



FOR MEDIA

2023/24



FOR ALL

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INTRODUCTION

The Football Association (The FA) Media Essentials Guide is produced each year to support print, broadcast and online journalists to understand our Rules and Regulations. It is also intended to help ensure any reporting around them is accurate for viewers, readers or listeners.

Our general on and off-field regulatory and disciplinary processes that apply to football 'participants' during the 2023/24 season are explained in the form of step-by-step guides and timelines where applicable.

Relevant updates from FIFA and the International Football Association Board (IFAB) that could have implications for English football throughout the current season are also outlined.

Please contact our Media Relations team in the first instance if you have questions about any of these topics during the season by using:

Media.Relations@TheFA.com

Our standard practice is to publish the details of misconduct charges and outcomes involving 'participants' under our jurisdiction, and regular updates can be found on:

@FAspokesperson and www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/discipline

Our Rules and Regulations are available in full via:

www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/lawsandrules

NB: The 2023/24 Media Essentials Guide does not alter or replace our Rules and Regulations, and they should be referred to for the comprehensive provisions relating to our disciplinary matters. It is accurate at the date of publication.

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PARTICIPANTS

Any affiliated association; competition; club; club official, which for the avoidance of doubt should include a director; intermediary; player; official; manager; match official; match official observer; match official coach; match official mentor; management committee member; member or employee of a club; and all persons who are from time to time participating in any activity sanctioned either directly or indirectly by us in English football are defined as 'participants'.

Any misconduct or breaches of our Rules and Regulations by 'participants' can lead to disciplinary charges and sanctions where appropriate.

THE LAWS OF THE GAME

The 2023/24 Laws of the Game were approved by the International Football Association Board (IFAB) at its 137th annual general meeting. They became effective for all friendly matches and competitions from 1 July 2023. Key changes and clarifications include:

EXTRA PLAYERS AND GOALS

- If, after a goal is scored, the referee realises, before play restarts, that an extra person was on the field of play when the goal was scored, and that person interfered with play:
- The referee must disallow the goal if the extra person was:
 - A player, substitute, substituted player, sent-off player or team official of the team that scored the goal; play is restarted with a direct free kick from the position of the extra person;
 - An outside agent who interfered with play unless a goal results as outlined above in 'Extra persons on the field of play'; play is restarted with a dropped ball.
- The referee must allow the goal if the extra person was:
 - A player, substitute, substituted player, sent-off player or team official of the team that conceded the goal;
- An outside agent who did not interfere with play.

RESERVE ASSISTANT REFEREES

- 'Reserve assistant referees' may assist the match referee in the same way as the other 'on-field' match officials.

TIME ALLOWANCES

- Allowance is made by the referee in each half for all playing time lost in that half through:
 - Substitutions;
 - Goal celebrations;
 - Any other cause, including any significant delay to a restart (due to interference by an outside agent).



OFFSIDE

- A player in an offside position receiving the ball from an opponent who deliberately played the ball, including by deliberate handball, is not considered to have gained an advantage, unless it was a deliberate save by any opponent.
- 'Deliberate play' (excluding deliberate handball) is when a player has control of the ball with the possibility of:
 - Passing the ball to a team-mate;
 - Gaining possession of the ball; or
 - Clearing the ball (e.g. by kicking or heading it).
- If the pass, attempt to gain possession or clearance by the player in control of the ball is inaccurate or unsuccessful, this does not negate the fact that the player 'deliberately played' the ball.
- The following criteria should be used, as appropriate, as indicators that a player was in control of the ball and, as a result, can be considered to have 'deliberately played' the ball:
 - The ball travelled from distance and the player had a clear view of it;
 - The ball was not moving quickly;
 - The direction of the ball was not unexpected;
 - The player had time to co-ordinate their body movement, i.e. it was not a case of instinctive stretching or jumping, or a movement that achieved limited contact/control;
 - A ball moving on the ground is easier to play than a ball in the air.

FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

- There are different circumstances when a player must be cautioned for unsporting behaviour, including if a player:
 - Handles the ball to interfere with or stop a promising attack;
 - Commits any other offence which interferes with or stops a promising attack, except where the referee awards a penalty kick for an offence which was an attempt to play the ball or a challenge for the ball;
 - Denies an opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by committing an offence which was an attempt to play the ball or a challenge for the ball and the referee awards a penalty kick.
- Denying a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO):
 - Where a player commits an offence against an opponent within their own penalty area which denies an opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity and the referee awards a penalty kick, the offender is cautioned if the offence was an attempt to play the ball or a challenge for the ball; in all other circumstances (e.g. holding, pulling, pushing, no possibility to play the ball etc.), the offending player must be sent off.
- Team officials:
 - Where an offence is committed by someone from the technical area (substitute, substituted player, sent-off player or team official) and the offender cannot be identified, the senior team coach present in the technical area will receive the sanction.



PENALTY SHOOT-OUTS

- The term 'kicks from the penalty mark' is outdated, so 'penalties' or a 'penalty shoot-out' are to be used moving forward.
- Warnings and cautions for team officials, as well as for players, are not carried forward into a penalty shoot-out.

PENALTIES

- The defending goalkeeper must remain on the goal line, facing the kicker, between the goalposts, until the ball is kicked. The goalkeeper must not behave in a way that unfairly distracts the kicker, e.g. delay the taking of the kick or touch the goalposts, crossbar or goal net.

The 2023/24 Laws of the Game are available in full via: www.theIFAB.com

VIDEO ASSISTANT REFEREES

Video Assistant Referees (VAR) will continue in certain rounds of the Emirates FA Cup and EFL Cup, as well as every game week of the Premier League during the 2023/24 season.

VAR involvement will remain limited to the following four match-changing decisions or incidents:

GOALS:

- If an offence has been made by the attacking team in the build-up to a goal;
- Goals can be disallowed subsequently if there is a foul; a player is in an offside position, or the ball goes out of play in the build-up.

MISTAKEN IDENTITY:

- If there has been a mistaken identity in awarding a yellow or red card;
- Either a potential case of mistaken identity is noticed and reviewed, or a match official suspects a potential case of mistaken identity has occurred and instructs for a review to be conducted.

PENALTIES:

- If a penalty has been awarded incorrectly or an offence has not been penalised;
- Whether a foul has taken place; if an incident has occurred inside or outside the penalty box; a player is in an offside position, or the ball has gone out of play in the build-up to a goal can be reviewed.

RED CARDS:

- Reviews are limited to straight red card offences and not second yellow cards;
- Either a straight red card offence that wasn't seen by the match officials is reviewed or a match official suspects a potential straight red card offence has been missed and instructs for a review to be conducted.

The 2023/24 VAR protocols are available in full via: [www.FIFA.com](https://www.fifa.com) and www.thelFAB.com



NB: The possible implications of VAR decisions on our regulatory and disciplinary processes are outlined in respective sections of this guide.

