



RUGBY LEAGUE IRELAND

DISCIPLINARY AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

For

All Members, Clubs & Participants

Adopted by the RLI Board on Friday June 18th 2021

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Introduction

1. Rugby League Ireland (RLI) is a community of grassroots members and volunteers who promote the sport of rugby league in Ireland.
2. These rules and procedures deal with disciplinary and complaints matters within our organisation. In line with the recent updating of our Constitution, we are revising the rules and procedures relating to complaints and disciplinary matters.
3. These rules help ensure all participants in our sport can participate safely and in the spirit of fair play and enjoy our sport.
4. There are (a) Rules and (b) Procedures.
 - a. The Rules clarify what gives rise to a Complaint or disciplinary action, and what sanction can be imposed.
 - b. The Procedures explains the step-by-step stages of the process from start to finish. It is a guideline for the Hearings Panel as well as Complainants and Respondents.
5. It is the right of a member of RLI to make a complaint where standards of care, treatment and practice are perceived to fall short of what is acceptable and should be expected. Likewise, it is the right of RLI clubs and RLI itself to take disciplinary action against a member and other units for any act or omission for breaches of these Rules or any other rules, codes or regulations of RLI or IRL or ERLF.
6. Amendments may be made from time to time to these Rules and Procedures so long as these amendments do not conflict with the RLI Constitution. Any penalty imposed on an individual or unit shall be operative throughout RLI until the penalty period has ceased.
7. It should be emphasised that Disputes/Complaints should be dealt with, where possible, at local level until all potential resolutions at this level have been exhausted. If either party is still not satisfied with the outcome, there is the right to challenge the decisions on certain grounds before Sport Dispute Solutions Ireland arbitration (SDSI), who can offer mediation services.
8. Dispute Solutions Ireland (SDSI), once all internal avenues of appeal have been addressed. SDSI is an independent sport-specific arbitral body which was set up by the Federation of Irish Sport in 2005. RLI has signed up to SDSI arbitration. It is binding on all RLI members.
9. Rugby League Ireland supports Mediation as a form of dispute resolution. Mediation may be an output of a disciplinary hearing where sanction may not be appropriate to resolve an issue.
10. These Rules and Procedures are not an appropriate mechanism for dealing with certain complaints such as allegations of physical or sexual abuse or other potential child abuse issues for which other procedures exist using the appropriate statutory authorities. In respect of allegations of physical or sexual abuse or other potential child abuse issues parties are referred to the child welfare and
11. Safeguarding policies such as Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Youth Sport as amended from time to time.
12. All persons who administer Complaints and disciplinary matters at any level in RLI shall not be liable to the Parties for any act or omission in connection with their function, role or service provided by such persons in relation to the administration of complaints and disciplinary matters. If there is an omission in these rules, then the Complaints & Disciplinary Bodies shall decide in accordance with the RLI custom or, in the absence of custom, in accordance with the spirit of the rules.
13. RLI may review and amend these Rules and Procedures from time to time, particularly where legislative updates or legal developments require it, including any fees payable.

DEFINITIONS

Board: means the members of the current Board of RLI.

Club: means any Club as defined in the RLI Constitution.

Code of Conduct/Ethics: means the relevant code of conduct and/or set of rules (as amended from time to time) outlining the rules and responsibilities of, or proper practices applicable to Events or Members acting in a specific role, duty or official capacity the RLI Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Youth Sport in RLI based on the Sport Ireland Code of Ethics and Good Practice and equivalent Northern Ireland youth regulations and as amended from time to time

Complaint: means an expression of discontent in writing or via email, accompanied by all relevant documentation in support of the complaint and the appropriate fee.

Complainant: means the person making the complaint.

Complaints and Disciplinary Register. Register which contains a record of all historical Complaints and Disciplinary Hearings and their outcomes.

Costs. The monetary value of provision of any hearings processes or third-party mediation processes. To be determined and included in this document as and when agreed with by the members

Domestic Competitions Committee (DCC): Body with manages and administers all domestic Rugby League Competitions on behalf of RLI

Disciplinary & Complaints Officer (DCO). Board member tasked with managing all Disciplinary and Complaints in so much as they will formulate the committees to investigate/manage those processes.

Event: means any Club, or RLI national or international event which means any training session, match, competition, RLI educational course and covers attendance at any RLI sanctioned tournament.

Hearing. A formulated Disciplinary or Complaints process, held face to face or via online video conferencing, in which the aforementioned processes can be carried out.

Hearings Panel: means the persons appointed to hear a Complaint / Disciplinary matter. The primary function of the Hearings Panel is to hear evidence in respect of a Complaint or disciplinary matter, to decide on culpability and to impose a sanction, where deemed appropriate.

Inter-Club. Something that happens between at least two separate clubs

Intra-Club. Something that happens within one club only

Match Officials' Report: means the report completed by a Match Official, following an RLI sanctioned match

Member: means Member of RLI as defined in the RLI Constitution.

NGB. National Governing Body. The body that runs the game of Rugby League on the island of Ireland: Rugby League Ireland (RLI). NGB refers in this document to the board of RLI.

Officer: means the directors and/or officers of the Board as set out in the Constitution and includes a person who holds an executive position on a Club Committee or sub-committee of RLI.

Official: means any person who officiates at or assists in the running of a competition.

Parent: means the legally appointed person responsible for a child – parent or guardian

Participant: means any member or person who participates in activities organised or sanctioned by RLI in any capacity, including but not limited to a player, official coach, manager, doctor, or spectator.

Person in Charge: means the Member in ultimate authority over a member, team or delegation at an Event. At a training session, the coach is the Person in Charge. At a national competition, the team manager is the Person in Charge. At an international competition, the team manager or head of the team delegation shall be the Person in Charge. At a festival or competition, the event manager/organiser is the Person in Charge. During a match the match official is the Person in Charge.

Procedures: means these RLI Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures.

Respondent: means the person responding to or the subject of a complaint or disciplinary action

Responsible Person: means the Member in ultimate authority over a “member”, “team” or “delegation” at an Event. At a training session, the coach is the Responsible Person. At a national competition, the team manager is the Responsible Person. At an international competition the team manager or head of the team delegation shall be the Responsible Person.

RLI: means Rugby League Association of Ireland Company Limited by Guarantee.

RLIDCC: Rugby League Irelands Disciplinary and Complaints Committee - The pool of Panel representatives from which the panel for hearings and investigations will be drawn.

RLIDCC representative: The person nominated by each member club to serve as a disciplinary panel member.

Spectator: means any person who neither participates in nor officiates at an event but who attends in a capacity to support a participant or participants.

Sports Dispute Solutions Ireland. An independent dispute resolution service for Sport Ireland who can assist in mediation matters

Unit: means any team, association, club or committee or sub-committee or other grouping within RLI.

