



ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

FOR MEDIA

2019/20



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INTRODUCTION

This is The Football Association [The FA] 'Media Essentials Guide' for the 2019/20 season.

It is produced each season to inform members of the media tasked with interpreting The FA's Rules and Regulations for the benefit of their readers, viewers or listeners.

Up-to-date information is provided on a range of on-field and integrity matters in the form of step-by-step guides and frequently-asked questions. In addition, key updates from the International Football Association Board [IFAB] for the 2019/20 season, and possible implications for The FA's Rules and Regulations, are outlined.

It is a valuable reference booklet and we hope it proves useful throughout the season.

To get in touch with The FA regarding any of the topics covered, please contact the Media Relations team in the first instance using the details below and overleaf.

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For further information on any of The FA's Rules and Regulations, please visit: **www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance**.

N.B. The 'Media Essentials Guide' for the 2019/20 season does not alter or replace The FA's Rules and Regulations, which should be referred to for the comprehensive provisions relating to all disciplinary matters, and is accurate at the date of publication.

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THE LAWS OF THE GAME

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The International Football Association Board [IFAB] 'Laws of the Game' for the 2019/20 season came into effect for all friendly matches and competitions that started either on or after 1 June 2019.

While the full 'Laws of the Game' are available under the 'Laws' section of www.theifab.com, key amendments and clarifications include:

DROPPED BALLS

- If play is stopped inside the penalty area, the ball will be dropped for the goalkeeper;
- If play is stopped outside the penalty area, the ball will be dropped for one player of the team that touched the ball last;
- In all cases, all the other players [of both teams] must be at least 4m [4.5yds] away;
- If the ball touches the referee [or another match official] and goes into the goal, team possession subsequently changes, or a promising attack starts, a dropped ball is awarded.

FREE KICKS

- When there is a 'wall' of three or more defenders, the attackers are not allowed within one metre [one yard] of the wall;
 - An attacker less than one metre [one yard] from the 'wall' when the kick is taken will be penalised with an indirect free kick;
- When the defending team takes a free kick in their own penalty area, the ball is in play once the kick is taken;
 - The ball does not have to leave the penalty area before it can be played further.

GOAL CELEBRATIONS

- A yellow card for an 'illegal' celebration [e.g. removing the shirt] remains even if the goal is subsequently disallowed.

GOAL KICKS

- The ball is in play once the kick is taken;
 - The ball does not have to leave the penalty area before it can be played further.

HANDBALL

- Deliberate handball remains an offence.
- The following 'handball' situations, even if accidental, will result in a free kick:
 - The ball goes into the goal after touching an attacking player's hand/arm;
 - A player gains control/possession of the ball after it has touched their hand/arm and then scores or creates a goal-scoring opportunity;
 - The ball touches a player's hand/arm which has made their body unnaturally bigger;
 - The ball touches a player's hand/arm when it is above their shoulder [unless the player has deliberately played the ball which then touches their hand/arm].
- The following situations will not usually result in a free kick:
 - The ball touches a player's hand/arm directly from their own head/body/foot or the head/body/foot of another player who is close/near;
 - The ball touches a player's hand/arm which is close to their body and has not made their body unnaturally bigger;
 - If a player is falling and the ball touches their hand/arm when it is between their body and the ground to support the body [but not extended to make the body bigger];
 - If the goalkeeper attempts to 'clear' [release into play] a throw-in or deliberate kick from a team-mate but the 'clearance' fails, the goalkeeper can then handle the ball.

KICK OFF

- The team that wins the coin toss can now choose to take the kick-off or which goal to attack [previously they only had the choice of which goal to attack].





MEDICAL BREAKS

- There is a difference between 'cooling' breaks [90 seconds to three minutes] and 'drinks' breaks [maximum one minute].

PENALTY KICKS

- The team's penalty taker can have quick treatment/assessment and then take a penalty kick;
- The goalkeeper must not be touching the goalposts/crossbar/nets;
 - The goalkeeper must not be moving;
- The goalkeeper must have at least part of one foot on/in line with the goal line;
 - When the kick is taken they cannot stand behind the line.

PLAYERS' EQUIPMENT

- Multi-coloured/patterned undershirts are allowed if they are the same as the sleeve of the main shirt.

QUICK FREE KICKS

- If the referee is about to issue a yellow or red card but the non-offending team takes a quick free kick and creates a goal-scoring opportunity, the referee can delay the yellow or red card until the next stoppage if the offending team was not distracted by the referee.

SUBSTITUTES

- A player who is being substituted must leave the field by the nearest point on the touchline/ goal line [unless the referee indicates the player can leave quickly/immediately at the halfway line or a different point because of safety, injury, etc.].

TEAM OFFICIALS

- A team official guilty of misconduct will be shown a yellow card [caution] or red card [dismissal]. If the offender cannot be identified, the team's senior manager or coach who is in the technical area at the time will receive the yellow or red card on their behalf.

N.B. Possible implications on The FA's Rules and Regulations of these amendments and clarifications are outlined in respective sections of this guide.

VIDEO ASSISTANT REFEREES

Since the 2016/17 season, numerous National Associations and competitions across the world have undertaken either trials or experiments of Video Assistant Referees [VAR] with the express permission of IFAB.

Various rounds of the Emirates FA Cup and Carabao Cup have been among a number of 'live' trials in England since the 2017/18 season.

A 'non-live' trial was undertaken in the Premier League during the 2018/19 season and IFAB has accepted a formal request for VAR to be used in the competition throughout the 2019/20 season.

In addition, VAR will be utilised during the 2019/20 Emirates FA Cup in all matches from the Quarter Finals onward and in select matches played at Premier League grounds in the Third, Fourth and Fifth Rounds Proper.

As standard, IFAB's protocols limit the use of VAR to the following four categories of match-changing decisions or incidents:

GOALS

- VAR will be able to review whether an offence has been made by the attacking team in the build-up to a goal;
 - If there has been a foul, a player is in an offside position or the ball has gone out of play in the build-up to a goal it may be subsequently disallowed.

PENALTIES

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





RED CARDS

- Reviews are limited to straight red card offences and not for second cautions;
 - Either a straight red card offence that was 'not seen' by the match official is reviewed by the VAR or the match official suspects a potential straight red card offence has been missed and instructs the VAR to conduct a review.

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

- Reviews can be undertaken for potential mistaken identity in awarding a yellow or card;
 - Either a potential case of mistaken identity is noticed and reviewed by the VAR or the match official suspects a potential case of mistaken identity has occurred and instructs the VAR to conduct a review.

For full details of IFAB's protocols on VAR, please visit www.theifab.com.

N.B. Possible implications of VAR in England on The FA's Rules and Regulations are outlined in respective sections of this guide.

ON-FIELD INCIDENTS

THE FAST-TRACK PROCESS

The FA's Fast-Track Process was introduced to speed up the disciplinary timescales of incidents that occur on or around the field of play. The process means that cases can be investigated, charged and heard before the offending player's team takes part in their next match.

Charges are issued within two working days of an incident and the player involved has until 18:00 on the day following a charge to respond. The process for a typical Fast-Track case is:

TIMELINE	
Incident:	Saturday or Sunday
Charge issued:	Monday or Tuesday
Deadline by which the player must reply:	By 18:00 on the day following the charge
Deadline by which the player must submit any evidence:	By 18:00 on the day following the charge
Hearing:	Prior to the offending player's next match

N.B. While increased use of VAR may reduce the number of on-field incidents typically subjected to the Fast-Track process, it will nevertheless remain available should The FA believe there may be a case to answer.





