

North Petherton Rugby Football Club LTD

Affiliated to the Rugby Football Union and the Somerset County Rugby Football Union

CASC REG. 04941



Disciplinary Procedure

NPRFC is responsible for dealing with any act of indiscipline on or off the field of play by players, supporters and spectators, or any Club member who uses threatening or abusive language or inappropriate behaviour towards any other member or visitor to the Club or in any way brings the Club or the game into disrepute. Any member, whether player/supporter/spectator will have a right to appeal to the General Committee following any penalty imposed.

RFU Disciplinary Regulation Section 19.1.4 states that “*Every Club shall appoint a Disciplinary Panel charged with the responsibility of maintaining the standards of discipline within that Club. They are further required to take appropriate action in accordance with these Regulations and unless set out to the contrary in these Regulations, shall be responsible for the conduct of their own members and for investigating allegations of foul play and/or acts of Misconduct which have taken place on Club premises or as part of Club activity.*”

Club Secretaries must within 48 hours of the conclusion of the match report to the Disciplinary Secretary of the Somerset RFU, the name, address and contact telephone number of ANY player who has been ordered off the playing enclosure

1. DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE

The following outlines the procedure to be followed where an act of indiscipline has taken place:

1.1 Player sent off by the referee

The Captain or Team Manager (both have the responsibility) concerned, **MUST** report the name of the player sent off, the match details including the opposition and any relevant details to the Chairman of the Disciplinary Committee within 24 hours of the sending off.

In the case of Youth / Junior Players (a player under 18 years of age at the time of the offence) the coach or manager of the relevant team **MUST** report the name and age of the player concerned, the referee's name and society (if any), the opposition and any relevant match details to the Chairman of the Disciplinary Committee within 24 hours of the incident.

Referees must report all players sent off to the Discipline Secretary of the Somerset RFU of the player's Club on the RFU Discipline Report form

1.2 Player Sin Binned (Yellow Cards)

The Captain of the team (or his representative) must report the name of any player sin binned (shown a yellow card) during a game (this relates to all teams and is irrespective of there being a Society or Club referee officiating) to the Chairman of the Disciplinary Committee

A record of players being sin binned will be kept by the Club Secretary, Any player, who in the opinion of the Disciplinary Committee has an excessive amount of yellow cards may be asked to appear before that Disciplinary Committee to explain the reasons why.

1.3 Acts of Foul Play not Detected by the Referee/Match Officials

Any member/player who witnesses an act of foul play or bad behaviour by a player (of any Club team), can report the incident giving name(s) and details of the incident to: the Club Secretary within 24 hours of the incident.

Any incident of foul play involving a member of an opposition team that has or has not been dealt with by the match official(s) and is witnessed by a NPRFC player/ member should be reported to the Club Secretary without delay so consideration and action can be taken if appropriate.

A Citing may only occur where an act of foul play was not detected by the match officials. Only Unions, Constituent Bodies and Clubs or match officials such as the referee's advisor may cite a player. It cannot be done by an individual player or spectator.

Any consideration for a Citing must be reported to the Club Secretary immediately as there is a very short time scale and a detailed procedure that has to be followed.

1.4 Acts of Bad Behaviour by Players, Members, Spectators, Supporters or Visitors

Any member / player who witnesses an act of bad behaviour at any time by any Club Member, or visitor to the Club, of whatever age, can report the matter to the Club Secretary so the appropriate action can be taken.

In all cases the Club Secretary will refer the matter for action by the Disciplinary Committee, for the appropriate action to be taken. In extreme cases the Disciplinary Committee may recommend action to be taken by the General Committee.

1.5 Abuse

Abuse of any description will not be tolerated on any account, be it physical, racial or gender related. Abuse will be dealt with severely.