PART 1 - Complaints and Disciplinary Rules ('the Rules')

BACKGROUND AND JURISDICTION

14. In addition to the offences under these Rules, any complaint or disciplinary matter arising out of, under or in connection with any breach of (or any act or omission prohibited in any) other RLI, IRL and ERLF rules, regulations or statutes, will be dealt with under these Rules and Procedures.
15. These Rules should not impact on competition rules or decisions of Match Officials in respect of competitions. In the absence of a specific provision in these Rules or in other disciplinary provisions of the IRL Regulations, the Complaints and Disciplinary Bodies shall rule according to the general principles appearing in these Rules.
16. The following natural and legal persons agree to and are subject to these rules:
 - a. Member (as defined in Constitution)
 - b. Participant in an Event
 - c. Supporting Organisation
17. The Rules apply in respect of:
 - d. Complaints against any natural or legal persons
 - e. Disciplinary matters against any natural or legal persons
18. The following persons or group of persons shall be appointed to administer these rules:
19. **Disciplinary and Complaints Officer.** The Board of RLI shall appoint a member to be the focal point of contact for all matters that would lead to the formulation of a disciplinary hearing. This person will be the Disciplinary Officer (DCO).
 - f. The DCO should, ideally, have no club allegiances.
 - g. The DCO shall formulate the hearing in accordance with the process for doing so and shall manage the process of informing those required to attend and provide all relevant documentation to the disciplinary committee and to the applicant and respondent parties, in good time, prior to the hearing, so each party has the opportunity to review the documentation.
 - h. The DCO will select two persons from The RLIDCC for the Hearings Panel.
 - i. The DCO shall manage the rotation of the Panel Pool
20. **RLIDCC Chair.** The chair shall be appointed by the RLI Board.
 - j. The Chair's role is to ensure any hearings are carried out in accordance with the policies and procedures laid down for those functions. The Chair is to ensure that both appellant and respondent are allowed to present their cases in a just manner and the Chair will allow sufficient time for evidence to be presented whilst ensuring it is done so in a professional and courteous manner.
 - k. The chair will lead the process alongside his two panel representatives and will, when evidence has been given and the disciplinary board has reached their decision return the result of the hearing to the respondent.
 - l. The chair will manage a ballot with his fellow disciplinary board members if a unanimous board decision cannot be reached.
 - m. In the case of a conflict of interest the Chair should recuse themselves and an alternate and equally capable RLIDCC member should take the role for the hearing in question
 - n. A Chair should serve no more than four years in post

21. **RLIDCC Representative.** Each club will nominate a Person who will be nominated to support hearings.
- o. All RLIDCC representatives will have their appointments to the hearings panel managed by the DCO, on a rotational basis.
 - p. An RLIDCC representative whose club is part of a hearing cannot be selected to the panel for that hearing.
 - q. A representative must recuse themselves from selection to a particular hearing/investigation if they find themselves having a conflict of interests.
 - r. Each representative will be recused from standing on a panel when their own club or a participant from their club is involved in a hearing in any role (appellant, respondent, complainant, witness, etc).
 - s. All RLIDCC representatives will be provided with the appropriate training for the role

Exclusions from a disciplinary hearing:

22. The following list are scenarios which RLI will not form a disciplinary hearing to manage:
- a. Employment and quasi employment contractual disputes.
 - b. Complaints or disciplinary matters relating to persons sitting on the Board in their capacity as Board members, which are dealt with under provisions of section 94 of the Constitution.
 - c. Allegations of child abuse. Such Complaints shall be referred to the statutory authorities, where appropriate.
 - d. Criminal matters. Such Complaints shall be referred to the statutory authorities.
 - e. Anti-doping matters. Such Complaints shall be dealt with in accordance with the Anti-Doping Rules laid down and agreed to with Sport Ireland.
 - f. Competition administration.

OFFENCES

23. The following is a non-exhaustive list of offences:
- a. Breach of any the rules, statutes, codes of conduct, regulations and Codes of Ethics more specifically provided in rule 1.1.
 - b. Aggressive or intimidatory/threatening behaviour
 - c. Offensive behaviour to other players or RLI officials
 - d. Violation of instructions and directives from RLI official
 - e. Damaging the dignity of a person or a group of persons, in any way whatsoever, in particular due to colour, race, handicap, sex, sexual orientation, religion or ethnic origin
 - f. Violation of contractual obligations towards RLI
 - g. Dishonest/inappropriate actions
 - h. Acts of violence
 - i. Inciting hatred or violence
 - j. Bullying/Coercion
 - k. Ineligibility – including but not limited to age and club affiliation.
 - l. Discrimination
 - m. Foul language
 - n. Disparaging comments
 - o. Corruption, Forgery or falsification

- p. Alcohol or substance abuse by Members at an Event
- q. Criminal investigation for indictable offences
- r. Criminal conviction likely to bring RLI into disrepute.
- s. Mischievous or vexatious Complaints
- t. Purporting to represent RLI without the permission of RLI
- u. Organising or Taking part in a competition or display organised by a club or committee not affiliated to RLI, or not sanctioned by RLI
- v. Distribution of correspondence. including texting, posting on social media, or distributed email content that would bring RLI, associated individuals, or the game into disrepute.
- w. Verbal or physical abuse of a match official
- x. Any act or omission that brings the sport of rugby league and/or RLI into disrepute

SANCTIONS

- 24. There are three types of sanctions:
 - a. Warnings
 - b. Immediate Sanctions
 - c. Non-Immediate Sanctions
- 25. Prior to imposing an Immediate Sanction, where appropriate, a Person in Charge may issue a verbal or written warnings in any sequence to a Member at an Event prior to imposing an Immediate Sanction.
- 26. An Immediate Sanction is a suspension or expulsion from a particular activity or Event, or sanction that applies automatically following a red card, as set out in the sanctions matrix. An immediate sanction will be issued by a Person in Charge.
- 27. A Non-Immediate Sanction is any sanction imposed by a hearings committee following a hearing, including the sanctions set out at clause 35 below. All non-immediate sanctions must be as the result of a hearing and issued by the RLIDCC.
- 28. The Chair of the Board of RLI is empowered to impose a suspension on a Respondent pending the determination of a hearing by the Hearings Panel, where in the opinion of the DCO the gravity of the matter warrants an immediate suspension.
- 29. On confirmation that a Respondent is under criminal investigation for an indictable criminal offence, the disciplinary may choose to suspend a Respondent from membership and/or from future participation in a Club, or national Event and/or from attending a Club or national building pending the outcome of a criminal investigation but without necessarily convening a disciplinary hearing on the matter.

HEARINGS PANEL

- 30. The Hearings Panel will be manned by three persons, one who will be the Hearings Panel Chair and the other two will RLIDCC Representatives and will be selected from the RLIDCC. These persons shall be appointed by the DCO on behalf of the Board of RLI.
- 31. Any person selected to sit on the Hearings Panel who has any actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest in the outcome of the hearing shall stand aside from hearing the Complaint/disciplinary matter. An alternative person shall be appointed from the Hearings Panel
- 32. The Hearings Panel shall act on a simple majority vote (+ 51%) in arriving at a decision
- 33. No minority or dissenting decisions shall be produced. In the event of a majority decision, this shall be the decision of the Hearing Panel.

