



Hartlepool United Football Club **Complaints Process**

Outline of Disciplinary Action by Club relating to Poor Practice and Misconduct

Where parents/carers, spectators, players, coaches or club officials are seen to have possibly acted inappropriately and a complaint is made, a Club will need to consider disciplinary action.

The general process for dealing with a case and deciding what to do, which may include issuing a sanction, is basically as follows.

Where a complaint is made to the club:

- The person making the complaint must put their complaint in writing and send it to the Club Secretary (Note - if the complaint is about the conduct of the Club Secretary, the letter should be sent to either the Chairman, COO or Welfare Officer)
- The Club must ask the complainant for permission to share their letter of complaint with the subject of the complaint. Such permission should also be given in writing and ideally, will be included in the original letter of complaint.
- A letter will then need to be sent by the Club to the subject of the complaint outlining the concerns that have been raised and including a copy of the complainants letter
- The Club letter should specify that it requires a written reply from the subject of the complaint within fourteen days and invite them to a Committee Meeting which is being convened to consider the matter.
- A Club letter must also be sent to the complainant inviting them to attend the Committee meeting.
- The Club letters to both complainant and subject should indicate the date/time/venue of the Committee Meeting and give at least 14 days' notice of it so that the parties concerned can attend should they wish to do so. The Club letter must also advise that if they do not attend the matter will be dealt with in their absence.

- The Committee dealing with the complaint must consist of 3-5 Officials of the Club and they must NOT include anyone directly named or involved in the original complaint.
- The Committee members will need copies of all relevant paperwork in advance of the hearing so that they can read it and be fully aware of the complaint and response.
- At the Committee Meeting a verbal outline of the complaint will be given through the Chair and the Committee would then hear from the person who made the complaint and the subject of the complaint. The Committee would then ask any questions they deem appropriate to challenge or clarify what had been written or said.
- When satisfied that relevant parties have had the opportunity to state their positions those individuals will leave the room to allow the Committee to deliberate and reach a decision.
- After a decision is reached, the person subject of the complaint would then be asked back into the room and given the decision which will be binding (and followed up in writing); or alternatively, the subject of the complaint would leave the meeting altogether, after being informed that the club would advise of the decision in writing.

Sanctions

Where the Committee find that the complaint is upheld/proven there are a number of sanctions available.

Sanctions are incorporated into the Respect Codes of Conduct

Respect Codes of Conduct

Before any new season it is important that each club makes sure it explains to all Officials, players, parents/carers and spectators the Respect Codes of Conduct which the club operate to. All involved must sign-up to the relevant Code and the club secretary will keep the signed sheets. (Codes are for Parents/Carers and Spectators; Coaches/Managers and Club Officials; and Young Players). This then makes it a lot easier to deal with any incident that arises as all involved have already signed-up to their particular Code of Conduct. Any new people getting involved with the club will need to sign-up to the relevant Code of Conduct.

Find the Codes of Conduct here

https://www.durhamfa.com/~media/CountySites/durhamfa/documents/respect/respect---code-of-conduct_a4.ashx