

RFL ON FIELD COMPLIANCE PROCEDURES AND SENTENCING GUIDELINES

1. INTRODUCTION AND UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

1.1. Introduction and Transitional Arrangements

These procedures and guidelines set out the process that will be followed and sanctions that should be imposed in relation to any On Field Misconduct. The On Field Sentencing Guidelines are intended to aid consistency and decision making when applying sanctions for breaches of the Laws of the Game and/or RFL Operational Rules and should be read in addition to the RFL Operational Rules.

In the event of a conflict between these guidelines and the RFL Operational Rules, the Operational Rules take precedence. The RFL also issues Off Field Sentencing Guidelines which set out guidelines for Off Field Misconduct. The Compliance Manager shall have the discretion to determine if a case is an Off Field case or an On Field case and which Sentencing Guidelines should apply.

Player is used throughout these On Field Sentencing Guidelines however for the avoidance of doubt, non-playing personnel can be charged under the On Field Sentencing Guidelines at the discretion of the Compliance Manager.

1.2. Underlying Principles

- Rugby League is a hard, fast, contact sport played at professional level by athletic players.
- In a sport with high-speed collisions there will always be injuries and players take part with this knowledge.
- The disciplinary system is not intended to sanitise the sport, however, there is no place in the game for players who jeopardise the safety of others by intentional, dangerous or malicious acts.
- The disciplinary system must support and protect Match Officials.

2. MATCH REVIEW PANEL

2.1. Introduction / Purpose

The role of the Match Review Panel is to: (i) review Matches (in accordance with this Section 2. below); (ii) to grade any incidents which it considers to be On Field Misconduct Offences (in accordance with these Sentencing Guidelines); (iii) in the case of any incidents which it considers to be Grade A to D, determine whether there is any reason that it should not be dealt with by way of Penalty Notice (in accordance with Section 3 below); and (iv) instruct the Compliance Manager to send Charge Letters (in accordance with Section 2.8 below).

2.2. Composition

The Match Review Panel is comprised of up to 4 Match Reviewers who will be persons with appropriate expertise (such as former players, referees and coaches) as appointed from time to time by the RFL. An appropriate member of the Match Review Panel will be nominated to be the Match Review Panel chairperson.

The Compliance Manager will attend all Match Review Panel meetings and shall provide the administrative function of the Match Review Panel and shall represent the Match Review Panel at any Operational Rules Tribunal hearing.

2.3. Process – general

The RFL has the right to vary the processes set out below including, but not limited to, Matches which take place over a bank holiday weekend or in later Rounds of the Season. The RFL will notify Clubs of any such variations.

2.4. Process – Regular Season

In relation to each round of Super League Matches (or Challenge Cup Matches involving Super League teams and all Challenge Cup Matches from the Quarter Final onwards irrespective of whether they contain a Super League team), each Match is reviewed in full by a member of the Match Review Panel to identify incidents which should be considered by the Match Review Panel. These incidents are then ordinarily considered by the Match Review Panel on the Monday morning following that round of Matches and the Match Review Panel decide what action should be taken in relation to the relevant Player(s) irrespective of any on field action which may or may not have been taken.

In relation to each round of Championship Matches, Challenge Cup Matches and Matches played in limited age and non-first grade competitions, the Match Review Panel ordinarily meet on the Thursday following the round of Matches in question and consider any incidents that have been reported by Match Officials or otherwise brought to the attention of the Match Review Panel, irrespective of any on field action which may or may not have been taken. For the avoidance of doubt Challenge Cup matches in Rounds 3 onwards involving Championship teams, the Match Review Panel ordinarily meet on the Thursday following the round of Matches in question and consider any incidents that have been reported by Match Officials or otherwise brought to the attention of the Match Review Panel, irrespective of any on field action which may or may not have been taken even if they were involved in a match against a Super League team.

2.5. Process – Play-Offs/1895 Cup (and preceding Round)

In relation to each Match in the last round of each of the Championship Regular Season, and the Regular Season for limited age and other non-first grade competitions, and the Play-Off phase for each of those competitions, the Match Review Panel ordinarily meet on the Monday morning following that round and the Match Review Panel decide what action should be taken in relation to the relevant Player(s) irrespective of any on field action which may or may not have been taken.

In relation to the 1895 Cup Final, the Matches from the League round involving the relevant finalists prior to the relevant Final will be reviewed on

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the Monday following the Matches played by the finalists to consider any incidents that have been reported by the Match Officials or otherwise brought to the attention of the Match Review Panel, irrespective of any action which may or may not have been taken.

