



Complaints & Disciplinary Policy

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PART 1 – COMPLAINTS Policy

1. Introduction

Pétanque England is committed to fair, timely and accountable handling of concerns and complaints arising within the sport.

This Policy sets out the governing process for receiving, assessing, determining and reviewing complaints within the jurisdiction of Pétanque England.

Its purpose is to support confidence in decision-making, protect participants, uphold standards and strengthen organisational governance.

2. Purpose of the Policy

This Policy provides an accessible and transparent complaints procedure. It promotes fair and consistent handling, supports accountability and good governance, encourages learning and improvement, and helps ensure compliance with equality and data protection obligations.

3. Scope

This Policy applies to individual members, affiliated Clubs and Regions, volunteers, officials, committee members, coaches, umpires, event organisers, participants and non-members interacting with Pétanque England, where the matter arises within its jurisdiction.

4. Principles of Complaint Handling

All complaints will be handled in accordance with fairness, impartiality, confidentiality, proportionality, transparency, equality of treatment, timely decision-making and natural justice.

All parties must behave respectfully throughout the process.

5. Procedural Flexibility & Time Frames

The time-scales contained within this Policy are intended to promote fair, transparent and efficient case management. However, Pétanque England may extend, shorten or vary time-scales where reasonably necessary having regard to:

- the complexity or seriousness of the matter;
- safeguarding or welfare considerations;
- availability of evidence or witnesses;
- external investigations or proceedings;
- participant availability; or
- other exceptional circumstances.

Any material variation to stated time-scales will be communicated to the relevant parties as soon as reasonably practicable unless safeguarding, confidentiality or legal considerations prevent this.

A failure to comply strictly with a procedural time-scale will not automatically invalidate proceedings provided the process remains fair and proportionate overall.

6. Informal Resolution

Concerns should be raised informally in the first instance where the issue is suitable for early resolution and does not indicate safeguarding risk, discrimination, abuse, misconduct, material governance failure, or another matter requiring formal

consideration.

Informal resolution may include clarification, discussion, apology, mediation or an agreed practical solution.

Matters involving safeguarding concerns, discrimination, abuse, misconduct or serious governance concern must proceed directly to the formal process.

7. Formal Complaints

Complaints should normally be submitted within three months of the incident. Complaints submitted outside this period will only be considered where Pétanque England considers there to be good reason to do so.

Anonymous complaints will be considered only where there is sufficient supporting evidence or a significant welfare concern.

8. Accessibility and Support

Reasonable adjustments may be made to support accessibility and inclusion, including alternative communication formats, language or communication support, assistance with forms, and the presence of a representative or support person.

Pétanque England will seek to ensure that no participant is disadvantaged by disability or another protected characteristic.

9. Complaint Management Process

Complaints will normally be acknowledged within five working days and assigned to a Complaint Case Officer, who manages the case, conducts the initial assessment, gathers information, manages the process, and issues the first instance written outcome, but does not determine any review.

Where a complaint directly concerns the conduct or actions of an identifiable individual or organisation, the Respondent should normally be notified of the complaint within ten working days of the complaint being received, unless:

- safeguarding considerations apply;
- confidentiality restrictions apply;
- immediate notification may prejudice enquiries or investigations; or
- exceptional circumstances justify delay.

The Respondent should normally receive sufficient detail to understand the nature of the complaint and be provided with a reasonable opportunity to respond.

The Complaint Case Officer may seek further information, attempt informal resolution, conduct enquiries, dismiss matters outside jurisdiction or lacking sufficient basis, and refer matters to the appropriate procedure where the complaint indicates safeguarding risk, disciplinary misconduct, criminal conduct, regulatory concern, a competition or technical challenge, an employment matter, or a dispute that falls primarily within club jurisdiction.

Where reasonably practicable, a written outcome will be issued within twenty working days and will record the issue considered, the evidence relied on, the decision, the reasons for it, any action to be taken, and any available review route.

The roles of Complaint Case Officer and Disciplinary Case Officer may be undertaken by the same appointed individual in accordance with Appendix A Definitions.

10. Conflicts of Interest

Any person involved in managing or investigating a complaint must declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest immediately.

Where a complaint concerns the conduct, actions or impartiality of the Complaint Case Officer, the matter shall be referred to an alternative suitably independent person appointed by Pétanque England, which may include an independent director or external adviser.

Individuals with conflicts may be removed from involvement in the matter.

11. Review Process

A complainant may request a review of the written complaint outcome within fourteen calendar days of the date of the outcome letter.

Any request for a review must be submitted in writing and should clearly identify the grounds upon which the review is sought.

- A review request may be made on one or more of the following grounds:
- material procedural error;
- failure to consider relevant evidence;
- new evidence that could materially affect the outcome; or
- an outcome that no reasonable decision-maker could have reached based on the information available.

Requests submitted outside the stated timeframe will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and where fairness requires.

A review is not a rehearing of the original complaint. The review process will determine whether the original outcome should:

- stand unchanged;
- be varied; or
- be remitted for reconsideration under the appropriate procedure.

12. Matters Covered by Other Policies

Certain matters may be referred under separate procedures, including:

- safeguarding concerns;
- disciplinary allegations;
- competition or technical decisions;
- Social media matters
- employment matters;
- criminal allegations;
- local club disputes.

13. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Information relating to complaints will be handled confidentially wherever reasonably possible and shared only with those requiring access to manage the matter.

Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where information sharing is necessary to protect an individual, comply with legal obligations, safeguarding requirements or the principles of procedural fairness.

The Board may receive anonymised, summarised or limited information where reasonably necessary for governance oversight, risk management or regulatory compliance, except where a conflict of interest exists.

Where a matter involves significant safeguarding, legal, regulatory or reputational considerations, the Chair of the Board may receive confidential information where reasonably necessary to fulfil their governance responsibilities, provided appropriate confidentiality is maintained.

Records will be securely retained and processed in accordance with applicable data protection legislation.

14. Unreasonable or Vexatious Complaints

Pétanque England may impose proportionate restrictions where complainants:

- repeatedly raise substantially the same issue;
- behave abusively or unreasonably;
- pursue matters excessively without new evidence;
- use threatening or discriminatory language.

