

AGE-GRADE RUGBY DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

1. Applicability and Overriding Objective

- 1.1 The following disciplinary procedures (“the procedures”) shall apply to Age-Grade Rugby, save where specific arrangements are put in place in relation to discipline for a particular match/competition/tournament.
- 1.2 Where a 17 or 18 year-old is playing in an U19 match, or is 17 or over and playing in an U20 match or an adult match, where permitted by RFU Regulations, he/she shall be dealt with as an adult in accordance with RFU Regulation 19.
- 1.3 The overriding objective of the procedures is that they are ‘child-centric’ and based on both the RFU Core Values and the following key principles:
- Those who know an Age-Grade Player best should be the ones who discipline, mentor, guide and educate the Age-Grade Player as part of his/her development;
 - The disciplinary procedure should be simple, easy to understand and conducted more informally than the adult procedure;
 - There should be minimal delay;
 - The welfare of Age-Grade Players is paramount and any arrangements around hearings should take into account their educational commitments and family life. Thus, hearings will be conducted locally and by those with experience in dealing with young people;
 - The details of a case involving an Age-Grade Player should not normally be publicised and RFU Safeguarding policies and guidance should be adhered to at all times;
 - Playing suspensions should not normally be so severe as to discourage Age-Grade Players from continuing to play rugby and should be tiered in severity to their age, responsibility and culpability. They should normally be less than adults receive and should be given in matches not weeks because of the more complex playing programmes in Age-Grade Rugby;
 - There will be no financial penalties or costs imposed on an Age-Grade Player;
 - Any sanction imposed on an Age-Grade Player for a rugby disciplinary matter may include a non-rugby related sanction.
- 1.4 Each Constituent Body shall appoint a CBYDS, who shall be someone with experience in dealing with youth matters. Advice and assistance in Age-Grade Rugby disciplinary matters shall be available to a school, college or Club from the CBYDS.

1.5 The RFU shall appoint a NYDS, who shall be someone with experience in dealing with youth matters. Advice and assistance in Age-Grade Rugby disciplinary matters shall be available to a CBYDS, Club, college or school from the NYDS.

1.6 The RFU Head of Discipline has the power to deal with any case or to direct how a case is to be dealt with.

1.7 All disciplinary hearings shall be conducted in accordance with the framework set out in RFU Regulation 19, adapted as appropriate to meet the needs of the Age-Grade Player as per the key principles set out in paragraph 1.3.

2. Discipline in Schools and Colleges

2.1 Age-Grade Rugby disciplinary issues in schools and colleges shall be dealt with by head teachers and principals respectively (or by a person(s) with delegated authority) as per the school or college's internal disciplinary process and in accordance with these procedures and the sanctions table.

3. Discipline in Clubs

a) U12 and below

3.1 Any rugby disciplinary matter arising in an U12 match and below in a Club shall be dealt with in person by the Age-Grade Player's coach.

b) U13 to U18

3.2 Any rugby disciplinary matter arising in an U13 to U18 match in a Club shall be dealt with by the Club disciplinary officer or panel (of no more than three persons), with experience in dealing with young people in accordance with these procedures and the sanctions table.

3.3 Cases covered by RFU Regulation 19.1.14(f) (serious injury), 19.1.14(g) (cases under police investigation), 19.1.14(h) (racial abuse cases) shall be referred to the NYDS who shall determine whether the Club, the CB or the RFU (if agreed by the RFU Head of Discipline) should deal with the matter.

4. Representative, County and Divisional Teams

4.1 Disciplinary matters involving an Age-Grade Player of a Representative Team shall be dealt with by an RFU Judicial Officer or by an RFU Disciplinary Panel, with experience in dealing with young people.

4.2 Where an Age-Grade Player of a visiting Representative Team is ordered-off the playing enclosure, the Referee shall provide a report to the RFU Head of Discipline, who shall send it to the Age-Grade Player's home Union to be dealt with.