2.6. Citings

If a Club wishes to bring any incidents of alleged On Field Misconduct to the attention of the Match Review Panel, they must notify the Compliance Manager by:

- a) no later than 7am on the day the Match Review Panel will be considering the relevant Match;
- b) where the Match Review Panel are due to meet on a Thursday to consider incidents from the applicable Match, no later than 12pm on the Wednesday following the day on which the incident took place.

Citings should include:

- i. a brief description of the incident;
- ii. the players involved;
- iii. the precise time of the incident.

2.7. Options Available to the Match Review Panel

The decision on whether a player should be charged with On Field Misconduct is made by the Match Review Panel. The Compliance Manager shall not have a vote and in the event of a tied vote, the Chair shall have the casting vote.

In relation to each Player considered, the Match Review Panel has the following options:

- Charge the Player with On Field Misconduct (an “**Offence**”), in which case the Match Review Panel will also determine:
 - the Grading of the Offence in accordance with the Sentencing Guidelines; and
 - whether there is any reason that a Penalty Notice should not be issued in accordance with Section 3 below.

For the avoidance of doubt, where a Player has been dismissed from the field of play, the Match Review Panel may deem the Offence as ‘Sending Off Sufficient’

- Decide there is no case to answer (in which case the Match Review Panel may still send the Player a warning/advice letter); or
- Refer the matter to the Compliance Manager for further investigation.

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All relevant decisions of the Match Review Panel will be minuted. Only where a Player has been charged will such minutes be published on the RFL website.

2.8. Notice of Charge

If a Player is charged with an Offence, they will receive a Notice of Charge via their Club which will include:

- The Law(s) of the Game the Player is alleged to have breached;
- The detail of the alleged Offence;
- The Grade of the Offence;
- For Offences where the Match Review Panel has determined (in accordance with these Guidelines) that a Penalty Notice should be issued:
 - The Penalty Points and corresponding sanction (if any) in accordance with these guidelines;
 - Details of how the Penalty Notice can be challenged;
 - In the event of a challenged Penalty Notice, the date of the hearing, the evidence the Compliance Manager would be relying upon and a summary of the Player's rights at that hearing.

3. PENALTY NOTICES

3.1. Purpose / Introduction

A Penalty Notice means that, save in exceptional circumstances (see section 3.4 below), where a Player is charged with any Offence: (i) the Penalty Points allocated shall automatically be set in accordance with section 7.3; and (ii) the sanction will be determined by a Player's previous record in accordance with section 7.4 below.

3.2. Penalty Notice

After the Match Review Panel have graded the offence in line with the Sentencing Guidelines, they will consider the previous disciplinary record of the Player in order to determine the Penalty Notice.

For example, a Player who is charged with an Offence, the Penalty Notice will be determined by the number of Penalty Points the Player already has on his disciplinary record from the previous 12 months on which the Offence attracting the Penalty Notice was committed plus the number of Penalty Points of the grading imposed for the Offence(s) as set out in 7.3 below. After 12 months the Penalty Points are deemed to have expired and are no longer relevant, save for purposes of a player's disciplinary record.

For example, Player A has five (5) Penalty Points on his disciplinary record. The Offence for what he is charged with is a Grade C which carries five (5) Penalty Points. This means that Player A has 10 Penalty Points and would be issued with a Penalty Notice of a 1 Match suspension and a fine commensurate to the competition in

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which the offence occurred or where the offence occurs in a Cup competition, a fine commensurate to the League competition that Player A's Club competes in.

In addition, a Player charged with on-field misconduct who has been dismissed in the first half of a match will receive two points fewer on their record than the stipulated penalty for the charge. Dismissal in the second half would mean a one-point readjustment.

In the unlikely event that a player does not have enough points on their disciplinary record should points be removed (for example where a player with no previous points is dismissed in the first half and charged with a Grade A offence), their disciplinary record will restart at zero disciplinary points.

If the victim of a foul is removed from the field of play and unable to return because of charged misconduct, the transgressor will receive an additional three points on their disciplinary record.

3.3. Multiple Offences

In the event that a Player is charged with multiple Offences from the same Match, the Penalty Notice for the first Offence will be issued in line with section 3.2 of these guidelines. Any subsequent Penalty Notices for further Offences in the same Match will consider the first Offence as a relevant matter for the purposes of the Player's disciplinary record and the sanctions contained within the Penalty Notice will be calculated accordingly.

The Player may challenge the Penalty Notices in relation to each Offence. In the event that the Player challenges the Penalty Notice in the first Offence and is found not guilty, then the Penalty Notice for the second Offence will be amended if necessary (subject to the previous disciplinary record of the Player and section 3.2 of these guidelines).

