

# DISCIPLINARY SECTION

All club and competition secretaries are advised to read this section thoroughly to ensure that they are familiar with its contents.

## RECEIPT OF MAIL FROM ASSOCIATION OFFICE

- For Clubs that opt out of online discipline, there is a remote possibility of mail not being received by clubs. You are advised that if a club has a player cautioned or sent off and does not receive a relevant communication from the Association Office within 14 days of the match, contact should be made with the Office to enquire if any communication has been sent. Alternatively, a club can check themselves if a caution or send off has been issued by logging onto Whole Game System using the information supplied at the time of affiliation. They can also check on what time period they have to pay within before late fines are added
- Similarly, if you have attended a personal hearing, and do not hear within 7 days, please contact the Office.
- In the case of submitting a letter of mitigation, which is heard by a non-personal Commission, contact the Office if you have not heard within 28 days.

## DEALING WITH DISCIPLINE PAPERWORK ONLINE & OFFLINE

- On receipt of a caution, sending off or misconduct charge, the player's name will be shown. It is the Club's responsibility to supply that player's address and date of birth. If an address is listed, but it is a previous address, it is the Club's responsibility to make a correction on the form. Where a player is shown as 'unknown player', the Club must supply that player's name, address and date of birth. Every player or participant has a FAN (FA Number). Where a **minus** is shown before that number in brackets, then that is an indication that that player is either unknown to the Middlesex Football Association, or that he is new to your Club or that his record is pristine.
- If there is insufficient information it is the Club's responsibility to complete it fully and to amend any changes. If the information is not supplied, this impacts on the player's previous disciplinary history. Therefore, the payment of the charge **will not be accepted**, the paperwork and the payment will be **returned** to the Club Secretary for correction, consequently increasing the risk of a late fine being added for not returning the paperwork within the 14-day time scale.
- It is also a benefit to Clubs if the Middlesex Football Association is in possession of all the Club's players' details at all times. This is just in case a player leaves a Club owing money. Should this occur, a Club may wish to instigate Rule 12 action against that person. This will not be possible, if the Middlesex Football Association are not in possession of that player's details and information of attachment to the Club that is owed money.

## PROOF OF POSTING TO ASSOCIATION OFFICE

- Clubs may obtain a proof of posting certificate (free from Post Office Counters). They must include, in the address on the certificate and envelope, the Case Number, as in the example below:

Middlesex Football Association  
"Case Number(s) i.e. 1899999 M"  
39 Roxborough Road, Harrow, Middlesex. HA1 1NS

- In the event of a dispute over whether a payment has been sent to the Association, only an officially stamped, correctly completed certificate will be accepted as proof that the fine, etc, was sent and will result in the sanction imposed being withdrawn as soon as possible. Without such a certificate, the Association will not accept that the communication was sent.
- Any query as to non-delivery must be taken up with Royal Mail by the club concerned. During any period of investigation into alleged non-delivery, notwithstanding that fact that proof of posting has been established, the Association will require the club concerned to replace immediately any money, etc, that has been posted and not delivered.
- Clearly, any late delivery of money that has already been replaced will be refunded by the Association.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Standard offences in all football are now dealt with on a match-based disciplinary system for “standard” on field offences. Details of this – and all other disciplinary matters – can be found via the link (below) to The FA’s Disciplinary Handbook. You are strongly advised to consult this Handbook if you have any doubts about completion of the form. Should you need further advice, do not hesitate to contact the Association’s Disciplinary Department.

If there is a charge that is not covered by the match-based system or is an additional charge over and above any match-based suspension, a separate charge is issued and a response required.

MFA does not wish to influence your decision on how you wish to deal with your case. The Questions and Answers below are for guidance only. They are designed to explain the options available in more detail than those contained on the disciplinary form in an effort to assist you to understand and decide on your options. They also give you some guidance as to the likelihood of you incurring additional costs. These apply to both individuals and to any clubs that are charged.

**Q What does Box A really mean?**

**A** It means if you agree with the report entirely, you can tick Box A and accept the charge and any punishment that may be outlined. The punishment and any suspension dates will be decided by a Commission and notified to your club.

**Q What does Box B really mean?**

**A** It means you agree with the report entirely but feel you would like to explain your actions personally to a Commission and ask for any mitigating factors to be taken into account. At the hearing, you will not be allowed to challenge or deny any aspect of the referee’s report – by ticking this box you are confirming that what the referee (and assistants, if applicable) have written is factually correct. If you opt for this, you may incur some additional costs in addition to any fine imposed, in that the personal hearing fee is likely to be forfeited and the costs of the Commission charged to you. You could easily find that the total costs, before any fine, amount to £60 per case.

**Q What does Box C really mean?**

**A** It means that you disagree with the report and wish to submit written evidence of why you are not guilty of the charge to be considered by a non-personal Commission. If you opt for this, you will not incur any costs in addition to any fine imposed. The result and punishment (if any) will be decided by the Commission and notified to your club.

**Q What does Box D really mean?**

**A** It means that you disagree with the report and wish to appear before a Commission to defend yourself. You are required to submit, in writing with the request, the fee, the reasons why you are contesting the charge and supply any documentation (statements, etc.), you would like to present to the Commission to support your case. You are also required to inform the Association of the number of witnesses you intend to bring. Should you not convince the Commission and you are found guilty, you may incur additional costs in that the personal hearing fee is likely to be forfeited and the costs of the Commission charged to you. The referee (and assistants if appropriate) will be required to attend and you need to be aware that, if the Commission does not uphold your case, you will be liable for the match officials’ expenses.

**Q What is mitigation?**

**A** It is a letter or verbal explanation that sets out the incident from your point of view. It should accept that the Referee acted correctly in football Law, but it could point out that you consider the certain circumstances at the time of the incident gave rise to your actions. It may also point out that you have a good disciplinary record or that there were other extenuating circumstances prevailing.

**Q Is it a bad idea to tick Box D?**

**A** To take this course you must seriously consider that you are totally innocent and feel certain that you can prove your case to a Commission that will also have the match official(s) present to question in seeking evidence. Otherwise, if the case is found to be proved, you risk the personal hearing fee being forfeited and the costs of the Commission charged to you. You could easily find that the total costs, before any fine, amount to £75 per case, more if there are several match officials involved, whose expenses form part of the costs.

## **The FA Disciplinary Handbook**

To download The FA Disciplinary Handbook, which gives a good guide for Discipline dealt with by MFA and other affiliated Football Associations click on the link below or paste into your browser:

<http://esports.flipboxapp.net/Discipline/>