15. Governance and Continuous Improvement

Pétanque England will maintain anonymous records of complaints and disciplinary reports. These records will be kept so that trends can be identified, timeliness and consistency can be monitored, learning can be supported and governance oversight can be strengthened.

16. Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed at least every two years or sooner where necessary.

This Policy replaces all previous complaints procedures adopted by Pétanque England and was approved by resolution of the Board.

Version Number: 1.00

Approval Date: 26 July 2026

Review Date: July 2028

CONTACT DETAILS:

Complaints & Disciplinary Case Officer: complaint@petanque-england.uk

Complaints & Disciplinary Policies

PART 2 – DISCIPLINARY POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Pétanque is a sport that should be enjoyed by all who participate, whether as players, officials, volunteers or spectators. In producing this Disciplinary Policy, Pétanque England believes that the highest standards of integrity can be maintained at all levels of the sport, thereby ensuring that the sport can be enjoyed by all. This Disciplinary Policy applies to all individual members, regions and clubs involved in our sport at all levels.

2. Policy Purposes

- 2.1 There are standards of conduct and behaviour expected of all players, volunteers and others involved in pétanque. Regrettably, there will be occasions when someone breaches these standards. Although such incidents are rare, it is important that Pétanque England, our regions and clubs deal with serious breaches in a fair, consistent and timely manner.
- 2.2 This Policy provides a clear and robust mechanism for dealing with a Complaint to Pétanque England of serious misconduct, as set out in this Disciplinary Policy, which constitutes a breach of our rules, policies, regulations and Codes of Conduct adopted and published by Pétanque England.
- 2.3 The Disciplinary Policy provides a framework for the effective management of Disciplinary Action within the sport of pétanque. It ensures that transparent procedures are in place, that Disciplinary cases are investigated fairly and that the appropriate process is followed in a fair and consistent manner.
- 2.4 Not all complaints will result in disciplinary action. A complaint may lead to informal resolution, recommendations, mediation, education, or referral to a disciplinary process where serious misconduct is identified.
- 2.5 All disciplinary proceedings shall be conducted respectfully, proportionately and with due regard to the welfare and well-being of all participants.
- 2.6 All participants are expected to act with integrity, respect, fairness and in a manner that upholds the reputation of the sport.

3. Jurisdiction and Scope

- 3.1 This Disciplinary Policy applies to all Members, Regions, Clubs and Participants under the jurisdiction of Pétanque England.
- 3.2 Pétanque England reserves the right to refer a Disciplinary case to an external body, which may involve an independent Investigation into alleged grievances or allegations of misconduct involving a member, Region, Club or office-holder.
- 3.3 Disciplinary Action may be taken under this Disciplinary Policy where an Investigation by an outside agency has substantiated the allegations.
- 3.4 This Disciplinary Policy does not apply to:
 - Safeguarding matters involving children, young people and adults at risk, unless the matter has been referred by the lead safeguarding officer for consideration under the safeguarding and disciplinary procedures of Pétanque England.
 - Safeguarding concerns relating primarily to club or regional activity should normally first be referred to the relevant Regional Safeguarding Officer unless the concern relates to that individual or there is another reason why direct referral to the National Safeguarding Officer is appropriate.

- Safeguarding procedures may be adapted where necessary to protect welfare, preserve confidentiality, comply with statutory obligations or ensure a fair and proportionate process.
- 3.5 Complaint(s) that do not constitute serious misconduct: These will be dealt with by the relevant Region or Club in accordance with its Constitution and any relevant internal policies.
- 3.6 Panels formed under this Policy may be held on paper, in person, by telephone, by video conference or by any other means of communication by which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other. The Chair of the relevant Panel shall determine the format of the proceedings.
- 3.7 This Disciplinary Policy does not replace the powers of umpires to penalise infringements of the Pétanque England competition rules or the FIPJP rules for the sport of pétanque. A participant may be sanctioned under this Disciplinary Policy for serious misconduct relating to conduct at an event, even if an umpire has already sanctioned a person for that conduct under the Pétanque England Competition Rules or the FIPJP Rules for the Sport of Pétanque.
- 3.8 Disciplinary Action may be suspended until the outcome of any criminal Investigation is determined, regardless of the time-scales stipulated in this Disciplinary Policy.
- 3.9 Disciplinary Action may be taken against a Complainant where it is considered that a Complaint or an Appeal is frivolous, vexatious and/or malicious.
- 3.10 In the following cases, a Region or Club should not handle a Complaint of Serious Misconduct under this Disciplinary Policy;
- It is a matter relating to the jurisdiction of Pétanque England.
 - It is in any way subject to a Conflict of Interest.

4. Time-frames and Procedural Flexibility

- 4.1 Pétanque England will seek to deal with all disciplinary matters fairly, proportionately and within a reasonable timeframe.
- 4.2 The time-frames set out within this Policy are intended as guidelines and may be extended, shortened, suspended or waived where it is fair, reasonable and proportionate to do so.
- 4.3 Failure to comply with a procedural time limit shall not automatically invalidate any proceedings, decision or sanction.
- 4.4 Where practicable:
- complaints should normally be acknowledged within 5 working days;
 - respondents should normally be notified within 10 working days;
 - investigations should normally be completed within 28 working days;
 - disciplinary hearing notice should normally be provided at least 21 days before the hearing;
 - appeals must normally be lodged within 14 calendar days beginning the day after the written decision is issued;
 - appeal decisions should normally be issued within 28 days of the Appeal Hearing.
- 4.5 Pétanque England may prioritise welfare, safeguarding, criminal investigations, availability of evidence, or the interests of fairness when determining procedural time-scales.

