

GHANA FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION



DISCIPLINARY CODE

2019

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TITLE I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1 Object

This Code describes infringements of the rules in GFA regulations, determines the sanctions incurred, regulates the organisation and function of the GFA judicial bodies responsible for taking decisions and the procedures to be followed before said bodies.

2 Scope of application: substantive law

1.

This Code applies to every match and competition organised or sanctioned by GFA.

2.

This Code also applies to any breach of GFA's Statutes as well as of any GFA rule or regulations that does not fall under the jurisdiction of any other GFA body.

3 Scope of personal application

The following are subject to this Code:

- a) members of the GFA in general, in particular the clubs;
- b) officials;
- c) players;
- d) match officials;
- e) intermediaries;
- f) licensed match agents;
- g) anyone elected or assigned by GFA to exercise a function, in particular with regard to a match, competition or other event organised or sanctioned by GFA.

4 Scope of temporal application

1.

This Code applies to all disciplinary offences committed following the date on which it comes into force.

2.

This Code also applies to all disciplinary offences committed prior to the date on which it comes into force, subject to any milder sanction that would apply under previous rules.

3.

Disciplinary proceedings instigated against someone who was under GFA's jurisdiction as per article 3 on the day the alleged disciplinary offence was committed shall not be abandoned by the GFA judicial bodies solely because the person involved is no longer under GFA's jurisdiction.

5 Applicable law

The GFA judicial bodies base their decisions:

- a) primarily, on the GFA Statutes as well as GFA's regulations, circulars, directives and decisions, and the Laws of the Game; and
- b) subsidiarily, on Ghanaian law and any other law that the competent judicial body deems applicable.

6 Disciplinary measures

1.

The following disciplinary measures may be imposed on natural and legal persons:

- a) warning;
- b) reprimand;
- c) fine;
- d) return of awards;
- e) withdrawal of a title.

2.

The following disciplinary measures may be imposed on natural persons only:

- a) suspension for a specific number of matches or for a specific period;
- b) ban from dressing rooms and/or the substitutes' bench;
- c) ban on taking part in any football-related activity;
- d) community football service.

3.

The following disciplinary measures may be imposed on legal persons only:

- a) transfer ban;
- b) playing a match without spectators;
- c) playing a match with a limited number of spectators;
- d) playing a match on neutral territory;
- e) ban on playing in a particular stadium;
- f) annulment of the result of a match;
- g) deduction of points;
- h) relegation to a lower division;

- i) expulsion from a competition in progress or from future competitions;
- j) forfeit;
- k) replaying a match;
- l) implementation of a prevention plan.

4.

Fines shall not be less than One Hundred Ghana Cedis (GHc100.00) or more than One Million Ghana Cedis (GHc1,000,000.00).

5.

Clubs are jointly liable for fines imposed on representative team players and officials. The same applies to other members of the GFA in respect of their players and officials.

6.

The disciplinary measures provided for in this Code may be combined.

7 Directives

1.

Directives require those affected by them to behave in a certain manner.

2.

In addition to disciplinary measures, the GFA judicial bodies may issue directives stipulating the manner in which a disciplinary measure must be carried out, including the date and conditions on which the disciplinary measure is enforced.

3.

The GFA judicial bodies may also award compensation for damage where a member or club is liable for that damage on the basis of article 8 or 16.

8 Responsibility

1.

Unless otherwise specified in this Code, infringements are punishable regardless of whether they have been committed deliberately or negligently. In particular, members and clubs may be responsible for the behaviour of their members, players, officials or supporters or any other person carrying out a function on their behalf even if the member or club concerned can prove the absence of any fault or negligence.

2.

Acts amounting to attempt are also punishable.

3.

Anyone who takes part in committing an infringement or induces someone to do so, whether as instigator or accomplice, may also be sanctioned.

9 Decisions of the referee

1.

Decisions taken by the referee on the field of play are final and may not be reviewed by the GFA judicial bodies.

2.

In cases where a decision by the referee involves an obvious error (such as mistaking the identity of the person penalised), the GFA judicial bodies may only review the disciplinary consequences of that decision. In cases of mistaken identity, disciplinary proceedings may, in accordance with this Code, be opened only against the person who was actually at fault.

3.

A protest against a caution or a sending-off from the field of play after two cautions is admissible only if the referee's error was to mistake the identity of the player.

4.

In cases of serious misconduct, disciplinary action may be taken even if the referee and his assistants did not see the event in question and were therefore unable to take any action.

5.

The provisions of this Code relating to protests against match results affected by a referee's decision that was an obvious violation of a rule remain applicable.

10 Limitation period for prosecution

1.

Infringements may no longer be prosecuted in accordance with the following periods:

- a) two years for infringements committed during a match;
- b) ten years for anti-doping rule violations (as defined in the FIFA Anti-Doping Regulations), infringements relating to international transfers involving minors, and match manipulation;
- c) five years for all other offences.

2.

The limitation period runs as follows:

- a) from the day on which the perpetrator committed the infringement;
- b) if the infringement is recurrent, from the day on which the most recent infringement was committed;
- c) if the infringement lasted for a certain period, from the day on which it ended;
- d) from the day on which the decision of the GFA Judicial Bodies, GFA Player Status Committee, Dispute Resolution Chamber, the FIFA Players' Status Committee or the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) becomes final and binding.

3.

The limitation periods set out above are interrupted by all procedural acts, starting afresh with each interruption.

TITLE II. OFFENCES

Chapter 1. Infringements of the Laws of the Game

11 Offensive behaviour and violations of the principles of fair play

1.

Members and clubs, as well as their players, officials and any other member and/or person carrying out a function on their behalf, must respect the Laws of the Game, as well as the Statutes and regulations, directives, guidelines, circulars and decisions of GFA, CAF and FIFA, and comply with the principles of fair play, loyalty and integrity.

