



DISCIPLINARY REGULATIONS & PROCEDURES & INTEGRITY FRAMEWORK 2025

REVIEWED MARCH 2025

1. OVERVIEW OF DISCIPLINARY FRAMEWORK

- 1.1. Matters ordinarily dealt with by the appointed referee issuing cautions (i.e. yellow cards) or expulsions (i.e. red cards) in response to words or actions by players and team officials participating in the match are classed as disciplinary matters.
- 1.2. A referee has the power to issue cautions and/or expulsions, for reasons consistent with those outlined in Law 12 of the Laws of the Game.
- 1.3. North Coast Football (as the Competition Administrator), or its agent, has the authority (and is obliged to act accordingly), to impose sanctions (i.e. suspensions), against participants, (being players and team officials), who are issued a red card and those who accumulate the number of cautions disclosed within these regulations that ignite a suspension being imposed against such participant(s).
- 1.4. North Coast Football (NCF or otherwise known as the Zone or Competition Administrator) adheres to the general principles, procedures and scope, outlined within the Football Australia (FA) National Disciplinary Regulations (refer link below that was last updated August 2023 and remains valid for 2025, unless otherwise advised);
<https://www.footballaustralia.com.au/sites/ffa/files/2024-02/National%20Disciplinary%20Regulations%202024%20%28Final%29.pdf>

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1. A disciplinary matter is ordinarily a consequence of a decision made by a referee (who has been appointed to a sanctioned fixture), to issue a yellow card (i.e. caution) or a red card (i.e. expulsion) to a player or team official who is participating in such fixture.
- 2.2. An allegation consists of a claim being made by an individual(s) or a member club, that behaviour (being words and or actions) within a football environment, are inappropriate and otherwise considered to be offensive;
- 2.3. An allegation made against an individual or a member club, does not immediately require (and may not allow) the Competition Administrator (or its nominee), to take action.
- 2.4. An allegation made against an individual player or team official involved in a specific fixture, does not immediately require a match official to take action. A match official is authorised to respond to matters, immediately before, during or immediately after a match that they are officiating, if they see or hear anything that they deem to be an offence as prescribed as an offence within Law 12.
- 2.5. An allegation made against a player or a team official, regardless of whether it is or is not actioned by a Red Card or Yellow Card being issued, may be investigated and dealt with (at the absolute discretion of the Competition Administrator or its nominee), within the terms outlined in the Football Australia Code of Conduct and Ethics Regulations.
- 2.6. An allegation made against any participant or spectator, whether they are registered or not, may be investigated and dealt with (at the absolute discretion of the Competition Administrator or its nominee), within the terms outlined in the Football Australia Code of Conduct and Ethics Regulations.
- 2.7. A Yellow Card, (when issued) is a response to a minor offence that is classified as a cautionable offence as specified in Law 12 of the Laws of the Game

- 2.8. A Red Card, (when issued) is a response to a serious infringement of the Laws of the Game, that requires the participant receiving the card, to leave the vicinity of the field of play;
- 2.9. A participant (in relation to Disciplinary Regulations), means a registered player or team official;
- 2.10. A participant has a broader definition within the scope of the National Code of Conduct and Ethics Regulations and includes any person deemed to have committed an offence within a football environment. Each member club is fundamentally responsible for the behaviour of its members and patrons. A member club may be held accountable for behaviour that is inappropriate and may be sanctioned accordingly, if found to be complicit in such behaviour occurring or it is concluded that the club failed to reasonably respond to prevent or mitigate the behaviour from occurring.
- 2.11. A sanction imposed, means a suspension that prohibits a specific participant from acting in any role until the sanction has been extinguished in full;
- 2.12. A fixture means a match/game including a competition fixture or friendly that is sanctioned by the zone.
- 2.13. An appeal is a written objection lodged to a sanction that is imposed beyond the minimum sanction for an offence (as defined in the Table of offences and sanctions disclosed in these regulations) or in response to a claim of mistaken identity.
- 2.14. Right to Be Heard provides an opportunity for a participant to make a submission (ordinarily in writing), to offer their version of an alleged incident/offence.
- 2.15. Mandatory suspension means that an immediate suspension of ONE (1) match, is ignited against a participant (being a player or team official), when a Red Card has been issued against them and this forms a component of whatever severity of sanction is imposed;
- 2.16. Minimum Sanction refers to the lowest level of severity of a suspension imposed in accordance with the schedule of sanctions for various offences.

3. LAWS OF THE GAME

- 3.1. Laws of the Game apply as specified by Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) and updated annually: <https://www.theifab.com/#!/laws>;
- 3.2. Law 5 defines the scope of disciplinary authority that each individual centre referee has when officiating.
- 3.3. The authority of a referee exists during the period immediately before, during and immediately after the fixture that they officiate.
- 3.4. Law 12 defines the scope of fouls and misconduct (against players and team officials) including potential disciplinary action that each individual centre referee can make rulings on when officiating.

