

ECB REGIONAL PREMIER LEAGUE DISCIPLINARY REGULATIONS

Aims and Jurisdiction

The England & Wales Cricket Board (ECB) is committed to maintaining the highest standards of behaviour and conduct. The ECB Regional Premier Leagues, namely The Birmingham & District Premier League, The East Anglian Premier League, The Home Counties Premier League, The North Eastern Premier League and The West of England Premier League (henceforth identified in this document as the Leagues) operating within the jurisdiction of the ECB, take this commitment very seriously.

To this end, these discipline regulations, incorporating major parts of the ECB Model Code of Conduct, the new MCC Laws and The Spirit of Cricket, have been adopted by all the Leagues.

The regulations shall be complied with by all those who participate under the jurisdiction of any of the Leagues' Management Committees. The regulations shall apply to any player, official, member or supporter at any club, at any level, under the auspices of any of the listed Leagues.

The regulations are intended to provide assistance and uniformity to all clubs in dealing with any alleged breach of the Code of Conduct, the new MCC Laws and The Spirit of Cricket and are aligned to ECB Non-First Class cricket procedures.

Any club which fails to take all reasonable steps to ensure the proper conduct of its players, officials, members and supporters in all matters for which the club or its committee is responsible, or acts in any way which is prejudicial or detrimental to the interests or reputation of the League, breaches this Code of Conduct.

There is nothing in this Code preventing or discouraging clubs from applying additional or stronger sanctions against offenders than those appearing within the Code, whether or not they are the subject of a discipline report. To this end, it is important that clubs have their own Code of Conduct and disciplinary procedures in place.

For the purposes of these regulations, the expression 'player' shall throughout this document be deemed to mean and include not only any player, whether professional or otherwise, but also any official, member and supporter of any club in any incident of alleged misconduct occurring on any part of a cricket ground or building and not merely the field of play.

1. Code of Conduct and Spirit of Cricket

1.1 Code of Conduct

- 1.1.1 The Leagues are committed to maintaining the highest standards of behaviour and conduct at cricket matches both on and off the field. All clubs and players, by virtue of their registration with their respective League, explicitly agree to abide by this Code of Conduct, which incorporates the Spirit of Cricket, and are bound by the provisions in these Regulations.
- 1.1.2 The major responsibility for ensuring fair play rests with the captains, but extends to all players, umpires and coaches.
- 1.1.3 Players and club officials must at all times accept the umpire's decision. Players and club officials must show self-discipline, even when things go against them. This means not showing dissent at the umpire's decision or reacting in a provocative or disapproving manner towards another player or a spectator.
- 1.1.4 Players and club officials shall not intimidate assault or attempt to intimidate or assault an umpire, another player, a club official or a spectator.
- 1.1.5 Players and club officials shall not use crude and/or abusive language (known as "sledging"), nor make offensive gestures or hand signals, nor deliberately distract an opponent.
- 1.1.6 Players and club officials shall not use language or gestures that offend, insult, humiliate, intimidate, threaten, disparage or vilify another person on the basis of that person's race, religion, sexual orientation, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin.
- 1.1.7 Players and club officials shall not use or in any way be concerned in the use or distribution of illegal drugs.
- 1.1.8 Players and club officials shall not make any public or media comment which is detrimental to the League, clubs, umpires or the game in general. In this instance, media shall include press, radio, television, external websites, club websites, social networking sites and club match programmes.
- 1.1.9 Players and club officials shall not disclose or comment upon any alleged breach of this Code.

1.1.10 Players and club officials shall not act in any manner which is against the Spirit of Cricket or is otherwise improper, prejudicial or detrimental to the interests or reputation of the League or the game of cricket.

1.1.11 Clubs must take adequate steps to ensure the good behaviour of their players, officials, members and supporters.

1.2 Spirit of Cricket

Cricket owes much of its appeal and enjoyment to the fact that it should be played not only according to the Laws, but also within the Spirit of Cricket.

The major responsibility for ensuring fair play rests with the captains, but extends to all players, umpires and, especially in junior cricket, teachers, coaches and parents.

Cricket is an exciting game that encourages leadership, friendship and teamwork, which brings together people from different nationalities, cultures and religions, especially when played within the Spirit of Cricket

1.2.1 There are Laws which place the responsibility for the team's conduct firmly on the captain.

Responsibility of Captains

The captains are responsible at all times for ensuring that play is conducted within the Spirit of the Game as well as within the Laws.

Players' Conduct

In the event of any player failing to comply with the laws relating to Player Conduct or Unfair Play the umpires shall summon and inform the offending player's captain that an offence has occurred and will request that they take appropriate action.

Players

Captains and umpires together set the tone for the conduct of a cricket match. Every player is expected to make an important contribution to this.