In the event that a Player is found guilty of multiple Offences, any suspensions should ordinarily be served consecutively.

In the event that a Player is charged with multiple identical Offences from the same Match, the Match Review Panel may at its discretion determine that it is not appropriate to issue multiple Penalty Notice sanctions for the same repeated offences in the same Match and may instead refer the charges to the Operational Rules Tribunal in accordance with 3.4 below.

3.4. Match Review Panel elect to refer matter to Operational Rules Tribunal

The Match Review Panel may at its discretion, (including but not limited to any injury being caused to an opponent as a result of the Offence with which the Player is charged, if the Player has been found guilty of similar offences which were dealt with under the Off Field Misconduct procedures or if the Player has been charged with multiple identical Offences from the same Match) determine that it is not appropriate to issue a Penalty Notice and instead refer the charge to the Operational Rules Tribunal.

3.5. Challenge

Subject to the other provisions of this clause, a Player who has been issued with a Penalty Notice may challenge the Penalty Notice and/or the Grading by informing the RFL Professional Game Delivery Team of their intention to do so by the deadline specified in the Charge Letter. Any such appeal shall be heard in accordance with Section 5 below.

In the event that such intention is not lodged with the RFL by the specified deadline, the Penalty Notice will be deemed to have been accepted and the sanctions specified will be imposed.

3.6 Charge

A Player who does not challenge the Penalty Notice will forfeit the right to any hearing.

3.7 Reduction in Penalty Points carried forward

When an offence adds Penalty Points to a Player's record the number of Penalty Points added to their record for that offence will be reduced by 75%. This is to recognise that the Player has previously served a sanction however there remains a percentage of Penalty Points on the Player's record to acknowledge that they have committed previous misconduct.

The table below shows an example over a 12 month period:

Opening Penalty Points	Grade	Offence Penalty Points	Total Penalty Points	Sanction	Carry Forward Penalty Points
0	A	1	1	N/A	0.25
0.25	A	1	1.25	N/A	0.25
0.5	A	1	1.5	N/A	0.25
0.75	C	5	5.75	Fine	2.5
3.25	B	3	6.25	1 match	1.5
4.75	D	12	16.75	2 matches and a fine	3
7.75	A	1	8.75	1 match	0.25

3.8 Penalty Points and Play Offs

Following the completion of the Regular Season, any Penalty Points that have been accumulated in the Regular Season will be 'frozen' so that if a player were to be charged ahead of the first Play Off match any Penalty Points would not take into account those that were accumulated in the Regular Season. If a Player however is charged and accepts or is found guilty during the Play Offs, then those Penalty Points will be subject to a reduction in Penalty Points carried forward and will not be frozen.

Ahead of the following season, the Penalty Points that were frozen following completion of the Regular Season or accumulated during the Play Off matches will become live again on a Player's record until such time they are removed, 12 months from when the offence took place.

4. OPERATIONAL RULES TRIBUNAL

4.1. Composition and Process

Cases where a Player is either not eligible for or challenges a Penalty Notice will be heard by the On Field Operational Rules Tribunal.

Appointments for hearings at the Operational Rules Tribunal will be made from the Operational Rules Panel.

At the Operational Rules Tribunal an independent chairperson and two independent side members will consider all the evidence put before them, subject to these Guidelines and the Operational Rules.

The Operational Rules Tribunal will normally meet each Tuesday via video conference but may at its discretion meet in person at an alternative time and place, should the RFL deem appropriate. The Operational Rules Tribunal will normally consider all matters that have been referred to it in the preceding week. Hearings which would otherwise fall on a Tuesday following a Bank Holiday Monday may instead be held on the next day (i.e. Wednesday). The Professional Game Delivery Team shall have the sole right in its absolute discretion to bring forward or put back a hearing to a day or time of its choosing.

The RFL will take a recording of the hearing which will only be retained for as long as is necessary.

There is a limit to the number of cases that the Operational Rules Tribunal can hear in one session. If there is more than this number of cases, some cases may instead be heard on the following evening, at the RFL's discretion.

4.2. Burden and Standard of Proof

The Compliance Manager shall have the burden of establishing that On Field Misconduct has occurred. The standard of proof shall be whether the Compliance Manager has established that On Field Misconduct has occurred to the reasonable satisfaction of the Operational Rules Tribunal, with due regard given to the seriousness of the allegation which is being made. This standard of proof in all cases is greater than a mere balance of probability but less than proof beyond a reasonable doubt.