4. DETERMINING AUTHORITY

- 4.1. An assessment of a disciplinary matter (and subsequent determination, meaning sanction(s) imposed) will be made under an authority of one or more of following authorities, with the Zone, or Zone Nominee or Independent Arbitrator) initially imposing a sanction* (*) A match official has no role in determining what sanction is (or is not) imposed against any individual. The role of a referee (or match official) concludes when they lodge a send-off report, unless specifically requested by a

Determining Authority, to provide more information about the send-off or (where applicable), post send-off allegations;

4.2. Ranking of the Determining authorities

4.2.1. Competition Administrator or Zone Nominee;

4.2.2. Independent Arbitrator

4.2.3. Appeals Body or nominee;

4.2.4. Grievance Body or nominee;

5. SCOPE OF AUTHORITY

5.1. Relevant scope of authority exists as articulated within the following documents;

5.1.1 North Coast Football Disciplinary Regulations

5.1.2 Football Australia Football Disciplinary Regulations

5.1.3 International Football Association Board (IFAB) Laws of the Game;

5.1.4 North Coast Football Competition Regulations;

5.1.5 North Coast Football Constitution;

5.1.6 Football Australia Constitution

5.2. The Competition Administrator

5.2.1. Is defined as being the Zone or it's nominee;

5.2.2. Will adhere to a consistent process within the terms underpinned within the FA National Disciplinary Regulations and otherwise as disclosed by the Zone to its members and participants;

5.2.3. Is authorised to review all official reports received by the Zone;

5.2.4. May initiate an investigation regarding the behaviour of any participant(s) in relation to the assessment of a send-off report;

5.2.5. May initiate an investigation regarding the behaviour of any participant(s) in relation to the assessment of a serious infringement that has escaped the attention of the referee (as a Code of Conduct & Ethics matter);

5.2.6. May impose sanctions against a participant (i.e. registered player or team official) in response to a disclosed number of accumulated cautions (i.e. yellow cards), issued against such individuals;

5.2.7. May impose sanctions against a participant (i.e. registered player or team official) in response to a Red Card (or more than Red Card in any one calendar year, that have been issued against such individual;

These Regulations and Procedures are supplementary to the FA National Disciplinary Regulations and relevant NNSWF guidelines.

5.2.8. May refer serious or complex matters of behaviour (whether on the field or otherwise) to an Independent Arbitrator or agent.

5.2.9. Has the authority to investigate any disciplinary matter that is not otherwise specifically referred to in these Regulations.

5.3. A Determining Authority (above the Competition Administrator and subject to adherence to the terms of an Appeals Process);

5.3.1. Has the authority to vary, set aside or to impose additional sanctions of any sanction(s) imposed by the previous Determining Authority.

6. DISCIPLINARY PROCESS OVERVIEW

6.1. Match Officials make decisions during sanctioned fixtures to which they are appointed, consistent with the Laws of the Game;

6.2. A participant who is issued a Red Card is immediately required to stand-down from all roles until an assessment has been made by the Competition Administrator of what sanction is to be imposed;

6.3. A Send-off Report is submitted by Match Officials in instances where a Red Card has been issued;

6.4. An assessment of relevant report(s) is considered by the Competition Administrator, including validity of the Red Card offence as recorded by the referee and reconciliation with details on the match sheet records;

6.5. An assessment of any verbal or written submissions from accused person or Body (i.e. definition of the Right to be Heard) is made by the Competition Administrator;

6.6. An assessment of any other report or information relevant to disciplinary matters is made by the Competition Administrator;

6.7. A sanction is imposed (summarily by the Administrator unless referred to an Independent Arbitrator)*;

- (i) (*) A participant who is issued a Red Card is immediately required to stand-down from all roles until an assessment has been made by the Competition Administrator of what sanction is to be imposed;
- (ii) A participant who is issued a Red Card will be required to serve a suspension that cannot be less than a minimum of ONE (1) match, notwithstanding any additional sanction(s) imposed (Unless an appeal is lodged and is upheld on the basis of mistaken identity).

6.8. The sanction is advised in writing to the accused party (i.e. line of communication is to the participant's applicable member club, that must provide it member(s) with a copy of such documentation);

6.9. An optional appeal can be lodged (where sanction is imposed above the applicable minimum sanction) and if submitted within seven (7) working days of the sanction notice being issued by the zone (or its nominee) and where any applicable payment for lodging such an objection, has been made;

6.10. An optional grievance can be lodged where an objection is submitted in writing from the person who has been sanctioned, had their appeal dismissed and who wants to pursue a further appeal. This must be lodged within seven (7) working days This is the final option for an appeal to proceed and the determination from a grievance is binding on all parties involved in the process;

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7. SCOPE OF SANCTIONS

- 7.1. All sanctions will be applied in accordance with the schedule of sanctions disclosed in these Regulations, noting that the schedule of sanctions refers to minimum sanctions that exist for each offence, however a sanction may be applied above a defined minimum sanction;
- 7.2. The Determining Authority is empowered to impose penalties on player and/or team officials within the Zone, in any combination of the listed penalty limits, as is determined necessary to ensure compliance with the Disciplinary Regulations and applicable matters as disclosed by North Coast Football or it's agent.
- 7.3. Match Suspensions
- 7.3.1. The Determining Authority may suspend a participant for any number of matches (from playing) in addition to having any formal involvement any match day activities during the period that the sanction is in place.
- 7.3.2. The Determining Authority may impose a sanction in the form of (1) Number of matches that the participant must stand-down and (2) Number of matches held within the sanction component as a suspended component. Refer Clause 11 (specifically 11.10 to 11.13) FA Disciplinary Regulations. This option is at the absolute discretion of the Determining Authority and should ordinarily be contingent upon an assessment concluding that there is sound reasons for providing a concession to an immediate requirement for the participant to be suspended from all game day football activities for a period at least equal to the minimum sanction prescribed in the schedule of offences and minimum sanctions.
- 7.4. Time suspensions
- 7.4.1. A sanction that is imposed as a time sanction must be consistent with the conditions disclosed in Article 11.9 and Article 12.7 of the FA Disciplinary Regulations.
- 7.4.2. The Determining Authority may suspend a participant for any number of matches (from playing) in addition to having any formal involvement any match day activities for a specified time period that may include up to a life ban;

