

## APPENDIX 6

### AGE-GRADE RUGBY

#### 1. Applicability

- 1.1 The procedures below shall apply to school and club youth rugby and representative rugby up to and including U18 teams. A school or club must carry out the disciplinary process below following one of their youth players being Sent Off or Cited. Citing procedures are contained in this Appendix 6.
- 1.2 Where a player is 17 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 Discipline Regulations.
- 1.3 Each CB RDP in consultation with their CSU will appoint a CB Schools & Youth Disciplinary Secretary (CBSYDS) for the season.
- 1.4 Any person(s) appointed under 1.3 shall be a member of the CB Disciplinary Committee with responsibility for disciplinary issues relating to youth within their CB. They will report on these to the CB 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 CBSYDS. Unless it is contested citing in which case 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, CB or Divisional matches and trials

If a player is Sent Off in a District, County, CB or Divisional match or trial, then his CBSYDS will, in consultation with the National Schools & Youth Disciplinary Secretary (NSYDS), convene a disciplinary panel to deal with that player

- 2.3.1 Any suspension imposed will be binding on all school and club matches.
- 2.3.2 The Union will advise the player's Head Teacher/Club Secretary and the NSYDS of their decision.
- 2.3.3 If a player is cited for an incident occurring in a District, County, CB or Divisional match or 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 contested by the NSYDS.

## 2.4 Representative rugby – Divisional and International matches

If a player is Sent Off the NSYDS will set up a panel to hear the case.

## 2.5 Cross Border Fixtures

2.5.1 If a visiting player from a school or club youth team of one of the six nations is Sent Off in a match, the Referee must send his report to the RFU Discipline Manager for onward transmission to the visitor's Union.

2.5.2 If a home player is Sent Off in a match against a school/club youth team of one of the six nations, the regulation 2.1 or 2.2 as appropriate should be applied.

2.5.3 If a player is Sent Off in on an away match regulation 2.1 or 2.2 as appropriate should be applied.

## 2.6 Tours:

### Schools and club teams abroad

2.6.1 If a player is Sent Off whilst on tour abroad, the case shall be adjudicated on as soon as possible (and in any event within 24 hours) by the player's head teacher/Club Secretary or their nominee, in consultation with a representative of the Host Union.

### Incoming schools and youth 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 a representative of the host Union. The host school or club must notify the RFU Disciplinary Manager 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 NSYDS will make appropriate arrangements.

## 2.7 Tours: National and Representative Teams

2.7.1 If a member of a visiting team is Sent Off his case shall, when ever practicable, be adjudicated upon within 24 hours. The hearing will be convened by the NSYDS or RFU Disciplinary Manager. 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 Disciplinary Manager or the NSYDS 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 Disciplinary Manager 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 Discipline Manager 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 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 ERFSU may sanction such regulations. Where such regulation exists the event organiser will inform the Sent Off player's CBSYDS and Head Teacher/Club Secretary so as 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 sentence of 4 matches or more, (such as kicking, biting or head butting an opponent, or abusing or assaulting an official), that player's head teacher/club disciplinary panel should be invited to consider the case with a view to deciding whether or not additional punishment should be imposed.

- 2.8.3 If a player is cited in a tournament, festival or competition for any offence, 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 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 2.7 will apply.

### **3. Referee's Report**

- 3.1 Referees of youth matches should report, in writing, any sending off within 48 hours to the player's head teacher /Club secretary. [If possible, this should be done before the Referee leaves the ground, with the Referee passing his written report to the player's head teacher/club secretary via his or her teacher/coach].
- 3.2 The Referee should also send a copy of his report to the CBSYDS.
- 3.3 The Head teacher/Club Secretary 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.
- 4.3 The hearing will be heard by a Panel convened by the head teacher as 2.1, club disciplinary panel as in 2.2 in consultation with the CBSYDS; or if in a representative match by his CB/Union 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 NSYDS. If the citing took place in representative rugby then the panel will be convened by the NSYDS.

