



NRLA: JUDICIARY

SENTENCING GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES

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THE FOLLOWING REGULATIONS, ESTABLISHED IN CONFORMITY WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE NIGERIA RUGBY LEAGUE ASSOCIATION (NRLA) SHALL APPLY TO ANY AND ALL CONTENTIOUS ISSUES THAT MAY ARRISE IN CONNECTION WITH THE SPORT OF RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL AND ITS ORGANISATION.

1 DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES AND BODIES

1.1 COMMON PROVISIONS

1.1.1 Delegation of Powers

The NRLA: Judicial Branch (and all its bodies) shall receive from the NRLA: General Assembly the authority to rule, opine and decide on matters arising out of, or in connection with, the conduct of competitions and their outcome. They shall provide the final resolution of matches played, undertake the investigations in relation to infringements that are committed during a match, and subsequently investigate any issue relating to the failure to abide by permanent rules and procedures established by the NRLA, as well as the common rules of ethics in sports, inclusive of the rules as established by the Rugby League International Federation (RLIF) and/or the Rugby League European Federation (RLEF) which have been ratified and adopted by the NRLA.

1.1.2 Nature and Number of Bodies

There shall be one (1) investigative body named as “Judicial Review Panel”, one (1) body named a “Disciplinary Committee”, as well as one (1) appeals body named “Appeals Commission”, that will have the disciplinary authority to sanction persons and entities affiliated to the NRLA, as well as connected persons or entities with the latter. Each body shall be composed of three (3) members selected from persons having a sound knowledge of the game and with sound ethics. The bodies shall be composed of a majority of members who are independent from the executive authorities of the NRLA. Members of the NRLA Board or NRLA Executive Board (e.g. the General Manager of the NRLA or the Chief Executive Officer) cannot be a member of any Judicial body. No person should be a member in more than one body, and there is a maximum of one (1) member allowed across more than one body with the exception of the NRLA Chief Justice [see Addendum I]; who maintains leadership oversight of all bodies as an independent and non-voting observer. The members of all bodies may not have any contractual relationship with the NRLA other than their mandate as part of the NRLA Judicial Branch.

The term of the mandate of Committee / Commission members shall be set to four (4) years. The members of the NRLA: Judiciary bodies shall be determined by a resolution of the NRLA General Assembly upon the recommendation of the NRLA Chief Justice (or NRLA General Manager, if a Chief Justice has not been appointed). If a member is permanently impeached from performing their duties, a new member is designated by a resolution of the NRLA Board under the same conditions of the remaining members and for the remaining term of the body.

1.1.2.1 JRP: Judicial Review Panel

The initial investigation and decision on whether a player should be charged with an on-field misconduct is made by the Judicial Review Panel (“JRP”) as detailed below in Article 2.1.

1.1.2.2 DC: Disciplinary Committee

The Disciplinary Committee (“DC”) has the authority to approve the results of the NRLA Championships and to resolve on all disciplinary issues related thereof. In particular, it has authority to investigate and rule on matters pertaining to assaults on the Match Officials (whether verbal, physical or moral), as well as investigating a player’s sanctions, as the case may be; all in accordance with the sentencing guidelines laid out in Article 5, below.

The DC is also competent to resolve on all off-field matters related to players actions and/or behaviours that transpire outside of the Playing Area, as well as matters affecting breaches by the officials and/or club/teams related to their duties in a given championship within which they are registered. It may sanction a player or club/team to be:

- i. excluded from a championship and/or fixture,
- ii. demoted to a lower division,
- iii. suspension / expulsion,
- iv. deduct championship points, and/or
- v. apply fines.

All decisions of the DC are appealable in accordance with the provisions of these rules.

1.1.2.3 AC: Appeals Commission

The Appeals Commission (“AC”) receives the appeals in relation to sentences rendered by the Disciplinary Committee.

The appeals body may be asked to resolve on matters that have been fully investigated, or on matters that are still subject to investigation.

2 ON-FIELD COMPLIANCE PROCEDURES

2.1 JUDICIAL REVIEW PANEL

2.1.1 Composition and Process

The decision on whether a player should be charged with misconduct is made by the Judicial Review Panel (“JRP”).

