



# ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

## **FOR** PLAYERS

2025/26

LEVEL: PROFESSIONAL  
AND SEMI-PROFESSIONAL





# CONTENTS

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## **5 - 13 On-Field Matters**

- 5 - 8 Yellow Cards
- 9 - 11 Red Cards
  - 12 Retrospective Action
  - 12 Surrounding match Officials
  - 12 Mass Confrontations
- 12 - 13 Goal celebrations/Interaction with crowd
  - 13 Pyrotechnics
  - 13 Slogans, statements, images and advertising
  - 13 Useful Contact

## **14 - 20 Anti-Doping**

- 15 Drug testing
- 15 - 16 Disciplinary charges
  - 16 Medication
  - 17 Supplements
  - 17 Cannabidiol (CBD) Products
  - 18 Whereabouts
  - 19 Report Doping
  - 19 Social Drug Regulations
  - 20 Useful Contacts

## **21 Football Agents**

## **22 Governing Body Endorsements**

## **22 - 23 Betting Related Integrity**

- 22 Betting
- 22 Inside Information
- 23 Fixing (including match and spot fixing)
- 23 Offences committed in other sports
- 23 Useful Contacts

## **24 Media Comments and Social Media**

## **25 - 27 Discrimination**

## **29 Safeguarding Children**

## **30 Disclaimer**





# ON-FIELD MATTERS



## HOW MANY YELLOW CARDS CAN I RECEIVE BEFORE I GET AN AUTOMATIC BAN?

Accumulating five, ten, fifteen or twenty Yellow Cards in league matches can result in an automatic ban in your relevant league. Accumulated Yellow Cards in cup competitions are treated separately and can result in an automatic ban from the cup competition in which the Yellow Cards were received.

The cut-off points for receiving a sanction, as a result of accumulating cautions are outlined in the tables below.

**Category 1.** Players of Clubs in the Premier League, EFL Leagues, the National League, WSL and WSL2 playing First Team Competitive matches (FTCM):

COMPETITION IN WHICH CAUTIONS ACCUMULATED	NUMBER OF CAUTIONS ACCUMULATED	CUT OFF POINT (UP TO AND INCLUDING)	AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION/ SANCTION	COMPETITIONS TO WHICH AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION/ SANCTION APPLIES
Premier League	5	19 Premier League Matches	1 Match	Premier League
	10	32 Premier League Matches	2 Matches	
	15	Last day of the same playing season	3 Matches	
	20	Last day of the same playing season	As determined by a Regulatory Commission	
EFL Leagues	5	19 EFL League Matches	1 Match	EFL Leagues
	10	37 EFL League Matches	2 Matches	
	15	Last day of the relevant league playing season prior to the Play-Off matches	3 Matches	
	20	Last day of the relevant league playing season prior to the Play-Off matches	As determined by a Regulatory Commission	
National League	5	19 National League Matches	1 Match	National League
	10	37 National League Matches	2 Matches	
	15	Last day of the relevant league playing season prior to the Play-Off matches	3 Matches	
	20	Last day of the relevant league playing season prior to the Play-Off matches	As determined by a Regulatory Commission	

COMPETITION IN WHICH CAUTIONS ACCUMULATED	NUMBER OF CAUTIONS ACCUMULATED	CUT OFF POINT (INCLUSIVE)	AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION FOR NUMBER OF CAUTIONS	COMPETITIONS TO WHICH AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION/SANCTION APPLIES
WSL	5	N/A	1 Match	WSL
	10		2 Matches	
	15		3 Matches	
	20		As determined by a Regulatory Commission	
WSL2	5	N/A	1 Match	WSL2
	10		2 Matches	
	15		3 Matches	
	20		As determined by a Regulatory Commission	
FA Cup	4 (where Player's Club enters in Qualifying Competition) and for every 2 further cautions	Fourth Qualifying Round (where Player's Club enters in Qualifying Competition)	1 Match	FA Cup
	2 (where Player's Club progresses to or enters in Competition Proper) and for every 2 further cautions	Sixth Round (Quarter Finals)		
EFL Cup	2	Quarter Finals	1 Match	EFL Cup
	4			
EFL Trophy	2	Quarter Finals	1 Match	EFL Trophy
	4		2 Matches	
FA Trophy	2	Quarter Finals	1 Match	FA Trophy
	4			
	6			
National League Cup	2	Quarter Finals	1 Match	National League Cup
	4		2 Matches	
Women's FA Cup	4 (where Player's Club enters in or before the Second Round Proper) and for every 2 further cautions	Quarter Finals	1 Match	Women's FA Cup
	2 (where Player's Club enters in or after the Third Round Proper) and for every 2 further cautions			
FA Women's League Cup	2 and for every 2 further cautions	End of Group Stage	1 Match	FA Women's League Cup

**Category 2.** Players of Clubs in the Premier League, EFL Leagues and National League playing Non-First Team Competitive matches (NFTM) in male open aged teams, Under 19s, Under 18s and Academy teams:

COMPETITION IN WHICH CAUTIONS ACCUMULATED	NUMBER OF CAUTIONS ACCUMULATED	CUT OFF POINT (UP TO AND INCLUDING)	AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION/ SANCTION	COMPETITIONS TO WHICH AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION/ SANCTION APPLIES
NFTM (excluding EFL Trophy and National League Cup)	5	31 December	1 Match	NFTM (excluding EFL Trophy and National League Cup)
	10	Second Sunday of April	2 Matches	
	15	Last day of the same playing season	3 Matches	
	20	Last day of the same playing season	As determined by a Regulatory Commission	
EFL Trophy	2	Quarter Finals	1 Match	EFL Trophy
	4		2 Matches	
National League Cup	2	Quarter Finals	1 Match	National League Cup
	4		2 Matches	

- Suspensions which are imposed for reaching these thresholds in both First Team Competitive matches and Non-First Team Competitive matches will commence with immediate effect.

