



DISCIPLINE HANDBOOK

FOR CLUBS

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CAUTIONS

If a player from your club receives a Yellow Card, the club secretary will be notified through the Whole Game System.

All yellow cards have an automatic administration fee of £10. There is no right of appeal for a caution, except for cases of mistaken identity.

If a player receives a Sin Bin, no administration fee will be charged.

Player's aren't suspended for being cautioned; however there are thresholds which if a payer reaches, they will become suspended. These suspensions begin 7 days after the final caution.

Number of Cautions	Cut Off Date (Inclusive)	Sanction
5	31 st December	1 match suspension & £15 fine
10	Second Sunday in April	2 match suspension & £15 fine
15	End of Season	3 match suspension & £15 fine
20+		Every 5 cautions received thereafter will result in a continuing misconduct charge

Competition Specific

For the FA Cup, FA Trophy and FA Vase, these are competition specific. If a player receives 2 yellow cards in the same competition, they 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 do not count in the caution tally for the 5 / 10 / 15 sanction process.



STANDARD CHARGES

If your player receives a red card, the suspension will start automatically 7 days after the offence.

The club secretary will receive notification through the Whole Game System, which will confirm the length of suspension and fine.

A player sent off a second time in the season, they will serve an additional suspension, if the red card is within the same category. For example: S2 (violent conduct)

The sanction that the player receives will depend on what the player gets sent off for. The sanction received also differs depending on the level of football.

If notification of the sending off is not received within 3 working days you have not, you must contact Northants FA immediately.

Non-receipt of paperwork / notification is not a valid defence and a charge is issued for playing whilst under suspension for both the club and player.

Since the 2018/2019 season, it is no longer a requirement for referee's to submit a report.



Offence	Offence Code	Step 5 - 7		Below NLS & Youth	
		Fine	Suspension	Fine	Suspension
Serious Foul Play	S1	£55	3 Matches	£40	3 Matches
Violent Conduct	S2	£55	3 Matches	£40	3 Matches
Spitting	S3	£55	6 Matches	£55	6 Matches
Denies an Obvious Goal-Scoring Opportunity	S4 / S5	£35	1 Match	£30	1 Match
Use of offensive or insulting or abusive language	S6	£45	2 Matches	£40	2 Matches
Receiving a Second Caution in a Match	S7	£35	1 Match	£30	1 Match

Suspensions

Qualifying matches for a suspension is based on the team that the player was playing for at the time they were sent off.

Should a player transfer to a team that is at the same level and category, any remaining suspension may also be transferred to the new club.

The club must make Northamptonshire FA aware of the fixtures the player is going to miss to clear the suspension, this is done on the Whole Game System

Players dismissed from Saturday football, they can still play Sunday football and vice versa.

An abandoned match will not count towards clearing a player's suspension as it is not a completed fixture, even if the league awards the game.

Qualifying matches

The following competitions will qualify to serve suspensions:

- FA Competitions (Cup, Trophy, Vase, Women's Cup & FA Sunday Cup)
- League Matches
- League Cup Matches
- All County Cup Matches
- League Cup Competitions

Unsure whether a fixture qualifies?

Contact Northamptonshire FA who can advise.

Appeals

Apart from sending offs for S6 (Use of offensive, or insulting or abusive language), or S7 (second yellow card), all other sending offs can be appealed.

There are two options in appealing a sending off;

- Wrongful Dismissal - A successful claim will need to demonstrate that the Match Official made an obvious error in dismissing the player.
- Mistaken Identity - A club should submit the name of the individual responsible to Northamptonshire FA

In all cases, an appeal fee must be submitted. For Step 5 - 7 this is £50, and for Non-NLS and Youth, it is £30.

For appeals, time limits are strict and any claims that are received late will not be considered.

All appeals will be heard before any sanction commences.

Day of Dismissal	Notification to Northants FA	Appeal fee paid & Evidence submitted (3pm)
Saturday	Tuesday	Thursday
Sunday	Tuesday	Thursday
Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Tuesday	Thursday	Monday
Wednesday	Friday	Tuesday
Thursday	Monday	Wednesday
Friday	Tuesday	Thursday

MISCONDUCT CHARGES

Misconduct Charges are issued for reported incidents which do not fall under the standard dismissal offences, or is a serious offence.