34. The Hearings Panel shall have jurisdiction to impose any sanction as set out in sections of the Disciplinary Rules or the Sanctions Matrix at Appendix A below.
35. The Chair will be responsible for managing the hearing. That does not diminish the involvement or voting power of the two other committee members
36. The Hearings Panel has sole jurisdiction to impose a Sanction following a hearing.
37. The following Sanctions may be directed or imposed by a Hearings Panel:
 - a. Apology
 - b. Reprimand
 - c. Written warning
 - d. Fine
 - e. Suspension from participation in an Event or in a team for a specified duration or number of Events
 - f. Suspension from Membership/ Affiliation
 - g. Expulsion from Membership/ Affiliation
 - h. Suspension of diplomas awarded
 - i. Suspension from coaching
 - j. Suspension/expulsion from office of a person on the RLI Board
 - k. Cancellation of results of a competition
 - l. Obligation to restore the financial benefits and prizes received.
 - m. Restriction from attending Events.
 - n. Completion of an education or training course

MITIGATING AND AGGRAVATING FACTORS

38. A Hearings Panel shall consider the following (non-exhaustive list of) mitigating and aggravating factors once a decision on culpability is reached, but prior to the imposition of a sanction.
 - o. Age
 - p. Admission of culpability
 - q. Cooperation
 - r. Prior warnings
 - s. Repeat offences
 - t. Apology made
 - u. Remorse
 - v. Gravity of offence
 - w. Effect on victim
 - x. Any other factor deemed relevant

DCO (DISCIPLINARY AND COMPLAINTS OFFICER)

39. The DCO shall manage the disciplinary process in the follow manner:
 - y. Receive all Complaints and Disciplinary Reports, either by email or in written format.
 - z. To investigate a Complaint
 - aa. To instigate the disciplinary process:
 - bb. To set the date of all hearings (Disciplinary and Complaints)
 - i. To appoint the Hearings Panel, via selection of two members of the pool panel to sit with the RLIDCC Chair
 - ii. To ensure there are no conflicts of interest to those appointed to the Hearings Panel and replace/request replacement as necessary

- iii. To correspond with and notify all parties of all necessary information prior to a hearing before the Hearings Panel to allow for review and presentation of evidence/defence.
- iv. To distribute all documentation relevant to the hearing to assist with the above point.
- cc. To receive any judgements laid down by the Hearings Panel with respect to decisions on hearings.
- dd. To notify all stakeholders of the results of the hearing
 - i. To log the results of the disciplinary process in the disciplinary sanctions register
 - ii. Notify respondent of any sanction
 - iii. Notify DCC/RLI Board of any suspension from participation
- ee. To instigate any appeals process, if an appeal requested.
- 40. Where the DCO has any actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest, they shall stand aside from managing the Complaint/disciplinary matter and the RLI Board shall appoint another DCO in respect of that particular matter.
- 41. The DCO is required to notify a Participant of the investigation of which they are the point of investigation.
- 42. Prior to referring the matter to the Hearings Panel, the DCO shall notify the Respondent and any other relevant party with the following information and documentation:
 - ff. Copy of the written Complaint /Disciplinary Report
 - gg. The relevant rule allegedly breached
 - hh. Copy of supporting documents relied on by either party
 - ii. The parties to the Complaint/ Disciplinary Report
 - jj. The procedures involved
 - kk. The rights of the parties at the hearing
 - ll. Any other procedural requirements
- 43. A flowchart of the base requirements for the DCO to setup a disciplinary/complaints hearing can be found in APPENDIX B

COSTS

- 44. The cost for provisioning of disciplinary processes will be borne in the first instance by the NGB but as the process matures it should be determined that a cost is placed upon those who are sanctioned/bring complaints.
- 45. These costs must be fair and not prohibitive to the point they deter from a complaint being brought or a sanction becoming punitive to the respondent.

PART 2 – Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures

INTRODUCTION

- 46. This is a step-by-step guideline as to how a Complaint or disciplinary matter should be commenced, investigated, decided on and appealed
- 47. A complaint can be characterised as a personal grievance whereas a disciplinary matter is an objective allegation of an offence / rule breach.

MATCH DAY DISCIPLINARY MATTERS

- 48. A disciplinary matter is commenced under these rules when: -
 - a. The Match Official sends a Participant from the field of play for a straight red card
 - b. The Match Official dismisses a Participant prior to completion of his duties (leaving the ground). For clarity, this would be an off-field expulsion before the game, at half time or post game and may or may not be in the vicinity of the field of play.
 - c. A Person in Charge denotes something which they decide merits further investigation and potential sanctioning.

Match Officials Report

- 49. The Match official who issues/recommends a red card sanction (which may be the referee or a touch judge/in goal judge) must follow the following process to ensure that a disciplinary hearings process can be planned for;
 - d. At the end of the game in which the sanction was issued IMMEDIATELY contact the Match Officials Secretary, via email, and report any Red Card Sanction.
 - e. The Match Officials Secretary, in turn, is to at the quickest possible moment report to the DCO so the DCO can instigate a Hearings Panel (3.4).
 - f. The Match Official who issues/recommends the sanction, drafts the Match Officials Dismissal Report. The report can be in the form of an email and must contain the following information;
 - a. Date of Match
 - b. Teams involved in match
 - c. Venue of Match
 - d. Participant(s) dismissed (if more than one participant dismissed separate, individual dismissal reports must be drafted)
 - e. Time of dismissal
 - f. Score at time of dismissal
 - g. Reason for dismissal (one line description)
 - h. Narrative of dismissal (a textual description of what has been witnessed. This may include the temperature of the match around the time of dismissal and anything that occurred after the dismissal but not contain any opinion, solely factual information).
 - i. The match official who has drafted the sanction sends to the Match Officials' Secretary who will check only that the email contains points A to H and will then forward this on to the Disciplinary Officer for submission to the Disciplinary Hearing
 - j. The match official who issued/recommended the dismissal will then be contacted by the Disciplinary Officer and provided with the date of the Disciplinary Hearing, to which he may be required to attend.

Person in Charge Disciplinary Report

50. If the DCO becomes aware/is made aware of any alleged breach of rules, by a request to investigate by the Person in Charge (either witnessed directly or reported to the Person in Charge, by a Witness), of any regulations or codes or any act of misconduct, then the following procedure shall apply:
51. The DCO shall request a report by the Person in Charge, in the form of an email, of the incident that may warrant further investigation. This must include;
 - a. Date of Match
 - b. Teams involved in match
 - c. Venue of Match
 - d. Participant or participants being reported
 - e. Nature of the incident (in a narrative). This must be written without opinion and must only describe what has been witnessed and any potential witnesses to the incident.
52. The DCO shall consider if an investigation is warranted which may include meeting with any party where appropriate;
53. The DCO will inform those suspected of a breach of the investigation and upon the completion of the preliminary investigation will and may;
 - f. Instigate a Disciplinary hearing
 - g. Inform the stakeholders involved that no further actions will be taken. This will include the Person in Charge who requested the investigation and those who were made aware of the investigation against them.