**Category 3.** Players associated with a team competing in the National League (North and South Divisions), the Isthmian League, the Northern Premier League and the Southern League playing matches in any League, League cup competition, the FA Challenge Cup and FA Trophy:

COMPETITION IN WHICH CAUTIONS ACCUMULATED	NUMBER OF CAUTIONS ACCUMULATED	CUT OFF POINT (UP TO AND INCLUDING)	AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION/ SANCTION	FINE	COMPETITIONS TO WHICH AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION/ SANCTION APPLIES
a) National League (North and South Divisions), the Isthmian League, the Northern Premier League or the Southern League; and  b) League cup competition	5	30 November	1 Match	£20.00	a) League in which Player's team competes; and;  b) League cup competition
	10	Second Sunday in March	2 Matches		
	15	Last day of the relevant league playing season prior to the Play-Off matches	3 Matches		
	20	Last day of the relevant league playing season prior to the Play-Off matches	As determined by a Regulatory Commission		
FA Cup	4 (where Player's Club enters in Qualifying Competition and for every 2 further	Fourth Qualifying Round (where Player's Club enters in Qualifying Competition)	1 Match	N/A	FA Cup Only
	2 (where Player's Club progresses to or enters in Competition Proper) and for every 2 further cautions	Sixth Round (Quarter Finals)			
FA Trophy	4 and for every 2 further cautions	Sixth round (Quarter Finals)	1 Match	N/A	FA Trophy Only

- Suspensions which are imposed for reaching these thresholds will commence 7 days following the final caution (or immediately before the play-off matches if the date of the final caution is less than 7 days prior to the first play-off match). Suspensions imposed for exceeding these thresholds at Non-First Team level will be dealt with by the County Association to which the Club affiliated.

**Category 4:** Clubs in the Premier League, EFL Leagues, the National League, WSL and WSL2 playing Friendly matches.

- Accumulated cautions do not apply to this category.





## IF I AM SENT OFF, HOW LONG WILL I BE SUSPENDED FOR?

Suspensions following a Red Card are applied across both league and cup competitions as per the tables below – however if the sending-off offence occurs in an EFL Trophy or National League Cup Match, the relevant automatic suspension must be served exclusively in that competition, unless specified by The FA. Players who are dismissed for a second time in a season will receive an additional match suspension to those listed below. Players who are dismissed for a third time will receive two additional matches and so forth.

**Category 1.** Players of Clubs in the Premier League, EFL Leagues, the National League, WSL and WSL2 playing First Team Competitive matches:

SENDING-OFF OFFENCE	AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION	COMPETITIONS TO WHICH AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION APPLIES
Denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by a handball offence	1 Match	a. Relevant League in which Player's Club competes; b. FA Cup; c. EFL Cup (as applicable); d. FA Trophy (as applicable); e. Women's FA Cup (as applicable) f. FA Women's League Cup (as applicable)  <b>(EFL Trophy:</b> Unless specified by The Association: (a) If the sending-off offence occurs in an EFL Trophy match, the relevant automatic suspension must be served exclusively in the EFL Trophy and (b) if the sending-off offence occurs in any other FTCM, an EFL Trophy match cannot be used to serve any part of the relevant automatic suspension.)  <b>(National League Cup:</b> Unless specified by The Association: (a) If the sending-off offence occurs in a National League Cup Match, the relevant automatic suspension must be served exclusively in the National League Cup and (b) if the sending-off offence occurs in any other FTCM, a National League Cup Match cannot be used to serve any part of the relevant automatic suspension.)
Denying a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent whose overall movement is towards the offender's goal by an offence punishable by a free kick	1 Match	
Serious foul play	3 Matches	
Spitting at an opponent or any other person	6 Matches	
Violent conduct	3 Matches	
Using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures	2 Matches	
Receiving a second caution in the same match	1 Match	

- The period of suspension will commence immediately (unless the Club have submitted a claim of wrongful dismissal or mistaken identity).

**Category 2.** Players of Clubs in the Premier League, EFL Leagues and National League playing Non-First Team Competitive matches in male open aged teams, Under 19s, Under 18s and Academy teams:

SENDING-OFF OFFENCE	AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION	COMPETITIONS TO WHICH AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION APPLIES
Denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by a handball offence	1 Match	<p>Automatic suspension to be served exclusively in NFTM (excluding EFL Trophy and National League Cup)</p> <p><b>(EFL Trophy:</b> Unless specified by The Association: (a) If the sending-off offence occurs in an EFL Trophy Match, the relevant automatic suspension must be served exclusively in the EFL Trophy and (b) if the sending-off offence occurs in any other NFTM, an EFL Trophy Match cannot be used to serve any part of the relevant automatic suspension.)</p> <p><b>(National League Cup:</b> Unless specified by The Association: (a) If the sending-off offence occurs in a National League Cup Match, the relevant automatic suspension must be served exclusively in the National League Cup and (b) if the sending-off offence occurs in any other NFTM, a National League Cup Match cannot be used to serve any part of the relevant automatic suspension.)</p>
Denying a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent whose overall movement is towards the offender's goal by an offence punishable by a free kick	1 Match	
Serious foul play	3 Matches	
Spitting at an opponent or any other person	6 Matches	
Violent conduct	3 Matches	
Using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures	2 Matches	
Receiving a second caution in the same match	1 Match	

- The period of suspension will commence immediately (unless the Club have submitted a claim of wrongful dismissal or mistaken identity).

