



ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

FOR PLAYERS

2020/21

LEVEL: **PROFESSIONAL AND SEMI-PROFESSIONAL**







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ON-FIELD MATTERS

HOW MANY **YELLOW CARDS** CAN I RECEIVE BEFORE I GET AN AUTOMATIC BAN?

Accumulating five, ten, fifteen or twenty Yellow Cards in league matches can result in an automatic ban in your relevant league. Accumulated Yellow Cards in cup competitions are treated separately and can result in an automatic ban from the cup competition in which the Yellow Cards were received.

The cut-off points for receiving a sanction as a result of accumulating cautions are outlined in the following tables.

Premier League, EFL Leagues, National League and Women's Super League and Women's Championship:

COMPETITION IN WHICH CAUTIONS ACCUMULATED	NUMBER OF CAUTIONS ACCUMULATED	CUT OFF POINT (INCLUSIVE)	AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION FOR NUMBER OF CAUTIONS	COMPETITIONS TO WHICH AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION/ SANCTION APPLIES
Premier League	5	19 Premier League Matches	1 match	Premier League
	10	32 Premier League Matches	2 matches	
	15	Last day of the same playing season	3 matches	
	20	Last day of the same playing season	As determined by a Regulatory Commission	
EFL Leagues	5	19 EFL League Matches	1 match	EFL Leagues
	10	37 EFL League matches	2 matches	
	15	Last day of the relevant league playing season prior to the Play-Off matches	3 matches	
	20	Last day of the relevant league playing season prior to the Play-Off matches	As determined by a Regulatory Commission	
National League	5	23 National League Matches	1 match	National League
	10	37 National League Matches	2 matches	
	15	Last day of the relevant league playing season prior to the Play-Off matches	3 matches	
	20	Last day of the relevant league playing season prior to the Play-Off matches	As determined by a Regulatory Commission	

COMPETITION IN WHICH CAUTIONS ACCUMULATED	NUMBER OF CAUTIONS ACCUMULATED	CUT OFF POINT (INCLUSIVE)	AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION FOR NUMBER OF CAUTIONS	COMPETITIONS TO WHICH AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION/ SANCTION APPLIES
The FA WSL	5	N/A	1 match	The FA WSL
	10		2 matches	
	15		3 matches	
	20		As determined by a Regulatory Commission	
The FA WC	5	N/A	1 match	The FA WC
	10		2 matches	
	15		3 matches	
	20		As determined by a Regulatory Commission	
FA Cup	4 (where Player's Club enter in Qualifying Competition or First Round Proper) and for every two further cautions	Sixth Round (Quarter Finals)	1 Match	FA Cup
	2 (where Player's Club enter in Third Round Proper) and for every two further cautions			
EFL Cup	2	Quarter Finals	1 Match	EFL Cup
	4			
EFL Trophy	2	Quarter Finals	1 Match	EFL Trophy
	4		2 Matches	
FA Trophy	2	Quarter Finals	1 Match	FA Trophy
	4			



National League North and South, Isthmian League, Northern Premier League and Southern League:

COMPETITION IN WHICH CAUTIONS ACCUMULATED	NUMBER OF CAUTIONS ACCUMULATED	CUT OFF POINT (INCLUSIVE)	AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION FOR NUMBER OF CAUTIONS	FINE	COMPETITIONS TO WHICH AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION/ SANCTION APPLIES
a) National League (North and South Divisions), the Isthmian League, the Northern Premier League or the Southern League; and b) League cup competition	5	30 November	1 Match	£20	a) League in which Player's team competes; and; b) League cup competition
	10	Second Sunday in March	2 matches		
	15	Last day of the relevant league playing season prior to the Play-Off matches	3 matches		
	20	Last day of the relevant league playing season prior to the Play-Off matches	As determined by a Regulatory Commission		
FA Cup	4 and for every 2 further cautions	Sixth round (Quarter finals)	1 Match	N/A	FA Cup only
FA Trophy	4 and for every 2 further cautions	Quarter Finals	1 Match	N/A	FA Trophy only





IF I AM SENT OFF, HOW LONG WILL I BE SUSPENDED FOR?