THE FAST-TRACK PROCESS

Our 'fast-track' process expedites the timescales of disciplinary proceedings for certain incidents that occur on or around the field of play.

Some cases considered under the 'fast-track' process can be investigated, charged and heard before the relevant 'participant' plays in their next competitive match.

An example of cases that would be considered under the 'fast-track' process would be most 'not seen' incidents.



CHARGES

We consider most on-field incidents as either 'standard' i.e. typical or 'non-standard' i.e. more serious or where the 'participant' has committed similar misconduct over a recent period (usually 12 months).

In 'standard' cases, we offer a pre-determined sanction for the type of misconduct with the charge, and the 'participant' can accept it without a Regulatory Commission hearing. Early admission of 'standard' charges can also lead to reduced penalties.

A 'participant' can also admit a 'standard' charge without accepting its pre-determined sanction if it is felt to be disproportionately harsh. A Regulatory Commission would then go on to consider written documentation in relation to the case during what is known as a 'paper' hearing.

If a 'standard' charge is denied, and the pre-determined sanction is not accepted, the 'participant' can choose either a 'paper' or 'personal' hearing involving a Regulatory Commission. The sanction is likely to be higher if the case is subsequently found to be proven.

In 'non-standard' cases, we don't offer a pre-determined sanction with the charge. A Regulatory Commission will go on to consider the case and any penalty ultimately imposed for proven or admitted charges will be solely at its discretion.

REGULATORY COMMISSIONS

If a misconduct charge leads to a Regulatory Commission, our Regulatory Legal department will act as prosecutors at a hearing against the 'participant' in question.

The appointment of a Regulatory Commission to hear a case is the responsibility of the Judicial Panel Chair (or nominee) through our Judicial Services department.

A Regulatory Commission consists of three Judicial Panel members selected from distinct pools (with at least one member always being from the Football Panel):

- The Chairs Panel – consisting of suitable personnel from the Council Panel and the Football Panel;
- The Council Panel – consisting of members on our Council with appropriate experience;
- The Football Panel – consisting of former players, managers or other independent football people with appropriate experience in the sport that can provide expert opinion;
- The Legal Panel – consisting of independent barristers and solicitors with expertise in sport and/or regulatory matters (all of whom may also sit as a Chairperson);
- The Specialist Panel – generally reserved for complex or unusual cases but consisting of independent barristers or solicitors with seven or more years' standing (all of whom may also sit as a Chairperson).

Judicial Panel members undergo continual training and education, and anyone with a conflict of interest in a particular case will not be selected. The Judicial Panel Members will assess all the evidence in a case and decide a relevant sanction where necessary.



THE STANDARD OF PROOF

The 'standard of proof' is the civil standard. It means that cases will only be proven if the Regulatory Commission in question is satisfied the event in question occurred on the 'balance of probabilities'. This civil standard of proof is widely used in civil and regulatory forums, including the civil courts, family courts and professional regulatory bodies. Other National Governing Bodies of sport across the industry also utilise it. It's the most appropriate standard for the tribunal-based forum used to determine our cases.

WRITTEN REASONS

'Written reasons' are a detailed record of how a Regulatory Commission reached a particular decision. They are generally produced by the Chair and agreed with relevant 'wing members'. Subject to the facts of the case, it is normal practice for them to be published below:

www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/discipline/written-reasons

ON-FIELD MATTERS

RETROSPECTIVE ACTION

We can take retrospective disciplinary action if video evidence clearly shows that a player has committed a dismissal offence that wasn't seen by the match officials or reviewed by VAR.

TYPICAL PROCESS:

- We can become aware of such an incident in a variety of ways;
- A match referee may file an extraordinary incident report detailing that an incident was 'not seen' by the match officials or reviewed by the VAR;
- We will ask the match referee whether they or any of the match officials saw the incident before considering whether to initiate proceedings for retrospective action;
- If a VAR was active, the match referee or the VAR are also asked whether the incident was reviewed;
- No further action is taken in almost all cases where it is confirmed that the specific act of misconduct was seen or reviewed at the time;
- If it is confirmed that the specific act of misconduct was not seen or reviewed, a panel of three ex-professional match officials is convened and asked to review all the available video footage independently;
- We will only issue a charge if the panel is unanimous, and the player in question is then asked whether they admit or deny it;



- If the charge is admitted, an automatic suspension is imposed to mirror the penalty that would have been applied if the incident had been seen or reviewed at the time, and the player had been dismissed subsequently;
- If the charge is denied, the case goes before a Regulatory Commission where video and/or written evidence can be submitted;
- If the Regulatory Commission agrees that it was a dismissal offence, an automatic suspension is imposed to mirror the penalty that would have been applied if the incident had been seen or reviewed at the time and the player had been dismissed subsequently;
- The Regulatory Commission may also increase or decrease the suspension in exceptional cases where either we have submitted that the standard punishment would be 'clearly insufficient', or the player has submitted that the standard punishment would be 'clearly excessive'.

The general timeline for cases such as this is detailed below:

TIMELINE	
Deadline for us to issue a charge:	Within two business days of the incident
Deadline for the player's reply and evidence:	By close of play on the business day following the charge
Deadline for a hearing to take place:	Prior to the player's next competitive match

SUCCESSFUL DECEPTION OF A MATCH OFFICIAL

We can take retrospective disciplinary action in situations where a match official may have been deceived by simulation and/or feigning an injury which directly resulted in:

- The offending player's team being awarded a penalty;
- An opposing player being sent off.

This process is not for debatable decisions, but only where there is overwhelming evidence to indicate that a player intentionally deceived a match official.

TYPICAL PROCESS:

- If we believe that there may be a case to answer, the incident is referred to a three-person panel consisting of one ex-match official, one ex-manager and one ex-player;
- Each panel member then reviews the footage independently of the others;
- A charge is only issued in circumstances where the panel members are unanimous;
- A player will receive a two-match suspension in accepted and/or proven cases of simulation and/or feigning an injury;



- Attempts to deceive a match official through simulation and/or feigning an injury are normally cautionable offences for unsporting behaviour. However, the fact that the simulation has succeeded, and led to a penalty and/or dismissal justifies a more severe penalty that is also intended to act as a deterrent;
- If the player contests the charge, the case is heard by a Regulatory Commission, and only written and/or video evidence would be considered;
- The Regulatory Commission would also decide whether to rescind a caution or dismissal which was received by an opposing player if a charge is found proven.

The general timeline for cases such as this is detailed below:

TIMELINE	
Deadline for us to issue a charge:	Within two business days of the incident
Deadline for the player's reply and evidence:	By close of play on the business day following the charge
Deadline for a hearing to take place:	Prior to the player's next competitive match

SURROUNDING MATCH OFFICIALS

A participant charter has been introduced ahead of the 2023/24 season to improve the image of the game and maintain a positive environment for everyone.

Match officials are empowered to take more robust action, and at least one player will receive a card if match officials are confronted, surrounded or their personal space is invaded by multiple players.