Any participant in football can be charged with misconduct, this includes, a manager, physio, referee, club secretary and club assistant referee. Clubs and Leagues can also be charged.

As suspension for a misconduct charge will be from ALL football at County Level (Step 5 and below) and automatically commences 3 days after the hearing.

When going through all the evidence, the panel need to make a judgement based on the balance of probability (is it more probable than not that the incident occurred / 51% - 49%).



Charge Responses

If someone within your club is charged, notification will come through to the club secretary on the Whole Game System. A copy of the charge will also be sent in the post. All evidence being used in support of the charge will be attached.

Depending on the charge, the participant usually has 14 days to respond to the charge, however for more serious charges the participant will have 7 days to respond to the charge.

The participant has four options when replying to a charge;
Guilty - correspondence: accepting the charge, the case will be dealt with via correspondence

Guilty - verbal plea: accepting the charge & appearing in front of a panel to give mitigation

Not Guilty - correspondence: denying the charge, the case will be dealt with via correspondence

Not Guilty - personal hearing: denying the charge & attending a disciplinary hearing

When replying to the charge the participant should submit all evidence that they want the disciplinary panel to consider for their case.

If no response is received, the case will automatically go to a correspondence hearing with a not guilty plea.

Appeals

If a misconduct charge is proven, you may appeal to The FA within 7 days of the hearing decision.

To appeal you must submit a letter to Discipline@TheFA.com with the appeal fee of £50. You then have a further 7 days to collect & submit all your evidence.

In the intention to appeal letter, this must contain the grounds for appeal, which must be one of;

- Failed to give the appellant a fair hearing
- Misinterpreted or failed to comply with the rules or regulations relevant to its decision
- Came to a decision on the facts of the case which no reasonable body could've reached
- Imposed an award order of any other sanction that is excessive



Suspensions

A misconduct suspension automatically starts 3 days after the hearing.

Suspensions for misconduct charges will be from all football, however, only matches for the team which the incident happened with will count towards clearing the suspension.

Like for sending offs, an abandoned match will not count towards clearing a player's suspension as it is not a completed fixture, even if the league awards the game.

Sanction guidelines

When a misconduct charge is found proven, the commission then decide on a sanction, taking the sanction guidelines into consideration.

When deciding on a sanction, the commission takes into account the participants previous history. The commission will only see this if the charge is found proven.

As well as sporting sanctions and fines, a commission is able to order a participant to attend various workshops to help improve poor behaviour.

FA Rule	Charge Description	Step 5 - 7			Outside NLS			Youth		
		Low	Mid	High	Low	Mid	High	Low	Mid	High
E3	Improper Conduct against a MO (Including Abusive Language/Behaviour)	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
E3	Improper Conduct (Not Including Threatening and/or abusive Language/Behaviour)	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
E3	Improper Conduct against a MO (Including Threatening and/or Abusive Language/Behaviour)	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								
E3	Improper Conduct (Threatening and/or Abusive Language/Behaviour)	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
E3	Improper Conduct against a MO (Including Physical Contact)	Recommended punishment for Physical conduct against a Match official is 182 days plus up to £10 fine but minimum is 84 days & £100 fine								
E3	Improper Conduct (Including Violent Conduct and Threatening Language/Behaviour)	1 / 3 £30 - £60	2 / 4 £50 - £100	3 / 10 £75 - £150	1 / 3 £20 - £50	2 / 4 £40 - £80	3 / 10 £75 - £125	1 / 3 £15 - £30	2 / 4 £20 - £50	3 / 10 £40 - £80
E3	Improper Conduct (Including Foul & Abusive Language)	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
E3	Assault Participant on Participant	140 Days £150	1 - 2 Years £150	5 Years £150	140 Days £150	1 - 2 Years £150	5 Years £150	140 Days £150	1 - 2 Years £150	2 - 5 Years £150
E3	Assault on a Match Official	Minimum 5 Years	7 Years	10 Years	Minimum 5 Years	7 Years	10 Years	Minimum 5 Years	5 - 7 Years	7 - 10 Years
E20	Failed to ensure Players/Spectators and/or Club Officials conducted themselves in an orderly fashion	£0 - £75	£75 - £150	£150 - 250	£0 - £50	£25 - £75	£75 - £150	£0 - £40	£25 - £60	£60 - £100

PERSONAL HEARINGS

There may be occasion when a Participant is asked to attend a Disciplinary hearing - either when requested as a result of a charge, or attending as a witness to misconduct.