Suspensions following a Red Card are applied across both league and cup competitions as per the tables below – only accumulated Yellow Cards are competition specific*. Players who are dismissed for a second time in a season will receive an additional match suspension to those listed below. Players who are dismissed for a third time will receive two additional matches and so forth.

Premier League, EFL Leagues, National League and Women's Super League and Women's Championship:

SENDING-OFF OFFENCE	AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION	COMPETITIONS TO WHICH AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION APPLIES
Denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by a handball offence	1 Match	a) Relevant League in which Player's Club competes; b) FA Cup; c) EFL Cup (as applicable); d) FA Trophy (as applicable); e) FA Women's Challenge Cup (as applicable) (If the sending-off offence occurs in an EFL Trophy Match, the relevant automatic suspension must be served exclusively in the EFL Trophy, unless specified by The FA)
Denying a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent whose overall movement is towards the offender's goal by an offence punishable by a free kick	1 Match	
Serious foul play	3 Matches	
Spitting at an opponent or any other person	6 Matches	
Violent conduct	3 Matches	
Using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures	2 Matches	
Receiving a second caution in the same match	1 Match	

- The period of suspension will commence immediately (unless the Club have submitted a claim of wrongful dismissal or mistaken identity)
- *the exception to this is the EFL Trophy as the relevant automatic suspensions must be served exclusively in the EFL Trophy, unless specified by The FA.

National League North and South, Isthmian League, Northern Premier League and Southern League:

SENDING-OFF OFFENCE	AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION	FINE	COMPETITIONS TO WHICH AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION APPLIES
Denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by a handball offence	1 Match	£20	a) League in which Player's team competes; b) League cup competition in which Player's team competes; c) FA Cup; and d) FA Trophy
Denying a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent whose overall movement is towards the offender's goal by an offence punishable by a free kick	1 Match		
Serious foul play	3 Matches	£40	
Spitting at an opponent or any other person	6 Matches		
Violent conduct	3 Matches		
Using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures	2 Matches	£30	
Receiving a second caution in the same match	1 Match	£20	

- The period of suspension will commence 7 days after the date of the sending-off offence (unless the Club have submitted a claim of wrongful dismissal or mistaken identity).
- The Senior County Cup will not be treated as a First Team fixture and cannot be used to serve suspensions for First Team matches. Any Misconduct for the Senior County Cup will be dealt with by the County FA as a Non First Team Misconduct
- There have been several cases in recent seasons of Players at Steps 2-4 playing matches whilst under suspension,

particularly following transfers to a different Club, as they were unaware that they had an outstanding suspension from a previous Club. It is the Player's responsibility at this level to ensure they are aware of any suspensions – you can check suspension records here: www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/suspensions

- Should a Player play whilst under suspension, both the Player and Club will face disciplinary action. This could lead to financial penalties and further suspension.





WHAT HAPPENS IF THE MATCH OFFICIALS DO NOT SEE AN INCIDENT OF MISCONDUCT?

- Please note that The FA has the power to take retrospective action for sending off offences which were not witnessed by the Match Officials.
- Players run the risk of being banned retrospectively particularly where such an incident is caught on camera.
- The FA may take action even where an incident has been witnessed or acted upon by Match Officials in very serious or unusual cases. In such circumstances lengthy bans may result (for example, following an incident of discrimination or spitting)

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY TEAMMATES AND I DISAGREE WITH A MATCH OFFICIAL'S DECISION?

- You are reminded of the need to show respect to the Match Officials at all times.
- Match Officials may report incidents where two or more players of one Club surround a Match Official in a confrontational manner and this may lead to a disciplinary charge.
- Your Club will be liable to receive a significant fine in the event of an accepted or proven charge and for repeat offences, the sanctions become considerably greater.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A FIGHT BREAKS OUT BETWEEN OPPOSING PLAYERS OR OFFICIALS?