STANDARD CHARGES V NON-STANDARD CHARGES

The vast majority of on-field incidents that occur are treated by The FA as either a standard case i.e. fairly typical or a non-standard case i.e. deemed more serious or similar misconduct has been committed by the participant or club over a recent period [usually 12-months].

In standard cases, a pre-determined sanction for particular acts of misconduct is offered with the charge so that the club or participant can accept the standard penalty without undergoing a Regulatory Commission hearing. There is also a reduced financial penalty for early admittance of standard charges. A charge may be admitted but the standard penalty not accepted if it is felt to be disproportionately harsh. The case would then go before a Regulatory Commission via written documentation only, which is otherwise known as a paper hearing.

If a charge is denied, and the pre-determined sanction not accepted, the club or participant can choose either a paper or personal hearing. If the case is subsequently found proven at a Regulatory Commission hearing, the sanction will be higher.

In non-standard cases, no sanction will be offered with the charge and any penalty ultimately imposed for proven charges by the Regulatory Commission will be solely at its discretion.

RETROSPECTIVE ACTION

If video evidence clearly shows that a player has committed a dismissal offence that was not seen at the time it occurred by the match officials, or reviewed in time by VAR, The FA may take retrospective disciplinary action.

Retrospective action was originally introduced to address 'off-the-ball' incidents of violent conduct or serious foul play that were committed out of the match officials' eye line and to put the player in the same position as if the incident had been seen at the time.

It has since evolved to include acts of violent conduct that happen secondary to a challenge for the ball where the match officials were concentrating on the challenge for the ball, or if the match officials' view of the incident meant that they did not have the opportunity to make a decision on the specific act of misconduct.

Whilst increased use of VAR may reduce the number of incidents where retrospective disciplinary action is possible or required because incidents 'not seen' by the match officials can be reviewed at the time, The FA may still initiate proceedings if it believes there may be a case to answer.

PROCESS:

- The FA can become aware of a potential 'not seen' incident in a variety of ways;
- A match referee may file an extraordinary incident report detailing that the incident was not seen by the match officials, or reviewed at the time by VAR;
- Before considering whether to initiate proceedings for retrospective action, the match referee is asked whether they or any of the match officials saw the incident at the time;
- If VAR was in operation, it is also necessary to establish from the match referee or VAR whether the incident was reviewed at the time;
- If it is confirmed that the specific act of misconduct was seen or reviewed at the time it occurred, no further action is taken in almost all cases;





- If it is confirmed that the specific act of misconduct was not seen or reviewed at the time it occurred, a panel of three ex-professional match officials is convened and asked to review all the available video footage;
- Each panel member reviews the footage independently of the other members;
- Only in circumstances where the panel members are unanimous will a charge be issued and the player 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 imposed had the incident been seen or reviewed at the time and the player dismissed;
- If the player denies the charge, the matter goes before a Regulatory Commission where video and/or written evidence only can be submitted;
- If the Regulatory Commission agrees that it was a dismissal offence, an automatic suspension is enforced to mirror the penalty that would have been imposed if the incident had been seen or reviewed at the time and the player dismissed;
- In exceptional cases, the Regulatory Commission may also increase or decrease the suspension either where The FA has submitted that the standard punishment would be clearly insufficient or the player has submitted that the standard punishment would be clearly excessive;
- The aim, where possible, is to deal with all cases before the offending player's next fixture.

TIMELINE

Incident:	Saturday or Sunday
Charge issued:	Monday or Tuesday
Deadline by which the player must reply:	By 18:00 on the day following the charge
Deadline by which the player must submit any evidence:	By 18:00 on the day following the charge
Hearing:	Prior to the offending player's next match

SUCCESSFUL DECEPTION OF A MATCH OFFICIAL

The FA can take retrospective disciplinary action in situations when a match official may have been deceived and, as a direct result, the offending player's team has been:

- awarded a penalty, and/or
- an opposing player has been dismissed from the field of play [where the act of simulation led to a straight red card or caused one of the two cautions that led to the dismissal].

This power is not utilised for debatable penalty decisions but only where there was clear and overwhelming evidence to suggest that the player had intentionally deceived a match official.

Increased use of VAR may reduce the number of incidents where The FA takes retrospective disciplinary action when a match official may have been deceived. However, The FA can still initiate proceedings if it believes that there may be a case to answer.

PROCESS:

- If The FA believes that there may be a case to answer, the incident will be referred to a three person panel consisting of one ex-match official, one ex-manager and one ex-player;
- Each panel member reviews the footage independently of the other members.
- Only in circumstances where the panel members are unanimous will a charge be issued;
- In accepted and/or proven cases of simulation and/or feigning of injury, a player would receive a two-match suspension;
- Although attempts to deceive a match official by feigning injury or simulation is a cautionable offence for unsporting behaviour, 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 will be heard by an Regulatory Commission;
- No party is invited to address the Regulatory Commission in person and only written and/or video evidence is considered;
- In the event that a charge is proven or admitted, the Regulatory Commission shall consider whether or not to rescind an associated caution or dismissal received by an opposing player as a result of the act of simulation.

TIMELINE

Incident:	Saturday or Sunday
Charge issued:	Monday or Tuesday
Deadline by which the player must reply:	By 18:00 on the day following the charge
Deadline by which the player must submit any evidence:	By 18:00 on the day following the charge
Hearing:	Prior to the offending player's next match

SURROUNDING MATCH OFFICIALS

Flash points such as bad challenges or a penalty award can sometimes lead to players surrounding the match officials to protest against a decision or apply pressure to take action.

It is the responsibility of the match official to report an incident “where two or more players of one club approach a match official in a confrontational manner.” The FA will normally only initiate an investigation if such a report is received. However, it reserves the right to do so regardless.

In the event of a charge, it is the club that is liable to receive a fine. Any further offences within the following 12 months are likely to incur an increased penalty.

PROCESS:

- Match Official reports a 'surrounding' incident to The FA;
- This could lead to a charge, a warning or no further action being taken depending on the circumstances and seriousness of the incident;
- Charges are either standard or non-standard.

TIMELINE	
Incident:	Saturday or Sunday
Charge deadline:	Within three days of the incident
Reply and submissions deadline:	By 18:00, no later than the third day following the charge
The FA's response to reply:	By 18:00, no later than the third day following the club's reply
Hearing:	At the earliest opportunity but no later than ten days after The FA's response to the club's submissions





MASS CONFRONTATIONS

The FA defines a mass confrontation where two or more players or club officials are involved in a confrontation with opposing players or club officials.

It is the responsibility of the match official to report a mass confrontation incident. The FA will normally only initiate an investigation if such a report is received. However, it reserves the right to do so regardless of whether a report is received.

In the event of a charge, it is the club that is liable to receive a fine. Any further offences within the following 12 months are likely to incur an increased penalty.

PROCESS:

- A match official reports a mass confrontation incident to The FA;
- This could lead to a charge, a warning or no further action being taken depending on the circumstances and seriousness of the incident;
- Charges are either standard or non-standard.

TIMELINE	
Incident:	Saturday or Sunday
Charge deadline:	Within three days of the incident
Reply and submissions deadline:	By 18:00, no later than the third day following the charge
The FA's response to reply:	By 18:00, no later than the third day following the club's reply
Hearing:	At the earliest opportunity but no later than ten days after The FA's response to the club's submissions

TECHNICAL AREA MISCONDUCT, CAUTIONS AND DISMISSALS

All occupants of the technical area are bound by a code of conduct that sets out the behaviours expected. It is the match officials' responsibility to implement the code and report any technical area misconduct to The FA by way of an extraordinary incident report.