**Category 3.** Players associated with a team competing in the National League (North and South Divisions), the Isthmian League, the Northern Premier League and the Southern League playing matches in any League, League cup competition, the FA Challenge Cup and FA Trophy:

SENDING-OFF OFFENCE	AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION	FINE	COMPETITIONS TO WHICH AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION APPLIES
Denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by a handball offence	1 Match	£20.00	a. League in which Player's team competes; b. League cup competition in which Player's team competes; c. FA Cup; and d. FA Trophy
Denying a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent whose overall movement is towards the offender's goal by an offence punishable by a free kick	1 Match		
Serious foul play	3 Matches	£40.00	
Spitting at an opponent or any other person	6 Matches		
Violent conduct	3 Matches		
Using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures	2 Matches	£30.00	
Receiving a second caution in the same match	1 Match	£20.00	

- The period of suspension will commence either (a) 7 days after the date of the sending-off offence, or (b) immediately before the play-off matches if the sending-off offence occurs less than seven days prior to the first play-off match or (c) immediately if the sending-off offence is committed in a play-off match (unless in each case the Club or Player submits a claim of wrongful dismissal or mistaken identity).
- The Senior County Cup will not be treated as a First Team fixture and cannot be used to serve suspensions for First Team matches. Any Misconduct for the Senior County Cup will be dealt with by the County FA as a Non-First Team Misconduct.

**Category 4:** Clubs in the Premier League, EFL Leagues, the National League, WSL and WSL2 playing Friendly matches.

- A sending-off offence by a Player will result in that Player receiving an automatic suspension of one match.
- Such automatic suspension can only apply to matches played by Clubs falling within Category 4.

## RETROSPECTIVE ACTION

- Please note that The FA has the power to take retrospective action for potential Red Card offences if not fully seen by the match Officials.
- The FA may also take action even where an incident has been witnessed or acted upon by match Officials in serious or unusual cases.
- The FA has the power to consider retrospective action for the successful deception of a match Official. This includes: (a) a clear simulation which leads either to a penalty, or the dismissal of an opposing Player, and (b) handling the ball in a direct and successful attempt to score a goal. Proven cases carry an automatic ban of two matches.
- Players can be reported for their reaction to being dismissed, and further disciplinary action may result.

## SURROUNDING MATCH OFFICIALS

- Match Officials must report incidents where two or more Players of one Club surround them in a potentially confrontational manner.
- Your Club may receive potentially significant fines in the event of an accepted or proven charge. For repeat offences, the sanctions may become considerably greater.

## MASS CONFRONTATIONS

- Match Officials must report incidents where two or more Players or Club Officials are involved in a confrontation with opposing Players or Club Officials.
- Again, your Club may receive a potentially significant fine in the event of a charge being accepted or found proven. For repeat offences, the sanctions may rise.

## GOAL CELEBRATIONS/INTERACTION WITH CROWD

- Celebrations that are considered to be inflammatory or which cause crowd issues, can lead to disciplinary action and potential match bans. A Referee may take action at the time and The FA may also consider additional action should it be felt necessary.
- In particular, do not celebrate directly in front of opposition supporters as in recent seasons this has led to missile throwing and risks potential injury to both players and supporters.
- Likewise, be aware that celebrating with your own supporters by going too close can lead to crowd surges and/or pitch incursions. Supporters and stewards have been injured as a result of some celebrations and again The FA may consider taking retrospective action in these circumstances.
- Please be careful when making any gestures to opposing Players, officials or the crowd. An abusive, insulting or improper gesture can lead to the Referee dismissing you and/or retrospective disciplinary action.
- It is important to note that disciplinary action can be taken for gestures which have a negative or inappropriate meaning in another country or part of the world, regardless of the fact that those gestures may not be widely known in England.

- You are reminded that any form of abusive, insulting, or improper language or behaviour which The FA considers to have been directed towards a camera may be the subject of disciplinary action.
- You are reminded that you should not approach any spectators who enter the pitch.
- It is the responsibility of stewards to deal with such incidents. Equally, you should not attempt to intervene in any matter being dealt with by stewards or the police as this can often lead to further problems.

### **WHAT SHOULD I DO IF A PYROTECHNIC IS THROWN ONTO THE PITCH?**

- In the event of any pyrotechnic device being thrown onto the pitch, you should move well away from it and you must not attempt to remove the device yourself as such matters will be dealt with by safety stewards.
- In recent seasons, there have been several examples of players being charged by The FA for celebrating with pyrotechnic devices.

### **AM I ALLOWED TO REVEAL A MESSAGE UNDERNEATH MY SHIRT?**

- Law 4 of the IFAB Laws of the Game states that Players must not reveal undergarments showing any slogans or advertising. The basic compulsory playing equipment must not have any political, religious or personal slogans, statements or images. If you breach this Law, it may be reported and you and/or your team could be subject to a sanction.