The JRP is made up of the Chairperson of the Match Officials Department (“MOD”), the NRLA: Tournament Director/General Manager (“TD”), and one (1) Independent Member who has appropriate knowledge and expertise (such as former players, referees and coaches). The JRP shall send match reports and an incident summary to the DC, plus supporting documents (i.e. score and team sheets, plus media files if available, plus MOD / Witness statements & testimonies, plus Player Disciplinary History) from the NRLA Executives, who shall provide this without delay.

In relation to each fixture of the NRLA [Nigeria Rugby League Association] or CRL [Collegiate Rugby League] or SRL [Schools Rugby League] or NRLA sanctioned Tournaments and/or Events involving clubs/teams, every incident placed “On Report” by the MOD [Match Officials Department], and/or Red Card issued by the Referee, are reviewed in full by an independent member of the JRP to identify incidents which should be considered by the DC. These incidents are then considered by the JRP within 96 hours following the recorded kick-off time of the fixture within which the incident took place, and the JRP shall decide what action should be taken in relation to the relevant player(s).

If a Club/Team wishes to bring any on-field incidents of alleged misconduct to the attention of the JRP, they must notify the NRLA CEO through an official written request no later than 48 hours from the recorded kick-off time of the fixture within which the incident took place. The NRLA CEO will then forward the written request to the JRP without delay, who will review and reach a conclusion within 96 hours, as above.

2.1.2 Options Available to the JRP

In relation to each Player considered, the JRP has the following options:

- Charge the Player / Club [henceforth referred to as “Party”] and refer the matter to the Disciplinary Committee.
- Caution the Party – in which case, subject to the “right of appeal” to the Disciplinary Committee, the Caution will be placed on record.
- Decide there is no case to answer, in which case the JRP may still send the Party a warning/advice letter.
- Where a Player has been dismissed from the field of play, deem the Referee’s decision to send the player from the field of play sufficient punishment and place this finding on the Player’s record.
- Refer the matter to the DC for further investigation.

All decisions of the JRP will be logged and published on the NRLA website.

2.1.3 Charge Letters

If a Party is charged, they will receive a detailed charge letter via their club/team from the NRLA CEO. The charge letter will include:

- The Law of the Game the player is alleged to have breached
- The detail of the alleged Offence
- The Grade of the Offence (see below)
- The normal suspension range for that Grade (see below)
- The evidence the DC will be relying on
- Whether the Party has the opportunity to enter an Early Guilty Plea
- Explicit instruction to enter a plea of “guilty” or not or not “guilty” for each charge
- Opportunity to submit written testimony
- If the matter is referred by the JRP to the DC indication that the DC will be in contact with the charged party

2.1.4 Cautions

If a Party is cautioned, they will receive a caution letter via their club/team, which will include:

- The Law of the Game the JRP considers the Party has breached

- The detail of the alleged Offence
- The evidence the JRP has based its decision on
- Details on how a Party may appeal the JRP's decision to the Disciplinary Committee (including the 7 day deadline for doing so)

2.1.5 Early Guilty Plea

A Party who has:

- been charged with an Offence of Grade A-C; and
- who has not been found guilty of any other charge of misconduct before the DC, or by submitting a previous Early Guilty Plea, in the twelve (12) months preceding the date of the incident in which the alleged Offence took place; and
- who has not been permanently sent from the field in a Match in the twelve (12) months preceding the date of the Match (unless subsequently found not guilty of such an offence), ...

... may elect to make an Early Guilty Plea by informing the NRLA CEO/General Manager of his intention to do so before 11:00 am on the day of any scheduled hearing. This will result in the lower end of the suspension range for the Grade of Offence set out in the Charge Letter being imposed. (e.g. for a Grade B offence a one match suspension will be imposed.)

A player making such an Early Guilty Plea will not be subject to any fine, but will forfeit the right to any hearing. For the avoidance of doubt, the right to make an Early Guilty Plea only applies to DC cases, and not to any Appeals Bodies.

For further avoidance of doubt, if a Player has previously used an Early Guilty Plea, the date from which the twelve (12) month period starts will be the date on which the previous suspension started, and not the date on which he entered the Early Guilty Plea.