Disciplinary Hearing

54. The Hearings procedure for Disciplinary will take place at an agreed time and will be organised by the DCO.
55. The structure of the presentation of evidence is as follows;
 - h. The Chair will welcome all present and confirm all in attendance are eligible to be there (from direction/documentation provided by the DCO) and will introduce the Disciplinary panel that will judge the case
 - i. The Chair will state the nature of the disciplinary offence, submitted by the match official or Person in Charge, who will both from this point forward be known as "The Witness."
 - j. The Chair will ask the respondent to confirm they understand the nature of the charge.
 - k. The respondent will be asked if they have anything they wish to declare.
 - i. If the respondent declares they wish to accept the charge, then the Witness will be excused and the process will move on to pleas of mitigation and sentencing.
 - l. The chair will then ask The Witness to take the stand and present their evidence, from their report
 - m. The respondent will be offered the opportunity to challenge the evidence presented by being allowed to cross examine The Witness
 - n. The Chair will then thank The Witness and excuse them from the meeting.
 - o. The Chair will then ask the respondent to take the stand and the Hearings Panel may ask the respondent questions on the report presented
 - p. The respondent may be invited to make any further submissions, including a plea of mitigation
 - q. The Hearings Panel will then order a short adjournment of the hearing and will discuss and decide the outcome of the hearing, which may be;

- i. The respondent has no case to answer and the case is dismissed.
 - ii. The respondent is guilty and a fixed term sanction is applied
 - iii. The respondent is guilty and a graded sanction must be applied; the length of which is at the determination of the panel.
 - r. The Hearings Panel resumes the hearing and hands down judgement of the disciplinary hearing to the respondent. The respondent, if they have been sanctioned, can be advised by the panel if they wish to appeal they must follow the appeals process and contact the DCO to instigate an appeals process.
 - s. The meeting is then closed
 - t. The hearings panel chair informs the DCO of the findings of the hearing and the DCO in turn informs the DCC of the findings.
 - u. The DCO logs the result of the findings in the Hearings Register
56. The Hearings Panel, at its discretion, may invite other persons (including but not limited to witnesses, officials or experts) to provide evidence or assistance for interpretations on the laws of the game, to the hearings panel in any form.
57. The respondent is entitled at a hearing to: -
- v. Be accompanied at the hearing, by either a member of their club (Panel Representative) or if the Member is a minor, by a parent or guardian.
 - w. Professional or legal advisors are specifically excluded from participating in a hearing.
 - x. Cross question the author of the disciplinary report
 - y. Call witnesses. Such witnesses may only be present to give their evidence and which witnesses may be questioned by the Hearings Panel.
 - z. All witnesses required must be declared in the Complaint submission so they can be sought for availability to attend at the hearing.
 - aa. Make submissions in writing or otherwise.
58. All parties must declare at the earliest possible moment of who will support them. The DCO will be responsible for contacting all stakeholders to instruct them of their requirement to attend and the DCO will not be responsible for omissions made by the Complainant/Respondent on who will support them.
59. The Hearings Panel shall have the discretion to accept testimony by telephone, written statements or submission, whether by fax, email or other means.
60. Match day video, be it from official or unofficial sources is submissible as evidence in its fullest format. Edited segments will not be submissible to avoid misinterpretation/manipulation of the context of the incident.
61. The Hearings Panel shall have the power to decide on the admissibility, relevance and weight of any evidence (including the testimony of any fact or expert witness) and shall not be bound by any laws or rules regarding the conduct of Court proceedings in relation to such matters. Facts may be established by any reliable means, including admissions
62. In the event of the non-attendance, without reasonable cause (considered by the Hearings Panel to be justifiable reason for non-attendance), of the author of the disciplinary report at a hearing, the Complaint/disciplinary action against the Respondent shall be dismissed
63. In the event of non-attendance, without reasonable cause, of a Respondent at a hearing, the Hearings Panel will be instructed by the chair to find the respondent guilty of the charge and will award the maximum sanction.
64. The Hearings Panel may adjourn or rearrange the hearing at its discretion. An adjourned or rearranged hearing shall take place as soon as is practicable, and the

- suspension of the Member, if already imposed, shall be automatically extended until the rearranged hearing takes place
65. A Match Official's Report or Disciplinary Report shall be, until the contrary is established to satisfaction of the Hearing Panel, sufficient evidence of:
- bb. the qualifications and authority of any Match Official/ Person in Charge who has reporting authority
 - cc. the authority of the official/Match Official/ Person in Charge who signed the Disciplinary Report.
 - dd. the facts stated in the Disciplinary Report.
66. Where facts are established by virtue of a Report, the burden of proof is on the Respondent to establish the contrary on the balance of probabilities.
67. Facts established by a decision of a Court which is not the subject of a pending appeal shall be irrefutable evidence of those facts against a Respondent.
68. The decision should be made at the hearing after a brief adjournment so the committee can confirm their decision.
69. On deciding culpability but prior to the imposition of a sanction, the Hearings Panel shall take into account any aggravating/mitigating factors as set out in the Mitigating and Aggravating Factors section.
70. After deciding on culpability of the Respondent the Hearings Panel shall impose a sanction as set out in Appendix A.
71. The Chair shall inform the DCO, in writing (hard copy or email), the decision of the board.
72. The DCO shall inform the DCC of the outcome within 3 days of the hearing
73. The decision shall be recorded in the Hearings Register by the DCO.
74. Pending an appeal being requested, the original sanction imposed by the Hearings Panel shall stand.
75. The basic flowchart for a Disciplinary Hearing can be found in APPENDIX C

COMPLAINT

76. A Complaint is commenced under these rules when: -
- a. The DCO receives a valid Complaint in writing or email.
 - b. A valid Complaint shall state
 - i. the nature of the Complaint and parties involved
 - ii. the date of the incident
 - iii. any rule/regulation allegedly breached.
77. A valid Complaint shall be made within 14 days of the occurrence of the subject matter of the Complaint, save where exceptional circumstances are proven to the satisfaction of the DCO.
78. For the purposes of this procedure Intra-club is termed as a dispute between persons at the same club, inter-club is a dispute between persons at different clubs or a dispute between two or more different club associations.
79. For internal Complaints arising intra-club DCO shall request to the club's committee that they attempt to resolve the matter informally, within 14 days of receipt of the Complaint (this timeline can be extended at the discretion of the DCO if the circumstances warrant extension)
80. If that fails, and in line with inter-club complaints, the DCO shall formulate a Hearings Panel to carry out a hearing on an agreed date.
81. The DCO will inform all relevant parties of the date of the hearing
82. After the hearing is concluded, the Hearings Panel will be granted 14 days to evaluate their findings before they deliver them to both parties.

83. The Hearings Panel will deliver their findings and any sanctions that may be forthcoming.
84. Either party has the right to appeal these findings
85. The Hearings Panel have the following options available for the results of their findings;
 - a. Dismiss the complaint
 - b. Suggest mediation from within the RLI
 - c. Suggest mediation from a third party
 - d. Sanction one or both parties
86. If In-house (RLI) mediation is suggested then RLI will provide a member who has experience and training in such an approach.
87. If third party mediation is required then the DCO is to contact the SDSI in order to provision mediation. SDSI is a specialist body that is Sport Ireland aligned and can provide excellent mediation services. It must be noted that SDSI cannot provide any further course of action after their mediation and have no powers to sanction or to suggest sanctions.
88. It shall be mandatory for both parties to the Complaint to participate in DCO directed mediation.
89. Failure by any party to engage with NCDO directed mediation can be considered to be an aggravating factor by the Hearings Panel if the matter is later referred for a Full Oral Hearing
90. If one of the parties refuses to accept a sanction award then the Hearing Panel will request the DCO instigates a Disciplinary Hearing against that party for non-compliance.