### **USEFUL CONTACT**

If you have any questions or queries  
[Disciplinary@TheFA.com](mailto:Disciplinary@TheFA.com)







# ANTI-DOPING

## WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ANTI-DOPING DRUG TESTING?

You can be drug tested at any time and location, including after a game, at a training session, at home or when you are overseas. You will be asked to provide a urine and/or a blood sample and may get tested multiple times during the season.

## KEY FACTS ABOUT BEING TESTED

- All testing will be without advance notice. This means no warning will be given of the test.
- Do not refuse to take the test as this may lead to a 4-year suspension from football.
- You must stay in full view of the Doping Control Officer (DCO) or Chaperone from the moment you have been notified that you have been selected for testing until the process is complete.
- If you are selected for a drug test you are required to report to the Doping Control Station (DCS) immediately.
- You will be asked to remove enough clothing so that the DCO can directly observe the passing of the urine from the body into the collection vessel.
- If your sample is too dilute, then you will be required to provide an additional sample. Do not overhydrate as this may result in further dilute samples being provided.
- Please show respect to the Anti-Doping Officials at all times during the process.

## WHAT CAN I BE CHARGED WITH?

Some of the things for which you can face disciplinary charges relating to drug testing are:

- The presence of a banned substance in your sample.
- Evading sample collection, refusing or failing to provide a sample.
- Failing to attend the DCS immediately.
- Using abusive or insulting words or behaviour to a Doping Control official.
- Tampering or interfering with the drug testing process.

In addition, you can face disciplinary charges for other anti-doping offences including:

- Using a banned substance.
- Having possession of a banned substance.
- Trafficking or administration of a banned substance.
- Assisting another person in breaking the Anti-Doping Regulations.
- Associating with Player Support Personnel who are serving a ban for an anti-doping offence.
- Acts that threaten or seek to intimidate another to discourage them from sharing information about doping (also referred to as whistleblowing), or retaliating against another for doing so.

Any breach of the Anti-Doping Regulations is serious and could lead to a significant period of suspension, for example refusing a drug test may lead to a 4-year suspension for a first offence.

## **HOW CAN I CHECK WHETHER I AM ALLOWED TO TAKE A MEDICATION?**

Medications that are used in everyday life may contain banned substances.

This includes medications prescribed by your doctor and those bought over the counter at a pharmacy or off the shelf at a supermarket. Examples include some cold and flu remedies. In addition, be aware that certain asthma inhalers are banned or only permitted up to a certain threshold.

### **ALWAYS CHECK WITH YOUR CLUB DOCTOR BEFORE TAKING ANY MEDICATION AND CHECK [WWW.GLOBALDRO.COM](http://WWW.GLOBALDRO.COM)**

If you have a legitimate medical condition and need to use a banned substance or method, you should check whether you need to apply for a Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE). A TUE is only accepted if there are no other suitable permitted medications or treatments that can be used, and there is a strict, detailed process to determine this. You can find out more information about the TUE process in the anti-doping section of The FA website and can use the UK Anti-Doping TUE Wizard to find out whether you need to apply for a TUE, and where your application should be submitted.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS WITH TAKING SUPPLEMENTS?

Players who take sports nutrition supplements to support their dietary needs may be at significant risk of inadvertently testing positive for a banned substance. Players are encouraged to seek expert advice before taking any products. Supplement companies are largely unregulated – meaning you may never know exactly what you are taking. Some products have been found to contain banned substances that are not listed on the label and there could be a banned substance in your supplement.

## ASSESS THE NEED

The FA recommends that players should develop their diet, lifestyle and training before considering taking any supplements. You should assess the need for taking a particular supplement by consulting a registered nutritionist or your Club Doctor before taking it.

## ASSESS THE RISK

If you decide to use supplements, then you need to make sure that you minimise the risk of testing positive from taking a contaminated supplement. See **[www.informed-sport.com](http://www.informed-sport.com)** which provides a testing and accreditation process for supplements and lists those products that have gone through the Informed Sport programme by batch number.\*

*\*The FA accepts no liability for the contents of supplements approved by Informed-Sport or any other organisations. Strict liability applies and players may incur a ban as a result of using a contaminated supplement.*

## ASSESS THE CONSEQUENCES

If you test positive for a banned substance contained in a supplement you could face up to a four-year suspension from football for a first offence.

**“YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR EVERYTHING IN YOUR BODY AT ALL TIMES – IGNORANCE IS NOT A DEFENCE. A POSITIVE TEST DUE TO A CONTAMINATED SUPPLEMENT CAN LEAD TO A SIGNIFICANT PERIOD OF SUSPENSION”.**

## CANNABIDIOL (CBD) PRODUCTS

There are a growing number of cannabidiol (CBD) products that can be purchased in forms such as oils, extracts, vape and e-liquids. CBD is one of around 110 known cannabinoids produced by the cannabis plant. It has a different chemical structure to THC, which is the psychoactive compound that illicit drug users use to get “high”. CBD does not have this effect. CBD is not currently listed on the World Anti-Doping Agency’s Prohibited List. As a result, it is permitted to use in sport. However, despite the permitted status of CBD, Players must still consider the risk of inadvertently ingesting a CBD product that either has a higher THC concentration than expected or contains another cannabinoid that is prohibited in sport through contamination.