2.2 HEARINGS OF THE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE

2.2.1 Composition and Process

Appointments for hearings of the Disciplinary Committee ("DC") will be made pursuant to notification of a case by the NRLA CEO/General Manager to the Party.

A "DC Chairperson" (DC/C") shall be nominated for each DC case, and the designated DC/C could be taken from outside the DC. The DC/C shall remind all DC members that all undertakings are confidential [see Article 2.2.5 & 2.2.6]. The decisions of the DC shall be taken by the majority of the members present, and in the event of a tie the DC/C shall have the casting vote.

2.2.2 Options Available to the DC

The DC shall determine:

- Whether an Offence has been committed
- If so, the Grade of the Offence (see below)
- Where a Party has been found guilty of an Offence, the appropriate sanction (in accordance with the Sentencing Guidelines)

If the DC does not consider that it can reach a decision on the evidence before it, it may ask the JRP for further evidence or dismiss the case.

2.2.3 Order of Proceedings:

The DC Chairperson ("DC/C") will determine the order of proceedings; however usually:

- The DC/C will read the charge to the DC.
- The Party, or their representative, will admit or deny the Offence (and the Grading of the Offence).
- The DC/C will present the case for the DC.
- The Party, or their representative, will present the Party's case.

- If the Party denies the Offence the DC will consider whether the Offence was committed and the Grade of any such Offence. (The Party will retire while this decision is made.) And only if the DC finds that the Party has committed an Offence will it then go on to consider the appropriate sanction.
- If the Party admits the Offence, or if the DC decides that an Offence was committed, then both the DC/C and the Party will have the opportunity to make submissions to the DC in relation to the appropriate Sanction. The DC will then determine the appropriate sanction in accordance with the Sentencing Guidelines.
- There will be the usual use of video graphic, photographic and written reports, to assist proceedings.

2.2.4 Nature of Hearings:

The hearings at any level, and before any body, are private. However, the DC/C may ex officio, or pursuant to the request of one of the parties in the proceedings, allow access of the public to the room for all or part of the session, and such for the best interests of public policy when items pertaining to the respect of privacy are at stake.

2.2.5 Secrecy of Deliberations:

Members of any NRLA Judicial Body are strictly prohibited to participate in deliberations of such bodies in matters where they can justify a direct or indirect relationship of any nature whatsoever to the matter at hand. In the course of the same case, a member in the Appeal Commission cannot take part in the deliberations if they have previously taken part in the deliberation of the matter in the JRP or DC.

2.2.6 Duty of Confidentiality:

All members of the NRLA: Judicial Branch are bound by absolute confidentiality in relation to act, facts and information that might have come to their knowledge as a result of the exercise of their functions. Any breach to the confidentiality provision shall consequently result in the immediate termination of their functions.

2.3 ADJUDICATIONS

The DC's adjudications will:

- Be published in full
- Include all aggravating and/or mitigating factors taken into consideration
- Explain any deviation from the sentencing guidelines
- Give clear and full reasons for the decision

3 SPECIFIC PROVISIONS PERTAINING TO THE JUDICIAL BODIES

3.1 AUTHORITY TO INITIATE

The DC's proceedings may be initiated by the JRP, or the NRLA President, or by any person designated by the latter to this effect. The JRP are in charge of the investigation of disciplinary matters and may present the case to the DC with the findings and recommendations.

3.2 PROCEDURE

The DC shall produce, within two (2) months starting from the date when the case is duly referred, a report detailing the outcome of their investigation. The report shall be sent to the CEO, only. The DC may recommend the closing of the matter, or issue a ruling upon the case.

The Party representatives and/or (as the case may be) the indicted person (or the legal guardians of minors) shall be called before the DC by the DC/C. The call shall be formulated in the form of a mail in which they mention the grievances, no less than seven (7) days prior to the date of the hearing. The call shall indicate the rights that the person has, by virtue of the present regulations.

The indicted Party may be represented by a qualified attorney, and one or more persons of their choice may also assist, providing that they inform the DC/C at least 24 hours prior to the hearing date. In case the indicted does not understand, or poorly understands the English language, they may ask to be assisted by a person who would be capable of translating the proceedings. The indicted, or their retained counsel, may consult, before the hearing, the entirety of the file and the report made by the investigator.

