Disciplinary Regulations

At the Pre-season General Meeting all clubs are given sufficient copies of the L&DCC Official Handbook for each of its team captains to have his own copy.

Captains and umpires are obviously expected to know the basic playing regulations for the various competitions in which they play and officiate, and the handbooks are there to provide a ready reference. It is impossible at a meeting like this to cover everything and point to any particular area as being more important than any other, but the Disciplinary Regulations are essential reading for everyone involved in the game. If you don’t know the rules of play and the boundaries between good and bad behaviour you shouldn’t be on the field, and this applies to everyone.

The Disciplinary Regulations (pp 76 to 90 in the Handbook) are based on the Preamble to the Laws of Cricket which is reproduced in its entirety in Clause 2.3 (as shown below)

* 1. **Spirit of Cricket**

**Cricket is a game that owes much of its unique appeal to the fact that it should be played not only within its Laws, but also within the Spirit of the Game. Any action which is seen to abuse this spirit causes injury to the game itself. The major responsibility for ensuring the spirit of fair play rests with the captains.**

2.3.1 There are two Laws which place the responsibility for the team’s conduct firmly on the captain *–* Law 1.4 (Responsibility of captains) and Law 42.1 (Fair and unfair play – responsibility of captains).

* **Responsibility of Captains**

The captains are responsible at all times for ensuring that play is conducted within the Spirit of the Game as well as within the Laws.

* **Player’s Conduct**

In the event of any player failing to comply with the instructions of an umpire, criticising his decision by word or action, showing dissent, or generally behaving in a manner which might bring the game into disrepute, the umpire concerned shall in the first place report the matter to the other umpire and to the player’s captain, requesting the latter to take action.

2.3.2 **Fair and Unfair Play**

The Laws state that the umpires are the sole judges of fair and unfair play. The umpires may intervene at any time and it is the responsibility of the captain to take action where required.

2.3.3 **The Umpires are authorised to intervene in cases of:**

* + - Time wasting
    - Damaging the pitch
    - Dangerous or unfair bowling
    - Tampering with the ball
    - Any other action that they consider to be unfair

2.3.4 **The Spirit of the Game involves RESPECT for:**

* Your opponents
* Your own captain and team
* The role of the umpires
* The game’s traditional values

2.3.5 **It is against the Spirit of the Game:**

* To dispute an umpire’s decision by word, action or gesture
* To direct abusive language towards an opponent or umpire
* To indulge in cheating or any sharp practice, for instance
  + - * + Appeal knowing the batsman is not out
        + Advance towards an umpire in an aggressive manner when appealing
        + Seek to distract an opponent either verbally or by harassment with persistent clapping or unnecessary noise under the guise of enthusiasm and motivation of one’s own side.

2.3.6 **Violence** There is no place for any act of violence on the field of play.

2.3.7 **Players**

Captains and umpires together set the tone for the conduct of a cricket match. Every player is expected to make an important contribution to this.

**General Comments on the Regulations**

A large part of the Regulations covers the procedures to be followed by those reporting breaches of the Disciplinary Code of Conduct and by those receiving the reports. For the purpose of this introduction it is the nature of the various breaches that is important. If captains and players don’t know what behaviour is unacceptable they are very likely to digress. If the umpires likewise are unsure what is acceptable they are likely to either report an incident when a quiet word would suffice or fail to report a breach for unacceptable behaviour. In either case, confusion will reign and behaviour on the field of play could get out of hand.

It is essential therefore for players and officials to read very carefully what is provided as a basic guide to breaches and their seriousness in the Appendices to the Regulations. The more serious offences will result in a written disciplinary report and almost without exception will lead to the reported player being banned for a number of weeks. Although the Regulations set out four levels of offence each situation will be ultimately adjudged by the Disciplinary Committee based on the written evidence presented.

For less serious breaches, when the umpires decide that a written report is unnecessary, but a warning is necessary, a comment will be recorded on the Match Report card. The ECB Guidance still refers to these as Accumulated Bad Behaviour infringements but defines each as ‘an infringement of the Spirit of the Game which in itself does not merit any immediate disciplinary action’. In principle any behaviour which falls just below that which would warrant a Level 1 or 2 Report and a first warning is issued needs to be recorded by the umpires. Any team which repeatedly has such events recorded will be liable to disciplinary action meaning that its captain can be summoned to attend a disciplinary hearing along with any named players. As mentioned above, it is the team captain who is responsible at all times for ensuring that play is conducted within the Spirit of the Game and for the control of his players.

Removing ABBs from the Match Report card and not listing them in the Regulations does not mean that this type of behaviour is being condoned, e.g. **shouting of foul or abusive language** at such a level as to be heard at or beyond the boundary thus bringing the game and L&DCC into disrepute; **premature ‘celebrations’** prior to an umpire’s decision; **gesturing/pointing towards the pavilion** upon dismissal of the batsman; **persistent questioning of an umpire’s decisions** and comment thereon – where this falls short of Abuse of an Umpire; **cheating** or any sharp practice, for instance appealing knowing the batsman is not out; **seeking** to distract an opponent either verbally or by harassment with persistent clapping or unnecessary noise under the guise of enthusiasm and motivation of one’s own side.

Umpires will advise captain(s) at end of match of their intention to record any warnings given during the match. The captain(s) must inform any players who will be named. The warnings will be recorded on the L&DCC website to monitor any repetitions.

Disciplinary offences, Level 1 to 4, are listed in the Table of Appendix 2 of the Disciplinary Regulations and again captains and players will be advised by the umpires at the end of the match of an intention to submit a written disciplinary report.

Because the captain has these major responsibilities, the tariffs for disciplinary offences are likely to be greater if it is the captain at fault. In particular, there is one offence relating specifically to the captain - failing to control his players following a request from the umpire – the minimum tariff for this is a three-week ban.

The Appendix 1 to the Disciplinary Regulations gives suggested penalties for these more serious offences but the Disciplinary Committee is the final arbiter taking into account all pertinent circumstances.