7.5. Table of RED CARD Offences by a Player and schedule of minimum sanctions

Offence	Minimum Sanction
Denying the opposing team an obvious goal-scoring opportunity as prescribed by Law 12 of the Laws of the Game	The Mandatory Match Suspension
Use of offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures	The Mandatory Match Suspension
Serious foul play (e.g. when challenging for the ball)	The Mandatory Match Suspension
Assault on a Player (e.g. violent conduct when not challenging for the ball) or against any other person other than a Match Official, including an attempted assault	1 additional match plus the Mandatory Match Suspension

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Serious unsporting conduct towards an opponent or a person other than a Match Official	The Mandatory Match Suspension
Use of discriminatory language and/or gestures, including racist, religious, ethnic or sexist conduct	4 additional matches plus the Mandatory Match Suspension
Spitting at a Player or any other person other than a Match Official	5 additional matches plus the Mandatory Match Suspension
Inciting a brawl	5 additional matches plus the Mandatory Match Suspension
Specific Offences against a Match Official	
Use of offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures against a Match Official	3 additional matches plus the Mandatory Match Suspension
Unsporting conduct toward a Match Official	3 additional matches plus the Mandatory Match Suspension
Assault of a Match Official	6 months including the Mandatory Match Suspension
Spitting at a Match Official	12 months Including the Mandatory Match Suspension

7.6 Table of Red Card Offences by a Coach/Team Official and schedule of minimum sanctions

Offence	Minimum Sanction
Entering the field of play to interfere with play or an opposing Player	The Mandatory Match Suspension
Deliberately leaving the Technical Area to act in a provocative or inflammatory manner or enter the opposing Technical Area in an aggressive or confrontational manner, or to enter the video operation room	The Mandatory Match Suspension
Use of offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures	The Mandatory Match Suspension
Assault on a Player, Team Official, spectator or any other person other than a Match Official (including physical or aggressive behaviour to such individuals)	1 additional match plus the Mandatory Match Suspension
Deliberately throwing/ kicking an object onto the field of play	The Mandatory Match Suspension
Using unauthorised electronic or communication equipment and/or behaving in an inappropriate manner as the result of using electronic or communication equipment	The Mandatory Match Suspension
Delaying the restart of play by the opposing team (e.g. holding onto the ball, kicking the ball away, obstructing the movement of a Player)	The Mandatory Match Suspension

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Use of discriminatory language and/or gestures, including racist, religious, ethnic or sexist	4 additional matches plus the Mandatory Match Suspension
Biting or spitting at a Player, Team Official or any other person other than a Match Official	5 additional matches plus the Mandatory Match Suspension
Specific Offences against a Match Official	
Use of offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures against a Match Official	3 additional matches plus the Mandatory Match Suspension
Deliberately leaving the Technical Area or entering the field of play to interfere with or confront a Match Official (including to show dissent towards or remonstrate with a Match Official)	The Mandatory Match Suspension
Unsporting conduct toward a Match Official	3 additional matches plus the Mandatory Match Suspension
Assault of a Match Official	6 months including the Mandatory Match Suspension
Biting or spitting at a Match Official	12 months Including the Mandatory Match Suspension

8. YELLOW CARDS (i.e. referee response to a cautionable offence)

8.1. Definition: A yellow card is issued by the referee in response to a minor offence by a player or team official that is considered by the referee to be a cautionable offence, as specified in Law 12 of the Laws of the Game.

8.2 Types of cautionable offences (i.e. types of yellow cards)

8.2.1 Y1 Unsporting behaviour

8.2.2 Y2 Dissent by word or action

8.2.3 Y3 Persistent offences (no specific number or pattern of offences constitutes “persistent”)

8.2.4 Y4 Delaying the restart of play

8.2.5 Y5 Failing to respect the required distance when play is restarted with a dropped ball, corner kick, free kick or throw-in

8.2.6 Y6 Entering, re-entering or deliberately leaving the field of play without the referee’s permission

8.2.7 Y7 Any cautionable offence by a Team Official, as listed in Law 12 of the Laws of the Game

8.3 Procedures and consequences

8.3.1 A Caution (Yellow Card) issued by the Referee, shall be recorded on the match sheet against a participant’s name (and including the nominated number for a player) or against the name of a Team Official, in such instances, at the conclusion of the match;

