following shall apply:
- 69.1** until the Player moves, the suspension shall be served by reference to Matches completed by the Club from which the Player moves;
- 69.2** where the Club that the Player moves to is within the same level as the Club that the Player moves from, any remaining period of suspension at the time that the Player moves shall be served by reference to Matches completed by the Club to which the Player moves;
- 69.3** where the Club that the Player moves to is within a different level as the Club that the Player moves from, any remaining period of suspension at the time that the Player moves shall continue to be served by reference to Matches completed by the Club that the Player moves from unless dispensation has been granted in writing by The Association for the suspension to be served with reference to Matches completed by the Club to which the Player moves.
- 70** For the purposes of paragraph 69, Clubs compete at three different levels. Each level is comprised as follows:
- 70.1** Premier League, EFL Leagues and the National League;
- 70.2** The National League (North and South Divisions), the Isthmian League, the Northern Premier League and the Southern League;
- 70.3** Steps 5 to 7 of the National League System, or any other League outside the National League System which operates a match-based disciplinary system.
- 71** Paragraph 69 applies to all moves by Players between Clubs which are completed and evidenced to the satisfaction of The Association, however they occur. This includes, but is not limited to, all transfers, loans and the expiration of loans, and Players whose registration is cancelled by the Club that the Player moves from, where that Player is subsequently registered by the Club that the Player moves to.
- 72** Players who are otherwise eligible (i.e. but for any suspension) to play for two or more Clubs competing at the level referred to at paragraph 70.3 above will not be taken to have moved between those Clubs for the purposes of this paragraph by virtue only of the fact that they are so eligible to play for them.

Re-arranged Matches

- 73** A Disciplinary Commission may determine that a Match shall not count towards the completion of a suspension if it is satisfied that the Match has been arranged by the Club with a view to enabling a Player to complete their suspension and thus enable the Player to play in a specific Match.

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RESPECT SANCTION SYSTEM

Respect Offences

- 74 A Respect Offence for the purposes of Respect Sanctions comprises any of the following:
- 74.1 a caution received by a Player for dissent;
 - 74.2 a sending-off of a Player for using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures;
 - 74.3 or any proven Charge issued to a Player or an occupant of the technical area for Misconduct on a Match day.
- 75 Where any team accumulates a set number of Respect Offences during a playing season, a Respect Sanction shall be imposed on that team's Club in accordance with the table at paragraph 77 below.
- 76 Where any team accumulates 20 Respect Offences during a playing season, that team's Club shall be issued a Charge for a breach of Rule E20. Further Charges for a breach of Rule E20 shall be issued against the team's Club for every five Respect Offences accumulated after the twentieth.

Respect Sanctions

- 77 The Respect Sanctions referred to in paragraph 75 above are as follows:

	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4
	ACCUMULATION OF 6 RESPECT OFFENCES	ACCUMULATION OF 10 RESPECT OFFENCES	ACCUMULATION OF 15 RESPECT OFFENCES	ACCUMULATION OF 20 RESPECT OFFENCES
STEP 5	Warning as to future conduct	£150	£300	Club issued with a Charge
STEP 6		£75	£150	
Outside the National League System (including Youth Football)		£50	£100	

- 78 An administration fee of £10.00 will be charged to the team's Club for the cost of processing each Respect Sanction.

Responding to the imposition of a Respect Sanction

- 79 A Club may submit a written plea in mitigation in respect of the Respect Sanctions imposed at Stages 2 and 3 only and this mitigation may be considered by a Disciplinary Commission at a non-personal hearing.
- 80 There is no right of appeal in relation to the Respect Sanctions imposed up to and including Stage 3.

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DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST CLUBS – MULTIPLE OFFENCES IN A SINGLE MATCH

- 81 An Affiliated Association will take disciplinary action against a Club if six or more Players in one of a Club's teams are either cautioned or sent off in a single Match.

Clubs at Steps 5 to 6 of the National League System

- 82 On the first occasion that this happens in a playing season, the Affiliated Association will impose an automatic fine on the Club in accordance with the following table:

STEP OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE SYSTEM	FINE
Step 5	£150
Step 6	£150

- 83 For each successive occasion that this happens in the same playing season, the automatic fine imposed by the Affiliated Association will be a fine that is double and then treble (and so on) the amount set out in the table at paragraph 82 above.