- Match Officials may report incidents where two or more players or Club Officials are involved in a confrontation with opposing players or Club Officials.
- These are deemed to be Mass Confrontations and may lead to a charge.
- Again, your Club may receive a significant fine in the event of a charge being found proven, and for repeat offences, the sanctions become considerably greater.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I GET SENT OFF AND REACT ANGRILY TO THE DECISION?

- You are reminded of the need to respect a Match Official's decision even if you disagree with it.
- In particular, you should note that a refusal to leave the pitch upon being dismissed or a delay in doing so or a bad reaction to such a decision may lead to a disciplinary charge and additional sanctions on top of any ban received for the Red Card.





WHAT PUNISHMENT CAN I FACE IF I DIVE OR FAKE AN INJURY?

- The FA can take retrospective disciplinary action in situations when a referee has been deceived by a clear act of simulation (such as a dive or feigning injury), and as a direct result, the offending player's team has been:
 - awarded a penalty; and/or an opposing player has been dismissed from the field of play (where the act of simulation led to a straight Red Card or caused one of the two cautions that led to the dismissal).
- Players run a particular risk of being banned retrospectively where such an incident is caught on camera.
- In accepted or proven cases of simulation or feigning of injury, a player will receive a two match suspension.

WHY SHOULD I BE CAREFUL OF MAKING GESTURES ON THE FOOTBALL PITCH OR MAKING COMMENTS TOWARDS A CAMERA?

- Please exercise care when making any gestures. An abusive, insulting or improper gesture can lead to the referee dismissing you and/or retrospective disciplinary action. It is important to note that disciplinary action can be taken for gestures which have a negative or inappropriate meaning in another country or part of the world, regardless of the fact that those gestures may not be widely known in England.
- You are reminded that any form of abusive, insulting, or improper language or behaviour which The FA considers to have been directed towards a camera may be the subject of disciplinary action.

WHY WOULD I GET PUNISHED FOR MY CELEBRATIONS AFTER SCORING A GOAL?

- You are specifically reminded of the need to exercise restraint when celebrating goals. Celebrations that are considered to be inflammatory or which cause crowd issues, can lead to disciplinary action and potential match bans.

HOW SHOULD I RESPOND IF A SUPPORTER ENTERS THE FIELD OF PLAY?

- You are reminded that you should not approach any spectators who enter the pitch. It is the responsibility of stewards to deal with such incidents. Equally, you should not attempt to intervene in any matter being dealt with by stewards or the police as this can often lead to further problems.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF A PYROTECHNIC IS THROWN ONTO THE PITCH?

- In the event of any pyrotechnic device being thrown onto the pitch, you should move well away from it and you must not attempt to remove the device yourself as such matters will be dealt with by safety stewards.

AM I ALLOWED TO REVEAL A MESSAGE UNDERNEATH MY SHIRT?

- Law 4 of the IFAB Laws of the Game states that Players must not reveal undergarments showing any slogans or advertising. The basic compulsory playing equipment must not have any political, religious or personal slogans, statements or images. If you breach this Law, it may be reported and you and/or your team could be subject to a penalty.

USEFUL CONTACT

If you have any questions or queries relating to on-field issues, please contact:

footballmatters@TheFA.com





ANTI-DOPING

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT DRUG TESTING?

The FA conducts blood and urine tests for the Prohibited Substances (referred to as “banned substances” in this guidance) included on the Prohibited List.

You can be drug tested at any time and location, including after a game, at a training session or at home. You will be asked to provide a urine and/or a blood sample and may get tested multiple times during the season. In addition, The FA Anti-Doping Testing Programme incorporates an Athlete Biological Passport (ABP) and Players may be selected for blood testing regularly across the season.

Key facts about being tested

- All testing will be without advance notice. This means no warning will be given of the test.
- Do not refuse to take the test as this may lead to a 4 year suspension from football.
- You must stay in full view of the Doping Control Officer (DCO) or Chaperone from the moment you have been notified that you have been selected for testing until the process is complete.
- If you are selected for a drug test you are required to report to the Doping Control Station (DCS) immediately.
- You will be asked to remove enough clothing so that the DCO can directly observe the passing of the urine from the body into the collection vessel.
- If your sample is too dilute, then you will be required to provide an additional sample. Do not overhydrate as this may result in further dilute samples being provided
- Please show respect to the Anti-Doping Officials at all times during the process.





