

Aireborough R.U.F.C.

Disciplinary Policy

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Introduction

This document covers the club's policy towards internal discipline. It covers both playing offences and non-playing offences, the disciplinary process and appeals process as well as the make up of the Club Disciplinary Panel.

1. Playing Offences

1.1 Temporary Suspension of Players

If any of the following circumstances occur, the player involved will immediately be temporarily suspended from playing for the club:

- A player has been dismissed from the field of play by the Referee (Red Card)
- A player has been cited for foul play or has been reported by the Referee for misconduct in the playing enclosure
- A player is reported by a match official for abuse during the game or after it while he is still on or at Club premises
- A player is alleged to have committed a doping offence
- A member is reported for **serious and/or persistent abuse** of the Players Codes of Conduct (specifically those codes highlighted in bold in Appendix B)

The temporary suspension will extend to the date on which the player attends the RFU Disciplinary Hearing relevant to that incident.

The temporary suspension will still be imposed if the player is adamant that the dismissal, citing or allegation was unwarranted / unjustified. This action by the club is expected by the RFU Disciplinary Committee and will be taken as a positive mitigating circumstance at the player's disciplinary hearing, and is likely to shorten the total period the player is banned from playing.

If at that hearing a period of suspension is imposed by the RFU Disciplinary Panel, the periods of suspension will run concurrently.

If no suspension is imposed by the RFU Disciplinary Panel, the period of temporary suspension imposed by the club will end immediately.

All players and captains are reminded that if a player is dismissed from the field of play by the referee, the player should return immediately to the changing room, i.e. they should not stay on the touchline for the remainder of the game and should not participate in the "players tunnel" after the game has finished.

1.2 RFU Disciplinary Hearings

- Players are expected to attend RFU Disciplinary hearings where requested by the RFU Disciplinary Panel
- In the case of non-attendance, the temporary suspension imposed by the club will be extended until the RFU Disciplinary hearing is rearranged
- Players are expected to cover the cost of RFU Disciplinary hearings personally (currently £25). If no disciplinary measures are imposed at the hearing (i.e. the player is found "not guilty") the club will refund this cost to the player.

2. Non-playing Offences

2.1 Disciplinary Action

Any member of the club may face disciplinary action if an incident that is reported to the Executive Committee (see Appendix A) is deemed serious enough to be referred to the CDP (Club Disciplinary Panel).

2.2 Incidents Warranting Disciplinary Procedures

The following are examples of incidents that may invoke disciplinary procedures against a club member, but it is not an exhaustive list:

- A member is reported by a match official for abuse during the game or after it while he/she is still on or at Club premises
- A member is reported for physical or serious verbal abuse on another club member or visitor to the club
- A member is reported for racial abuse of another club member or visitor to the club
- A member is reported for sexual harassment of another club member or visitor to the club
- A member is reported to have caused intentional damage to the clubhouse or equipment owned by the club
- There has been an allegation of child abuse or other breach of the RFU Child Protection policy against a player, member or visitor of the club
- Actions of a member are reported or demonstrated that may harm the club's reputation or cause internal conflict between club members that may be detrimental to the general spirit and morale within the club as a whole

2.3 Internal Discipline

- When such an incident is reported to the Executive Committee, three members of the Executive Committee, not involved in the incident reported, will consider the accusation, make preliminary enquiries (e.g. speak to known witnesses) and determine if the incident should be heard by the CDP. Those three members will not take part in any subsequent disciplinary or appeal hearing.
- If those three members, whilst undertaking their preliminary enquiries, deem that it is in the best interests of the club, a temporary suspension of playing rights or club membership may be imposed. Such suspension will extend to the date of the CDP hearing.
- Any disciplinary measures imposed on a player or club member by the Club Disciplinary Panel will be fully supported by the Executive Committee

Process

This section articulates the procedures to be adopted for CDP hearings and the appeals process.

3. Club Disciplinary Panel (CDP)

3.1 Constitution of CDP

- The CDP will consist of the Club President and a minimum of two other persons of sufficient standing, or, nominees of the Club President. These may be drawn from current or former committee members, captains or longstanding club members, however, **those participating will be considered to be independent of and uninvolved with the matter reported and be able to offer an unbiased contribution to the decision making process.** The three members of the Executive Committee who determined that the CDP should deal with this incident will not be eligible to sit on the CDP.