The indicted may ask the DC to hear persons they designate as witnesses. They shall then be required to transmit a list of these persons to the DC/C, no later than four (4) days prior to the hearing's date. The DC/C shall have the discretionary authority to approve or reject the list in whole or in part, especially if such list appears to conceal an abuse of defence.

The delay of the call may be reduced to two (2) days in the event of urgency, and such upon the request of the DC/C. In this case, the process of listening to witnesses shall be made without any delay. Exceptionally, the urgency delay may be further reduced in the case where the indicted is involved in the final phases of a Championship.

3.3 POSTPONEMENT

In an emergency / exceptional case, as reference in Article 3.2 above, and save for any case of force majeure, the adjournment of the case may not be requested. In all other cases, and save for events of force majeure, the adjournment of the proceedings may be asked only once; no later than 48 hours before the date of the hearing, and the hearing can be adjourned for no later than twenty (20) days.

3.4 PROCEDURE WHEN CASE IS EXEMPTED FROM INVESTIGATION

When, in the application of Article 3.2, the matter is exempted from JRP investigation, the DC shall start by discussing the facts of the case, as presented.

The DC/C shall then ask any Party who may have relevant information to present this information, ipso facto.

The defendant (or their representative) will be the last person to speak.

3.5 DELIBERATION

The DC shall then start its deliberations; which shall always be done in private quarters. The defendant or their representation, or the investigating Party, cannot attend these deliberations. At the end of the deliberations, the DC shall reach a verdict, which will be rendered in writing, and executed by the NRLA CEO. The decision(s) shall be immediately notified to the defendant and the NRLA: Board, by the NRLA CEO. The award shall also mention the conditions of the appeal and shall mention if it has been unanimously rendered, or by a vote of majority, and in the latter case it should also mention the reasons for the minority to oppose the award.

3.6 DURATION OF THE PROCEEDINGS

The DC must reach an award by no later than two (2) months starting from the date when the proceedings first commenced. If the hearing has been adjourned pursuant to the provisions of Article 3.4, the term shall extend accordingly.

In case the DC fails to reach an award within the ascribed time frame, it shall cease to look into the matter, and the matter shall be transmitted to the Appeals Commission.

4 APPEALS COMMISSION

4.1 APPEALS AUTHORITY

The Appeals Body is defined as:

- Appeals Commission (AC): to receive, adjudicate and resolve the appeals in relation to decisions, sentences or verdicts rendered by the Disciplinary Committee (DC).
- Appeals Commission: to receive, adjudicate and resolve the appeals in connection with the breaches to the game, to the rules of the NRLA.

The Appeals Body may be asked to resolve on matters that have been fully investigated, or on matters that are still subject to investigation. The same rules of proceedings mentioned for the DC shall apply for the AC, except that the Appeals Body shall not be bound by the time frame to reach decisions.

4.2 PROVISIONS PERTAINING TO APPEALS AUTHORITY

The award rendered by the Disciplinary Committee (DC) may be subject to an appeal to be lodged by either:

- the Party sanctioned by the DC
- the President of the Club(s) / Team(s) concerned by the matter
- the NRLA President and NRLA Secretary-General, jointly signed

The delay of the appeal is fifteen (15) days, starting from the next day of the date of the award. The appeal is subject to the payment of a non-refundable fee of fifty Naira (\$50)

Unless otherwise decided by the Appeals Body, the appeal shall serve to suspend the effect of the DC's award.

Upon the receipt of a request for appeal, the AC shall proceed with the notification of all the other parties involved in the DC proceedings. The notification shall contain the reference to the delay within which the notified Parties will have to submit their observations to the appeals body.

The appeals body shall conduct an independent investigation into the case as a last and final resort. It bases its decision on the grounds of the file of the Disciplinary Committee (DC), and any new facts that may be brought to it by the parties, and it shall apply the principle of listening to both parties.

The Appeals Commission Chairperson (AC/C) shall designate a deciding member who will establish to the AC a report detailing the facts and drawing the conduct of the proceedings. This report shall be orally relayed during the appeals hearings.