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- 8.3.2 The failure of a referee to record a caution on a match sheet (as a consequence of an error in such notation on a match sheet) does not nullify the reporting of such cautions by the referee if subsequently advised to NCF before 1pm on the second business day after the conclusion of a match or as otherwise determined by NCF.
- 8.3.3 NCF will notify the participant's member club if it is identified that a referee made an error in the recording of a yellow card. NCF will do so at the earliest opportunity after the error has been identified and ordinarily within three (3) working days.
- 8.3.4 The club and team to which the participant is registered, is primarily responsible for keeping a record of accumulated cards for their participants. There is no clemency provided if a participant fails to stand-down (and subsequently extinguish a suspension) based on a reliance upon NCF to issue written notification about a suspension being imposed as a consequence of accumulated cards;
- 8.3.5 Yellow Cards accumulated by the same participant in different competitions, apply as if they were issued to the participant in the same competition* (*) Refer to Clause 9 that depicts weighting of cautions issued to a player versus a team official;
- 8.3.6 A participant who accumulates a number of cautions (being any number of cautions defined within these Regulations to trigger a suspension), is not considered eligible to participate (in any role) beyond the conclusion of the fixture in which such suspension is effective and cannot rely on any defence, including for reasons such as (i) The specific severity of the sanction is unknown, (ii) The sanction notification has not been issued, (iii) The sanction notification has not been received or (iv) Any other reason.
- 8.3.7 The validity of a caution recorded in a match that is determined by NCF to be an abandoned match, will be considered at the discretion of NCF;
- 8.3.8 The only appeal allowed against a caution is for mistaken identity, where NCF or its agent is satisfied that sound evidence exists to defer the caution to another participant;
- 8.3.9 Cumulative cautions received by an individual while participating in more than one role (e.g. Player and Team Official), will ignite a severity of sanction being imposed at the sole assessment of the Zone;
- 8.3.10 A participant who receives a caution (Yellow Card) in the one match and who also receives a direct Red Card will have recorded against his/her name ONE (1) Caution which will be counted in the participant's accumulation of Yellow Cards, plus the penalty imposed for the Red Card offence;
- 8.3.11 Match suspensions incurred as a result of the accumulation of cautions (i.e. Yellow Cards) will not be cancelled and shall be served (in the next equivalent competition match in which the offence occurred), that is scheduled for the participant where such suspensions have not been fully extinguished consistent with the terms of NCF regulations;
- 8.3.12 The accumulation of cautions (i.e. yellow cards) will be reset at the end of the last match of the respective pre-season competitions, pointscore competitions, Finals Series of each year.
- 8.3.13 Cautions (i.e. yellow cards) issued in a sanctioned competition that is not managed by NCF (e.g. Australia Cup), are not recorded for the purposes of participant eligibility, unless NCF is

advised that a participant is subject to a sanction as a consequence of accumulated yellow cards. In such circumstances, a participant is required to extinguish the sanction in the relevant NCF competition.

9 CUMULATIVE CAUTIONS AND SANCTIONS

9.1 Pre-season

9.1.1 Player

- i. A player who accumulates THREE (3) cautions (i.e. yellow cards) within the same Pre-Season shall be required to serve a ONE (1) match suspension (consistent with the terms outlined in the NCF Competition Rules);

9.1.2 Team Official

- i. A Team Official who accumulates ONE (1) caution (i.e. yellow card) within the same Pre-Season shall be required to serve at least a minimum of ONE (1) match suspension (consistent with the terms outlined in the NCF Disciplinary Regulations);
- ii. A Team Official who accumulates any further cautions (i.e. yellow cards) within the same competition, shall be required to serve at least a further ONE (1) match suspension for each subsequent caution (i.e. yellow card received (*)) and further; NCF may apply an additional penalty if the participant's record or nature of the cautions received is considered of a level to justify such action

9.2 Pointscore Series

9.2.1 Player

- i. A player who accumulates FIVE (5) cautions (i.e. yellow cards) within the same season, shall be required to serve a minimum of ONE (1) match suspension (consistent with the terms outlined in the NCF Competition Rules);
- ii. A player who accumulates a further THREE (3) cautions, (i.e. a total of eight (8) yellow cards) within the same season, shall be required to serve a TWO (2) match suspension;
- iii. A player who accumulates NINE (9) cautions shall serve a THREE (3) match suspension with no right to appeal (consistent with the terms outlined in the NCF Competition Rules)

9.2.2 Team Official

- i. A Team Official who accumulates TWO (2) cautions (i.e. yellow cards) within the same season, shall be required to serve at least a minimum of ONE (1) match suspension (consistent with the terms outlined in the NCF Disciplinary Regulations);
- ii. A Team Official who accumulates any further cautions (i.e. yellow cards) within the same season, shall be required to serve at least a further ONE (1) match suspension for each subsequent caution.

10 RED CARDS

- 10.1 A participant who is issued a Red Card is immediately required to stand-down from all roles until an assessment has been made by the Competition Administrator of what sanction is to be imposed;
- 10.2 A participant who receives a Red Card will be required to serve at least a minimum of one (1) match suspension, notwithstanding any additional sanction(s) imposed;
- 10.3 A participant who receives a Red Card is immediately prohibited from participating in any role upon being sent from the field of play until the terms of a sanction have been issued in writing by the competition administrator and the suspension has been fully extinguished;
- 10.4 There will be no exemptions given to enable a participant (who has been issued a Red Card) to continue a participation (in any role) on a basis that they intend to appeal or have lodged an appeal.
- 10.5 A Member who accumulates more than one or more Red Cards during the same calendar year, that includes the pre-season competition, main season competition, Finals Series, must serve a suspension that includes a component as disclosed below, in addition to any further penalty determined by the Competition Administrator or nominee;
 - 10.5.1 First Red Card – One (1) Match suspension;
 - 10.5.2 Second Red Card – Two (2) Match suspension;
 - 10.5.3 Third Red Card – Four (4) Match suspension;
 - 10.5.4 Fourth Red Card – Six (6) Match suspension in addition to sanction imposed by the Competition Administrator;
- 10.6 Suspended participants and participants sent from the field during the match are not permitted in the Technical Area until the full suspension is served and cannot have any active role in the coaching of team activities during a fixture.
- 10.7 The only appeal allowed against the mandatory match suspension is for mistaken identity.
- 10.8 The requirement to serve the suspension cannot be appealed unless a case of mistaken identity is proven by NCF or it's agent. In such cases, a participant must otherwise be confirmed as having committed the offence and must be sanctioned accordingly;
- 10.9 Cautions (i.e. yellow cards) or Red Cards, issued in a sanctioned competition that is not managed by NCF (e.g. Australia Cup), are not recorded for the purposes of participant eligibility, unless NCF is advised that a participant is subject to a sanction as a consequence of accumulated yellow cards or red card. In such circumstances, a participant is required to extinguish the sanction in the relevant NCF competition.
- 10.10 A Participant who receives a Red Card in a Friendly, may be required to serve a suspension in the next Friendly for such participant or as otherwise required by the Competition Administrator;