5. Serious Misconduct

- 5.1 Serious Misconduct means conduct, behaviour or omission which Pétanque England, acting reasonably, considers sufficiently serious to warrant formal disciplinary action under this Policy.
- 5.2 Examples of Serious Misconduct include, but are not limited to:
- conduct which is disgraceful, dishonest or contrary to the interests of Pétanque England or the sport of pétanque;
 - conduct likely to bring Pétanque England or the sport into disrepute;
 - serious breaches of Pétanque England policies, regulations or Codes of Conduct;
 - abuse, bullying, harassment or intimidation;
 - discrimination;
 - theft, fraud or dishonesty;
 - physical violence or threatening behaviour;
 - safeguarding breaches;
 - serious breaches of health and safety requirements;
 - bribery or gambling-related misconduct; and
 - retaliation against complainants or witnesses.
- 5.3 For the purposes of this Policy, abuse may include physical, emotional, psychological, sexual or financial abuse.
- 5.4 Discrimination includes unlawful discrimination on grounds including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

6. Panels formed under the Disciplinary Policy

- 6.1 No member of a Disciplinary or Appeals Panel shall have a direct relationship with any named party involved in the Disciplinary case where there is an actual conflict of interest. Members of a Panel have a duty to declare any potential or actual conflict of interest.
- 6.2 All members of a Panel must respect the trust placed in them and ensure that anything disclosed to them in connection with a Disciplinary case remains confidential.
- 6.3 Panel members must;
- have no personal interest in the outcome of the proceedings (other than to see that the decision is fair) and no previous knowledge or involvement in the matter under consideration, be impartial and act in good faith;
 - deal consistently, objectively and fairly with cases in accordance with this Disciplinary Policy;
 - be careful and thorough in their consideration of the evidence and procedures;
 - base their decision on all available evidence.

7. Reporting Serious Misconduct

- 7.1 A Complaint of Serious Misconduct may be made by completing the Complaint Form in Appendix B or by emailing the Disciplinary Case Officer with all relevant information. If someone wishes to make a Complaint of Serious Misconduct by telephone or in person, they will be asked to complete the Complaint form or send an email to the relevant Disciplinary Case Officer.

- 7.2 A Complainant must set out in writing the grounds for the Complaint and full details of the serious misconduct giving rise to the Complaint. It is recommended that as much detail as possible is included in the Complaint, including but not limited to why the Complainant believes the incident falls within the scope of this Disciplinary Policy, witnesses, times, dates and location of the incident.

8. Receipt of a Complaint of Serious Misconduct

- 8.1 On receiving a Complaint of Serious Misconduct, the Disciplinary Case Officer must first consider and declare any actual or potential conflict of interest and, where such a conflict exists, refer the matter to another individual acting as the Disciplinary Officer; where there is no potential or actual conflict of interest, the Disciplinary Case Officer will determine whether the matter falls within the jurisdiction and scope of the Disciplinary Policy.

The roles of Disciplinary Case Officer and Complaint Case Officer may be undertaken by the same appointed individual in accordance with Appendix A Definitions.

- 8.2 On receiving a Complaint of Serious Misconduct, the Disciplinary Case Officer shall also determine if the Complaint should be referred to an outside agency.
- 8.3 If the Disciplinary Case Officer considers that such action is warranted, the Disciplinary Case Officer will refer the allegation of Serious Misconduct to the police for investigation and may then defer consideration of the matter under this Policy until the police investigation is complete.
- 8.4 Where a Complaint received by Pétanque England does not amount to an allegation of serious misconduct and arises from one or more incidents within a Region, Club or other body under the jurisdiction of Pétanque England, the matter will be referred to the organisation concerned to be dealt with in accordance with its own internal procedures.
- 8.5 Once the Disciplinary Case Officer has decided whether the Complaint of Serious Misconduct can be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy, they will acknowledge the Complaint in writing and record details of the allegation, including the date and time of the incident, the names of the Complainant and Respondent, and commence an investigation.

9. Investigation of Complaint

- 9.1 The Disciplinary Case Officer will commence an investigation into the matter. If a referral is made to an outside agency, the process under this Disciplinary Policy is suspended until the outside agency investigation has concluded.
- 9.2 In order to determine whether the allegation can be substantiated by the facts and relevant evidence, all relevant circumstances must be taken into account and, where appropriate, the Disciplinary Case Officer may request information from any relevant person or organisation and all Members, Clubs, Regions and Participants are expected to cooperate honestly and reasonably with disciplinary investigations. The Disciplinary Case Officer is entitled to carry out any investigation they consider necessary, which may include a recorded interview(s).
- 9.3 As soon as practicable, the Disciplinary Case Officer will notify the Respondent in writing of the nature of the Complaint, identify the Investigating Officer and confirm that an investigation of the Complaint will be conducted.
- 9.4 The Disciplinary Case Officer will contact those involved in or who witnessed the alleged incident and ask them to provide statements and evidence. This will

include informing the Respondent and requesting their written response to the Complaint and any evidence they wish to provide.

- 9.5 Where possible, all evidence should be written or typed so that it can be recorded. Where evidence is given orally, the Disciplinary Case Officer will take notes and return them to the person giving the evidence for approval. Where appropriate, the Complainant, Respondent or witnesses may submit photographs and documents as evidence.

Where lawful and appropriate, audio recordings, video recordings, electronic communications and digital evidence may also be considered.

- 9.6 Prior to and including the Investigation stage, the Respondent will not normally be entitled to know the identity of the Complainant unless the Disciplinary Case Officer considers it necessary to properly investigate the Complaint. All Complainants have the right to be free from harassment or retaliation as a result of their Complaint. If the identity of the Complainant is revealed, the Respondent must not attempt to contact the Complainant or influence anyone involved in the Investigation. Any attempt to contact the Complainant, influence the Investigation, harassment or reprisal by a Respondent may result in Disciplinary Action being taken against them.

- 9.7 On completion of the Investigation, the Disciplinary Case Officer will prepare a report on the Serious Misconduct, including, where appropriate, details of the breach of the relevant Rule, Policy, Procedure or Codes of Conduct and determine the outcome of the Complaint, which will be:

- To take no further action and the Complaint is not taken forward.
- To take any further actions to attempt to resolve the matter without recourse to form a Disciplinary Panel. This may include recommendations, helping to resolve conflicts between any parties, or issuing formal warnings See Paragraph 11.26; or
- Offer a Specified Sanction to the Respondent. See Paragraph 11.27; or
- Form a Disciplinary Panel as there is a case to answer under this Policy. See Paragraph 11.

- 9.8 The Disciplinary Case Officer shall inform the Respondent and Complainant of the course of action taken. In the event that a Complaint is withdrawn by a Complainant, Pétanque England retains the right to take any action deemed appropriate against the Respondent or Complainant under this Disciplinary Policy.

- 9.9 Until such time as a decision and/or details of any Sanctions imposed are published, all parties in the proceedings must treat such proceedings as confidential, a breach of confidentiality may result in Disciplinary Action.