**The use of any CBD product is at the Player’s own risk. To view the UK Anti-Doping Athlete advisory note regarding CBD products visit:**  
**[www.ukad.org.uk/cannabidiol-cbd](http://www.ukad.org.uk/cannabidiol-cbd).**

## WHAT DO I NEED TO REMEMBER ABOUT WHEREABOUTS? (PREMIER LEAGUE AND ENGLISH FOOTBALL LEAGUE)

All Players in the Premier League and English Football League (EFL) need to be aware of their Whereabouts requirements.

If you are not going to be at a training session or are leaving early or arriving late, you must notify The FA.

### REMEMBER:

1. If you are missing training or arriving late, notify The FA in advance of the training session.
2. If you are finishing training early notify The FA before you leave, clearly stating that you are leaving early.
3. When notifying The FA you must provide your;
  - a. full name,
  - b. your Club,
  - c. an address, including a postcode, and
  - d. a one hour time slot when you are available for testing (at the address).
4. The time slot must be at least two hours after you have notified The FA of your absence and must be between the hours of 0600 – 2300 e.g. if you notify The FA at 9am then the earliest your one hour time slot can start is 11am.
5. Make sure you are present at the address stated for the full hour.
6. If you are participating in Club activity at a different venue to that of the scheduled Club training session, you must notify The FA, preferably in advance of the training session and in any event before you leave the original venue (if applicable) to relocate, stating your alternative training venue and time.

### PLAYER TIPS

- Submit Whereabouts information ahead of the submission deadline e.g. the day before your scheduled training session if you know you will be absent.
- If you are going to be absent from training for a long period of time, notify The FA and submit a consistent one (1) hour testing time slot together with a location for the defined period of your absence.

**IF YOU DO NOT ADHERE TO THE WHEREABOUTS REQUIREMENTS, YOU MAY INCUR A MISSED TEST STRIKE. IF YOU GET THREE MISSED TEST STRIKES WITHIN A 12 MONTH ROLLING PERIOD, YOU ARE LIKELY TO BE SUSPENDED FROM FOOTBALL FOR AT LEAST 12 MONTHS.**

**YOU CAN BE TESTED AT ANYTIME AND ANYWHERE, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER YOU HAVE BEEN ABSENT FROM TRAINING THAT DAY. THIS INCLUDES BEING TESTED AT HOME AT ANY TIME. CLUBS ARE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE THE FA WITH A LIST OF ADDRESSES WHERE EACH OF THEIR PLAYERS REGULARLY RESIDES.**



## WHO DO I CONTACT IF I WANT TO REPORT DOPING IN FOOTBALL?

Protecting clean sport depends on everyone playing their part. Speak out if you feel something's wrong - no matter how small. There are four ways for you to speak out. You can share your concerns via email [pys@reportdoping.com](mailto:pys@reportdoping.com), online (search: Protect Your Sport) or by phone 08000 32 23 32.

If you would rather contact The FA directly, please email [anti-doping@TheFA.com](mailto:anti-doping@TheFA.com).

## SOCIAL DRUG REGULATIONS

In addition to anti-doping testing, The FA also conducts a social drug testing programme.

As a reminder, The FA's social drug testing programme is run completely separately to the anti-doping programme. Testing will be conducted by an external agency with an FA Supervising Officer present to help facilitate the smooth running of the process.

'Social drugs' including cocaine, ecstasy (MDMA), Ketamine and cannabis are banned by The FA at all times. A positive test for a social drug on a non-match day (i.e. at training) is a breach of The FA Social Drugs Regulations and may lead to a fine (for a first offence). However, refusing or failing to provide a sample and complete the test may result in a 4-12 month suspension.

## SOCIAL DRUG TESTING

- The testing procedures will vary from those undertaken as part of the anti-doping programme, with hair and/or urine and/or any other suitable biological material being collected. Please note you do not get to decide which type of sample to provide.
- Players are obliged to undergo a social drugs test. Please do not refuse or evade a social drugs test as this may lead to a long-term suspension from the game.

## WHAT ARE THE SANCTIONS FOR SOCIAL DRUGS?

- For a first offence a Player will receive a warning, fine and have to undergo a mandatory course of education and/or counselling/treatment.
- For a second or subsequent breach a Player will receive a three month period of suspension, reduced to one month if the Player agrees to complete a course of education and/or counselling/treatment.
- For refusing to be tested or evading sample collection a suspension in the range of 4 to 12 months will be imposed.
- For full details on sanctions please see The FA Social Drugs Regulations.

## WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ANTI-DOPING AND SOCIAL DRUGS?

### FA ANTI-DOPING VIDEOS

For more information on all of the above, a series of short anti-doping education videos can be found on The FA website at [www.TheFA.com/anti-doping](http://www.TheFA.com/anti-doping).