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 NSYDS and that (s)he must do this within 7 days of the hearing.

## **5. Sanctions**

- 5.1 Sanctions imposed on schools and youth players should apply to all rugby matches. If a player is subject to sanctions which result from misconduct in a CB or club youth match, head teachers are requested to honour and enforce those sanctions, and vice versa. Mutual enforcement of sanctions should be encouraged by the CBSYDS
- 5.2 The head teacher or disciplinary panel may, following the consideration of the Referee's Report (where one is available), decide that:
- a) the sending off was in itself sufficient punishment;
  - b) a caution or reprimand should be given, laying down expectations about future good conduct; or
  - c) the player should be given a period of suspension from all rugby matches.
- 5.4 Any playing suspension should be based on the sanction tariff for youth rugby at Appendix 3, or on advice from the CBSYDS. Those deciding upon a sanction must decide on the appropriate entry point for the offence in the tariff.
- 5.5 The head teacher or disciplinary panel should, in making their decision, take into account:
- a) the player's age;
  - b) the player's experience;
  - c) the player's disciplinary record;
  - d) the circumstances of the offence;
  - e) any mitigation; and
  - f) the remorse shown.
- 5.6 In particular, a player's period of suspension should be for a specified number of matches, and should take into account:
- a) the player's programme, including both their school and youth matches; and any representative matches (s)he was likely to be selected for; 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, any match bans can extend to remaining school or club rugby in a player's programme, including representative trials and matches, or sevens tournaments, or to matches at the start of the next season.
- 5.7 Suspensions from playing extend to representative trials, but do not prevent a player from training, or participating in internal non-competitive matches. A player may appeal his sentence if he considers it too severe. (see 7)
- 5.8 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.
- 5.9 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.
- 5.10 If the school/club do not adjust the sanction in 5.9 the CBSYDS may refer the case to the NSYDS who may:
- a) re-open the case and instruct the relevant CBSYDS to review the matter in consultation with the CB Disciplinary Secretary; or
  - b) re-open the case and instruct an independent panel to review the matter; or
  - c) refer the case to the RFU Disciplinary Officer for action under regulation 2.6.4.

The NSYDS 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.
- 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 Once notified of any sanction in a disciplinary case the CBSYDS will notify any Referee Society that may be involved and others as appropriate 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 NSYDS or the RFU Disciplinary Manager 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 NSYDS before a disciplinary panel who would have power to suspend them from any CB 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 the Hearing outlining the nature of the appeal. The CBSYDS will create an appeal hearing whose decision is final.
- 7.2 The player may appeal against a first hearing arranged by a CBSYDS in a contested citing or a disputed sending off in representative rugby, by giving notice in writing, setting out the grounds for appeal, served upon and received by the NSYDS within 7 days of that hearing. The NSYDS 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 an appeal hearing or be asked to be available for consultation by telephone.
- 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.

## **8. Misconduct by adults involved with youth rugby**

- 8.1 Complaints can be made to a CBSYDS or to the NSYDS 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/NSYDS consider it vexatious, they would normally present a charge before a CB's Disciplinary Panel or a panel convened by the NSYDS.
- 8.2 A CBSYDS or the NSYDS 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 safe guarding 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	Responsibility for dealing with Player	Regulations to be applied	Responsibility for informing CB Schools/ Youth Discipline Secretary
U13- U18	School match	School – Head Teacher	Schools and Youth tariff [See Appendix 3]	School
U13- U18	Club match	Youth Club Disciplinary Panel	Schools and Youth tariff [See Appendix 3]	Club
17, 18, 19	Club U19/U20 match	CB (County) Disciplinary Committee	Adult Tariff [See Appendix 3]	CB Disciplinary Secretary
17, 18, 19	Club Adult match	CB (County) Disciplinary Committee	Adult Tariff [See Appendix 3]	CB 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 CB Schools & Youth Discipline Secretary 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	CB (County) Disciplinary Committee

## Recommended Sanctions (Age Grade)/Sin Bin Protocol

Offences	U17 + U18	U15 + U16	U13 + U14
Repeated infringements	Sending off Sufficient (SoS)	SoS	SoS
Dissent	1 match 4 matches 6 matches	Caution 1 match 3 matches	Sos Caution 2 matches
Verbal abuse to other players or others	1 match 6 matches	1 match 3 matches	Caution 2 matches
Collapsing scrum, ruck, maul	LE caution MR 2 matches TE 4 matches	LE caution MR caution TE 2 matches	SoS
Trip, late or dangerous tackle, obstruction	LE 2 matches	Caution	SoS
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 *

\* 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.