Clubs Outside the National League System

- 84 On the first occasion that this happens in a playing season, the Affiliated Association will issue a Charge against the Club and warn the Club as to the future conduct.
- 85 On the second occasion that this happens in the same playing season, the Affiliated Association will impose an automatic fine on the Club of £25. For each successive occasion that this happens in the same playing season, the automatic fine imposed by the Affiliated Association will increase by £25.

Plea in Mitigation

- 86 In truly exceptional circumstances, a Club may submit a written plea in mitigation against the imposition of a fine under paragraphs 82, 83 or 85 above.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST CLUBS – ACCUMULATION OF PENALTY POINTS BY A CLUB'S PLAYERS

General

- 87 The purpose of the penalty points system is to assess the disciplinary record of Players of each of a Club's teams across a playing season.
- 88 The number of penalty points accumulated by a one of a Club's teams is calculated in accordance with paragraphs 89 to 90 below.

Calculating Penalty Points Totals

- 89 Each cautionable offence and sending-off offence committed by a team's Players in each Match during a playing season (together with each Charge issued to a team's Players in that playing season) will incur that team a set number of penalty points.

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- 90 The number of penalty points incurred for a cautionable offence, each sending-off offence and Charge are as follows:

TYPE OF OFFENCE/CHARGE	PENALTY POINTS INCURRED
Cautionable Offences	1 penalty point (with the exception of a caution for dissent, which will incur 2 penalty points)
Denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by a handball offence	3 penalty points
Denying a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent whose overall movement is towards the offender's goal by an offence punishable by a free kick	3 penalty points
Serious foul play	5 penalty points
Spitting at an opponent or any other person	7 penalty points
Violent conduct	6 penalty points
Using offensive, insulting, or abusive language and/or gestures	4 penalty points
Receiving a second caution in the same Match	3 penalty points
Charge	5 penalty points (subject to any increase by the Disciplinary Commission)

Accumulation of Penalty Points

- 91 Where a team accumulates 75 penalty points during a playing season, that team's Club shall be issued a Charge for a breach of Rule E20.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST CLUBS - CUMULATIVE OFFENCES

- 92 A Club may be liable for a Charge of Misconduct where:
- 92.1 There have been four occasions during a 12 month period where one or more Participants from the Club have committed a proven offence of violent conduct. A Club may also be Charged on the fifth and every subsequent occasion such a proven offence is committed by one or more of its Participants during a 12 month period.
- 92.2 There have been two occasions during a 12 month period where one or more Participants from a Club commits Misconduct for an offence against a Match Official of the sort described at paragraphs 96.2 and 96.3 below. A Club may also be Charged on the third and every subsequent occasion such a proven offence is committed by one or more of its Participants during a 12 month period.

Guidance: Paragraph 92 is only intended to capture behaviour by a specific team within a Club, it is not an accumulation of offences across all teams within a Club. For youth teams, the intention is to track the same team as it passes through the age groups, so for the purposes of determining liability, the 12 month look back period will include any time spent in a lower age bracket.

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ABANDONED MATCHES

- 93 If a Referee's report indicates that a Match has been abandoned due to alleged acts of Misconduct of either team, the Affiliated Association shall without delay conduct an investigation in to the matter.
- 94 Following the investigation, if an Affiliated Association decides to issue a Charge against the Club or the relevant Participants it must do so within 28 days of the abandoned Match unless prior dispensation has been granted by The Association to extend the applicable time limits
- 95 A Charge against a Club and/or Participant for Misconduct relating to an abandoned Match must be heard by a Disciplinary Commission within 42 days of the Affiliated Association being first notified of the Misconduct which led to the abandoned Match taking place. Where an extension of time to issue a Charge has been provided under paragraph 94, the 42-day time limit under this paragraph shall be extended by an equivalent amount of time.