4.3 Those Age-Grade Players representing their County or playing in Divisional matches shall have any disciplinary matter dealt with by their CB, unless the CBYDS determines that the Age-Grade Player's Club would be best placed to deal with the matter, having consulted with the NYDS or the RFU Head of Discipline.

5. Cross-Border Fixtures and Tours – Schools, Colleges and Clubs

- 5.1 Where a visiting Age-Grade Player is ordered-off the playing enclosure, the Referee shall provide a report to the CBYDS (where the match was played), who shall send it to the visiting Age-Grade Player's school, college or Club to be dealt with.
- 5.2 If an Age-Grade Player is ordered-off the playing enclosure whilst playing in a cross-border fixture or tour-match, then the matter shall be dealt with by the Age-Grade Player's head teacher, principal or Club disciplinary officer/panel or by a person(s) with delegated authority, in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of these procedures.

6 Tournaments, Festivals, and Competitions

- 6.1 If an Age-Grade Player is ordered-off in a tournament, festival or competition the matter shall be dealt with as soon as possible (and in any event before the Age-Grade Player's next match) by his/her coach. The Age-Grade Player will be provisionally suspended until his/her case has been dealt with in accordance with paragraph 10.1.

7. Reporting

- 7.1 In all cases where the Referee has ordered-off an Age-Grade Player the Referee shall as soon as practicable, and in any event within 24 hours of the end of the match, provide a copy of his/her report to the Age-Grade Player's coach, Club, head teacher or principal as appropriate.
- 7.2 Any rugby disciplinary incident that arises in:
- (i) A school or college shall be reported to the NYDS within 48 hours by the head teacher, principal or person(s) with delegated authority.
 - (ii) A Club shall be reported to the CBYDS within 48 hours by the Club disciplinary officer or person(s) with delegated authority.
- 7.3 Thereafter, any finding and/or sanction imposed in relation to the disciplinary incident shall be reported within 48 hours in accordance with paragraph 7.2(i) and (ii).
- 7.4 The NYDS shall have the power to review any sanction imposed by a school or college and, if he/she is of the view that the sanction imposed was unduly lenient, direct that the school or college review the matter and report back to the NYDS.
- 7.5 The CBYDS and the RFU Head of Discipline shall have the power to review any sanction imposed by a Club or coach and, if he/she is of the view that the sanction imposed was unduly lenient, may refer the matter to the NYDS for consideration. The NYDS may convene a suitably qualified disciplinary panel to deal with the matter and it may vary the sanction imposed if considered appropriate to do so.

8. RFU Rule 5.12 cases

- 8.1 A CBYDS shall have the power to investigate and institute disciplinary proceedings in relation to an alleged breach of RFU Rule 5.12 and may require an Age-Grade Player to whom the allegations relate to attend before a CB disciplinary panel, with experience of dealing with young people.
- 8.2 Any complaint regarding an adult involved in Age-Grade Rugby in relation to an alleged breach of RFU Rule 5.12 shall be referred to the Constituent Body Disciplinary Secretary in accordance with RFU Regulation 19 to be dealt with.

9. Citing

- 9.1 Save for where there are any specific citing procedures applicable to a particular match/tournament/competition as approved by the RFU the following procedures in relation to the commencement of a citing complaint shall apply.
- 9.2 The power to bring a citing complaint applies to U13 to U18 matches only.
- 9.3 Any citing complaint arising out of a Club match shall only be made by the chairman or secretary of the citing Club. It shall be lodged with the cited Age-Grade Player's CB not later than the 14th day following the match. The CBYDS shall, subject to paragraph 3.3, refer the matter to a CB disciplinary panel with experience of dealing with young people; unless the citing complaint is admitted in which case he/she may refer the matter to the Age-Grade Player's Club to deal with if considered appropriate to do so.
- 9.4 A citing complaint arising out of a school or college match shall only be made by the citing school's head teacher or college's principal and shall be lodged not later than the 14th day following the match with the cited Age-Grade Player's school or college. The complaint shall be dealt with by the cited Age-Grade Player's head teacher or principal (or a person(s) with delegated authority) as appropriate.
- 9.5 A citing may be initiated where there is an allegation that an Age-Grade Player committed an act of Foul Play but has not been awarded a red card for that act. The citing must be in writing, stating:
- a) The date, venue and teams participating in the match;
 - b) Details of the alleged act of Foul Play, including as accurately as possible, the point of time in the match, score at the time and position on the field when and where the incident is alleged to have occurred;
 - c) The identity of (or means of identifying) the Age-Grade Player(s) alleged to be guilty of Foul Play; and
 - d) Sufficient evidence to establish a case to answer.
- 9.6 A citing may be made whether or not the alleged act of Foul Play was seen by the Referee. Where the Referee did not detect the act of Foul Play cited, then it must be proved by the citing party that had the Referee seen the act, a red card would have been awarded. However, where a Referee,

