

AGE-GRADE RUGBY Disciplinary Procedures

1. Applicability

- 1.1 The procedures below shall apply to school, club and representative age grade rugby up to and including U18 teams. A school or club must carry out the disciplinary process below following one of their age grade players being sent off or cited. Citing procedures are contained towards the end of this Appendix 6.
- 1.2 Where an U17 or U18 player is playing in an U19 match, or is over 17 and playing in an U20 or an adult team, he shall be subject to the RFU regulations which apply to all adult players, as covered in Discipline Regulation 19.
- 1.3 Each Constituent Body RDP in consultation with their CSU will appoint a Constituent Body Schools & Youth Disciplinary Secretary (CBSYDS) for the season.
- 1.4 Any person(s) appointed in section 1.3 shall be a member of the Constituent Body Disciplinary Committee with responsibility for disciplinary issues relating to youth within their Constituent Body. They will report on these to the Constituent Body and to the RFU as required. They will fulfill the responsibilities as described in the remainder of Appendix 6.

2. Jurisdiction

2.1 School Matches

If a player is sent off or cited in a school match, then that player's Head Teacher shall be responsible for taking disciplinary action against him or her, under the guidance of the Constituent Body SYDS. Unless it is a contested citing in which case section 4.4 applies.

2.2 Club Youth Matches

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, under the guidance of the CBSYDS. Unless it is contested citing in which case 4.4 applies.

2.3 Representative Rugby: District, County or Constituent Body Matches and Trials

If a player is sent off in a District, County, Constituent Body match or Divisional trial, then his CBSYDS will, in consultation with the National Schools & Youth Disciplinary Secretary (NSYDO), convene a disciplinary panel to deal with that player

2.3.1 Any suspension imposed will be binding on all age grade matches.

2.3.2 The Union will advise the player's Head Teacher/Club Secretary and the NSYDO of their decision.

2.3.3 If a player is cited for an incident occurring in a District, County, Constituent Body match or Divisional trial, that player's case will be heard by a disciplinary panel, set up as soon as possible by the player's CBSYDS or if he contests the citing by the NSYDO.

2.4 Representative Rugby – Divisional and International Matches

If a player is sent off or cited at this level the NSYDO or RFU Head of Discipline will set up a panel to hear the case.

2.5 Cross Border Fixtures within the Six Nations – School, Club or Constituent Body level

2.5.1 If a visiting player from an age grade team of one of the six nations is sent off or cited in a match, the Referee must send his report to the RFU Head of Discipline for onward transmission to the visitor's Union.

2.5.2 If an English team's player is sent off or cited in a match against a school/club/Constituent Body age grade team of one of the six nations whether playing at home or away section 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 as appropriate should be applied.

2.6 Tours:

Schools and Club Age Grade Teams Playing Abroad

2.6.1 If a player is sent off or cited whilst on tour abroad, the case shall be adjudicated on as soon as possible (and in any event before the next match) by the player's Head Teacher/Club Secretary or their nominee, in consultation with a representative of the Host Union.

Incoming Age Grade Teams

2.6.2 If a visiting player is sent off it is expected that the visitors will invoke the procedures of their own Union, in consultation with the CBSYDS or NSYDO. The host school or club must notify the RFU Head of Discipline of the decision taken within 24 hours. If the visiting team's own Union is unable or unwilling to invoke their procedures the CBSYDS or NSYDO will make appropriate arrangements.

2.7 Tours: Representative and National Teams

2.7.1 If a member of a visiting team is sent off his case shall, whenever practicable, be adjudicated upon within 24 hours. The hearing will be convened by the NSYDO or RFU Head of Discipline. If there is any delay, a player sent off may not take part or be selected for any further game until his case has been dealt with.

2.7.2 A chairman will be appointed prior to the match by the IRB or RFU. The RFU Head of Discipline or the NSYDO will make such an appointment in the event of the IRB not doing so.

2.7.3 The Referee must submit a written report and if the player is sent off as a result of a touch judge's intervention, the Touch Judge must also submit a written report. Such reports must be made available to the player and the panel as soon as practicable prior to the hearing.

