

Blandford RFC Discipline Policy

Introduction

Blandford Rugby Football Club (BRFC) as a member club of both the Rugby Football Union (RFU) and Dorset and Wiltshire Rugby Football Union fully supports and ensures that its members adhere to the regulations issued by the RFU.

The overall objective of this policy is to maintain and promote fair play, protect the health and welfare of Players and others involved in the game, ensuring that acts of Foul play and Misconduct both on and off the field are dealt with expeditiously and fairly and are not permitted to affect the image or reputation of the game.

BRFC Disciplinary Committee will investigate and deal with all breaches of the regulations, procedures and rules set out by the RFU, Dorset and Wilts RFU and those of BRFC. All disciplinary hearings held by BRFC will follow the procedures set out by these regulations.

Discipline procedures for Youth Rugby (those under 18 years of age at the time of the offence, playing youth rugby) will follow the same conventions unless otherwise stated. Guidance will be sought on the current Dorset and Wilts and /or RFU rules in place at the time of the offence. The Disciplinary Committee will impose sanctions both independently, upon the recommendation of Dorset and Wilts and/or the RFU and prior to any player or club member appearing before the Dorset and Wilts and/or the RFU on any matter. In matters relating to safeguarding rules and policies if required the club will issue a Temporary Suspension Order whilst the issue is investigated.

Referrals Procedure

Sending Offs:

Referees responsibilities (Society or Club): In all cases where a Referee has sent a player off the Referee shall within 48 hours after the end of the match send a completed copy of the sending off report to the Disciplinary Panel to which the player's club is affiliated or allocated to and the Discipline Secretary of Dorset and Wilts RFU. A copy is to be sent to the players Club Secretary.

Captain/Senior Team Manager responsibilities: The Captain and/or Team Manager must report the name of the player sent off and the relevant details to the Honorary Secretary on completion of the game. The Honorary Secretary is to notify the Dorset and Wilts RFU Disciplinary Panel Chairman and/or Secretary within 24 hours of the offence occurring providing full details of the player involved.

Yellow Cards

All adult teams must report any individuals who have been sin-binned within 48 hours of the completion of the game to the Honorary Secretary. Any player who is deemed to have an irregular frequency of yellow cards will be requested to appear in front of the Club Disciplinary Committee to explain the reason for the irregularities. To monitor levels across the club the Honorary Secretary will keep a record on a seasonal basis of all yellow cards received by players.

Youth Rugby

In the case of a Youth player either being sent off or receiving a yellow card the coach or team manager must report the name and age of the player to the Head of the Mini and Youth Section and the Honorary Secretary within 24 hours of the completion of the game.

Other

Undetected acts of foul play: BRFC actively encourage all players and club representatives to report any incidences of foul play to the Chairman and Honorary Secretary which has otherwise been undetected by the match officials. This reporting must be in writing providing the name of the player(s) involved and the nature of the incident. BRFC Disciplinary Committee will review the report and if appropriate raise the incident with the Club or body from which the complaint was instigated.

Unseemly Behaviour: BRFC actively encourage all individuals to report any observed acts of unseemly behaviour by any other member of the club to the Chairman and the Honorary Secretary. This includes that of spectators and/or parents of youth players.

Breaches of Club Rules: BRFC requires its members to adhere to the club rules set out within the policy documentation at all times. Referrals to the Discipline Committee will be made where a club member has failed to comply.

Disciplinary Procedures

Disciplinary Panel: All instances of negative behaviour and/or breaches of RFU, Dorset and Wilts RFU and Club policies, procedures and/or rules will be dealt with by the Disciplinary Panel. The Panel will comprise of the Club President, Club Chairman, Vice Chairman and Honorary Secretary, who will act only as the Secretary for the hearing and have no involvement in the hearing process. For disciplinary matters involving a youth player either the Safeguarding Officer or the Assistant Safeguarding Officer will also be consulted and may be requested to be present at the hearing. These members are charged with maintaining the standards of discipline within the whole club.

