Northumberland - Discipline Audit 23/24

Overview

CBs play a critical role in the delivery of core devolved responsibilities, including discipline management locally. Working collaboratively with individual CBs; the purpose of this annual audit is to understand and support you in undertaking best practices and procedures aligned to RFU policy and regulation.

Once this is completed Nationally for the first time, each CB will be provided with a dashboard report specifically for them, and we will liaise with the RFU Discipline Team to identify recommendations to the Governance Committee for implementation. These will also be shared with CB Discipline Teams via your networking meetings.

Report

Date.	CB	Name 1	Name 2	Name 3	Name 4	Name 5	Number completing audit
24/01/24	Northumberland Rugby Union (CB)	Alan Beddis					1

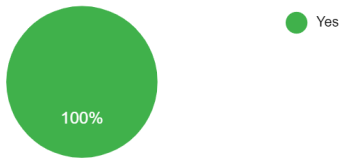
Section 1: Regulation & Policies

Regulation and Policy Qs	Responses	Comments
1. Appointed Adult Discipline Secretary/ies (if applicable)	Yes	In post in two spells since 1998. No Assistant - caseload does not really merit one although it would be desirable to deal with Rule 5.12 cases to enable the CBDS to avoid having to perform role of 'prosecutor' and adviser to the Panel. No obvious candidate to fulfil the role has been identified.
2. Appointed Age Grade Discipline Secretary (if applicable	Yes	In post 10 years. No Assistant or any plans to appoint one.
3. Capacity to hold meetings by Zoom/Video/Telephone or on paper rather than requiring all Players to attend in person	Yes	We hold meetings on a Thursday evening as and when required. We have processes in place to ensure cases can be heard expeditiously assuming that the referee's report is received on time and the player is available.
4. Regular hearings that do not prevent people being banned whilst awaiting their case to be heard or flexibility to arrange ad hoc hearings	Yes	Assuming that we receive the referee's report within the timescale laid down in Reg.19 we can usually hold the hearing on the Thursday evening following the red card.
5. Clear written judgments using the standard CB Short judgment form provided by the RFU	Yes	
6. All adult discipline cases loaded on to GMS	Yes	
7. Are Cases uploaded within 7 days or before next round of fixtures?	Yes	Occasional delays when problems experienced with GMS and whenever the club is required to register the player on GMS.

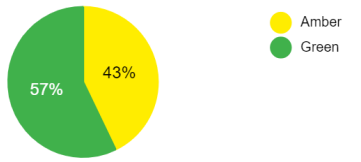
Section 2 - Best Practice

Best Practice Qs	Responses	Comments
1. Attendance at training events organised by RFU. All members sitting on Panels should attend a training event at least every 2 years.		In view of our geographical location, the paucity of RFU organised training events (usually only one per year) and the fact that we have appointed a number of new panel members who work fulltime make it impossible to meet this requirement in full. We have 12 panel members to call upon. The three most recently appointed have had no training although one is an RFU Citing Commissioner and so is familiar with the disciplinary process.
2. Clear succession planning in place for Discipline Secretaries and Panel Members		There has been no formal succession planning for the CBDS role but he intends to ensure that this is addressed in the coming months. He has no immediate intention of stepping down but is looking to reduce his rugby commitments which involve a number of other voluntary roles. Succession planning for panel members is generally good and is in fact constant as we are always seeking new members who more accurately reflect the diversity of the game.
3. Publication of decisions or summary of outcome on CB website		
4. The CB Discipline Panel reflects the diversity of the Game?		Following the sad loss of two senior panel members and the recruitment of new members who have altered the age profile and gender balance of the panel I believe that we now meet this requirement although we have not been able to identify potential panel members from minority communities in the county.
5. Clear and structured engagement with Clubs to include regular updates on disciplinary issues		
6.The CB Discipline Team is in regular communication with their local Referee Society(ies)		
7. A training event for all clubs in the CB within the last 2 seasons aimed at sharing good practice, updates to regulations where appropriate and encouraging dialogue		No formal in-house training events have been held although the CBDS provides regular disciplinary updates to all stakeholders and gave a presentation to CB Club Reps at the County's November meeting.
8. What is your current cost for a disciplinary hearing	£100.00	

Regulations and Policies status



Best Practice Status



Additional Comments

Given that we are a CB with only 21 active clubs we generally manage reasonably well. Issues arise when we have challenging, multi-witness contested misconduct cases under Rule 5.12 where the more frequent appointment of an RFU Panel Chair or someone to present the case leaving the CBDS free to advise the Panel would assist..