From the 2019/20 season, match officials can issue technical area occupants with yellow and red cards for cautions and dismissals respectively in the following competitions:

- Premier League;
- EFL [English Football League];
- The Vanarama National League;
- The Emirates FA Cup [from the First Round proper];
- The Carabao Cup;
- The EFL Trophy;
- The Buildbase FA Trophy;
- The Barclays FA Women's Super League;
- The FA Women's Championship;
- The Women's FA Cup;
- The FA Women's Continental League Cup.

If the offender cannot be identified, the respective team's senior manager or coach who is in the technical area at the time will receive the yellow or red card on the individual's behalf.

From the 2019/20 season, automatic and immediate touchline bans will result from the accumulation of cautions by match officials. This is similar to the current system that operates for players but individual thresholds are different and there is no cut-off date for accumulated cautions. An automatic suspension will be triggered when an individual reaches the following thresholds:

NUMBER OF CAUTIONS	SUSPENSION
Four	One match
Eight	Two matches
12	Three matches
16	Misconduct Charge and Regulatory Commission

N.B. Play-off matches in the EFL, the Vanarama National League and the Final of the Emirates FA Cup are exempt from any automatic period of suspension arising from an accumulation of cautions by technical area occupants.





- If an individual is dismissed from the technical area they must immediately leave the area of the touchline and take a position in the directors' box or a designated approved area;
 - Individuals dismissed from the technical area in the Vanarama National League are not permitted to observe the remainder of the game;
- The match official subsequently reports the incident to The FA. It could lead to a charge, a warning, a reminder of responsibilities or no further action being taken depending on the seriousness of the incident;
- Charges are either standard or non-standard.

TIMELINE	
Incident:	Saturday or Sunday
Charge deadline:	Within three days of the incident
Reply and submissions deadline:	By 18:00, no later than the third day following the charge
The FA's response to reply:	By 18:00, no later than the third day following the individual's reply
Hearing:	At the earliest opportunity but no later than 10 days after The FA's response to the individual's submissions

TOUCHLINE BANS

- The individual must be away from the technical area and is not permitted to sit in or behind the area of the dugout or any barrier adjacent to the touchline or goal line;
- They may only communicate with the dugout by means of either a telephone or a runner;
- They can communicate with the team in the changing room prior to the game and at half-time unless a Stage 2 touchline ban has been imposed:
 - A Stage 2 touchline ban is imposed if the individual receives a second touchline ban in a season or the offence warrants an immediate Stage 2 ban. In that instance, the individual cannot communicate with the team from 30 minutes prior to the game until 30 minutes after the game.





STADIUM OR GROUND BANS

- The individual cannot enter the ground/stadium at which the team are playing on match day;
- They cannot enter or use any facilities on the site of the stadium or ground at which the team are playing at any stage on the match day;
- They cannot take a position immediately outside the perimeter of the ground that enables them to have a direct live view of the pitch;
- Any breach of the terms of a ban may result in further disciplinary proceedings.

OUTSIDE MATCH OFFICIALS' JURISDICTION

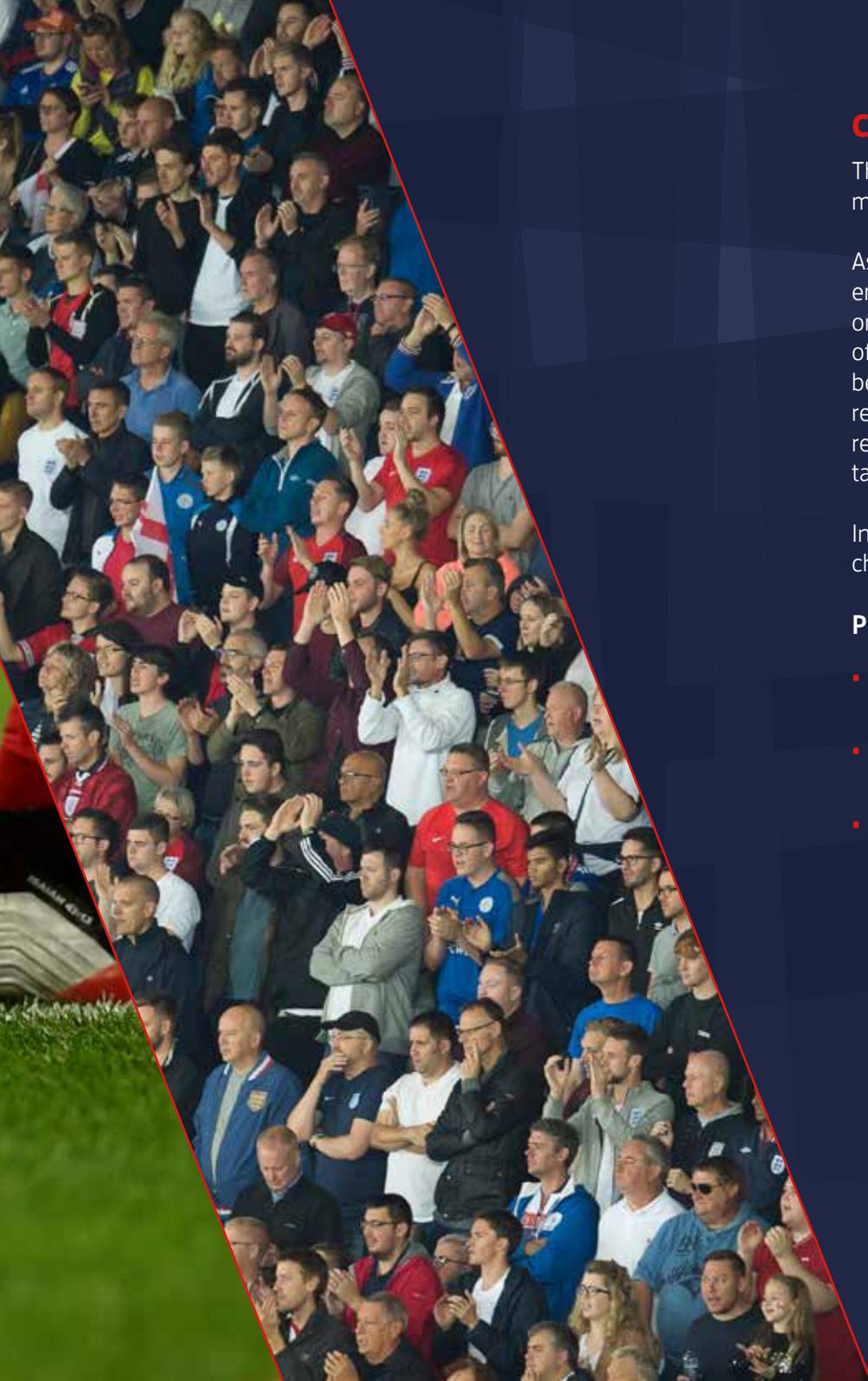
Fast-Track charges may also be issued for incidents that occur outside the jurisdiction of the match officials. For example:

- An act of misconduct or refusal to leave the pitch after a dismissal;
- Two dismissal offences before a red card is shown;
- An act of misconduct after the match has ended and the match referee has left the pitch.

TIMELINE

Incident:	Saturday or Sunday
Charge deadline:	Within three days of the incident
Reply and submissions deadline:	By 18:00, no later than the third day following the charge
The FA's response to reply:	By 18:00, no later than the third day following the participant's reply
Hearing:	At the earliest opportunity but no later than ten days after The FA's response





CROWD MANAGEMENT

The FA does not have jurisdiction over spectators [unless they are participants by some other means]. Therefore, any action would be taken against the club.