2.

For example, anyone who acts in any of the following ways may be subject to disciplinary measures:

- a) violating the basic rules of decent conduct;
- b) insulting a natural or legal person in any way, especially by using offensive gestures, signs or language;
- c) using a sports event for demonstrations of a non-sporting nature;
- d) behaving in a way that brings the sport of football and/or GFA into disrepute;
- e) actively altering the age of players shown on the identity cards they produce at competitions that are subject to age limits.

Chapter 2. Disorderliness at matches and competitions

12 Misconduct of players and officials

1.

Players and officials shall be suspended for misconduct as specified below and may be fined accordingly:

- a) one match for players who are sent off for denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goalscoring opportunity;
- b) at least one match or an appropriate period of time for unsporting behaviour towards an opponent or a person other than a match official;
- c) at least one match for officials who are sent off for dissent by word or action;
- d) at least one match for deliberately receiving a yellow or red card, e.g. in order to be suspended for an upcoming match and to ultimately have a clean record;
- e) at least two matches for serious foul play;

- f) at least two matches for provoking spectators at a match by any means;
- g) at least two matches or a specific period for acting with obvious intent to cause a match official to make an incorrect decision or supporting his error of judgement and thereby causing him to make an incorrect decision;
- h) at least three matches or an appropriate period of time for assault, e.g. elbowing, punching, kicking, biting, spitting, hitting, etc., an opponent or a person other than a match official;
- i) at least four matches or an appropriate period of time for unsporting behaviour towards a match official;
- j) at least ten matches or an appropriate period of time for intimidating or threatening a match official;
- k) at least 15 matches or an appropriate period of time for assaulting a match official, e.g. elbowing, punching, kicking, biting, spitting, hitting, etc.

2.

The misconduct described in paragraph 1 b), f), i) and j) is also subject to the respective sanctions of this Code, despite the fact that the offence has been committed off the field of play (e.g. via social networks etc.).

3.

If the suspension is to be served in terms of matches, only those actually played by the respective team count towards execution of the suspension. It is not necessary for a player to be included on the team sheet for the respective match or competition in order for a match suspension to be considered served.

4.

A player or official who, in the context of a match (including pre- and post-match) or competition, publicly incites others to hatred or violence will be sanctioned with a ban on taking part in any football-related activity for no less than six months and with a minimum fine of Five Thousand Ghana Cedis (GHc5,000.00). In serious cases, in addition to the above sanctions and in particular if the infringement is committed using social networks and/or the mass media (such as the press, radio or television) or takes place on a matchday in or around a stadium, the minimum fine will be Twenty Thousand Ghana Cedis (GHc20,000.00).

5.

If a member or club team conducts itself improperly (for example, if individual disciplinary sanctions are imposed by the referee on five or more players – three or more in the case of futsal – during a match), disciplinary measures may also be taken against the member or club concerned.

6.

Additional disciplinary measures may also be imposed in all cases.

13 Discrimination

1.

Any person who offends the dignity or integrity of a country, a person or group of people through contemptuous, discriminatory or derogatory words or actions (by any means whatsoever) on account of race, skin colour, ethnic, national or social origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation, language, religion, political opinion, wealth, birth or any other status or any other reason, shall be sanctioned with a suspension lasting at least ten matches or a specific period, or any other appropriate disciplinary measure.

2.

If one or more of a member's or club's supporters engage in the behaviour described in paragraph 1, the member or club responsible will be subject to the following disciplinary measures:

a) For a first offence, playing a match with a limited number of spectators and a fine of at least GHc20,000 shall be imposed on the member or club concerned;

b) For reoffenders or if the circumstances of the case require it, disciplinary measures such as the implementation of a prevention plan, a fine, a points deduction, playing one or more matches without spectators, a ban on playing in a particular stadium, the forfeiting of a match, expulsion from a competition or relegation to a lower division may be imposed on the member or club concerned.

3.

Individuals who have been the direct addressee of potential discriminatory behaviour may be invited by the respective judicial body to make an oral or written victim impact statement.

4.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, if a match is abandoned by the referee because of racist and/or discriminatory conduct, the match shall be declared forfeited.

14 Unplayed matches and abandonment

1.

If a match cannot take place or cannot be played in full for reasons other than force majeure, but due to the behaviour of a team or behaviour for which a member or a club is liable, the member or the club will be sanctioned with a minimum fine of Ten Thousand Ghana Cedis (GHc10,000.00). The match will either be forfeited or replayed.

2.

Additional disciplinary measures may be imposed on the member or club concerned.

3.

If a match is to be replayed in full, any caution issued during that match shall be annulled. If a match was abandoned, in particular for reasons of force majeure, and it recommences at the minute at which play was interrupted, any caution imposed before the match was abandoned remains valid for the remainder of the match. If the match is not to be replayed, the cautions received by the teams shall be upheld.

15 Failure to respect decisions

1.

Anyone who fails to pay another person (such as a player, a coach or a club) or GFA a sum of money in full or part, even though instructed to do so by a body, a committee or an instance of GFA, CAF, FIFA or a CAS decision (financial decision), or anyone who fails to comply with another final decision (non-financial decision) passed by a body, a committee or an instance of GFA, CAF, FIFA or by CAS:

a) will be fined for failing to comply with a decision; in addition:

b) will be granted a final deadline of 14 days in which to pay the amount due or to comply with the non-financial decision;

c) in the case of clubs, upon expiry of the aforementioned final deadline and in the event of persistent default or failure to comply in full with the decision within the period stipulated, a transfer ban will be pronounced until the complete amount due is paid or the non-financial decision is complied with. A deduction of points or relegation to a lower division may also be ordered in addition to a transfer ban in the event of persistent failure, repeated offences or serious infringements or if no full transfer could be imposed or served for any reason.

d) in the case of members, upon expiry of the aforementioned final deadline and in the event of persistent default or failure to comply in full with the decision within the period stipulated, additional disciplinary measures may be imposed;

e) in the case of natural persons, upon expiry of the aforementioned final deadline and in the event of persistent default or failure to comply in full with the decision within the period stipulated, a ban on any football-related activity for a specific period may be imposed. Other disciplinary measures may also be imposed.

