



## NATIONAL DISCIPLINARY REGULATIONS

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## 1. OBJECTIVES AND APPLICATION OF REGULATIONS

- 1.1 These National Disciplinary Regulations form part of the FFA Statutes and apply to any infringement of the Laws of the Game by any Player or any Team Official during a Match played in Australia or otherwise played under the direction or control of FFA.
- 1.2 These National Disciplinary Regulations are mandatory and are designed to ensure that appropriate standards of behaviour are upheld on the field of play in a consistent manner across Australia. The Regulations may be supplemented, but not varied, by Competition Rules.
- 1.3 These Regulations:
  - (a) apply to FFA, Member Federations, District Associations, Clubs, Players, Officials and Agents (**Members**);
  - (b) apply to all forms of organised football under FFA's jurisdiction, including eleven-a-side, modified football, futsal, indoor and beach football;
  - (c) comply with FIFA Statutes;
  - (d) continue to apply to a Member even after that Member's association, registration, employment or engagement has ended, if that Member breached these Regulations while a current Member;
  - (e) form part of the FFA Statutes to which all Members are bound; and
  - (f) do not limit or restrict the application of FIFA Statutes or FFA Statutes and, in particular, the Code of Conduct for conduct or behaviour of a Player or Team Official that occurs outside of the authority of the Referee.
- 1.4 All Matches must be conducted and officiated in accordance with the Laws of the Game. Any modifications, including for age appropriate or gender or disability specific requirements, must be approved by the Competition Administrator in accordance with any guidelines issued by FFA from time to time.

## 2. INFRINGEMENT OF THE LAWS OF THE GAME

- 2.1 A caution (or yellow card) is issued for a minor infringement of the Laws of the Game and is a warning from the Referee to a Player during a Match to sanction unsporting behaviour of a less serious nature.
- 2.2 An expulsion is for a serious infringement of the Laws of the Game and is the order given by the Referee to someone to leave the vicinity of the field of play and the technical area, including the substitutes' bench, during a Match. Expulsion takes the form of a red card for Players.
- 2.3 A red card is regarded as direct if it sanctions serious unsporting behaviour and indirect if it is the result of the accumulation of two (2) yellow cards in the same Match.
- 2.4 Any yellow card or red card issued during a Match is identified by the Referee on the Referee's Report for that Match, including the name and number of the Player, the Offence and the time of commission of the Offence.
- 2.5 For the purpose of these Disciplinary Regulations, **Offence** means an infringement of the Laws of the Game in accordance with the following codes:

### **A. Minor infringements - Yellow Card (Caution) Codes**

- Y1** is guilty of unsporting behaviour
- Y2** shows dissent by word or action
- Y3** persistently infringes the Laws of the Game
- Y4** delays the restart of play

- Y5** fails to respect the required distance when play is restarted with a corner kick, free kick or throw-in
- Y6** enters or re-enters the field of play without the Referee's permission
- Y7** deliberately leaves the field of play without the Referee's permission

**B. Serious Infringements - Red Card (Expulsion) Codes**

- R1** is guilty of serious foul play
- R2** is guilty of violent conduct
- R3** spits at an opponent or any other person
- R4** denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball (this does not apply to a goalkeeper within his or her own penalty area)
- R5** denies an obvious goal scoring opportunity to an opponent moving towards the player's goal by an offence punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick
- R6** uses offensive or insulting or abusive language and/or gestures
- R7** receives a second caution in the same Match