10. Interim Suspension

- 10.1 The Disciplinary Case Officer has the power to impose an Interim Suspension.
- 10.2 Any Interim Suspension shall be supported by written reasons.
- 10.3 If the Disciplinary Case Officer determines that the Complaint or allegation is sufficiently serious and it is considered appropriate, an Interim Suspension may be imposed at any time after receipt of the Complaint. In some cases, an immediate Interim Suspension may be deemed necessary prior to Investigation.
- 10.4 An Interim Suspension will be imposed where it is considered that such action is appropriate which shall include without limitation the following factors, if present, tending to support an Interim Suspension being used:

- For the protection of the Respondent, Complainant or other Participants;
 - The reputation of Pétanque England would be at risk of being brought into disrepute if it fails to impose an Interim Suspension;
 - Where a failure to apply an Interim Suspension may impede internal or external Investigations.
- 10.5 Interim Suspensions may be imposed for a specified or indefinite period. All Interim Suspensions will be reviewed periodically and the necessity and proportionality of the duration and conditions of the Interim Suspension will be considered.
- Reviews shall be undertaken by the Disciplinary Panel or another independent person appointed by Pétanque England at reasonable intervals having regard to the circumstances of the case.
- 10.6 Where the Disciplinary Case Officer has imposed an Interim Suspension, he/she shall notify the Respondent of the fact of the Interim Suspension, the terms and conditions of the Interim Suspension and the duration of the Interim Suspension. Other relevant parties may be notified of the Interim Suspension in order to ensure compliance with the Interim Suspension.
- 10.7 An Interim Suspension imposed on a Respondent may include, but is not limited to, Pétanque England membership, suspension or prohibition from participating in any capacity in any pétanque activity, including competing, training, officiating, coaching, managing, attending meetings, volunteering at clubs or competitions, or entering a venue where a pétanque event is being held under the Pétanque England competition rules.
- 10.8 A Respondent who has been subject to an Interim Suspension may apply to the Disciplinary Case Officer for the suspension to be lifted. The Disciplinary Case Officer shall refer the matter to the Disciplinary Panel to determine whether the decision to impose an Interim Suspension was and remains appropriate. The decision of the Disciplinary Panel shall not be subject to Appeal. The Disciplinary Case Officer shall notify the Respondent of the decision.
- 10.9 Any breach of the terms or conditions of an Interim Suspension shall constitute a new Disciplinary offence and shall be dealt with accordingly under this Disciplinary Policy.
- 10.10 Any Interim Suspension will automatically cease if any of the following occurs (whichever is soonest):
- The matter has been fully determined by the Disciplinary Panel under the Disciplinary Policy; or
 - The matter is resolved by way of recommendation, mediation or alternate dispute resolution; or
 - Following an Investigation, the Disciplinary Case Officer concludes that no further action is necessary.

11. Disciplinary Panel

- 11.1 If, following the Investigation, the Disciplinary Case Officer determines that there is a case to answer and jurisdiction under this Policy, a Disciplinary Panel will be appointed.
- 11.2 The purpose of the Disciplinary Panel is to provide impartial and independent judgement in Disciplinary cases. The Disciplinary Panel shall be composed of 3 or 5 members from the Disciplinary Panel Register. One of these members will act as Chairman of the Disciplinary Panel. The Panel will maintain an odd

number of members so that, where necessary, matters can be decided by majority vote.

- 11.3 The Disciplinary Panel shall ensure that the principles of natural justice are observed. The proceedings of the Disciplinary Panel must be conducted fairly and objectively, with the Respondent being given full opportunity to respond and to present evidence in support of their case. The meeting of the Disciplinary Panel is not a court hearing and therefore evidence will not be given under oath. All parties will give truthful evidence.
- 11.4 Where appropriate Pétanque England will invite the Respondent, and any witnesses, to attend the Disciplinary Panel meeting.
- 11.5 A meeting of the Disciplinary Panel shall be convened. The meeting will be held in person, remotely, on paper or by video conference.
- 11.6 The Disciplinary Case Officer will send the Respondent a notice of the Disciplinary Meeting at least 21 days before the date of the meeting.
- 11.7 Notice of the Disciplinary Panel Meeting shall:
 - Set out the date, time, and place of the Disciplinary Panel meeting.
 - Name the individuals appointed to the Disciplinary Panel.
 - Inform the Respondent of the Disciplinary Charge against them, along with any supporting evidence gathered against the Respondent, ensuring that the Respondent is given full disclosure of the matter in dispute in writing.
 - Invite the Respondent to attend and confirm that they are entitled to be represented by a legal advisor and/or another representative.
 - Inform the Respondent that if no reply is received at least 7 days before the Disciplinary Panel meeting the Disciplinary Panel will consider the Complaint on the basis of the facts and statements in its possession.
 - Inform the Respondent that they may wish to submit to the Disciplinary Panel any written submissions or evidence that they consider appropriate and identify any witnesses they wish to call at the meeting or by written submission. The Respondent shall ensure that this information is received by the Disciplinary Case Officer at least 7 days before the Disciplinary Panel meeting.
- 11.8 The Respondent has until 7 days before the date of the Disciplinary Panel meeting in which to submit a written reply to:
 - Accept or deny the Disciplinary Complaint in whole or in part (and if in part, which part and why).
 - Where the Disciplinary Complaint is accepted in whole or in part submit a response in mitigation.
 - If the Disciplinary Complaint is denied in whole or in part, provide a response and any evidence (including witness statements) that you consider appropriate to support the denial of the Disciplinary Complaint (if denied in whole or in part).
- 11.9 The Disciplinary Panel may decide:
 - that the Disciplinary Panel meeting takes place on paper;
 - that the Disciplinary Panel meeting is convened by telephone or video conference (provided that all information has been supplied to both parties and each has had the opportunity to respond to information supplied by the other).