OFFENCES AGAINST MATCH OFFICIALS

Categories of Offence

- 96 The three categories of offence against Match Officials are as follows:
- 96.1 Threatening behaviour: words or action that cause the Match Official to believe that they are being threatened. Examples include but are not limited to: the use of words that imply (directly or indirectly) that the Match Official may be subjected to any form of physical abuse either immediately or later, whether realistic or not; the raising of hands to intimidate the Match Official; pretending to throw or kick an object at the Match Official.
- 96.2 Physical contact or attempted physical contact: physical actions (or attempted actions) that are unlikely to cause injury to the Match Official but are nevertheless confrontational, examples include but are not limited to: pushing the Match Official or pulling the Match Official (or their clothing or equipment); and
- 96.3 Assault or attempted assault: acting in a manner which causes or attempts to cause injury to the Match Official (whether or not it does in fact cause injury), examples include, but are not limited to, causing and/or attempting to cause injury by spitting (whether it connects or not), causing and/or attempting to cause injury by striking, or attempting to strike, kicking or attempting to kick, butting or attempting to butt, barging or attempting to barge, kicking or throwing any item directly at the Match Official.

Investigation and Process

- 97 If a Match Official's report indicates that an offence has been committed against a Match Official (as categorised in paragraph 96 above), the Affiliated Association will without delay investigate the Match Official's report.
- 98 Following the investigation, the Affiliated Association, if it is satisfied that a prima facie case can be made out against the alleged offender, may:
- 98.1 issue a Charge against the Participant; and
- 98.2 may issue an Interim Suspension Order in accordance with paragraph 113 below which shall only be lifted in accordance with paragraph 115 below.
- 99 The Affiliated Association will take all reasonable steps to notify the Participant (and their Club, where applicable) of the Interim Suspension Order issued in accordance with paragraph 98.2 above.

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- 100** The Charge must be adjudicated by a Disciplinary Commission within 28 days of the Interim Suspension Order being issued unless the period is extended by the Association providing written dispensation prior to the expiry of 28 days.
- 101** Where a Charge issued in accordance with paragraph 98.1 above has been found proven against the Participant, a Disciplinary Commission shall impose sanctions in accordance with this paragraph 101:

Sanction range (Suspension)

A Disciplinary Commission shall impose an immediate suspension within a range based on the category of offence committed (as set out below). A Disciplinary Commission shall take all aggravating and mitigating factors into account, including, but not limited to, those listed in paragraph 102, when determining the level of sanction within the range.

Unless otherwise stated, the lowest end of the applicable range shall operate as a standard minimum suspension. A Disciplinary Commission may impose an immediate suspension in excess of the upper limit in circumstances where aggravating factors of significant number or weight are present.

Guidance: *where any part of a suspension period under this Paragraph is due to fall during the Close Season, the Disciplinary Commission or Appeal Board should add an additional day to the suspension period to account for each day of the Close Season the suspension period falls under (up to a maximum of 30 days). This is to take into account the fact that Matches rarely take place during the Close Season. By way of an example, if a suspension period of 90 days was due to commence on 1 June, a Disciplinary Commission or Appeal Board would be expected to issue a 120 day suspension and note in the written reasons that an additional 30 days was added to take into account the Close Season. A Disciplinary Commission may also add such further period as it determines appropriate to take into account a period of time, in addition to the Close Season, where the Participant Charged is unlikely to take part in any fixtures, subject to imposing a maximum additional period of 60 days.*

Threatening behaviour:

- 101.1** suspension from all football activity for a period of between 56 days and 182 days. The recommended entry point, prior to considering any mitigating or aggravating factors, is 112 days.
- 101.2** a fine of up to £100, with a mandatory minimum fine of £50.
- 101.3** an order that the Participant completes an education programme before the time-based suspension is served.

Physical contact or attempted physical contact:

- 101.4** suspension from all football activities for a period of between 112 days and 2 years. The recommended entry point, prior to considering any mitigating or aggravating factors is 182 days.
- 101.5** a fine of up to £150, with a mandatory minimum fine of £75.
- 101.6** an order that the Participant completes an education programme before the time-based suspension is served or within 28 days of the Disciplinary Commission's decision, whichever is the later.

Assault or attempted assault:

- 101.7.1** immediate suspension from all football activity for a period of between 5 years and 10 years, subject to the following:
- 101.7.2** where the Participant is aged 14 or under, the standard minimum suspension shall be 2 years; and
- 101.7.3** where any assault causes serious injury to the Match Official, the standard minimum suspension shall be 10 years.
- 101.8** an order that the Participant completes an education programme before the time-based suspension is served.