**3. AUTHORITIES AND JURISDICTION**

- 3.1 Each Match is controlled by the Referee who has full authority to enforce the Laws of the Game in connection with the Match to which he or she has been appointed. The powers and duties of a Referee are as specified in the Laws of the Game and, in particular, Law 5. The Referee has the authority to make disciplinary decisions, as from the moment the Referee enters the field of play until he or she leaves the field of play after the final whistle.
- 3.2 During a Match, the Referee makes the disciplinary decisions and these decisions are final.
- 3.3 At the end of each Match, the Referee must submit the Referee's Report to the Competition Administrator who then determines if additional action needs to be undertaken in accordance with this clause 3 or clause 4.
- 3.4 A Competition Administrator may determine that the send off of a Player or the expulsion of a Team Official was of such a nature as to warrant a sanction greater than the mandatory match suspension, including additional match suspensions and/or a fine.
- 3.5 Without limiting the generality of clause 3.4, a Competition Administrator must determine that a sanction additional to a mandatory match suspension is required for:
  - (a) violent conduct (or R2 expulsion code);
  - (b) spitting at another person (or R3 expulsion code);
  - (c) conduct directed at or against a Match Official;
  - (d) discriminatory or offensive words or gestures, including racial or ethnic vilification; and
  - (e) repeat Offences.

**4. CITING A PLAYER OR TEAM OFFICIAL**

- 4.1 A Competition Administrator may cite a Player or a Team Official to appear before its Disciplinary Committee to:
  - (a) sanction a red card or serious infringement that has escaped the Referee's attention; or
  - (b) rectify an obvious error in the Referee's disciplinary decision (such as a right decision against a wrong player or mistaken identity).
- 4.2 The following guidelines apply to determine whether a Referee's decision amounted to an obvious error under clause 4.1(b):
  - (a) a decision must have been made;
  - (b) it clearly must have been a wrong decision; and
  - (c) it must have been a seriously wrong decision (and not, for example, a discretionary decision by a Referee as to whether an action was a foul or a yellow or red card).

4.3 For the avoidance of doubt, neither a Competition Administrator nor a Disciplinary Committee can change a Referee's decision to issue a yellow card to a red card or vice versa.

## **5. POSSIBLE DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS**

5.1 Mandatory match suspensions are incurred for the accumulation of yellow and red cards by a Player and for the expulsion of a Team Official in accordance with clauses 6, 7 and 8 respectively.

5.2 A Competition Administrator and a Disciplinary Committee:

- (a) may impose the types of sanctions as specified in Part V of the FFA Statutes; and
- (b) must determine the scope and duration of each sanction in accordance with the Recommended Sanctions.

5.3 Competition Rules may provide an additional grading system for each Offence provided it remains within the Recommended Sanctions.

5.4 A sanction outside of the range of Recommended Sanctions may be imposed only in exceptional circumstances that must be detailed in either the Competition Administrator's Disciplinary Infringement Notice or the Disciplinary Committee's Determination (as the case requires).

5.5 If, in the case of a group of people involved in violent conduct, it is not possible to identify the instigators, the Competition Administrator or the Disciplinary Committee may sanction the Club to which the aggressors belong.

## **6. ACCUMULATION OF YELLOW CARDS - MANDATORY MATCH SUSPENSIONS**

6.1 Competition Rules must specify that a Player who accumulates a certain number of yellow cards during the course of a Competition must serve mandatory match suspensions as specified in those Competition Rules.

6.2 The number of yellow cards accumulated to incur a mandatory match suspension will depend on the number of Matches played in the Competition. By way of guidance, the mandatory match suspensions applying to the accumulation of yellow cards by Players playing in the A-League are as specified in Annexure B.

6.3 If a Player receives two yellow cards during the same Match and therefore receives a red card, the two yellow cards are expunged from his or her record.

6.4 If a Player receives a yellow card and then a direct red card in the same Match, the yellow card will not be expunged and will be counted in the Player's accumulation of yellow cards.

6.5 The accumulation of yellow cards will be reset at the end of the last Match of the pre-season, the competition proper and any finals series respectively. This means that yellow cards accumulated in a pre-season competition do not carry over to the competition proper and yellow cards accumulated in a competition do not carry over to any finals series. Match suspensions incurred as a result of the accumulation of yellow cards will not, however, be cancelled.

6.6 Yellow cards are not accumulated for Friendly matches.

## **7. ACCUMULATION OF RED CARDS - MANDATORY MATCH SUSPENSIONS**

7.1 Competition Rules must specify that a Player who accumulates a certain number of red cards during the course of a Competition must serve mandatory match suspensions as specified in those Competition Rules.

