



SCOTTISH WOMEN'S  
FOOTBALL

## Scottish Women's Football Regional Leagues

### Disciplinary Procedures Season 2024

Scottish Women's Football Leagues & League Cup

Highlands and Islands League & League Cup



SCOTTISH WOMEN'S  
FOOTBALL LEAGUE



SCOTTISH WOMEN'S  
HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS  
LEAGUE



SCOTTISH WOMEN'S  
FOOTBALL

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## **PART 1: Disciplinary Procedures for Players**

### Introduction

The following Disciplinary Procedures (“Procedures”) shall apply to all senior regional football played under the jurisdiction of Scottish Women’s Football (SWF) as listed below: -

- a) Scottish Women’s Football League
- b) Scottish Women’s Football League Cup/ Plate
- c) Highlands and Islands League
- d) Highlands & Islands League Cup

These procedures shall apply to all players registered or playing for clubs as defined by the foregoing paragraph, and to players who are not participating in a match as either a player or a named substitute.

SWF shall administer cautions and sending off offences and/or Excessive Misconduct by players at a match, as reported by the match official, in terms of these procedures. SWF maintains appropriate disciplinary records to give effect to suspensions in accordance with section 3.

### **1. REPORTING OF OFFENCES BY MATCH OFFICIALS**

#### **1.1 Cautionable and Sending off Offences**

- 1.1.1 Referees will administer cautions and sendings-off in accordance with the Laws of the Game. A caution or sending off is not nullified by a referee failing to show the player the appropriate card when issuing the sanction to the player.
- 1.1.2 Referees must submit report forms to the League or Cup Administrator, confirming cautions and sending offs administered to player(s); such reports to be received by the League/Cup Administrator within three working days of the match. The forms must state the details of each offence. In the case of a player who is sent off for receiving a second caution, the referee must report the two offences which resulted in the player’s dismissal.
- 1.1.3 If a referee considers that a player’s sending off is of such a serious nature that it warrants consideration by the relevant Committee as a case of misconduct in accordance with ‘Section 4–Other Provisions’, he/she shall submit, in addition to the report form, a separate report fully detailing the incident.

#### **1.2 Incidents Occurring Before, During or After a Match**

- 1.2.1 Referees must submit to the League/Cup Administrator a detailed report on any incident which occurs before, during or after a match; such reports to be received by the League/Cup Administrator within three working days of the match.
- 1.2.2 Misconduct committed by a player which is the equivalent of a cautionable or sending off offence will be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 or by referral to the SWF Discipline Committee where the League Administrator deems this necessary.

### **2. RECORDING OF OFFENCES**

#### **2.1 Cautionable Offences**

The League/Cup Administrator will confirm the caution to the player’s club. In the case of a player incurring a fourth caution in the same season, and for every fourth caution incurred thereafter during that season, the League/Cup Administrator will confirm to her club that she is subject to the standard sanction as detailed in Section 3.

#### **2.2 Sending-off Offences**

The League/Cup Administrator will confirm the sending-off to the player’s club and that she is subject to the standard sanction as detailed in Section 3.

#### **2.3 Incidents Occurring Before, During or After a Match**

Where a player has committed an offence, the League/Cup Administrator will confirm to the player's club whether it is deemed to be the equivalent of a cautionable or sending off offence and, where appropriate, that she is subject to the standard sanction as detailed in Section 3.

### **3. SANCTIONS**

#### **3.1 Cautions**

A player who incurs four cautions during a season will be suspended for one match. The suspension shall be effective on the 14th day following the date of the offence which resulted in the incurring of the suspension and will require to be served by the player's recognised team (i.e. the team for which she normally plays) playing one match. In cases where a player is regularly listed in the team lists for more than one of the club's teams, her level of participation for each team will be used to determine the player's recognised team (i.e. whichever team she has the most appearances for). The application of a one match suspension will be repeated for every fourth caution incurred by a player during the season.

