



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE, LINCOLNSHIRE & DERBYSHIRE
RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

DISCIPLINARY DECISION

Professionalism • Transparency • Fairness • Integrity • Consistency

JUDGMENT OF THE PANEL

Venue: Newark RUFC

Date: Thursday 27th June, 2019

Club: Lincoln RFC ('the Club')

Panel: Matthew O'Grady, Chairman
Timothy Bembridge
Ian Roe

Secretary: Andrew Statham, NLD Disciplinary Secretary

Attending: Neil Hair (Club Vice Chairman)
Pete Small (Club President)

Preliminary Issues

1. There were no objections to the composition of the Panel.

Charge

2. The Club was charged with an offence under Rule 5.12 for conduct which was prejudicial to the interests of the Union or the Game, namely a breach of Regulation 19.3.1 (bad disciplinary record).

Particulars

3. In the 2018-2019 season the Club appeared before a Disciplinary Panel on five or more separate occasions:
 - a) Clare Brown;
 - b) George Chilra;
 - c) Lee Dearden;
 - d) A Young Player 'P'; and
 - e) Mitchell Ashworth.

Plea

4. The Club admitted the charge.

The Evidence

5. A summary of the appearances is as follows:

Name	Offence Date	Hearing Date	Offence	Sanction
Clare Brown	16/09/18	15/10/18	9.28 Dissent	1 week
George Chilra	01/12/18	19/12/18	9.28 Abuse of Match Official	6 weeks
Lee Dearden	09/02/19	N/A	9.27 Two Yellow Cards	SOS
P	31/03/19	10/04/19	9.12 Striking Fist and Boot	2 matches
Mitchell Ashworth	13/04/19	30/04/19	9.12 Punching	8 weeks

Submissions by the Club

6. The Club admitted the charge. The Officers regretted the situation. The Club explained that it intended to talk to a coaching coordinator before the start of the next season and introduce more refereed training sessions where possible.

Sanction

7. This Club's disciplinary record this season is poor. In terms of the number of appearances, it has had the third equal number of appearances of the all the clubs that make up the three counties of this Constituent Body. Whilst there is a single offence of two yellow cards, there are serious offences amongst the balance of the offences including offences against match officials and a serious act of physical abuse. It is regretful that one of the red cards is for a young person.

8. Discipline is a fundamental core value of the Game and it underpins all aspects of it. A clear deterrent from persistent disciplinary issues and an incentive to take proactive steps to address the issue is required. It appears that a whole club approach is necessary and the sanction must reflect the responsibility of all members of the Club to address the problem.
9. The Panel considered imposing an immediate League points deduction on the 1st XV, but was satisfied, having regard to all the submissions the Club made in mitigation, that the deterrent would be adequately imposed by a suspended penalty. The Panel was not satisfied a reprimand would be an adequate deterrent to a further charge next season.
10. The sanction imposed on the Club is follows:
 - a) The Club's 1st XV have 5 League points deducted for the 2019-2020 season.
 - b) This deduction shall be suspended until the end of the 2019-2020 season and shall be activated only if there is an offence of the same kind during that season (namely, five or more separate appearances before a Disciplinary Panel at any level).
 - c) Before the start of the 2019-2020 season the Club must remind all players at all levels of the importance of discipline.
 - d) The Club must contact its Regional Development Officer before the start of the next season to seek guidance on core values training. The Club may wish to share this decision with its RDO.
11. Should the Club be found to have committed the same offence next season it, and its members and players, must know that the consequence for its 1st XV will not only be the activation of the 5 point deduction, but probably also the imposition of an additional penalty on top of the 5 point deduction. It should be obvious, but will be stated for the avoidance of doubt, that the deduction may well cost the 1st XV promotion or relegation in a tight season.
12. If this situation occurs again, it will have meant that a suspended punishment will have been an insufficient motivator to bring about a change and the Club may have left itself few options other than a more significant penalty than a suspended 5 point deduction alongside the activation of this 5 point deduction.

Costs

13. The Club shall pay costs to NLD RFU of £30.

Appeal

14. There is a right to appeal against this decision. Any such appeal must be made within 14 days of this judgment being sent.

Matthew O'Grady
Chairman, for and on behalf of the Panel