3.2 Procedures of CDP

- The CDP will convene a hearing as soon as is practically possible following referral of a disciplinary incident by the Executive Committee
- The player/club member whose conduct has been reported will attend the disciplinary hearing together with any character or incident witnesses they ask and make arrangements with to attend
- Prior to the hearing the CDP will seek to obtain any other witness statements it may deem relevant or ask witnesses to attend the hearing. **The primary objective being to provide a full and balanced view of the incident and obtain as much factual evidence relating to the incident as possible.**

- The Club President will chair the CDP and will conduct the hearing as follows:
 - Read out the details of the incident as reported by the Executive Committee
 - Read out any witness statements
 - Ask the player/club member involved in the incident to “answer the allegations”
 - Ask any attending witnesses to read out their statements
 - Ask the player/club member and witnesses to leave the hearing
 - Consider the evidence and decide if any disciplinary action will be imposed on the player/club member
 - Advise the player/club member of the outcome and any disciplinary measures imposed
 - The Club Secretary or nominee will minute the hearing
- There is no set structure of internal disciplinary measures against a player/club member. The measures will range from no action, through caution/reprimand, playing suspension, and in extreme cases, withdrawal of club membership, based on the seriousness of the incident and the impact on the club.

4. Appeals Process

4.1 Right of Appeal

Any player/member subject to disciplinary action by the club has the right of appeal against the decision. The appeal must be communicated to a member of the Executive Committee within 7 days of the date on which the disciplinary action was communicated to the player or member. In such circumstances an Appeals Panel will be convened by the Club President, albeit the Club President will not sit on the panel itself.

4.2 Constitution of Appeals Panel

The Appeals Panel will be convened by the Club President and will consist of a minimum of three individuals drawn from:

- a) Members of other constituent clubs of ANSA and/or
- b) Committee members of other local rugby clubs affiliated to the RFU and/or
- c) Yorkshire RFU appointed officials

4.3 Appeals Panel Procedures

- The player/member appealing may nominate an individual for support and to witness the appeal
- The minutes of the CDP and any accompanying witness statements will be read to the Appeals Panel by the Club President
- The player/member subject to disciplinary action may address the panel to explain the reason for the appeal, why the disciplinary action is deemed unjust and offer any other mitigating circumstances they may wish to be taken into account
- No witnesses present at the CDP hearing will attend the Appeals Panel hearing as their statements will be read to the panel

4.4 Appeals Decisions

- Following the appeals hearing the Appeals Panel will recommend one of the following to the CDP
 - That the disciplinary action determined by the CDP should stand
 - That the disciplinary action determined by the CDP should be less severe - a recommendation for alternative disciplinary action will be made by the Appeals Panel
 - That the disciplinary action determined by the CDP should be withdrawn with immediate effect
- The CDP will consider the Appeals Panel recommendation and determine the disciplinary action to be imposed. This decision will be communicated to the player or member at the earliest opportunity and will be the final decision.

Appendix A - Executive Committee Members

- President
- Club Chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Club Coach
- Rugby Manager
- 1st XV Captain
- 2nd XV Captain
- 3rd XV Captain
- Social Secretary
- Junior Section Representative
- ANSA Representative
- Volunteer Co-ordinator

Appendix B - Players Code of Conduct

The following code of conduct, discussed and agreed by the players, forms the basis for the clubs main aims and ambitions for the season 2005/2006, namely:

At all times players representing the club shall strictly adhere to the following accepted code:

- The current club tie and shirt is to be worn with smart trousers to all official games and at other times as requested. Jeans must not be worn to any league or cup games.
- Club training kit is to be worn during all pre-match preparations.
- **Players will abide by and conduct themselves, during every game, within the laws of rugby.**
- **Strict discipline on and off the pitch during matches and the immediate time prior and after the game shall be maintained, transgressions may result in immediate substitution and subsequent match ban(s).**
- **Comments made to the coaching staff, match officials and fellow team-mates must be positive and never derogatory.**
- All players will ensure they have correct club playing kit and that it is clean at all times. Boots are to be clean at all times.
- Both Monday and Wednesday training sessions and additional sessions as scheduled, will be attended as frequently as possible. When training sessions can not be attended, players will contact the club captain or coaching staff prior to the sessions with their apologies.
- **All players are to set a positive example to others through their attitude and commitment.**
- Try scorers are to be congratulated by everyone on the pitch at that time.
- Punctuality will be of paramount importance to players, ensuring a 7pm start for training with a full 75 minute allocation for pre-match preparation both home and away.
- No player is to consume alcohol to excess on the night prior to the game.
- **Abusive, negative and crude language must never be used.**
- Every team mate is to be encouraged and treated with mutual respect with their point of view listened to and appreciated.
- Players and coaching staff are to communicate any issues arising from matters on and off the pitch that have a direct bearing on the club, the team and fellow players.
- All players must have paid their club subscriptions as soon as possible.
- **Smoking is completely banned from the changing rooms at all times.**
- Players must not smoke for a full half an hour before any game.
- All match day substitutes are to ensure there is adequate touch line cover if no other official is available.
- Substitutes are to encourage team mates, ensure balls are kept dry and that a constant supply of water is taken to the players at breaks.
- Players should not expect to be informed by coach or captain if they are selected for the next game, they are expected to find out either by the discussion board or at training on a Wednesday evening unless it is an emergency.