#### **3.2 Sendings-off (For serious foul play, violent conduct, or spitting)**

A player who is sent off for serious foul play, violent conduct or spitting will be suspended automatically for the next three matches her club plays at the same age/level as the match in which she was sent off.

#### **3.3 Sendings-off (For offensive, insulting or abusive language)**

A player who is sent off for offensive, insulting or abusive language will be suspended automatically for the next two matches her club plays at the same age level as the match in which she was sent off.

#### **3.4 Sendings-off (For denying the opposing team a goal or goal scoring opportunity or receiving a second caution)**

A player who is sent off for denying the opposing team a goal or goal scoring opportunity or receiving a second caution will be suspended automatically for the next match her club plays at the same age level as the match in which she was sent off.

#### **3.5 Incidents Occurring Before, During or After a Match**

Where a player has committed an offence which is the equivalent of a cautionable or sending off offence, she will be suspended in accordance with sub-paragraph 3.1 in the event of this being the player's fourth caution during the season, or in accordance with sub-paragraphs 3.2 to 3.4 in the case of a sending off.

#### **3.6 Serving of Suspensions**

Suspensions incurred by players shall apply to all football, with the following exceptions: During any period of suspension a player shall be able to play in:

- i) International matches
- ii) Friendly matches\*

\*Depending on the severity of a player's suspension will determine whether a player is authorised to compete in a friendly match whilst serving a suspension- A1, A2, A3.SWF records cautionable and sending off offences committed by the players in all friendly matches. The cautions and sending off offences shall be recorded in the player's recognised league disciplinary record. These cautions will not contribute towards the player's cumulative total of cautionable offences but may be considered should a disciplinary hearing be required.

In the event that a player incurs an automatic suspension and a fixed suspension which become effective from the same date, the automatic suspension shall be served prior to the Fixed Suspension. For the avoidance of doubt, the automatic suspension and the Fixed Suspension shall not be served concurrently.

Where a player is age eligible to play within Youth football competitions, the player will be banned from participating in youth football until the senior football suspension has been served in full.

#### **3.7 Breach of Suspension**

## **4. OTHER PROVISIONS**

### **4.1 Investigation of Cases of Players' Misconduct**

In the event that a referee submits, in addition to the standard report form, a report on a player's misconduct which he/she deems to be of a serious nature, the matter will be progressed in accordance with the following provisions:

- 4.1.1 The League/Cup Administrator will confirm to the player, via her club secretary, that the report of misconduct has been escalated to the relevant committee. The player will be advised:
- i) that the matter is being dealt with on the basis that the referee has deemed the player's misconduct to be of a serious nature,
  - ii) that any penalty may be imposed by the relevant Committee on the completion of its investigation and/or consideration,
  - iii) that she may be requested to make ~~representations~~,
  - iv) that she has the right to be accompanied by an official of her club. On application to the Chairperson of the relevant Committee the player may be accompanied by more than one representative, and
  - v) that she has the right to call any witness in her defense.
- 4.1.2 A copy of the report(s) submitted in connection with the case will be issued to the player and to her club, and the player will be given the opportunity to respond with her comments prior to the meeting and in any case within seven days of the date of the letter. The players' club will be requested to provide its comments on the report(s) within the same seven-day period. The relevant Committee reserves the right to obtain reports from the other officials appointed to the match and from other witnesses as deemed appropriate to assist in the proper investigation and consideration of the case.
- 4.1.3 The relevant Committee may intend to hear the case without representation and on the facts collected by the abovementioned process.
- 4.1.4 The relevant Committee may require the referee and/or assistant referee/assistant referees and/or fourth official, or any other witness, to attend any such hearing where the committee has requested the player to attend.
- 4.1.5 The procedures for the conducting of the hearing will be in accordance with the Procedures detailed in Appendix 1.
- 4.1.6 The decision of the relevant Committee will be intimated to the player following the meeting and it will be confirmed by the League/Cup Administrator, to the player and to her club. The commencement date for any suspension imposed on a player by the relevant Committee is seven days from the date s after the date on which the decision was intimated to her. The player will be advised of her right of appeal to Scottish Women's Football.