We will investigate any incidents where two or more players of a club approach a match official in a 'confrontational manner'.

The offending club would be charged and sanctioned instead of its players, and similar offences within the previous 12 months can also lead to increased penalties.

TYPICAL PROCESS:

- A match official reports such a 'surrounding' incident to us;
- A charge, warning or no further action can follow depending on the seriousness and circumstances of the incident;
- Any charges can be treated as either 'standard' or 'non-standard'.

The general timeline for cases such as this is detailed below:

TIMELINE	
Deadline for us to issue a charge:	Within three business days of the incident
Deadline for the club's reply and evidence:	By close of play on the third business day following the charge
Deadline for our response to the reply:	By close of play on the third business day following the club's reply
Deadline for a hearing to take place:	At the earliest opportunity but no later than 10 business days after our response



MASS CONFRONTATIONS

We will investigate any incidents where two or more players or club officials are involved in a confrontation with opposing players or club officials.

The offending clubs would be charged and sanctioned instead of their players, and any similar offences within the previous 12 months can also lead to increased penalties.

TYPICAL PROCESS:

- A match official reports a 'mass confrontation' incident to us;
- A charge, warning or no further action can follow depending on the seriousness and circumstances of the incident;
- Any charges can be treated as either 'standard' or 'non-standard'.

The general timeline for cases such as this is detailed below:

TIMELINE	
Deadline for us to issue a charge:	Within three business days of the incident
Deadline for the club's reply and evidence:	By close of play on the third business day following the charge
Deadline for our response to the reply:	By close of play on the third business day following the club's reply
Deadline for a hearing to take place:	At the earliest opportunity but no later than 10 business days after our response to the club's reply

TECHNICAL AREA MISCONDUCT

A participant charter has been introduced ahead of the 2023/24 season to improve the image of the game and maintain a positive environment for everyone.

Match officials are empowered to implement the Laws of the Game by issuing any technical area occupants with yellow and red cards for caution or dismissal offences in the following competitions:

- Emirates FA Cup;
- Premier League;
- English Football League (EFL);
- The Women's FA Cup;
- The FA Women's Continental League Cup;
- Barclays Women's Super League (WSL);
- Barclays Women's Championship;
- The National League;
- The National League System (NLS);
- The EFL Cup;
- The EFL Trophy;
- The Isuzu FA Trophy.

If an offender cannot be identified, a yellow or red card will be given to the respective team's senior manager or coach in the technical area.

Technical area occupants can also receive automatic and immediate touchline bans for the accumulation of cautions. The starting point for one-match touchline bans was reduced to three cautions as part of the updated code of conduct. The respective thresholds for further cautions and their corresponding suspensions can be seen below:

NUMBER OF CAUTIONS	SUSPENSION
Three	One match
Six	Two matches
Nine	Three matches
12	Misconduct charge and Regulatory Commission

Any technical area cautions or dismissals will now be added to club's total for that game, which will also include any received by its players. A financial penalty will be imposed where six or more are received.



Play off matches (semi-finals and finals) in the EFL and NLS Steps 1-4, as well as finals of the Emirates FA Cup; EFL Cup; EFL Trophy; Isuzu FA Trophy; Women's FA Cup; and The FA Women's Continental League Cup are exempt from any automatic touchline ban for the accumulation of cautions by technical area occupants.

TYPICAL PROCESS:

- If an individual is dismissed from the technical area, they are no longer permitted to observe the remainder of the game; return to the field of play post-match or conduct post-match media interviews or conferences;
- The match official subsequently reports the incident to us, and this could also lead to a charge, warning, reminder of responsibilities or no further action taken depending on the seriousness and circumstances of the incident;
- These charges can be treated as either 'standard' or 'non-standard';
- 'Standard' charges for any confrontational behaviour towards match officials can now include touchline bans being offered at this stage.

The general timeline for cases such as this is detailed below:

TIMELINE	
Deadline for us to issue a charge:	Within three business days of the incident
Deadline for the club's reply and evidence:	By close of play on the third business day following the charge
Deadline for our response to the reply:	By close of play on the third business day following the club's reply
Deadline for a hearing to take place:	At the earliest opportunity but no later than 10 business days after our response to the club's reply

N.B: We will issue charges to clubs if technical area policies are persistently or seriously breached.

TOUCHLINE BANS

As well as automatic touchline bans for the accumulation of yellow cards, misconduct in the technical area can lead to us issuing a charge and a Regulatory Commission imposing a touchline ban. The following restrictions apply in these instances:

- The individual may only communicate with those in the dugout by either phone or a 'runner';
- The individual cannot be on the touchline before, during or after the match, and this includes participating in the team's warm-up;
- The individual can communicate with the team in the changing room prior to the game and at half-time unless an 'extended' touchline ban has been imposed;
- An 'extended' touchline ban can be imposed by a Regulatory Commission if misconduct is deemed serious enough to warrant further measures;
- The individual cannot communicate with the team from 30 minutes prior to the game until 30 minutes after the game if an 'extended' touchline ban is imposed.

STADIUM OR GROUND BANS

Misconduct in the technical area and charges being issued can also lead to a Regulatory Commission imposing a stadium or ground ban, and the following restrictions would apply in these instances:

- The individual cannot enter a ground or stadium that their team is playing at on a matchday;
- The individual cannot enter or use any facilities on the site of the stadium or ground that their team are playing at on a matchday;
- The individual cannot take any position immediately outside the perimeter of the stadium or ground that would give them a direct view of the pitch;
- Any breach of the terms of a ban may result in further disciplinary proceedings.

INCIDENTS OUTSIDE THE JURISDICTION OF MATCH OFFICIALS

There are certain incidents that fall outside the jurisdiction of match officials, which can lead to us issuing charges. Examples may include:

- An individual committing an act of misconduct or refusing to leave the pitch after being sent off;
- Two dismissal offences being committed before a red card is shown;
- An individual committing an act of misconduct after the match has ended and the referee has left the pitch.

The general timeline for incidents such as these is detailed below:

TIMELINE	
Deadline for us to issue a charge:	Within three business days of the incident
Deadline for the club's reply and evidence:	By close of play on the third business day following the charge
Deadline for our response to the reply:	By close of play on the third business day following the club's reply
Deadline for a hearing to take place:	At the earliest opportunity but no later than 10 business days after our response to the club's reply



CLAIMS OF WRONGFUL DISMISSAL

If a club believes that it can prove a player's straight red card was an 'obvious error' by the match official/s, it can submit a claim of 'wrongful dismissal' for consideration by a Regulatory Commission.

