

RUGBY ARIZONA
DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Updated August 26, 2017

1. THE RUGBY ARIZONA (RAZ) DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE

1.1. Composition of the Committee

Discipline for Rugby Arizona (RAZ) shall be determined and communicated by a permanent Disciplinary Committee (the “Committee”). Members of the Committee shall consist of the elected Chairman of the Disciplinary Committee (the “Chairman”), and current RAZ members in good standing designated by the Chairman and approved by the President of the RAZ, and shall serve a term of two years to coincide with elections of the Chairman.

Should a member of the Committee choose to resign at any time during his/her term, the Chairman shall designate another member to complete the remainder of the term. If the Chairman should resign, or be removed from Office, the Executive Committee shall designate a replacement until a new Chairman is elected or replaced.

1.2. Role and Jurisdiction of the RAZ Disciplinary Committee

Rugby Arizona has established the Disciplinary Committee to adjudicate disciplinary matters involving RAZ clubs and club members that arise in connection with rugby union football on or off the field. Officers of RAZ or members of the Arizona Rugby Referees Society, a referee that has officiated over an affiliated RAZ rugby team or player, or a CIPPed member of USA Rugby listed as certified coach, administrator or referee may refer such matter directly to the Committee. In the case of matters arising outside of Arizona, referrals by other parties, such as referees of other unions or officers of other unions or USARFU, must be made to the Committee, or RAZ who will direct all matters to the Chairman. The policies and procedures of the RAZ Disciplinary Committee shall control all disciplinary matters within RAZ.

2. GENERAL

The local union disciplinary committee is only one arm of an effective disciplinary structure, which begins at the club level and extends to the national level. The base of all discipline lies in the club. As such, the clubs must insist on high standards of behavior from their members on and off the field. The spirit and the law of rugby must be inculcated into all participants in the game. Disciplinary rules should be enforced at the club and local union level with the interests of all players and of the game itself in mind.

3. REFERRALS TO THE COMMITTEE

While all matters of misconduct, on or off the field, which may be detrimental to the game of rugby, will be considered by the Committee, most matters requiring disciplinary action will result from sending off of a player from the field by a referee.

3.1. Referee Referrals for Sending Off of a Player

When a player is ordered off the field under Law 10 (issued a “red card”) in a match within RAZ, the referee must promptly (within 48 hrs) file a Disciplinary Report as prescribed with the Committee and follow the duties outlined by the USARFU in its disciplinary directives.

3.2. Other Referrals

When a matter arises which, in the view of a referee or RAZ Executive Committee, is contrary to the spirit of and/or detrimental to the game of rugby and which might warrant disciplinary action, such person may bring the matter to the attention of the Committee by filing a report with the Committee. This report shall contain appropriate documentation, including but not limited to, a detailed description of the incident or practice in question and the names of all parties involved or present.

4. OFFENSES

The Committee shall consider all matters referred to it in accordance with section 3.

4.1. Major Offenses

Matters pertaining to sending off under section 3.1 shall constitute “major offenses.” Such offenses shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- 4.1.1. Foul play, misconduct, or dangerous play (Law 10);
- 4.1.2. Repeated reports for minor offenses (Law 10);
- 4.1.3. Assault on another player during a match;
- 4.1.4. Playing or attempting to play while under suspension;
- 4.1.5. Playing knowingly with a suspended player;
- 4.1.6. Extreme verbal abuse of a referee;
- 4.1.7. Verbal threat of physical harm or injury to a referee;
- 4.1.8. Physical assault against a referee.

4.2. Functions of the Referee

Under the provisions of Law 6 of the Laws of the Game, the referee is the sole judge of fact on the field.

5. PENALTIES

5.1. Mandatory Suspension for Player Sent Off

- 5.1.1. A player who has been sent off by a referee under Section 3.1 (red card) shall be suspended for their next two (2) scheduled matches, or two (2) weeks, whichever is the longer period of time.

- a. Exceptions to mandatory suspension:
 - 5.1.1.a.1. If the referee states in his/her Disciplinary Report to the Committee that they made a genuine mistake and that the player did not commit the offense for which he/she had ordered him/her off.
 - 5.1.1.a.2. If the player received 2 yellow cards in the match and both yellow cards were for non-violent offenses.
 - b. The Committee will then adjudicate based on all the facts presented to rule on the Exception scenarios.
- 5.1.2. A player who has been sent off by a referee under section 3.1, and it is the player's second red card for violent offenses within any season year, then that player shall be suspended for their next five (5) scheduled matches, or five (5) weeks, whichever is the longer period of time.
- 5.1.3. A player who has been sent off by a referee under section 3.1, and it is the player's third red card for violent offenses within any season year, then that player shall be suspended for one (1) full year from the date of the suspension.

5.2. *Additional Penalties for Players Sent Off*

In the case of a player sent off for a major offense under section 4.1, if the Committee determines that penalties in addition to the mandatory suspension may be in order, it shall hold the discretion to impose any additional penalties as the Committee deems appropriate for the offense. The Committee shall have broad discretion in determining fair and just additional penalties in accordance with the facts and circumstances of each case.

5.3. *Penalties for Specific Actions*

- 5.3.1. A Player who commits assault before start of play or after play is completed (ie outside the two halves of playing time); shall be assessed a life ban from RAZ.
- 5.3.2. A Player who commits assault by kicking, punching, head butt or similar during the course of play, and connects, before whistle can be assessed up to a 1 year ban to the end of the next scheduled league season (July 1st) from RAZ.
- 5.3.3. A Player who attempts to commit dangerous play as in point 2 above, deemed as such by the referee; shall be suspended for their next two (2) scheduled matches, or two (2) weeks, whichever is the longer period of time.
- 5.3.4. A player who receives two yellow cards by a referee within a given season year for violent offenses, deemed as such by the referee, shall be suspended for their next one (1) scheduled match, or one (1) week, whichever is the longer period of time.
- 5.3.5. A Player who receives two yellow cards within a 3 match span for any reason; shall be suspended for their next one (1) scheduled match, or one (1) week, whichever is the longer period of time.