7.2 The number of red cards accumulated to incur mandatory additional match suspensions will depend on the number of Matches played in the Competition. By way of guidance, the mandatory match suspensions applying to the accumulation of red cards by Players playing in the A-League are as specified in Annexure B.

## **8. TEAM OFFICIALS - MANDATORY MATCH SUSPENSION**

8.1 A Referee may take action against a Team Official who fails to conduct themselves in a responsible manner and may expel the Team Official from the field of play and its surroundings, including the substitute's bench.

8.2 A Team Official who has been expelled from the field of play by a Referee must serve a mandatory one (1) match suspension.

## **9. TEAM'S MISCONDUCT**

9.1 Competition Rules may specify that a Competition Administrator may impose additional disciplinary sanctions on a Club for the misconduct of a Team, including when:

- (a) a specified number of Players are cautioned during one (1) Match;
- (b) a specified number of Players are sent off during one (1) Match; or
- (c) several Players together make threats or show force against a Match Official.

9.2 By way of guidance, the team misconduct provision for the A-League is as specified in Annexure B.

## **10. NOTIFICATION AND TIMEFRAMES**

10.1 The imposition of a mandatory match suspension is immediate. For completeness, a Competition Administrator will send a Disciplinary Infringement Notice notifying the Player or Team Official (through his or her Club) of the mandatory match suspension within the timeframes specified by the Competition Rules. For the avoidance of doubt, the mandatory match suspension is effective regardless of whether or not the notice was received.

10.2 If a Competition Administrator has determined under clause 3.4 that an Offence by a Player or a Team Official was such as to warrant a sanction in addition to the mandatory match suspension, that Competition Administrator must send a Disciplinary Infringement Notice notifying the Player or Team Official (through his or her Club) of the details of the Offence and of the disciplinary sanction imposed.

10.3 If a Competition Administrator cites a Player or Team Official under clause 4 to appear before a Disciplinary Committee, that Competition Administrator will send a Disciplinary Hearing Notice to the Player or Team Official (through his or her Club) by the close of business on the second business day following the Match.

10.4 The Disciplinary Hearing Notice must provide:

- (a) reasonable detail of the alleged Offence;
- (b) notice of possible sanctions; and
- (c) date, time and place of the disciplinary hearing.

10.5 The Competition Administrator must ensure a disciplinary hearing is heard in a timely fashion to enable a Player or Club to have the opportunity to be heard and to make submissions in relation to the issues of infringement and sanction before the next applicable Match.

## **11. DISCIPLINARY HEARING PROCEDURES**

11.1 Each Member is bound by Part V of the FFA Statutes (Judicial Bodies and Disciplinary Sanctions), which dictate the independence and impartiality of a Disciplinary Committee, and

the Grievance Resolution Regulations, which specify the rules and procedures that apply to the hearing and appeal of disciplinary infringements.

- 11.2 Except in the case of alleged mistaken identity, there is no appeal from a mandatory match suspension.
- 11.3 A Player or a Team Official may appeal the disciplinary sanction imposed in a Disciplinary Infringement Notice by notifying the Competition Administrator within 7 days after the date on which the Disciplinary Infringement Notice was received using the Application Form in accordance with the Grievance Resolution Regulations.
- 11.4 An appeal from a Competition Administrator's disciplinary sanction must be heard by the Disciplinary Committee. When determining any appropriate sanction, a Disciplinary Committee may consider:
- (a) the nature and severity of the infringement;
  - (b) the offender's past record and whether or not this is a repeated Offence;
  - (c) the culpability of the offender (including whether or not the infringement was intentional, negligent or reckless);
  - (d) any reasons prompting a the offender to commit an infringement;
  - (e) the remorse of the offender; and
  - (f) any extenuating circumstances.
- 11.5 If a Player or Team Official disputes a Disciplinary Committee's Determination, that Player or Team Official must notify the Competition Administrator within 7 days after the date on which the written Determination was received using the Application Form in accordance with the Grievance Resolution Regulations.
- 11.6 All decisions of a Disciplinary Committee remain in force unless reversed by the Appeals Committee.