As defined by FA Rule E20 [a], each club is responsible for ensuring that its directors, players, officials, employees, servants, representatives, spectators, and all persons purporting to be its supporters or followers, conduct themselves in an orderly fashion and refrain from any one or combination of the following: improper, violent, threatening, abusive, indecent, insulting or provocative words or behaviour, [including, without limitation, where any such conduct, words or behaviour includes a reference, whether express or implied, to any one or more of: ethnic origin, colour, race, nationality, religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or disability] whilst attending at or taking part in a match in which it is involved, whether on its own ground or an away ground.

In the event of an incident at a game, such as missile throwing, pitch incursions or discriminatory chanting, The FA will usually investigate the matter.

PROCESS:

- The FA's investigations usually entail seeking observations from the club[s] concerned and, on many occasions, other agencies such as the Police;
- The FA will work closely with the club[s] and the Police to ensure that those responsible are identified, dealt with by the club[s] concerned and if, appropriate, the courts;
- In serious cases where The FA's investigations conclude that the club[s] concerned did not do enough to either prevent and/or deal with its supporters' misconduct, disciplinary charges may follow.

N.B. Further information specifically in relation to discrimination by crowds can be found on page 36.

CLAIMS OF WRONGFUL DISMISSAL

A club may seek to limit the consequences of a player's straight red card if they can prove that the dismissal was an "obvious error".

In games where VAR is in operation, clubs are still entitled to lodge a claim of wrongful dismissal.

PROCESS:

- The club must notify The FA of its intention to lodge a wrongful dismissal claim by 13:00 on the first working day following the game;
- The club must submit any evidence to support the wrongful dismissal claim by 13:00 on the second working day following the game;
- A Regulatory Commission will hear the case and the onus is on the club to demonstrate – via written and/or video evidence only – that the match referee made an "obvious error" in dismissing the player;
- In incidents involving VAR, the club must demonstrate – via written and/or video evidence only – that the match referee made an "obvious error" in dismissing the player following involvement of the VAR;
- The Regulatory Commission will decide whether the club's wrongful dismissal claim will be rejected, meaning the player's suspension remains, or is upheld, meaning the player's suspension is withdrawn with immediate effect;
- If the Regulatory Commission's decision is to reject the club's claim it will then, in every case, go on to consider whether or not the player's punishment should be increased;
- If the Regulatory Commission considers that the rejected claim "had no prospect of success" and/or "amounts to an abuse of process", it has the discretion to increase the punishment up to twice the standard amount with immediate effect.





CLAIMS OF CLEARLY EXCESSIVE PUNISHMENT

Another way in which a club may seek to limit the consequences of a player's straight red card is if they can demonstrate that the standard punishment would be 'clearly excessive' i.e. the offence committed does not warrant the standard suspension it would otherwise trigger.

PROCESS:

- The club must notify The FA of its intention to lodge a 'clearly excessive' claim by 13:00 on the first working day following the game;
- The club must submit any evidence to support the 'clearly excessive' claim by 13:00 on the second working day following the game;
- A Regulatory Commission will hear the case and its only consideration will be whether the standard punishment should not be imposed in view of the truly exceptional facts of the case;
- If the Regulatory Commission's decision is that the club's claim is successful, it will then decide on the player's punishment in respect of their dismissal:
 - At least a one-game suspension will be enforced as only a claim of 'wrongful dismissal' can achieve the full withdrawal of a player's suspension;
- If the Regulatory Commission's decision is to reject the club's claim it will then, in every case, go on to consider whether or not the player's punishment should be increased;
- If the Regulatory Commission considers that the rejected claim 'had no prospect of success' and/or 'amounts to an abuse of process, it has the discretion to increase the punishment up to twice the standard amount with immediate effect.

N.B. Clubs can lodge a claim of wrongful dismissal at the same time as a claim of clearly excessive.

CLAIMS OF CLEARLY INSUFFICIENT PUNISHMENT

The FA may seek to increase the consequences of a player's dismissal if it can demonstrate that the standard punishment would be clearly insufficient, i.e. the offence committed was "truly exceptional" and, therefore, warrants more than the standard suspension it would otherwise trigger.

PROCESS:

- The FA must notify the club of its intention to lodge a 'clearly insufficient' claim by 13:00 on the first working day following the game;
- The player has until 18:00 on the second working day following the game to submit any evidence supporting their case that the punishment is 'clearly sufficient';
- A Regulatory Commission will hear the case and its only consideration will be whether the standard punishment should not be imposed in view of the truly exceptional facts of the case;
- If the Regulatory Commission's decision is to reject The FA's claim, the player will serve the standard punishment;
- If the Regulatory Commission's decision is that The FA's claim is successful, it will then go onto decide the player's punishment in respect of their dismissal.





MISTAKEN IDENTITY

A claim of mistaken identity may be lodged by a player who believes they have been cautioned or dismissed in error because another player committed the offence.

PROCESS:

- The club must notify The FA of its intention to lodge a claim of mistaken identity by 13:00 on the first working day following the game;
- The club must submit any evidence to support the mistaken identity claim by 13:00 on the second working day following the game;
- A Regulatory Commission will hear the case and either reject or accept the claim before the player's next fixture and any suspension would commence;
- If the Regulatory Commission's decision is to reject the claim, it will go on to consider whether or not the player's punishment should be increased;
- If the Regulatory Commission considers that the rejected claim "had no prospect of success" and/or "amounts to an abuse of process", it has the discretion to increase the punishment up to twice the standard amount with immediate effect;
- If the claim is successful, the standard punishment will be transferred to the appropriate player;
- It should be noted that where evidence clearly shows a case of mistaken identity, but a club does not submit a claim, The FA reserves the right to request a Regulatory Commission to review the matter;
- Furthermore, a club failing to lodge a claim for mistaken identity may be charged with misconduct if there is evidence that the club sought to gain an advantage by remaining silent.

YELLOW CARD CUT-OFF DATES

Competition-specific sanctioning will continue during the 2019/20 season for players' yellow cards in the following competitions:

- Premier League;
- EFL [English Football League];
- The Vanarama National League;
- The Emirates FA Cup;
- The Carabao Cup;
- The FA Trophy.

The cut-off dates for the accumulation of yellow cards in league matches are as follows:

NUMBER OF CAUTIONS	CUT OFF DATE [INCLUSIVE]
Five [Premier League]	Following 19 league fixtures
Five [English Football League]	Following 19 league fixtures
Five [The Vanarama National League]	Following 23 league fixtures
10 [Premier League]	Following 32 league fixtures
10 [English Football League]	Following 37 league fixtures
10 [The Vanarama National League]	Following 37 league fixtures
15 [All leagues]	*End of the season**

