

Manchester Rugby Club

Disciplinary Procedures



The full RFU Disciplinary Regulations can be found at Section 19;
www.rfu.com/the_game/regulations

CLUB DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEES

Each Club shall form a Disciplinary Committee and such Committees shall have the power to inflict appropriate punishment on any player, official or member of the Club for an infringement of any Laws of the Game provided that such powers are without prejudice to the powers of Manchester RFU to deal with such matters in accordance with the powers delegated to them by the Rugby Football Union.

Every Club shall be responsible for the conduct of its own members, and for investigating any allegations of foul play and/or acts of misconduct which have taken place on Club premises or as part of a club activity unless set out to the contrary of the Disciplinary Regulations.

Every club must appoint a Disciplinary Panel, consisting of a Chairman plus two panel members and a secretary (who will be appointed but will not be a member of the panel). They are further required to take appropriate action in accordance with these Regulations. **Annex A** lists the members of Manchester RFU's Disciplinary Panel.

A Player need not have been disciplined by an Official in order to appear before a Club Disciplinary Committee.

If a Player is punished by his own Club for a foul play offence, which was undetected by an Official, Clubs should inform the Secretary of the opposing Club of the verdict and action taken.

CODE OF RUGBY – SENIOR

Everyone involved in rugby in England, whether as a player, coach, referee, administrator, parent or spectator is expected to uphold the Core Values of our sport.

Teamwork - Respect - Enjoyment - Discipline - Sportsmanship

- Play to win - but not at all cost
- Win with dignity, lose with grace
- Observe the Laws and regulations of the game
- Respect opponents, referees and all participants
- Reject cheating, racism, violence and drugs
- Value volunteers and paid officials alike
- Enjoy the game

REFERRAL TO THE DISCIPLINARY PANEL

SENDING'S OFF

In all cases where the Referee has sent off a player, the Referee shall, within 48 hours after the end of the match;

- a) Send a completed copy of the sending off report to the secretary of the Constituent Body Disciplinary Committee to which the player's club is affiliated or allocated.
- b) Send a copy of his report to his own Referee Society or, if he is not a member of a Referee Society, to the Constituent Body in whose area the match was played.

Where a player is sent off following foul play drawn to the Referee's attention upon the intervention of an Assistant Referee, that official shall also comply with the obligations imposed upon the Referee (as above).

Club Secretaries must report to their Constituent Bodies within 48 hours after the match the name, address and contact telephone number of any player who has been ordered off the playing enclosure, including players under the age of 17 years.

If a player is being reported for Misconduct in the Playing Enclosure, then the same procedure set out above shall be followed. If the misconduct takes place outside the playing enclosure then this must be reported to the Constituent Body Disciplinary Committee to consider any action.

A Match Official reporting abuse shall comply with the above requirements, save that, where the player has not been sent off in relation to the alleged abuse, a Match Official Abuse Form shall be completed and submitted within 7 days. The official must give full details of the abuse, including details of any witnesses.

Where a player has been sent off, the Disciplinary Committee Secretary, will complete and forward as soon as possible a Notice of Hearing that will include the details of;

- a) The specific charge,
- b) The date, time and place appointed for the hearing,
- c) Directions on case management, as appropriate.

The player will be asked in the Notice of Hearing;

- a) Whether he accepts that he committed the offence specified in the Match Official's Report and wishes to plead guilty and, if so whether he wishes the case to be dealt with in his absence; or
- b) Whether he disputes the allegations and wishes the Referee, or Assistant Referee in appropriate cases, to be invited to attend.

The player will be advised in the Notice of Hearing that if he wishes any of the match officials to be invited to attend, he may be called upon to pay their travelling expenses.

The Notice of Hearing will be accompanied by a copy of the Match Officials Report. It will also advise a player that he should have available any evidence he wishes to call and his attention will be specifically directed to the Discipline Regulations. If the player admits the offence and requests that the case be dealt with in his absence, he may provide a written statement of mitigation. The panel shall take into account the fact that the player has pleaded guilty.

The Disciplinary Committee will endeavour to hear the case within 21 days unless there are exceptional circumstances that merit a longer period.

Where a player is 17 years or over and is playing in an U19, U20 or an adult team, he shall be subject to the RFU regulations which apply to all adult players, as covered in the Disciplinary Regulations.

If a player is sent off or cited in a club youth match, that player's club secretary (via the club disciplinary panel) shall be responsible for taking disciplinary action against him or her.

If a player fails to attend the hearing, the panel can adjourn the hearing or proceed to hear the case. The panel can suspend the player during the adjournment period if they see fit.

The procedure for the hearing will be determined by the Chairman of the panel and all parties will be given proper opportunity to state their case.