2.

With regard to financial decisions passed by a body, a committee or an instance of GFA, or CAS, disciplinary proceedings may only commence at the request of the creditor or any other affected party, who will have the right to be notified of the final outcome of the said disciplinary proceedings.

3.

If the sanctioned person disregards the final time limit, the GFA Disciplinary Committee (in cases involving clubs or natural persons) shall implement the sanctions imposed. A transfer ban or a ban on taking part in any football-related activity may only be lifted before it has been fully served upon payment of the due amounts, with other disciplinary measures being reserved.

4.

The sporting successor of a non-compliant party shall also be considered a non-compliant party and thus subject to the obligations under this provision. Criteria to assess whether an entity is to be considered as the sporting successor of another entity are, among others, its headquarters, name, legal form, team colours, players, shareholders or stakeholders or ownership and the category of competition concerned.

5.

Any financial or non-financial decision that has been pronounced against a club by the relevant GFA body or Committee, court of arbitration within GFA or national dispute resolution chamber (NDRC), both duly recognised by GFA and/or FIFA, shall be enforced by the GFA or the deciding body that has pronounced the decision in accordance with the principles established in this article and in compliance with the applicable disciplinary regulations.

6.

Any financial or non-financial decision that has been pronounced against a natural person by a court of arbitration within GFA or NDRC, both duly recognised by GFA and/or FIFA, shall be enforced by the association of the deciding body that has pronounced the decision or by the natural person's new association if the natural person has in the meantime registered (or otherwise signed a contract in the case of a coach) with a club affiliated to another association, in accordance with the principles established in this article and in compliance with the applicable disciplinary regulations

16 Order and security at matches

1.

Host clubs and members are responsible for order and security both in and around the stadium before, during and after matches. They are liable for incidents of any kind and may be subject to disciplinary measures and directives unless they can prove that they have not been negligent in any way in the organisation of the match. In particular, members, clubs and licensed match agents who organise matches shall:

- a) assess the degree of risk posed by the match and notify the GFA bodies of those that are especially high-risk;
- b) comply with and implement existing safety rules (GFA regulations, national laws, international agreements) and take every safety precaution demanded by the circumstances in and around the stadium before, during and after the match and if incidents occur;
- c) ensure the safety of the match officials and the players and officials of the visiting team during their stay;
- d) keep local authorities informed and collaborate with them actively and effectively;
- e) ensure that law and order are maintained in and around the stadiums and that matches are organised properly.

2.

All members and clubs are liable for inappropriate behaviour on the part of one or more of their supporters as stated below and may be subject to disciplinary measures and directives even if they can prove the absence of any negligence in relation to the organisation of the match:

- a) the invasion or attempted invasion of the field of play;
- b) the throwing of objects;
- c) the lighting of fireworks or any other objects;
- d) the use of laser pointers or similar electronic devices;
- e) the use of gestures, words, objects or any other means to transmit a message that is not appropriate for a sports event, particularly messages that are of a political, ideological, religious or offensive nature;
- f) acts of damage;
- g) causing a disturbance during national or other anthems;
- h) any other lack of order or discipline observed in or around the stadium.

17 Doping

Doping is sanctioned in accordance with the FIFA Anti-Doping Regulations and this Code.

18 Manipulation of football matches and competitions

1.

Anyone who directly or indirectly, by an act or an omission, unlawfully influences or manipulates the course, result or any other aspect of a match and/or competition or conspires or attempts to do so by any means shall be sanctioned with a minimum five-year ban on taking part in any football-related activity as well as a fine of at least One Hundred Thousand Ghana Cedis (GHc100,000.000). In serious cases, a longer ban period, including a potential lifetime ban on taking part in any football-related activity, shall be imposed.

2.

If a player or official engages in behaviour described in paragraph 1, the club or member to which the player or official belongs may be sanctioned with the forfeiting of the match in question or may be declared ineligible to participate in a different competition, provided the integrity of the competition is protected. Additional disciplinary measures may be imposed.

3.

Persons bound by this Code must cooperate fully with GFA at all times in its efforts to combat such behaviour and shall therefore immediately and voluntarily report to the GFA any approach in connection with activities and/or information directly or indirectly related to the possible manipulation of a football match or competition as described above. Any breach of this provision shall be sanctioned with a ban of at least two years on taking part in any football related activity and a fine of at least Fifteen Thousand Ghana Cedis (GHc15,000.00).

4.

The Disciplinary Committee or the Ethics Committee shall be competent to investigate and adjudicate all conduct on and off the field of play in connection with the manipulation of football matches and competitions.

Chapter 3. Other provisions

19 Duty to report

1.

Anyone subject to this Code shall immediately report to the secretariat of the Disciplinary Committee any violation of, or attempt to violate, this Code by any third party.

2.

Anyone subject to this Code making an unfounded or irresponsible accusation shall be sanctioned with a fine of at least Five Thousand Ghana Cedis (GHc5,000.00).

20 Duty to collaborate

1.

The parties shall act in good faith during the whole proceedings.

2.

The parties shall collaborate to establish the facts and, in particular, comply with requests for information from the GFA judicial bodies.

3.