- 2.7.4 The Referee, and if appropriate the Touch Judge, should attend the hearing. The player sent off and a member of his team's management must attend the meeting.
- 2.7.5 The panel shall have full discretion as to procedure and as to what evidence is required, but it must hear the evidence of the referee and, if appropriate the touch judge. The player sent off shall have the right to be heard and to be represented. It is the duty of the home union to provide an interpreter if necessary.
- 2.7.6 Video evidence should be presented immediately if available. It should be noted that no witnesses are called and no character references are necessary.
- 2.7.7 The panel may suspend or impose an appropriate sanction on the player.
- 2.7.8 The panel shall convey its findings to the player and his manager, and notify the RFU Head of Discipline who will arrange for any relevant parties to be notified, particularly in the case of a tour to the next Union to be visited.
- 2.7.9 The player has the right to appeal against the verdict of the panel. The appeal must be lodged with the RFU Head of Discipline within twenty-four hours of the original verdict.
- 2.7.10 Any appeal will be heard by a single senior official appointed by the home Union. If circumstances are such, then the senior official of the next home Union will consider the appeal. Where the case involves the last match of a tour the player's appeal will be heard by the player's home Union.
- 2.7.11 The person conducting the appeal shall receive all the written evidence, including the Referee's Report and the touch judge's report if applicable, plus the verdict of the original disciplinary hearing. He shall hear the appellant's plea and (s)he shall then confirm or not, the original verdict, and consider increasing or decreasing the original sentence. His verdict is final.
- 2.8 Tournaments, Festivals, and Competitions
- 2.8.1 In certain tournaments, festivals and competitions, it may be that being sent off will ban a player from further participation in some or all of the subsequent matches in that event. Only a CSU, a CBRDP, a Division or the ERFUSU may sanction such regulations. Where such regulation exists the event organiser will still inform the sent off player's CBSYDS and Head Teacher/Club Secretary of the Sending Off so further disciplinary action can be considered by them if merited.
- 2.8.2 If a player is sent off in a tournament, festival or competition for an offence which is so serious that it would normally attract a sanction of 4 matches suspension or more (see tariff), the event organiser will inform the player's CBSYDS and Head Teacher/Club Secretary within 7 days so as additional punishment can be considered by them.
- 2.8.3 If a player is cited in a tournament, festival or competition, then that player's Head Teacher or Club Disciplinary Panel should consider and deal with the matter unless it is a contested matter in which case section 4.4 applies.

- 2.8.4 If a player is sent off in an international tournament or festival, the disciplinary regulations pertaining to that event shall be followed and if none then section 2.4 or 2.7 will apply.

3. Referee's Report

- 3.1 In age grade matches referees should report, in writing, any sending off within 48 hours to the player's Head Teacher /Club Secretary with a copy to the CBSYDS. Where possible, this should be done before the Referee leaves the ground, passing his written report to the player's Head Teacher/Club Secretary via his or her teacher/coach.
- 3.2 The Head Teacher/Club Secretary/CBSYDS should receive the Referee's Report before he or she takes any further action. However, the lack of a Referee's Report should not prevent a case being heard, nor should it delay the case by more than 72 hours, as delays in proceedings should be kept to an absolute minimum.

4. Contested Hearing

Sending Off (Player Denies the Offence)

- 4.1 Whilst the Referee is the sole judge of fact during a game, in disciplinary proceedings his decision may be challenged.
- 4.2 If a player disputes his Sending off, a hearing must be convened as soon as possible.
- 4.3 The hearing will be heard by a Panel convened by the Head Teacher as in 2.1, Club Disciplinary Panel as in 2.2 in consultation with the CBSYDS; or if in a representative match by his Constituent Body/Union's panel set up as in 2.3 or 2.4 as appropriate.

Citing (Player Denies the Offence)

- 4.4 A disputed citing will be heard by a hearing convened under arrangements made by the CBSYDS or the NSYDO. If the citing took place in representative rugby then the panel will be convened by the NSYDO.

Conduct of Hearings

- 4.5 Panels in contested cases should normally consist of three people.
- 4.6 The player must be heard and can be represented.
- 4.7 The hearing shall be conducted in accordance with the RFU Disciplinary Regulations set out above, adapted as necessary in the circumstances.
- 4.8 The panel will decide, on the balance of probabilities, whether they find the case proven or not. They should provide the player with reasons for their finding.

- 4.9 Their powers to impose sanction will be the same as those of a Head Teacher/Club Disciplinary Panel, had the player pleaded guilty from the onset. The panel has no power to levy a fine, but may award reasonable travel costs incurred by witnesses against the player's school/club.
- 4.10 The principles of natural justice, as they apply to RFU disciplinary matters, should be applied. The player must be advised of his right to appeal any decision to the NSYDO and that (s)he must do this within 7 days of the hearing.