- 11.10 The Disciplinary Panel may also rely on a written and/or oral submission from the Disciplinary Case Officer, which may include a recommendation as to the disposition of the case.
- 11.11 Where the Respondent has accepted the Disciplinary Charge, the Disciplinary Panel will meet to agree a Sanction only. See section 12 Sanctions.
- 11.12 If the Respondent has requested that the matter be dealt with in their absence or fails to attend the meeting of the Disciplinary Panel, provided that notice of the hearing was properly served, the Disciplinary Panel may proceed in the absence of the Respondent.
- 11.13 The Disciplinary Case Officer will send the case file to the Disciplinary Panel 7 days before the date of the Disciplinary Panel meeting. The case file will contain the Disciplinary Complaint and a description of the incident. The file will be accompanied by the evidence collected and the Respondent's submissions.
- 11.14 The standard of proof in all cases before the Disciplinary Panel is the balance of probabilities. The Disciplinary Panel will base its decisions only on the contents of the case file and any evidence given at the Disciplinary Panel meeting.
- 11.15 The Disciplinary Panel will decide any issue by majority. No member of the Disciplinary Panel may abstain from voting.
- 11.16 The Disciplinary Panel meeting may be audio-recorded or transcribed.
- 11.17 If the facts of the case are disputed by the Respondent, the Disciplinary Panel may resolve the matter by considering all evidence presented to it, including oral and written evidence from any party. It may question any party present in relation to the matter.
- 11.18 The Disciplinary Panel will review the information, case file, evidence and submissions and make a Decision, which will be one of the following:
- The Disciplinary Charge has been proven and the Disciplinary Panel imposes a Sanction upon the Respondent. See Section 12.
 - The Disciplinary Charge has been proven and the Sanction imposed is a permanent suspension or ban.
 - The Disciplinary Charge has not been proven but there have been examples of poor practice. The Disciplinary Panel will send through a list of recommended actions to the Disciplinary Case Officer. See paragraph 11.26.
 - The Disciplinary Charge has not been proven and the case is dismissed.
 - The Disciplinary Panel decide that there is not enough evidence to make a Decision and ask the Disciplinary Case Officer to investigate further with a view to looking at whether more evidence exists before re-convening. Any further investigation should normally be completed within 28 days unless the parties are notified otherwise.
- 11.19 When reaching their Decision, the Disciplinary Panel will assess whether there have been any aggravating or mitigating factors.
- 11.20 Mitigating factors may include:
- admission of guilt and/or existence of remorse;
 - an unintentional breach of rules;
 - a track record of exemplary behaviour and/or a previously good Disciplinary record;
 - relevant welfare, medical or clinically diagnosed conditions.

11.21 Aggravating factors may include:

- lack of remorse;
- an intentional breach of rules;
- a history of repeated or similar conduct; and/or
- actions resulted in or could have resulted in serious injury to others.

11.22 The Disciplinary Case Officer will inform the Respondent of the decision of the Disciplinary Panel. The Decision shall be accompanied by details of any Disciplinary Action that has been agreed by the Disciplinary Panel. It shall also set out the right to Appeal the Decision of the Disciplinary Panel.

11.23 Any suspension, disqualification or exclusion shall, unless otherwise specified, take effect immediately from the date of the Disciplinary Hearing. The Disciplinary Panel may take into account any period of suspension served prior to the date of the Disciplinary Hearing.

Any refund of membership or competition fees shall be determined in accordance with applicable competition regulations or Board Policy.

11.24 If a Respondent fails or refuses to comply with any or all of the Sanctions imposed by the Disciplinary Panel, the Disciplinary Panel may reconvene and treat the failure or refusal as a new Complaint and deal with the matter and impose any Sanction in accordance with these Disciplinary Procedures.

11.25 Pétanque England shall keep a record of the Disciplinary Panel proceedings and Decision.

11.26 Recommendation:

- The Disciplinary Case Officer, the Disciplinary Panel or Pétanque England may provide a list of recommendations, together with expected time frames for completion, to the relevant parties.
- The Disciplinary Case Officer shall monitor compliance with any recommendations and may request evidence or confirmation that the recommendations have been completed.
- Where appropriate, a review date shall be agreed with the Respondent in order to assess progress and compliance with the recommendations.
- If either party disagrees with the recommendations, the matter may be referred to the Disciplinary Panel for further consideration.
- Where recommendations are not complied with within the agreed time-frame, or where insufficient progress has been made without reasonable explanation, the Disciplinary Case Officer may:
 - a. extend the review period;
 - b. issue further guidance or recommendations;
 - c. refer the matter back to the Disciplinary Panel; and/or
 - d. treat the failure to comply as a further disciplinary matter where appropriate.
- Any further referral to the Disciplinary Panel may result in additional recommendations, formal sanctions or other action considered proportionate in the circumstances

11.27 Specified Sanction:

- The Disciplinary Case Officer may offer a Specified Sanction to the Respondent, giving them an opportunity to:
 - a. admit the Complaint;

- b. forego their right to a hearing with the Disciplinary Panel and the right to an Appeal; and
 - c. fully accept the terms of a Specified Sanction.
- 11.28 If the Respondent does not fully accept the terms of a Specified Sanction within fourteen working days of receipt the Disciplinary Complaint will proceed to a hearing.
- 11.29 If the Respondent fully accepts the terms of a Specified Sanction within fourteen working days of receipt, no hearing will be held.

12. Sanctions

- 12.1 Where the Disciplinary Complaint is admitted or proven the Disciplinary Panel shall have the power to determine and pronounce Sanctions. Sanctions must be reasonable and proportionate in all the circumstances.
- 12.2 The Disciplinary Panel will follow the recommended Sanctions set out in Appendix C.
- 12.3 Sanctions will be effective immediately, unless determined otherwise by the Disciplinary Panel (at its sole discretion) including where considered appropriate to take account of any Interim Suspension imposed.
- 12.4 The Disciplinary Case Officer will inform the Respondent of the decision of the Panel.
- 12.5 If no Appeal is made against the Decision of the Disciplinary Panel in accordance with section 13, the Decision will be final.