WHAT ARE THE RULES FOR SOCIAL DRUGS?

'Social drugs' including cocaine, ecstasy (MDMA) and cannabis are banned by The FA at all times. A positive test for a social drug on a non-match day (i.e. at training) is a breach of The FA Social Drugs Regulations and may lead to a 3 month suspension (for a first offence). However, refusing or failing to provide a sample and complete the test may result in a 4 year suspension.

A positive test for any banned substance, including a social drug, on a match day is a breach of The FA's Anti-Doping Regulations and may lead to a 2-4 year suspension for a first offence.

WHAT CAN I BE CHARGED WITH?

Some of the things for which you can face disciplinary charges relating to drug testing are:

- the presence of a banned substance in your sample.
- evading sample collection, refusing or failing to provide a sample.
- failing to attend the DCS immediately.
- using abusive or insulting words or behaviour to a Doping Control official.
- tampering or interfering with the drug testing process.

In addition you can face disciplinary charges for other anti-doping offences including:

- using a banned substance.
- having possession of a banned substance.
- trafficking or administration of a banned substance.
- assisting another person in breaking the Anti-Doping Regulations.
- associating with Player Support Personnel who are serving a ban for an anti-doping offence.

Any breach of the Anti-Doping Regulations is serious and could lead to a significant period of suspension, for example refusing a drug test may lead to a 4 year suspension for a first offence.

HOW CAN I CHECK WHETHER I AM ALLOWED TO TAKE A MEDICATION?

Medications that are used in everyday life may contain banned substances.

This includes medications prescribed by your doctor and those bought over the counter at a pharmacy or off the shelf at a supermarket. Examples include some cold and flu remedies. In addition, be aware that certain asthma inhalers are banned or only permitted up to a certain threshold.

ALWAYS CHECK WITH YOUR CLUB DOCTOR BEFORE TAKING ANY MEDICATION AND CHECK WWW.GLOBALDRO.COM

If you need to take a medication which contains a banned substance then you should speak to your Club Doctor about obtaining a Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE).

WHAT ARE THE RISKS WITH TAKING SUPPLEMENTS?

Due to the physical demands of football, players may be tempted to take supplements as part of their diet. The FA does not recommend that any players take supplements, but if you do choose to take supplements it is important you are aware of the risks.

Supplement companies are largely unregulated – meaning you may never know exactly what you are taking. Some products have been found to contain banned substances that are not listed on the label and there could be a banned substance in your supplement.

ASSESS THE NEED

The FA recommends that players should develop their diet, lifestyle and training before considering taking any supplements. You should assess the need for taking a particular supplement by consulting a registered nutritionist or your Club Doctor before taking it.

ASSESS THE RISK

If you make a decision to use supplements then you need to make sure that you minimise the risk of testing positive from taking a contaminated supplement. See www.informed-sport.com which provides a testing and accreditation process for supplements and lists those products that have gone through the Informed Sport programme by batch number.*

*The FA accepts no liability for the contents of supplements approved by Informed-Sport or any other organisations. Strict liability applies and players may incur a ban as a result of using a contaminated supplement.



ASSESS THE CONSEQUENCES

If you test positive for a banned substance contained in a supplement you could face up to a four year ban from football for a first offence.

“YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR EVERYTHING IN YOUR BODY AT ALL TIMES – IGNORANCE IS NOT A DEFENCE. A POSITIVE TEST DUE TO A CONTAMINATED SUPPLEMENT CAN LEAD TO A SIGNIFICANT PERIOD OF SUSPENSION”.

WHAT DO I NEED TO REMEMBER ABOUT WHEREABOUTS? (PREMIER LEAGUE AND ENGLISH FOOTBALL LEAGUE)

All Players in the Premier League and English Football League (EFL) need to be aware of their Whereabouts requirements.