### **4.2 Abandoned/Void Matches - Misconduct and Suspensions**

- 4.2.1 Any cautionable or sending-off offence reported in a match which is abandoned or declared void will apply notwithstanding the abandonment/voiding of the match.
- 4.2.2 A match which is abandoned does not count as a completed match in terms of a player serving a suspension.
- 4.2.3 A match which is awarded will be deemed as a played match, reducing the number of games the player is suspended.

### **4.3 Outstanding Suspensions**

- 4.3.1 Any suspension which remains outstanding at the end of a season must be served from the commencement of the following season's competition. In the case of a player who becomes ineligible because of age conditions

to play at the same age level in which she incurred the suspension, any outstanding suspension will be applied to her new age level or other competition, as appropriate, for the following season.

- 4.3.2 Confirmation of outstanding suspensions will be issued to clubs prior to the commencement of each season's competitions.

## **5. SCHEDULE OF OFFENCES**

### **5.1 Sending-Off Offences**

A1 Serious foul play

A2 Violent conduct

A3 Spitting at an opponent or any other person.

A4 Denying the opposing team or an opponent a goal or an obvious goal scoring opportunity.

as defined by law twelve

A5 Offensive, insulting, or abusive language and/or gestures

A6 Receiving a second caution in the same match.

### **5.2 Cautionable Offences**

B1 Unsporting Behaviour

There are different circumstances when a player must be cautioned for unsporting behaviour which.

include, but are not limited to, when a player:

- a) Impedes an opponent with contact
- b) Recklessly trips or attempts to trip an opponent
- c) Recklessly tackles or challenges an opponent
- d) Recklessly kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
- e) Denies an opponent an obvious goal scoring opportunity as defined by Law 12
- f) Holds or pushes an opponent
- g) Commits an offence which interferes with or stops a promising attack out with the penalty area
- h) Excessively celebrates the scoring of a goal as defined by Law 12
- i) Handles the ball deliberately
- j) Shows a lack of respect for the game
- k) Commits an act of simulation
- l) Commits any other offence(s) deemed by a match official to be unsporting behaviour

B2 Dissent by Word or Action

B3 Persistently offending against Laws of the Game

B4 Delaying the restart of play.

B5 Failing to respect the required distance at restart of play.

B6 Entering or re-entering or deliberately leaving the field of play without the referee's permission.

## **PART 2: Disciplinary Procedures for Team Staff/Officials**

### Introduction

The following Disciplinary Procedures (“Procedures”) apply to members of Team Staff who have a managerial or coaching role with a club participating in the competitions as defined in the Introduction and/or are named officials of an SWF club. The procedures relate to incidents of misconduct committed by such persons before, during or after matches and which are subject of report(s) by match officials (referees and/or assistant referees).

Included within the Procedures is a system for the application of automatic suspensions.

Misconduct reports which are submitted by match officials on officials, such as chairperson, secretaries and/or committee members will not be subject to the system of automatic suspensions and will be referred directly to the relevant Committee.

For the purposes of these Procedures, the following definitions shall apply:

*“Team Staff” shall mean those individuals, other than players, authorised to represent a club within the technical area at any match (including the Team Officials).*

*“Official” shall mean any person having a function or duty or position involving authority or trust within a club or recognised football body, including any such person who is able to exercise control over the majority of the board of any such club or recognised body.*

SWF shall administer suspensions and fines of Team Staff and Officials under these disciplinary procedures.