13. Appeal

- 13.1 An Appeal against a Decision of the Disciplinary Panel can be made by the Respondent (but not the individual(s) or organisation(s) who originally made the Complaint) on one or more of the following grounds:
 - The Decision of the Disciplinary Panel was based on error of fact or could not have been reasonably reached by a Disciplinary Panel when faced with the evidence before it.
 - There was serious procedural or other irregularity in the proceedings before or during the Disciplinary Panel.
 - Significant and relevant new evidence has come to light which was not available before the Disciplinary Panel and, had it been available, may have caused the Disciplinary Panel to reach a materially different Decision.
 - The Sanction imposed was manifestly unreasonable in the light of the facts before the Disciplinary Panel.
- 13.2 The purpose of disciplinary proceedings under this Policy is regulatory and protective rather than adversarial. The disciplinary process is intended to uphold standards of conduct, protect participants and the integrity of the sport, and is not designed to determine civil liability or provide a mechanism for private dispute resolution between parties.
- 13.3 An Appeal should be set out in writing using the Appeal form to the Disciplinary Case Officer within 14 days of the date of the Disciplinary Panel Decision and should identify the reason for Appeal.

14. Appeal Panel

- 14.1 An Appeal Panel will be appointed to hear the Appeal. The Appeal Panel shall consist of appropriately trained and independent individuals appointed from

the Disciplinary Panel Register. None of the members of the Appeal Panel may have previously been involved in the matter being heard. The Panel will maintain an odd number so matters where needed can be decided by majority vote.

- 14.2 The Appeal Panel meeting may be audio-recorded or transcribed only at the determination of the Appeal Panel.
- 14.3 Following the appointment of an Appeal Panel, notice of the Appeal Panel Meeting shall be sent to the Appellant at least 21 days before the date of the Appeal meeting.
- 14.4 The Notice of the Appeal Panel meeting shall:
 - Set out the date, time, and place of the Appeal meeting.
 - Name the individuals appointed to the Appeal Panel.
 - Invite the Appellant to attend and state that they are entitled to be represented by a legal advisor and/or another representative.
 - Inform the Appellant they may seek to present to the Appeal Panel whatever written submission or evidence they consider appropriate in line with their request for an Appeal. The Appellant shall ensure this information is received by the Disciplinary Case Officer dealing with the Appeal no less than 14 days before the Appeal Panel meeting.
- 14.5 The Appellant may request that the Appeal Panel meet in their absence. If the Chair of the Appeal Panel agrees, then the Appellant shall be entitled to make representations in writing to the Appeal Panel.
- 14.6 If the Appellant does not attend the Appeal, provided that the Appeal Panel is satisfied that notice of the hearing was properly served, it may proceed to hear written submission or evidence in the absence of the Appellant.
- 14.7 The Chair of the Appeal Panel should ensure that the Appeal is heard in a manner that allows the Appellant to state their case fairly and shall consider all the evidence made available.
- 14.8 Any Appeal of the Decision by the Disciplinary Panel shall be by way of a review only unless significant and relevant new evidence has become available in accordance with paragraph 13.1.
- 14.9 The Appellant may not, without the express consent of the Appeal Panel, advance any ground of challenge that was not specified in the Notice of Appeal.
- 14.10 The standard of proof in all cases before the Appeal Panel is the balance of probabilities. The Appeal Panel will decide any issue by majority. No member of the Appeal Panel may abstain from voting.
- 14.11 Pétanque England shall keep a record of Appeal Panel proceedings and Decision.
- 14.12 An Appeal Panel has the power to:
 - Dismiss the Appeal.
 - Overturn the Decision, its findings and any Sanction imposed by the Disciplinary Panel;
 - Substitute an alternative Decision, findings and Sanctions;
 - Reduce, increase or substitute the original Sanction;
 - Order that the case is reheard by a different Disciplinary Panel in the light of new evidence produced; and/or
 - Make such further order as it considers appropriate.
- 14.13 For the avoidance of doubt, Sanctions may be increased as well as decreased

on Appeal.

14.14 The Chair of the Appeal Panel shall report the Decision to the Disciplinary Case Officer. The Disciplinary Case Officer shall inform the Appellant of the decision of the Appeal Panel.

14.15 The Chair of the Board shall be informed of the final outcome for governance purposes unless conflicted from the matter.

15. Publication of Decisions

15.1 Pétanque England reserves the right to publish details of any Disciplinary case, including publication of any decision made by a Panel where a Complaint is upheld. Publication will only take place after the expiry of the period within which the Respondent may Appeal, or after the conclusion of any Appeal.

15.2 Publication decisions shall take account of confidentiality, safeguarding, data protection obligations, proportionality and the legitimate interests of all parties.

16. Disclosure and Confidentiality of Witnesses

16.1 During the course of Disciplinary cases considered under this Policy, it will normally be necessary to identify the Complainant and any other relevant witnesses in order to provide the Respondent with a clear understanding of the allegations against them and to ensure procedural fairness.

16.2 In some circumstances, it may be considered necessary and appropriate to keep the details of the Complainant or a witness confidential. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to, where the identity of the Complainant or witness is not material to the case, where there is a reasonable belief that disclosure would put the Complainant or witness at risk, and/or where anonymity is required by law.

16.3 Where there are legitimate and reasonable grounds to preserve the anonymity of the Complainant or witnesses, any evidence or documentation provided to the Respondent will be sufficiently redacted to preserve that anonymity.

16.4 A Complainant or witness should be aware that Pétanque England cannot guarantee complete anonymity, even in circumstances where it is considered reasonable and necessary to preserve the Complainant's or witness's anonymity. Even where Pétanque England has taken all reasonable steps, the Respondent may be able to identify who has made a Complaint or provided evidence. In addition, if the matter is sufficiently serious to result in subsequent civil/criminal proceedings, Pétanque England may also be required by law to disclose or provide certain confidential information.

17. Safeguarding

17.1 It is the responsibility of all concerned to protect the welfare of all participants involved in a Disciplinary case. Where children or vulnerable adults are involved in a Disciplinary case, every effort should be made to ensure that their welfare is considered and protected.

17.2 Where a Complainant, Respondent or witness is under the age of 18, all contact will be made through their parent or guardian. Unless the Complaint is made by someone under 18 about their parent or guardian, contact will be made through another appropriate adult. An appropriate adult must also be present during any interviews or telephone calls.

- 17.3 If, at any time during the Investigation, Pétanque England believes there has been a breach of safeguarding policies, this will be treated as a safeguarding incident and handled under the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

18. Record Keeping and Data Protection

- 18.1 All personal data held in connection with a Disciplinary case will be held in accordance with applicable data protection legislation and PE data handling procedures.
- 18.2 Records, sanctions, decisions and related documentation shall be retained in accordance with applicable legal, safeguarding and governance requirements and any retention schedule adopted by Pétanque England.