Complaints hearing

91. The Hearings procedure for Complaints will take place at an agreed time and will be organised by the DCO.
92. The structure of the presentation of evidence is as follows;
 - a. The Chair will welcome all present and confirm all in attendance are eligible to be there (from direction/documentation provided by the DCO) and will introduce the Hearings Panel that will listen to the case
 - b. The Chair will state the complaint submitted by the Complainant
 - i. In the event of a counter complaint the Chair will state this following on from the original complaint and they will be dealt with chronologically
 - c. The Chair will ask both parties to confirm they understand the nature of the complaint(s)
 - d. The chair will then authorise the Complainant with the opportunity to present their case
 - ii. The Hearings Panel may ask questions of the Complainant during this process
 - e. The chair will then authorise the Respondent to present their rebuttal
 - iii. The Hearings Panel may ask questions of the respondent during this process
 - f. The process will then be reversed if there is a counter claim and points b to e will be repeated.
 - g. The chair will then thank both parties and will adjourn the meeting until a date for the findings of the hearing to be given.
93. The Hearings Panel will have 14 days in which to confirm their findings and award and will inform both parties by written correspondence (hard or soft copy), which will be distributed to all parties via the DCO.

94. The DCO, if required, will inform the DCC of the findings (should, for example, a suspension be awarded against the respondent).
95. The Hearings Panel shall have discretion to extend the deadline where they deem it appropriate.
96. The Hearings Panel, in its discretion, may invite other persons (including but not limited to witnesses, officials or experts) to provide evidence or assistance to the Panel in any form.
97. Both Complainant and Respondent parties are entitled at a hearing to: -
 - h. Be accompanied at the hearing, by either a member of their club (Panel Representative) or if the Member is a minor, by a parent or guardian.
 - i. Professional or legal advisors are specifically excluded from participating in a hearing.
 - j. Call witnesses. Such witnesses may only be present to give their evidence and which witnesses may be questioned by the Hearings Panel.
 - k. All witnesses required must be declared in the Complaint submission so they can be sought for availability to attend at the hearing.
 - l. Make submissions in writing or otherwise.
98. All parties must declare at the earliest possible moment of who will support them. The DCO will be responsible for contacting all stakeholders to instruct them of their requirement to attend and the DCO will not be responsible for omissions made by the Complainant/Respondent on who will support them.
99. The Hearings Panel shall have the discretion to accept testimony by telephone, written statement or submission, whether by fax, email or other means.
100. The Hearings Panel shall have the power to decide on the admissibility, relevance and weight of any evidence (including the testimony of any fact or expert witness) and shall not be bound by any laws or rules regarding the conduct of Court proceedings in relation to such matters. Facts may be established by any reliable means, including admissions
101. In the event of the non-attendance, without reasonable cause (considered by the Hearings Panel to be justifiable reason for non-attendance), of a Complainant at a hearing, the Complaint/disciplinary action against the Respondent shall be dismissed
102. In the event of non-attendance, without reasonable cause, of a Respondent at a hearing, the Hearings Panel will be entitled to proceed to hear the matter and decide the matter based on the information and evidence before it. The Hearings Panel may draw an adverse inference against a Respondent who fails to appear at the hearing after being given reasonable notice of the hearing, or the Participant's refusal to answer questions put to them by the Hearings Panel.
103. The Hearings Panel may adjourn or rearrange the hearing at its discretion. An adjourned or rearranged hearing shall take place as soon as is practicable, and the suspension of the Member, if already imposed, shall be automatically extended until the rearranged hearing takes place.
104. The Complainant shall have the burden of proving the alleged infringement(s). The standard of proof shall be whether the Complainant has established the infringement(s) on the balance of probabilities.
105. Where facts are established by virtue of a Report, the burden of proof is then on the Respondent to establish the contrary on the balance of probabilities.
106. Facts established by a decision of a Court which is not the subject of a pending appeal shall be irrefutable evidence of those facts against a Respondent.
107. The decision of the Hearings Panel shall be made and notified in writing to the relevant parties within 14 days of the hearing, unless the Hearings Panel deem an

extension of time necessary. The DCO shall retain the decision in the Complaints and Disciplinary Register.

108. Pending an appeal being requested, the original sanction imposed by the Complaints and Hearings Panel shall stand.
109. The basic flowchart for the format of a Complaints flowchart can be found in APPENDIX D

APPEALS (DCO)

110. A decision of a Hearings Committee may be appealed by written (upon receipt of a complaints/grievance finding) or oral declaration (usually after passing of sentence at a disciplinary hearing) to the RLI DCO.
111. Any appeal must have substance and not be of a frivolous nature. Evidence and rationale for an appeal must be such that they present the necessity for an appeal.
112. For a Disciplinary hearing an appeal will be held within 7 days of the original hearing, for a Complaints appeal the hearing will be held within 14 days of the original hearing.
113. All original suspensions/sanctions will stand until the appeals are held.
114. If a respondent is currently going through a criminal court action that is in direct relation to the appeal, the suspension will be upheld until completion of the court case, whereupon if the respondent is successful with the court case the suspension will be paused until the appeal hearing is heard.
115. A copy of the Notice of Appeal shall be sent by email or registered post to the DCO and Complainant/Respondent to any appeal.
116. The DCO will inform all members of the appeal
117. The DCO will convene a new Hearings Panel to hear the appeals, free from conflict of interest and whose members were not involved in the original hearing.
118. No Member, Participant, Unit or RLI Ltd, or its Affiliate members shall refer a dispute to SDSI directly before this appeals procedure has been exhausted

ARBITRATION – SPORTS DISPUTE SOLUTIONS IRELAND (SDSI)

119. If after receiving the decision of the Appeals hearing either party genuinely feel they have not had a fair hearing, they may escalate the issue using the services of SDSI.



120. The appeal to SDSI arbitration shall be limited to the legality of the procedures used and/or the decision made. The decision cannot be appealed on any other grounds.
121. The appellant shall deliver a written notification of appeal to the secretary of SDSI within 14 days of receipt of the Hearings Panel decision specifying (a) date of decision (b) the grounds of appeal (c) copy of relevant documentation together with (d) and SDSI fee.
122. A copy of the Notice of Appeal shall be sent by email or registered post to the DCO and Complainant/Respondent to any appeal.
123. No Member, Participant, Unit or RLI Ltd or its Affiliate members may issue Court proceedings relating to such dispute in any Court in any jurisdiction.
124. No Member, Participant, Unit or RLI Ltd, or its Affiliate members shall refer a dispute to SDSI Arbitration or CAS arbitration until all available internal avenues of resolution under the RLI Rules have been exhausted.
125. The decision of the SDSI Arbitrator shall be final and binding.
126. SDSI Arbitration shall be conducted in accordance with the SDSI Arbitration Rules and Procedures and in accordance with the Arbitration Act 2010 or any statutory modification or re-enactment thereof.

For more details on SDSI refer to <http://sportdisputesolutions.ie/>

GENERAL PROVISIONS

DEVIATION

Any deviation from these Rules or the procedures referred to in these Rules shall not invalidate any finding, procedure, decision or result under these Rules unless the person relying on such deviation establishes that it casts material doubt on the validity of such finding, procedure, decision or result and the other parties to the proceedings cannot rebut that doubt or otherwise establish the validity of such finding, procedure, decision or result.

DAYS

Unless otherwise specified, time periods in these Rules are total consecutive days irrespective of weekends or holidays. When a deadline falls on a weekend or a statutory holiday, the next working day shall be the deadline for the purpose of these Rules.