The referee/witnesses may attend the hearing via telephone conference if he is not available.

Where the offence is admitted or proven, the panel has power to impose penalties sanctions as recommended by the RFU (**Annex B**)

The panel shall produce a short form of decision within 72 hours of the hearing and ensure a copy is provided to the player, the constituent body and the RFU disciplinary manner. If the player is dissatisfied with the decision then he can appeal to the RFU Appeal Panel within 14 days.

YELLOW CARDS

1. The totting up process for suspension purposes will only apply to Clubs operating at level 1 to 4 inclusive. Totting up will only apply to yellow cards awarded for foul play. No further disciplinary action will be taken on yellow cards awarded for technical offences, save as in paragraph 4 below. However all yellow cards will be reported to the RFU and will attract a fee.
2. A player who receives three yellow cards for foul play during a season will have his case heard by an RFU Disciplinary Panel.
3. An appeal against a yellow card is only valid where the appellant alleges that there was mistaken identity or no act of foul play took place. The appeal must be lodged within 7 days of the date of the match.
4. A player who receives two yellow cards in a match (whether for foul play or technical offences) and is sent off after the second yellow card (i.e. awarded a red card), shall appear before a Disciplinary Panel. Where a Disciplinary Panel allows an appeal against one of those two yellow cards, the red card shall be expunged from the player's record.

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Dealing with Player Disciplinary Issues - Under 7 to Under 12 Age Groups

General Principles

Given the young age of some of the players in this age range, it is imperative that all matters involving issues of discipline are dealt with as quickly and as sensitively as possible always remembering that the **welfare of the child concerned is paramount**.

All actions taken against any child must be fair, consistent and reasonable in the circumstances. Players of this age should be dealt with informally, where possible, and in consultation with a parent/carer. As a general rule all disciplinary matters will be dealt with by the coach in consultation with the match officials and the parent/carer at the time of the incident. Outcomes of disciplinary actions are **strictly confidential** and must not be reported publicly.

Dealing with Issues of Low to Medium Level Seriousness

Where problems arise on the field of play, match officials and coaches are encouraged to withdraw players from the game rather than have the player dismissed. This should be followed by a discussion with the parent/carer of the child concerned and, if necessary, an informal discussion with the player themselves. Where necessary, informal advice and guidance regarding future conduct should be given to both the parent/care and the player. A written record of the incident and action taken must be kept and a copy given to the Chairman of Mini Junior Rugby and the Child Safeguarding Officer (see **Annex C**).

Dealing with Issues of High Level Seriousness

On the rare occasion when the behaviour complained of is so serious that it requires a more formal intervention (for example, where there is a pattern of behaviour developing and the player has failed to respond to the informal interventions or where there the behaviour involves a serious level of violence such as biting, deliberate stamping etc), the player should be withdrawn from the field of play by the coach in consultation with the match officials. The matter should then be discussed with the Chairman of Mini Junior Rugby and Child Safeguarding Officer who will decide whether the matter can be dealt with informally or referred for formal action to be taken. A written record of the incident must be kept and a copy given to the Chairman of Mini Junior Rugby and Child Safeguarding Officer (see **Annex C**).

Dealing with Player Disciplinary Issues - Under 13 to Under 18 Age Groups

General principles

Coaches, match officials and other volunteers, are responsible for ensuring appropriate standards of behaviour are maintained at all times and must report all behaviour which falls below these standards. It is also important to ensure that misconduct occurring before and after the game is dealt with as robustly as that occurring during the game. Standards of behaviour should be enforced at all times, even when the behaviour goes unnoticed by match officials.

Given the age of the players in this age range, it is imperative that all matters involving issues of discipline are dealt with as quickly and as sensitively as possible always remembering that the **welfare of the young person concerned is paramount**.

All actions taken against any young player must be fair, consistent and reasonable in the circumstances and be taken in accordance with the guidelines set out below.

Outcomes of disciplinary action are **strictly confidential** and must not be reported publicly.

What Needs Reporting?

The guidance from the RFU is clear in respect of dealing with disciplinary matters for players in this age range and sets out circumstances in which it expects Clubs to respond. The following is an overview of those issues which the RFU regard as serious in respect of which the RFU expects Clubs to take the appropriate disciplinary action:

- ☐ dismissal of a player
- ☐ abuse of Officials
- ☐ action which results in the abandonment of the game
- ☐ misconduct contrary to the spirit of the game
- ☐ yellow cards
- ☐ repetitive behaviour where the player has failed to respond to informal interventions

Coaches and match officials **must report all such incidents** to the Chair of Mini Junior Rugby or the Child Safeguarding Officer **within 48 hours** of the match ending using the appropriate forms (see **Annex C**).