5.4. *Players under Suspension*

Should a player, during his suspension:

- Play in a match with his/her team;
- Play in a match with any other team, regardless of union or location;
- Commit any further misconduct;
- Fail to comply with the guidelines set by the Committee;

The player shall automatically be subject to further disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by the Committee.

5.5. *Non-RAZ Players*

Should a player, who is not affiliated with a RAZ club, be sent off by a referee under Section 3.1, that player shall be considered ineligible for play in RAZ for a period of up to one (1) year from the date of the suspension.

5.6. *Club Responsibilities*

- 5.6.1. Should any RAZ club allow an ineligible player to play in a match for their team, the club will forfeit the game in which the offense has occurred. Forfeits shall be handled according to the RAZ Constitution.
- 5.6.2. Should any RAZ club allow an ineligible player to play in a second match for their team during any season year, regardless if it was the same ineligible player or not, the club will be suspended from Union membership for a period of up to one (1) year from the date of suspension.
- 5.6.3. When a player is issued a red card and that red card has been confirmed by the Disciplinary Committee, the Club is required to email a legible head-shot photo of the player to the Chairman before their next scheduled game that is suitable for posting to the RAZ website (to a section that is not for free public viewing).

Penalty: Failure to provide the photo via email before the following game shall result in the Club forfeiting that game and the game shall not be played.

5.7. *Offenses against Referees*

Major offenses against Referees will be treated with severity. Because of the seriousness of these offenses these sanctions will be strictly adhered to. For any action toward a Referee or a game related action reported by a referee, the following penalties shall apply:

- 5.7.1. Persistent criticism/disputing of calls:
 - a. First Offense – 1 to 3 game suspension.
 - b. Second Offense (within 1 year) – Minimum 5 game suspension, up to 1 year suspension.
- 5.7.2. Verbal abuse and/or Threatening a Referee:
 - a. First Offense – 3 to 5 game suspension.

- b. Second Offense (within 1 year) – 4 to 10 game suspension.
- c. Third Offense (within 1 year) – 1 to 3 year suspension.
- 5.7.3. Continuation of acts listed in Section 5.7.1 or 5.7.2 above and/or non violent contact with a referee after a send off *or* at the end of the match *or* elsewhere:
 - a. First Offense – 6 month suspension.
 - b. Second Offense (within 1 year) – 1 year to indefinite suspension.
- 5.7.4. Physical Assault or Attempted Physical Assault of a Referee on or off the field:
 - a. Immediate Suspension.
 - b. 21 day fact finding period to commence from the day of the incident, in which a representative of the accused party’s team may present a written statement containing any mitigating circumstances.
 - c. Unless overwhelming evidence is presented, as determined by the Committee, that would mitigate the situation, a minimum suspension of 5 years shall be assessed, with a maximum suspension of indefinite.
 - d. If the Committee determines that overwhelming evidence is presented as to not warrant a 5 year suspension, then no less than a 1 year suspension shall be assessed to the guilty party.

5.8. *Additional Penalties*

The Committee may, at any time, determine that penalties in addition to any mandatory suspension/penalty may be in order and it shall hold the discretion to impose any additional penalties as the Committee deems appropriate for the offense. The Committee shall have broad discretion in determining fair and just additional penalties in accordance with the facts and circumstances of each case.

5.9. *Precedent*

In determining appropriate penalties for major or other offenses, the Committee may look to previous dispositions of similar offenses in determining appropriate sanctions.

5.10. *Prior Records*

The Committee shall consider an individual’s record or previous misconduct relating to rugby football when determining appropriate disciplinary penalties in a given case.

5.11. *Appeals Process*

The Sanction is in place immediately and the offending player/club has the right to appeal the sanction. The appeal shall be submitted by a Club Officer to the Chairman within 7 calendar days of the sanction being levied. The appeal process can be conducted electronically.

5.12. *Tracking of Offenders*

It will be the responsibility of the Chairman or his designee to ensure that a report of any penalties received by a player is provided to all clubs and members in RAZ. A posting of penalties on the official RAZ web page will constitute notification to all clubs and members.

5.13. *Scope*

The guidelines set forth under Section 3 are intended for any player of the game of rugby participating in or wishing to participate in any game under RAZ, or representing RAZ in any manner. Send off's from any union matches, non-union matches, tournament matches, 'friendlies', or any other form of the game of rugby, will be enforced within these guidelines.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CLUB

RAZ clubs have primary responsibility for ensuring that penalties imposed by the Committee which affect club activities, e.g. suspensions, are carried out. Any club which allows a player to play rugby football and/or participate in club activities while under suspension will be subject to disciplinary action by the Committee under Section 5.6.

Individual RAZ clubs are free to impose penalties on their own players in addition to those imposed by the Committee. Also, penalties imposed by clubs on their own players before the Committee has had a chance to act on a pending matter may be considered by the Committee in its decision regarding sanctions, and the Committee may back date a suspension to take account of a disciplinary action imposed by a player's club.

7. RECOMMENDED SANCTIONS

In addition to the criteria contained in prior sections of this document, Appendix 1: World Rugby Sanctions for Foul Play (Regulation 17) of the World Rugby Regulation 17 Discipline – Foul Play document shall be used for guidance to the Committee in determining appropriate sanctions.

8. PRIOR RULES OVERRIDDEN

These rules shall override all prior disciplinary rules of Rugby Arizona, including those appearing in print.