11 SERVING A SUSPENSION/EXTINGUISHING A SANCTION

- 11.1 The name of a participant who is serving a suspension that is stipulated as being a consecutive (i.e. suspended for matches), must be noted on the respective match sheet(s) as standing down.
- 11.2 A participant is required to extinguish the relevant sanction/suspension, in the competition in which the offence occurred for a Red Card offence;
- 11.3 A participant is required to extinguish the relevant sanction, in the same competition in which the yellow card offence occurred, that initiates the suspension being imposed, for a Yellow Card offence;
- 11.4 The absence of player records on respective match sheets will void the impact of extinguishing any component of the sanction.
- 11.5 A participant cannot extinguish any component of a sanction by being noted as standing down in a competition other than the one in which the sanction was imposed* (*) Unless an offence ignites a suspension that must be extinguished in a different competition as a consequence the scheduling of different competitions. Refer to Australia Cup Regulations and Football Australia National Disciplinary Regulations Clause 11.6
- 11.6 A participant cannot act in any role (on match day) while subject to a sanction;
- 11.7 A suspension remains valid (until fully extinguished), including if a participant de-registers from one club and registers with another;
- 11.8 There is no requirement to note a participant's name on any match sheet(s) who is subject to a time suspension;
- 11.9 NCF or it's agent has the authority to determine any matter that is not otherwise specifically referred to in these Regulations.
- 11.10 Cautions (i.e. yellow cards) or Red Cards, issued in a sanctioned competition that is not managed by NCF (e.g. Australia Cup), are not recorded for the purposes of participant eligibility, unless NCF is advised that a participant is subject to a sanction as a consequence of accumulated yellow cards or red card. In such circumstances, a participant is required to extinguish the sanction in the relevant NCF competition.

12 NOTIFICATION AND TIMEFRAMES

- 12.1 The Competition Administrator will issue a sanction notification (by notifying the participant in writing to the participant's member club) ordinarily within 10 working days from the date of the send-off;
- 12.2 A Member Club can write to the Competition Administrator seeking a sanction notification (or advice about the sanction process) if a sanction notification has not been received after a participant has stood down for the mandatory one (1) match that applies notwithstanding any further sanction imposed.
- 12.3 A participant who receives a Red Card is ineligible to participate (in any role) until a sanction that has been imposed is fully extinguished;

- 12.4 A participant who receives a Red Card is not considered eligible to participate (in any role) on the basis that a sanction is unknown, has not been issued, has not been received or for any other similar reason;
- 12.5 A participant who accumulates a number of cautions (being any number of cautions defined within these Regulations to trigger a suspension), is ineligible to participate (in any role), effective from the conclusion of the fixture in which such suspension is effective, until the specific sanction that is imposed is fully extinguished.
- 12.6 A participant who accumulates a number of cautions (being any number of cautions defined within these Regulations to trigger a suspension), is not considered eligible to participate (in any role) beyond the conclusion of the fixture in which such suspension is effective and cannot rely on any defence, including for reasons such as (i) The specific severity of the sanction is unknown, (ii) The sanction notification has not been issued, (iii) The sanction notification has not been received or (iv) Any other reason
- 12.7 A matter that is assessed by an Independent Arbitrator or within the terms of a Code of Conduct will be determined in a timeline that is contingent upon factors including the complexity of the matter and resources allocated by the Arbitrator;
- 12.8 Where, in the opinion of the Competition Administrator, a reported incident appears likely to be particularly complex or be expected to give rise to a large number of persons wishing to give evidence or where the identity of any person cited in the referee's report is unknown or disputed for any reason, the Competition Administrator may convene an Investigative Process to hear witnesses and/or make the necessary findings in respect of any matters requiring determination prior to hearing.
- 12.9 The Competition Administrator is obliged to adhere to the directions imposed by the Arbitrator and any higher authority.

