

**DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES  
LOCAL REGULATIONS AND  
GUIDANCE AND ADVICE FOR CLUBS**

Sponsor Governance Committee

1201 Players

- 1 Many hours of unnecessary work and aggravation can be saved if all players exercise self-discipline, an essential feature of a physical contact game. Players must appreciate that they alone are responsible for their own self-discipline. They should all understand the Code of Conduct and should support their Club in promoting good discipline.
- 2 Players must be aware that Law 6.A.4 states that the referee is the sole judge of fact and of Law during a match. They must respect his authority and not dispute his decisions. They must be aware that retaliation is not an excuse for foul play. They must also be aware that once a referee has given a 'General Warning' for foul play then the referee must order off the next offending player whether such player was on the field or the replacements' bench at the time of the warning.
- 3 Players should be aware that the Law states that rucking for the ball does not permit them to intentionally step on an opponent, let alone stamp or trample.
- 4 When a player has been ordered off the field of play he must leave the playing enclosure immediately. It is in the player's interest that he should return directly to the changing room and should avoid speaking to or becoming involved with any opposition player, match official or spectator. A player temporarily suspended is to stay in his team's Technical Area or, if none is provided, behind the opposition's dead ball area.
- 5 After the game a wise player will apologise to the referee and to any opposition player with whom he might have been involved. This would be to his advantage when penalties are decided. He would obtain the details of any witnesses to the incident who may be prepared to speak on his behalf at a disciplinary hearing.
- 6 The team captain must report the incident to at least one member, preferably the Discipline Officer, of his Club Committee as soon as possible.

1202 Composition of the Hampshire Disciplinary Sub Committee

- 1 The powers delegated by the RFU to Hampshire are vested by the Management Committee in the Disciplinary Sub Committee (DSC). The DSC will decide upon all disciplinary matters concerning adults whether administrators, officials, coaches or players including but not limited to cases reported by Match Officials, all Citings and all Rule 5.12 cases. They may require an alleged offender to appear before them regardless of any sanction taken by a Club. Club sanctions will be considered and may be reduced or increased by the DSC.
- 2 The Chairman of the DSC is appointed by and is a member of the Governance Committee. As a Sub Committee Chairman he has the authority to convene his own Sub Committee subject to ratification in June annually by the Governance Committee. The Disciplinary Secretary is also the CBYDS.
- 3 The HRURS shall be invited to nominate representatives to be an observer at Disciplinary Hearings.
- 4 The HSRFU Disciplinary Secretary (CSUDS) may be co-opted.

1203 Club Requirements and Preventative Procedures

- 1 Clubs are required to include in their Rules, and to promulgate positively and publicly, a Code of Conduct based on Regulation 13 and including the message in 1202 above. Clubs producing a Match Programme are encouraged to include their Code of Conduct in the Programme.
- 2 Club Officers and Coaches are to actively promote good discipline among their members, both playing and non-playing, on and off the field. In particular, Clubs are to ensure that the game is coached and taught within the letter and spirit of the Laws, and must not select players who neither follow the Code nor play to the Laws.
- 3 Club Officers should support all visiting match officials on and off the field, and should encourage an understanding and knowledge of the Laws from all their members.
- 4 Clubs are to appoint a Club Disciplinary Committee (CDC) and a Club Disciplinary Officer (CDO) who will be responsible for all discipline matters within the Club. The CDO should be a member of the Club Committee and should make himself fully aware of the RFU Disciplinary Regulations, particularly the Recommended Sanctions for both adults and youth.
- 5 The CDC should normally include the Club Secretary, another Committee person and members from the playing side and the youth section. Smaller Clubs may choose to nominate three of their main Committee for this task. The Club Child Welfare Officer should be involved when the Club deals with cases involving any member of the youth section but should NOT be a member of the Panel.

#### 1204 Sending-Off Action

- 1 The sending-off of any player, male or female, adult or youth, must be reported to the County Office within 48 hours, preferably by e-mail to [hantsrugby@aol.com](mailto:hantsrugby@aol.com). This is mandatory whether or not the match official sending the player off is a Society Referee, a Club Referee or a Coach. Match Officials are required to report any sending-off or case of verbal or physical abuse on the relevant forms. Guidance and report forms are available on the HRURS website ([www.hantsrefs.org.uk](http://www.hantsrefs.org.uk))
- 2 It is neither in the Game's interest nor the Club's interest to attempt to hide a disciplinary offence just because the referee may not know the correct procedure. Be aware that such cover-ups have a nasty habit of being discovered. Failure to report any sending-off within 72 hours will incur a fixed-penalty. All Team Managers and Coaches should be made aware of this.