This Policy replaces all previous disciplinary procedures adopted by Pétanque England and was approved by resolution of the Board.

Version Number: 1.00

Approval Date: 26 July 2026

Review Date: July 2028

CONTACT DETAILS: Complaints Case Officer: complaint@petanque-england.uk

Complaints & Disciplinary Policies



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Appendix A

Definitions

- **Appeal**- An application by a Respondent to have an Appeal Panel review the processes, findings, Decision and/or Sanction imposed by the Disciplinary Panel.
- **Appeal Panel**- An independent panel appointed under this Policy to hear and determine an Appeal.
- **Appellant**- The person submitting an Appeal under this Disciplinary Policy.
- **Chair**- The person appointed to chair a Disciplinary Panel or Appeal Panel.
- **Club**- A club affiliated to or recognised by Pétanque England.
- **Code of Conduct & Behaviour Standards**- Any code, regulation, standard, guidance or behavioural expectation adopted by Pétanque England and applicable to Members, Regions, Clubs, officials or participants.
- **Complainant**- The individual, organisation or body submitting a Complaint under this Disciplinary Policy.
- **Complaint**- An allegation, report, concern or expression of dissatisfaction relating to the conduct, actions, decisions, services, governance or activities of Pétanque England or persons operating within its jurisdiction.
- **Complaint Case Officer**: The individual appointed to manage the complaints process at first instance, including assessment, enquiries, referral and written outcome.
- **Conflict of Interest**- A situation where an individual has, or may reasonably be perceived to have, competing interests, loyalties or bias which could affect their impartiality.
- **Disciplinary Action**- Any formal action taken under this Disciplinary Policy, including Investigation, Interim Suspension, hearing, recommendation, warning, sanction or Appeal
- **Disciplinary Case Officer**: The individual appointed to conduct the initial assessment and investigation phase of a disciplinary matter, including referral, interim measures and case-to-answer decisions.

Pétanque England may, where appropriate, appoint a single individual to undertake the roles of Complaint Case Officer and Disciplinary Case Officer. Such appointment shall not, in itself, constitute a conflict of interest provided that the individual remains impartial and acts in accordance with the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness.

Where circumstances require, including matters involving complexity, safeguarding concerns, conflicts of interest or heightened governance sensitivity, separate appointments may be made at the discretion of Pétanque England.

- **Disciplinary Charge**- The formal allegation(s) of misconduct made against a Respondent and considered under this Disciplinary Policy.
- **Disciplinary Panel**- An independent panel appointed under this Policy to hear and determine a Disciplinary Charge.
- **Disciplinary Panel Register**- A register maintained by Pétanque England of appropriately trained and/or experienced individuals eligible for appointment to a Disciplinary Panel or Appeal Panel.
- **Disciplinary Policy**- This Pétanque England Disciplinary Policy, including any amendments, appendices or associated procedures adopted by Pétanque England from time to time.

- **Decision**- A determination made by a Disciplinary Panel or Appeal Panel following consideration of the evidence and submissions before it.
- **Hearing**- A meeting or proceeding convened under this Policy for the purpose of determining a disciplinary matter or Appeal, whether conducted in person, remotely, in writing or by electronic means.
- **Interim Suspension**- A temporary suspension, restriction or condition imposed pending the outcome of an Investigation or disciplinary proceedings.
- **Investigation**- The process undertaken to gather, review and assess evidence relating to a Complaint or allegation under this Disciplinary Policy.
- **League**- A league affiliated to or recognised by Pétanque England.
- **Member**- Any individual, Club, League, Region or affiliated organisation granted membership, affiliation or recognition by Pétanque England.
- **Participant**- Any individual involved in pétanque under the jurisdiction of Pétanque England, including but not limited to players, coaches, officials, volunteers, directors, spectators, staff, contractors and Members.
- **Pétanque England**- The national governing body for the sport of pétanque in England.
- **Region**- Any regional or county structure recognised by Pétanque England.
- **Respondent**- The individual, Club, Region or organisation against whom a Complaint or Disciplinary Charge has been made.
- **Review**- A reconsideration of a complaint outcome conducted under Part 1 of this Policy for the purpose of determining whether the original outcome should stand, be varied or be reconsidered. A Review is not a rehearing of the original complaint.
- **Safeguarding**- The policies, procedures and practices intended to protect children, young people and adults at risk from harm, abuse or neglect.
- **Sanction**- Any disciplinary penalty, restriction, requirement or condition imposed under this Disciplinary Policy.
- **Serious Misconduct**- Conduct, behaviour or omission considered sufficiently serious to warrant formal disciplinary action under this Policy, including but not limited to the matters identified in Section 5.
- **Specified Sanction**- A sanction offered by the Disciplinary Case Officer and accepted by a Respondent without the need for a formal hearing before a Disciplinary Panel.
- **Witness**- Any person providing evidence, information or testimony in connection with a Complaint, Investigation, Hearing or Appeal under this Policy.
- **Working days**- Any day other than a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday in England, on which the offices of Pétanque England would ordinarily be open for business.

Complaints & Disciplinary Policies



Complaints & Disciplinary Policy Reporting Form

COMPLAINT & DISCIPLINARY REPORTING FORM

Confidential Governance Document

This form should be used to submit a formal complaint relating to the conduct, administration, services, governance or activities of Pétanque England or individuals operating within its jurisdiction.

Please complete all relevant sections as fully as possible and attach any supporting evidence where appropriate.

1. Complainant Details

Full Name

Address (include postcode)

Telephone Number

Email Address

Club / Region (if applicable)

2. Details of Complaint

Date of Incident / Concern

Time of Incident (if applicable)

Location of Incident / Concern

Name(s) of Individual(s) Involved

Please provide full details of your complaint

3. Witnesses & Supporting Evidence

Witness Names and Contact Details

Supporting Evidence Attached YES ☐ NO ☐ If yes, please add the titles below

4. Previous Action Taken

Please provide details of any previous attempts to resolve this matter

5. Desired Outcome

Please explain what outcome or resolution you are seeking

6. Accessibility or Support Requirements

Please provide details of any accessibility, welfare or support requirements

7. Safeguarding Concerns

Does this complaint involve concerns regarding the welfare or safety of a child, young person or adult at risk?

