

BITTESWELL CRICKET CLUB

CODE OF CONDUCT REVIEW – AUGUST 2025

CONTENTS

Background

Disciplinary Procedure

Disciplinary Procedure cont.

Code of Conduct

Hierarchy of Offences & Penalties, Three Year Rule & Counting of Offences

ECB Levels of Misconduct

Cases involving Juniors and Unforeseen Circumstances

BACKGROUND

As part of the recent disciplinary issues, we (Dick & Nick) became aware, for the first time, that the club had adopted a Disciplinary Code of Conduct around three years ago.

Upon inspection, we had immediate, serious concerns that the thresholds for effective punishments were far too generously weighted towards members and did not enable the club to exercise effective disciplinary controls.

As just one example, the current code would allow a player to be warned up to three times for showing dissent to an umpire across three separate incidents with a suspension only possible on the fourth occasion.

That is far too lenient.

Whilst the current code is correctly based on the ECB's Four Levels of misconduct for recreational cricket (which we propose to retain), the penalties adopted by BCC, were watered down to the point of being ineffectual.

This new proposal aims to create a simple process along with clear, fair thresholds which will allow the Club to administer timely and effective restraints.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

For all disciplinary matters, an impartial three person Sub-Committee of elected Club Committee members should be convened and empowered to consider the evidence, reach a verdict and recommend any personal penalty to the Club Committee. Where possible, the process should be concluded before the next weekend fixtures.

If an investigation is for a Level 3 or 4 offence and will take longer, the Club can consider an interim suspension, pending further enquiries if there is a potential safeguarding issue or a likelihood of repetition and/or escalation. Any suspension served on this basis will be deducted from any penalty later handed down.

The Sub-Committee should be:

- Comprise three Committee Members
 - Be chaired by the Club Chair
 - If this is not possible, then it shall be chaired by an elected Vice Chairman
 - Failing that the Club Chair should appoint a substitute
 - If the Club Chair is under investigation, then it will fall to the Secretary to act as the Sub-Committee Chair or to nominate another Committee Member into that role.
 - All members of the Sub-Committee shall be currently elected Committee Members
 - If this is not possible, the Sub-Committee Chair will be empowered to co-opt one or both other members from the wider membership. Preference should be given to those who have served previously as Committee Members and those with longest continuous membership.
- X No member of the Sub-Committee can have any family or other prejudicial link to the member under investigation.
- X The captain or teammates from any game in which an investigated incident occurred should not sit on the Sub-Committee either.

The Secretary will notify the member being investigated of the nature of the charge, giving them at least 48 hours to respond.

The Sub-Committee's role shall be to:

1. Determine which ECB Level the allegation falls within
2. Gather all evidence including but not limited to any league report, video and witness statements
3. Review all the evidence impartially, including any response from the member, under investigation
4. Agree on a guilty or not guilty verdict on at least a unanimous basis. The verdict can be on the balance of probability if there are conflicting accounts which overwhelmingly point towards one outcome
5. In the case of a guilty verdict, agree on at least a majority basis, the level of penalty to be applied, using the Code of Conduct and any relevant precedents
6. Where the guilty party has failed to respond, co-operate, admit liability or offer any form of apology in the lead up to a hearing, then this should be reflected in the judgement
7. Present a short summary including the verdict and any recommended sanctions to the Club Committee

Prior to endorsing the recommendation, the Club Committee will only be permitted to:

- Query if it is believed there could have been a procedural error

- Query the consistency of any proposed penalty when compared with any precedent

The Club Committee will not be permitted to revisit evidence or re-litigate the case but any Committee Member can submit evidence at the enquiry stage.

Once procedure and consistency has been confirmed, the ratified verdict will be implemented and communicated to the member immediately, by the Secretary.

The Secretary shall keep a record of all disciplinary action on file for a period of three years from issue.

All members will be expected to agree to abide by the Code as part of the annual membership registration.

CODE OF CONDUCT

To ensure that club values and expected levels of behaviour are upheld, Bitteswell Cricket Club (BCC) operates to a Code of Conduct which is based around the ECB's four levels of misconduct.

The Code follows a simple traffic light system with clear penalties and escalations.

- 1 FORMAL WRITTEN WARNING**
- 2 SUSPENSION**
- 3 EXPULSION**

WRITTEN WARNING

- A formal warning, identifying the nature and level of the violation
- The warning will remind the member of the possible sanctions for a subsequent breach

SUSPENSION

- The member will be advised of the nature and level of the code violation
- An immediate suspension from playing and training will be applied
- A suspended player must not come to the ground or attend any Bitteswell fixtures, home or away for the duration of the ban. Failure to comply will constitute a new Level 1 offence and be subject to additional sanction
- The minimum suspension term shall be 7 days
- The maximum suspension term shall be 70 days
- The dates of any suspension must fall within LRCL season dates and where appropriate, will be carried across to the following season
- The suspension notice will remind the member of the possible sanctions for any subsequent breach

EXPULSION

- The member will be advised of the nature of the violation
- Expulsion will be with immediate effect and represent a lifetime ban from membership of BCC
- An expelled member will not be permitted to enter the Peter Smith Ground for a period of at least 12 months following expulsion other than in the capacity of a visiting player for a guest club
- No refund of any subscription will be made
- At the club's discretion, and in order to safeguard the wider game, the club may notify its decision to regulatory bodies including but not limited to the League, County Cricket Board, ECB, other authority to which it is affiliated to and any appropriate law enforcement agency
- Where the reason of the expulsion warrants it or where other action is pending from external authorities, BCC shall reserve the right to warn any club which the expelled player subsequently requests a transfer to, of any ongoing process
- In line with any other transfer, all outstanding debts must be paid before release forms are signed

