

	Policy Contact: Honorary Secretary	
	Issue Date: June 2021	Review Date: June 2024
	Title: Disciplinary Procedure [Discipline on the Field of Play]	

Purpose/Objective

Rugby is a competitive and results driven game. TRFC believes that results must be achieved by playing within the rules. Acts of foul play are not condoned. TRFC supports and follows the disciplinary guidelines laid down by the RFU and GRFU. Sending off or citing by a game referee will result in a player being suspended. This policy describes the process in place for the assessment of the seriousness of such incidents, and determination of appropriate sanctions.

Note: This procedure is based on, and must be used in conjunction with GRFU Rules Section 19 – Discipline, and the following GRFU Appendices;

Appendix 1 – Yellow Cards

Appendix 2 – Sanction Entry Points

Appendix 3 – Discipline Costs/RFU Administration Fees

Appendix 4 – Adult Rugby Citing Procedures

Appendix 5 – RFU Practice Notes & Sanctions Guidance

Appendix 6 – Age Grade Rugby Disciplinary Procedures

Appendix 7 – Disciplinary Hearing Procedure & Draft Form

Requirements

1] Disciplinary Panel (DP)

The TRFC shall consist of 4 members of the management committee. The Panel chairman is responsible for convening the Panel to consider incidents arising, communicating meeting times and outcomes.

The DP has jurisdiction to carry out an assessment of any incident and determine and impose appropriate sanctions over players, members, officials and supporters regardless of level within the club.

Typically, the panel will be asked to consider incidents where;

- A player has been dismissed from the field of play by the referee
- A player has been cited for foul play
- An incident occurs on the field of play affecting a non-player

The Disciplinary Panel members will be Chairman, Director of Rugby, Honorary Secretary and Safeguarding Officer.

2] Notification

In cases where the referee has sent off a player that player is automatically ineligible for selection until otherwise advised by the disciplinary panel. The player must inform the Honorary Secretary within 24 hours giving name, address and contact details. In the case of young players, the notification may be made by the player's team coach or manager.

The Honorary Secretary is obliged to inform GRFU Disciplinary Secretary within 72 hours of the end of the match of any player, regardless of age, who has been ordered off the field of play. Contact details for the player must be provided.

In cases where the referee or match official has cited a player for misconduct, but not sent them off, notification must be made to the disciplinary Panel chairman who will determine whether the citing warrants immediate action. Such cases may include, for example, citing for verbal abuse or disrespect of match officials or opposing players.

3] Notice of Hearing

When a player has been sent off, or a player/ club member/ club official/ supporter has been reported for abuse by a match official, or where the DP is satisfied that there is a case to answer following a citing or allegation of misconduct then a notice of hearing will be arranged. Wherever possible, the hearing will be conducted on the same day as the alleged offence. In order to facilitate this, the club chairman may invite another official to sit in if a member of the DP is not present.

If it is not possible to hold the hearing on the day of the alleged offence then a notification will be sent to the person concerned detailing the nature of the alleged offence and the date, time and location of the hearing. If the person is unable to attend at the specified time, they may request a rescheduling. Rescheduling is at the discretion of the DP.

In the event that a person, having been given due notice, fails to attend the hearing it may be adjourned and reasonable attempts made to reschedule. In case of repeated failures to attend the DP may take the decision to hold the hearing in absence of the offender, or further reschedule, depending on the stated reasons for non-attendance. Suspension from the club/player selection list will remain in place until the hearing is held and the matter resolved.

4] Hearing Procedure

- A] the player/member/official/supporter in question is required to attend the hearing unless they can demonstrate to the chair of the DP sufficient reason not to.
- B] Youth and Mini players shall be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Colts players may be so accompanied if they wish.
- C] In the case of Youth, Colts or Mini players, the player's head coach and the Junior Chair should also attend.
- D] The DP Chairman will explain the procedure and possible outcomes at the start of the hearing.