4.3. Submission of Evidence

Players are entitled to submit evidence including witness statements, written evidence, and further footage (in a format in which they wish to present), including photographs, of the incident for which they have been charged. Such evidence must be submitted to the Professional Game Delivery Team by 2pm on the day of the hearing. Recordings, including video footage and photographs, of other incidents shall not be permitted.

4.4. Alternative Charges

For the avoidance of doubt, the Operational Rules Tribunal can amend the Offence a Player has been charged with, both in terms of grading and description.

4.5. Referral to Compliance Manager

If the Operational Rules Tribunal does not consider that it can reach a decision on the evidence before it, it may refer the incident to the Compliance Manager for further investigation.

5. CHALLENGES TO PENALTY NOTICES

5.1. Challenging a Penalty Notice – Submitting a Challenge

A Player may challenge the imposition of a Penalty Notice by informing the Professional Game Delivery Team by the time and date specified in the Charge Letter, in which case the matter shall be determined by the Operational Rules Tribunal. A refundable deposit, of (i) £1000 in the case of Super League Players; (ii) £250 in the case of all other professional male Players; and (iii) £100 in the case of Scholarship Players, must be lodged when submitting a challenge to a Penalty Notice. In the event that the challenge is successful, the deposit shall be returned.

Players can challenge a Penalty Notice on the following grounds only:

- a) Guilt; or
- b) Improper Grading of the Offence by the Match Review Panel.

The Player must confirm in writing at the time of notifying the RFL that they wish to challenge the Penalty Notice and what the grounds for the challenge are. For the avoidance of doubt, the Player can only submit a challenge based on one of the above grounds.

5.2. Order of Proceedings

The chairperson will determine the order of proceedings, however usually:

- The chairperson will read the charge;
- The Player or their representative will explain the grounds for challenging the Penalty Notice;
- The footage of the incident will be played;
- The Compliance Manager will present the case for the Match Review Panel;
- The Player or their representative will present the Player's case;
- The Compliance Manager will be given the opportunity to respond to the Player's submissions;
- The Player or their representative will be given the opportunity to respond to the Compliance Manager's response;
- The Compliance Manager and the Player and any representatives will retire while the Operational Rules Tribunal deliberate;
- If the Player denies the Offence the Operational Rules Tribunal will consider whether an Offence was committed; If the Player challenged the Grade of the Offence the Operational Rules Tribunal will consider the appropriate Grade for the Offence;
- The Compliance Manager and the Player and any representatives will reconvene in front of the Operational Rules Tribunal at which point the chairperson will advise all parties of the Operational Rules Tribunal's decision;

- In the event of a not guilty finding the hearing will conclude;
- In the event of a guilty finding the chairperson will outline the sanction with reference to the Penalty Notice and section 5.3.
- The hearing concludes.

5.3. Consequences of Challenges

If the Player is unsuccessful on their grounds of challenge the Operational Rules Tribunal shall impose the Penalty Points and any subsequent sanction outlined in the Penalty Notice. and shall impose five (5) additional Penalty Points. As an example, a Penalty Notice which is graded at a Grade A and specifies a one (1) Penalty point; this would be increased to six (6) Penalty Points, meaning a 1 Match suspension would be imposed further to the tariffs set out at 7.4 below.

In the event that a Player is successful in challenging the Grading of an Offence, the Player will receive the Penalty Points and the sanction they would have received had the confirmed Grading been issued in the Penalty Notice.

5.4. Adjudications

The Operational Rules Tribunal's adjudications will:

- Be published in full;
- Give clear and full reasons for the decision;
- Summarise the cases of the Compliance Manager and Player respectively;

Confirm the sanction (if any) handed down including detailing the imposition of the one match suspension increment in the event that a Player has unsuccessfully challenged a Penalty Notice and the number of Penalty Points on the Player's record.

5.5. Right of Appeal

Both the Compliance Manager and the Player have a right of appeal subject to section D2 of the Operational Rules.

Appeals must be lodged within 7 days of the hearing or, if the case needs to be heard the following day, by 11am on the day after the hearing.

The only grounds for appeal are that the Operational Rules Tribunal:

- came to a decision to which no reasonable body could have come; or
- made an error of law in reaching its decision; or
- failed to act fairly in a procedural sense; or
- the sanction imposed was so excessive or lenient (in the case of the Compliance Manager) as to be unreasonable.

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Appeal hearings will be conducted by way of review and will not be 'de novo' hearings.