If you are not going to be at a training session or are leaving early or arriving late, you must notify The FA.

REMEMBER:

1. If you are missing training or arriving late, notify The FA in advance of the training session.
2. If you are finishing training early notify The FA before you leave, clearly stating that you are leaving early.
3. When notifying The FA you must provide your;
 - a. full name
 - b. your Club
 - c. an address, including a postcode, and
 - d. a one hour time slot when you are available for testing (at the address).
4. The time slot must be at least two hours after you have notified The FA of your absence and must be between the hours of 0600 – 2300 e.g. if you notify The FA at 9am then the earliest your one hour time slot can start is 11am.
5. Make sure you are present at the address stated for the full hour.
6. If you are participating in Club activity at a different venue to that of the scheduled Club training session, you must notify The FA, preferably in advance of the training session and in any event before you leave the original venue (if applicable) to relocate, stating your alternative training venue and time.

IF YOU DO NOT ADHERE TO THE REQUIREMENTS LISTED OPPOSITE, YOU MAY INCUR A MISSED TEST STRIKE. IF YOU GET THREE MISSED TEST STRIKES WITHIN A 12 MONTH ROLLING PERIOD, YOU WILL BE SUSPENDED FROM FOOTBALL FOR AT LEAST 12 MONTHS.

YOU CAN BE TESTED AT ANYTIME AND ANYWHERE, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER YOU HAVE BEEN ABSENT FROM TRAINING THAT DAY. THIS INCLUDES BEING TESTED AT HOME AT ANY TIME. CLUBS ARE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE THE FA WITH A LIST OF ADDRESSES WHERE EACH OF THEIR PLAYERS REGULARLY RESIDES.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

FA ANTI-DOPING VIDEOS

For more information on all of the above, a series of short anti-doping education videos can be found on The FA website at: www.TheFA.com/anti-doping

USEFUL CONTACTS:

FA ANTI-DOPING TEAM

Tel: 0800 169 1863 ext. 4334

FA Whereabouts

SMS number: 07800 140062

FA Whereabouts

e-mail: whereabouts@TheFA.com

FA Whereabouts

Tel: 0844 980 8210

(24hr messaging service)

Report Doping in Football:

Tel: 08000 32 23 32

If you need to speak to someone in confidence regarding social drugs, you can contact the Sporting Chance Clinic at;

Tel: 0870 220 0714 e-mail: info@sportingchanceclinc.com

WEBSITES

www.TheFA.com/anti-doping – access to all anti-doping education resources

www.globaldro.com – to check medication.

This web address is mobile enabled so you can check the status of medication on the move

www.wada-ama.org/ – to view the latest version of the Prohibited List

www.informed-sport.com – provides a testing and accreditation process for supplements*

www.ukad.org.uk/medications-and-substances/about-TUE/ – to apply for a TUE

* The FA supports the Informed-Sport programme however The FA accepts no liability for the contents of supplements tested by Informed-Sport or similar accreditation programmes.





INTERMEDIARIES

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT INTERMEDIARIES?

You do not need to use an Intermediary to represent you but if you do choose to use one they must be registered with The FA.

If you have entered into an exclusive Representation Contract with an Intermediary, you should not sign another contract with a different Intermediary.

You cannot be represented by an Intermediary until you are in the year of your 16th birthday and an Intermediary cannot be paid for representing you until you turn 18.

Intermediaries who wish to represent Players under the age of 18 also need to receive additional authorisation from The FA. It is against the Regulations for someone who does not have that authorisation to represent you if you are under 18. An Intermediary cannot contact you before your 18th birthday without the permission of your parent or guardian. Your parent or guardian must also provide signed consent if you choose to sign a Representation Contract with an Intermediary.

A list of all FA Registered Intermediaries can found on [TheFA.com](https://www.thefa.com)

The list will also confirm whether the Intermediary has been given FA authorisation to represent under 18's.

