

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

- We encourage all clubs that do not receive a notification through the Whole Game System of a known disciplinary action (caution or send-off) within 7 days to notify us urgently and note that the suspension(s) (if applicable) will automatically start straight away.
- Regarding personal hearings and correspondence cases, the results will be notified through the Whole Game System the following day after the hearing.
- If you have attended a personal hearing, and do not hear within 5 days, please contact the Office.
- In the case of submitting a letter of mitigation, where a case is to be heard by a non-personal Commission, contact the Office if you have not heard within 28 days.

DEALING WITH DISCIPLINE ONLINE & OFFLINE

- On receipt of a caution, sending off or misconduct charge through the Whole Game System, 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 the player's name is spelt incorrectly or the club believes they already have an existing FAN then they **must** notify the Football Services Team as soon as possible. Once accurate details are on the system, the case needs to be acknowledged by clicking the acknowledge button and then they will be able to pay for the discipline or misconduct.
- 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**. Contact will be made with the Club Secretary for correction, consequently increasing the risk of a late fine being added for not returning the paperwork within the prescribed timescale.
- 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 is not in possession of that player's details and information of attachment to the Club that is owed money.

PROOF TO ASSOCIATION OFFICE

- Posting – we are happy to accept cheques via post but would encourage clubs to pay online.
- If posting is used, 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"
Rectory Park, Ruislip Road, Northolt, Middlesex UB5 5FA

- 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. Consulting this Handbook, if there are any doubts about completion of the form is recommended. Should further advice be needed, do not hesitate to contact the Association’s Football Services Team.

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 the party charged’s decision on how to deal with your case **in any way**. The Questions and Answers below are for clarification only. They are designed to explain the options available in more detail than those contained on the disciplinary form in an effort to assist in understanding and deciding options. They also give some guidance as to the likelihood of 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 the party charged agrees with the report entirely. 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 the club.

Q What does Box B really mean?

A It means the party charged agrees with the report entirely but feels an explanation of actions can be explained personally to a Commission any mitigating factors outlined to be taken into account. At the hearing, the party charged will not be allowed to challenge or deny any aspect of the referee’s report. By ticking this box it confirms that what the referee (and assistants, if applicable) have written is factually correct. In opting for this, the party charged 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 the party charged.

Q What does Box C really mean?

A It means that the party charged disagrees with the report and wishes to submit written evidence of why the party charged is not guilty of the charge to be considered by a non-personal Commission. In opting for this, the party charged will not incur any costs in addition to any fine imposed.

Q What does Box D really mean?

A It means that the party charged disagrees with the report and wishes to appear before a Commission to offer a full defence. The party charged is required to submit, in writing, with the request, the fee, the reasons for contesting the charge and supply any documentation (statements, etc.), the party charged would like to present to the Commission to support the defence. The party charged is also required to inform the Association of the number of witnesses likely to attend. Should the party charged not convince the Commission and is found guilty, the party charged may incur additional costs in that the personal hearing fee is likely to be forfeited and the costs of the Commission added. The referee (and assistants if appropriate) will be required to attend and the party charged needs to be aware that, if the Commission does not uphold the defence case, liability for the match officials’ expenses will be included in the costs.

Q What is mitigation?

A It is a letter or verbal explanation that sets out the incident from the party charged’s point of view. It should accept that the referee acted correctly in football Law, but it could point out that the party charged considers that certain circumstances at the time of the incident gave rise to particular actions. It may also point out that the party charged has 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 the party charged must seriously consider that the charge is not appropriate and is totally innocent of it, feeling certain that a defence case can be proved to a Commission. Match official(s) will be present to question in seeking evidence. If the case is found to be proved, the party charged risks the personal hearing fee being forfeited and the costs of the Commission being charged. Match officials’ expenses will be included in 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:

<https://book.flipboxapp.net/client/essential-information#page/1>