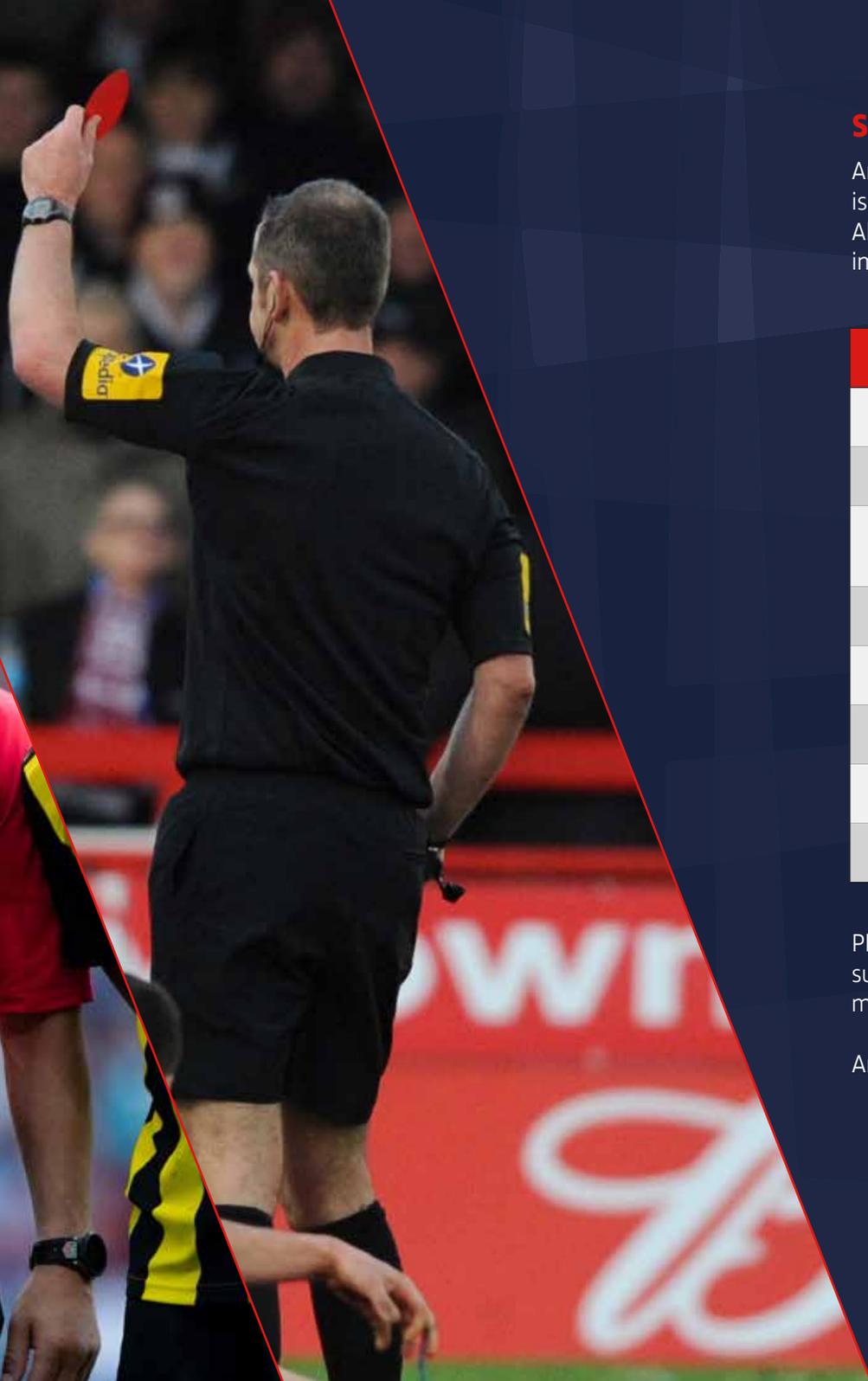
The remaining cup competitions will carry suspensions when a player has received two yellow cards in that competition.

N.B. Discipline in the EFL Trophy is competition-specific and remains unchanged from last season.

**The Barclays FA Women's Super League and FA Women's Championship do not have cut-off dates. Automatic suspensions for players accumulating five, 10, 15 cautions etc. will take effect at any stage during the season.*

*** This applies to the last day of the relevant league season prior to any play-off matches.*





SUSPENSIONS

Any suspension is served immediately in the category of match in which it was received. If a player is sent off in a reserve match, he or she would still be able to play first-team competitive matches. All automatic suspensions, whether in first team or non-first-team football, will commence with immediate effect. A standard sanction is automatically applied for the following offences:

DISMISSAL OFFENCE	AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION
Receiving a second yellow card	One match
Denying a goal or an obvious goal scoring opportunity	One match
Using offensive or insulting or abusive language/gestures	Two matches
Violent conduct or serious foul play	Three matches
Spitting	Six matches
Five cautions within the time limit	One match
10 cautions within the time limit	Two matches
15 cautions within the time limit	Three matches

Players who are dismissed for a second time in a season will receive an additional one-match suspension to those listed above. Players who are dismissed for a third time will receive two additional matches and so forth.

Any player that accumulates 20 cautions during the season will be charged with misconduct.

OFF-FIELD INCIDENTS

INTEGRITY

The integrity of football in England at all levels is of paramount importance. This is why The FA, in partnership with the whole game, is committed to ensuring integrity is maintained.

- The FA has a dedicated Integrity Team specifically tasked with undertaking investigations into any alleged breaches of The FA's Rules and Regulations. The team works closely with statutory bodies and law enforcement agencies and shares data with betting operators to ensure a bespoke intelligence handling system;
- The FA has a partnership with a specialist bet monitoring company that analyses global markets offered on all English matches to identify unusual odds movements;
- The FA works closely with the Gambling Commission's Sports Betting Integrity Unit and UK betting operators to investigate any unusual betting patterns. It is also represented on the national Sports Betting Group and the Sports Betting Integrity Forum;
- Education is a key part of The FA's overall framework. In conjunction with the PFA and leagues, regular club visits, educational films, literature and a 'Player Essentials' app are all provided in one place to ensure all participants are aware of their obligations to report any approaches to bet, accept a bribe, share inside information, influence any event within a match or fix the outcome or result of a game or competition;
- A dedicated, anonymous, integrity reporting line also exists via **0208 795 9640** or **integrity@TheFA.com**.





BETTING

In 2014, a rule that was agreed by the entire game, including players, managers and match officials, was introduced that prohibits participants involved in the English game from betting – either directly or indirectly – on any worldwide football or football-related activity.

This simple and straightforward message when it comes to football is that ‘all bets are off’. This extends to bets on any match or competition, events within a match, manager markets or players transfers. Also included are novelty bets connected to a game or events in the technical area.

The worldwide ban applies to participants involved with clubs in the Premier League, the EFL [English Football League], the Barclays FA Women’s Super League and FA Women’s Championship, as well as Steps 1 to 7 of the National League System.

INSIDE INFORMATION

Participants from the Premier League right through to Step 7 of the National League System continue to be prohibited from the passing of inside information by any means, even if that individual did not know the other person was going to use it to place a bet.

MATCH-FIXING

All participants are prohibited from seeking to influence for an improper purpose the result, progress, conduct or any other aspect or occurrence in a football match or competition. This is to prevent any attempts to fix not only the result of a match but also any attempt to ‘spot fix’ any incident in or around a match or competition. Any participant who is approached to get involved with match-fixing must report it. Failure to do so is a serious breach of The FA’s Rules and Regulations.

MEDIA COMMENTS AND SOCIAL MEDIA POSTINGS

The FA has developed clear guidelines that strike the balance between allowing freedom of speech while protecting the integrity and reputation of the game.

The FA will consider bringing charges in relation to media comments or social media postings under FA Rule E3[1]. This rule states that participants shall, at all times, act in the best interests of the game and shall not act in any manner that is improper or brings the game into disrepute. In addition, should those comments include reference to: ethnic origin; colour; race; nationality; faith; gender; sexual orientation or disability, these may be considered 'aggravating factors' under FA Rule E3[2].