When submitting an appeal, a Player must submit a deposit of (i) £1000 in the case of Super League Players; (ii) £250 in the case of all other professional Players and (iii) £100 in the case of Scholarship Players and must specify the grounds for the appeal. In the event that the appeal is successful, the deposit shall be returned.

5.6. Appeal Hearing – Order of Proceedings

The chairperson will determine the order of proceedings, however usually:

- The chairperson will read the charge;
- The Appellant or their representative will confirm the grounds for appeal and will make relevant submissions
- The Respondent will be given the opportunity to respond to the Appellant's submissions;
- The Appellant or their representative will be given the opportunity to respond to the Respondent's response and will be given the final word;
- The Appellant and Respondent and any representatives will retire while the Operational Rules Tribunal deliberate;
- The chairperson will inform the parties if the appeal has been successful or unsuccessful and will, if necessary, confirm the sanction which has been imposed.
- The hearing concludes.

6. CASES REFERRED DIRECTLY TO OPERATIONAL RULES TRIBUNAL

The provisions in this Section 6 apply to cases where the Match Review Panel **elects** to refer a matter to Operational Rules Tribunal.

6.1. Order of Proceedings

The chairperson will determine the order of proceedings, however usually:

- The chairperson will read the charge;
- The Player or their representative will:
 - admit the Offence (and the Grading of the Offence);
 - admit the Offence and challenge the Grading of the Offence;
 - deny the Offence.
- The footage of the incident will be played;
- The Compliance Manager will present the case for the Match Review Panel;
- The Player or their representative will present the Player's case;
- The Compliance Manager will be given the opportunity to respond to the Player's submissions;

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- The Player or their representative will be given the opportunity to respond to the Compliance Manager's response and will be given the final word;
- The Compliance Manager and the Player and any representatives will retire while the Operational Rules Tribunal deliberate;
- If the Player denies the Offence the Operational Rules Tribunal will consider whether an Offence was committed;
- If the Player challenges the Grade of the Offence the Operational Rules Tribunal will consider the appropriate Grade for the Offence;
- The Compliance Manager and the Player and any representatives will reconvene in front of the Operational Rules Tribunal at which point the chairperson will advise all parties of the Operational Rules Tribunal's decision;
- In the event of a not guilty finding the hearing will conclude;
- In the event of a guilty finding the Operational Rules Tribunal will ask for the Player's previous disciplinary record to be read out.
- The Player or their representative will be given the opportunity to address the Operational Rules Tribunal regarding sanction;
- The Compliance Manager will be given the opportunity to respond to the Player's submissions;
- The Player or their representative will be given the opportunity to respond to the Compliance Manager's response and will be given the final word;
- The Compliance Manager and the Player and any representatives will retire while the Operational Rules Tribunal deliberate and determine the appropriate sanction with reference to these guidelines and any aggravating or mitigating factors which may be relevant.
- The Compliance Manager and the Player and any representatives will reconvene in front of the Operational Rules Tribunal at which point the Chairperson will advise all parties of the Operational Rules Tribunal's decision and any rights of appeal.
- The hearing concludes.

6.2. Normal Suspension Ranges – Guidelines Only

Players and Clubs should be aware that the normal suspension ranges are guidelines only and the Operational Rules Tribunal has the discretion to step outside of the normal ranges in the following three circumstances:

- If the Compliance Manager seeks a higher sanction in the light of specified aggravating factors, and the Operational Rules Tribunal agree that such factors mean a higher sanction should be imposed.
- If the Operational Rules Tribunal has previously advised the Player that it will apply a higher sanction next time that Player is found to have committed a misconduct Offence; or
- If the Operational Rules Tribunal feels that in the light of the aggravating and mitigating factors present it is appropriate to step outside of the normal suspension range (irrespective of whether this has been requested by the Compliance Manager) subject to section

5.3 of these guidelines and the imposition of any automatic one match suspension increment as a result of a Player challenging the imposition of a Penalty Notice.

6.3. Aggravating and Mitigating Factors

In determining the appropriate sanction, the Operational Rules Tribunal will take into account all relevant aggravating and mitigating factors (see below for a non-exhaustive list). For the avoidance of doubt the Operational Rules Tribunal shall apply appropriate weighting to any aggravating and mitigating factors when considering the relevant sanction, however it shall not be the case that each aggravating or mitigating factor invoked equates to a one match enhancement or reduction.