13 APPEALS

- 13.1 There can be no appeal to the imposition of a ONE (1) match suspension;
- 13.2 An appeal cannot be lodged for a suspension imposed that is consistent with an applicable minimum sanction imposed for a defined offence. (Refer range of offences and schedule of minimum sanctions outlined on pages 6 and 7)
- 13.3 Appeals must be submitted in writing, signed and dated, by the participant who is subject to the suspension, stating full grounds for the appeal, and enclosing the appropriate fee as per Appendix 'A' and lodged to the zone (or nominated body) within seven (7) working days of a determination being advised to a member* (*) The participant's club will ordinarily facilitate the submission of a appeal, but cannot act solely as the agent for a participant in this situation.
- 13.4 There will be no exemptions given to enable a participant (who has been issued a Red Card) to continue a participation (in any role) on a basis that they intend to appeal or have lodged an appeal.
- 13.5 The Competition Administrator (or its nominee), will convene at an appointed time, place and format, at its discretion;

- 13.6 A party may be called to attend in person or by phone or to provide more information, at the absolute discretion of the Competition Administrator, or its agent.
- 13.7 If a party fails to attend, the case can be heard and determined in that party's absence, including as to determination of the charge and/or sanction.
- 13.8 Once the Competition Administrator or its nominee has reached a decision the Member and/or the Member's representative will be given a copy of the determination, which must be given to the participant who lodged the appeal.
- 13.9 All decisions of a Competition Administrator or its agent remain in force unless dismissed as a consequence of the disclosed appeals process outlined above.
- 13.10 Any aggrieved person who is dissatisfied with the finding of the Determining Authority Competition may initiate a grievance process in accordance with the lodgement of a non-refundable fee of \$880.00 and lodging a written submission that articulates (1) The basis of the grievance lodged and (2) specifying what outcome would resolve the grievance.
- 13.11 A grievance process will be heard by an independent authority in accordance with relevant factors and are not subject to precise timelines.
- 13.12 Schedule of Fees for Appeals and/or Grievance Procedure

Disciplinary Appeals

• Appeals to Disciplinary Committee Fee	\$220.00
• Appeals to Appeal Board Fee	\$440.00
Appeals to NCF Zone Committee Fee	\$880.00 (non-refundable)

14 MISTAKEN IDENTITY

- 14.1 The definition of Mistaken Identity is outline in FA Regulations Article 4;
- 14.2 The competition Administrator has absolute discretion over the assessment of an appeal based on mistaken identity;
- 14.3 An appeal lodged on the basis of mistaken identity must be submitted in writing to NCF within two (2) working days from the end of the match in which the mistake allegedly occurred.
- 14.4 Details of the person alleged to have committed the said offence and who has not been issued a Red Card, must be identified and nominated in the appeal lodged;
- 14.5 Details of the person alleged to have committed the said offence and who has not been issued a Yellow Card, must be identified and nominated in the appeal lodged;

15 INVESTIGATIVE POWERS

- 15.1 Where, in the opinion of the Competition Administrator, a reported incident appears likely to be particularly complex or be expected to give rise to a large number of persons wishing to give evidence or where the identity of any person cited in the referee's report is unknown or disputed for any reason, the Competition Administrator may convene an investigative process to hear

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witnesses and/or make the necessary findings in respect of any matters requiring determination prior to hearing. This would ordinarily be managed by an independent Arbitrator.

- 15.2 The Competition Administrator may impose costs relevant to the engagement of an Independent Arbitrator, against the participant's member club.

16 EVIDENCE

- 16.1 Evidence shall comprise written submissions, and oral presentation (where appropriate) by way of;
- 16.1.1 Reports, Referees or other accepted by the Competition Administrator;
 - 16.1.2 Participants' written deposition, signed and dated;
 - 16.1.3 Witnesses' written depositions, signed and dated, from witnesses who may be called upon by the Determining Authority if required;
- 16.2 The Member must provide to the Determining Authority a copy of any written submissions, materials or documents it intends to rely on in the hearing, as well as the names of any persons who will be attending to represent them, at least two (2) business days before the start of that hearing. If it fails to do so, the Competition Administrator may refuse to submit them into evidence at the hearing;
- 16.3 The Competition Administrator will provide all applicable documentation to the Determining Authority without prejudice;
- 16.4 If after a hearing has concluded, the Competition Administrator becomes aware that a Member or witness may have misled the Competition Administrator or the Determining Authority, the Determining Authority may set aside decisions and make new determinations upon them or their member club or team(s) or all parties.
- 16.5 Witnesses or participants considered to have misled the Competition Administrator or the Determining Authority may have penalties imposed upon them or their member club or team(s).

17 NOTIFICATION AND TIMEFRAMES

- 17.1 The Competition Administrator will issue a sanction notification (by notifying the participant in writing to the participant's member club) ordinarily within 10 working days from the date of the send-off;
- 17.2 A Member Club can write to the Competition Administrator seeking a sanction notification (or advice about the sanction process) if a sanction notification has not been received after a participant has stood down for the mandatory one (1) match that applies notwithstanding any further sanction imposed.
- 17.3 A participant who receives a Red Card is ineligible to participate (in any role) until a sanction that has been imposed is fully extinguished;

INTEGRITY FRAMEWORK

18 OVERVIEW

It is important to recognise the distinction between disciplinary matters and integrity matters.

Disciplinary matters are offences made by participants in their role as a player or team official during a match that are subsequently actioned by a referee issuing a caution (i.e. yellow card) or expulsion (i.e. red card).

Allegations made against any person (whether a player or team official who participate in any match), or a Body, (being a member club), that are that are not subject to action by a referee during a match or that were not actioned by the referee, may be investigated and dealt with in accordance consistent with the scope of relevant matters outlined in Football's Integrity Framework.