PRE-MATCH MEDIA COMMENTS CONCERNING A MATCH OFFICIAL

Any pre-match media comments concerning the appointed match official for a particular match, whether the official is identifiable by name or implication, will be deemed as improper conduct under The FA's Rules and Regulations.

POST-MATCH MEDIA COMMENTS CONCERNING A MATCH OFFICIAL

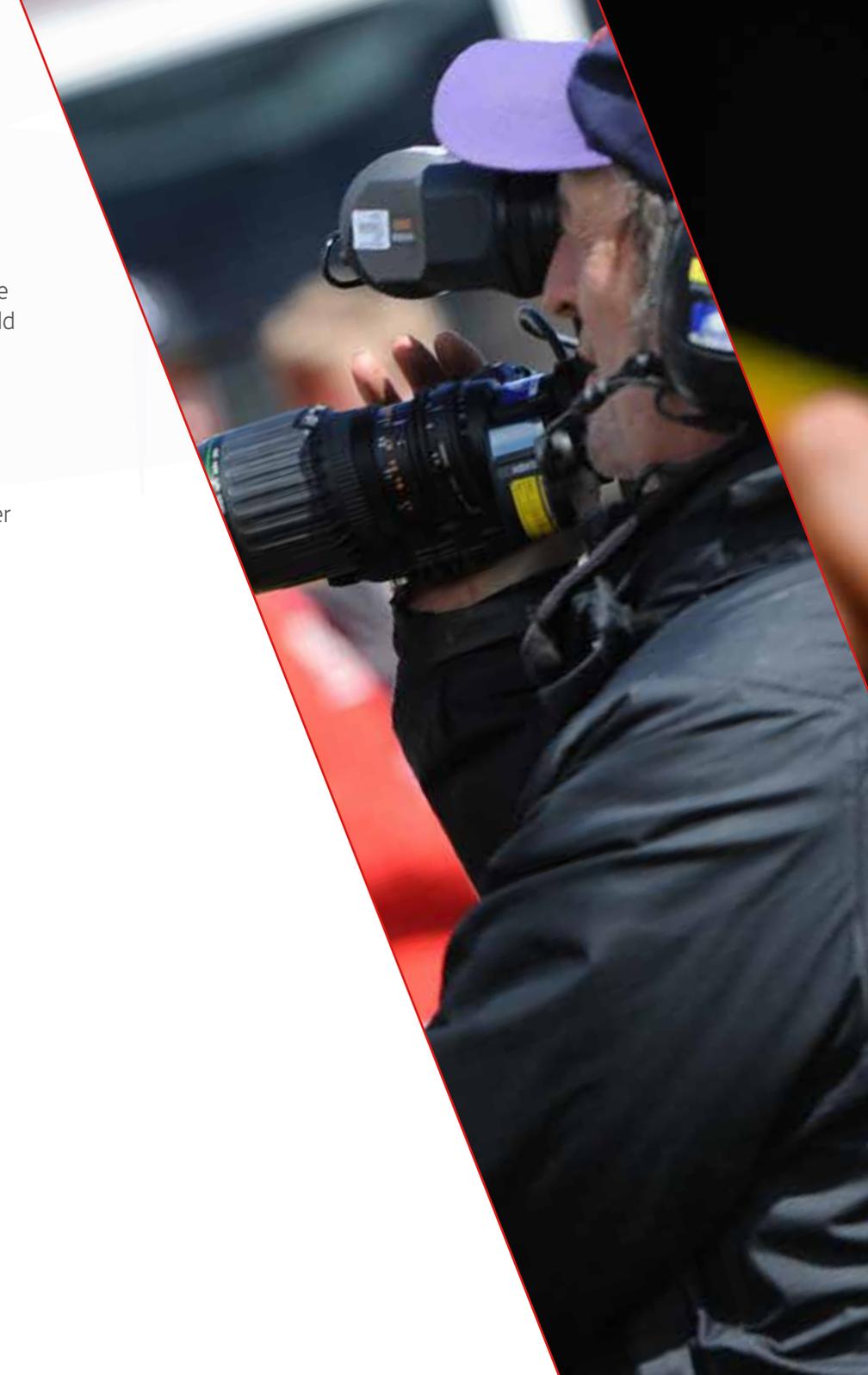
Post-match media comments that criticise the performance or competence of a match official are permitted as long as they don't fall into one of the categories below or are prolonged and/or particularly unreasonable.

A participant will be considered to be in breach of FA Rule E3[1] if their media comments about a match official:

- Imply bias;
- Attack their integrity;
- Are particularly personally offensive in nature.

Depending on the seriousness of the case and/or the participant's previous track record, it is not always the case that a charge will follow. The FA may instead:

- Issue a formal warning;
- Remind the individual of their responsibilities;
- Take no further action.





PROCESS for FA RULE E3[1] MEDIA COMMENTS

- This does not apply to media comments cases charged under FA Rule E3[2];
- Within three working days of The FA being aware of the comments, it may charge or contact the individual and seek their written observations before deciding whether to issue a charge;
- The participant will have three working days to provide any requested observations;
- The FA will have three working days from the deadline for the provision of the observations to decide whether to issue any charge;
- The participant will have three working days to reply to any charge;
- The Regulatory Commission hearing will take place within 10 working days of receipt of the reply.

SANCTIONS

There are no set sanctions for media or social media charges that are found proven. It is for the Regulatory Commission to decide what punishment it deems appropriate for the offence.

ANTI-DOPING

The FA operates one of the most comprehensive national anti-doping programmes across world sport in partnership with UK Anti-Doping [UKAD].

The research and intelligence-led anti-doping programme is in place to identify potential doping risks in the game. It applies to all professional clubs. There is targeted testing across first teams; reserve teams; under-21 teams and youth teams across the Premier League and EFL clubs. In addition, drug-testing is conducted on teams in the Barclays FA Women's Super League and FA Women's Championship, as well as the England Men's, Women's and Development teams.

The FA takes anti-doping extremely seriously. Although current practices are some of the best in the world, the programme is constantly reviewed alongside UKAD to see where improvements can be made.

Q: What drug tests does The FA conduct?

A: Players are subject to blood and urine testing, including an Athlete Biological Passport programme and urine steroid profiling. A positive test for any banned substance listed in the World Anti-Doping Agency [WADA] Prohibited List can lead to a four-year suspension for a first offence. The majority of banned substances on WADA's prohibited list are detectable in urine, whilst some might not be in blood. The FA works closely with UKAD to ensure as effective a programme as possible and review the split between blood and urine testing every season. This flexible approach allows The FA and UKAD to decide upon a particular type of test[s] at each drug testing event depending upon any specific perceived doping risk.

Q: What is The FA's stance on social drug use by players?

A: The FA has a clear position on social drugs, including cocaine, ecstasy and cannabis, in that their use is banned at all times. A positive test for a social drug on a non-matchday is not a WADA offence. However, in line with The FA's tough stance on social drugs, it is a breach of The FA's own social drugs policy regulations and will lead to a suspension.

Q: Aside from failing a drug test, how else could a player breach The FA's Rules and Regulations on anti-doping?

A: If a player were to evade sample collection; refuse or fail to provide a sample; fail to attend the doping control station immediately; use abusive or insulting words or behaviour to a doping control official; tamper or interfere with the drug testing processes; be in possession of a banned substance; traffic a banned substance or assist another participant in breaking The FA's Rules and Regulations on anti-doping they could face a suspension.





Q: Why doesn't The FA publish the name or details of a player failing a test for social drugs out-of-competition?