TECHNICAL DEFECTS

All acts done in good faith by any Person in the implementation of these Rules, notwithstanding that it is afterwards discovered that there was some defect in the appointment or authority of such Person so acting, shall be as valid as if every such Person had been duly appointed or authorised.

LIABILITY

None of RLI Ltd, members, officers, employees, agents, representatives and other Persons involved in the administration of these Rules shall be liable to any Person in any way, in relation to acts done or omitted to be done in good faith in connection with these Rules.

SEVERABILITY

If any clause or provision of these Rules is held invalid, unenforceable or illegal for any reason, these Rules shall remain otherwise in full force apart from such clause or provision which shall be deemed deleted insofar as it is invalid, unenforceable or illegal.

DISCRETION

Where a matter arises that is not otherwise provided for in these Rules, the Person or body called upon to resolve the matter shall have discretion to do so in such manner as he or she or it sees fit, provided that such resolution does not materially undermine the reliability of proceedings under these Rules or otherwise cause material injustice to the Participant to whom these Rules are being applied.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Complaints and Disciplinary Bodies shall keep all information disclosed to them confidential and

no disclosure of any detail shall be made to any third party unless in the administration of their disciplinary function. The administration of a disciplinary function may require the disclosure of certain offences and sanctions to be made to other persons at Club, or National level but only where strictly required. The documents produced during any proceedings shall remain private unless required by Law.

MINORS

Any Member under the age of 18 shall be accompanied by their guardian or parent at a hearing. Any Member under the age of 18 who is a Complainant or a Respondent is obliged to attend any hearing and where appropriate, by video link. In all cases, but particularly where the subject of the Complaint is under 18, steps should be taken to ensure the fair treatment of both parties, and advice should be sought if necessary from the Club, Region and National Children's Officer /CEO.

The Hearings Panel shall ensure a Children's Officer is present at a hearing where the matter concerns an under 18-year-old Member. The Children's Officer shall be invited to make submissions on behalf of the child at the hearing. The Hearings Panel shall never exceed three persons when an under 18-year-old is providing evidence.

COSTS/EXPENSES

Any costs or expenses incurred by a Member (or any of their witnesses but not including the DO and/or the Hearings Panel) in relation to any matter under the Procedures will be the sole responsibility of that Member. The Hearings Panel shall have no authority to make any award for costs. There is a cost for each Club and RLI in administering the Complaints and Disciplinary process.

Accordingly, Members when making a Complaint to a Hearings Panel will be obliged to pay an administration fee. Where a Complaint is upheld, the administration fee will be reimbursed to the Complainant.

CRIMINAL CHARGES

The Hearings Panel shall have the right to suspend a Member where that Member is subject to a criminal charge where that charge has the potential to RLI into disrepute. Once the matter has been dealt with by the statutory authorities, the Hearings Panel reserves the right to take further action as appropriate.

In the event of criminal charges being initiated in relation to the alleged misconduct of a Member the subject of the Complaint received, then the Member may be suspended pending the outcome of the said charges, which will be referred to the statutory authorities. Once the appropriate statutory authorities have dealt with the matter, even if the Member concerned is not eventually convicted of the charge, the Hearings Panel shall nevertheless have the right and power to review all circumstances in accordance with this procedure and decide to continue the suspension or expel the Member, if it deems it so necessary in the interests of RLI as a whole.

POOR PRACTICE

Allegations of a breach of RLI Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Youth Sport are not necessarily suspected child abuse. A breach of the code of conduct can be due to poor practice which should be dealt with pursuant to these Procedures.

SUSPENSION PENDING HEARING

A Hearings Panel shall be empowered to impose a suspension on a Respondent pending the determination on culpability where the gravity of the Complaint/ disciplinary matter shall warrant immediate suspension.

NOTIFICATION TO RLI

RLI shall be notified if a Member is suspended, is stepped down from a position or expelled from a Club.

Notification should be received in writing from the person or committee imposing the sanction stating the sanction imposed, the outcome and their authority in the process.

SERVICE

All communications shall either be hand-delivered or sent by post, e-mail or facsimile transmission to the DO c/o RLI Ltd, [] or c/o the relevant Club address and to the Complainant/Respondent. Any such communications shall be deemed to be delivered:

- a) If hand-delivered, at the time of delivery;



b) If posted at the expiration of 48 hours after the envelope containing same shall have been put in the post; and

c) If sent by e-mail or facsimile transmission at the expiration of 12 hours after receipt of same has been acknowledged to the sender thereof.

MEDIATION

RLI recognises the benefits of Mediation as a method of dispute resolution and has provided for it in Part 4 above, Informal Complaints Procedure.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – SANCTIONS MATRIX

Appendix B – DCO Hearings arrangement process

Appendix C – Disciplinary hearing flowchart

Appendix D – Complaints hearing flowchart



ON FIELD SENTENCING GUIDELINES – June 2021

References to “Warning/Advice” in the table below means that the offence will be placed on the player’s record but that rather than a suspension being imposed the emphasis will be on advising the player how to avoid similar offence in occurring again in the future (such advice might be delivered by the Club).

Where there is a reference to 8+ in the table below, the Competition Disciplinary Tribunal shall have the discretion to impose either a for a number of matches or a term of suspension (i.e. a suspension that will run until a stated date).

SOS = Sending off suffice no suspension necessary

Law	Charge	Recommended Ranges – Depending on Fixtures			Guideline Description
		Under 11 – Under 14	Under 15 – Under 18	Open age (irrespective of age of player)	
15.1(a)	Trips, kicks or strikes another player				
	Trips	Warning/Advice	Warning/Advice	Warning/Advice	Reactional Trip
		SOS	SOS	SOS-1	Intentional Trip
	Kicks	SOS-1	SOS-1	1-3	Intentionally kicks body
		1-3	2-4	4-6	Intentionally kicks head
		Warning/Advice	SOS-1	1-3	Intentionally stands on
		SOS-1	1-3	3-5	Trampling
		1-3	1-3	3-5	Stamping



	Strikes	Warning/Advice	Warning/Advice	1-2	Recklessly strikes with hand, arm or shoulder
		1	2	2-4	Intentionally strikes with hand, arm or shoulder
		Warning/Advice	1-2	2-4	Recklessly strikes with elbows or forearm
		1-3	2-4	4-6	Intentionally strikes with elbow or forearm
		2-4	4-6	8+	Intentionally strikes with elbow or forearm – off the ball
	Strikes – knee	Warning/Advice	SOS-1	SOS-1	Raising knee in tackle
		1	2	3-5	Strikes with knee
		2-4	3-5	8+	Strikes with knee in a violent & aggressive manner
	Strikes – head butting	1	2-4	2-4	Head Butting – makes light contact
		2-3	3-4	3-5	Head Butting – makes full contact
		3-5	4-6	5-8	Head Butting – makes full contact in aggressive violent manner
	Strikes – punches	Warning/Advice	Warning/Advice	SOS-1	Reaction to opponent – lashing out
		Warning/Advice	1-2	1-2	Punching – self defence
		Warning/Advice	1-2	1-2	Punching – one on one
		2	2-4	2-4	Punching – sustained, repeated
		3-4	4-5	5-8	Punching – sustained, repeated, violent & aggressive