At the request of the judicial body, persons subject to this Code shall help to establish and/or clarify the facts of a case or any possible breaches of this Code and, in particular, shall provide any evidence requested.

4.

If the parties are dilatory in responding, the chairperson of the judicial body may, after warning them, impose disciplinary measures on them. The same principle applies to persons subject to this Code and witnesses.

5.

If the parties fail to collaborate, especially if they ignore the stipulated time limits, the judicial body may nonetheless reach a decision on the case using the file in its possession.

21 Forgery and falsification

1.

Anyone who, in football-related activities, forges a document, falsifies an authentic document or uses a forged or falsified document will be sanctioned with a fine and a ban of at least six (6) matches or for a specific period of no less than 12 months.

2.

A member or a club may be held liable for an act of forgery or falsification by one of its officials and/or players.

22 Forfeit

1.

If a player is fielded in a match despite being ineligible, the team to which the player belongs will be sanctioned by forfeiting the match and paying a fine as stated in the specific competition Regulations. The player may also be sanctioned.

2.

A team sanctioned with a forfeit is considered to have lost the match 3-0 in 11-a-side football, 5-0 in futsal or 10-0 in beach soccer. If the goal difference at the end of the match is less favourable to the team at fault, the result on the pitch is upheld.

3.

If ineligible players are fielded in a competition, the GFA judicial bodies, taking into consideration the integrity of the competition concerned, may impose any disciplinary measures, including a forfeit, or declare the club or member ineligible to participate in a different competition.

4.

The Disciplinary Committee has also the capacity to act ex officio.

5.

Cautions issued in a match that is subsequently forfeited shall not be annulled.

Chapter 4. Implementation of disciplinary measures

23 Enforcement of sanctions

1.

The limitation period to enforce disciplinary measures is five years.

2.

The limitation period begins on the day on which the final decision comes into force.

24 Determining the disciplinary measure

1.

The judicial body determines the type and extent of the disciplinary measures to be imposed in accordance with the objective and subjective elements of the offence, taking into account both aggravating and mitigating circumstances.

2.

Disciplinary measures may be limited to a geographical area or to one or more specific categories of match or competition.

3.

When determining the disciplinary measure, the judicial body shall take into account all relevant factors of the case, including any assistance of and substantial cooperation by the offender in uncovering or establishing a breach of any GFA rule, the circumstances and the degree of the offender's guilt and any other relevant circumstances.

4.

In exercising its discretionary powers, the relevant GFA judicial body may scale down the disciplinary measure to be imposed or even dispense with it entirely.

25 Recidivism

1.

Recidivism occurs if another offence of a similar nature and gravity is committed after notification of the previous decision within:

- a) one year of the previous offence if that offence was sanctioned with a suspension of up to two matches;
- b) two years of the previous offence if that offence related to order and security;
- c) ten years of the previous offence if that offence related to match manipulation or corruption;
- d) three years of the previous offence in all other cases.

2.

Recidivism counts as an aggravating circumstance.

3.

Recidivism in doping matters is subject to the rules of the FIFA Anti Doping Regulations.

26 Suspension of implementation of disciplinary measures

1.

The judicial body may decide to fully or partially suspend the implementation of a disciplinary measure.

2.

By suspending the implementation of the sanction, the judicial body subjects the person sanctioned to a probationary period of one to four years.

3.

If the person benefiting from a suspended sanction commits another infringement of a similar nature and gravity during the probationary period, the suspension shall be revoked by the judicial body and the sanction enforced without prejudice to any additional sanction imposed for the new infringement.

4.

Anti-doping rule violations or disciplinary measures relating to match manipulation cannot be suspended.

TITLE III. ORGANISATION AND COMPETENCE

Chapter 1. General provisions

27 General rule

1.

The GFA judicial bodies shall be competent to investigate, prosecute and sanction conduct within the scope of application of this Code.

2.

Associations under the GFA (e.g. Security Services Sports Association, Regional Football Associations) are responsible for investigating, prosecuting and sanctioning conduct in their respective jurisdictions. In particular, the associations shall have jurisdiction on disciplinary matters related to friendly matches and competitions between representative teams or clubs belonging to the same association, provided that the competition is not organised by GFA.

3.

GFA shall have jurisdiction on disciplinary matters related to matches and competitions organised by it, to friendly matches and competitions between teams of its members or clubs or to matches involving invitational teams from different association sanctioned by the GFA.

4.

Each member of the GFA has a duty to cooperate with the GFA and must forward and notify the GFA of documents or to provide information related to and/or required for domestic disciplinary proceedings. If a member fails to cooperate in this way, it may lead to sanctions as provided under this Code.

5.

Associations under the GFA shall inform GFA of the sanctions pronounced within their association.

6.

The GFA judicial bodies reserve the right to investigate, prosecute and sanction serious infringements within the scope of application of this Code that fall under the jurisdiction of any association under the GFA if the GFA deemed appropriate in a specific case and if the association fails to prosecute serious infringements within three months from the infringement becoming known to the Disciplinary Committee.

28 Composition of the GFA judicial bodies

1. In the context of this Code, the GFA judicial bodies are:

- a) the Disciplinary Committee;
- b) the Appeal Committee;
- c) the Ethics Committee.

2.

The GFA judicial bodies shall consist of a chairperson, a deputy chairperson and a specified number of members stated in the GFA Statutes.

3.

The Congress elects, upon the proposal of the Executive Council, the chairpersons, deputy chairpersons and other members of the GFA judicial bodies for a period of four years.

29 Independence

1.

The chairpersons, deputy chairpersons and other members of the GFA judicial bodies shall fulfil the independence criteria as defined in the GFA Statutes.

2.