5. Sanctions

- 5.1 Sanctions imposed on age grade players should apply to all their rugby matches. If a player is subject to sanctions which result from misconduct in a Constituent Body or club youth match, head teachers are requested to honour and enforce those sanctions, and vice versa. The CBSYDS should encourage mutual enforcement of sanctions.
- 5.2 The Head Teacher or Disciplinary Panel may decide that:
- a) the sending off was in itself sufficient punishment;
 - b) a caution or reprimand is given, laying down expectations about future good conduct; or
 - c) the player is given a period of suspension from playing rugby matches.
- 5.3 Any playing suspension should be based on the sanction tariff for age grade rugby at, on advice from the CBSYDS. Those deciding upon a sanction must decide on the appropriate entry point for the offence in the tariff.
- 5.4 The Head Teacher or Disciplinary Panel should, in making their decision, take into account:
- a) the player's age, experience and disciplinary record;
 - b) the circumstances of the offence;
 - c) any mitigation and the remorse shown.
- 5.5 In particular, a player's period of playing suspension should be for a specified number of matches, and should take into account:
- a) the player's programme, including both their school and club matches; festivals or tournaments and any representative trials or matches (s)he was likely to play; and
 - b) that the sanction should not be so severe as to discourage players from continuing to play; and
 - c) that if a Sending off occurs at the end of the term or the season, whether any match bans can extend to matches at the start of the next term/season.

- d) Suspensions from playing extend to representative trials, but do not prevent a player from training, or participating in internal non-competitive matches.
- 5.6 A player may appeal his sentence if he considers it too severe. (see section 7)
- 5.7 In some situations to give an effective punishment, a non-rugby sanction may need to be imposed on the player. Schools will have their own disciplinary procedure, but in rugby clubs this may include:
- a) in extreme situations, banning a player from membership; or
 - b) in less serious situations, banning a player from the clubhouse and all social activities, in or out of the season.
- 5.8 The CBSYDS may review sanctions imposed by schools or clubs on his own motion. If a school or club imposes what appears to be an unduly lenient sanction, they will be asked to review this and then justify it to the CBSYDS.
- 5.9 If the school/club do not review or adjust the sanction as per section 5.9 the CBSYDS may refer the case to the NSYDO who may:
- a) re-open the case and instruct the relevant CBSYDS to create a panel to review the matter in consultation with the Constituent Body Disciplinary Secretary; or
 - b) re-open the case and instruct an independent panel to review the matter; or
 - c) refer the case to the **Head of Rugby Judiciary for consideration**

The NSYDO may initiate review of sanction on his own motion and apply (a), (b), or (c).

6. Reporting the Outcome of Disciplinary Proceedings and Hearings

- 6.1 The Head Teacher/Club Secretary should inform the CBSYDS of any decision taken, within 7 days of the sending off /citing incident including any reason for a delay in dealing with the player.
- 6.2 If the case is adjourned for a contested hearing the CBSYDS must be advised of this and then notified of the outcome with 48 hours of the conclusion of the hearing
- 6.3 The CBSYDS will notify any Referee Society that may be involved and others as appropriate of any sanctions imposed on a player to ensure that any suspension imposed is enforced.
- 6.4 Where a player is cited in a representative match, the Union dealing with this case should advise:
- a) the player's Head Teacher or Club Secretary; and
 - b) the NSYDO or the RFU **Head of Discipline** of their decision.

- 6.5 A failure by a school or club to report the results of disciplinary cases may lead to action being taken against that school or Club by the CBSYDS or NSYDO before a disciplinary panel who would have power to suspend them from any Constituent Body or national competition, or reprimand the Club/School/individuals, or they may impose financial penalties and/or costs against them.