TYPICAL PROCESS:

- The player's club must notify us of its intention to submit a claim by 13:00 on the first business day following the game;
- The player's club must submit any evidence to support its claim by 13:00 on the second business day following the game;
- A Regulatory Commission will hear the case, and the onus is on the player's club to demonstrate via video and/or written evidence only that the match official/s made an 'obvious error';
- In incidents involving a VAR, the player's club must demonstrate via video and/or written evidence only that the match referee's decision was an 'obvious error' following the involvement of the VAR;
- A Regulatory Commission will decide whether the claim of 'wrongful dismissal' will be upheld, and the player's suspension is withdrawn with immediate effect, or dismissed, and the player's suspension would therefore remain;
- The Regulatory Commission would go on to consider whether the player's punishment should be increased if the claim of 'wrongful dismissal' is dismissed;
 - The Regulatory Commission has the discretion to increase the punishment by up to twice the standard amount if it considers that the dismissed claim 'had no prospect of success' and/or 'amounts to an abuse of the process';
- Where there are no or insufficient working days between fixtures, with Boxing Day or New Year's Day being key examples, there are further expedited timeframes to ensure the claim of 'wrongful dismissal' is heard before the next applicable fixture.

NB: A club can lodge a claim of 'wrongful dismissal' at the same time as a claim of 'clearly excessive' punishment explained overleaf.

CLAIMS OF CLEARLY EXCESSIVE PUNISHMENT

Clubs may also attempt to limit the suspension for a player's straight red card by submitting a claim of 'clearly excessive' punishment for consideration by a Regulatory Commission.

TYPICAL PROCESS:

- The player's club must notify us of its intention to submit a claim by 13:00 on the first business day following the game;
- The player's club must submit any evidence to support its claim by 13:00 on the second business day following the game;
- A Regulatory Commission will consider whether there are exceptional circumstances and the standard punishment would therefore be excessive. The intention is that the standard punishment will be appropriate in the vast majority of cases and that these provisions to reduce the sanction will only cater for any clear and obvious cases;
- If the club's claim is upheld, the Regulatory Commission would also decide the player's new punishment;
- If the club's claim is upheld, at least a one-game suspension would be enforced as only a claim of 'wrongful dismissal' can withdraw a player's suspension entirely;
- If the club's claim is rejected, the Regulatory Commission would also consider whether the player's punishment should be increased;
 - The Regulatory Commission has the discretion to increase the punishment by up to twice the standard amount if it considers that the rejected claim 'had no prospect of success' and/or 'amounts to an abuse of the process'.

NB: A club can lodge a claim of 'wrongful dismissal' at the same time as a claim of 'clearly excessive' punishment.



CLAIMS OF CLEARLY INSUFFICIENT PUNISHMENT

If we think that a dismissal offence is 'truly exceptional', we can seek to increase the associated sanction by submitting a claim of 'clearly insufficient' punishment that would be considered by a Regulatory Commission.

TYPICAL PROCESS:

- We must submit a claim and evidence to the player's club by 13:00 on the second business day following the game;
- The club or player has until 18:00 on the second business day following receipt of our claim to submit any evidence supporting their case that the punishment is 'clearly sufficient';
- A Regulatory Commission would hear the case, with its only consideration being whether the standard punishment should not be imposed;
- If our claim is successful, the Regulatory Commission would also decide the player's new punishment;
- If our claim is dismissed by the Regulatory Commission, the player would serve the standard punishment for the dismissal offence.

CLAIMS OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY

Clubs can submit a claim of 'mistaken identity' on a player's behalf if they believe that another player committed a particular offence that they have been cautioned or dismissed for incorrectly.

TYPICAL PROCESS:

- A player's club must notify us of its intention to lodge a claim by 13:00 on the first business day following the game;
- The club must submit any evidence to support the claim by 13:00 on the second business day following the game;
- A Regulatory Commission will hear the case before any suspension would be served and either uphold or dismiss the club's claim;
- If the claim is upheld, the standard punishment will be transferred to the appropriate player;
- If the claim is dismissed, the Regulatory Commission would also consider whether the player's punishment should be increased;
- If the Regulatory Commission considers that the dismissed claim 'had no prospect of success' and/or 'amounts to an abuse of the process', it can increase the punishment by up to twice the standard amount;
- If a player's club does not submit a claim, we reserve the right to request that a Regulatory Commission reviews an incident where evidence clearly shows a case of 'mistaken identity';
- If there is evidence to show that a club sought to gain an advantage by not submitting a claim, it can be charged with misconduct.



CAUTIONS

The following leagues and cups will continue to have 'competition-specific' suspensions for yellow cards accumulated by players during the 2023/24 season:

- Emirates FA Cup;
- Premier League;
- EFL;
- The Women's FA Cup;
- The FA Women's Continental League Cup;
- Barclays WSL;
- Barclays Women's Championship;
- The National League;
- The NLS;
- The EFL Cup;
- The Isuzu FA Trophy;
- The EFL Trophy.

The cut-off dates for yellow cards accumulated by players in leagues matches are as follows:

NUMBER OF CAUTIONS	CUT OFF DATE (INCLUSIVE)
Five (Premier League, EFL and National League)	19 league fixtures
10 (Premier League)	32 league fixtures
10 (The EFL and National League)	37 league fixtures
15 (All leagues)	*End of the season

**This applies to the last day of the respective league's season and before any play-off matches.*

If a player is yellow carded 20 times during their league season, then they will be charged with misconduct.

The Barclays WSL and Women's Championship do not have cut-off dates. Players will be suspended automatically at any stage of the season if they accumulate five, 10, 15 or more yellow cards.

If a player receives two yellow cards in a cup campaign, they will be suspended for the next fixture in that competition. However, any single yellow cards are expunged following the quarter-final stages, and a suspension in the Emirates FA Cup and Women's FA Cup may require four yellow cards, rather than two, depending on the player's point of entry.

SUSPENSIONS

All suspensions are served immediately in the category of match that they were received in, unless stated otherwise. For example, any player sent off in a first-team competitive match would only be able to play in reserve team matches during their suspension.

Typical offences and their corresponding suspensions include:

DISMISSAL OFFENCE	AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION
A second yellow card	One match
Denying a goal or an obvious goal scoring opportunity	One match
Using offensive, insulting or abusive language or gestures	Two matches
Violent conduct or serious foul play	Three matches
Spitting	Six matches
Five yellow cards within the cut-off date	One match
10 yellow cards within the cut-off date	Two matches
15 yellow cards within the cut-off date	Three matches

Players who are dismissed for a second time in a season will receive a one-match ban in addition to the suspension for their offence. Players who are dismissed for a third time will receive two additional matches; and a fourth time will receive three additional matches etc.



CROWD MANAGEMENT

We do not have any jurisdiction over individual spectators at fixtures unless they are 'participants' in football, so any disciplinary action for crowd management issues such as discriminatory behaviour*, missile throwing or incursions onto the pitch is taken against the relevant club/s.

TYPICAL PROCESS:

- We investigate almost all crowd management issues at fixtures;
- Our investigations usually involve seeking observations from the club/s concerned and agencies such as the Police;
- We work closely with the club/s and any agencies to ensure that those responsible are identified, and dealt with appropriately by the club/s and the criminal courts where appropriate;
- If our investigations conclude that the club/s did not do enough to prevent and/or deal with the misconduct of spectators, we may issue disciplinary charges.

