



# Coalville Town Youth FC Referee/Match Official Disciplinary Policy

## Disciplinary Policy

The emphasis of this Disciplinary Policy is in the first instance, on the improvement of the Referee/Officials behaviour and standard of officiating by working in collaboration with them and or County FA and the Referee Mentor, rather than just on imposing sanctions. Coalville Town Youth FC will, however, impose sanctions in the most serious cases or where improvement in the Referee/Officials behaviour has not been forthcoming.

Coalville Town Youth FC's aim is to ensure consistent and fair treatment for all Referee/Officials and no disciplinary action will be taken against a Member until a full investigation as to the circumstances of the incident or matter has been conducted by Coalville Town Youth FC.

This procedure is designed to help and encourage all members of Coalville Town Youth FC (hereinafter the Club) to achieve and maintain standards of behaviour as detailed within the club's Match Officials Code of Conduct, <sup>1</sup> and the Clubs Equality Policy. <sup>2</sup> Our aim is to ensure consistent and fair treatment for all Referee/Officials.

In common law two separate standards of proof are recognised

- Beyond all Reasonable Doubt
- Balance of Probabilities

The former is the standard adopted while dealing with criminal cases whilst the latter is the standard in use in cases of civil matters.

Whilst using this disciplinary policy the proof will be on a **balance of probabilities** and taking positive action on Referee/Officials to correct behaviour within the grassroots football arena.

Those who seek to use this policy must and will insure that Referees/Officials understand Right from Wrong. Where necessary the learning outcomes will be facilitated by the Members representative or Parents and Guardians if under the age of 18 years old. This may be when present at meeting or over the phone or by web call if and when needed.

The purpose of this policy is not to punish but to correct behaviour and have positive role models within grassroots football. This approach will enhance and deliver the right minded Referee/Officials who will be equipped to deliver and facilitate learning within the England FA framework.

## Principles

The Disciplinary Committee will consist of the Club Welfare Officer and a minimum of one more member of the Club Committee.

A meeting will be convened within 14 days of the alleged breach of the Code of Conduct and the Member will be notified in writing of the nature of their failure to maintain the standards detailed in the Code.

<sup>1</sup> Coalville Town Youth FC Match Officials Code of Conduct Policy 2023-004-4

<sup>2</sup> Coalville Town Youth FC Equality Policy 2023-002.2



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On the day of the incident giving rise to the breach of the Coalville Town Fc Match Officials Code of Conduct,<sup>3</sup> the matter should be reported to the Club Secretary or Vice Chairman in their absence, by the team Coach/Manager or Welfare Officer. If the Club Secretary considers that a potential breach of the Match Officials Code of Conduct has occurred, the matter will be passed to the Welfare Officer who will coordinate the investigation and institute the disciplinary procedure.

Referee/Officials will be notified of the time, date, and venue of the meeting by letter or email. They will be required to confirm attendance no later than 24 hours prior to the date of the meeting. The Referee/Officials will be required to attend with their parent/guardian if applicable, if they are under 18 years of age, who may make a representation on their behalf. The Referee/Official and or their representative will be given an opportunity to state their case prior to any decision being made by the Disciplinary Committee.

No disciplinary action will be taken against a Referee/Officials until a full investigation as to the circumstances of the incident have been conducted by the club.

At all stages of the investigation the Referee/Officials will be required to be accompanied by their parent/guardian, if they are under 18 years of age, who may make representations on their behalf and confirm that the Referee/Official fully understands the potential breach of the code, the procedure taking place and the sanction, if any, imposed by the Disciplinary Committee. All aspects of the investigation will remain confidential.

No Referee/Officials will be dismissed from the Club for a first breach of the Code of Conduct except in cases where there has been a Gross Misconduct as detailed below. In those circumstances a specific procedure will be followed. As explained previously the policy is to correct behaviour that is deemed to have dropped below the standards the Club expects from its Members at all times.

Referee/Officials will have the right to appeal against any disciplinary action imposed. An appeal should be addressed to the Club Secretary and submitted within seven days from the date that the Disciplinary Committee's decision is communicated to the member.