The Competition Administrator (or its agent), has the power to initiate reasonable enquiries and to subsequently investigate serious allegations made known to North Coast Football, that potentially identify activity that is in breach of any aspect of the Football Australia National Code of Conduct and Ethics Regulations (including Clause 2 as shown below);

- 18.1 Matters ordinarily dealt with by the appointed referee issuing cautions (i.e. yellow cards) or expulsions (i.e. red cards) in response to words or actions by players and team officials participating in the match are disciplinary matters.
- 18.2 A referee has the power to issue cautions and/or expulsions, for reasons consistent with those outlined in Law 12 of the Laws of the Game. This authority exists for the period of a match and is primarily excised in response to cautionable or expulsion offences by the use of yellow and/or red cards.
- 18.3 The authority of a referee (or assistant referee), beyond the period of a match, is limited to reporting allegations and they cannot issue a yellow or red card to any player or team official after the conclusion of a match. This means when players and team officials have exited the field of play (including the technical area).
- 18.4 A match official can submit a written report (being an Incident Report), if they personally see or hear an incident that is alleged to be an offence beyond the conclusion of a match. This is the mechanism for making an allegation against a player or team official for any off field incident that cannot be otherwise actioned by issuing a yellow or red card.
- 18.5 A match official can submit a written report (being an Incident Report), if they personally see or hear an incident that is alleged to be an offence prior to, during or beyond the conclusion of a match, against an individual or member club. This is the mechanism for making an allegation against an individual or club, for any off field incident that cannot be otherwise actioned by issuing a yellow or red card.
- 18.6 A participant has a broader definition within the scope of the National Code of Conduct and Ethics Regulations and includes any person deemed to have committed an offence within a football environment. Each member club is fundamentally responsible for the behaviour of its members and patrons. A member club may be held accountable for behaviour that is inappropriate and may be sanctioned accordingly, if found to be complicit in such behaviour occurring or it is concluded that the club failed to reasonably respond to prevent or mitigate the behaviour from occurring.
- 18.7 A sanction imposed, means a suspension that prohibits a specific participant from acting in any role until the sanction has been extinguished in full;
- 18.8 An allegation consists of a claim being made by an individual(s) or a member club, that behaviour (being words and or actions) within a football environment, are inappropriate and otherwise considered to be offensive;

- 18.9 An allegation made against an individual or a member club, does not immediately require (and may not allow) the Competition Administrator (or its nominee), to take action.
- 18.10 An allegation made against an individual player or team official involved in a specific fixture, does not immediately require a match official to take action. A match official is authorised to respond to matters, immediately before, during or immediately after a match that they are officiating, if they see or hear anything that they deem to be an offence as prescribed as an offence within Law 12.
- 18.11 An allegation made against a player or a team official, regardless of whether it is or is not actioned by a Red Card or Yellow Card being issued, may be investigated and dealt with (at the absolute discretion of the Competition Administrator or its nominee), within the terms outlined in the Football Australia Code of Conduct and Ethics Regulations.
- 18.12 An allegation made against any participant or spectator, whether they are registered or not, may be investigated and dealt with (at the absolute discretion of the Competition Administrator or its nominee), within the terms outlined in the Football Australia Code of Conduct and Ethics Regulations.
- 18.13 North Coast Football (as the Competition Administrator), or its agent, has the authority (and is obliged to act accordingly), to impose sanctions (including suspensions against participants) and member clubs, where breaches of the National Code of Conduct and Ethics Regulations are proven.
- 18.14 North Coast Football (NCF or otherwise known as the Zone or Competition Administrator) adheres to the general principles, procedures and scope, outlined within the Football Australia (FA) National Code of Conduct Regulations (refer link below that was last updated April 2021 and remains valid for 2025, unless otherwise advised);
- 18.15 Spectators are expected to adhere to standards of behaviour appropriate as outlined in the Football Australia Spectator Code of Behaviour
<https://www.footballaustralia.com.au/sites/ffa/files/201907/2019%20Spectator%20Code%20of%20Behaviour.pdf>

19 FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA NATIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS REGULATIONS

<https://www.footballaustralia.com.au/sites/ffa/files/2021-04/FA%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20and%20Ethics%20%282021%29.pdf>

Excerpt from National Code of Conduct and Ethics Regulations (being Clause 2) is shown below;

Misconduct

Any Constituent who engages in Misconduct may be sanctioned in accordance with this Code. For the purposes of this Code, Misconduct means a breach of clauses 2.2 to 2.13 set out below.

General Behaviour

A Constituent must not engage in any of the following conduct:

- (a) offensive behaviour, including offensive, obscene, abusive, provocative, indecent or insulting gestures, language or chanting;*
- (b) physically assaulting another person;*
- (c) provocation or incitement of hatred or violence;*

These Regulations and Procedures are supplementary to the FA National Disciplinary Regulations and relevant NSWVR guidelines.

- (d) intimidating another person or creating a hostile or unsafe environment within the sport;*
- (e) damaging property in connection with a Match or Competition;*
- (f) any conduct in breach of the FA Spectator Code of Behaviour or the Terms of Admission at a Match, including any involvement in spectator, supporter or crowd violence;*
- (g) any other conduct that brings, or may bring, FA, any of its sponsors, a Football Administrator or Football generally into disrepute or which is otherwise prejudicial to the interests of FA or Football generally.*

20 PROCEDURE

20.1 Subject to Clause 7, a Football Administrator may enforce the terms of this Code and invoke the sanctions only if it has given the party alleged to have infringed this Code:

- i. reasonable details of the alleged infringement;
- ii. notice of possible sanctions; and
- iii. the opportunity to be heard in relation to the issues of infringement and sanction.