HIERARCHY OF OFFENCES & PENALTIES

	1 st OFFENCE	2 nd OFFENCE	3 rd OFFENCE	4 th OFFENCE
ECB LEVEL ONE	WARNING	SUSPENSION 7 days minimum	LONGER SUSPENSION at least 7 days longer	EXPULSION
ECB LEVEL TWO	SUSPENSION 7 days minimum	LONGER SUSPENSION at least 7 days longer	EXPULSION	
ECB LEVEL THREE	SUSPENSION 21 days minimum	EXPULSION		
ECB LEVEL FOUR	EXPULSION			

Where a guilty party fails to adequately respond, co-operate, admit liability or offer any form of apology to any victim, teammate or the Committee, a longer suspension, than the ones listed above should be considered.

THE THREE YEAR RULE

Any written warning or suspensions will remain on a member's record for THREE YEARS from the date of issue. This will determine which iteration of offence has occurred.

For example – if a member has served a second Level 2 suspension and then commits an additional violation after two years, that will be the third offence within a three year period and will result in expulsion. If the next Level 2 violation is after 4 years then this will be treated as a new first offence because the original violation will have been removed from their record upon expiry of three years.

MULTIPLIER EFFECT

The iteration of the offence will be counted sequentially regardless of which Levels they are.

A Level 3 (first offence), followed by a Level 1 (offence) would be a second offence and therefore treated as Level 1 second offence.

However, it cannot be fair that someone is expelled after four Level 1 offences, the same number of offences as someone with one Level 3, and then three Level 1 offences.

To achieve fairness and ensure that there is increased jeopardy of already sitting on a higher level, any subsequent violations at a lower level will be penalised at double the published tariff.

This means a player with an outstanding Level 2 or 3 judgement, whose second offence is at Level 1 will receive double the standard Level 1 second offence tariff. This would mean that a suspension judged at 7 days would be automatically increased to 14 days.

The tariff of sanctions, listed above, is specific to Bitteswell Cricket Club. Additional penalties could be independently applied by the League, ECB or other qualified enforcement agency.

ECB LEVELS OF MISCONDUCT

ECB LEVEL ONE	Wilfully mistreating any part of the cricket ground or any equipment or implements used in the match
	Showing dissent at an umpire's decision by word or action
	Using language that, in the circumstances, is obscene, offensive or insulting
	Making an obscene gesture
	Appealing excessively
	Advancing towards an umpire in an aggressive manner when appealing; and/or
	Any other misconduct, the nature of which is, in the opinion of the umpires or the BCC Committee, is equivalent to a Level 1 incident
ECB LEVEL TWO	Showing serious dissent at an umpire's decision by word or action
	Making inappropriate and deliberate physical contact with another cricketer
	Throwing the ball at a cricketer, umpire or another person in an inappropriate and dangerous manner
	Using language or gesture to another cricketer, umpire, team official or spectator that, in the circumstances, is obscene or of a seriously insulting nature; and/or
	Any other misconduct, the nature of which is, in the opinion of the umpires, or the BCC Committee is equivalent to a Level 2 incident
LEVEL THREE	Intimidating an umpire by language or gesture; and/or threatening to assault a cricketer or any other person except an umpire; and /or
	Any other misconduct, the nature of which is, in the opinion of the umpires, or the BCC Committee is equivalent to a Level 3 incident
LEVEL FOUR	Threatening to assault an umpire
	Making inappropriate and deliberate and/or dangerous physical contact with an umpire
	Physically assaulting a cricketer or any other person
	Committing any other act of violence; and /or
	Any other misconduct, the nature of which is, in the opinion of the umpires, or the BCC Committee is equivalent to a Level 4 incident

CASES INVOLVING JUNIORS

The club recognises that junior members must learn and adhere to the expected standards from an early age. However, they may lack the experience or maturity of adult players. Application of the policy must deal with firmly for Level 3 & 4 offences, but some leniency may be applied to Levels 1 & 2 provided the Sub-Committee is satisfied that:

It is a first offence **AND** at least one of the following

- It was out of character
- It was borne of naivety
- Appropriate contrition has been shown
- The risk of repetition is very low having learnt from the incident

In these circumstances, a Level 2 suspension might be commuted to a warning, or a Level 1 warning to a stern chat.

Where it is necessary to consider disciplinary action for a junior, the club should notify the member's parents / guardians of the allegations and ensure they have an opportunity to make any appropriate representation.

UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES

In the event that this document does not cover all eventualities such as if a member seeks to launch an appeal, the club will defer to the prevailing ECB General Conduct Regulations for Recreational Cricket document for any missing procedural guidance.

NOTES

Days rather than matches have been deliberately chosen for suspensions. A date is unambiguous, whereas a player with a two game ban might claim a Sunday game, they would never had made themselves available for, counted as a second game. Dates can be manipulated to cover a specific number of matches, but where it is the intention to cover a certain number of games, this should be clearly recorded on the player record so it can be used for comparing precedents.