To challenge the totally unacceptable presence of football tragedy abuse, regulation changes and tough new measures have been introduced from the 2023/24 which will see people who are found to have committed offences face stadium bans and potential criminal prosecution.

The issue is focused on offensive chanting, gesturing and displaying offensive messages based on football-related tragedies, which causes significant distress to the victims' families, survivors and affected-club supporters. Football authorities, supporter groups and law enforcement organisations, including the police and CPS, have united to crack down on fans who participate in this vile form of abuse.

**Further information in relation to discriminatory behaviour by crowds is on the following pages.*

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

We stand firmly against all forms of discrimination and one of our key strategic objectives is to use our influence to deliver a game free from discrimination. We are striving to ensure that our sport is a safe environment for all, which truly embraces diversity and inclusion, and challenges hateful conduct both on and off the pitch.

In 2021 we launched A Game For All, our latest equality, diversity and inclusion strategy, which outlines our ongoing commitment to actively tackle discrimination, and will ensure this remains a core priority for English football for years to come. It focuses on tangible action and collaborative work across the game to create an enjoyable and even safer environment for all.

Ongoing work from us to tackle discrimination and make the game more inclusive includes:

- **Our employees:** Increased representation of women and people of Black, Asian, Mixed and Other Ethnic backgrounds amongst our total workforce, while delivering gender pay gap results which are significantly below the national average;
- **Internal programmes:** We launched both the Employee Ethnicity Network and Pride Network, and recruited over 50 employees to be part of our Mental Health Ambassadors Programme, in efforts to make the workplace truly inclusive and supportive for all;
- **Inclusion Advisory Board:** The appointment of Deji Davies as Chair of our Inclusion Advisory Board;
- **Coaching:** New coaches onboarded to the Elite Coach Placement Programme, and 20% of places on the Introduction to Coaching Football and UEFA C Licence courses were fully funded to increase participation from historically underrepresented groups and support individuals from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds;
- **Disability football:** Growth in disability football participation, with the first anniversary of the Football Your Way plan marked with a multi-team camp at St. George's Park with England players across the Senior Men's Deaf, Senior Women's Deaf, Partially Sighted and Cerebral Palsy squads, while also proudly supporting the formation of the England Women's Blind team;
- **Grassroots game:** Confirming the introduction of point deductions for teams across the grassroots game from the start of the 2023/24 season for repeat offenders of serious misconduct. We have also appointed regional officers across the County FA network to ensure discrimination cases are handled appropriately and that victims of abuse get the necessary support;



- **Women's and girls' game:** A public commitment to improving the diversity within the England pathway and the wider women's and girls' game. This includes working with Government so every girl can have the chance to play in school, as well as re-structuring the talent pathway so more young girls from all backgrounds can find a local place to play, and taking steps to ensure it is then possible for the very best talent to be identified;
- **Online Safety Bill:** Working closely with the Government on the Online Safety Bill to tackle online discriminatory abuse in football and ensure that social media companies are held to account for the content on their platforms;
- **Football Leadership Diversity Code:** The second annual update on the landmark Football Leadership Diversity Code showed some positive signs of progress, with a shift in recruitment processes that will start to change the game and the three governing bodies exceeding seven out of eight targets. However, there is still a large amount of work to be done across the game, and we remain committed to challenging clubs to make substantial progress in years to come;
- **Asian inclusion:** Published an update on Bringing Opportunities to Communities Phase 2, which aims to increase Asian participation across all levels of English football. While there is more to be done, progress is being made with the number of Asian people playing, coaching, refereeing and in off-pitch roles increasing;
- **Faith and football:** Increased efforts to bring faith and football closer together with events to celebrate important dates in the faith calendar. This included hosting an event to mark Vaisakhi, as well as an Open Iftar at Wembley Stadium alongside Ramadan Tent Project, and visiting the local community at Neasden Temple for Diwali and Hindu New Year;
- **Windrush 75:** Celebrating the legacy of the Windrush Generation with a dedicated event at Wembley Stadium to mark the 75th anniversary of HMT Empire Windrush arriving in Britain.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

Anti-discrimination continues to play a key role in our A Game For All strategy, with stricter regulations, new reporting mechanisms and tougher sanctions all having been introduced in recent seasons.

'Participants' and spectators who believe that they have been subject or witness to discriminatory abuse are actively encouraged to report it through the appropriate channels: us; the County FA network; or key partners such as Kick It Out, and all allegations will be investigated thoroughly.

Updated charging policies and sanctioning guidelines for an act of discriminatory behaviour by individual 'participants' and spectators were published ahead of the 2020/21 season. They were published after a detailed consultation process with focus groups and stakeholders such as Kick It Out, the PFA, the LMA and various representatives from clubs and leagues.

Match-based sanctions of six to 12 games are recommended to Regulatory Commissions for almost all 'aggravated breaches' of FA Rule E3 that are a first offence by individual 'participants'. A range provides greater scope for cases to be sanctioned appropriately and consistently based on their individual circumstances and seriousness.

The sanctioning guidelines also allow Regulatory Commissions to apply a match-based sanction below this standard range where an offence is 'in writing only or via any communication device' and another specific mitigating factor is present to ensure fair outcomes. However, any decision must be in the best interests of anti-discrimination in football and the absolute minimum sanction in such cases will be three games.

An incident of discriminatory behaviour by a 'participant' in private or outside of a standard football setting can result in disciplinary sanctions, as football's stakeholders agreed that such measures are appropriate ahead of the 2020/21 season.



A Regulatory Commission will impose any sanction that it considers to be appropriate if a match-based sanction cannot be applied due to the role of a 'participant' and impose mandatory education courses as part of all sanctions for 'aggravated breaches' by 'participants'.

In cases where there is clear evidence of discriminatory chanting by supporters, we will act against the relevant club/s and recommend that a Regulatory Commission imposes an action plan for a first offence. While a range of financial penalties are possible, action plans implement practical and measurable improvements to matchday operations that can come at a significant financial cost to offending clubs. Any subsequent offences will be treated with the utmost seriousness. Partial or full stadium closures and financial penalties will always be considered but Regulatory Commissions can impose any sanctions they deem appropriate in such circumstances.

From the 2023/24 season, we will introduce point deductions for teams across the grassroots game if their players or coaches commit repeated offences of serious misconduct. This landmark development is part of our commitment to tackle and address incidents of unacceptable behaviour in the game. Point deductions will apply to clubs at Step 7 and below of the men's game, and clubs across Tier 3 and below in the women's pyramid which commit cumulative incidents of serious misconduct such as acts of discrimination and assault or attempted assault, and physical contact or attempted physical contact against a match official.

We continue to support any player who wishes to take a stand against discriminatory behaviour in a respectful manner and we will always condemn the behaviours of anyone who chooses to actively oppose these values. We continue to work with the appropriate bodies to ensure that supporters are dealt with if they are deemed to behave in an actively discriminatory manner.