21 SANCTIONS

21.1 The scope and implementation of disciplinary sanctions is as specified in article 21.5 of the Football Australia Constitution (effective 13 December 2023), as outlined below;

(a) The following disciplinary sanctions may be imposed against a legal person including a Body:

- (i) a reprimand;
- (ii) warning;
- (iii) a fine;
- (iv) the return of awards,
- (v) a forfeit of match or matches;
- (vi) replaying of a match;
- (vii) place the Body on a bond;
- (viii) a deduction or loss of competition points;
- (ix) ban on the registration or transfer of any Players for a specified period of time;
- (x) annulment of registration of a Player;
- (xi) suspension from participation in a Match or Matches;
- (xii) exclusion, suspension or expulsion from a Competition;
- (xiii) playing a match without spectators or on neutral territory;
- (xiv) a ban on playing in a particular stadium;
- (xv) annulment of the result of the match;
- (xvi) relegation to a lower division; or
- (xvii) such other disciplinary sanctions or measures as is appropriate in all the circumstances, including as prescribed in the FIFA Statutes.

(b) The following disciplinary sanctions may be imposed against a natural person:

- (i) a reprimand;
- (ii) a warning;
- (iii) a caution;

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- (iv) a fine;
- (v) return of award;
- (vi) place the individual on a bond;
- (vii) ban on registration of Player with any Club for a specified period of time;
- (viii) annulment of registration of a Player;
- (ix) suspension from participation in a Match or Matches;
- (x) suspension or expulsion from a Competition;
- (xi) suspension or cancellation of licence or accreditation, including Licensed Player Agent's licence or coaching accreditation;
- (xii) termination of registration or playing contract;
- (xiii) a ban from the dressing rooms and/or the substitutes' bench;
- (xiv) a ban from entering a stadium;
- (xv) ban on taking part in any football related activity;
- (xvi) community or social work; or
- (xvii) such other disciplinary sanctions or measures as is appropriate in all the circumstances, including as prescribed in the FIFA Statutes.

22 MEMBER PROTECTION

22.1 Safeguarding

22.1.1 A Constituent must not engage in any conduct that endangers or may endanger the safety or wellbeing of a Child or Adult at Risk in accordance with FA's Safeguarding Policy.

22.1.2 A Constituent must not abuse their relative position of power or inappropriately take advantage of a relationship where a power imbalance exists (such as coach/player).

22.2 Discrimination

22.2.1 A Constituent must not engage in any unlawful discriminatory behaviour towards a person on account of an Attribute. Discrimination includes:

22.2.2 publicly disparaging or vilifying;

22.2.3 inciting hatred towards,

22.3 North Coast Football fundamentally adheres to the scope of matters articulated with the following sources;

20.3.1 Office of the Children's Guardian

<https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/>

<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/2012/51>

20.3.2 Football Australia's Member Protection Framework

<https://www.footballaustralia.com.au/member-protection-framework>

20.3.3 Northern NSW Football's Working with Children Check Policy

23 GRIEVANCE

These Regulations and Procedures are supplementary to the FA National Disciplinary Regulations and relevant NNSWF guidelines.

- 23.1 North Coast Football recognises the general principles of providing a mechanism for an aggrieved party to lodge a grievance to a Code of Conduct and Ethics determination made against such party.
- 23.2 Any aggrieved person (meaning a person who has been sanctioned), who is dissatisfied with the Determination made against them, may initiate a grievance process in accordance with the lodgement of a non-refundable fee of \$1000.00 paid to NCF (or body nominated by NCF) and lodging a written submission not later than seven (7) working days from the written notification given on behalf of an Independent Arbitrator. A grievance must articulate (1) The basis of the grievance lodged and (2) specifying what outcome would resolve the grievance.
- 23.3 Any aggrieved Body (i.e. member club) that is dissatisfied with the Determination made against them may initiate a grievance process in accordance with the lodgement of a non-refundable fee of \$1000.00 paid to NCF (or body nominated by NCF) and lodging a written submission not later than seven (7) working days from the written that articulates (1) The basis of the grievance lodged and (2) specifying what outcome would resolve the grievance.
- 23.4 North Coast Football acknowledges the framework outlined by Football Australia in its Grievance Procedures By-Laws: <https://www.footballaustralia.com.au/sites/ffa/files/2021-10/FA%20Grievance%20Procedure%20By-Law%20-%20effective%201%20November%202021.pdf>
- 23.5 A grievance will be heard by an Independent Arbitrator (i.e. Outcome is not made by North Coast Football or the same authority that made the Determination).
- 23.6 The grievance process is not subject to precise timelines.
- 23.7 There will be no exemptions given to enable a participant (who has been issued a Red Card) to continue a participation (in any role) on a basis that they intend to appeal or have lodged an appeal.
- 23.8 The Independent Arbitrator, will convene at an appointed time, place and format, at its discretion;
- 23.9 A party may be called to attend in person or by phone or to provide more information, at the absolute discretion of the Independent Arbitrator.
- 23.10 If a party is called to attend or make an submission or to add further information to a matter and fails to do so, the case can be heard and determined in that party's absence, including as to determination of the charge and/or sanction.
- 23.11 There is no mechanism for a party (or North Coast Football), to appeal a decision made by the authority hearing a grievance.
- 23.12 All parties agree that they will not pursue matters via legal/court jurisdiction that otherwise exists beyond allegations and decisions made within a football setting and dealt with within the scope of the relevant regulations.
- 23.13 Schedule of Fees for Grievance Procedure

Lodgment of Grievance

\$1000.00 (non-refundable)

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