		2	2-3	4-6	Running in & punching
		2-4	3-5	5-8	Running in & punching opponent off guard
	Other striking offences	Discretion of Competition Disciplinary Tribunal	Discretion of Competition Disciplinary Tribunal	Discretion of Competition Disciplinary Tribunal	
15.1(b)	When tackling or attempting to tackle makes contact with head or neck of an opponent				
	Unintentional				
		Warning/Advice	Warning/Advice	SOS-1	Careless – flat hand off balance
		Warning/Advice	Warning/Advice	SOS-1	Careless – Ball carrier dips
		Warning/Advice	Warning/Advice	SOS-1	Careless – stepped and reaching
		Warning/Advice	Warning/Advice	SOS-1	Careless – initial contact with ball or chest
		Warning/Advice	Warning/Advice	SOS-1	Careless – second tackler in – wrapping tackle up
		Warning/Advice	1-2	2-3	Reckless – whole body to go at – tackler in control
		Warning/Advice	1-2	2-3	Reckless – tried to tackle but reckless about outcome
	Intentional				
		2-3	3-5	5-8	Intentional – clenched fist – intent to make contact with head
		2-3	3-5	8+	Intentional – stiff arm tackle – no attempt to legitimately tackle – violent
	Other Tackling offences	Discretion of the Competition Disciplinary Tribunal	Discretion of the Competition Disciplinary Tribunal	Discretion of the Competition Disciplinary Tribunal	
15.1(c)	Drops knees on an opponent on the ground				



	Drops knees first	1	2-4	4-6	Intentional
15.1(d)	Uses a dangerous throw				
	Dangerous throw	Warning/Advice	SOS-1	SOS-1	Other tackler's actions were part of the problem (only applies where players is not aware of other tacklers actions)
		Warning/Advice	1-2	1-2	Ball carries actions were part of the problem
		Warning/Advice	1-2	2-3	Lifting and dropping player
		Warning/Advice	2-3	4-6	Throwing player into ground
		2	4-6	8+	Spear Tackle – intentionally driving player into ground on head or neck
	Other Dangerous Throw	Discretion of the Competition Disciplinary Tribunal	Discretion of the Competition Disciplinary Tribunal	Discretion of the Competition Disciplinary Tribunal	
15.1(e)	Intentionally and continually breaks the Laws of the Game				
		Discretion of the Competition Disciplinary Tribunal	Discretion of the Competition Disciplinary Tribunal	Discretion of the Competition Disciplinary Tribunal	
15.1(f)	Use of offensive or obscene language				
		Warning/Advice	SOS-1	1-2	Foul language
		1	1-3	2-4	Foul & abusive language
		1	2-5	3-6	Foul language towards match official
		2-3	3-6	4-8	Foul & abusive language towards match official



		1	2-4	3-6	Questioning the integrity of a Match Official
		2-5	3-8	8+	Verbal abuse based on race, colour, religion, gender, sexual preference, disability, national or ethnic origin – heard by match official
		Discretion of the Competition Disciplinary Tribunal	Discretion of the Competition Disciplinary Tribunal	Discretion of the Competition Disciplinary Tribunal	Verbal abuse based on race, colour, religion, gender, sexual preference, disability, national or ethnic origin – not heard by match official
	Other offences or obscene language	Discretion of the Competition Disciplinary Tribunal	Discretion of the Competition Disciplinary Tribunal	Discretion of the Competition Disciplinary Tribunal	
15.1(g)	Disputes a decision of the Referee or Touch Judge				
		Warning/Advice	SOS-1	SOS-1	Disputes decision
		SOS-1	1-3	2-4	Disputes using aggressive language or body language
		2-3	3-6	4-8	Disputes using aggressive language & body language
	Other disputes decision	Warning/Advice	Discretion of the Competition Disciplinary Tribunal	Discretion of the Competition Disciplinary Tribunal	
15.1(h)	Re-enters the field of play without the permission of the referee or touch judge				
		Warning/Advice	SOS-1	SOS-1	



15.1(i)	Behaves in a way contrary to true spirit of the game				
		2-4	5-8	6+	Gouging
		2-4	5-8	6+	Biting
		2	5-8	6+	Spitting
		2-4	5-8	6+	Attack on the testicles
		2	5-8	6+	Raking with studs
		2-4	5-8	6+	Threatening word or actions towards match officials
					Dangerous contact*
		Warning/Advice-1	1-3	2-8	Deliberate or reckless physical contact with a match official (e.g. placing a hand on arm to attract attention)
		2-4	5-8	8+	Physical assault of a match official (e.g. pushing/shoving)
		Life Ban	Life Ban	Life Ban	Violent and aggressive physical assault of match official (e.g. punching)
		Discretion of the Competition Disciplinary Tribunal	Discretion of the Competition Disciplinary Tribunal	Discretion of the Competition Disciplinary Tribunal	Other contrary behaviour
15.1(k)	Shoulder Charge				
		Warning/Advice	SOS-1	1-2	Indirect or secondary contact with the head of an attacking player
		1	1-2	2-4	Direct contact with the head of an attacking player
		Warning/Advice	SOS-1	1-2	Shoulder charge – other dangerous contact



	Intentional obstruction of an Opponent not in possession				
		Discretion of the Competition Disciplinary Tribunal	Discretion of the Competition Disciplinary Tribunal	Discretion of the Competition Disciplinary Tribunal	
	Team Fines				
	Brawling	£100.00 plus discretionary suspended fine	£100.00 plus discretionary suspended fine	£100.00 plus discretionary suspended fine	
	2 nd Brawl	£200.00 plus discretionary suspended fine	£200.00 plus discretionary suspended fine	£200.00 plus discretionary suspended fine	
	Abandonment of game	£100.00	£100.00	£100.00	
	Spectator or Club officials entering the field of play				
		£150.00 and/or relevant RLI course	£150.00 and/or relevant RLI course	£150.00	
	Spectator or Club officials usage of foul and abusive language				
		£100.00 and/or relevant RLI course	£100.00 and/or relevant RLI course	£100.00	