### USEFUL CONTACTS:

#### FA Anti-Doping team

E-mail: [anti-doping@TheFA.com](mailto:anti-doping@TheFA.com)

#### FA Whereabouts

E-mail: [whereabouts@TheFA.com](mailto:whereabouts@TheFA.com)

Telephone: **0844 980 8210** (24hr messaging service)

#### FA Whereabouts SMS number:

Telephone: **07800 140062**

#### Report Doping in Football:

Telephone: **08000 32 23 32**

If you need to speak to someone in confidence regarding social drugs, you can contact the Sporting Chance Clinic at;

E-mail: [info@sportingchanceclinic.com](mailto:info@sportingchanceclinic.com)

Telephone: **0870 220 0714**

#### Websites:

[www.TheFA.com/anti-doping](http://www.TheFA.com/anti-doping) – access to all anti-doping education resources

[www.globaldro.com](http://www.globaldro.com) – to check medication. This web address is mobile enabled so you can check the status of medication on the move

[www.wada-ama.org](http://www.wada-ama.org) – to view the latest version of the Prohibited List

[www.informed-sport.com](http://www.informed-sport.com) – provides a testing and accreditation process for supplements\*

[www.ukad.org.uk/tue-application](http://www.ukad.org.uk/tue-application) – to apply for a TUE

*\* The FA supports the Informed-Sport programme however The FA accepts no liability for the contents of supplements tested by Informed-Sport or similar accreditation programmes.*

# FOOTBALL AGENTS

## WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FOOTBALL AGENTS?

You do not need to use a Football Agent to represent you, but if you do choose to use one they must be registered with The FA. You can check if an Agent is registered on TheFA.com and/or by requesting to see their Digital ID.

If you have entered into an exclusive Representation Agreement with an FA Registered Football Agent, you should not sign another agreement with a different FA Registered Football Agent.

You cannot be represented by an FA Registered Football Agent before 1 September in the Academic Year (which runs from 1st September to 31st August (inclusive) of your 16th birthday and an FA Registered Football Agent can only receive a service fee when providing services in respect of a professional contract (and not until that contract comes into force).

FA Registered Football Agents who wish to represent Players under the age of 18 also need to receive additional authorisation from The FA. It is against the relevant regulations for someone who does not have that authorisation to represent you if you are under 18. The FA Agent list and the Agent's Digital ID will show if they are permitted to work with Players under 18. An FA Registered Football Agent cannot contact you before your 18th birthday without the written permission of your legal guardian. Your legal guardian must also provide signed consent if you choose to sign a Representation Agreement with an FA Registered Football Agent.

You must have a Representation Agreement with your FA Registered Football Agent. Ensure that you are given a copy of that agreement and that it is signed by the Registered Football Agent and dated. You should check the terms of the agreement closely and seek legal advice if required. The agreement with your Registered Football Agent can only last for a maximum of 2 years. This term may only be extended by entering into a new Representation Agreement.

At the time of completing a Transaction, such as a new contract, permanent transfer or loan, you will be required to sign a declaration form known as an AF1 Form. You must ensure that all information on this form is accurate before you sign as you may be held liable for any information that is not accurate.

The FA Registered Football Agent must provide you with an Annual Return detailing all payments they have received in respect of services provided to you within 30 days of the 30 June each year.

Players and Coaches are prohibited from have an interest in any affairs of a Football Agent or their Agency.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING FOOTBALL AGENTS, PLEASE EMAIL [FOOTBALLAGENTSQUERIES@THEFA.COM](mailto:FOOTBALLAGENTSQUERIES@THEFA.COM). FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [WWW.THEFA.COM/FOOTBALLAGENTS](http://WWW.THEFA.COM/FOOTBALLAGENTS).**

# GOVERNING BODY ENDORSEMENTS

Players, Managers and Coaches who do not have the right to work in the United Kingdom will require a Governing Body Endorsement (GBE) before they can be issued with a visa.

To receive a GBE the individual must meet the requirements of the relevant criteria.

The latest GBE Criteria can be found on [TheFA.Com](https://www.thefa.com).

## BETTING RELATED INTEGRITY

### WHAT ARE THE BETTING RULES?

You are not permitted to bet on any aspect of any football worldwide – this includes bets on any match or competition, events within a match or competition, or on any other football matter (such as next manager markets or transfers). Remember that events in the technical area are considered part of a match and that betting on novelty markets connected to a game is also prohibited.

You are not permitted to ask or instruct someone else to place any of the above bets on your behalf.

The rule applies to bets made in person, on the telephone, online or even with friends.

Betting operators are obliged to report any bets made in breach of FA Rules to The FA and the Gambling Commission. They can also search your betting history.

Players are not allowed to be involved in TV/Radio adverts for betting companies which encourage betting on football markets. Players should seek advice before being involved in any kind of betting adverts other than shirt sponsorship.

Sporting Chance offers help and support to Players dealing with betting and addiction issues and can be contacted at [info@sportingchanceclinic.com](mailto:info@sportingchanceclinic.com).

### WHY DO I NEED TO BE CAREFUL WITH SHARING INSIDE INFORMATION?

Inside information is information that you are aware of due to your position in the game, which is not publicly available – for example, this may include injury or team selection news.

You are not allowed to pass inside information on to someone else which they then use for betting.

You can be considered to have passed inside information by any means, e.g. word of mouth, text or other instant message, email, writing or social media postings.

## WHAT IF I AM APPROACHED TO FIX A MATCH?

Fixing is arranging in advance the result or conduct of a match or competition, or any event within a match or competition (i.e. spot-fixing), this may include conduct within the technical area.

Fixing is prohibited and is treated extremely seriously.

In addition, offering or accepting (or even just agreeing to offer or accept) any reward or bribe related in any way to influencing the result or conduct of a match or competition or any event within a match or competition is similarly banned and serious.

If you attempt to fix, you are likely to get caught and be charged by The FA.