#### 1205 The Disciplinary Secretary

When a Sending-Off, a Match Official Abuse or a Citing Report is received the Disciplinary Secretary will

- 1 allocate a Case number and record details which may be published in the Annual Report.
- 2 decide if the Case should be referred to the RFU; if not he will allocate a provisional date and time for a Hearing before the DSC. Usually Hearings are held on the last Tuesday in the month.
- 3 prepare a joint Plea Form/Preliminary Notice of Hearing.
- 4 send this Form and the Report by e-mail to the Club Secretary, the CDO, the DSC Chairman and the HRURS Chairman.
- 5 advise the match official/citing club of the provisional date and time of the Hearing.

#### 1206 Club Action

- 1 On receipt of the Report, etc, the CDO must pass a copy to the player or other person (the offender) concerned. He must then convene a Club Disciplinary Hearing. This should not be held before the Report has been received.
- 2 The CDO may or may not suspend an offender pending the Club Hearing.

- 3 Detailed Disciplinary Regulations are published in the RFU Handbook. The flow chart for the conduct of hearings and the recommended sanctions for particular offences must be followed. Advice on the conduct of hearings may be obtained from the Disciplinary Secretary.
- 4 At the Club Hearing, the offender should state if he accepts the report, whether he wishes to plead guilty to the charges and whether he wishes the County DSC to deal with the case in his absence; or if he wishes to attend the DSC Hearing in person to challenge the report, and plead not guilty.
- 5 At the Club Hearing the CDC must decide if it considers the offender to be guilty or not guilty. If it is a guilty decision it must assess the seriousness and categorise the offence as being at either the Lower End, the Mid Range or the Top End of the scale of seriousness in order to identify the appropriate entry point for any sanction.
- 6 A suspension cannot start on the day of the incident. A recommended sanction may be reduced for a guilty plea or increased if there are previous guilty findings. Guidance is in the RFU Regulation.
- 7 The CDO must return the Plea Form to the County Office within fourteen days. This Form must be fully completed to show the player's date of birth and registration number, the entry point and the penalty awarded; it must be signed by the offender (unless circumstances prevent this) and counter-signed by the CDO. It is to be returned with a Club cheque payable to "HRFU Ltd" for the fixed-penalty specified on the Form, even if it is a Not Guilty plea.
- 8 If a County Hearing is requested, or if the Disciplinary Secretary states one will be held, the Club will be advised of any reasonable expenses the Club might be required to pay. The cost could be considerable for a match official from out of county who may have to stay overnight following the Hearing. Sometimes it may be possible for a conference call to be placed to enable the match official to contribute without attending the Hearing.

#### 1207 The County DSC Hearing

- 1 The CDO should advise the offender what to expect at the DSC Hearing, and should decide which of the Club's Officers or members will appear at the Hearing and whether or not the Club itself wishes to be represented. He should assist the offender in preparing for the Hearing. If there is video evidence to be viewed then it is the CDO's responsibility to ensure the necessary equipment is available to show it.
- 2 The offender should decide whether he wishes to be represented by a person of his own choice at the Hearing.
- 3 Those present will include three or four members of the Panel, the Disciplinary Secretary, the offender, a Club Officer, the Match Official, any legal representatives, witnesses called by the offender or by the match official, a character witness and an observer from the HRURS.
- 4 The offender will be advised in advance of those on the Panel; he may state his objection to any member dealing with his case in writing in advance to the Disciplinary Secretary.
- 5 The Hearing may be adjourned at the discretion of the Chairman if the case is the subject of criminal or civil law proceedings.
- 6 When the Chairman announces the decision he will include any monetary penalty to be paid. If the decision is that the offence has not been proven there will be no monetary penalty other than any which may have been incurred by a failure to adhere to these regulations. If the offence is proven then the monetary penalty will include the cost of the match official's expenses, the standard fixed-penalty or an increased fine and any other penalties or costs incurred.
- 7 CDO's should be aware that the DSC may reduce or increase any Club suspension which it believes is inconsistent with the sending-off report.
- 8 An offender will be given reasonable notice of the time and date of the Hearing; if unavailable to meet that date, for an excuse which is acceptable to the Disciplinary Secretary, he/she will be expected to appear before the next scheduled Hearing when the case will be heard regardless.

- 9 If an offender fails to appear at a Hearing without providing a reasonable excuse prior to the Hearing, he will be suspended automatically until the next scheduled Hearing. He may also be fined, even if later he is found not guilty of the offence.

#### 1208 After the DSC Hearing

- 1 The Disciplinary Secretary will provide a written judgement to the RFU and the Club Secretary and will advise the Secretary of the Match Official's Society or the Secretary of the Citing Club, as appropriate.
- 2 The results of all cases are referred to the Governance Committee for ratification.
- 3 The names of offenders found guilty, the law infringed and the penalties awarded will be included in the Annual Report and may in exceptional cases be made available to the local press.