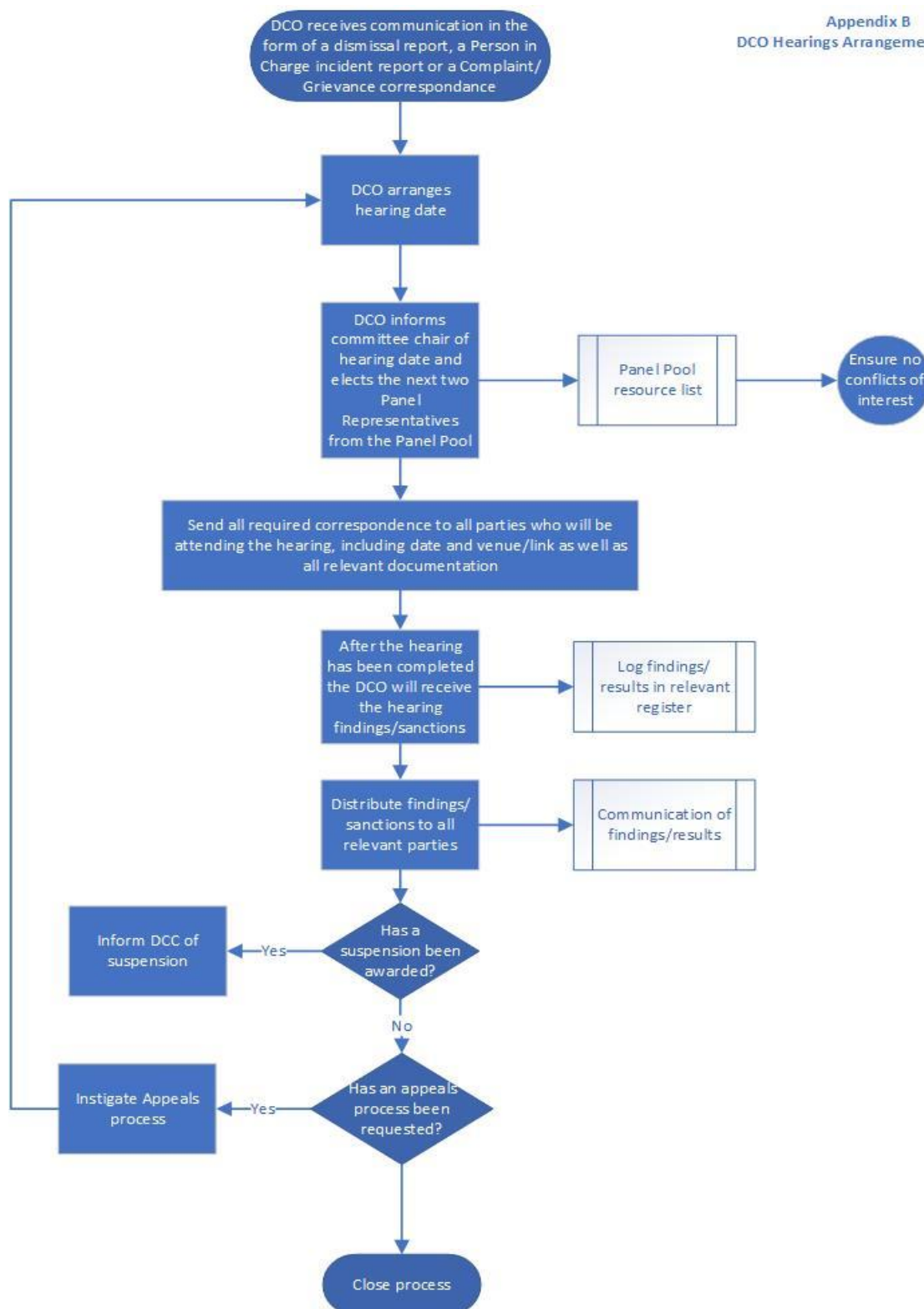
*Dangerous Contact includes:

- Applying unnecessary pressure to the head, neck or spinal column of a tackled player so as to keep that player at a disadvantage in or after a tackle
- Forcefully and unnecessarily grasping (or jerking or pinning or twisting) the head or neck of a tackled player
- Contact with the legs (either direct or indirect) with the supporting leg(s) of an attacking player who is held in a vulnerable position in a way that involves an unacceptable risk of injury
- Forcefully twisting, bending or otherwise applying pressure to the limb(s) of an opposing player in a way that involves an unacceptable risk of injury

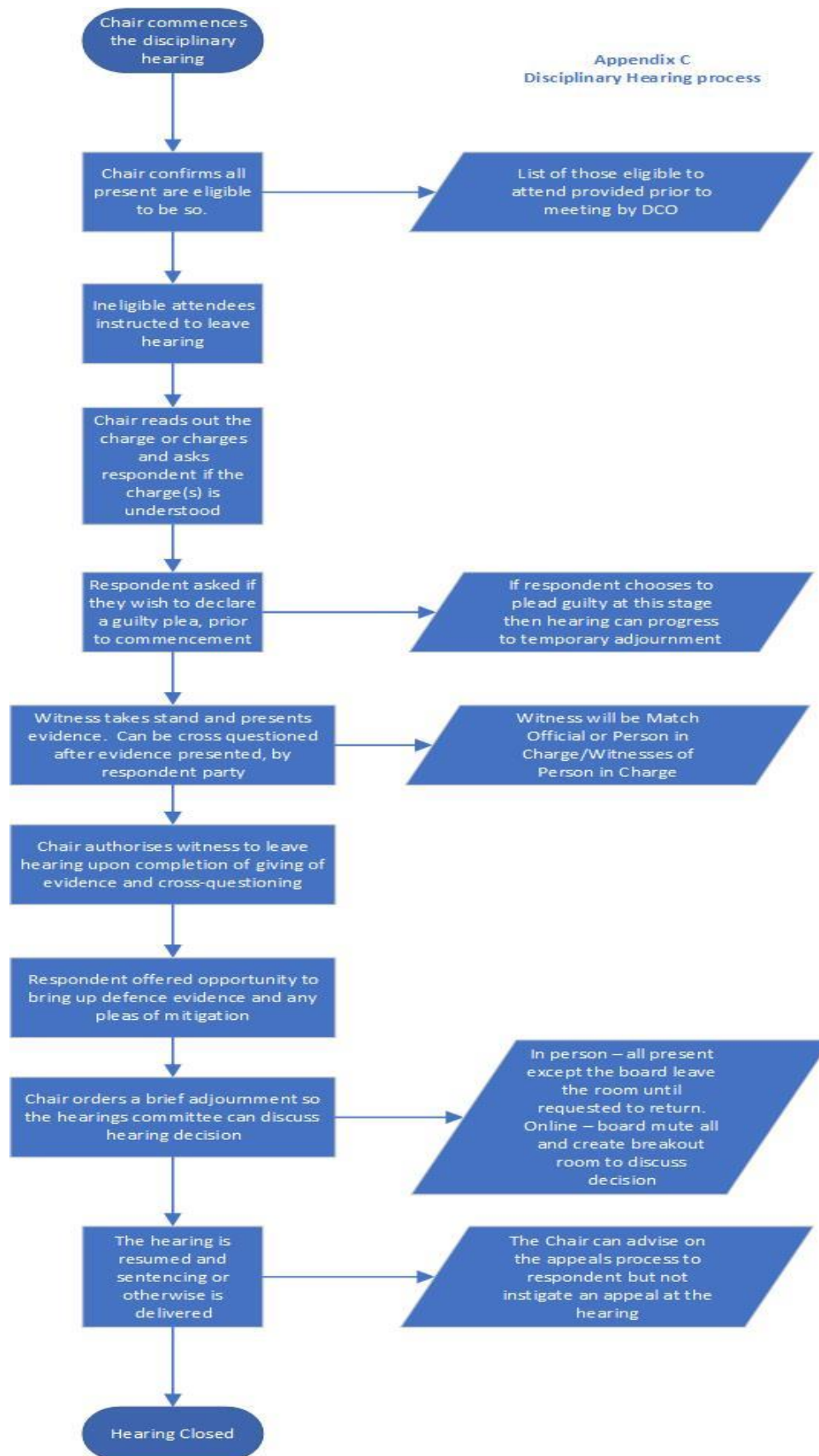
Making contact with the leg(s) of an attacking player who has kicked the ball in a way that involves an unacceptable risk of i

APPENDIX B – DCO HEARINGS ARRANGEMENT PROCESS

Appendix B
DCO Hearings Arrangement Process



APPENDIX C – DISCIPLINARY HEARINGS FLOWCHART



APPENDIX D – COMPLAINTS HEARINGS FLOWCHART