Any abuse shown against a referee may result in an immediate suspension of the offender by the Disciplinary Committee prior to being sanctioned by the General Committee

Racial abuse or any abuse of a minor must be reported to the Chairman of the Disciplinary Committee and the offender(s) will be automatically suspended from club privileges and their actions reported to the General Committee for further investigation. An automatic referral will be made to the police of the alleged incident(s)

2. THE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE

The Disciplinary Committee will be responsible for investigating and taking action on any sending off, or any incident of foul play or bad behaviour by an NPRFC player not detected by the Match Officials and instances where a player has been sin binned an excessive number of times.

The Disciplinary Committee will impose sanctions both independently, upon recommendation of the Somerset RFU and prior to any player / member appearing before the County Disciplinary Committee on any matter. In matters relating to breaches of safeguarding rules and policies the club may issue a Temporary Suspension Order whilst the incident is investigated.

This hearing will be set as soon as possible after the day of the reported offence, at a date that is acceptable with both parties.

The Club Secretary will inform all parties concerned of the date of the internal hearing and invite them to present themselves and any representatives they may wish to attend.

This Disciplinary Committee will discuss the incident and make a preliminary judgement based on the information received from the match official and other witnesses.

They will also investigate and take action on any instance of indiscipline or bad behaviour by any NPRFC member, supporter or spectator.

They will exercise such power in a fair and open manner and the accused will have the right to attend and put his/her case after first been given reasonable notice of the hearing and to exercise its power without prejudice. Although the Disciplinary Committee has the authority to suspend a player from future matches, it has no right to rescind club membership, although if the offence is thought to warrant it, recommendations will be made to the General Committee for such an action.

2.1 The Disciplinary Committee shall consist of:

The Chairman of the General Committee, the Club Secretary, the Club Coach and the Captain of the team that the player was playing for at the time of the offence. For Youth / Junior disciplinary matters, the club Safeguarding Officer will be consulted and may be asked to join the committee.

In cases involving youth / junior players a section representative will also have a right to attend in an advisory capacity.

The Disciplinary Committee will meet as soon as practicable after the alleged act of indiscipline, offence or incident and further meetings may be held if required.

The key role of the committee is to establish the facts and the circumstances of the offence prior to making any decisions. Witness statements will be taken as required and the committee will call witnesses and persons as required to establish the facts of the incident / breach of rules / policies and procedures. The age of the individual will be taken into account in terms of the way in which the hearing is conducted. The roles of the Safeguarding Officer in youth matters are to ensure that the welfare of the child is catered for at all times.

The reported player, member, supporter or spectator **MUST** attend the discipline hearing. He/she may, if they wish, be represented by one person of his/her choice.

The Disciplinary Committee may also receive evidence (either verbally or in writing) from any other person(s) who witnessed the incident or was involved in it.

A designated member of the Disciplinary Committee must take notes at the hearing as a true and accurate record.

2.2 **Those present at a discipline hearing will be:**

- The player, member, supporter or spectator.
- His/her representative.
- Witness (es) to the incident.
- Disciplinary Committee members.

2.3 **Procedure**

- The report of the incident will be read to the meeting.
- The player, member, supporter or spectator is invited to make his/her statement.
- Witness (es) to the incident will make their statement(s).
- Any character witness makes his/her statement.
- Members of the Disciplinary Committee may question any of those present about the incident, and/or the player, member, supporter or spectator involved.

The meeting will be adjourned while the Disciplinary Committee decides on what action to take. The meeting is then re-convened and the results of the hearing along with any penalties are announced.

2.4 **Penalties**

The Disciplinary Committee will have the power to decide upon one or more of the following:

- a. No further punishment additional to the punishment of sending off.
- b. To take no action but to leave the matter to the County Discipline Sub-Committee.
- c. That the player (or other, person if the enquiry is into incidents off the field of play) be cautioned or severely cautioned as to his/her future conduct.
- d. A period of suspension from playing, or taking part in the administration of Rugby Union

Football (within the Club context only), or both, be imposed on the player, member, supporter or spectator.

e. Suspend or terminate membership of the Club for such period as it thinks fit.

f. Any other penalties or suspensions as decided by the Disciplinary Committee.