YES ☐ NO ☐

8. Declaration

I confirm that the information provided within this form is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signature

Date

Submission Guidance

Completed forms and supporting documentation should be submitted to:

Complaint Case Officer - Pétanque England

Email: complaint@petanque-england.uk

All complaints will be handled in accordance with the Pétanque England Complaints Policy and applicable data protection legislation.

APPENDIX C

SANCTIONS MATRIX

Indicative Guidance Framework for Complaints & Disciplinary Proceedings

This sanctions matrix provides indicative guidance to assist Disciplinary Panels in determining appropriate and proportionate outcomes. Panels retain discretion to consider aggravating and mitigating factors, previous conduct, safeguarding considerations and the overall circumstances of each case.

Level	Examples of Conduct	Indicative Sanctions	Possible Aggravating Factors
Level 1 Minor Infringement	• Minor breach of etiquette • Inappropriate language without abuse • Isolated poor behaviour • Failure to follow event instructions • Minor administrative breach	• Verbal advice • Education or guidance • Informal warning • Written reminder • Warning/no suspension	• Repeated behaviour • Lack of cooperation
Level 2 Unsporting Conduct	• Persistent dissent • Unsporting behaviour • Aggressive verbal conduct • Refusal to follow reasonable instructions • Bringing the sport into minor disrepute	• Formal written warning • Match or event suspension • Suspension up to 3 months • Mandatory education or mediation	• Abuse directed at officials • Repetition after warning
Level 3 Serious Misconduct	• Bullying or harassment • Threatening behaviour • Serious verbal abuse • Discriminatory conduct • Intimidation of participants or officials • Deliberate cheating	• Suspension from events or activities • Suspension from office or official roles • Suspension from membership (3-12 months)	• Abuse of authority • Multiple victims • Public reputational damage
Level 4 Gross Misconduct	• Physical intimidation • Serious discrimination • Serious abuse of position • Deliberate falsification or fraud • Retaliation against complainants or witnesses	• Long-term suspension (1-5 years) • Removal from office • Restrictions on participation • Exclusion from representative activities	• Premeditated conduct • Failure to accept responsibility • Significant reputational harm
Level 5 Violent or Safeguarding Breach	• Physical violence • Safeguarding breaches • Sexual misconduct • Conduct causing serious risk of harm • Criminal conduct affecting the sport • Abuse involving children, young people or adults at risk	• Immediate interim suspension • Long-term suspension or permanent exclusion • Referral to statutory authorities	• Vulnerable victims • Repeated conduct • Serious safeguarding failures

Mitigating Factors

Panels may consider mitigating factors including remorse, cooperation, early admissions, lack of previous disciplinary history, welfare considerations and efforts to remedy the situation.

Aggravating Factors

Panels may consider aggravating factors including repeated misconduct, abuse of authority, targeting vulnerable individuals, dishonesty, intimidation, lack of remorse, damage to the reputation of the sport and safeguarding implications.

Sanctions remain at the discretion of the Panel having regard to aggravating and mitigating factors.

This matrix is guidance only and does not remove the discretion of a properly constituted Disciplinary Panel.

Complaints & Disciplinary Policies

APPENDIX D

PROCESS SUMMARY

Complaints Procedure

1. Concern Raised

A concern, issue or dissatisfaction is brought to the organisation's attention.

2. Informal Resolution Considered

Where appropriate, efforts may be made to resolve the matter informally and promptly.

3. Formal Complaint Submitted

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, a formal complaint is submitted in writing.

4. Acknowledgement and Triage

The Complaint Case Officer acknowledges receipt of the complaint and assesses:

- the nature of the complaint;
- whether it falls within the Policy; and
- the most appropriate way to progress the matter.

5. Enquiry or Referral

The Complaint Case Officer may:

- make enquiries and seek information;
- attempt resolution; or
- refer the matter to another appropriate process or Policy where necessary.

6. Written Outcome

A written outcome is issued setting out:

- the findings;
- any actions or recommendations; and
- the reasons for the decision.

7. Appeal / Review (Where Permitted)

The complainant may request a review or appeal on the permitted grounds and within the stated timeframe.

Disciplinary Procedure

1. Allegation Received

An allegation of misconduct or breach of rules is reported to the organisation.

2. Initial Assessment

The Disciplinary Case Officer conducts an initial assessment to determine:

- whether the allegation falls within the disciplinary process; and
- whether immediate action is required.

3. Referral or Interim Measures

Where necessary, the matter may be referred to another body or interim measures imposed pending investigation.

4. Investigation

An investigation is undertaken to gather evidence, statements and relevant information

5. Case-to-Answer Decision

The Disciplinary Case Officer determines whether there is sufficient evidence for the matter to proceed to a hearing.

6. Disciplinary Hearing

The case is heard by an independent Disciplinary Panel, with both parties given the opportunity to present evidence and respond.

7. Decision and Sanction

The Panel issues a reasoned written decision and, where appropriate, imposes a sanction.

8. Appeal

An appeal may be lodged on the permitted grounds and within the specified timeframe. Appeals are heard by an independent Appeal Panel.

Complaints & Disciplinary Policies

APPENDIX E

MEMBER INFORMATION SUMMARY

Pétanque England has introduced a clearer framework for handling complaints and disciplinary matters across the sport. The aim is to make the process fairer, easier to understand, and more consistent for everyone involved.

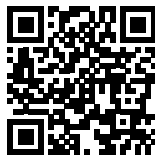
In practice, this means:

- concerns that can be resolved early should usually be dealt with informally;
- more serious matters, including safeguarding concerns, abuse, discrimination and misconduct, will go straight into the formal process;
- complaints and disciplinary cases will be managed by clearly defined officers and, where necessary, decided by independent panels;
- written decisions will explain what was considered, what was decided, and what review or appeal options are available;
- sanctions will be applied more consistently using a structured matrix.

The framework also includes provisions on accessibility, confidentiality, conflicts of interest and governance oversight. Members, clubs, regions, officials, volunteers and participants are expected to engage with the process respectfully and in good faith.

If you need to raise a complaint or report a disciplinary concern, please use the reporting form and contact details set out in this document.

Complaints & Disciplinary Policies



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