Members of the GFA judicial bodies must decline to participate in any meeting concerning a matter where there are serious grounds for questioning their impartiality and/or if there is a conflict of interest.

3.

Members who decline to participate in a meeting on any of the above grounds shall notify the chairperson immediately.

4.

The chairperson shall decide on any claim of bias. If an objection is raised concerning the chairperson, the deputy chairperson or, in his absence, the longest-serving member present shall decide on such claim.

30 Meetings

1.

At the request of the chairperson, the deputy chairperson or, in his absence, the longest-serving member available, and depending on the seriousness of the potential infringement, the secretariat shall call the number of members deemed necessary to each meeting.

2.

A meeting may take place with a single judge.

3.

The chairperson, the deputy chairperson or, in their absence, the single judge, shall conduct the meetings and pass the decisions that this Code empowers him to take.

31 Confidentiality

1.

The members of the GFA judicial bodies shall ensure that everything disclosed to them during the course of their duty remains confidential (including the facts of the case, the contents of the deliberations and decisions taken).

2.

The opening of proceedings as well as decisions already notified to the addressees may be made public by GFA.

3.

Any person who is required to participate in or is subject to a disciplinary investigation or disciplinary proceedings must keep such information confidential at all times, unless the chairperson of the judicial body explicitly stipulates otherwise in writing. Any breach of such duty may be sanctioned.

4.

In the event of a breach of this article by a member of a judicial body, the relevant member shall be suspended by the Executive Council until the next GFA Congress.

32 Secretariat

1.

The GFA shall provide the judicial bodies with a secretariat and the necessary support, infrastructure and staff.

2.

The secretariat takes charge of the administrative work.

3.

The secretariat manages the case files. The decisions passed and the relevant files shall be kept for at least ten years.

4.

The GFA secretariat keeps records of cautions, sending-off and match suspensions, which are stored in GFA's central data storage system. The GFA secretariat confirms them in writing to the club concerned. To ensure that the relevant records are complete, the Regional Football Associations shall inform GFA of all sanctions that have been pronounced during their own competitions that are likely to be carried over to a GFA competition or future competitions organised by the GFA.

5.

The GFA secretariat takes charge of the necessary investigation ex officio.

33 Exemption from liability

Except in the case of gross culpability, neither the members of the GFA judicial bodies nor the secretariat may be held liable for any deeds or omissions relating to any disciplinary procedure.

34 Time limits

1.

Time limits to which the members shall adhere commence the day after they have received the relevant document.

2.

Official holidays and non-working days are excluded in the calculation of time limits.

35 Evidence, evaluation of evidence and standard of proof

1.

Any type of proof may be produced.

2.

The competent judicial body has absolute discretion regarding the evaluation of evidence.

3.

The standard of proof to be applied in GFA disciplinary proceedings is the comfortable satisfaction of the competent judicial body.

36 Burden of proof

1.

The burden of proof regarding disciplinary infringements rests on the Prosecution.

2.

Any party claiming a right on the basis of an alleged fact shall carry the burden of proof of this fact. During the proceedings, the party shall submit all relevant facts and evidence of which the party is aware at that time, or of which the party should have been aware by exercising due care.

3.

For anti-doping rule violations, the FIFA Anti-Doping Regulations apply.

37 Witnesses

1.

Witnesses shall tell the absolute and whole truth and shall answer the questions put to them to the best of their knowledge and judgement.

2.

It is the responsibility of the parties to ensure the appearance of the witnesses requested by them and to pay all costs and expenses in connection with their appearance.

38 Anonymous participants in proceedings

1.

When a person's testimony in proceedings conducted in accordance with this Code could lead to threats on his person or put him or any person particularly close to him in physical danger, the chairperson of the competent judicial body or the deputy chairperson may order, inter alia, that:

- a) the person not be identified in the presence of the parties;
- b) the person not appear at the hearing;
- c) the person's voice be distorted;
- d) the person be questioned outside the hearing room;
- e) the person be questioned in writing;
- f) all or some of the information that could be used to identify the person be included only in a separate, confidential case file.

2.

If no other evidence is available to corroborate the testimony provided by the person concerned, such testimony may only be used in the context of imposing sanctions under this Code if:

- a) the parties and their legal representatives have had the opportunity to pose questions to the person concerned in writing; and
- b) the members of the judicial body have had the opportunity to interview the person concerned directly and in full awareness of his identity and to assess his identity and record in full.

3.

Disciplinary measures shall be imposed on anyone who reveals the identity of any person granted anonymity under this provision or any information that could be used to identify such person.

39 Identification of anonymous participants in proceedings

1.

To ensure their safety, persons granted anonymity shall be identified behind closed doors in the absence of the parties. This identification shall be conducted by the chairperson of the competent judicial body alone, the deputy chairperson and/or the members of the competent judicial body present and shall be recorded in minutes containing the relevant person's personal details.

2.

These minutes shall not be communicated to the parties.

3.

The parties shall receive a brief notice which:

- a) confirms that the person concerned has been formally identified; and
- b) contains no details that could be used to identify such person.

40 Match officials' reports

Facts contained in match officials' reports and in any additional reports or correspondence submitted by the match officials are presumed to be accurate. Proof of their inaccuracy may be provided.

41 Representation and assistance

1.

Parties are free to have legal representation at their own cost, in which case a duly signed power of attorney must be submitted.

2.

If they are not required to appear personally, they may be represented.

42 Language used in proceedings

The languages used in proceedings is English. Decisions are passed in the English language.

43 Communication with the parties

1.

All of the parties shall be notified of the decision.

2.

Communications from the secretariat shall be sent to the email address specifically provided to the secretariat by the party concerned. Emails are valid and binding means of communication and will be deemed sufficient to establish time limits and their observance.

3.