#### 1209 Players under 18 years of age

- 1 Any player under 18 sent off while playing in an Adult or Under 19 Colts match will be dealt with as an adult player under the above procedures.
- 2 The CDC (not its Youth Committee) is to consider the case of any player under 18 years of age for an offence in a Club Under 18 or lower age grade match. Procedures are as specified in the RFU Handbook. Normally at least one of the player's parents or guardians and the CWO should be present at the Club Hearing. Any sanction (which is specified in matches, not weeks) must take into account both club and school matches.
- 3 The CDO must inform the County Office as soon as possible of the CDC decision by returning the Plea Form to the County Office within fourteen days. If the offender is still at school the Disciplinary Secretary will inform the HSRFU Disciplinary Secretary who will advise the Head Teacher.

#### 1210 Citing for Foul Play undetected by a Match Official

- 1 The procedures are set out in the RFU Handbook and must be followed explicitly. If video evidence is to be introduced then the citing Club must provide a second copy of the video for the use of the alleged offender prior to the Hearing. It is essential that accurate details are provided. Witnesses must be available to attend to confirm the allegations including for example being able to confirm exactly actions taken and words used.
- 2 A cited player is presumed innocent until proven guilty.
- 3 The Disciplinary Chairman and Secretary will decide whether a person cited has a case to answer and whether any video-recorded evidence is admissible.

#### 1211 Clubs with a Less than Satisfactory Disciplinary Record

- 1 Whether a Club has a less than satisfactory disciplinary record is determined by the DSC. Its Officers will then be required to attend a Disciplinary Hearing.
- 2 The DSC will take into account the volume of matches being played in a Club, taking adult and youth as two separate entities. Thus the Officers of a Club with one or two teams are more likely to be invited to appear before the DSC for fewer sendings-off than Clubs with three or more teams.
- 3 Penalties awarded against Clubs may include a Fine and may extend to all teams and all members and, if involving suspension from the Hampshire Union would include suspension from all Competition Rugby and would prevent allocation of international tickets by the RFU.

#### 1212 Channel Islands

- 1 Powers are also vested in further Panels on Guernsey (which shall include Sark) and Jersey. The Guernsey and Jersey Rugby Associations shall nominate the Chairman and members of each Island Panel respectively. The Chairman of each Panel is responsible to the Hampshire

Disciplinary Chairman for the conduct of hearings. After consultation with the Panel Chairman, these powers may be withheld for certain cases, in exactly the same way that the RFU may take over disciplinary action from HRFU. Additionally a Chairman may request that the DSC deal with a case.

- 2 All mainland Disciplinary Procedures apply equally to Channel Island Clubs.
- 3 The Disciplinary Secretary will also send a copy of the documents at 1204.2 to the Panel Chairman who may convene a local Hearing. This can be in lieu of a Club Hearing.
- 4 The Panel Chairman will report the findings and will return all the documents to the Disciplinary Secretary.

#### 1213 Fixed Penalties, Fines and Finance

- 1 Fixed Penalties and Fines will be set by the Governance Committee and will be shown each year in the Handbook.
- 2 A Standard Fixed Penalty is applicable to all adult offenders found guilty.
- 3 Additionally, whether a case is proven or not, Fixed Penalties will be levied, without notice, on Clubs which fail to:
  - 1 Report any sending-off within 72 hours;
  - 2 Return the Plea Form and a cheque for £25 within 14 days;
  - 4 Ensure an Offender appears at Hearing;
  - 5 Pay any fixed penalty, fine or costs within the specified time.
- 4 A Club cheque for the Standard Fixed Penalty must be forwarded with the Plea Form. This cheque will be refunded to the Club if the DSC finds the case not proven.
- 5 The Club of any guilty person may be required to pay the costs, or a part thereof, of the Hearing which may include but not be restricted to the costs of a Match Official attending the Hearing.
- 6 The amount of any Fine, and the costs or part thereof which a Club is required to pay and the date by which it must be paid, will be announced at the Hearing at the time the penalty is announced.
- 7 The balance of the total sum announced must be paid by the Club to the County Office within twenty-one days or by the date specified. If this is not paid by the date specified any period of suspension will continue until such time as the sum has been paid in full.
- 8 The Club may recover its costs from the offender if it so wishes, but is still required to pay by means of a Club cheque in the first instance.
- 9 In the case of a citing or a Rule 5.12 case where the complaint is not proved, the person or Club citing or making the complaint under Rule 5.12 may be required to pay the costs, or part thereof, of the Hearing. In the case of a citing the costs may be recovered from the remittance submitted with the citing report.

1214 This Regulation does not apply to Associate Clubs in membership of another County Constituent Body.