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102 Factors to be considered when determining sanction

A Disciplinary Commission will have due regard to the circumstances and seriousness of the incident when determining the appropriate sanction and whether (and to what extent) to depart from any sanction range applicable to the offence (subject to any applicable standard minimum suspensions).

The Disciplinary Commission shall consider any aggravating and mitigating factors, to include, but not limited to:

Aggravating factors

- The degree of force or threatening behaviour used.
- The profile of the Participant, including where they hold a position of responsibility within their Club or organisation (e.g. Club captain, Club chair, a member of the Club's senior management).
- The relative ages of the Participant and the Match Official at the time of the offence, particularly where the Match Official was a minor and the Participant was not.
- Failure to co-operate with the Affiliated Association.
- Previous disciplinary record of the Participant.
- Any attempt to conceal the breach.
- The extent of any premeditation.
- The overall impact on the reputation and integrity of the game

Mitigating factors

- Admission at the earliest opportunity.
- Demonstration of genuine remorse.
- Co-operation with the Affiliated Association.
- Age of the Participant.
- Previous disciplinary record of the Participant.

- 103 A Match Official who has reported a Participant for an offence against them may make a written request for notification of the decision and any sanctions imposed, which must be made available to the Match Official at the earliest opportunity.

ASSAULTS BY PARTICIPANTS ON OTHER PARTICIPANTS

- 104 If a Match Official's report indicates that a Participant has perpetrated an assault on another Participant causing serious bodily harm before, during or after a Match, the Affiliated Association shall without delay investigate the Referee's report.
- 105 Following the investigation, the Affiliated Association, if it is satisfied that a prima facie case can be made out against the alleged offender, may:
- 105.1 issue a Charge; and
- 105.2 may issue an Interim Suspension Order in accordance with paragraph 113 below against the alleged offender from all football activity until a Disciplinary Commission has adjudicated on the matter.
- 106 A Disciplinary Commission shall meet to consider the Charge within 28 days of (the date of) the Charge letter.

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- 107** The recommended (or mandatory, where stated) sanctions where a Charge issued in accordance with paragraph 105.1 above has been found proven against the Participant are as follows:

PARTICIPANT CHARGED	RECOMMENDED / MANDATORY MINIMUM SANCTIONS
Player	1. Mandatory minimum: suspension for all football activity for 140 days 2. £150 fine
Club Official	
Match Official	1. Mandatory suspension from all football and football activity for 5 years from the date of suspension. Where the assault causes serious injury the suspension period should be extended to 10 years. 2. A recommendation to the relevant Referees' Committee that the Match Official's registration is removed and no request for reinstatement is to be allowed until the suspension has been completed or removed.

FAILURE TO COMPLY

- 108** Where a Participant fails to comply with any applicable deadlines or other procedural requirements set out in this Section Three, the Participant's right to a personal hearing or right to make a plea in mitigation is forfeited and the Disciplinary Commission may deal with the reported Misconduct on such evidence as is available.
- 109** Where a Player or their Club fails to respond to a request for information (to include, but not limited to, a request pursuant to paragraph 4 above):
- 109.1** a fine will be imposed and a further seven days given to respond;
 - 109.2** failure to respond within the further seven days will result in the Player and the Player's team being suspended from all football activities from the following Monday; and
 - 109.3** may result in a Charge against the Player, their Club (or both).
- 110** The Club Secretary must make Players aware of the applicable punishment where an automatic suspension and/or sanction applies. The Club Secretary must sign and return the reply form to the Affiliated Association by the response date. By signing the form, the Club Secretary is confirming that they have made the Player so aware.
- 111** Where a Participant has been issued with a Charge both the Club Secretary and the Participant will be required to sign and return the form to the Affiliated Association.
- 112** When dealing with compliance issues the Affiliated Association must consider the following:
- 112.1** whether the Player has responded to their Club;
 - 112.2** whether the Club has failed to pass on the Player's reply;
 - 112.3** whether the Club has informed the Affiliated Association that the Player has failed to respond; and
 - 112.4** whether the Player has left the Club.