OFF-FIELD MATTERS

INTEGRITY

We are committed to ensuring that the integrity of football is maintained in partnership with stakeholders from the wider game and other industries.

Our dedicated Integrity team supports 'participants' to understand and follow our Rules and Regulations. It is responsible for undertaking investigations into any alleged breaches and providing evidence if there is a case to answer.

Education is a key focus of the team's overall approach, and regular club visits, educational films, literature and a 'player essentials' app are provided alongside materials from the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA), leagues and partners in relation to betting, inside information, match-fixing, anti-doping and media activities.

Any 'participants' who: are approached to bet; accept a bribe; share inside information; influence an event; fix the outcome of a game or competition; aware of possible breaches of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Code or our Anti-Doping Regulations are obliged to report it.

BETTING

Our Rules and Regulations prohibit all 'participants' involved with clubs in the Premier League, EFL, Barclays WSL, Women's Championship and NLS from betting on any football or football-related activity.

The simple and straightforward message to 'participants' is that 'all bets are off'. This includes gambling on matches; match events; competitions; manager markets; players transfers and so-called novelties. We reinforced this message by ending our commercial betting partnerships in 2017.

Our Integrity team works closely with statutory bodies and law enforcement agencies, and shares data with betting operators to ensure a bespoke intelligence handling system. In addition, the team ensures that all betting markets on English football are monitored to identify any suspicious activities.

Any investigations into unusual betting patterns are also supported by partnerships with the Gambling Commission's Sports Betting Integrity Unit and UK betting operators. The team also has representation on the national Sports Betting Group and the Sports Betting Integrity Forum.



INSIDE INFORMATION

Inside information is defined as a 'participant' having knowledge about a club matter due to their position in the game that is not publicly available. Examples can include a team selection for a specific fixture or a player's transfer status.

All 'participants' involved with clubs in the Premier League, EFL, Barclays WSL, Women's Championship and NLS are prohibited from passing any inside information for the purpose of either betting or instructing someone else to bet on their behalf.

Even if a 'participant' is unaware that inside information may be used for betting it is still treated as a serious breach of our Rules and Regulations.

MATCH-FIXING

All 'participants' are prohibited from seeking to influence the result, progress, conduct or any other incident in a match or competition for an improper purpose. This is to prevent any attempt to fix not just a result but spot-fixing of any incidents that can occur in or around a fixture or competition.

Any 'participant' who is approached to get involved in match or spot-fixing but then doesn't report it could also be in serious breach of our Rules and Regulations.

MEDIA COMMENTS AND SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY

Our Rules and Regulations are designed to strike a balance between allowing freedom of speech for 'participants' while also protecting the integrity and reputation of the game. However, they may be charged if any comments in the media or on social media are deemed to breach FA Rule E3.1.

FA Rule E3.1 states: 'A participant shall at all times act in the best interests of the game and not act in any manner which is improper or brings the game into disrepute or use any one, or a combination of violent conduct, serious foul play, threatening, abusive, indecent or insulting words or behaviour'.

A typical breach involves comments made either pre or post-match in the media or on social media that relate specifically to a match official who has been appointed for a particular fixture.

Any pre-match comments in the media or on social media in relation to an appointed match official, whether they are identified by name or implication, are treated as a breach of FA Rule E3.1.

Post-match comments in the media or on social media are permitted if they solely criticise a match official's performance or competence. However, if the comments imply bias, attack their integrity, are personally offensive, prolonged, or particularly unreasonable it could lead to us issuing a charge or formal warning; reminding them of their responsibilities or taking no further action depending on the seriousness of the incident or track record of the 'participant'.



TYPICAL PROCESS:

- We may contact a 'participant' to seek their written observations or issue a charge within three business days of being made aware of comments in the media or on social media;
- If observations are requested, the 'participant' would have three business days to respond;
- We would then have three further business days to decide whether to: issue a charge; issue a formal warning; remind them of their responsibilities or take no further action;
- If a charge is issued, the 'participant' would have three further business days to reply;
- A Regulatory Commission hearing would take place within 10 business days of the reply by the 'participant';
- There are no set sanctions for FA Rule E3.1 breaches in relation to media comments or social media activity, so any penalty ultimately imposed for proven or admitted charges would be solely at the commission's discretion.

N.B: Any cases involving discriminatory comments are not subject to the above timelines, and any posting that remains on the social media account of a 'participant' which is in breach of our Rules can be subject to disciplinary action irrespective of when it was made.

ANTI-DOPING

We are fully compliant with the National Anti-Doping Policy of the UK Government's Department for Culture, Media & Sport.

Players are strictly liable for any breaches of our Anti-Doping Regulations, which align with the WADA Code, and they are educated regularly about their responsibilities.

We also fund one of sport's most comprehensive anti-doping programmes, which is world-leading and constantly reviewed to make improvements where possible, and we input into testing that is directed by UK Anti-Doping (UKAD). Key features of the programme include:

TESTING

Targeted, researched and intelligence-led drug testing is undertaken across the England men's, women's and development teams, as well as clubs in the Premier League, EFL, Barclays WSL and Women's Championship.

Both 'in-competition' and 'out-of-competition' drug testing are carried out on matchdays immediately after games and on non-matchdays respectively. Examples of 'out-of-competition' drug testing can include at a club's training ground or at a player's home address.

A player can be tested anywhere and at any time on a 'no advance notice' basis, regardless of whether they have or haven't been absent from training that day. They can be subject to blood and urine drug testing, including an Athlete Biological Passport programme.

While some banned substances on WADA's Prohibited List might not be detectable in blood, most are detectable in urine. We work closely with UKAD to ensure the drug-testing programme is as effective as possible and the split between blood and urine tests is reviewed each year. UKAD employs a flexible approach to decide testing at each event depending upon any doping risk.



WHEREABOUTS

If a player isn't going to be at training; is leaving early; or arriving late, they must notify us in advance and provide a one-hour time slot for that day when they will be available at their home address for testing. Any player that fails to adhere to these requirements may incur a missed test 'strike', and three 'strikes' within a 12-month rolling period would trigger a suspension from football for at least 12 months.

Clubs must also inform us of their training schedules; any changes to their timings or the location/s that players are attending, and a list of addresses where each player regularly resides. Clubs that fail to adhere to these requirements on three occasions within a 12-month rolling period will be charged under our Anti-Doping Regulations.

ADVERSE ANALYTICAL FINDINGS

An 'adverse analytical finding' in a player's sample, which is otherwise known as a positive test, does not automatically lead to an 'anti-doping rule violation' and a suspension.