4.3 DELAY AND CONSEQUENCE OF SUSPENSION OF THE AWARD

The Appeals Commission must reach its decision within a time frame of three (3) months from the start of the proceedings. In case of failure by the latter to reach a decision, the AC/C will inform the NRLA: Board, to request an allowance for an extension of time. In case the NRLA: Board resolves not to extend the time, the matter shall be reviewed and resolved by the NRLA: Board, themselves.

In cases where the appeals has suspended the enforcement of the decision of the Disciplinary Committee (DC), and it resulted that the defendant's appeal was unfounded, the Appeals Committee shall be compelled to apply a more severe sanction; representing an increase to the initial penalty decided by the Disciplinary Committee (DC).

4.4 PUBLICATION OF THE AWARD

The appeals award shall be published and rendered public. It shall be final and binding, and cannot be subject to any form of contestation.

5 SENTENCING GUIDELINES

5.1 UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

- Rugby League is a hard, fast, contact sport played at professional level by athletic players.
- In a sport with high-speed collisions there will always be injuries and players take part with this knowledge.
- Judiciary system is not intended to sanitise the sport.
- However there is no place in the game for players who jeopardise the safety of others by intentional, dangerous or malicious acts.
- The Judicial system will support and protect match officials.

5.2 LEGAL SYSTEM

- All sentencing should be carried out on the basic tenets of Nigerian Law.
- Everything should be taken into account.
- Each case must be judged on its merits.
- Judicial Bodies will apply judgement & discretion.
- In determining the appropriate sanction the Bodies will take into account all relevant aggravating and mitigating factors (see below).

5.3 AGGRAVATING FACTORS

- Previous Record
- Violence
- Retaliation
- Injury Caused
- Incident Not Part of Play
- Other Aggravating Factors

5.3.1 Previous Record

- Player has record of the same or a similar offence in the past - should result in a higher penalty than would otherwise be the case.
- Player has a Judicial record for dissimilar offences – not necessarily taken into account unless the player’s record is such that it shows a general disregard for the safety and welfare of others.
- Players who regularly commit acts of foul play – should receive ever-increasing suspensions that may lead to a period suspension. (i.e. a player with a serious record may receive a substantially longer suspension than a player with no record for an offence of the same nature.)

5.3.2 Violence

- No place for acts of intentional violence or thuggery.
- Includes head butting, vicious attacks with fists, intentional high tackles, kicking a prone opponent, an assault on an opponent from behind, gouging.
- Unprovoked violent assaults punished severely & period suspensions considered.

5.3.3 Retaliation

- When retaliation is calculated and intentional it is an aggravating factor.

5.3.4 Injury

- If the Misconduct has caused injury to an opponent, this may result in a higher penalty than if no injury had occurred.
- Judicial Bodies may consider the length of time an injured opponent is likely to be out of the game when passing sentence.

5.3.5 Incident Not Part of Play

- Where an incident is not part of play (i.e. off the ball or in back play) then this may be an aggravating factor.

5.3.6 Other Aggravating Factors

- The NRLA Judicial Bodies shall be entitled to take into account other aggravating factors as they reasonably think appropriate in the circumstances of an individual case.

5.4 MITIGATING FACTORS

- Previous Good Record
- Provocation
- Technique or Fitness [in some cases]
- Genuine Remorse
- Other Mitigating Factors

[NB: THE FACT THAT NO INJURY WAS CAUSED IS NOT USUALLY A MITIGATING FACTOR]

5.4.1 Previous Record

- Where a player has a good previous record this may be treated as a mitigating factor.
- Must have been playing the game at semi-professional level (i.e. CRL or NRLA or higher) for long enough to have established a good record. (e.g. at least three years)
- Where a player has a previous record but has not committed a similar offence for a period of at least five years his previous record may be discounted.

5.4.2 Provocation

- An immediate reactionary retaliation to foul play by an opponent may be a mitigating plea as it may be seen as self-defence.

5.4.3 Technique or Fitness

- Rarely a valid defence at the NRLA or CRL (Division 1) level.
- A player who does not have the appropriate technique or fitness levels may be a danger to other players.
- At CRL (Division 2) and/or SRL level some consideration may be given to these factors when accompanied by genuine remorse and intention to resolve the problem.