You must have a Representation Contract with your Intermediary. Ensure that you are given a copy of that contract and that it is signed by the Intermediary and dated. You should check the terms of the contract closely and seek legal advice if required. The contract with your Intermediary can only last for a maximum of 2 years (unless it was entered into while you were playing overseas).

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING INTERMEDIARIES, PLEASE CONTACT US ON 0844 980 8213 OR EMAIL: INTERMEDIARIES.QUERIES@THEFA.COM

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT: [WWW.THEFA.COM/FOOTBALL-RULES-GOVERNANCE/POLICIES/INTERMEDIARIES](https://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/policies/intermediaries)

BETTING RELATED INTEGRITY

WHAT ARE THE BETTING RULES?

You are not permitted to bet on any aspect of any football worldwide – this includes bets on any match or competition, events within a match or competition, or on any other football matter (such as next manager markets or transfers). Remember that events in the technical area are considered part of a match and that betting on novelty markets connected to a game is also prohibited.

You are not permitted to ask or instruct someone else to place any of the above bets on your behalf.

The rule applies to bets made in person, on the telephone, online or even with friends.

Betting operators are obliged to report any bets made in breach of FA Rules to The FA and the Gambling Commission. They can also search your betting history.

Players are not allowed to be involved in TV/Radio adverts for betting companies which encourage betting on football markets. Players should seek advice before being involved in any kind of betting adverts other than shirt sponsorship.

Sporting Chance offers help and support to Players dealing with betting and addiction issues and can be contacted at info@sportingchanceclinic.com

WHY DO I NEED TO BE CAREFUL WITH SHARING INSIDE INFORMATION?

Inside information is information that you are aware of due to your position in the game which is not publicly available – for example, this may be injury or team selection news.

You are not allowed to pass inside information on to someone else which they then use for betting.

You can be considered to have passed inside information by any means, e.g. word of mouth, text or other instant message, email, writing or social media postings.



WHAT IF I AM APPROACHED TO FIX A MATCH?

Inside information is information that you are aware of due to your position in the game which is not publicly available – for example, this may be injury or team selection news.

You are not allowed to pass inside information on to someone else which they then use for betting.

You can be considered to have passed inside information by any means, e.g. word of mouth, text or other instant message, email, writing or social media postings.

WHAT IF I AM APPROACHED TO FIX A MATCH?

Fixing is arranging in advance the result or conduct of a match or competition, or any event within a match or competition, this may include an incident in the technical area.

Fixing is prohibited and is treated extremely seriously.

In addition, offering or accepting (or even just agreeing to offer or accept) any reward or bribe related in any way to influencing the result or conduct of a match or competition or any event within a match or competition is similarly banned and serious.

If you attempt to fix, you are likely to get caught and be charged by The FA.

If found proven, this is likely to lead to a significant suspension, and in some instances, a lifetime ban. Fixing offences may also be subject to criminal investigation and prosecution.

HOW DO I REPORT A MATCH/SPOT FIXING APPROACH?

If you are approached to fix or suspect that a colleague or someone you know has been approached to fix or is involved in fixing, then you must report it to The FA immediately on the phone number or email **below**.

FAILURE TO REPORT ANY SUCH INFORMATION MAY RESULT IN AN FA CHARGE AGAINST YOU.

OFFENCES COMMITTED IN OTHER SPORTS

The FA may take disciplinary action against you if you are found by another sport's disciplinary body to have committed a betting or fixing or related offence under the rules of that other sport.

USEFUL CONTACTS

If you have any questions or want to send a report, you can contact us through the Betting and Integrity section of [TheFA.com](https://www.thefa.com), or please contact: Email: integrity@TheFA.com
Telephone: **0208 795 9640**

MEDIA COMMENTS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

WHY DO I NEED TO BE CAREFUL WITH WHAT I POST ON SOCIAL MEDIA OR SAY TO THE MEDIA?

ALL MEDIA COMMENTS AND POSTINGS ON SOCIAL MEDIA SITES SUCH AS TWITTER, FACEBOOK, SNAPCHAT AND INSTAGRAM MAY BE SUBJECT TO THE FA'S DISCIPLINARY JURISDICTION.