### Procedure

#### Stage 1 – Verbal Warning and or Reflective Practice\* FA Educational Work

If the conduct is deemed to be in breach of the standards laid down in the Match Officials Code of Conduct,<sup>4</sup> or FA England,<sup>5</sup> the Referee/Officials will in the first instance be given a verbal warning.

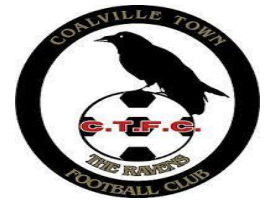
The Referee/Officials will be advised of the reason for the warning and notified that this is the first stage of the Disciplinary Procedure. He or she will be notified that they have a right to appeal, the timescale upon which the appeal should be submitted to the Club Secretary for the Club's further consideration.

A note of the verbal warning will be kept by the Club Secretary but will be discarded after 12 months or in line with the present requirements of the Data Protection Act. Where a follow up review is necessary, the Referee/Officials will be advised of this and the timescales for

<sup>3</sup> Coalville Town Youth FC Match Officials Code of Conduct Policy 2023-004-4

<sup>4</sup> Coalville Town Youth FC Coaches and Managers, Code of Conduct. Policy 2023-004.3

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.EnglandFootball.com/participate/explore/inclusive-football/Respect>



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review. In those circumstances, an action plan will be mutually agreed with the Referee/Official or parent/guardian if under 18 years of age, and a mentor appointed by the Club.

It may be that the Referee/Officials may work on Reflective Practice, County FA or signposted to a County FA Referee Development Officer <sup>6</sup> to encourage learning from the incident/event and correct unwanted behaviour. Please see appendix regarding Gibbs Reflective Cycle\* and Reflective Practice Log for Members \*\*

### **Stage 2 – Written Warning**

If the matter is more serious or there is a further breach of the Code of Conduct, then a written warning will be given to the Referee/Officials. This will explain the reason for the warning, the improvement in conduct required and the timescale. Further, if there is no improvement the action detailed in Stage 3 may be considered. The right of appeal against this decision will be advised and explained to the Referee/Officials. An S.M.A.R.T Action Plan\*\*\* will be mutually agreed with the Referee/Officials or parent/guardian if under 18 years old, and a mentor appointed by the Club or County FA. A copy of the written warning will be kept by the Club Secretary, but will be discarded for disciplinary purposes after 12 months subject to satisfactory conduct

### **Stage 3 – Final Written Warning**

If there is still a failure to improve and conduct is still unsatisfactory, or if the matter is sufficiently serious to warrant only one written warning but insufficiently serious to justify dismissal from the club, a final written warning will be given by the Committee. This will explain the reason for the warning, the improvement required and the timescale. An action plan will be mutually agreed with the Referee/Officials or parent/guardian if under 18, and a Mentor appointed by the Club or County FA. It will also warn that dismissal from the Club will result if there is no improvement and will advise the right of appeal. The Club Secretary will hold a copy of the final written warning, but it will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after 12 months subject to satisfactory conduct.

### **Stage 4 – Dismissal from the Club**

If the conduct is still unsatisfactory and the Referee/Official still fails to reach the required standards or the conduct is regarded as serious gross misconduct then dismissal from the club will usually result. Only the Club Committee of at least three can take the decision to dismiss the player. The Referee/Officials will be provided, as soon as practicable, a written explanation for dismissal, the date upon which membership will terminate and the right of appeal.

### **Gross Misconduct**

The following list gives examples of behaviour that are normally regarded as gross misconduct:

1. Fighting or Encouragement of
2. Assault/Spitting on another person or Encouragement of
3. Deliberate damage to Club property or Encouragement of

<sup>6</sup> Leicestershire and Rutland County FC Referee Development Officer [Jacob.Lehane@leicestershirefa.com](mailto:Jacob.Lehane@leicestershirefa.com)



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4. Bringing the Club into disrepute by actions or words (racist/sexist/homophobic)
5. Serious negligence or disregard of the Club Rules that causes, or could have caused loss, damage or injury.
6. Serious acts of insubordination. Including the failure to follow or observe reasonable laws and procedures as set by the Club, County FA, England FA.

Any behaviour deemed as outside of the above will be deemed as Misconduct, unless advised by the Legal Advisor of Club or County FA.

### Procedure

In the event that a Referee/Official of the Club is alleged of gross misconduct by an player, parent, guardian or other Club authority, the Referee/Officials shall be automatically suspended; pending investigation/disciplinary hearing according to the Club's policy or when superseded by County FA Policies and procedures.

1. The Referee/Official will abstain from officiating and assisting directly or indirectly any match until an emergency meeting of the Club Committee has been convened.
2. An emergency meeting of the Club Disciplinary Committee will be convened within 2 weeks of the incident. This will comprise of a Welfare Officer, Club Chairman and other Committee members to constitute a quorum of three. The committee members will be mutually agreed by the Welfare Officer and Club Chairman.
3. The Referee/Officials involved will be asked to attend the meeting and will be accompanied by a representative if required or a parent/guardian.
4. The Referee/Officials will be asked to recall the incident, to confirm that they understand the charges, explain their actions and to answer questions regarding the incident with the agreement of their representative or parent/guardian if needed. Witnesses may be called by the Referee/Official charged with serious/gross misconduct. The Club also reserves the right to call witnesses if deemed appropriate.
5. At the end of the hearing once all the evidence has been heard the Referee/Officials and or their representative will be entitled to make a closing submission to the Disciplinary Committee.
6. After the closing submissions, all other persons shall withdraw whilst the Committee considers the evidence and submissions. It will determine whether the breach has been proved or not and what actions are to be taken as a result.
7. The Referee/Officials will be recalled to the meeting and notified of the Committee's decision which will be confirmed in writing.
8. Should a Referee/Officials be charged with serious/gross misconduct not attend the Disciplinary Meeting then a decision will be made in their absence and the decision of the Committee will be confirmed in writing to the address noted on their registration document.

The Committee have the authority to take whatever action is appropriate within the club rules and constitution. In the most serious of cases this could lead to dismissal from the club.

Referee/Official will be expected to pay any fines imposed by the League or County FA in relation to such an incident.



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If the Club believe that Criminal Offences have been committed by the Referee/Officials whilst representing the Club then law enforcement authorities will be notified such as the Police, Social Services, Council, Housing, Educational and any others that may be applicable. The protection and safeguarding of all Players, Referees, Mangers, Coach's and other Members connected with the club is paramount.

### Appeals

**Referee/Officials who wish to appeal against any disciplinary decision should inform the Club Secretary within seven days.** At the appeal, any disciplinary action proposed will be reviewed by members of the Committee/Club Welfare Team **not** involved in the original hearing or investigation and be **independent** to the first hearing. The members must constitute a quorum of three.

The Referee/Officials will be notified of the outcome of the appeal in writing within seven days of the appeal hearing.

### Committees

Club Committees

**The Disciplinary Committee is made up from any of the following roles:**

1. The Clubs Chairperson/Secretary.
2. Welfare Officer.
3. Assistant Welfare Officers.
4. Disciplines Officers.
5. Independent Coaches and Managers of allegation or incident.

**The Appeals Committee is made up from any of the following roles all independent of first hearing:**

1. The Clubs Treasurer.
2. Club Secretary.
3. Supporting Welfare Officers
4. Legal Advisor.
5. Any **Committee** member **independent** to the Disciplinary Committee.

If one of the above of the committee members is deemed to prejudice the disciplinary hearing or appeal, then a long standing /experienced committee member may be co-opted onto the relevant committee.

Members of the club include Manager/Coach/Assistants/Players/Referee/Chair Person/ Club Secretary/Welfare Officer/Legal Advisor/Disciplines Officer/Treasurer/Accountant and all other staff either paid or otherwise linked directly or indirectly with the club.

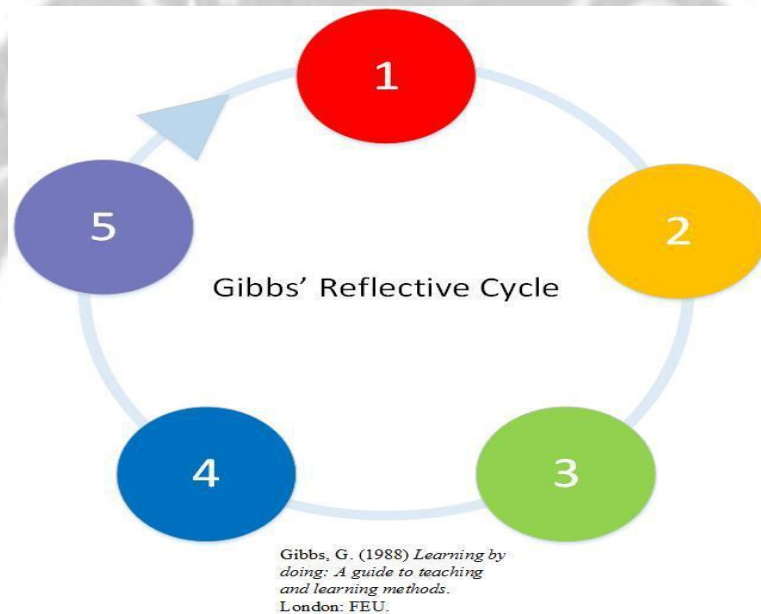


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## Appendix

### Gibbs' Reflective Cycle\*

This model might help you to explore and learn from situations that occur, particularly if the outcome was unexpected or it was a negative experience.



1. **Description**  
Describe the event – when and where. Why you were there? Who else was there? What happened? How did you react? How did others react? What was the outcome?
2. **Feelings**  
How were your thoughts and feelings at the time? What did you feel before and after? How did others feel? How do you feel about it now?
3. **Evaluation/analysis**  
What worked and what didn't work – positive or negative outcomes. What went well or not so well? Did you or others make a positive or negative contribution?
4. **Conclusions**  
What did you learn? What would you do differently in future? Any skills or knowledge you need to develop?
5. **Action**  
What will you do about it? Do you need to make changes to your practice? Have you identified any areas to work on?



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The log is based on Gibbs' reflective cycle.

Reflective Practice Log \*\*

Incident
Describe what happened: -
Action
Do you need to make changes to your behaviour?
What action will you take?
What are the first steps?
Describe your learning?



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## S.M.A.R.T. Action plan for Mangers/Coaches/Assistants\*\*\*

Crafting S.M.A.R.T. Goals are designed to help you identify if what you want to achieve is realistic and determine a deadline. When writing S.M.A.R.T. Action Plan use concise language, but include relevant information. These are designed to help you succeed, so be positive when answering the questions.

**INITIAL  
GOAL**

Write the goal you have in mind look at the below to assist you.

- Remember as a Referee you are constantly under the micro scope.
- Have the interpretations of the Laws of the Game been met
- Have you facilitated a safe match day experience
- Emotional Intelligence is important are you in Control of your Emotions when speaking to Players, Mangers and Spectators

**S**

**SPECIFIC**

What do you want to accomplish? Who needs to be included? When do you want to do this? Why is this a goal?

**M**

**MEASURABLE**

How can you measure progress and know if you've successfully met your goal? Ask your assistant for feedback?

**A**

**ACHIEVABLE**

Do you have the skills required to achieve the goal? If not, can you obtain them? What is the motivation for this goal? Is the amount of effort required on par with what the goal will achieve? Is CPD required, mentoring you, E-Learning? FA County development of your skills and knowledge.

**R**

**RELEVANT**

Why am I setting this goal now? Is it aligned with overall objectives? Do my goals meet the requirements of the clubs values and ethics and those set by The Referees Association?

**T**

What's the deadline and is it realistic? Will it be over a few weeks of training or a few months of match days? Spot checks by welfare officer?





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TIME-BOUND

SMART  
GOAL

Review what you have written, and craft a new goal statement based on what the answers to the questions above have revealed