## **12. IMPLEMENTATION OF DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS**

- 12.1 All fines imposed under these Regulations must be paid within 14 days after the date on which the fine is imposed unless otherwise specified in Competition Rules or agreed to in writing by the Competition Administrator.
- 12.2 The Player or the Team Official cannot take part in any Match until the fine is paid in full. This means that if a match suspension is combined with a fine, the suspension is prolonged until the fine is paid in full.
- 12.3 A match suspension means a ban from taking part in a Match or to attend it in the area immediately surrounding the field of play.
- 12.4 Unless otherwise specified by a Competition Administrator or a Disciplinary Committee, a Player or Team Official who receives a suspension for an Offence in a Match must serve that suspension in the next following Match(es) in which his or her Team participates. For the avoidance of doubt, suspensions do carry over from one round to the next in the same competition, including from the pre-season to the regular season to the finals series and to the following season.
- 12.5 A Player or Team Official who receives a mandatory suspension in a Friendly, must serve that suspension in the next Friendly. A Player or Team Official who receives a match suspension in addition to a mandatory match suspension for an Offence that occurs in a Friendly, may be required by the Competition Administrator or the Disciplinary Committee to serve the suspension in the next official Matches in which his or her Club participates (rather than the next Friendly).

- 12.6 A suspension imposed in terms of Matches on a Player participating in:
- (a) eleven-a-side football only affects that Player's participation in eleven-a-side football; or
  - (b) futsal only affects that Player's participation in futsal.
- 12.7 A suspension imposed in terms of time (such as days, weeks or months) affects a Player's participation for both that Player's eleven-a-side or futsal Team, regardless of whether the infringement was committed in eleven-a-side football or futsal.
- 12.8 A suspended Player transferring to a new club will be required to serve the remainder of that suspension and will not be permitted to play until the suspension has been served in its entirety with his or her new club. Accordingly, a suspension must be disclosed on the applicable registration forms under the National Registration Regulations.
- 12.9 The implementation of a sanction may be suspended and, if so, the person sanctioned is subject to a probationary period. If that person commits another infringement during the probationary period, the suspension is automatically revoked and the sanction is applied in addition to any sanction determined for the new infringement.

### 13. EFFECT OF ABANDONED MATCHES

- 13.1 If a suspension is to be served in terms of matches, only those matches actually played count towards the execution of the suspension. If a Match is abandoned, cancelled or forfeited, a suspension is only considered to be served if the team to which the suspended Player belongs is not responsible for the facts that led to the abandonment, cancellation or forfeiture.
- 13.2 A yellow card issued during an abandoned Match will be annulled if that Match is replayed and upheld if that Match is not replayed.
- 13.3 A direct red card issued during an abandoned Match will be upheld, regardless of whether the Match is replayed or not.

### 14. COMPETITION RULES

If there is any inconsistency between a term of these Regulations and a term of any Competition Rules, the term of these Regulations will govern to the extent of that inconsistency and the inconsistent term is void and of no effect.

### 15. PROVISIONS FOR TOURNAMENTS

These Regulations apply equally to Competitions that are staged as tournaments (such as national or state championships) except that the Competition Rules may specify:

- (a) procedures to ensure all hearings are heard on an urgent basis given the structure of a tournament; and
- (b) the appointment of ad hoc arbitrators who are present at the tournament.

### 16. DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION

- 16.1 In these Regulations:

**Club** means any club registered with FFA in accordance with the National Registration Regulations from time to time. A reference to Club includes a club admitted by:

- (a) a Competition Administrator to field a team in a Competition; or
- (b) FFA to field a team in a National League or a National Championships.

**Competition** means any competition, tournament or league conducted by FFA, or by the Competition Administrator and registered with FFA in accordance with the National Registration Regulations, including any pre-season competition and finals series and age specific championships.