The parties, members and clubs must ensure that their contact details (e.g. address, telephone number and email address) are valid and kept up to date at all times.

4.

Decisions and other documents intended for players, clubs and officials are addressed to the members or clubs concerned on condition that it forwards the documents to the parties concerned. Failure by the member or club to comply with the aforementioned instruction may result in disciplinary proceedings in accordance with this Code.

44 Costs and expenses

1.

Costs and expenses shall be borne by the party that has been sanctioned, unless otherwise stipulated in this Code.

2.

The costs of proceedings before the judicial bodies shall be borne by GFA, except in protest cases, when they shall be borne by the defeated party.

3.

If no party is sanctioned, the costs and expenses shall be borne by GFA. Should a party generate unnecessary costs on account of its conduct, costs may be imposed upon it, irrespective of the outcome of the proceedings.

4.

The judicial body that rules on the substance of the matter decides how costs and expenses shall be allocated and the relevant amounts are stipulated by the chairperson of the relevant judicial body. This decision is not subject to appeal.

5.

Each party shall bear its own costs, including the costs of its own witnesses, representatives, legal advisers, interpreters and counsel.

45 Protests

1.

Clubs are entitled to lodge protests. Protests must reach the GFA in writing, indicating the relevant grounds, within 24 hours of the end of the match in question.

2.

The 24-hour time limit cannot be extended. For the sake of the smooth running of the competition, the corresponding competition regulations may shorten the protest deadline accordingly.

3.

A protest fee must be paid when the protest is lodged.

4.

A protest is admissible only if it is based on conditions defined in the relevant competition regulations.

46 Effects of decisions

1.

Decisions come into force as soon as they are notified.

2.

Cautions, sendings-off and automatic match suspensions have an immediate effect on subsequent matches even if the notification reaches the club concerned later.

47 Provisional measures

1.

The chairperson of the competent judicial body, or his nominee, is entitled to pronounce provisional measures where these are deemed necessary to ensure the proper administration of justice, to maintain sporting discipline or to avoid irreparable harm, or for reasons of safety and security. He is not obliged to hear the parties.

2.

Provisional measures pronounced by the chairperson of the Disciplinary Committee or his nominee may be appealed against in accordance with the relevant provisions of this Code. However, the appeal must reach GFA in writing and with grounds within one day of notification of the contested measure with the appeal fee. The chairperson of the Appeals Committee, or his nominee, decides on such appeals as a single judge. Such decisions are final.

48 Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS)

Decisions passed by the Disciplinary and Appeal Committees may be appealed against before CAS, subject to the provisions of this Code and articles 57 and 58 of the FIFA Statutes.

Chapter 2. Decision-making process

49 Convocation, rights of the parties, hearings, decisions, communications and confidentiality

1.

As a general rule, there are no oral statements and the GFA judicial bodies decide on the basis of the file.

2.

At the discretion of the chairperson, the deputy chairperson or the competent single judge, a hearing may be arranged to be held, to which all the parties shall be summoned.

3.

Unless this Code specifies otherwise, the parties are entitled to submit written statements.

4.

The GFA judicial bodies may hold hearings and take decisions in the absence of one or all of the parties.

5.

If different proceedings are opened against the same member, club or individual, the competent judicial body may combine the cases and issue one comprehensive decision.

6.

Hearings of the GFA judicial bodies are not open to the public, except in cases of anti-doping rule violations by individuals if duly requested by the defendant and approved by the chairperson of the relevant judicial body or his nominee. In cases of match manipulation, the relevant chairperson or his nominee will decide about a public hearing. The chairperson or his nominee decides at his own discretion if and under what conditions a public hearing may take place.

7.

At any time prior to the meeting set up to decide the case by the relevant judicial body, a party may accept responsibility and request the GFA judicial bodies to impose a specific sanction. The GFA judicial bodies may decide on the basis of such request or render a decision which it considers appropriate in the context of this Code.

8.

All communications concerning a member, club or individual (including notifications of proceedings against them and the issuing of the decisions taken by the GFA judicial bodies) are addressed to the member or club concerned, which must then, if applicable, inform the club or the individual in person. All such communications by GFA or the GFA judicial bodies take the form of emails sent by the secretariat.

9.

Written communications to GFA by a member, club or individual shall take the form of email or hand delivered.

50 Decisions

1.

Decisions are passed by a single judge or by a simple majority of the members present. If votes are equal, the chairperson has the casting vote.

2.

The GFA judicial bodies may take decisions via personal meetings, teleconference, videoconference or any other method.

3.

The GFA judicial bodies shall issue its decisions with ground(s).

4.

The GFA secretariat publishes decisions issued by the GFA judicial bodies. Where such a decision contains confidential information, GFA may decide, ex officio or at the request of a party, to publish an anonymised or a redacted version.

5.

Decisions shall take effect as soon as it is notified to the parties.

6.

The competent judicial body may rectify any mistakes in calculation or any other obvious errors in the decision at any time.

Chapter 3. Disciplinary Committee

51 Commencement of proceedings

1.

Proceedings are opened by the secretariat of the Disciplinary Committee:

- a) on the basis of match officials' reports;
- b) where a protest has been lodged;
- c) at the request of the GFA Executive Council;
- d) at the request of the Ethics Committee;
- e) on the basis of a report filed by GFA;
- f) on the basis of article 15 of this Code;
- g) on the basis of documents received from a public authority;
- h) ex officio.

2.

Any person or body may report conduct that he or it considers incompatible with the regulations of GFA to the GFA judicial bodies. Such complaints shall be made in writing.

52 Jurisdiction

1.

The Disciplinary Committee is competent to sanction any breach of GFA Statutes and regulations which does not come under the jurisdiction of another body.

2.