A record of any penalty awarded against any player/supporter/spectator etc, plus the reasons how that decision was arrived at by the Disciplinary Committee will be kept on file for 3 years.

This penalty can be taken into account when deciding any future penalties at any subsequent discipline hearing relating to that member within that 3 year period.

A member/player/supporter/spectator has the right to an appeal process as outlined in Section 4.

3. YOUTH / JUNIOR DISCIPLINE

NPRFC also has a duty to deal with all Youth/Junior discipline matters (Youth/Junior being a member under the age of 18 at the time of the offence).

3.1 Player sent off by the referee (Society or Club) –

If the player has reached his/her 18th birthday on the date of the incident, the matter is dealt with by the Somerset Discipline Committee.

In the case of Youth Players the coach or manager of the relevant team MUST report the name and age of the player concerned, the referee's name and society (if any), the opposition and any relevant match details to the relevant Youth / Juniors Committee Chairman and the Club Secretary within 24 hours of the incident.

This is important as it is mandatory that the Club Secretary has to report the incident in writing to the Somerset County Discipline Secretary within 72 hours of the incident.

Referees must report all players sent off over 18 years of age to the Discipline Secretary of the Somerset RFU. For players under 18 years of age a copy of the report should go to the Club Secretary and Youth / Junior Committee Chairman.

All reports should be on the RFU Discipline Report form.

3.2 Player Sin Binned (Yellow Card)

In the case of Youth / Junior Players, the coach or manager of the relevant team should report the name of the player sin binned (shown a yellow card) to the Disciplinary Chairman. A record of players being sin binned will be kept by the relevant Disciplinary Chairman. Any player who has been sin binned twice in a season may be asked to appear before the Disciplinary Committee.

3.3 Acts of Bad Behaviour by Players, Spectators, Supporters and Visitors

Any member / player who witnesses an act of bad behaviour at any time by any Club Member or visiting supporter / spectator, of whatever age, can report the matter to the Disciplinary Chairman who will consult with the Club Secretary.

In all cases the Club Secretary will refer the matter for action by the Disciplinary Committee, for the appropriate action to be taken. In extreme cases the Disciplinary Committee may recommend action to be taken by the General Committee.

3.4 Youth section cases dealt with by the Disciplinary Committee

3.4.1 Penalties

The Disciplinary Committee can impose the same penalties as for a senior player, spectator, member etc as outlined in section 2.4 a, c, d, e and f of this document however, the age and seriousness of the offence must be taken into account when deciding penalties. Depending on the circumstances, Under 18 players are normally suspended for shorter periods than adults.

A list of recommended sanctions for Youth / Junior players is outlined in Appendix 3 at the end of the Disciplinary Procedures section in the RFU Handbook.

A record of the penalty awarded against any youth player / spectator etc (if any), plus the reasons how that decision was arrived at by the Disciplinary Committee will be kept on file for 3 years. This penalty can be taken into account when deciding any future penalties at any subsequent discipline hearing relating to that member within that 3 year period.

4 APPEALS PROCEDURE

All individuals should be given the option to appeal against any sanctions given. The appellant shall serve notice of appeal in writing, stating the grounds of the appeal and address the letter to the Club Chairman. The Chairman shall appoint two other Officers of the club to serve on the Appeal Panel (none of whom served on the original Disciplinary Committee) and shall advise the appellant of the appeal hearing, which should be no more than 14 days after the original hearing. A member of the original panel that heard the case may attend the appeal hearing as an observer. The Appeal Panel has the power to quash a finding and any sanction imposed by the original Disciplinary Committee. It may also substitute an alternative finding and/or reduce or increase the original sanction.

5. COSTS OF ATTENDING A COUNTY DISCIPLINE HEARING

There is a levy imposed on NPRFC by the County for any senior player or junior player who has reached their 17th birthday and who was playing in an adult or Colts match, appearing before the County Discipline Committee.

The amount of this levy will be determined by the County and this levy must be paid by the player concerned before being allowed to play again.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years

Wayne Carter Nov 2023