1.2.2 Unfair Play

According to the Laws, the umpires shall be the sole judges of fair and unfair play. If either umpire considers an action, not covered by the Laws, to be unfair he/she shall intervene without appeal and, if the ball is in play, call and signal dead ball and implement the procedure as required.

1.2.3 The umpires are authorised to intervene in cases of:

- Damaging the ball
- Distracting the batsman
- Unfair bowling
- Time wasting
- Damaging the pitch
- Non striker leaving his ground early
- Penalty runs
- Any other conduct that they consider to be unfair including a persistent course of conduct, an individual occurrence within which may not be suitable for sanction but when aggregated, constitutes unfair conduct.

1.2.4 Respect is central to the Spirit of Cricket.

- Respect the captain, team-mates, opponents and the authority of the umpires.
- Play hard and play fair.
- Accept the umpire's decision.
- Create a positive atmosphere by your own conduct, and encourage others to do likewise.
- Show self-discipline, even when things go against you.
- Congratulate the opposition on their successes, and enjoy those of your own team.
- Thank the officials and your opposition at the end of the match, whatever the result.
- Cricket is an exciting game that encourages leadership, friendship and teamwork, which brings together people from different nationalities, cultures and religions, especially when played within the Spirit of Cricket.

1.2.5 Violence

There is no place for any act of violence on the field of play and if reported and found guilty this will be dealt with as a Level 4 offence.

- 1.3 Failure to comply with the provisions of the Code of Conduct may lead to disciplinary action, irrespective of a proven breach being related to a match not under the jurisdiction of the League.

2. Breaches

- 2.1 A breach of the disciplinary regulations occurs when:-
 - a. Any player in the course of, or in connection with a match, offends against the Code of Conduct or acts at any time to prejudice the good name or interests of the League.
 - b. Any club fails to properly control or discipline its players, officials, members or supporters or acts in a manner prejudicial to the good name or interests of the League.
- 2.2 Any player or club committing such a breach shall be liable to penalties in the manner prescribed in the Disciplinary Regulations.
- 2.3 A breach of the Code of Conduct will normally be categorised as Level 1, 2, 3 or 4, as set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.4 Reporting of Breaches
 - 2.4.1 For a first offence of a Level 1 breach of the Code of Conduct in a match, the umpire (s) should issue a first and final warning which shall apply to all members of the team for the remainder of the match.
 - 2.4.2 If a Level 1 breach follows another breach, at any level, by that team, the umpires shall award five penalty runs to the opposing team and will report the occurrence as soon as possible after the match to the Executive of the offending player's team and to the League responsible for the match, who shall take such further action as is considered appropriate against the captain, any other individuals concerned and, if appropriate, the team.
 - 2.4.3 Any player who receives a first and final warning for a Level 1 breach (including the first offence) must be named on the on-line Umpires Match Report.
 - 2.4.4 Should the umpire(s) consider that the first offence of a Level 1 breach is sufficiently serious, they have the authority to decide to submit a formal report without having previously issued any warning. The player and his captain should be advised accordingly.
 - 2.4.5 Any player named on an Umpires Report for receiving a first and final warning for a second time in the same season will receive a two week suspension. A player named on an Umpires Report for receiving a first and final warning for a third time in the same season will receive a three week suspension.

- 2.4.6 In all instances of any Level 2, 3 or 4 breach, the umpire(s) must complete a formal report (for any breach attracting a five run penalty or more).
- 2.4.7 The report should be submitted using the standard disciplinary report form.

3. Procedure

- 3.1 Notification that a report is to be submitted following any alleged breach of the Code of Conduct must first be advised, by the umpire(s), to the player and his captain or an executive of the player's club, on the day of the alleged offence, prior to leaving the ground.
- 3.2 Any such alleged breach of the Code of Conduct subject to a report (to be known as 'a complaint') will then be notified by telephone by the complainant to the General Manager of the League within 24 hours of the end of the match. The written report should be sent, preferably by email, to the General Manager of the League, using the standard disciplinary report form and be received within 48 hours of the end of the match.
- 3.3 In 2nd XI matches where players are acting as umpires throughout the duration of the game, the Code of Conduct protocols should be maintained but on-field sanctions should not be applied.
- 3.4 The General Manager of the League shall, as soon as reasonably practicable, inform the Secretary of the club against whom the complaint has been made.
- 3.5 It is intended that any breach of the Code of Conduct shall in the first instance be dealt with by the participant's club who shall notify the General Manager of the League within 48 hours of any action taken. In the case of Level 1 and Level 2 breaches, this shall as an indicator, be a minimum, of a two week (Level 1) or three week (Level 2) suspension to be served with immediate effect.
- 3.6 All suspensions shall commence at 9.00 a.m. on the Friday after the sanction has been endorsed and confirmed by the General Manager.
- 3.7 Failure by a club to comply with this procedure may itself be treated as a breach of the Code of Conduct under paragraph 1.1.10.