A: Under the WADA code, The FA is not obliged to test for social drugs out-of-competition. However, it does so under its own social drugs policy regulations to safeguard the physical health and mental wellbeing of players, uphold the ethics of the sport and protect the image of the game. Experience shows that offenders here are typically players who are experiencing difficulties in their lives or young players who are only starting their careers.

While The FA seeks to sanction social drug use and impose suspensions, it also recognises that players in these circumstances would benefit from attending education courses, counselling and treatment in order to seek to overcome and cope with the difficulties they are facing. The FA shall therefore decide in its absolute discretion whether or not to publish any detail relating to a charge brought under its social drugs policy regulations.

Q: When can a player be tested?

A: A player can be tested anytime and anywhere, including at home, on a 'no advance notice' basis, regardless of whether they have or haven't been absent from training that day.

Q: What is meant by the term 'player whereabouts' in the context of anti-doping?

A: If a player is not going to be at training, is leaving early, or arriving late, they must notify The FA in advance and provide a one-hour time slot for that day when they will be available at their home address for a drug test. A player who fails to adhere to these requirements may incur a missed test strike, with three strikes within a 12 month rolling period triggering a suspension from football for at least 12 months.

Q: What is meant by the term 'club whereabouts' in the context of anti-doping?

A: As well as players being individually responsible for keeping The FA informed of their whereabouts, clubs must also inform The FA of their training schedules, any changes to the time or location that players are attending and a list of addresses where each player regularly resides. Clubs that fail to adhere to these requirements three times within a 12 month rolling period will be charged under The FA's Rules and Regulations on anti-doping.

Q: How many tests is The FA expected to carry out during the 2019/20 season?

A: The FA's anti-doping programme is research- and intelligence-led, which means it can be flexible and responsive to any potential emerging doping risk. So, rather than focusing on the numbers of completed anti-doping tests, it is more important to concentrate on being adaptable and to review anti-doping processes at the end of every season to meet the demands of the growing game.

DISCRIMINATION

From the start of the 2019/20 season, any participant who commits an ‘aggravated breach’ of FA Rule E3[1], which is defined in FA Rule E3[2] as a reference, whether express or implied, to any one or more of the following: ethnic origin; colour; race; nationality; religion or belief; gender; gender reassignment; sexual orientation or disability, and it is found proven as a first offence by a Regulatory Commission, will receive a mandatory minimum suspension of at least six matches. That suspension may also be increased depending on any additional aggravating factors. In the event a match-based suspension cannot be applied due to the participant’s role, a Regulatory Commission shall consider any appropriate sanction it considers to be fit.

Where an ‘aggravated breach’ of FA Rule E3[1] is committed in writing only, or via the use of any communication device, public communication network or broadcast media; or by reference only to nationality; then a Regulatory Commission will not be bound to impose an immediate suspension of at least six matches for a first offence.

Discrimination on social media does not trigger the automatic six-match ban in the same way as it would on the pitch. It will still be for a Regulatory Commission to determine what sanction they deem appropriate for the offence committed. However, if the media comments are clearly pejorative and discriminatory, match-based sanctions are likely. Where the offence is in writing, The FA will be encouraging Regulatory Commissions to consider applying an entry point for sanction. This would be at least the mandatory minimum, which can be increased where aggravating features are present. Conversely, the sanction may be reduced where mitigating features are present.

As part of the sanction set down by a Regulatory Commission for an ‘aggravated breach’ by any participant that is found proven, there are also mandatory education courses.

In cases where there is clear evidence of mass discriminatory chanting by a club’s supporters within a stadium [i.e. not one or two individual supporters] then formal disciplinary action can be taken under E20 [a]. The due diligence defence under E21 does not apply where the misconduct relates to discriminatory behaviour by a club’s supporters.

The FA has started a consultation process with key stakeholders across the game – including the Leagues, the PFA, the LMA, Kick It Out and others – with the aim of reviewing its sanctioning guidelines for proven cases of discrimination. This review involves working on a range of projects with stakeholders in football to combat discrimination, both on and off-the-pitch. As part of this, The FA is reviewing what the minimum match-based suspension for proven cases of discrimination should be to ensure the deterrent in place is appropriate and effective.





INTERMEDIARIES

The concept of intermediaries was first introduced to FIFA's Regulations in April 2015 and adoption into domestic regulations became mandatory for all National Associations automatically. In England, only intermediaries registered with The FA are permitted to carry out related activity on the behalf of English players and clubs.

There is no entrance exam to become an intermediary. However, any individual or company that wishes to register is required to complete a 'test of good character and reputation', which contains certain criteria such as their criminal and financial histories, and to pay a registration fee.

The English game identified the need to go above and beyond the minimum criteria set down by FIFA when it came to its own Regulations on Working with Intermediaries [The Regulations]. For example, there are additional provisions for intermediaries who wish to work with minors [under 18s]: They must provide a DBS Check; be authorised to do so and are not permitted to receive any payment until the player they are representing reaches the age of 18. They must also now receive parental consent before approaching or entering into a contract with a minor.

The Regulations and associated materials, which include a number of key amendments and clarifications for the 2019/20 season, are available in full via: <http://www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/policies/intermediaries/regulation-and-forms>.

A key aspect of The Regulations is transparency. All payments made by clubs to intermediaries must pass through The FA's Clearing House system and be supported by all relevant documentation. Annually, The FA publishes the total fees paid to intermediaries by each club and the details of each transaction involving an intermediary that each club has entered into. The list of intermediary fees from 1 February 2018 to 31 January 2019 is available via: <http://www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/policies/intermediaries/intermediaries-transactions>.

A list of all registered intermediaries and The FA's disciplinary sanctions against intermediaries since the introduction of the concept in April 2015 can be found via: <http://www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/policies/intermediaries/fa-registered-intermediaries-list>.

N.B. This guidance does not alter or replace The Regulations, which should be referred to in all cases for the comprehensive provisions in relation to working with intermediaries in England.