How Will Disciplinary Matters be Dealt With?

All disciplinary matters for players in these age groups will be dealt with by the Disciplinary Panel and in consultation with the Child Safeguarding Officer.

The Disciplinary Panel shall consist of such persons (see **Annex A**) as it is felt necessary to deal with the matter complained of and will include people with an understanding of junior rugby and who have been CRB checked. The coach and the parent/carer will be involved throughout the process by the Club Secretary who will be responsible for providing administrative support and procedural advice.

The Disciplinary Panel will have regard to the guidance set out in Regulation 10 of the RFU Disciplinary Rules and Regulations when dealing with disciplinary matters.

If the matter complained of is denied, it may be necessary to convene a formal disciplinary hearing. However, this would not be done without full consultation with the Child Safeguarding Officer and the parent/carer.

The Disciplinary Panel is authorised to impose all sanctions as set out in **Appendix B** (from the RFU Disciplinary Rules and Regulations as they relate to youth players). Where it is felt necessary to consider greater sanction such as expulsion from the Club, the Club Welfare Officer must be consulted.

A full report of the investigation, hearing if any and outcome will be sent to the RFU County Safeguarding Manager

ANNEX A:



Manchester Rugby Club Disciplinary Panel Members

Chair

Andrew Bridgman

Panel Members

Allan Power

Getty Schinkel

Bryan Fisher

James Beane

Secretary

Suzanne Morton

Child Welfare Officer

Jenny Johnson

ANNEX B: RFU Recommended Sanctions for Offences within the playing Enclosure

Law No.	Description	Entry Point based on Scale of Seriousness of the Player's conduct, which constitutes the offending. Lower End (LE), Mid Range (MR), Top End (TE).	Maximum Sanction
10.4(s) 10.4(m)	Verbal Abuse of Match Officials	LE – 6 weeks; MR – 12 weeks; TE – 18+ weeks	52 weeks
10.4(s) 10.4(m)	Threatening Actions or Words at Match Officials	LE – 12 weeks MR – 24 weeks TE – 48+ weeks	260 weeks
10.4(s) 10.4(m)	Physical Abuse of Match Officials	LE – 24 weeks MR – 48 weeks TE – 96+ weeks	Life
10.4(a)	Striking another Player with a hand, arm or fist	LE – 2 weeks MR – 5 weeks TE – 8+ weeks	52 weeks
10.4(a)	Striking another Player with the elbow	LE – 2 weeks MR – 5 weeks TE – 9+ weeks	52 weeks
10.4(a)	Striking with knee	LE – 4 weeks MR – 8 weeks TE – 12+ weeks	52 weeks
10.4(a)	Striking with head	LE – 4 weeks MR – 10 weeks TE – 16+ weeks	104 weeks
10.4(b)	Stamping/Trampling on an Opponent	LE – 2 weeks MR – 5 weeks TE – 9+ weeks	52 weeks
10.4(c)	Kicking an Opponent	LE – 4 weeks MR – 8 weeks TE – 12+ weeks	52 weeks
10.4(d)	Tripping an Opponent with the foot/leg	LE – 2 weeks MR – 4 weeks TE – 8+ weeks	52 weeks
10.4(e)	Dangerous tackling of an Opponent including early or late and including the action known as the “stiff arm tackle”	LE – 2 weeks; MR – 6 weeks; TE – 10+ weeks	52 weeks

ANNEX B: Continued

Law No.	Description	Entry Point Based on Scale of Seriousness of the Player's conduct, which constitutes the offending. Lower End (LE), Mid Range (MR), Top End (TE).	Maximum Sanction
10.4(e)	Dangerous tackling of an Opponent including a tackle or attempted tackle above the line of the shoulders even if the tackle starts below the line of the shoulders	LE – 2 weeks MR – 6 weeks TE – 10+ weeks	52 weeks
10.4(f)	Holding, pushing or obstructing an Opponent not holding the ball, by a Player who is not in possession of the ball, except in a scrum, ruck or maul	LE – 2 weeks MR – 4 weeks TE – 6+ weeks	52 weeks
10.4(f) 10.4(k)	Dangerous charging or obstructing or grabbing of Opponent without the ball, including shouldering	LE – 2 weeks MR – 5 weeks TE – 10+ weeks	52 weeks
10.4(g)	Dangerous charging or knocking down an Opponent with the ball, including shouldering	LE – 2 weeks MR – 5 weeks TE – 10+ weeks	52 weeks
10.4(h)	A player must not charge into a ruck or maul. Charging includes any contact made without use of the arms, or without grasping a player	LE – 2 weeks MR – 5 weeks TE – 10+ weeks	52 weeks
10.4(i)	Tackling, tapping, pushing or pulling an Opponent jumping for the ball in a lineout or in open play	LE – 3 weeks MR – 6 weeks TE – 12+ weeks	52 weeks
10.4(j)	Lifting a Player from the ground and either dropping or driving that Player's head and/or upper body into the ground whilst the Player's feet are off the ground	LE – 4 weeks MR – 8 weeks TE – 12+ weeks	52 weeks
10.4(k)	Causing a scrum, ruck or maul to collapse	LE – 2 weeks MR – 4 weeks TE – 8+ weeks	52 weeks