6.3.1. Aggravating Factors

Previous record
Violence
Retaliation
Injury caused
Incident not part of play
Other aggravating factors

6.3.1.1. Previous Disciplinary Record

- Player has record of the same or a similar Offence in the past - should result in a higher penalty than would otherwise be the case.
- Player has a disciplinary record for dissimilar Offences – not necessarily taken into account unless the Player's record is such that it shows a general disregard for the safety and welfare of other Players.
- Players who regularly commit acts of foul play – should receive ever increasing suspensions which may lead to a period suspension i.e. a Player with a serious record may receive a substantially longer suspension than a Player with no record for an Offence of the same nature.

6.3.1.2. Violence

- No place for acts of intentional violence or thuggery.
- Includes head butting, vicious attacks with fists, intentional high tackles, attacks on a prone opponent, an assault on an opponent from behind, gouging.
- Unprovoked violent assaults punished severely and period suspensions considered.

6.3.1.3. Retaliation

- When retaliation is calculated and/or intentional it is an aggravating factor.

6.3.1.4. Injury caused

- If the Misconduct has caused injury to an opponent, this may result in a higher penalty than if no injury had occurred.
- For the avoidance of doubt, if an incident has caused a Player to receive a concussive injury, the Operational Rules Tribunal should consider it as an aggravating factor.
- The Operational Rules Tribunal may consider the length of time an injured opponent is likely to be out of the game when passing sentence.

6.3.1.5. Incident not part of play

- Where an incident is not part of play i.e. off the ball or in back play then this may be an aggravating factor.

6.3.1.6. Other aggravating factors

- The Match Review Panel shall be entitled to take into account other aggravating factors as they reasonably think appropriate in the circumstances of an individual case.

6.3.2. Mitigating Factors

Previous good record

Provocation

Technique or fitness in some cases

Genuine remorse

Other mitigating factors

NB: the fact that no injury was caused is not usually a mitigating factor.

Mitigating factors are not ordinarily sufficient to go below the minimum of the range of suspensions of the charge the Player is found guilty of, other than in truly exceptional circumstances.

6.3.2.1. Previous Good Disciplinary Record

- Where a Player has a good previous record this may be treated as a mitigating factor.
- The Player must have been playing the game at professional level for long enough to have established a good record e.g. at least three years.
- Where a Player has a previous record but has not committed a Similar Offence for a period of at least five years their previous record may be discounted.

6.3.2.2. Provocation

- An immediate reaction to foul play by an opponent may be a mitigating factor as it may be seen as self-defence.
- Due consideration must be given to the distinction between self-defence, provocation and retaliation.

6.3.2.3. Technique or Fitness (*in some cases*)

- Rarely a valid defence at first team level.
- A Player who does not have the appropriate technique or fitness levels may be a danger to other Players.
- At academy level, some consideration may be given to these factors when accompanied by genuine remorse and intention to resolve the problem.

6.3.2.4. Genuine Remorse

- Genuine remorse for the Offence and formal apologies to the opponent may be mitigating pleas.

6.3.2.5. Dismissal

- The Operational Rules Tribunal, when sanctioning a Player, may consider whether that Player was dismissed from the field and the time of dismissal.

6.3.2.6. Other Mitigating factors

- The Match Review Panel shall be entitled to take into account other mitigating factors as they reasonably think appropriate in the circumstances of an individual case.
- Credit will not be given for a guilty plea at appeal stage if the charge was contested at first instance.

6.4. Adjudications

The Operational Rules Tribunal's adjudications will:

- Be published in full;
- Include all aggravating and/or mitigating factors taken into consideration;
- Give clear and full reasons for the decision;
- Summarise the cases of the Compliance Manager and Player respectively;
- Confirm the sanction (if any) handed down including all aggravating and/or mitigating factors taken into consideration;
- Explain any deviation from the On Field Sentencing Guidelines;
- Give clear and full reasons for the decision.

6.5. Right of Appeal

Both the Compliance Manager and the Player have a right of appeal subject to section D2 of the Operational Rules.

Appeals must be lodged within 7 days of the hearing or, if the case needs to be heard the following day, by 11am on the day after the hearing.

The only grounds for appeal are that the Operational Rules Tribunal:

- came to a decision to which no reasonable body could have come; or
- made an error of law in reaching its decision; or
- failed to act fairly in a procedural sense; or
- the sanction imposed was so excessive or lenient as to be unreasonable.

Appeal hearings will be conducted by way of review and will not be 'de novo' hearings.

When submitting an appeal, a Player must submit a refundable deposit of (i) £1500 in the case of Super League Players; (ii) £250 in the case of all other professional Players (iii) £100 in the case of all Scholarship Players and must specify the grounds for the appeal. In the event that the appeal is successful, the deposit shall be returned.