## Recommended Sanctions (Age Grade)/Sin Bin Protocol Sin Bin Protocol

- 1.1 The Sin Bin is part of the Laws of the Game and applies to all levels of the game, including Schools Rugby and Club Youth Rugby (but excluding the continuum). It also applies to seven-a-side rugby.
- 1.2 The Referee will send a player 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.The player will also be cautioned and shown a Yellow Card.
- 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.
- 1.4 During his or her time in the Sin Bin, a School or Club Youth player:
  - a) must not be isolated and should be given warm clothing to wear;
  - 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 and 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, then notwithstanding paragraph 1.4 above, 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.
- 1.8 The player may only recommence playing at a stoppage in play and on the invitation of the Referee.
- 1.9 Citing occurs where a player allegedly commits an act of foul play which has not been detected or punished by the Match Official(s) when either the aggrieved player, his/her parents or representatives, or his/her School or Club

cites that player to show cause why he/she should not be held accountable in the same way as a player who has been sent off. A citing may also be made by a Referee advisor or Referee assessor officially appointed to attend the match.

- 1.10 The citing should normally be:
  - a) In writing;
  - b) Signed by the aggrieved player's head teacher/Club secretary (or, if the relevant person is not willing to support the procedure, by the aggrieved player's parent or guardian); and
  - c) Sent either to the head teacher of the player's school, the secretary of the player's Club, or to a Constituent Body, the ERSU or RFU within 14 days of the match, with a copy to the Age Grade Discipline Secretary.
- 1.11. Citings received out of time may still be permitted by the National Schools & Youth Disciplinary Secretary 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 In the event of a District, County, CB or Divisional match, it would normally be signed by the Chairman of the CSU/CBRDP, or a Divisional Officer, and sent to the CB Age Grade Discipline Secretary to which the cited player belongs, but if the Chairman of the CSU/CBRDP, or a Divisional Officer, is not willing to support this procedure the player, or his parents/guardian, may initiate the citing procedure.
- 1.14 In the event of an International match, it would normally be signed by the Manager of the International team and sent to the Disciplinary Officer of the Rugby Union to which the cited player belongs, but if the Manager of the International team is not willing to support this procedure the player, or his parents/guardian, may initiate the citing procedure. The citing should be sent to the cited player's Home Union or to the National Age Grade Disciplinary Secretary if he plays for an England team.
- 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.
- 1.18 If he or she denies the offence, then unless the head teacher, Club Disciplinary Panel or Union consider it vexatious, then it will be handled as a contested hearing. The onus shall be on the complainant to prove the case.
- 1.19 A player who is cited is presumed innocent until proven guilty and may continue to play until the hearing.

- 1.20 If the chairman of the 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 National Age Grade Disciplinary Secretary (or to the RFU Disciplinary Secretary if the incident occurred in an International match) whose decision shall be final.
- 1.21 For Representative Rugby at District, County, CB and Division level a player who is cited will be disciplined by his CBRDP in consultation with the CB Age Grade Disciplinary Secretary. A Disciplinary Panel will be set up by the CB Age Grade Discipline Secretary as in 10.2.4.4 or by the National Age Grade Discipline Secretary if complications exist.
- 1.22 If a player is Cited in an International match: At U16 the ERFUSU will set up a Panel; At U17 or U18 the RFU Discipline Manager will be responsible for convening a Panel, recruiting persons with the appropriate expertise.