REGULATORY COMMISSIONS

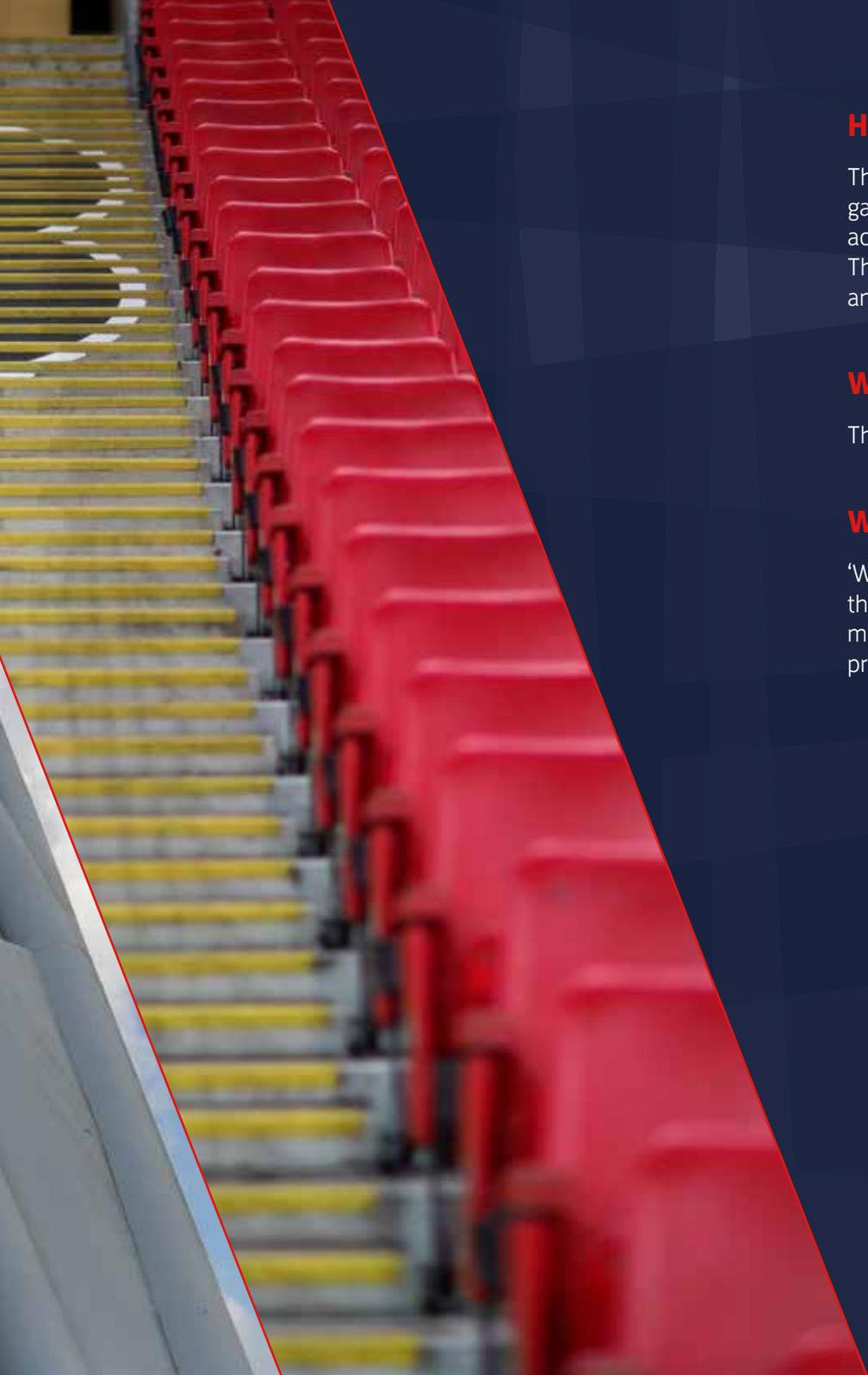
The convening of a Regulatory Commission to hear a disciplinary case is the responsibility of the Judicial Panel Chairman [or nominee] via The FA's Regulatory Commissions and Appeals team.

A Regulatory Commission comprises three Judicial Panel Members, selected from five distinct pools [with at least one member being from the Football Panel]:

- The Chairs Panel – consisting of suitable personnel from the Council Panel, the Football Panel, the Legal Panel and the Specialist Panel;
- The Council Panel – consisting of FA Council members with appropriate experience;
- The Football Panel – consisting of former players and managers or other independent football people with appropriate experience in football who are able to provide expert opinion;
- The Legal Panel – consisting of junior barristers and solicitors with expertise in sport and/or regulatory matters;
- The Specialist Panel – consisting of independent barristers or solicitors of seven or more years' standing and are generally reserved for complex or unusual cases.

All Judicial Panel members undergo continual training, education and assessment. Any member with a conflict of interest in a particular case is not selected.





HOW DOES A REGULATORY COMMISSION WORK?

The FA's Legal and Governance division is responsible for investigating alleged misconduct and gathering evidence. If this leads to a misconduct charge then The FA's Regulatory Legal department act as prosecutors at the Regulatory Commission hearing against the charged club or participant. The Judicial Panel Members who make up the Regulatory Commission will assess all the evidence and, if necessary, decide upon a relevant sanction.

WHAT IS THE 'STANDARD OF PROOF'?

The 'Standard of Proof' is the civil standard of the 'balance of probability'.

WHAT ARE 'WRITTEN REASONS'?

'Written Reasons' are produced by the Chairman of the Regulatory Commission and are agreed by the Regulatory Commission or Appeal Board and are a detailed record of how the Judicial Panel members reached their decision. It is normal practice for 'Written Reasons' to be published, when produced, via: www.TheFA.com.

SAFEGUARDING

Football takes the safety and welfare of children extremely seriously. For many years, English football's leadership organisations have worked collaboratively on safeguarding and child protection matters. The shared and unequivocal goal has always been to ensure the game is safe and enjoyable for all. However, the allegations of historic child sexual abuse that came to light from November 2016 onwards has seen football re-double its efforts to ensure every child and young person has a safe, fun experience playing or participating in the world's most popular team game.

As the game's governing body in England, The FA has led this work and along with the Premier League, EFL, PFA, LMA, PGMOL, County FAs, leagues and clubs, the united strategy has been, and continues to be, to:

- Implement **preventative safeguarding measures** and create fun, safe football environments via policies, guidance, vetting, raising awareness and educating;
- Make the **reporting of concerns** as easy as possible and ensure concerns are investigated swiftly and thoroughly in conjunction with statutory agencies;
- Maintain a network of **Designated Safeguarding Officers** [DSOs] across the game to guide safeguarding to be embedded at every level, ensuring safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

To do this, The FA has a full-time team of more than 30 safeguarding professionals. Some of the team drives preventative measures via policy, standards, education and sharing good practice. They also support the national network of DSOs, who work across professional and grassroots football.

Another part of The FA team manages referrals and reported concerns. It comprises safeguarding professionals with significant experience in social work, probation service, legal and child protection in sport. In relation to investigations, they work with statutory agencies and, where appropriate, the relevant County FA and professional club. They assess people who pose, or may pose, a risk of harm and put safeguards in place, including suspensions from football, where necessary.

All DSOs are DBS Checked, trained and their role includes taking preventative safeguarding measures, promoting good practice, helping their organisation to maintain standards, as well as making referrals to the appropriate authorities.

The Premier League and EFL undertake vital roles in supporting their clubs to implement safeguards and they also oversee and guide for club safeguarding provisions.

The FA's proactive activity includes working directly with victims, survivors and those with 'lived experience', via a Survivor Support and Safeguarding Advisory Group, which offers essential learnings to this often complex landscape. The FA is also supporting access to counselling via Sporting Chance, providing practical assistance via The FA Benevolent Fund and meetings with The FA Chairman, for any survivor who wants to.





WHY DOESN'T THE FA COMMENT PUBLICLY ON SAFEGUARDING CASES?

The FA does not ordinarily comment publicly about individual safeguarding cases. The reasons for this and a brief explanation of The FA's safeguarding process are:

The FA has the power to investigate safeguarding concerns. Following a risk assessment process, The FA may refer a case to an independent Safeguarding Review Panel 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 vulnerable adults. Safeguarding measures, which can include suspensions from 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 which result in the final determination of a matter. For example, in a safeguarding case, if a suspension is initially imposed 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.

Further detailed information on this can be found via www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding or a document entitled '**Keeping Football Safe and Enjoyable**'. To request a hard copy, please contact The FA's Media Relations team.

COUNTY FOOTBALL ASSOCIATIONS

The County Football Association [CFA] network consists of individual devolved organisations across England [detailed below]. Each CFA is responsible for local football delivery in its respective area:

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





The role of every CFA involves promoting participation, ensuring accessible opportunities across all formats; growing diversity, ensuring equal opportunities to play; regulating the game by implementing The FA's Rules and Regulations, and ensuring a fun and safe environment for all.

Numerous CFAs have dedicated marketing and communications functions, either in-house or outsourced. The contact details for CFAs can be found via <http://www.TheFA.com/about-football-association/who-we-are/county-fas>.

For general enquiries about the CFA network, please contact The FA's Media Relations team.



FOR ALL

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