



**ARMY RUGBY UNION**  
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From: Lieutenant Colonel P R Stannett RLC  
Chairman of Discipline and Governance

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See Distribution

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**ARMY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION - SEASON 2014-2015**  
**DISCIPLINARY & GOVERNANCE MATTERS**

References:

- A. ARU Season Handbook 2014-2015 (To be issued on ARU website - <http://www.armyrugbyunion.org.uk/> ).
- B. RFU Handbook 2014-2015, Regulation 19: <http://www.rfu.com/thegame/regulations>
- C. RFU Website Discipline Section: <http://www.rfu.com/thegame/discipline>

1. In my capacity as the Chairman of Discipline & Governance for the Army Rugby Union (ARU), I would like to welcome all rugby officers, players, coaching staff, commanding officers and personnel involved with Army Rugby to the start of what promises to be another exciting season. A copy of this letter with enclosures will be placed on the ARU website at the link shown at Reference A.

2. The aim of this letter is to keep Unit Rugby Officers (UROs) and all personnel involved in Rugby Union management, coaching or playing informed of their duties, responsibilities and actions with regard to the maintenance of discipline both on and off the field of play. I would like all personnel involved in Rugby Union to be fully briefed and coherent with the rules and regulations of the game. These rules and regulations are clearly laid out in Reference B, the official Rugby Football Union Handbook 2014-2015. An abridged version can be found attached to this letter and in the ARU Handbook.

3. The ARU intent is to strive for a discipline/incident free season. This will obviously need buy in from the entire rugby community and continual education of players. Coaches must set an example on the touchline and include discipline within their coaching sessions. It became clear during last season that many clubs and players had not been briefed on the direction given regarding disciplinary and governance issues. I hope this year the message is disseminated clearly to all levels!

4. In my first season as Chairman of Discipline, I have convened 19 Disciplinary Panels which included a variety of instances of foul play; most notably – 7 for receiving two Yellow Cards in one match (Persistent Offending) and 6 for Abuse of the Match Official. This last offence is one which is looked on severely by the ARU and the RFU. Players and coaches must curb their tempers against the Match Officials despite any frustration they may have at the time. I would also add that without the continued support of personnel who are willing to give up their time to officiate rugby matches, players would not be taking to the park week in week out to enjoy the sport they seek to play. **So – please get this message down to your players and coaches!**
5. Army players continue to be red carded whilst playing for civilian clubs. As a reminder, anyone who receives a ban whilst playing rugby for any club is banned from playing in any Rugby Union fixture, regardless of who they are playing for. This includes bans issued by other Rugby Unions. It should be noted that I am actively engaged with the other RFU Constituent Bodies to ensure efficient and effective notification of bans and disciplinary proceedings against any serving player or coach where they represent both Army and civilian clubs.
6. There are clearly still too many cases of ill-discipline and bringing the game into disrepute, both on and off the pitch. I have increased my pool of qualified Panel members in order to deal with cases as expeditiously as possible and I would like to thank all those who assisted me so far. Discipline Panels will continue to take all disciplinary issues seriously. If players/coaches or spectators are found guilty of contravening regulations there will be little sympathy from the panel. UROs are to ensure they have read and fully understand the RFU Rules and Disciplinary Procedures contained in Reference B and are to ensure that players/coaching staff are up to speed with these regulations. Unfortunately, past hearings have demonstrated that not all UROs, players and commanding officers fully appreciate and understand the complexities and detail of this important handbook.
7. All personnel must be made aware of the following:
- a. The referee is the sole judge of fact and law during the match. The referee's decisions on the field of play shall not be altered or overturned. The purpose of the subsequent review of an incident that occurred during a match by a Disciplinary Panel is to determine whether there should be any disciplinary sanctions for an act of Foul Play as provided for in IRB Law 10. (Reg 19.5.1).
  - b. A Player ordered off or cited may not take part or be selected for any match until his case has been dealt with by a Disciplinary Panel. The player (or any other individual) is not entitled to play the Game or be involved in any on-field match day activities anywhere in the world until his/her case has been finally resolved. This includes during any Appeal process. (Reg 19.5.2).
  - c. Offenders should be made aware that the standard of proof in all disciplinary cases is the balance of probabilities. For the avoidance of doubt there is no sliding scale. (Reg 19.5.6).
8. Annex A is the disciplinary section extracted from the ARU 2014/2015 Handbook. It contains an outline of the disciplinary procedures and sequence of events from when a player is sent from the field of play all the way up to his/her disciplinary hearing. It gives guidance on sanctions available to the Disciplinary Panel.
9. There also continues to be too many other governance and disciplinary incidents. These include:
- a. Teams playing players from other units (particularly in 1 day competitions). Ensure you comply with the rules of the competition and do not be found “cheating”.
  - b. Inappropriate behaviour at the Army v Navy match at Twickenham. However, to your credit, during this years match, the four individuals who invaded the pitch were civilians and only two

servicemen were cautioned by the Police on the day. Please continue to communicate the need for the highest behaviour at Twickenham or we will lose it!

c. The use of performance enhancing drugs is still an issue across the sport and clear guidance has been produced by Army Headquarters. As a reminder, if an RFU drugs test is proved positive, it will generally mean a ban from playing ALL sport for 2 years. There was an incident of an individual being caught by both a military CDT and sports CDT whilst playing for his civilian club. As a result, that individual is no longer serving.

9. In summary, the number of red cards last season was still too high. There is no place on the rugby pitch for foul or abusive play or off the field discipline/governance issues. I would like to wish all players and teams the very best of luck for the coming season; I hope your players will not have to attend a disciplinary hearing!

*Paul Stannett*

P R STANNETT  
Lt Col  
ARU Chairman of Discipline & Governance

Annex:

A. ARU Disciplinary Procedure Sequence & RFU Recommended Sanctions for 2013/2014.

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Action:

Sec ARU – For distr to all ARU Voting & Non-Voting Clubs  
Chairman BA(G) Rugby  
HQ BFC – Secretary of Rugby  
Chairman of Corps Rugby Committee – for dissemination  
Chairman of Premiership/Championship – for dissemination  
To all Directors of ARU rugby sides  
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Information:

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