7. Appeals

- 7.1 A player can appeal his School or Club's decision by either following his school's grievance process or writing to his CBSYDS within 7 days of being notified of his sanction outlining the nature of the appeal. The CBSYDS will create an appeal hearing whose decision is final.
- 7.2 A player may appeal against a hearing arranged by a CBSYDS in a contested citing or in a Sending off in representative rugby, by giving notice in writing, setting out the grounds for appeal, served upon and received by the NSYDO within 7 days of being notified of his sanction. The NSYDO will convene an appeal hearing whose decision is final. An appeal fee of £100 payable to the RFU must be lodged with the notice. This may be returned in full or part if the appeal is allowed.
- 7.3 The Referee may be invited to attend any appeal hearing or be asked to be available for consultation by telephone. Any appeal panel may choose to call witnesses or proceed by submissions, as they see fit depending upon the case.
- 7.4 An appeal panel's verdict will be binding. If they find the player guilty they may vary the original sentence up or down. They have no power to levy a fine, but may award reasonable travel costs incurred by witnesses against the player's union, school or club, but not against the player.

8. Misconduct by Adults Involved with Youth Rugby

- 8.1 Complaints can be made to a CBSYDS or to the NSYDO alleging a breach of this appendix, or of the Schools and Youth Playing Regulations, including playing out of season and touring without permission, against an individual, School, Club, or Union. These complaints will be investigated and if sufficient evidence exists and, unless the CBSYDS/NSYDO consider it vexatious, they would normally present a charge before a Constituent Body's Disciplinary Panel or an RFU panel.
- 8.2. A CBSYDS or the NSYDO may initiate Rule 5.12 actions against any School, Club, coach, manager, parent or supporter for ill discipline on the touchline, or for breaches referred to in 8.1, and for breaching safeguarding regulations or for general misconduct in the youth game, such as referee abuse on their own motion.

Summary for Disciplinary Action

Age of Player	Match in which sent off or cited	Responsibility for dealing with Player	Regulations to be applied	Who informs CBSYDS
U13-U18	School match	School – Head Teacher	Schools and Youth tariff	School
U13-U18	Club match	Youth Club Disciplinary Panel	Schools and Youth tariff	Club
U13-U18	School or Club match - player denies citing allegation	CBSYDS makes arrangements	Schools and Youth Tariff	–
U13-U18	Representative match	CBSYDS or NSYDO makes arrangements	Schools and Youth tariff	(NSYDO)
17, 18, 19	Club U19/U20 or adult match	Constituent Body (County) Disciplinary Committee	Adult Tariff [See Appendix 2]	Constituent Body Disciplinary Secretary

NB: In all cases of players sent off in a School or Club Youth match, the School or Club should consult with the CBSYDS before imposing any sanction.

In addition:

5.12 Actions Prejudicial to the Interests of the Game	Responsibility for dealing with the Report
Coaches, parents and other adult supporters reported for ill discipline on the touchline at a School or Club Youth match or making abusive comments in the media or on web sites	Constituent Body (County) Disciplinary Committee

Recommended Sanctions (Age Grade)

Offences	U17 + U18	U15 + U16	U13 + U14
Repeated infringements	Sending off Sufficient (SoS)	SoS	SoS
Dissent	LE 1 match MR 4 matches TE 6 matches	LE caution MR 1 match TE 3 matches	LE SoS MR caution TE 2 matches
Verbal abuse to other players or others**	LE 1 match MR 6 matches TE 8* matches	LE 1 match MR 3 matches TE 6* matches	LE caution MR 2 matches TE 4 Matches
Collapsing scrum, ruck, maul	LE caution MR 2 matches TE 4 matches	LE caution MR caution TE 2 matches	LE SoS
Trip, late or dangerous tackle***, obstruction	LE 2 matches MR 4 matches TE 8* matches	LE caution MR 2 matches TE 6 matches	LE SoS MR 1 match TE 4 matches
Dangerous use of boot/ kneeling	LE 3 matches MR 6 matches TE 10 matches	LE 2 matches MR 4 matches TE 6 matches	LE caution MR 1 match TE 3 matches
Hit punch	LE 1 match MR 4 matches TE 8 matches	LE caution MR 2 matches TE 4 matches	LE SoS MR caution TE 2 matches
Kick, bite or head butt	LE 4 matches MR 8 matches TE 8* matches	LE 3 matches MR 6 matches TE 8* matches	LE 1 match MR 3 matches TE 6* matches
Abusive behaviour to official including verbal abuse	LE 4 matches MR 8* matches TE *	LE 2 matches MR 6 matches TE 8* matches	LE 1 match MR 3 matches TE 6* matches
Assault an official	LE 8 matches MR 8* matches TE *	LE 6 matches MR 8* matches TE *	LE 4 matches MR 8* matches TE *

Entry point based on assessment of seriousness

LE = low entry; MR = mid range; TE = Top entry

* It is assumed that Schools, and Clubs, would apply other sanctions for such serious breaches of conduct. If not, then higher match suspensions should be applied.