Appeals are to be conducted in accordance with the procedure specified in section 5.6.

7. LAWS OF THE GAME

The Laws of the Game for On Field Misconduct offences are:

- 15.1(a) Trips, kicks or strikes another player
- 15.1(b) When tackling or attempting to tackle makes contact with the head or neck of an opponent
- 15.1(c) Drops knees first on an opponent on the ground
- 15.1(d) Uses a dangerous throw
- 15.1(e) Intentionally and continuously breaks the Laws of the Game
- 15.1(f) Uses offensive or obscene language
- 15.1(g) Disputes a decision of the Referee or Touch Judges
- 15.1(h) Re-enters the field of play without the permission of the referee or touch judge
- 15.1(i) Behaves in any way contrary to the true spirit of the game
- 15.1(j) Intentional obstruction of an opponent not in possession
- 15.1(k) Shoulder Charge

Breaches of the Operational Rules which take place on field are not included in these Sentencing Guidelines.

7.1. Grading and Description of Offences

All Offences are graded in five grades A – F where Grade A is the lowest level of Offence and Grade F the most serious. The usual range of grades for each Offence is specified below however both the Match Review Panel and On Field Operational Rules Tribunal may deem that an incident should be graded outside of the range specified.

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The commonest Offences are listed in the sentencing guidelines with a description to assist all those concerned in referring to incidents in a standardised manner. It is accepted that there will be incidents not covered by the guideline descriptions and each sub section of the laws includes Other Offences which can be graded from A to F. Furthermore, it is accepted that some offences may be able to be categorised into more than one guideline description.

7.2. Table of Offences

Law No	Charge	Grade	Guideline Description
15.1(a)	Trips, kicks or strikes another player		
	Trips	A-E	Intentional tripping
	Kicks	E	Kicking opponent – makes contact with head of opponent
		D	Kicking opponent – makes contact with opponent (but not the head of the opponent)
		F	Kicking opponent – sustained and/or violent
		A-D	Intentionally stands on
		E	Trampling
		E	Stamping
	Strikes	A-E	Strikes with hand, arm, elbow or shoulder – ball carrier
		A-E	Strikes with hand, arm, elbow, or shoulder – tackling player
		B-E	Strikes with hand, arm, elbow, or shoulder – off the ball
	Strikes – knee	A-E	Raising knee in tackle
	Strikes - head butting	E	Head butting – makes contact with head of opponent
		D	Head butting – makes contact with opponent (but not Head of opponent)
		F	Head butting - sustained and/or violent
	Strikes – punching	C	Punching – self-defence - makes contact with head of opponent
		B	Punching – self-defence - makes contact with opponent (but not the head of the opponent)
		E	Punching– makes contact with the head of an opponent
		D	Punching –makes contact with an opponent (but not the head of the opponent)
		F	Punching – sustained and/ or violent
	Other Striking offences	A-E	
15.1(b)	When tackling or attempting to tackle makes contact with the head or neck of an opponent		
	Contact with head or neck	A-F	See Head Contact Sanctioning Framework
15.1(c)	Drops knees first on an opponent on the ground		
	Drops knees first	A-F	
15.1(d)	Uses a dangerous throw		
	Dangerous throw/lift	A-F	See Dangerous Throw Sanctioning Framework
15.1(e)	Intentionally and/or continuously breaks the Laws of the Game		
		A-F	
15.1(f)	Uses offensive or obscene language		
		A-C	Foul and/or abusive language

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		F	Verbal abuse based on race, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, national or ethnic origin or any other form of Unacceptable Language and/or Behaviour
	Other offensive or obscene language	A-E	