5.4.4 Genuine Remorse

- Genuine remorse for the Offence and formal apologies to his opponent may be mitigating pleas.

5.4.5 Other Mitigating Factors

- The NRLA Judicial Bodies shall be entitled to take into account other mitigating factors as they reasonably think appropriate in the circumstances of an individual case.

5.5 LAWS OF THE GAME

The “Laws of the Game & On-Field Misconduct Offences” are:

- 15.1(a) Trips, Kicks or Strikes: another Player
- 15.1(b) When Tackling or Attempting-to-Tackle: Makes Contact with the Head or Neck of an Opponent
- 15.1(c) Drops Knees First on an Opponent on the Ground
- 15.1(d) Uses a Dangerous Throw
- 15.1(e) Intentionally & Continuously Breaks the Laws of the Game
- 15.1(f) Uses Offensive or Obscene Language
- 15.1(g) Disputes a Decision of the Match Officials (Referee, Touch Judges or Fourth Official)
- 15.1(h) Re-Enters the Field of Play without the Permission of the Match Official
- 15.1(i) Behaves in any way Contrary to the True Spirit of The Game (including: Dangerous Contact)
- 15.1(j) Intentional Obstruction of an Opponent Not-in-Possession

Breaches of the Operational Rules, which take place on-field, are not included in these Sentencing Guidelines.

5.6 GRADING & DESCRIPTION OF OFFENCES

All offences are graded in six grades A – F where Grade A is the lowest level of offence and Grade F the most serious.

The most common offences are listed in the sentencing guidelines with a description to assist all those concerned in referring to incidents in a standardised manner. It is accepted that there will be incidents not covered by the guideline descriptions and each sub section of the laws includes Other Offences which can be graded from A to F.

5.7 SENTENCING GUIDELINES

Law No.	Charge	Grade	Guideline Description	
15.1 (a)	TRIPS, KICKS OR STRIKES: ANOTHER PLAYER			
	Trips	A-B	Reaction trip	
		A-D	Intentional trip	
	Kicks	B-D	Kicks opponent – light contact	
		E-F	Kicks opponent – makes full contact in aggressive violent manner	
		B-D	Intentionally stands on	
		D-E	Trampling	
		E-F	Stamping	
		Strikes	A-D	Strikes with hand, arm or shoulder – reckless
	D-E		Strikes with hand, arm or shoulder – intentional	
	B-C		Strikes with elbow/forearm – dropping on player	
	B-C		Strikes with elbow/forearm – ball carrier – reckless	
	C-F		Strikes with elbow/forearm – ball carrier – intentional	
	C-E		Strikes with elbow/forearm – tackling – reckless	
	D-F		Strikes with elbow/forearm – tackling – intentional	
	C-E		Strikes with elbow off ball reckless	
	E-F		Strikes with elbow off ball intentional	
	Strikes – Knee		A-C	Raising knee in tackle
		B-C	Strikes with knee – reckless	
		D-E	Strikes with knee – intentional	
		D-F	Strikes with knee violent & aggressive	
	Strikes – Head-Butting	A-B	Head Butting – makes light contact	
		C	Head butting – makes full contact	
		E-F	Head butting – makes full contact in aggressive violent manner	
	Strikes – Punching	A-B	Reaction to opponent – lashing out	
		A-B	Punching – self defence	
		A-B	Punching – one on one – minor	
		C-D	Punching – sustained, repeated or violent	
		E	Punching – sustained, repeated, violent & aggressive	
		C-D	Running in & punching	
		E-F	Running in & punching – opponent off guard	
	Other Striking Offences	A-F		
	15.1 (b)	WHEN TACKLING OR ATTEMPTING-TO-TACKLE: MAKES CONTACT WITH THE HEAD OR NECK OF AN OPPONENT		
		Careless	A-B	Careless – flat hand off balance
			A-B	Careless – Ball carrier dips
			A-B	Careless – Stepped and reaching
			A-B	Careless – initial contact with ball or chest
			A-B	Careless – second tackler in – wrapping tackle up
			Reckless	B-C
		B-C		Reckless – tried to tackle but reckless about outcome
		Intentional		D-F
			D-F	Intentional – stiff arm tackle – no attempt to tackle legitimately – violent
Other Tackling Offences			A-F	
15.1 (c)		DROPS KNEES FIRST ON AN OPPONENT ON THE GROUND		
	Drops Knees First	A-F		
15.1 (d)	USES A DANGEROUS THROW			
	Dangerous Throw	B-C	Other tackler’s actions were part of the problem (only applies where Player is not aware of other tackler’s actions)	
		B-C	Ball carrier’s actions were part of problem	
		B-D	Lifting & dropping player	
		D-E	Throwing player into ground	
	Spear Tackle	E-F	Driving player into ground on head or neck	
	Other Dangerous Throw	A-F		
15.1 (e)	INTENTIONALLY & CONTINUOUSLY BREAKS THE LAWS OF THE GAME			
		A-F		
	USES OFFENSIVE OR OBSCENE LANGUAGE			