DO NOT:

- Use threatening, indecent, abusive or insulting language or images.
- Use discriminatory language.
- Imply bias or attack the integrity of Match Officials.
- Make any comment about an appointed Match Official before a match.
- Be personally offensive about Match Officials.

These are examples of where charges may be brought.

Charges may be brought in respect of any comments or postings that may cause damage to the wider interests of football or bring the game into disrepute.

**ANY QUERIES SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO :
FOOTBALLMATTERS@THEFA.COM**





REMEMBER:

- Retweeting is treated the same as posting a comment yourself.
- You are responsible for everything on your account at all times whether or not you posted it.
- Only use words, phrases and images that you are 100% sure of the meaning of – ignorance will not be a defence.
- Your comments may affect your future career.
- Remove any inappropriate postings as soon as possible.
- You are responsible for everything on your account including historic postings that you may no longer remember are still on your account. Therefore you must ensure you remove all posts which might be in breach of FA Rules.
- Be careful of what you 'like'

SANCTIONS FOR THESE OFFENCES MAY BE FINANCIAL AND/OR MATCH SUSPENSIONS.

USEFUL CONTACT

If you have any questions or queries relating to media comments or social media issues, please contact: footballmatters@TheFA.com

DISCRIMINATION

WHAT IS DISCRIMINATORY ABUSE?

DISCRIMINATORY ABUSE INCLUDES A REFERENCE WHETHER EXPRESS OR IMPLIED TO ANY ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Ethnic origin
- Colour
- Race
- Nationality
- Religion or belief
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Sexual orientation
- Disability

CAN I BE CHARGED FOR MESSAGES SENT IN PRIVATE OR OUTSIDE OF A FOOTBALL ENVIRONMENT?

Players should be aware that discriminatory language or content may result in disciplinary action even if shared in a 'private' message – For example, via text, email, private social media account or WhatsApp message. The FA may also take action for discriminatory language or behaviour that occurs outside of a football context – for example, using discriminatory language during a night out. In addition, any Club or Participant must report any allegations or reported discrimination within a Club, whether it is being dealt with by way of internal process, employment tribunal or not.





WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SEE OR HEAR DISCRIMINATORY ABUSE?

IF YOU OR ANOTHER PLAYER IS SUBJECT TO DISCRIMINATORY ABUSE AT A GAME BY EITHER THE CROWD OR ANOTHER PARTICIPANT, REPORT IT TO A MATCH OFFICIAL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND FOLLOW THE MATCHDAY PROTOCOLS BELOW:

DISCRIMINATION BY SUPPORTERS

- The incident should in the first instance be brought to the attention of the referee.
- The referee should report the incident to the home club's safety officer (or responsible home club representative) and police via the fourth official. (If there is no fourth official appointed the referee should stop play and report the incident to a member of the home club's safety management and note the incident with an assistant referee).
- The police and safety officer should seek to identify the person/people responsible and take appropriate action while the match continues.
- If, within an amount of time agreed by the safety officer and referee, the problem continues, the referee (in consultation with the police and safety officer/home club representative) may remove the players from the field and suspend the match, allowing the police and safety officer/home club representative a further opportunity to deal with the problem.
- If the matter cannot be dealt with satisfactorily and the welfare of any participants, in terms of the threat of continued abuse, remains at risk, the referee should consider abandoning the match.
- Any decision to suspend or abandon a match should be taken by the referee after full consultation with the police, safety officer and (dependent on fixture) either the
 - o Premier League Match Centre; or
 - o EFL Football Services Department or Duty Director; or
 - o Home club representative, and after consultation with the team managers and captains

Where no police are present in the stadium, the initial decision-making responsibility belongs to the safety officer, including informing the police. Where the safety officer or police are not present initial decision making responsibility should be made in consultation between the referee and home club representative.

If participating in an UEFA match, they have a slightly different 3 step protocol – visit UEFA.Com for further information.