SUSPENSIONS

If one or more of the below anti-doping rule violations (ADRVs) is committed by a 'participant' it can lead to a suspension from the game:

- Presence – the presence of a prohibited substance or its metabolites or markers in a player's sample;
- Use – the use or attempted use by an athlete of a prohibited substance or method;
- Evasion, Refusal or Failure – evading, refusing, or failing to submit to sample collection;
- Tampering or Attempted Tampering – tampering or attempted tampering with any part of doping control. This includes engaging in fraudulent conduct i.e. submitting falsified documents to an anti-doping organisation or asking a witness to lie in their witness statement;
- Possession – possession of a prohibited substance or method;
- Trafficking – trafficking or attempted trafficking of any prohibited substance or method;
- Administering or Attempted Administration – administration or attempted administration to any player of any prohibited substance or method;
- Complicity or Attempted Complicity – complicity in helping someone to commit an ADRV or avoid detection;
- Prohibited Association – associating in a professional or sport-related capacity with a person such as a coach, doctor, physio or trainer who is serving a ban or who has been found guilty of a criminal or disciplinary offence equivalent to a doping violation;
- Acts to Discourage or Retaliate Against Reporting to Authorities – acts that threaten or seek to intimidate another to discourage them from sharing information about doping (also referred to as whistleblowing) or retaliating against another for doing so;
- Whereabouts – failure to notify us in advance that they are not going to be at training, are leaving early, arriving late or failure to provide a one-hour time slot for that day when they will be available at their home address to be tested.

SUBSTANCES OF ABUSE

The 2021 WADA Code introduced 'substances of abuse' as 'those prohibited substances which are specifically identified on the Prohibited List because they are frequently abused in society outside of the context of sport'. Cocaine, heroin, ecstasy and cannabis are designated as 'substances of abuse' under the Anti-Doping Regulations. If an athlete can demonstrate that their use was out-of-competition and unrelated to sport performance following an in-competition 'adverse analytical finding', any suspension will just be for three months, and it may also be reduced to one if they complete a treatment programme.

PUBLICATION

We do not discuss or disclose the details of our testing programmes and any 'adverse analytical findings', and we will only publish the outcomes of specific cases once they are fully concluded.

SOCIAL DRUGS

We also operate our own dedicated social drugs programme to safeguard the physical and mental wellbeing of footballers, uphold the values and ethics of the sport and protect its image.

Our Social Drugs Regulations are in place voluntarily and separately from the WADA Code, and recreational drugs are always prohibited.

Our social drugs programme is run independently from the anti-doping programme. It focuses on education and rehabilitation with key features including:

TESTING

- Hair testing is the primary method of sample collection, and this leads to both a faster collection process and increased detection window;
- Urine testing can be collected on occasion as a secondary method of sample collection;
- Testing numbers are spread more evenly across the professional leagues.



SANCTIONS

- For a first offence, a player would receive a warning, fine and must undergo a mandatory course of education and/or counselling/treatment;
- For a second or subsequent offence, a player will receive a three-month suspension that can be reduced to one month if the player agrees to complete a course of education and/or counselling/treatment. This mirrors the WADA Code's 'substances of abuse' provision;
- For refusing to be tested or evading sample collection, a suspension in the range of four to 12 months would be imposed.

INTERMEDIARIES

We currently regulate the activities of 'intermediaries' in England in accordance with our Working with Intermediaries Regulations.

If an individual or company wishes to carry out 'intermediary' activity on behalf of a player or club in England, they must be registered with us, complete a 'test of good character and reputation' and pay a registration fee.

We also operate a 'clearing-house' system, which mandates that every payment made by a club to an 'intermediary' or an overseas club in relation to a player transfer is made via us.

Clubs are required to declare every 'intermediary' involved in a transaction to us and checks on this information form part of the player registration process. All representation contracts between 'intermediaries' and players or clubs are also required to be lodged with us within 10 days of being signed. We publish the total fees paid by each club to 'intermediaries' and the details of each transaction involving an 'intermediary' that each club has entered into annually.

The latest list of payments and transactions is available below:

[www.TheFA.com/news/2023/mar/31/publication-of-payments-and-transactions-310323](https://www.thefa.com/news/2023/mar/31/publication-of-payments-and-transactions-310323)

An up-to-date list of all registered 'intermediaries' and any disciplinary sanctions imposed against them are also available below:

[www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/policies/intermediaries/fa-registered-intermediaries-list](https://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/policies/intermediaries/fa-registered-intermediaries-list)

The regulatory framework that applies to intermediaries is set to change during the 2023/24 season.

The new FIFA Football Agent Regulations (FFAR) are set to replace FIFA's existing Regulations on Working with Intermediaries and will provide the regulatory framework governing football agents and the performance of football agent services worldwide. The FFAR provide that, from 1 October 2023, those wishing to perform football agent services must hold a licence issued by FIFA.

As a member association of FIFA, we are obliged under the FFAR to implement and enforce National Football Agent Regulations (NFAR) by 30 September 2023 to regulate the activity of football agents at national level. The proposed implementation of NFAR by us will be subject to a period of consultation with relevant stakeholders and, in the meantime, our existing Regulations on Working with Intermediaries remain in force.

GOVERNING BODY ENDORSEMENTS

Players and non-playing staff who require the right to work in England must obtain a Governing Body Endorsement (GBE) from us. Once a GBE has been provided, the club must also complete the Home Office visa application process for the individual to be able to participate in English football.

In 2023, we proposed updated GBE criteria for men's and women's football to the UK Government alongside the Premier League, EFL, Barclays WSL and Women's Championship, which were approved subsequently by the Home Office.

Male and female players without the right to work freely in England must meet certain requirements to obtain a GBE automatically, and some specific examples from the criteria of how they can achieve points are detailed below:

- Number of international appearances;
- Number of domestic minutes played;
- Number of continental minutes played;
- Final league position of their last club;
- Continental progression of their last club;
- League quality of their last club.

The updated criteria also saw the introduction of the Elite Significant Contribution (ESC) Criteria for male players who do not meet the automatic requirements above. Clubs in the Premier League and EFL Championship are eligible for up to four ESC Places, and the EFL League One and Two are eligible for up to two. These depend on the percentage of minutes played by their English Qualified Players (EQP) over the reporting period, and clubs who fail to reach the maximum of ESC Places through EQP minutes can receive additional places if they contribute players to the England Men's Seniors, Under 21 or Under 20 teams.

Clubs in the women's game can apply for an Exceptions Panel to review applications for players under 21 who do not meet the automatic points criteria. This panel is chaired by a legal qualified individual and contains subject experts (e.g. former players). Clubs must evidence that a player shows significant potential and are of elite quality to enhance the English game's development.

For non-playing staff there are specific experience and qualification requirements that must be met in order to achieve a GBE automatically.

Should an individual not meet the automatic requirements set out in the criteria for players or non-playing staff, there is the potential for their club to request an Exceptions Panel.

The full men's and women's criteria are available below:

www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/policies/player-registration/points-based-system

SAFEGUARDING

Football takes the safety and welfare of children, young people, and adults at risk extremely seriously. For many years, English football's leadership authorities have worked collaboratively on safeguarding. The shared and unequivocal goal has always been to ensure the game is safe, fun, and inclusive for all.