The Disciplinary Committee is, in particular, responsible for:

- a) sanctioning serious infringements which have escaped the match officials' attention;
- b) rectifying obvious errors in the referee's disciplinary decisions;
- c) extending the duration of a match suspension incurred automatically by a sending-off;
- d) pronouncing additional sanctions.

53 Jurisdiction of the single judges of the Disciplinary Committee

1.

The chairman can rule alone as a single judge and may delegate his functions to another member of the Disciplinary Committee. In particular, the chairman or his nominee acting as a single judge may take the following decisions with respect to any of the following matters:

- a) urgent or protest cases;
- b) deciding whether disciplinary proceedings shall be initiated, suspended or terminated;
- c) suspending a person for up to four matches or for up to three months;
- d) pronouncing a fine of up to GHc20,000;
- e) ruling on extending a sanction;
- f) settling disputes arising from objections to members of the Disciplinary Committee;
- g) pronouncing, altering and annulling provisional measures;
- h) cases involving matters under article 15 of this Code;
- i) other infringements that are punishable with a fine only.

2.

The secretariat, under the guidance of the chairperson or the deputy chairperson, is responsible for assigning the relevant cases to single judges. The proceedings before a single judge shall be conducted in accordance with this Code.

3.

In matters reserved for the single judge, the chairperson of the Disciplinary Committee or his nominee may propose a sanction on the basis of the existing file before the disciplinary proceedings even commence. The party concerned may reject the proposed sanction and request the commencement of disciplinary proceedings within two days of notification of the proposed sanction, in the absence of which the sanction will become final and binding. Should disciplinary proceedings be opened, the Disciplinary Committee, which shall not contain the single judge proposing the sanction, will determine the appropriate disciplinary measure in accordance with this Code. The proposed sanction shall become null and void and shall not be taken into consideration by the Disciplinary Committee.

54 Closure of proceedings

Proceedings may be closed when:

- a) the parties reach an agreement;
- b) a party is under insolvency or bankruptcy proceedings according to the respective procedures provided for by the relevant national law;

- c) a club is disaffiliated from the GFA;
- d) the alleged violation has not been proven.

Chapter 4. Appeal Committee

55 Jurisdiction

1.

The Appeal Committee is competent to decide appeals against any of the Disciplinary Committee's, decisions that GFA regulations do not declare as final.

2.

The Appeal Committee is also competent to decide appeals against decisions of the Ethics Committee, Elections Committee and the Players' Status Committee.

3.

Any party intending to lodge an appeal must do so in writing within 1 day of notification of the grounds of the decision.

4.

The appropriate appeal fee is payable on submission of the appeal.

5.

The appeal is not admissible if any of the above-mentioned requirements have not been complied with.

56 Admissibility of appeals

1.

An appeal may be lodged with the GFA against any decision passed by the Disciplinary Committee, unless the disciplinary measure pronounced is:

- a) a warning;
- b) a reprimand;
- c) a suspension of up to two matches or of up to two months (with the exception of doping-related decisions);
- d) a fine of up to GHc2,000 imposed on a member or a club or of up to GHc1,000 in other cases;
- e) decisions passed in compliance with article 15 of this Code.

57 Standing to appeal

1.

Anyone who has been a party to the proceedings before the Disciplinary Committee may lodge an appeal with the Appeal Committee, provided this party has a legally protected interest in filing the appeal.

2.

Clubs may appeal against decisions sanctioning their players, officials or members.

58 Deliberations and decisions

1.

The Appeal Committee deliberates behind closed doors.

2.

Within the framework of the appeal proceedings, the Appeal Committee has full power to review the facts and the law.

3.

The decision by the Appeal Committee upholds, amends or overturns the contested decision. In the case of a fundamental mistrial, the Appeal Committee can overturn the contested decision and refer the case back to the Disciplinary Committee for reassessment.

4.

If the accused is the only party to have lodged an appeal, the sanction cannot be increased.

5.

If new disciplinary offences come to light while appeal proceedings are pending, they may be judged in the course of the same proceedings. In such a situation, the sanction can be increased.

59 Jurisdiction of the chairperson ruling alone

The chairperson (or in his absence, the deputy chairperson) of the Appeal Committee may take the following decisions alone:

- a) in urgent or protest cases;
- b) decide on an appeal against a decision to extend a sanction;
- c) resolve disputes arising from objections to members of the Appeal Committee;
- d) rule on appeals against provisional decisions passed by the chairperson of the Disciplinary Committee;

- e) pronounce, alter and annul provisional measures;
- f) in cases where the sanction imposed by the Disciplinary Committee is a fine of up to GHc50,000 or a suspension from playing or carrying out a function for up to five matches or a period of time up to 12 months;
- g) in cases where the appeal is clearly inadmissible; or
- h) at the request of the parties.

60 Effects of appeal

1.

The appeal does not have a suspensive effect except with regard to orders to pay a sum of money.

2.

The chairperson, the deputy chairperson or, in his absence, the longest-serving member available, may, on receipt of a reasoned request, order a stay of execution.

TITLE IV. SPECIAL PROCEDURES

61 Expulsion and match suspension

1.

A player who has been sent off:

a) shall stay in the team dressing room or the doping control room, accompanied by a chaperone, until the names of the players selected for the doping test are communicated. The player may be allowed to sit in the stands, provided his integrity and security are safeguarded, he is not picked for doping control and is no longer wearing his football equipment;

b) is not entitled to attend the post-match press conference or any other media activity held in the stadium.

2.

An official who has been sent off or is serving a match suspension:

a) may be allowed to sit in the stands, but not in the immediate vicinity of the field of play, provided his security and integrity are safeguarded;

b) shall not enter the dressing room, tunnel or technical area, or communicate with or contact any person involved in the match—in particular, players or technical staff—by any means whatsoever;

c) is not entitled to attend the post-match press conference or any other media activity held in the stadium.