** In instances of verbal abuse of players or officials based on religion, race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, higher match suspensions should be applied.

*** Tackle: A tip or spear tackle is normally to be regarded as a serious aggravation.

GUIDELINE

Age Grade Sin Bin Protocol

- 1.1 The Sin Bin is part of the Laws of the Game and applies to all levels, including Schools and Club Youth Rugby in the age grades U13-U18, including seven-a-side rugby.
- 1.2 The Referee will caution a player and show him a yellow card then send him to the Sin Bin if the player:
 - a) Commits an act contrary to good sportsmanship;
 - b) Commits Foul Play which warrants a caution;
 - c) Deliberately offends; or
 - d) Is a member of a team that has been repeatedly offending.
- 1.3 Being sent to the Sin Bin is only one stage below being sent off and should not be treated lightly. Teachers and coaches should not condone any action which results in a player being sent to the Sin Bin or sent off.
- 1.4 During time in the Sin Bin, a player:
 - a) must not be isolated and should if appropriate be given protective clothing;
 - b) must stand out of the field of play, in the vicinity of the half way line, at a place readily identifiable to the Referee; and
 - c) must be under the control of the teachers / coaches and be made to realise they are serving a punishment for contravening the Laws of the Game.
- 1.5 If the player's time in the Sin Bin spans the half time interval, the player may go onto the field and be part of the team talk.
- 1.6 The actual playing time a player will spend in the Sin Bin shall be as follows:
 - a) In the fifteen-a-side game, 10 minutes; or
 - b) In the seven-a-side game, 2 minutes.
- 1.7 The referee shall be the sole judge of the time a player has spent in the Sin Bin and when he can rejoin play.

Age Grade Citing Procedures

- 1.9. A citing occurs where a player allegedly commits an act of Foul Play which has not been detected or punished by the Match Official(s). A School, Club or Union, or the aggrieved player, or his parents/guardian can cite to show why that player shouldn't be punished as if he had been sent off. A citing may also be made by a Referee advisor or assessor officially appointed to the match.

- 1.10 The citing should normally be in writing, signed and sent either to the head teacher of the player's school, the secretary of the player's Club, or to the Discipline Secretary of the player's Union, Constituent Body, the ERFUSU or RFU within 14 days of the match, and copied as to the Constituent Body SYDS or in representative rugby to the NSYDO.
- 1.11 Citings received out of time may still be permitted by the NSYDO if he or she decides that in the interests of rugby or in the interests of justice there is a prima facie case to answer.
- 1.12 For the purposes of these regulations, a game in an Age Grade sevens or tens tournament is regarded as an Age Grade match.
- 1.13 Citings made by a School, Club or Union must be signed by the Head Teacher, Club Secretary or a CSU/Constituent BodyRDP/ Divisional Officer and not just by the Team Manager. In District, County and Constituent Body matches and trials this should be sent to the NSYDO.
- 1.14 In the event of a Divisional or an International match, it would normally be signed by the Manager of the team and sent to the RFU Head of Discipline.
- 1.15 In the event of an International Festival/Tournament, the Disciplinary Regulations pertaining to that event shall be followed.
- 1.16 A player who is cited must be given the opportunity to admit or deny the allegation.
- 1.17 If he or she admits the allegation, he or she will be dealt with as if he or she had been Sent Off by a disciplinary panel as in section 2.3 above
- 1.18 If a player denies the offence, then it will be handled as a contested hearing as in section 4.4 above. The onus shall be on the complainant to prove the case. It is expected that these hearings will be heard promptly.
- 1.19 A player who is cited is presumed innocent until they admit or are proven guilty and may continue to play until the hearing.
- 1.20 If the chairman of a Disciplinary Panel considers the citing to be frivolous or vexatious, he shall advise the complainant of that decision. The complainant may refer the matter in writing within 7 days of such notification to the NSYDO (or RFU Head of Discipline if the incident occurred in an International match) whose decision shall be final.
- 1.21 For Representative Rugby at District, County, Constituent Body and Division level a player who is cited will be disciplined by a panel convened as in section 2.3
- 1.22 If a player is cited in an International match he will be dealt with as in section 2.4