Most of our hearings take place in weekday evenings, however if this is not suitable, we will do our best to arrange it to suit all parties involved. Once a date has been set, each party has an opportunity to postpone the hearing, however this can only happen once.

Should we not be able to find a suitable date and time, WebEx can be used (this can only be used for County FA witnesses or participant witnesses).

When being asked to attend, you will be sent a Guide to Personal Hearings, which includes topics such as;

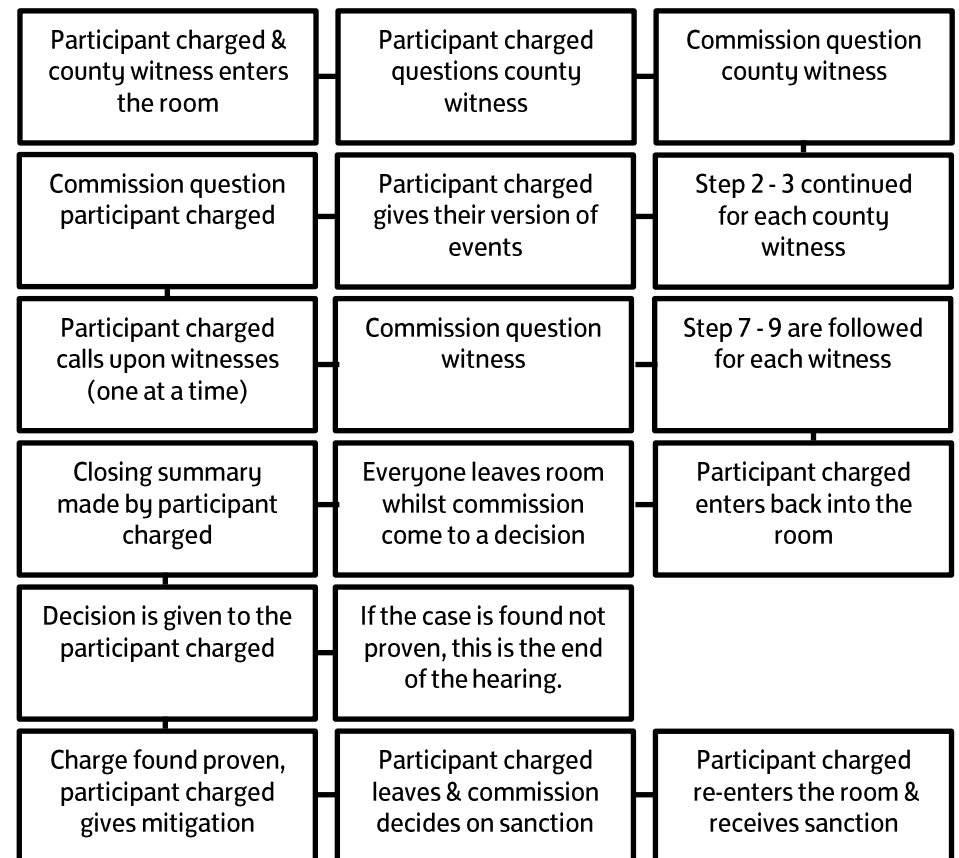
- What do I bring to the hearing?
- What should I wear?
- How long do personal hearings last?

It is advised that this is read beforehand to help you answer any questions. If there are still questions, call Northants FA who will be able to help.

If an under 18 is present at hearing, special measures are put in place to make this person feel as comfortable as possible. You will be made aware if this is the case before your hearing.

Procedure

The process for personal hearings can vary from each hearing, however they all generally follow the process below;



REPORTING

The easiest way to report is through email, however you can make reports over the phone. If making a report over the phone, you may be asked to follow this up with an email.

To make it the best report as possible, please include the following;

- What happened
- How far away from the incident were you
- Why did the incident occur
- Were there any other witnesses to the incident
- Who was involved in the incident



If you are unsure on the name/s of the people involved, give a description so that we can try and identify them, including the number that they were playing if known.