**Competition Administrator** means the entity responsible for the conduct and staging of a Competition.

**Competition Rules** mean the rules and regulations governing the administration and conduct of a Competition.

**Disciplinary Committee** means the disciplinary committee constituted in accordance with the Grievance Resolution Regulations that has jurisdiction over a Competition.

**Disciplinary Hearing Notice** means the notice issued by a Competition Administrator to a Player or a Team Official citing him or her to appear before a Disciplinary Committee to be heard in relation to an alleged Offence and possible disciplinary sanction, which contains the content as prescribed in Prescribed Form 03.

**Disciplinary Infringement Notice** means the notice issued by a Competition Administrator to a Player or a Team Official notifying of the disciplinary sanction imposed for the Offence committed by that Player or Team Official, which contains the content as prescribed in Prescribed Form 02.

**FFA Statutes** means FFA's statutes as promulgated by FFA from time to time, including its constitution and by-laws and rules and regulations and policies and procedures.

**Friendly** means any official match participated in by a Club as sanctioned by FFA or a Member Federation, which is not part of a Competition.

**Grievance** means any dispute or grievance that arises in relation to the FFA Statutes, including a dispute about the infringement, enforcement or subject matter of these National Disciplinary Regulations.

**Grievance Resolution Regulations** means the national procedure that applies exclusively to facilitate the expeditious and fair resolution of a Grievance, as promulgated by FFA from time to time (a current version of which can be obtained on [www.footballaustralia.com.au](http://www.footballaustralia.com.au) or on request).

**Laws of the Game** means the official Laws of the Game and the Futsal Laws of the Game as promulgated by FIFA from time to time.

**Match** means any match played in Australia under the auspices of FFA, a Member Federation or a Competition Administrator or otherwise played under FFA's direction or control.

**Match Official** means a referee, assistant referee, fourth official, match commissioner, referee inspector, selector, any person in charge of safety or any other person appointed by FFA, a Member Federation or a Competition Administrator to assume responsibility in connection with a Match.

**Player** means any person who is, from time to time, registered to a Club or is selected as a member of a National Team, whether that person is male or female, junior or senior or an amateur or professional. For the avoidance of doubt, a reference to a Player during a Match includes a substitute and a substituted player.

**Recommended Sanctions** mean the sanctions for the serious infringements as specified in Annexure A or as amended on notification by FFA from time to time.

**Referee** means the referee appointed by the Competition Administrator or who is otherwise approved in accordance with article 13 of the National Registration Regulations (Match Official) to assume responsibility in connection with a Match.

**Referee's Report** means the report to be completed by a Referee at the end of each Match and submitted to the Competition Administrator, which contains the content as prescribed in Prescribed Form 01.

**Team** means the team within a Club to which a Player or Team Official is usually a member of.

**Team Official** means any personnel involved with the management, preparation or participation of a Club (whether paid or unpaid), including the coaches, managers, medical staff (including team or match doctor), physiotherapists, gear persons and other support staff.

16.2 In these Regulations:

- (a) any term used but not defined has the meaning given to it in the FFA Statutes;
- (b) any use of the word 'includes' or words such as 'for example' or 'such' do not limit anything else that is included in general speech; and
- (c) all notices must be in writing and in English.

16.3 These Regulations will be interpreted, varied and reviewed in accordance with Part IX of the FFA Statutes.

## 17. ANNEXURE A: RECOMMENDED SANCTIONS

17.1 A Competition Administrator and a Disciplinary Committee:

- (a) may impose the types of sanctions as specified in Part V of the FFA Statutes; and
- (b) must determine the scope and duration of each sanction and must do so in accordance with this Annexure A.

17.2 The sanctions of reprimand and placement on a bond can be imposed only on first time offenders.

17.3 A fine cannot be issued against an Amateur.

17.4 A fine against a Professional cannot exceed the total Payments that Professional would have received over the duration of the sanction. For example, if a Professional is fined without a match suspension, the maximum fine is the total Payments that Professional would have received for 1 week being the weekly salary paid for the most recent week and any match payments for the Player's most recent Match. If a Professional is fined with a 3 match suspension, the maximum fine is the total Payments that Professional would have received for 3 matches being the weekly salary paid for the 3 matches together with any match payments for those 3 matches.