3.8 Within 48 hours of receipt of the club's response to the written complaint, the General Manager of the League shall consider the complaint and resolve either:

- a. To take no action except to record the complaint and notify the club; or
- b. To endorse any action taken by the club (which thereafter will be deemed to have been imposed by the League) and confirm that no further action is required; or
- c. To refer the matter for a full Disciplinary Hearing.

Level 3 or 4 complaints will automatically be subject to a full Disciplinary Hearing.

3.9 Any time sanctions imposed by the club under paragraph 3.6 b. above, shall be advised in writing to the relevant club's County Board by the League. Players should understand that time bans will apply to all cricket played under the auspices of ECB.

3.10 In the case of an incident involving a player under the age of 18 years old, the County Board Welfare Officer will immediately be informed. In such circumstances, the incident may be regarded as:

- a. A welfare and child protection case or
- b. An outright disciplinary case. If the incident is being investigated by another organisation (e.g. the Police, ECB Safeguarding Department) the League will await the outcome of that investigation.

3.11 In the case of a registered player being the subject of a complaint, the National Leagues & Competitions Manager is to be advised immediately by telephone or email by the General Manager of the League.

4. Disciplinary Hearings

4.1 In any case which is referred for a Disciplinary Hearing, the General Manager of the League shall convene the hearing within 21 days of the decision to refer. Any delay may only be granted at the discretion of the Chairman of the Disciplinary Hearing.

4.2 Where a charge against a player is referred to a Disciplinary Hearing, his captain and club may be charged separately under their responsibilities as set out in the Code of Conduct above.

4.3 At least seven days' notice in writing of the hearing shall be given to the player via his club Secretary. In the case of a club, its Secretary shall be so notified. The notice shall specify the alleged breach(es) of the Code of Conduct above.

- 4.4 The accused player or club shall be entitled:
- To submit written statements ahead of the hearing
 - To attend the hearing
 - To state his case (in the case of a club, by its Secretary or other official)
 - To be supported by a colleague and to call witnesses.
- 4.5 If the player or club is to have representation present at the hearing then the details of that representation must be given to the Discipline Chairman not less than seven days before the date of the hearing. .
- 4.6 The Hearing shall be conducted by a Disciplinary Panel appointed by the General Manager of the League and shall consist of not less than three persons and not more than five persons drawn from a list approved by the League's Management Committee. None of the Panel should be connected with the player, the club or their opponents at the time of the alleged breach, or a club which might directly benefit from any disciplinary action.
- 4.7 A club or player involved in disciplinary proceedings will be solely responsible for meeting such costs or expenses as it or they may incur, including the cost of any legal or other representation.
- 4.8 The standard of proof shall be on the 'balance of probabilities' rather than the criminal law standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt'.

5. Penalties

- 5.1 As a guideline, the following indicative penalties should be expected to be imposed for any complaint referred and, if appropriate, proved at a disciplinary hearing. The higher end of the tariff band is most likely to be reserved for serial offences/offenders:-
- Level 1 Final warning to a suspension from playing for a minimum of two weeks
- Level 2 A suspension from playing for a minimum of three weeks
- Level 3 A suspension from playing for a minimum of four weeks
- Level 4 A suspension from playing for a minimum of 10 weeks
- These sanctions apply to all cricket played under the auspices of ECB.
- 5.2 All suspensions shall commence at 9.00 am on the Friday after the sanction has been confirmed by the General Manager.

- 5.3 Where applicable, penalties will be carried over to apply in the following season.
- 5.4 Where the complaint is not referred to a Disciplinary Hearing, repeated infringements, listed on umpires reports, by an individual player or by a Club may still result in additional penalties as laid out in 5.5 below.
- 5.5 If at a hearing a breach of the Code of Conduct is proven, the Disciplinary Panel shall have the power to impose one or more of the following penalties, together with such order as to costs as it deems appropriate:

In the case of a player:-

- To require the player to submit appropriate letter(s) of apology within a specified time
- To record a reprimand and to give a warning as to future conduct
- To impose a fine, not to exceed £500
- To suspend the player for a stated period of time
- To deduct League points from the player's team
- To expel the player from the League

In the case of a club:-

- To require the club to submit appropriate letter(s) of apology within a specified time
- To record a reprimand and to give a warning as to future conduct
- To impose a fine
- To deduct League points from the club's team to which the complaint relates (if any)
- To expel the club from any competition of the league
- To relegate to any lower division of the League or to a County league

- 5.6 Panels will take the following factors into account when determining the penalties to be imposed:
- a. If the accused player/club has pleaded guilty
 - b. The player's previous disciplinary record
 - c. If the player is also the captain
 - d. The conduct of the player subsequent to him being warned and told that he will be reported
 - e. If an appeal is considered to be spurious