3.

A sending-off automatically incurs suspension from the subsequent match. The GFA or its judicial bodies may impose additional match suspensions and other disciplinary measures.

4.

The automatic match suspension and any additional match suspension must be served, even if the sending-off is imposed in a match that is later abandoned, annulled, forfeited and/or replayed.

5.

If a match is abandoned, cancelled or forfeited (except for a violation of article 22), a suspension is only considered to have been served if the team to which the suspended player belongs is not responsible for the circumstances that led to the abandonment, cancellation or forfeit of the match.

6.

A match suspension is regarded as no longer pending if a match is retroactively forfeited because a player took part in a match despite being ineligible. This also applies to the match suspension imposed on the player who took part in the match despite being ineligible.

62 Carrying over cautions

1.

If a person receives a caution in three separate matches of the same GFA competition, he is automatically suspended from the next match in that competition. Such suspensions must be served before any other suspension. The GFA may exceptionally depart from or amend this rule before the start of a particular competition. Any such decision reached by the GFA is final and binding.

2.

Cautions received during one competition are not carried over to another competition.

3.

They are, however, carried over from one round to the next in the same competition. The GFA may exceptionally depart from this rule before the start of a particular competition. This provision is subject to article 63 of this Code and to any derogating rules that GFA may issue for a specific competition.

4.

If a person is guilty of a sending-off offence (direct red card), any other caution he has previously received in the same match is upheld.

63 Cancellation of cautions

1.

The Disciplinary Committee may, at its own discretion and on its own initiative or at the request of a club, cancel cautions that have not resulted in a sending-off by means of a decision not subject to appeal.

2.

In any case, the Disciplinary Committee may do this only once in any competition.

64 Carrying over match suspensions

1.

As a general rule, every match suspension (of players and other persons) is carried over from one round to the next in the same competition.

2.

Match suspensions imposed in terms of matches in relation to a sending-off pronounced on a player outside of a competition (separate match[es]) or not served during the competition for which they were intended (elimination or the last match in the competition) are carried over the subsequent match (es) of the competition the following season.

3.

In no case may match suspensions resulting from several cautions issued to a player in different matches of the same competition be carried over to different GFA competition.

4.

Officials of a club or member shall serve a match suspension with any club or member of which the official is an official.

5.

Match suspensions that have to be carried over to the same competition of the next season must be served by the person concerned, regardless of whether the status of that person has changed in the meantime – e.g. from player to official or vice versa.

65 Extending sanctions to have worldwide effect

1.

If the infringement is serious, in particular but not limited to discrimination, the manipulation of football matches and competitions, misconduct against match officials or forgery and falsification, GFA or judicial bodies shall request the Disciplinary Committee of FIFA to extend the sanctions they have imposed so as to have worldwide effect.

2.

Any doping-related legally binding sanction imposed by GFA or its judicial bodies that complies with fundamental legal principles shall automatically be adopted by FIFA and, provided that the requirements described hereunder and in article 71 of the FIFA Anti-Doping Regulations are met, shall be automatically recognised by all confederations and associations.

3.

The request shall be submitted in writing and enclose a true copy of the decision. It shall show the name and address of the person who has been sanctioned and that of the club and the association concerned.

4.

A worldwide extension will be approved if:

- a) the person sanctioned has been cited properly;
- b) he has had the opportunity to state his case (with the exception of provisional measures);
- c) the decision has been communicated properly;
- d) the decision is compatible with the regulations of FIFA;
- e) extending the sanction does not conflict with public order or with accepted standards of behaviour.

5.

A sanction imposed by FIFA in this respect has the same effect in each association of FIFA, in each confederation and in FIFA itself as if the sanction had been imposed by any one of them.

6.

If a decision that is not yet final in a legal sense is extended to have worldwide effect, any decision regarding extension shall follow the outcome of the final decision.

66 Review

A review may be undertaken by the Appeals Committee suo muto only in exceptional circumstances.

TITLE V. FINAL PROVISIONS

67 Official languages

This Code exists in the English languages.

68 Gender and number

Terms referring to natural persons are applicable to both genders. Any term in the singular applies to the plural and vice versa.

69 Specific disciplinary rules

Specific disciplinary rules may be introduced for the duration of a special competition. Such rules shall be communicated to the participating clubs before the start of the said competition.

70 Disciplinary codes of Associations under GFA

1.

Associations affiliated to or under the GFA (e.g. Security Services Sports Association) are obliged to adapt their own disciplinary provisions to the general principles of this Code for the purpose of harmonizing disciplinary measures. Article 61 paragraph 3 of this Code is considered mandatory.

2.

Upon GFA's request, the associations under the GFA must provide GFA with a copy of their updated regulations.

3.

Members of the GFA shall ensure that no one is involved in the management of clubs or the GFA itself who is under prosecution for action unworthy of such a position or who has been convicted of a criminal offence in the past five years.

71 Adoption and enforcement

1.

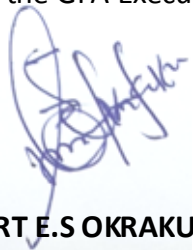
This Code was adopted by the GFA Executive Council at its meeting in Accra on December 18, 2019 and comes into force on the same day.

2.

Disciplinary measures for failure to respect a final CAS decision rendered in the context of ordinary proceedings shall be imposed provided that the respective CAS procedure has started after the entry into force of this Code.

Accra, December 18, 2019

For the GFA Executive Council



**KURT E.S OKRAKU
(PRESIDENT)**



**ALEX ASANTE
(DEP. GENERAL SECRETARY)**