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15.1 (f)		A-B	Foul language
		B-C	Foul & abusive language
		B-C	Foul or abusive language towards a Match Official
		D	Foul and abusive language towards a Match Official
		B-F	Questioning the integrity of a Match Official
		E-F	Verbal abuse based on race, colour, religion, gender, sexual preference, national or ethnic origin
	Other Offensive or Obscene Language	A-F	
15.1 (g)	DISPUTES A DECISION OF THE MATCH OFFICIALS (REFEREE, TOUCH JUDGES OR FOURTH OFFICIAL)		
		A-B	Disputes decision
		C-F	Disputes using aggressive language or body language
		C-F	Disputes using aggressive language & body language
		A-F	Other Disputes Decision
15.1 (h)	RE-ENTERS THE FIELD OF PLAY WITHOUT THE PERMISSION OF THE MATCH OFFICIAL		
		B-C	
15.1 (i)	BEHAVES IN ANY WAY CONTRARY TO THE TRUE SPIRIT OF THE GAME (INCLUDING: DANGEROUS CONTACT)		
		E-F	Gouging
		E-F	Biting
		E-F	Spitting
		F	Testicles – attacking
		D-F	Raking with studs
		F	Threatening words or actions towards match officials
		A-E	Deliberate physical contact with a match official (e.g. placing hand on arm to attract attention)
		F	Physical assault of a match official (e.g. pushing / shoving)
		F (Top end)	Violent and aggressive physical assault of match officials (e.g. punching)
		A-F	Other contrary behaviour
		A-D	Defending player, in or after affecting a tackle, uses any part of his body forcefully to bend or apply unnecessary pressure to the head and/or neck and/or spinal column of the tackled player so as to keep the tackled player at a disadvantage in or after the tackle.
		A-D	Defending player, in or after affecting a tackle, forcefully and unnecessarily grasps (or jerks, or pins or twists) the head or neck of the tackled player.
		A-D	Defending player, in affecting a tackle, forcefully makes contact with the supporting leg or legs of an attacking player who has been held in the tackle and who is deemed to be in a vulnerable position, in a way that involves an unacceptable risk of injury to that player.
		A-D	Defender uses any part of his body forcefully to twist, bend or otherwise apply pressure to the limb or limbs of an opposing player in a way that involves an unacceptable risk of injury to that player.
	A-D	Defender attempting to charge down a kick from an attacking player makes contact with the leg or legs of an attacking player who has kicked the ball, in a way that involves an unacceptable risk of injury to that player.	
Save where otherwise prescribed in the Laws of the Game attempted foul play will be dealt with under 15.1(i).			
15.1 (j)	INTENTIONAL OBSTRUCTION OF AN OPPONENT NOT-IN-POSSESSION		
		A-F	

5.8 SENTENCING GUIDELINES FOR EACH GRADE OF OFFENCE

GRADE	NORMAL SUSPENSION RANGE (Season Length ≤ 15 Games)
A	NFA – 1
B	1 – 2
C	2 – 3
D	3 – 5
E	4 – 8
F	8+ or period suspension

5.9 NORMAL SUSPENSION RANGES – GUIDELINES ONLY

Players and Clubs/Teams should be aware that the normal suspension ranges are guidelines only and the Judicial Bodies have the discretion to step outside of the normal ranges in the following circumstances:

- The Disciplinary Committee agree that relevant factors mean a higher sanction should be imposed;
- If the Judicial Branch has previously advised the Party that it will apply a higher sanction next time that Party is found to have committed a misconduct offence; or
- If the Body feels that, in the light of the aggravating and mitigating factors present, it is appropriate to step outside of the normal suspension range.