In cases where there is clear evidence of mass discriminatory chanting by a Club's supporters within a stadium (i.e. not one or two individual supporters) then formal disciplinary action will be taken. In circumstances where The FA becomes aware of an individual supporter (or a small number of individuals) directing discriminatory abuse within a stadium, The FA will investigate the steps taken by the Club to deal with the abuse to determine whether formal disciplinary action is taken.

DISCRIMINATION BY PARTICIPANTS

- The incident should in the first instance be brought to the attention of the referee as soon as possible.
- The referee will make full notes of any discussions as soon as possible.
- Match Officials may become aware of incidents which they themselves have not witnessed during the course of a game. If this occurs the Referee should ensure that full notes of the incident are made at the time. Again, this may involve using the communication system to ensure that the Fourth Official has a complete record of the words used.
- Shortly after the conclusion of the game the referee should then invite the person who made the allegation, accompanied by a member of their club, into the referee's changing room. The referee should confirm with the player the exact words used in the allegation so that there is certainty on exactly what is being reported.
- Following this meeting the referee should then invite the person who is the subject of the allegation, again accompanied by a member of their club, into the changing room. The referee should advise this player of the nature of the allegation. If the player makes any comments these should be recorded.
- An extraordinary incident report is then submitted to The FA for investigation.





The sanction for an offence of on-field discriminatory abuse for a participant (for example, a player towards another player) ranges between **6 and 12 matches suspension** and mandatory education, plus a possible fine. A sanction in excess of 12 matches may be imposed where the incident is sufficiently serious.

WHAT OTHER WAYS CAN I REPORT DISCRIMINATION?

If you see or hear discrimination on the pitch, at the training ground or in the stands, please contact us to report it:

Email The FA: footballforall@TheFA.com

Or you can contact Kick It Out: info@kickitout.org

You can also download Kick It Out's app to help you report Misconduct.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

HOW SHOULD I HELP SAFEGUARD CHILDREN IN FOOTBALL?

Children and young people (under 18's) naturally look up to professional players; as such how you behave has a powerful influence and impact.

You may come into contact with under 18's in lots of different ways; as players, fans, via school or hospital visits, community programmes or socially in pubs and clubs.

It is everyone's responsibility to safeguard children and young people, both on and off the pitch. It is important that you are alert to not putting a child or young person or yourselves at risk.

The FA investigates all safeguarding concerns, which depending on the nature of the concerns, could involve the Club, the league, the police and local authorities.

To safeguard yourself and under 18's, ensure you are accompanied on personal appearances and that you are aware of personal contact with under 18's – e.g. when shirt signing, using social media and posing for photos.

DO NOT:

- Give out your contact details on social networking sites.
- Accept under 18's as a 'friend' on your personal social media site, or engage in communications.
- Be left on your own with fans who are under 18.
- Drink alcohol before or during work or at an appearance with under 18's.
- Make sexually suggestive comments or actions to under 18's face to face or via text, phone, computer or social media – even in fun.
- Touch children inappropriately.
- Use foul or discriminatory language or make abusive gestures.
- Give personal gifts to under 18's.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding safeguarding, please speak to your Club.

Designated Safeguarding Officer or contact: safeguarding.children@TheFA.com





WHERE CAN I FIND FURTHER INFORMATION?

This booklet has been prepared to provide helpful guidance on some disciplinary matters for the 2020-21 Season for players of Clubs in the Premier League, English Football League, National League, The FA Women's Super League, The FA Women's Championship, National League (North and South), the Isthmian League, the Northern Premier League and the Southern League.

Players are subject to The FA's Rules and Regulations, which should be referred to for the full provisions relating to the matters in this booklet.

In the event of any inconsistency between this guidance and the Rules and Regulations, the Rules and Regulations take precedence.

RULES AND REGULATIONS WEBSITE

For further information on any of these areas, please visit:
www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION FOR PLAYERS APP

A free app version of this guidance along with additional video content is available from the App Store (IOS) or Google Play (Android).

PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALLERS ASSOCIATION

Should you wish to discuss any of these issues with the PFA, you can contact them on:

Email: info@thepfa.co.uk
Telephone: 0161 236 0575



FOR ALL

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