15.1(g)	Disputes a decision of the Referee or Touch Judges		
		A-B	Disputes decision
		C-E	Disputes using any foul and abusive or aggressive language and/or body language
		D-F	Questioning the integrity of a Match Official
		A-E	Other disputes decision
15.1(h)	Re-enters the field of play without the permission of the referee or touch judge		
		B-C	
15.1(i)	Behaves in any way contrary to the true spirit of the game (includes Dangerous Contact)		
		A-C	Attempted strike
		E	Makes unnecessary contact with a Player who is or may be injured.
		F	Gouging
		F	Biting
		E	Spitting
		F	Testicles – attacking
		F	Raking with studs
		F	Threatening words or actions towards match officials
		A-E	Reckless physical contact with a match official (e.g. placing hand on arm to attract attention)
		F	Intentional contact with a match official (e.g. pushing / shoving)
		F	Violent and aggressive physical assault of match officials (e.g. punching)
		A-F	Other contrary behaviour
		A-F	Defending player, in or after effecting a tackle, uses any part of their body forcefully to bend or apply unnecessary pressure to the head and/or neck and/or spinal column of the tackled player so as to keep the tackled player at a disadvantage in or after the tackle.
		A-F	Defending player, in or after effecting a tackle, forcefully and unnecessarily grasps (or jerks, or pins or twists) the head or neck of the tackled player.
		A-F	A defending player, in effecting a tackle, makes dangerous contact (either direct or indirect), or uses a technique which is likely to make dangerous contact (either direct or indirect), with the supporting leg or legs of an attacking player who is being held in the tackle by a defender(s), and who is deemed to be in a vulnerable position, in a way that involves an unacceptable risk of injury to that player,
		A-F	Defender uses any part of their body forcefully to twist, bend or otherwise apply pressure to the limb or limbs of an opposing player in a way that involves an unacceptable risk of injury to that player.
		A-F	Defender attempting to charge down a kick from an attacking player makes contact with the leg or legs of an attacking player who has kicked the ball, in a way that involves an unacceptable risk of injury to that player.

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		A-F	A defending player makes contact with an opponent after the ball has been released by an opponent in a vulnerable position which causes flexion to the head, neck or spinal column on an attacking player, which poses an unacceptable risk of injury to that player.
		A-F	A defending player endangers the safety of an opponent by making contact to the lower limb(s) of the opponent in an uncontrolled manner in a situation where there is no genuine attempt to make a tackle, and which involves an unacceptable risk of injury to the opponent.
	Save where otherwise prescribed in the Laws of the Game attempted foul play will be dealt with under 15.1(j).		
15.1(j)	Intentional obstruction of an opponent not in possession		
		A-F	
15.1(k)	Shoulder Charge		
		A-F	Indirect or secondary contact with the head of an attacking player.
		B-F	Direct initial contact with the head of an attacking player.
		A-F	Other dangerous Shoulder Charge

7.3. Penalty Points allocation for each Charge Grade

GRADE	POINT ALLOCATION
A	1
B	3
C	5
D	12
E	18
F	36

* Where an opponent is removed from the field of play and unable to return because of an injury caused by the charged misconduct an additional 3 Penalty Points will be allocated to that Player's disciplinary record.

* Where a Player is charged with On Field Misconduct but was permanently dismissed in the first half as a result of the incident for which he has been charged, 2 Penalty Points will be removed from the Player's disciplinary record. Where a Player is charged with On Field Misconduct but was permanently dismissed in the second half as a result of the incident for which he has been charged, 1 point will be removed from the Player's disciplinary record.

7.4. Sanctions

PENALTY POINTS	TARIFF
0-2	No further action
3-5	Fine
6-8	1 match suspension
9-11	1 match suspension and a fine
12-14	2 match suspension
15-17	2 match suspension and a fine

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18-20	3 match suspension
21-23	3 match suspension and a fine
24-26	4 match suspension
27-29	4 match suspension and a fine
30-32	5 match suspension
33-35	5 match suspension and a fine
36-38	6 match suspension and a fine
39-41	7 match suspension and a fine
42-44	8 match suspension and a fine
45-47	9 match suspension and a fine
48-50	10 match suspension and a fine
51-53	11 match suspension and a fine
54 +	12 match suspension plus and a fine

LEVEL	Fine – Match Review Panel	Fine – Operational Rules Tribunal
Scholarship	£0	£0
Championship Reserve/Academy	£25	£25
Super League Reserve/Academy	£25	£50
Community Club/Championship pre season	£40	£75
Championship	£125	£250
Super League*	0.5% of Player's salary	1% of Player's salary

*Super League fines capped at £1,000

In the event that Player is found guilty of multiple Offences, a fine should ordinarily be imposed for each Offence.

Education

In addition to any other sanction imposed by the Operational Rules Tribunal, where a Player is found guilty of Rule 15.1 (f) and such breach includes Unacceptable Behaviour and/or Language then the Operational Rules Tribunal must impose mandatory education on the Player provided that such offence is the Players first in such circumstances. For the avoidance of doubt such sanction of education shall not be issued instead of a fine and suspension but in addition to such other sanctions.

8. DEFINITIONS

8.1. Zero Tolerance

- Defined in the Operational Rules as the RFL policy of not tolerating any “Unacceptable Language and/or Behaviour” of any type and imposing severe penalties with no exceptions.
- Policy to be applied to player found guilty of “Unacceptable Language and/or Behaviour” on the field of play.
- Severe penalties to be applied.