#### **1. RECEIPT AND ISSUE OF REPORTS FROM MATCH OFFICIALS**

- 1.1 On receipt of a report from a match official on an incident before, during or after a match involving a member of Team Staff/official, a copy of the report(s) will be issued to the individual concerned by the League/Cup Administrator. A match official may submit only one report of misconduct on a member of Team Staff/Official e.g. if a further misconduct incident follows an initial incident, both matters should be contained in the one report. A copy of the correspondence will be issued to the individual club.
- 1.2 When a member of Team Staff is notified of the match official’s report, he/she will be notified of the suspension imposed in accordance with these Procedures.

#### **2. SUSPENSIONS**

- 2.1 The following level of suspensions will automatically apply dependent upon the disciplinary record of the member of Team Staff over the determining period (i.e. the current and preceding two seasons):

First report of misconduct	2 match suspension from the Playing Zone*
Second report of misconduct	4 match suspension from the Playing Zone
Third report of misconduct	6 match suspension from the Playing Zone

\*Playing Zone as defined in paragraph 10.

- 2.2 The League administrator may refer to the committee in instances of repeat suspensions. The committee otherwise retains discretion to deal with each case on its merits. The range of sanctions open to the committee to impose on a member of Team Staff is detailed below. Sanctions may be imposed singularly or a combination of any or all:

- a written reprimand to be placed in participant(s) file.
- a verbal and/or written apology.
- further education, training, or counselling.
- publication of all or some of the details of the misconduct and the sanction.
- suspension from the activities of SWF for a specified period.
- coach and or club termination of membership of SWF.
- impose a financial sanction.
- payment of part of all costs of the hearing, investigation, or both; and
- deduction of points

- consult the Judicial Panel Protocol to determine a specific suspension.
- any other sanction(s) deemed appropriate in the circumstances.
- To take no action

In applying these sanctions, the Committee may have regard to the following aggravating or mitigating circumstances:

- the nature and severity of the offence.
- whether the incident is a first offence or has occurred repeatedly.
- the participant's acknowledgement of responsibility.
- the participant's extent of remorse.
- the participant's extent of co-operation with the investigation.
- the age, maturity, or experience of the participant.
- the participant's prospects for rehabilitation; and
- the extent to which others were harmed by the participant's actions.

### **3. FOUR (OR MORE) REPORTS OF MISCONDUCT**

If a fourth (or greater number) misconduct report is received in respect of a member of Team Staff within the determining period, the case will be referred directly to the relevant Committee.

### **4. DETERMINING PERIOD FOR SUSPENSION**

A rolling 3-season period will be used to determine the suspension to be imposed. In effect, a member of Team Staff's record over the current and preceding two seasons will be considered.

### **5. STARTING PERIOD FOR SUSPENSION**

A suspension will, generally, be imposed from the 7th day following the date of the match when the misconduct occurred.

### **6. APPLICATION OF AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION**

- 6.1 The automatic suspension will apply to all football until such time as the relevant team of the member of team Staff's club, commensurate with his/her position with his/her club, has completed the requisite number of matches.
- 6.2 If a member of Team Staff's role covers more than one team, the automatic suspension will apply to the "highest" level i.e. the highest Age Group level if the member of Team Staff is involved in a working role with other teams of his/her club and the misconduct has occurred at a lower Age Group level.
- 6.3 Prior to issuing correspondence to the member of Team Staff in accordance with Paragraph 1.1, the SWF will establish the extent of the member of Team Staff's working role with his/her club to verify the application of the automatic suspension to be imposed.

### **7. OUTSTANDING SUSPENSIONS**

Any suspension, or part thereof, which remains outstanding at the end of a season, or any extension thereof, must be served from the commencement of the following season.