17.5 The Recommended Sanctions for match suspensions are as specified in the table below. The match suspensions are inclusive of any applicable mandatory match suspension.

CODE	OFFENCE	EXAMPLES	RANGE OF MATCH SUSPENSIONS
R1	serious foul play	excessive force or brutality when challenging for the ball when it is in play  eg: tackle from behind that endangers the safety of an opponent	according to the nature of the offence committed
R2	violent conduct	excessive force or brutality when NOT challenging for the ball, including striking, kicking, elbowing or head-butting  may occur either on the field of play or outside its boundaries, whether the ball is in play or not, and against an opponent, team-mate or any other person	2 – 4 matches
R2	serious act of violent conduct	Violent conduct of the most serious nature that intends to cause significant bodily harm to any person	5 matches – 24 months

		Involvement in a brawl (but not if person has tried to prevent a fight, shield others or separate those involved in a brawl)	
R2	violent conduct against a Match Official	pushing, striking, kicking, elbowing, head-butting	1 year – life
R3	spitting at a Player or any other person		4 matches -12 months
R3	spitting at a Match Official		6 matches – 18 months
R6	use of offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures		2 – 4 matches
R6	use of discriminatory language and/or gestures, including racist, religious, ethnic or sexist		3 – 5 matches
R6	use of offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures against a Match Official	Intimidation to pressure that Match Official to take or omit to take certain action  Harassment (including sexual harassment) of a verbal nature against a Match Official	3 – 6 matches

17.6 A match suspension determined in accordance with these Regulations will take effect across Australia. If a Competition Administrator thinks the Offence was so serious as to warrant the extension of the sanction across Asia or the world, that Competition Administrator may apply to FFA in writing stating its reasons.

17.7 A sanction imposed on a Club, such as a deduction of competition points, suspension or expulsion from a Competition, or playing a match without spectators or on neutral territory, can be imposed only in very serious or repeated circumstances, including a brawl amongst Players and/or spectators.

## **18. ANNEXURE B: A-LEAGUE COMPETITION RULES**

- 18.1 The A-League is the national men's club competition that involves 8 teams playing 3 rounds during the Competition (or a maximum of 21 Matches for a Player) and a Final Series of 6 Matches (with semi-finals on a home and away basis).
- 18.2 An A-League Player who accumulates the following number of yellow cards during the course of the Competition, must serve the following mandatory match suspensions:
- (a) four (4) yellow cards during the Competition, equates to a one (1) match suspension;
  - (b) seven (7) yellow cards during the Competition, equates to a two (2) match suspension;  
and
  - (c) ten (10) yellow cards during the Competition, equates to a three (3) match suspension.
- 18.3 An A-League Player who accumulates two (2) yellow cards during the course of the Finals Series, must serve a mandatory one (1) match suspension.
- 18.4 An A-League Player who accumulates the following number of red cards during the Competition or Finals Series, must serve the following mandatory match suspensions:
- (a) 1<sup>st</sup> occasion, equates to a one (1) match suspension;
  - (b) 2<sup>nd</sup> occasion, equates to a two (2) match suspension;
  - (c) 3<sup>rd</sup> occasion, equates to a three (3) match suspension; and
  - (d) 4<sup>th</sup> occasion, equates to a four (4) match suspension.
- 18.5 Team misconduct is constituted when several Players in an A-League Team together make threats or show force against a Match Official and the Club may be subject to a disciplinary sanction.

**19. NDR PRESCRIBED FORM 01: REFEREE REPORT**

**20. NDR PRESCRIBED FORM 02: DISCIPLINARY INFRINGEMENT NOTICE**

**21. NDR PRESCRIBED FORM 03: DISCIPLINARY HEARING NOTICE**