- 5.7 In addition, where an individual behaves inappropriately or fails to respect the formality at any level during a Disciplinary hearing, the Disciplinary Panel assumes the right to impose further corrective actions or penalties as it sees fit.
- 5.7.1 Where a representative and/or witness(es) behaves inappropriately or fails to respect the formality at any level during a Disciplinary hearing this can be dealt with under the Code by having a separate hearing.
- 5.8 The Disciplinary Panel shall have the power to suspend the operation of any part, or all, of the penalty it imposes for such period and subject to such terms and conditions it deems appropriate.
- 5.9 Decisions of the Disciplinary Panel (a finding that a complaint is proved or not proved or a decision on penalty) shall be by majority vote; where necessary the Disciplinary Panel Chairman shall have a casting vote.
- 5.10 The League shall report suspensions in writing to the relevant club's County Board for national circulation. Players should understand that suspensions will apply to all cricket played under the auspices of ECB. The ECB Regional Premier Leagues will also recognise suspensions from other Leagues.

6. Appeals

- 6.1 Appeals shall only be allowed against a suspension instigated for a Level 1 or 2 offence on the grounds of mistaken identity or failure of the umpires to follow the procedures in Paragraph 2 above.
- 6.2 Where a breach of the Code of Conduct has been proved at a Disciplinary Hearing, a player or club shall have the right of appeal. Where a player and his club are appealing in relation to the same incident, they must do so separately.
- 6.3 A notice of appeal setting out the grounds must be given in writing to the General Manager of the League within seven days of the decision of the Disciplinary Panel, together with a deposit of £250 if the appeal is by a player or £500 if the appeal is by a club.
- 6.4 If a notice of appeal is given, the penalty shall not take effect pending the hearing of the Appeal, which shall take place as soon as is practicable and in any event within 28 days of receipt of notice of the appeal.

- 6.5 The Appeal shall be by way of a new hearing before a different Panel. The Appeal Panel shall be appointed by the General Manager of the League and shall consist of not less than three persons and not more than five persons drawn from a list approved by the League's Management Committee. None of the Panel should be connected with the individual or the club or their opponents, or a club which might directly benefit from any disciplinary action or have been a member of the original Disciplinary Panel.
- 6.6 The player or club shall have the same entitlements as set out in Paragraph 6.4 above.
- 6.7 If the player or club is to have representation present at the hearing then the details of that representation must be given to the General Manager of the League not less than seven days before the date of the hearing.
- 6.8 Non-attendance at a hearing of the Appeals Panel by the club or person that submitted the appeal without good and valid reason for such non-attendance will automatically result in forfeiture of both the right of appeal and the deposit paid by the club and/or player.
- 6.9 The Appeals Panel may confirm, vary or reverse the decision of the Disciplinary Panel and it shall have the power to increase the penalty and award costs of the Appeal hearing and forfeit the whole or part of the deposit. Decisions of the Appeal Panel shall be by majority vote; where necessary, the Chairman shall have a casting vote.
- 6.10 If the decision of the Disciplinary Panel is confirmed or increased, the whole of the deposit lodged by the player and/or the club shall be forfeited and the responsibility for covering the whole costs of the appeal hearing will lie with the appellant(s).
- 6.11 If the decision of the Disciplinary Panel is reversed or reduced, the deposit lodged by the club shall be returned in full or in part but the responsibility for covering their own costs of the appeal hearing will lie with the appellant(s).
- 6.12 The decision of the Appeals Panel or, if no appeal, of the Disciplinary Panel, shall be final and binding.

7. Non Payment of Fines

- 7.1 Any fine levied under these procedures or imposed for the breach of any match rule must be paid to the Treasurer of the League within 28 days of the Club being notified of such fine.

- 7.2 Any fines still outstanding at the end of that period shall be increased by 100% of the original fine, when the Secretary or Chairman of the offending Club shall be notified to the effect that the fine is outstanding. They will be given a reminder that if after a period of fourteen days from that reminder, the fine is still outstanding, a deduction of five points shall be made from the points gained by the side that received the fine.

SOCIAL MEDIA

For the avoidance of doubt, any postings online and/or on social media (Twitter, Facebook or similar/equivalent platforms) also fall to be determined in accordance with the factors above. In relation to such cases, it should be noted:

1. Participants are to be considered responsible for any posting(s) on their social media account(s) which are caught by the factors detailed above (the fact that a posting may have been made by someone else in the Participant's name will not necessarily prevent disciplinary action being taken);
2. Disciplinary action may result from repeating comments made on social media by others (e.g. "retweeting") which are caught by the factors detailed above; and
3. The deleting of any inappropriate content, whilst advisable, does not itself prevent disciplinary action being taken.