The following procedure shall apply;

Details of the alleged conduct will be explained. If there is a referee report this will be read out. Any other witness reports will be read out.

The person appearing before the DP will be asked if the allegations and reports are correct, and the alleged misconduct is admitted.

If the alleged misconduct is admitted, the person before the hearing will be given the opportunity to make an appropriate statement in mitigation.

If the alleged misconduct is not admitted, the person before the hearing has the right to give and call evidence in rebuttal. Questions may be put to any witnesses present at the hearing, or to members of the DP.

When all statements and questions are concluded, everyone other than members of the DP shall withdraw while the DP considers its decision. In considering the decision, the previous disciplinary record of the person concerned shall be taken into account. The recommendations of RFU shall also be taken into account [See Below]

In determining the seriousness of the offence, *Lower End, Mid-Range or Top End*, the DP will consider the following;

- Whether the offending was committed intentionally or deliberately
- Whether the offending was reckless, and the person knew [or should have known] that there was a risk of committing an act of illegal/foul play
- The gravity of the persons actions, such as
 - o manner in which the offence was committed and which part of body [e.g. fist/elbow/knee/boot]
 - o The existence of provocation, or was the offending action taken in self defence
- The effect of the offending action on the victim, such as extent of injury
- The effect of the offending action on the game
- The vulnerability of the victim, including part of body affected and ability to defend themselves
- The level of participation in the offending action, including premeditation
- Any other relevant information about the offence

5] Decision and Penalties

In cases where the alleged offence is admitted or proven, the DP shall have the authority to impose appropriate penalties, which may include

- A] that in the circumstances the sending off or suspension served is sufficient and no further penalty is appropriate.
- B] that the person be reprimanded/cautioned or severely reprimanded/cautioned as to future conduct.
- C] that a period of suspension from the club be imposed.

D] any other appropriate penalty, including but not limited to suspension from playing or suspension of club membership.

GRFU Rules & Regulations

When imposing penalties, the DP shall refer to the recommendations set out within the GRFU Rules & Regulations. The DP shall assess, using the criteria set out above, whether the offence may be categorised as *Lower End, Mid-Range or Top End* of the scale of seriousness. This assessment shall determine the applicable entry point for penalties. Details are given in GRFU Appendix 2.

Having identified the appropriate entry point, the DP shall then consider any aggravating or mitigating factors which may influence the final decision. Aggravating factors include;

- An absence or lack of remorse/contrition
- The person's prior disciplinary record, such as persistent offending
- The need for deterrent action to combat a pattern of offending

Mitigating factors include;

- Prompt and sincere acknowledgement of culpability
- Evidence of remorse
- Prior good record
- Age and experience [or lack of experience] of the offender
- Conduct at the hearing

The DP shall set out in writing their decision and the sanctions or penalties to be imposed. Details of possible sanctions are given in GRFU Appendices 1, 5 & 6. If this involves a period of suspension the start and end dates shall be made clear.

Appeals

In cases where a person subject to a hearing by the DP is aggrieved by their decision they have a right to appeal to the Club Chairman. The notice of appeal must be made in writing, stating the grounds for appeal.

The Chairman shall appoint two other officers of the club to form an appeal panel [members of the original hearing panel may not be part of the appeal panel, but one member may attend the appeal as an observer].

The appeal will be heard no later than 14 days after the publication of the original hearing decision.

The appeal panel has the authority to uphold, vary or quash the original finding, including substituting alternative sanctions or reducing [or increasing] the original sanction. The results of this appeal panel are final and binding. There is no further right of appeal. Suspended appellants shall remain under suspension pending the outcome of the appeal.

Records

Records of disciplinary hearings, including evidence heard, shall be maintained by the Honorary Secretary in a secure area of the club's Sharepoint document library.

The record shall be confidential, but may be seen by the person affected on request to the chairman of the DP.

The record shall be kept for a period of two years. And then destroyed