If found proven, this is likely to lead to a significant suspension, and in some instances, a lifetime ban. Fixing offences may also be subject to criminal investigation and prosecution.

## HOW DO I REPORT A MATCH/SPOT FIXING APPROACH?

If you are approached to fix or suspect that a colleague or someone you know has been approached to fix or is involved in fixing, then you must report it to The FA immediately on the phone number or email below.

***FAILURE TO REPORT ANY SUCH INFORMATION MAY RESULT IN AN FA CHARGE AGAINST YOU.***

## OFFENCES COMMITTED IN OTHER SPORTS

The FA may take disciplinary action against you if you are found by another sport's disciplinary body to have committed a betting or fixing or related offence under the rules of that other sport.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

If you have any questions or want to send a report, please contact:

Email: [integrity@TheFA.com](mailto:integrity@TheFA.com).

Telephone: **0208 795 9640**

[www.TheFA.com/betting](http://www.TheFA.com/betting)



# MEDIA COMMENTS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

## WHY DO I NEED TO BE CAREFUL WITH WHAT I POST ON SOCIAL MEDIA OR SAY TO THE MEDIA?

**ALL MEDIA COMMENTS AND POSTINGS ON SOCIAL MEDIA SITES SUCH AS X, FACEBOOK, TIKTOK, TWITCH, SNAPCHAT AND INSTAGRAM MAY BE SUBJECT TO THE FA'S DISCIPLINARY JURISDICTION.**

### DO NOT:

- Use threatening, indecent, abusive or insulting language or images.
- Use discriminatory language.
- Imply bias or attack the integrity of Match Officials (including the VAR Officials).
- Make any comment about an appointed Match Official (including VAR Officials) before a match. Please note that The FA may take disciplinary action even in circumstances where the Match Official is not named by the Player, or the Match Official(s) has not yet been appointed for the next game.
- Be personally offensive about Match Officials.

These are examples of where charges may be brought. The above can also include repeated negative and/or inflammatory comments in respect of the performance of a Match Official.

Charges may be brought in respect of any comments or postings that may cause damage to the wider interests of football or bring the game into disrepute.

**ANY QUERIES SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO [INTEGRITY@THEFA.COM](mailto:integrity@thefa.com).**

### REMEMBER:

- Reposting is treated the same as posting a comment yourself.
- You are responsible for everything on your account at all times whether or not you posted it.
- Only use words, phrases and images that you are 100% sure of the meaning of – ignorance will not be a defence.
- Your comments and posts may affect your future career.
- Remove any inappropriate postings as soon as possible.
- You are responsible for everything on your account, including historic postings that you may no longer remember are still on your account.
- Be careful of what you 'like'.

**SANCTIONS FOR THESE OFFENCES MAY BE FINANCIAL AND/OR MATCH SUSPENSIONS.**

### USEFUL CONTACT

If you have any questions or queries relating to media comments or social media issues, please contact: [integrity@TheFA.com](mailto:integrity@thefa.com)

# DISCRIMINATION

## WHAT IS DISCRIMINATORY ABUSE?

**DISCRIMINATORY ABUSE INCLUDES A REFERENCE WHETHER EXPRESS OR IMPLIED TO ANY ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:**

- Ethnic origin
- Colour
- Race
- Nationality
- Religion or belief
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Sexual orientation
- Disability

## CAN I BE CHARGED FOR MESSAGES SENT IN PRIVATE OR OUTSIDE OF A FOOTBALL ENVIRONMENT?

Players should be aware that discriminatory language or content may result in disciplinary action even if shared in a 'private' message – For example, via text, email, private social media account or WhatsApp message. The FA may also take action for discriminatory language or behaviour that occurs outside of a football context – for example, using discriminatory language during a night out. In addition, any Club or Participant must report any allegations or reported discrimination within a Club, whether or not it is being dealt with by way of internal process, employment tribunal or otherwise.



## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SEE OR HEAR DISCRIMINATORY ABUSE?

**IF YOU OR ANOTHER PLAYER IS SUBJECT TO DISCRIMINATORY ABUSE AT A GAME BY EITHER THE CROWD OR ANOTHER PARTICIPANT, REPORT IT TO A MATCH OFFICIAL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND FOLLOW THE MATCHDAY PROTOCOLS BELOW:**

### DISCRIMINATION BY SUPPORTERS

- The incident should in the first instance be brought to the attention of the Referee.
- The Referee should report the incident to the home club's safety officer (or responsible home club representative) and police via the Fourth Official. (If there is no Fourth Official appointed the Referee should stop play and report the incident to a member of the home club's safety management and note the incident with an assistant Referee).
- The police and safety officer should seek to identify the person/people responsible and take appropriate action while the match continues.
- If, within an amount of time agreed by the safety officer and Referee, the problem continues, the Referee (in consultation with the police and safety officer/home club representative) may remove the players from the field and suspend the match, allowing the police and safety officer/home club representative a further opportunity to deal with the problem.
- If the matter cannot be dealt with satisfactorily and the welfare of any Participants, in terms of the threat of continued abuse, remains at risk, the Referee should consider abandoning the match.
- Any decision to suspend or abandon a match should be taken by the Referee after full consultation with the police, safety officer and (dependent on fixture) either the
  - Premier League match Centre; or
  - EFL Football Services Department or Duty Director; or
  - Home club representative, and after consultation with the team managers and captains

Where no police are present in the stadium, the initial decision-making responsibility belongs to the safety officer, including informing the police. Where the safety officer or police are not present initial decision making responsibility should be made in consultation between the Referee and home club representative.