### **8. REPORTS OF EXCESSIVE MISCONDUCT**

- 8.1 When submitting a report on a member of Team Staff, a match official may indicate he/she considers that the nature of that misconduct is excessive and worthy of direct consideration by the relevant Committee beyond the standard application of a suspension.
- 8.2 "Excessive Misconduct" shall include, but not be limited to, prolonged incidents of misconduct, the continued use of offensive, abusive and insulting language, calling a match official a cheat, failure to comply with a referee's requests, the adoption of threatening and aggressive behavior towards a match official.
- 8.3 In such cases, the procedures for the imposition of the automatic suspension will be applied and the member of



Team Staff will be advised that the case is also being referred to the relevant Committee. He/she will have either the opportunity to make a personal appearance before the committee or to have the case dealt with in his/her absence. If he/she does wish to make a personal appearance, he/she will also be required to indicate if he/she accepts or disputes the report(s).

- 8.4 It is open to the members of Team Staff's club to submit a response in support of the member of Team Staff's appeal.
- 8.5 It is open to the member of Team Staff to refer to witnesses in his/her reply and for statements from any such witnesses to be included with the reply or to be provided separately by any witness.
- 8.6 The member of Team Staff will be given the opportunity of accepting the application of the automatic suspension at the outset of the case. If the opportunity is declined, the suspension will be set aside pending the outcome of the Committee hearing.
- 8.7 The response from the member of Team Staff, indicating his/her position on the various matters requiring to be addressed by him/her as outlined in the foregoing sub-paragraphs, requires to be received by the League/Cup Administrator no later than seven days after the date of the letter issued to the member of Team Staff.
- 8.8 On the completion of its consideration of the case, the relevant Committee reserves the right to increase the automatic suspension if it is considered the member of Team Staff's misconduct is of a sufficiently serious nature to warrant such a course of action. It is also open to the committee to find the member of Team Staff guilty of an offence or offences of a lesser nature to that which he/she was reported for.
- 8.9 Where a breach of suspension is reported, an individual's case may be reported back to the relevant committee for further determination. This may result in more severe penalties being imposed on the individual and their club.
- 8.10

## **9. TERMS OF SUSPENSION**

During a suspension, a player or member of Team Staff is excluded from the Playing Zone at any match played under the jurisdiction of the SWF until the expiry of the suspension. The "Playing Zone" is the area used by players and Team Staff at a match and shall extend to both team's dressing rooms, the match officials' dressing rooms, the players' tunnel to the pitch, any corridors leading to and/or connecting the said rooms and the players' tunnel to the pitch, the technical areas and substitutes' benches, and the track and playing surface. The exclusion shall apply from one hour prior to the scheduled time of kick-off of a match until 15 minutes following the referee having signaled the end of the match. For the avoidance of doubt, the exclusion continues to apply during extra time and/or kicks from the penalty mark when required in any match.

## **10. FINES**

- 10.1 The relevant Committee reserves the right, in its discretion, to impose a fine on an official regarding any case which it deals with. The committee, however, utilises a guideline minimum of £50 for determining fines to be imposed on an official. There is no upper limit.
- 10.2 A period of 30 days, from the date of the letter issued confirming the Committee's decision, is given to an official to remit payment of a fine.
- 10.3 Any failure to remit payment of a fine within the stipulated period will be reported to the relevant Committee. Unpaid fines may result in teams being suspended from competition, rejected affiliation and/or any other determination by the relevant committee.

## **11. SUSPENSIONS OF PLAYER/MANAGERS & PLAYER/COACHES**

Where a player/manager or a player/coach is suspended in either capacity, he/she shall also be suspended from his/her playing, managing and/or coaching activities on the same basis.

## **12. MISCONDUCT OF OFFICIALS**

The relevant Committee reserves the right to take such action it considers may be merited upon the completion of its investigation into any report of misconduct by an official who does not have a managerial or coaching role. The range

of sanctions open to the Committee to impose on an official is:

- a written reprimand to be placed in participant(s) file.
- a verbal and/or written apology.
- further education, training, or counselling.
- publication of all or some of the details of the misconduct and the sanction.
- suspension from the activities of SWF for a specified period of time.
- coach and or club termination of membership of SWF.
- impose a financial sanction.
- payment of part of all costs of the hearing, investigation, or both; and
- deduction of points
- consult the Judicial Panel Protocol to determine a specific suspension.
- any other sanction(s) deemed appropriate in the circumstances.
- To take no action