Our safeguarding strategy, Building an Ever-Safer Culture, outlines the ongoing work to drive safeguarding culture and practice across the game. We work alongside the Premier League, EFL, PFA, LMA, PGMOL, County FAs, leagues, and clubs, to:

- Implement preventative safeguarding measures and create fun, safe, welcoming football environments via policies, standards, vetting, raising awareness, guidance and educating at all levels;
- Make the reporting of concerns as easy as possible, ensure concerns are investigated at the appropriate level, and escalated to us where thresholds are met to be dealt with swiftly and thoroughly in conjunction with statutory agencies.

We employ a significant number of full-time safeguarding professionals. Some of these personnel drive preventative measures via policy, procedures, standards, vetting, education and sharing guidance on safer working practice. They also:

- Support the national network of those in designated safeguarding roles who work across the grassroots game, as well as working with the Premier League and EFL to support their respective designated safeguarding officer (DSOs);
- Oversee safeguarding at our venues and events, across England teams and talent pathways, and all our programmes and activities;
- Support safeguarding work in the NLS, Barclays WSL, Women's Championship and The FA Women's National League.

Another part of our Safeguarding team manages referrals and reported concerns. It comprises safeguarding professionals with significant experience in social work, policing, the probation service and legal and child protection in sport. They also work with statutory agencies and the relevant club or County FA in relation to investigations where appropriate. They assess people who pose, or may pose, a risk of harm to children and/or adults at risk, and put safeguards in place, including any suspensions from football and making referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) where necessary.

All County FAs operate to our Safeguarding 365 Standard, which is independently assessed. The County FAs also drive preventative safeguarding measures across the grassroots game, undertake safeguarding visits to clubs, make referrals to the appropriate authorities and manage low-level concerns.



The Premier League and EFL, as well as their respective charitable arms, undertake vital roles in setting and supporting their clubs and club community organisations to meet the safeguarding standards. They also oversee and guide club safeguarding provisions.

The 92 professional clubs and County FAs are independently assessed against the respective safeguarding standards.

Our proactive activities include working directly with victims, survivors and those with 'lived experience', via a Survivor Support and Safeguarding Advisory Group that offers essential learnings to this often-complex landscape. We also support access to counselling via Sporting Chance and provide practical assistance via our Benevolent Fund.

INDIVIDUAL SAFEGUARDING CASES

We do not ordinarily comment publicly about individual safeguarding cases. The reasons for this and a brief explanation of our safeguarding process are as follows:

We have the power to investigate safeguarding concerns. Following a risk assessment process, we may refer a case to an independent Safeguarding Review Panel, which is composed of independent safeguarding experts, for them to consider the matter. The function of the Safeguarding Review Panel is to assess risk and determine whether the risk assessment process has shown that the individual may present a risk of harm to children or adults at risk in football. Safeguarding measures, which can include suspensions from varying levels of football, will be imposed on an individual where necessary to prevent potential future risk of harm.

It is important to note that safeguarding measures may be amended and can change in response to changing levels of risk. This means that safeguarding cases are treated differently from disciplinary cases that result in the final determination of a matter. For example, if a suspension is initially imposed in a safeguarding case due to a failure to provide information, that suspension may be lifted once the information is received.

Safeguarding measures can be imposed for a wide range of reasons and publication of details can have serious consequences. This includes re-traumatising victims and/or causing them to re-live harmful abusive experiences. In addition, vigilantism can have harmful effects on innocent people connected to those involved in safeguarding cases. It is important to remember that a safeguarding suspension doesn't always mean sexual or serious abuse has taken place, but the public stigma is such that people often immediately link the two things.

Our safeguarding strategy, Building an Ever-Safer Culture, and further information is available at:

www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding

COUNTY FOOTBALL ASSOCIATIONS

There are 50 County Football Associations (FAs), and they are shown below:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Amateur Football Alliance | • Hampshire FA | • Northumberland FA |
| • Army FA | • Herefordshire FA | • Nottinghamshire FA |
| • Bedfordshire FA | • Hertfordshire FA | • Oxfordshire FA |
| • Berks & Bucks FA | • Huntingdonshire FA | • RAF FA |
| • Birmingham FA | • Isle of Man FA | • Royal Navy FA |
| • Cambridgeshire FA | • Jersey FA | • Sheffield & Hallamshire FA |
| • Cheshire FA | • Kent FA | • Shropshire FA |
| • Cornwall FA | • Lancashire FA | • Somerset FA |
| • Cumberland FA | • Leicestershire & Rutland FA | • Staffordshire FA |
| • Derbyshire FA | • Lincolnshire FA | • Suffolk FA |
| • Devon FA | • Liverpool FA | • Surrey FA |
| • Dorset FA | • London FA | • Sussex FA |
| • Durham FA | • Manchester FA | • Westmorland FA |
| • East Riding FA | • Middlesex FA | • West Riding FA |
| • Essex FA | • Norfolk FA | • Wiltshire FA |
| • Gloucestershire FA | • Northamptonshire FA | • Worcestershire FA |
| • Guernsey FA | • North Riding FA | |



46 of these County FAs are geographically based, including three islands (Isle of Man FA, Guernsey FA, and Jersey FA), and four are non-geographically based (Amateur Football Alliance, Army FA, Royal Navy FA, and RAF FA).

Each County FA is responsible for local football delivery in its respective area. This can include promoting participation; ensuring accessible opportunities across all formats; growing diversity and inclusion; ensuring equal opportunities to play, and creating a fun and safe environment for all. County FAs, like us, are not-for-profit and all surplus money generated is reinvested back into football.

County FAs govern the game by affiliating clubs, sanctioning leagues, running local cup competitions, and implementing our Rules and Regulations within their local area. This includes administering yellow and red cards; investigating, charging, and appointing a disciplinary panel to hear misconduct cases. They are also responsible for recruiting disciplinary commission members who possess the correct attributes to maintain the integrity and perception of the disciplinary process.

From the start of the 2023/24 season, we have introduced points deductions for teams across the grassroots game if their players or coaches commit repeated offences of serious misconduct. Points deductions will apply to clubs at Step 7 and below of the men's game, and clubs across Tier 3 and below in the women's pyramid. Incidents of serious misconduct may include acts of discrimination and assault or attempted assault, physical contact or attempted physical contact against a match official. Deductions will range from three to 12 points depending on the number of breaches within 12 months of the team's first offence and severity of the case(s).

We were also the first national governing body in English sport to introduce a Regional Code of Governance. Tier 3 of Sport England's Code of Governance is the current gold standard for National Governing Bodies across England, but our Regional Code of Governance builds upon it and sets a higher precedent. It lays out several diversity and inclusion requirements, including gender and ethnic diversity of County FA boards, to ensure those leading and working at these organisations better reflect the communities they serve.

The Code of Governance for County FAs will be mandated from the 2025/26 season.

The respective County FA contact details can be accessed at:

www.EnglandFootball.com/explore/county-football-associations



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