If someone else witnessed the behaviour that is reported, include their names in your report. We may ask that reports are written by these people to make a stronger case.

Should a report be made, a charge maybe raised. If necessary the person who made a report may be requested to attend a personal hearing. Details of this can be found on page 9.

We understand that this maybe a daunting experience, but the participant charged has the right to request this, and to get the best result it would be necessary that they attended the hearing.

DISCRIMINATION

We 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 football.

Discriminatory abuse includes reference whether expressed or implied to anyone or more of the following:

- Ethnic Origin
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Gender Reassignment
- Disability
- Colour
- Nationality
- Gender
- Sexual Orientation

When discriminatory behavior takes place, those who witness it, or are a victim of it, need to be able to report quickly and to the right people.

All cases of discrimination that are reported into us are immediately reported centrally to The FA. Investigations are managed by Northamptonshire FA, and where appropriate, charged will be raised upon completion of the investigation.

The sanction for discriminatory abuse is a minimum 5 match suspension, £75 fine and a mandatory education course.

All cases of discrimination are heard by an independent Chairman who have been selected based on their skills, knowledge and experience.



A charge shall not be raised for an aggravated breach for any player under the age of 12, the primary aim in these cases will be education.

If a spectator of a club be accused of using discriminatory language, if the individual cannot be identified and/or they are not a participant in football, then the club will be charged.

Reporting

Should you wish to report an incident of discrimination at Step 5 and below, in the first instance, please contact Northants FA via email or telephone.

Concerns can also be reported directly to Kick It Out, either through the app, or by contacting ifo@kickitout.org

FOOTBALL DEBT RECOVERY

If a Participant leaves your club owing money, the Football Debt Recovery (FDR) scheme is in place to help recover the monies owed. Should a club want to do this, there is a refundable fee of £25.

Under FA Regulations, only money owed for the following can be collected;

- Fines for discipline
- Match costs (e.g. match fees)
- League costs (e.g. repair to cups)
- Player expenses (e.g. pitch hire)

The FDR scheme cannot be used for the following;

- Kit/Equipment
- Club Subscriptions
- Signing on fees
- Internal club fines
- Fund raising schemes
- End of season trip costs

The club should inform us that there is a problem within 28 days of payment being requested and 112 days of the debt being incurred.

Leagues can use the FDR system to recover monies owed to them by clubs. In these cases, the debt will be split between the player registered with the club.

How does the process work?

STAGE 1

Write to the player concerned as soon as there is a problem getting payment. Correspondence must provide a date that the payment must be received - we recommend 14 days.

STAGE 2

If payment has not been received, contact Northants FA immediately. A copy off the correspondence with the player must be provided.

STAGE 3

Providing the request falls within the correct timescales, Northants FA will write to the player giving a further 21 days to pay.

STAGE 4

If the player fails to pay within the 21 days, they will be suspended from all football until the payment is made.

STAGE 5

When monies are paid to Northants FA, we will then pay the club back via BACS .

ILLEGAL APPROACH

An illegal approach happens when a club does not give a notice of approach (NOA) to another club when wanting to sign or allow players to train with them.

Formal written NOA needs to be given by:

- A Saturday Club only to all Saturday Clubs
- A Sunday Club only to all Sunday Clubs
- A midweek Club only to all Midweek Clubs

A NOA must be sent to the secretary or chairman of the club, via one of the following communications;

- Email
- Text message



You must send a NOA even if;

- The player approaches your club (before you allow them to train/sign)
- The player is still going to play for their other club

Following the NOA being sent, or receipt of the club waiving the NOA, the following can then happen;

- The player maybe registered on or after the eighth day
- The player must have been registered on or before the 21st day

The approaching club;

- May not approach the same player a second time in the same season
- May approach only one player at a club at any time
- May not approach another player at the same club within 28 days of an earlier notice of approach

It is the clubs responsibility to make sure that NOA are sent to all Clubs that the player is registered with.

Should a club breach this rule, the club maybe subject to a charge of Misconduct under FA Rule E1(b).

If found proven to have breached this rule, the current registration of the Player maybe cancelled and subject to other penalty as the commission deems appropriate.