In applying these sanctions, the Committee may have regard to the following aggravating or mitigating circumstances:

- the nature and severity of the offence.
- whether the incident is a first offence or has occurred repeatedly.
- the participant's acknowledgement of responsibility.
- the participant's extent of remorse.
- the participant's extent of co-operation with the investigation.
- the age, maturity, or experience of the participant.
- the participant's prospects for rehabilitation; and
- the extent to which others were harmed by the participant's actions.

### **13. FAILURE TO REPLY TO CORRESPONDENCE**

Failure to reply to the League/Cup Administrator' correspondence will render the member of Team Staff/Officials liable to sanctions from the relevant committee.

## **ANNEX 1**

### **Procedures for Conducting a Player's Disciplinary Hearing**

1. The relevant Committee shall have the power to regulate the procedures at a disciplinary hearing as it considers appropriate and expedient to enable a case to be determined.
2. The player charged and any representative who may accompany her, shall be admitted to the hearing, together with the referee and any other relevant match official or other such person who submitted a report on the case in question.

The player may be accompanied throughout the hearing by an official of her club. On application to the relevant Committee the player may be accompanied by more than one representative. H

3. The relevant Committee shall be entitled to take account of the evidence of any witness as is made apparent to it in any form.
4. At the commencement of the hearing, the Chairperson shall confirm the identities of the people admitted to the hearing and introduce the committee members.
5. The committee shall satisfy itself that the player charged is aware of the reasons for her presence at the hearing and of the potential consequences if the charge of misconduct is proved to the satisfaction of the committee.
6. The referee and any other person in support of the charge shall be given the opportunity to comment upon their report.
7. The player charged, or her representative, shall be given the opportunity to comment upon her written submission to the committee.
8. The referee and any other person in support of the charge shall be given the opportunity of supplementing their report.
9. The player charged, or her representative, shall be given the opportunity of supplementing her own written submission.
10. At any time, the Chairperson, and through him/her, members of the committee, may ask questions of any of the parties. The committee may draw such inferences as it considers appropriate from the failure of the person charged to give evidence or answer a question put to him/her.
11. The opportunity of cross-questioning shall be given to those who have presented evidence.
12. The player charged, or her representative, shall have the right to ask questions relevant to the matters in issue of any person who gives evidence in support of the charge.
13. Evidence from any witnesses called by the player or by the committee shall be heard. After making their statement and answering questions put to them by the committee and the player, a witness shall leave the hearing.
14. Prior to the parties being invited to leave the hearing, the player charged, and her representative shall be given the opportunity of making a closing submission based upon the evidence presented.
15. The committee shall consider the evidence and submissions presented to it and determine whether the club official has been found guilty of misconduct or not. The standard of proof applied by the committee will be whether the case in respect of the club official has been proven on the balance of probabilities. The committee may, if required, request the presence of the parties again for further questioning.
16. After reaching its decision, the committee shall recall the player charged and their representative. The Chairperson shall announce whether the charge has been found proved or not. If the charge against the player is not proved, it is open to the committee to find the player guilty of a lesser charge.

17. If the player is found not guilty of any charge, the hearing will be declared closed.
18. If the original charge, or a lesser charge, is found proved, the player charged, and their representative shall be advised accordingly. The player and her representative will be given the opportunity to make a statement or plea in mitigation.
19. At the conclusion of the statement or plea in mitigation, the player charged, and their representative shall withdraw whilst the committee determines the sanction to be imposed on the player.
20. The player charged and their representative shall then be re-admitted and advised of the decision of the committee, which shall subsequently be confirmed in writing to her.
21. The player shall be advised that they have a right of appeal to Scottish Women's Football and shall be provided with the relevant details. This information shall also be confirmed in writing to them.