ANNEX B: Continued

Law No.	Description	Entry Point Based on Scale of Seriousness of the Player's conduct, which constitutes the offending. Lower End (LE), Mid Range (MR), Top End (TE)	Maximum Sanction
10.4(m)	Testicle grabbing or twisting or squeezing	LE – 12 weeks MR – 18 weeks TE – 24+ weeks	208 weeks
10.4(m)	Biting	LE – 12 weeks MR – 18 weeks TE – 24+ weeks	208 weeks
10.4(m)	Contact with Eye(s) or the Eye Area	LE – 12 weeks MR – 18 weeks TE – 24+ weeks	208 weeks
10.4(m)	Spitting at Players	LE – 4 weeks MR – 7 weeks TE – 11+ weeks	52 weeks
10.4(m)	Verbal abuse of Players based on Religion, Race, Colour, or National or Ethnic Origin, sexual orientation or otherwise	LE – 4 weeks MR – 8 weeks TE – 16+ weeks	52 weeks
10.4(m)	Any other acts (not previously referred to) which are contrary to good sportsmanship	LE – 4 weeks MR – 7 weeks TE – 11+ weeks	52 weeks
10.4(m)	Hair pulling or grabbing	LE – 2 weeks MR – 4 weeks TE – 6+ weeks	52 weeks
10(4)(m)	2 yellow cards in one match	LE – SOS TE – the lower end of the range for the more serious of the yellow card offences	52 weeks
10(4)(m)	Totting up of 3 foul play yellow cards within season – applies only to Levels 1-4	LE – 1 week TE – the lower end of the range for the most serious of the yellow card offences	52 weeks
<i>In respect of offences not referred to in Appendix 2 above, appropriate sanctions may be imposed at the discretion of the Disciplinary Panel.</i>			
<i>Notwithstanding the Sanctions in Appendix 2 in cases where the player's actions constitute mid range or top end offending for any type of offence which had the potential to result and, in fact, did result in serious/gross consequences to the health of the victim, the Disciplinary Panel may impose any period of suspension including a suspension for life.</i>			
<i>For the purposes of RFU Regulations 19.6.6 and 19.6.7, references to Match Officials in this Appendix 2 shall also extend to include Officials (as defined in RFU Regulation 1)</i>			

ANNEX B: Continued – Playing Under-Age Players in Adult Rugby

This sanctions table relates to an entry point for the first breach of RFU Regulation 15. The final sanction may be increased to reflect aggravating features or reduced to reflect mitigating factors (see below). A second breach may include expulsion from the Union.

Classification of breach	Description of classification	Entry point for sanction
Low level breach	U18 player trains with adults without permission. No injury	Suspension of coach/person responsible for training for 4 weeks; and Club reprimanded
Mid level breach	U18 player plays with adults without permission. No injury U18 trains with adults without permission. Injury occurs	Suspension of coach/person responsible for team selection 3 months; and Team suspended from playing for 4 weeks; and Points deducted from club 1st XV equating to 2 wins (possibly suspended); and Club reprimanded
High level breach	U18 player plays with adults without permission. Injury occurs	Suspension of coach/person responsible for team selection for 6 months; and Team suspended from playing for 3 months; and Points deducted from club 1st XV equating to 4 wins; and Club reprimanded

Aggravating features:

Intentional breach of regulation

Club failure to warn teams of regulation and consequences of breach

Very young player

Very serious injury

Mitigating factors:

Unintentional breach – team did not know player was under 18 and it was reasonable to assume he was

Player nearly 18 years old

Player capable of playing adult rugby and permission would have been granted has it been requested

Injury not serious

ANNEX C: Incident Report



Manchester Rugby Club Incident Report

Match Officials Name:

Date of Incident:

Fixture:

Venue:

Person responsible for the incident (please indicate):

Player

☐

Coach

☐

Club Official

☐

Spectator

☐

Name of person being reported:

Date of Birth (if known):

Club affiliated to:

Describe the details of the incident including the names of any witnesses:

(Continue on separate sheet if necessary)

Match Officials Signature:

Date: