

Saskatchewan Rugby

Foul Play Policy and Procedures



Date: May 2025

1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.1. "Foul Play" means any conduct which contravenes World Rugby Law 9 and includes acts of misconduct, violence, or unfair play.
- 1.2. "Foul Play Committee" means the body composed of Judicial Officers assigned by Saskatchewan Rugby to review disciplinary matters.
- 1.3. "Judicial Officer" means an independent individual appointed to hear and adjudicate disciplinary matters as part of the Foul Play Committee.
- 1.4. "Hearing" means A formal review process undertaken to assess incidents of Foul Play
- 1.5. "Match Official" means the appointed head official of a match.
- 1.6. "Assistant Referee" means the appointed AR of a match.
- 1.7. "Ordering Off (Red Card)" means when a player is sent off permanently by the referee and cannot participate further in the match.
- 1.8. "Citing" means when a player is reported after the match for an act of foul play that was not dealt with by the match officials during the game.
- 1.9. "Temporary Suspension (Yellow Card)" means when a player is temporarily suspended (sin-binned) for a period of playing time (10 minutes in 15s, 2 minutes in 7s).
- 1.10. "Harmonization" means making sure Saskatchewan Rugby's rules use the same terminology and definitions, follow similar steps and standards in disciplinary processes, apply consistent sanctions and appeals mechanisms, don't contradict national or international policies

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1. This policy aligns with World Rugby Regulation 17 to maintain and promote fair play, protect the safety and welfare of players, to ensure acts of foul play are dealt with efficiently and appropriately by independent means and to protect the image and reputation of the game. All players, coaches, officials, and administrators must adhere to its principles.
- 2.2. This policy applies to all rugby activities sanctioned by Saskatchewan Rugby.
- 2.3. The harmonization of our foul play policies and processes allows for further alignment with these core principles found within World Rugby Regulation 17:
 - 2.3.1. Universality of Sanctions: Sanctions for foul play are generally the same throughout the game. All Unions and Associations are expected to adopt the World Rugby Sanctions for Offences within the Playing Enclosure (Appendix 1).
 - 2.3.2. Equality of Matches: A player suspended from playing is suspended from all levels of the game during their suspension period.
 - 2.3.3. Natural Justice: All disciplinary proceedings must adhere to the principles of natural justice, including the right for players to know the evidence against them, to be heard, and to be represented.
 - 2.3.4. Independent Adjudication: Judicial Officers, Disciplinary Committees, and Citing Commissioners are to be independently appointed and exercise their functions independently.

3. APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

- 3.1. This policy governs all red card offenses, citing offenses, citing procedures, hearings, suspension processes and appeals related to violations of Law 9 of the Laws of the Game.

4. JUDICIAL OFFICERS AND FOUL PLAY COMMITTEE

- 4.1. A pool of trained Judicial Officers will be maintained by Saskatchewan Rugby.

- 4.2. The Foul Play Committee will include the Chair and three judicial officers.
- 4.3. The three Judicial Officers will be selected per case by the Chair and must have no conflict of interest.
- 4.4. The Foul Play Committee shall operate at all times in accordance with this policy.
- 4.5. The Foul Play Committee must notify parties of decisions within 7 days.
- 4.6. The Foul Play Committee requires a 2/3 majority vote for any disciplinary decisions.

5. INITIAL PROCEDURES

5.1. Ordering off

- 5.1.1. The player must leave the playing enclosure without attempting to question, argue with or address any other participants, including but not limited to opposition players, fans, coaches and/or Match Officials.
- 5.1.2. The player must inform their club executive of the incident.
- 5.1.3. The player is suspended effective immediately from all or any exhibition, touring, league or tournament matches until receiving notice from the Foul Play Committee expressly detailing a timeline allowing their return to play.

5.2. Citing Complaint

- 5.2.1. Citing can only take place from an appointed citing commissioner during a match or by a Member Organization.
- 5.2.2. Citing Commissioners may refer incidents within 48 hours post-match.
- 5.2.3. Where matches without a citing commissioner, member organizations may file a citation with video evidence within 48 hours post-match.
- 5.2.4. The video evidence must be the full game footage or reference time stamps on any league video that was used.
- 5.2.5. All citations must be provided to the Chair.

6. STANDARD AND BURDEN OF PROOF FOR ORDERING OFF AND CITING

In all disciplinary proceedings related to foul play under this policy, the standard of proof to be applied by the Foul Play Committee shall be the balance of probabilities. This means that the Foul Play Committee must be satisfied that it is more likely than not that the alleged incident occurred or that the decision was incorrect.

6.1 During a Match:

- 6.1.1 The referee is the sole judge of fact and law during a match. Their decisions on foul play are based on what they observe.
- 6.1.2 If a referee issues a red card for foul play, the player is provisionally suspended and a hearing will follow.
- 6.1.3 In a post-match hearing for a red card, the burden of proof may shift. If a player challenges the red card, the burden shifts to the player to demonstrate that the referee's decision was wrong and that the foul play did not warrant a red card. This

might involve showing mistaken identity or that the act did not meet the threshold for a red card.

6.2 Post Match Citing:

- 6.2.1. A citing occurs when a citing commissioner or a participating club alleges that an act of foul play warranting a red card occurred during a match but was not sanctioned by the referee at the time.
- 6.2.2. In a citing case, the burden of proof lies with the party bringing the citing (the citing commissioner or the club). They must present evidence (e.g., video footage, witness statements) to convince the disciplinary body that foul play occurred and that it should have resulted in a red card. They need to prove, on the balance of probabilities, that the referee was wrong if the referee did observe the incident and took lesser action.

7. FOUL PLAY COMMITTEE AND JUDICIAL OFFICERS - POWERS AND PROCEDURES

- 7.1. The Foul Play Committee has the discretion on procedure and evidence
- 7.2. The Foul Play Committee must notify parties of decisions within 7 days after receiving the red card report.
- 7.3. The Committee may call a hearing with 3 days notice
- 7.4. The Committee requires a 2/3 majority vote for all suspension decisions.

8. SANCTIONS AND CORE SANCTIONING PROCESS - APPLYING DISCIPLINE

- 8.1. **ASSESSMENT OF SERIOUSNESS OF THE FOUL PLAY**
Factors include intent, injury, recklessness and effect on the match.
- 8.2. **AGGRAVATING FACTORS**
Factors include prior offenses, lack of remorse, and disrespect for authority.
- 8.3. **MITIGATING FACTORS**
Factors include apology, good disciplinary record and provocation.

9. POST - HEARING PROCEDURES

- 9.1. Suspensions must be communicated to all parties. Player details and suspensions will be published via Sask Rugby. All records will be retained for 5 years (60 months).

10. APPEALS

- 10.1. Grounds for Appeal are either new evidence not available at original hearing or procedural errors or jurisdictional overreach.
- 10.2. The Appeal Officer will be the Executive Director
- 10.3. The Appeal Committee will be three members who are selected by the Appeal Officer from the pool of Judicial Officers. The Appeal Committee must have no conflict of interest and can not include any judicial officers involved in the original hearing.
- 10.4. All appeals must be submitted in writing and include a \$300 bond (\$150 refundable if successful)
- 10.5. Appeals will be heard at the next scheduled or special meeting within 7 days.
- 10.6. Original suspension remains until a decision is communicated.

11. SUSPENSION

Decisions may include warnings, fines, match suspensions (per World Rugby Regulation 17, Appendix 1) or Expulsion from membership.