Hearings: The key function of the panel is to establish the facts relating to the incident and the circumstances leading up to the offence prior to making any decisions. Witness statements will be gathered when required and if deemed necessary the witnesses will be asked to attend the hearing. The age of the individual will be taken into account in the manner in which the hearing is conducted. It is the role of the Safeguarding Officer or the Assistant Safeguarding Officer in youth matters is to ensure that the welfare of the child is catered for at all times. The hearing must be attended by the individual involved and/or an appropriate representative. In cases involving a youth player one of their parents/guardians may attend. Notification of these additional or representative attendees must be made to the Honorary Secretary prior to the hearing.

Before the hearing: The Honorary Secretary will set a date for the hearing within 5 working days of the reporting of the alleged incident. Notification of the hearing must be in a written format and sent formally to the individual involved advising them of the proposed date and time of the hearing. If this date is not suitable an alternative date must be agreed within 24 hours. All the required information relating to the hearing will be circulated by the Honorary Secretary at least 24 hours prior to the hearing to all panel members.

Procedures at the Hearing: The following actions will be undertaken at the hearing

- The Disciplinary Panel are to make the individual as comfortable as possible.
- The Club Secretary will read out the alleged offence and ask the individual for admission or denial of the offence.
- The individual or their representative will be given the opportunity to explain what happened in their own words.
- Any witness statements will be read out and the panel will ask questions of the individual to ascertain the facts relating to the alleged incident.
- If a representative is present to support the individual the panel will ask them for any mitigating or supporting comments.

- The Honorary Secretary will take written notes of the proceedings and produce a true and accurate record of the hearing.
- Prior to discussing the evidence set before them the panel will request the individual and his representative to withdraw whilst the submitted evidence is discussed and any required sanctions are agreed.

Sanctions

The BRFC Disciplinary panel will have the powers to carry out the following

- Make sanctions and/or restrictions in membership in accordance with the recommended sanctions of the RFU as contained in the RFU Handbook.
- Make sanctions as in accordance with the Youth Rugby guidelines of the RFU Handbook
- Take no further action and record the decision.
- Take no action at club level but refer the case to Dorset and Wilts RFU Discipline Sub-Committee
- Suspend any individual from all privileges appropriate to their membership for an agreed period of time. This can include exclusion from attending the club house.
- Terminate the individual"s membership.
- Any other penalties or sanctions as deemed suitable to the offence committed.

Appeals

All individuals will be given the option to appeal against any imposed sanctions. The appellant shall serve notice of appeal in writing, stating the grounds for the appeal; the formal written appeal is to be sent to the Honorary Secretary. On notification of the received appeal the Honorary Secretary is to notify the Club Chairman, who is to appoint two officers of the club to serve on the Disciplinary panel. The two club members selected are not to have been members of the original panel. The appellant is to be notified following the selection of the new panel members in writing by the Honorary Secretary of the date of the appeal hearing. This hearing is to be no more than 14 days after the initial hearing. A member of the original panel is to be in attendance should the need to clarify any point from the original hearing. The Honorary Secretary shall be in attendance to ensure that a true and accurate record of the hearing is taken, but will not contribute to any of the questions or discussions which from the appeal hearing.

The Appeal panel has the power to quash the findings of the original panel and any sanctions imposed by the members. It also has the power to substitute an alternative finding and/or reduce or increase the original sanction awarded. There shall be no further right of appeal from this appeal. Any sanction imposed at the original hearing will remain in force until the outcome of an appeal.

Appearing before Dorset and Wilts Disciplinary Panel

Any player(s) who is called to appear before the Dorset and Wilts Disciplinary Panel is to be accompanied by the Honorary Secretary or a nominated club member. Dates for these hearings are published on an annual basis and are published in the Blandford RFC Events Calendar, to which all members may subscribe if they so wish. Any fines imposed by the panel as a result of a player(s) appearing before the panel will be the sole responsibility of the player(s) to pay and not the club. Guidance on the format of Dorset and Wilts RFU Disciplinary hearing can be found on the [Dorset and Wilts RFU Website](#).

Payment of Fines

Any player(s) appearing before and/or being fined by the Dorset and Wilts RFU will be solely responsible for the payment of any fine imposed. The player(s) will also be responsible for meeting any costs/charges in relation to an appeal or representation against a fine and/or judgement awarded by Dorset and Wilts RFU Disciplinary panel.

Thomas Davis-Richings
Chairman
Dated August 2021