5.10 FINES – GUIDELINES ONLY

The NRLA Judiciary may continue to impose fines on players found guilty at hearings. Fines are not, and will not be, issued instead of suspensions and will not be used in an exemplary manner. The fine structure is as set out below:

LEVEL	Fine (N\$)
SRL: Schools Rugby League	\$3-\$20 +
CRL: Collegiate Rugby League	\$20-\$50 +
NRLA: Nigeria Rugby League Association	\$33-\$66 +
Domestic Representative Fixtures	\$66 +

5.11 DEFINITIONS

5.11.1 Zero Tolerance

- Defined in the Operational Rules as the NRLA policy of not tolerating racist or other “unacceptable behaviour” of any type and imposing severe penalties with no exceptions.
- Policy to be applied to player found guilty of racist behaviour on the field of play.
- Severe penalties to be applied.

5.11.2 Definitions of Intentionally (Deliberately), Recklessness and Carelessness

Intentionally (Deliberately):

A person acts intentionally with respect to a result (for example contact with the head or neck when tackling or attempting to tackle) when:

- i. it is his purpose to cause it; or
- ii. although it is not his purpose to cause that result, he is aware (or should be aware) that it would occur or almost certainly occur in the ordinary course of events if he were to succeed in his purpose of causing some other result (for example stopping a player).

A person who intends to harm a person and harms another person instead shall be deemed to have intended to harm the other person.

An intention need not necessarily be planned before or during a match; an intention may be formed on the spur of the moment, just before (or even during) the contact or other event (for example during a tackle).

Recklessness:

- i. something is caused recklessly if the person causing the result (for example contact with the head or neck when tackling or attempting to tackle) is, or ought to be, aware of an obvious risk that acting or failing to act in a particular manner will bring about that result but nonetheless acts or fails to act in that manner where a reasonable person would not do so;
- ii. a person acts recklessly with respect to a circumstance or as to a possible result of an act, if the person is, or ought to be, aware of an obvious risk that the circumstances exist, or that the result will follow, but nonetheless acts where a reasonable person would not do so.
- iii. a person acts recklessly if the person is, or ought to be, aware of an obvious risk of dangers or of possible harmful results (for example contact with the head or neck when tackling or attempting to tackle) in so acting but nonetheless acts where a reasonable person would not do so.

In showing that a person has acted recklessly the NRLA Judicial Bodies need not show that the person intended or wished for a particular result to occur.

A person may become aware or ought to have been aware of an obvious risk just before (or even during) the contact or other event (for example during a tackle).

Carelessness:

A person acts carelessly if his conduct falls below the standard expected of the ordinary reasonable player. The test is objective, based on the hypothetical player, and involves the person either doing something the reasonable player would not do, or not doing something that the reasonable player would do. It does not matter that the person was unaware that the result of his act/omission might happen, if the reasonable player would have realised the risk and taken steps to avoid it.

In showing that a person has acted carelessly, the NRLA Judicial Bodies need not show that the person intended or acted recklessly in relation to the result.

ADDENDUM I | NRLA: CHIEF JUSTICE

The position of NRLA: Chief Justice (CJ) should be filled by an individual with appropriate knowledge and expertise (such as legal / judicial acumen). The post is upon a voluntary basis, ratified by the NRLA: Board, for a term of two (2) years; renewable upon re-election.

The role of the Chief Justice will be advisory and also to act as a non-voting Chairperson of the Disciplinary Committee (DC) and Appeals Commission (AC).

Any NRLA: Judicial Branch member (i.e. JRP, DC and/or AC member) may contact, in writing, the Chief Justice for advice upon any NRLA: Judicial matter.

In the event that a member of one body is impeached or unable to preside their duties, the NRLA Chief Justice shall assume the role ex officio, and continue as such until the NRLA Board resolves the appointment of a new member in case the impeachment is permanent, or until such time that the member is able to resume their functions in case the impeachment is for a temporary period.

2019 – Martin Crawford*