having detected the alleged act, decided that it was either not Foul Play, or that it was, but he/she took action other than sending off, the citing party must prove on the balance of probabilities that the Referee was wrong in not sending the Age-Grade Player off.

- 9.7 The RFU Head of Discipline has the power to take over any citing complaint where he/she believes that it is necessary in the interests of the Game and/or the Union to do so.

10. Provisional Suspension

- 10.1 An Age-Grade Player ordered-off the field of play shall not take part or be selected for any further match until his/her disciplinary case has been dealt with in accordance with these procedures.

- 10.2 A suspended Age-Grade Player who elects to appeal a finding and/or sanction that has been imposed shall not take part or be selected for any further match until his/her appeal has been dealt with and it has been directed that he/she may play again, unless his/her suspension has already expired.

11. Sanctions

- 11.1 Playing suspensions imposed on an Age-Grade Player are to be in accordance with the framework set out in RFU Regulation 19 and the Age-Grade Rugby sanctions table and shall apply to all of the Age-Grade Player's forthcoming matches, irrespective of whether they are scheduled to play for their school, college, Club or any other team.

12. Appeals

- 12.1 Appeals in a school or college setting in relation to a rugby disciplinary incident shall be in accordance with the school's or college's internal disciplinary procedures. There is no right of appeal from a decision of the school or college to a CB or the RFU.

- 12.2 Appeals from a decision of a Club disciplinary officer or panel shall be dealt with by the CB disciplinary panel. Any appeal shall be lodged with the CBYDS by the Age-Grade Player concerned not later than the 14th day following written notification of the decision. The decision of the CB is final and binding and there is no further right of appeal.

- 12.3 Appeals from a first-instance decision of a CB shall be dealt with by the RFU in accordance with RFU Regulation 19. Any appeal shall be lodged by the Age-Grade Player concerned with the RFU Head of Discipline not later than the 14th day following written notification of the decision. The decision of the RFU Judicial Officer or panel is final and binding and there is no further right of appeal.

- 12.4 Appeals from a first-instance decision of the RFU shall be dealt with by an RFU Judicial Officer of Appeal Panel in accordance with RFU Regulation 19. Any appeal shall be lodged by the Age-Grade Player concerned with the RFU Head of Discipline not later than the 14th day following written notification of the decision. The decision of the RFU Judicial Officer or Appeal Panel is final and binding and there is no further right of appeal.K

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 10 matches + | 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 12 matches TE 24 matches + | LE 6 matches MR 8 matches TE 16 matches + | LE 4 matches MR 8 matches TE 12 matches + |

Entry point based on assessment of seriousness
LE = low entry; MR = mid range; TE = Top entry

Where ‘+’ is denoted, it is assumed that Schools, Colleges, Clubs and CB/RFU Disciplinary Panels would apply higher sanctions for very serious breaches of conduct.

(Please note that the above list is not exhaustive and Schools, Colleges, Clubs and CB/RFU Disciplinary Panels should apply an appropriate sanction for offences not listed).

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.

Dangerous Tackle: A tip or spear tackle is normally to be regarded as a serious aggravating factor.