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SUSPENSION PENDING MISCONDUCT HEARING

- 113** An Affiliated Association shall have the power, in consultation with and upon the agreement of The Association, to issue an Interim Suspension Order in relation to a Club Official affiliated to, or a Player registered with, that Affiliated Association where the Club Official or Player has been:
- 113.1** issued with a Charge by the Affiliated Association in relation to an alleged act of serious Misconduct;
 - 113.2** charged with a criminal offence; or
 - 113.3** charged by a League in connection with disciplinary action pursuant to the relevant regulations of the League.
- 114** As soon as reasonably practicable, notification of an Interim Suspension Order shall be communicated to the Player and/or the Club.
- 115** The Interim Suspension will be lifted when either the Charge is dealt with by a Disciplinary Commission, the criminal charges are withdrawn or found not to have been proven or the charge has been dealt with by the League.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS BEFORE DISCIPLINARY COMMISSIONS

General

- 116** These provisions should be read in conjunction with:
- 116.1** Part A: General Provisions;
 - 116.2** Part G: Appendix II: Affiliated Associations – Hearings before Disciplinary Commissions.
- 117** Subject to paragraph 118, the Charge must be heard by a Disciplinary Commission no later than 90 days from receipt by the Affiliated Association of the first report of the alleged Misconduct. In the event of non-compliance with these time limits, the disciplinary proceedings shall be void, unless written dispensation is requested from The Association prior to expiry of the time limits to extend or dispense with either or both of these time limits. If deemed reasonable, any period of delay requested or caused by the Participant shall not count towards these time limits.
- 118** Where an Interim Suspension Order has been imposed or where the Misconduct relates to playing whilst suspended, the Affiliated Association must aim to conclude disciplinary proceedings within 28 days.
- 119** A Disciplinary Commission shall comprise of no less than three and no more than five members, save for non-personal hearings where The Association may appoint a single Chair to determine the case alone. The Disciplinary Commission shall have no previous personal knowledge of the events or any involvement with any of the Participants concerned.
- 120** Financial penalties for Misconduct must not be imposed on any Player in Youth Football. Where a punishment or Disciplinary Commission decision applicable to a Player in Youth Football includes any financial sanction, the Player's Club shall pay the sum imposed.

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Personal Hearings

Right to Request a Personal Hearing

- 121** A Participant issued with a Charge has the right to a personal hearing on request.
- 122** A Disciplinary Commission may, whether on the application of one of the parties or otherwise, require a Participant (whether before or during a hearing) to attend before it to provide information, in which case questions may be put to them by the Disciplinary Commission.
- 123** Where the Participant accepts the Charge, the appropriate Match Official(s) will not be required to attend a Disciplinary Commission. If the Participant denies the Charge, the appropriate Match Official(s) may be required to attend the Disciplinary Commission.
- 124** The Participant, through their Club Secretary, shall be notified of:
 - 124.1** the date, time and venue fixed for the hearing; and
 - 124.2** the attendance of any witnesses in support of the Charge, in particular the Match Official(s) on whose report the Charge has been issued.
- 125** Both the Participant issued with the Charge and any witness, including the Match Official(s) concerned, should be given a minimum 14 days' notice of details of the personal hearing unless; an interim suspension order is in place following the Charge; the case arises out of an abandoned game; or where a charge has been brought for a breach of FA Rule E10 and / or E12, in which case a minimum of 7 days' notice shall be provided. Any written request to the Disciplinary Commission for a postponement of the personal hearing should be given consideration. If the reason submitted is considered valid, then a postponement should be granted, and in such circumstances costs may be charged. A request for a second postponement by the same party should not ordinarily be granted.

Personal Hearing Procedures

- 126** In the case of a Participant under 18 years of age on the date fixed for the hearing, the hearing shall take place either in the presence of a parent or guardian of the Participant or another appropriate adult.
- 127** At a personal hearing a Disciplinary Commission may adopt such procedures as it considers appropriate and expedient for the just determination of the Charge.
- 128** Subject to paragraph 127 above, a Disciplinary Commission shall follow the procedure set out in "County and Other Affiliated Associations – Hearings before Disciplinary Commissions" (at Part G: Appendix II).