If participating in an UEFA match, they have a slightly different 3 step protocol – visit [UEFA.Com](https://www.uefa.com) for further information.

In cases where there is clear evidence of mass discriminatory chanting by a Club's supporters within a stadium (i.e. not one or two individual supporters) then formal disciplinary action will be taken.

In circumstances where The FA becomes aware of an individual supporter (or a small number of individuals) directing discriminatory abuse within a stadium, The FA will investigate the steps taken by the Club to deal with the abuse to determine whether formal disciplinary action is taken.

## DISCRIMINATION BY PARTICIPANTS

- The incident should in the first instance be brought to the attention of the Referee as soon as possible.
- The Referee will make full notes of any discussions as soon as possible.
- Match Officials may become aware of incidents which they themselves have not witnessed during the course of a game. If this occurs the Referee should ensure that full notes of the incident are made at the time. Again, this may involve using the communication system to ensure that the Fourth Official has a complete record of the words used.
- Shortly after the conclusion of the game the Referee should then invite the person who made the allegation, accompanied by a member of their club, into the Referee's changing room. The Referee should confirm with the player the exact words used in the allegation so that there is certainty on exactly what is being reported.
- Following this meeting the Referee should then invite the person who is the subject of the allegation, again accompanied by a member of their club, into the changing room. The Referee should advise this player of the nature of the allegation. If the player makes any comments these should be recorded.
- An extraordinary incident report is then submitted to The FA for investigation.

The sanction for an offence of on-field discriminatory abuse for a Participant (for example, a player towards another player) ranges between 6 and 12 matches suspension and mandatory education, plus a possible fine. A sanction in excess of 12 matches may be imposed in circumstances where aggravating factors of significant number or weight are present.

In certain circumstances a match-based suspension is not appropriate and a time-based suspension will be imposed instead.

Second or further offences will be treated with the utmost seriousness.

## WHAT OTHER WAYS CAN I REPORT DISCRIMINATION?

If you see or hear discrimination on the pitch, at the training ground or in the stands, please contact us to report it:

Email The FA: [integrity@TheFA.com](mailto:integrity@TheFA.com)

Or you can contact Kick It Out: [info@kickitout.org](mailto:info@kickitout.org)

You can also download Kick It Out's app to help you report Misconduct.

## WHAT IF I RECEIVE DISCRIMINATORY ABUSE ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

If you see a post on social media that you believe is discriminatory, you can report it to the site or platform where it was posted. All platforms have designated teams who review reports and make decisions on removing posts. It is also advised that you should report it to your club and/or league as well.





# SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

## HOW SHOULD I HELP SAFEGUARD CHILDREN IN FOOTBALL?

Children and young people (under 18's) naturally look up to professional players; as such how you behave has a powerful influence and impact.

You may come into contact with under 18's in lots of different ways; as players, fans, via school or hospital visits, community programmes or socially in pubs and clubs.

It is everyone's responsibility to safeguard children and young people, both on and off the pitch. It is important that you are alert to not putting a child or young person or yourselves at risk.

The FA investigates all safeguarding concerns, which depending on the nature of the concerns, could involve the Club, the league, the police and local authorities.

To safeguard yourself and under 18's, ensure you are accompanied on personal appearances and that you are aware of personal contact with under 18's – e.g. when shirt signing, using social media and posing for photos.

### DO NOT:

- Give out your contact details on social networking sites.
- Accept under 18's as a 'friend' on your personal social media site, or engage in communications.
- Be left on your own with fans who are under 18.
- Drink alcohol before or during work or at an appearance with under 18's.
- Make sexually suggestive comments or actions to under 18's face to face or via text, phone, computer or social media – even in fun.
- Touch children inappropriately.
- Use foul or discriminatory language or make abusive gestures.
- Give personal gifts to under 18.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding safeguarding, please speak to your Club Designated Safeguarding Officer or contact [safeguarding.children@TheFA.com](mailto:safeguarding.children@TheFA.com).

# DISCLAIMER

This guide is only intended as a summary of the key rules and regulations for players of Clubs in the Premier League, EFL, National League, WSL, WSL2, National League (North and South), the Isthmian League, the Northern Premier League and the Southern League. For further details and a complete understanding, Participants should always refer to the applicable rules and regulations as set out in full in the latest version of The FA's Handbook (accessible here [www.TheFA.com/handbook](http://www.TheFA.com/handbook)) and/or contact the relevant department of The FA for further information.

In the event of any inconsistency between this guidance and the The FA's Rules and Regulations, the Rules and Regulations shall take precedence.

This guide has been prepared in English, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. In the event of any conflict between the English language version of this guide and any translation of this guide into a language other than English, the English language version shall prevail.

## RULES AND REGULATIONS WEBSITE

For further information on any of these areas, please visit: [www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance](http://www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance).

## ESSENTIAL INFORMATION FOR PLAYERS APP

A free app version of this guidance along with additional video content is available from the App Store (IOS) or Google Play (Android).

## PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALLERS ASSOCIATION

Should you wish to discuss any of these issues with the PFA, you can contact them on:

Email: [info@thepfa.co.uk](mailto:info@thepfa.co.uk).

Telephone: **0161 236 0575**





**FOR ALL**

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