MULTI PLAYER MISCONDUCT

Multi player misconduct is when a club has six or more individual players cautioned or dismissed the club will be fined as per the table below;

	1 st Occasion	2 nd Occasion	3 rd Occasion	4 th Occasion
Step 5 & 6	£150	£300	£450	£600
Step 7	£75	£150	£225	£300
Non NLS	Warned	£25	£50	£75

If the clubs breaches this offence more than once, the fine will increase on each occasion.

Example

Players 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are cautioned and Player 6 is sent off. The club will be dealt with as detailed in the table.

Players 1, 2, 3 and 4 are cautioned and Players 2 and 3 are sent off for two yellow cards.

The Club would not be fined as only four Players have been disciplined during the match.



It must be six different individuals discipline in the game, multiple sanctions for one player will only count as one offence.

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.

RESPECT THRESHOLDS

Respect both on and off the pitch has been one of our main priorities over the past few seasons, with the aim to improve discipline and promote good behaviour from Players, Clubs and all Participants involved in the game.

Respect Sanctions have been in place for the past 4 seasons, with automatic punishments being given out when thresholds are reached to try and deter bad behaviour.

Offences that contribute to the automatic punishments are:

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

The following automatic punishments are put in place for when teams reach the following thresholds;

	Stage 1 (6 offences)	Stage 2 (10 offences)	Stage 3 (15 offences)	Stage 4 (20 offences)
Step 5	Warned	£150	£300	E20 Charge
Step 6 & 7	Warned	£75	£150	E20 Charge
Non NLS	Warned	£50	£100	E20 Charge

County Respect Working Party (CRWP)

Over the past 3 seasons, Northamptonshire FA have formed a group that is helping promote good behaviour across the county.

The group meets with teams, and provides help them, by suggesting measures and processes to try and stop the team reaching the next threshold.

	Stage 1 (6 offences)	Stage 2 (10 offences)	Stage 3 (15 offences)	Stage 4 (20 offences)
Last Sunday in October	Warning Letter	Meeting with CRWP	Meeting with CRWP	Meeting with CRWP
Last Sunday in February	Warning Letter	Meeting with CRWP	Meeting with CRWP	Meeting with CRWP
End of Season	Warning Letter	Further Warning Letter	Meeting with CRWP	Meeting with CRWP

Appealing

A team is permitted to appeal in writing if they receive a sanction at Stage 2 - 4 of the process, however this is only a plea of mitigation and to present extenuating circumstances that a Commission may consider in a non-personal hearing.

The decision of the Commission is final and binding.

FAQ's

How much is the Administration Fee?

The Administration Fee is £10 cautions and £15 for Sending offs and misconduct charges

A Parent was refereeing a fixture and sent a player off. Are we able to receive discipline from that game if they are unregistered or not qualified?

A person acting in the capacity of Referee on the match day has the same powers and duties as those that are registered officials. Therefore should any discipline sanctions be imposed, a report must be submitted.

If a Player is sent off or cautioned, who is liable for the Fine?

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

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

When registering the Player, any suspensions that they have will appear on their profile, this is identified by a red card. If you are still not sure, you can contact Northamptonshire FA who can inform you of their current status.

If a Club players a Player who is suspended, who gets charged?

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

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

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

A Player 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. Should the team have no friendlies left, the suspension is held over to the next friendly, but the player can resume playing competitive football.

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

If in the same game there is a need to raise two charged from the same report, only one administration fee shall be included on the response forms.

GLOSSARY

Caution

Another word for a yellow card

Commission

A panel of 3 from Northants FA's Discipline Committee. Headed up by qualified chairman, with two wing members. At least one of the panel will be an independent member.

Correspondence

A misconduct case being heard via paperwork.

Football Debt Recovery (FDR)

A scheme put in place to help clubs recover money owed to them by players. Leagues can also use this to recover money from clubs.

Notice of Approach (NOA)

Written communication between a club that wants to sign a player from another club.

Personal Hearing

Pleading not guilty to a charge, attending a commission to give evidence. Witnesses of the incident will be in attendance.

Standard Charge

Another word for a red card

Whole Game System (WGS)

The system used by Northants FA which details all discipline cases, as well as other things such as: player registration and affiliation.

Verbal Plea

Pleading guilty to a charge, attending in front of a commission to give mitigation.



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