Disciplinary Commission Decisions and Costs

- 129** Save where otherwise provided, a Disciplinary Commission may impose such penalties as provided for in paragraph 40 of Part A: General Provisions Section Two.
- 130** Where the Charge is found not proven, any record of it will be expunged from the Player's record.
- 131** Where the Charge is found proven the Disciplinary Commission will decide what punishment, if any, is to be imposed. In so doing, the Disciplinary Commission must consider the overall nature and effect of the offence(s) and the Player's disciplinary record during the current playing season and the previous five playing seasons and any plea in mitigation. In cases where the Disciplinary Commission can order costs in accordance with paragraph 132 below, it shall take into account any deposit lodged by the Player.
- 132** Where a personal hearing is requested in accordance with paragraph 121, and the Charge is subsequently found proven at that hearing, the Disciplinary Commission may, in addition to any other penalty, order:
 - 132.1** the Player to pay all or part of the costs of the personal hearing. Such costs may include some or all of the costs incurred in relation to the holding of the Disciplinary Commission.
 - 132.2** any deposit lodged by the Player be forfeited.

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- 133** Where:
- 133.1** a personal hearing is requested in accordance with paragraph 121, and the Charge is subsequently not found proven at that hearing;
 - 133.2** a Player is instructed to attend a personal hearing by the Affiliated Association or the relevant Disciplinary Commission; or
 - 133.3** a case is considered on written submissions only,
- there shall be no costs order made against the Player. In such cases, any deposit lodged by the Player shall be returned.
- 134** Save where an appeal has been submitted in accordance with paragraph 139 below, any fines or costs that are ordered must be paid before the expiry of 14 days from the date of the order. Failure to make payment shall constitute Misconduct.
- 135** The Player and their Club are jointly and severally responsible for payment of any fine and costs. The Club shall take such action as may be necessary to recover any sum paid on the Player's behalf.

Notification of Disciplinary Commission Decisions

- 136** Decisions of Disciplinary Commissions will be provided to the Player or (in the cases of Players) Club Secretaries of all Clubs for whom the Player is known to be currently playing and to the Player's home address if known. Each of these Club Secretaries is responsible for informing the Player of the decision.
- 137** The commencement date of any suspension imposed on a Player is at the discretion of the Disciplinary Commission, subject to the suspension starting on a Monday. Such date must allow for the time permitted for notification of an intention to appeal.
- 138** A Disciplinary Commission decision may be notified to the relevant Match Officials, subject to (a) the Player being aware of the decision, and (b) the Match Officials having requested to be so notified.

APPEALS FROM DISCIPLINARY COMMISSION DECISIONS

- 139** Participants shall have the right to appeal decisions of a Disciplinary Commission to an Appeal Board in accordance with Part C: Appeals – Non-Fast Track. A Participant wishing to appeal must:
- 139.1** lodge notification of an intention to appeal within seven days of notification of the decision being appeal against;
 - 139.2** submit their appeal within 14 days of notification of the decision being appeal against.
- 140** The Association shall also have the right to appeal decisions of a Disciplinary Commission to an Appeal Board. Where The Association wishes to appeal it must submit its appeal within 28 days following the receipt of the reasons of the Disciplinary Commission.
- 141** In respect of any appeal made by a Participant against a decision of a Disciplinary Commission, upon application and its absolute discretion, the Judicial Panel Chairman may stay the effect of, or compliance by the Participant Charged with, a penalty or order of a Disciplinary Commission.

FURTHER DISCIPLINARY ACTION

- 142** The rules or regulations of an Affiliated Association must provide for disciplinary action to be taken against a Player who fails to reimburse their Club where the Club has had a claim upheld in accordance with the Football Debt Recovery Regulations.
- 143** An Affiliated Association in formulating its rules and regulations for Misconduct may adopt and include the power to make an order that a Club whose Players are persistently the subject of proven Charges:
- 143.1** is censured and/or fined in accordance with the penalty point system in accordance with paragraphs 87 to 91 above;
 - 143.2** may have its affiliation suspended or cancelled;
 - 143.3** is subject to any other power approved in writing by The Association.
- 144** A power approved by The Association pursuant to paragraph 143.3 shall continue from year to year until such time as the approval is withdrawn. Such approval may be withdrawn by The Association giving notice in writing before 30 April in any year.