



Gridiron SA



## Gridiron SA Tribunal Policy

Version	Scope	Status	Board Approval	In Effect
1.0	Public	Voted in	14/2/2024	14/2/2024

### 1. Introduction:

- This tribunal process is established to address disciplinary actions involving players within Gridiron SA. The process involves both state-level and national-level tribunals to ensure fair and consistent handling of disciplinary matters.

### 2. Ejections:

A member can be ejected from the same for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to:

- Targeting:** The most common reason for ejection is targeting, which involves a player intentionally striking an opponent above the shoulders with the crown of their helmet. Targeting can also occur if a player leads with the crown of their helmet on a defenceless opponent. The penalty for targeting includes ejection from the game and, in some cases, suspension for the next game.
- Fighting:** Players involved in fights, altercations, or unsportsmanlike conduct that leads to punches, kicks, or other violent actions may be ejected from the game.
- Multiple Unsportsmanlike Conduct Penalties:** A player who accumulates multiple unsportsmanlike conduct penalties during a game may be ejected. Unsportsmanlike conduct includes actions such as taunting, excessive celebrations, or other behaviour deemed detrimental to the spirit of the game.
- Flagrant Personal Fouls:** A player who commits a flagrant personal foul, such as a particularly dangerous or malicious hit, may be ejected.
- Egregious Misconduct:** In cases of egregious misconduct, such as spitting on an opponent or a game official, players can be ejected.
- Referee Discretion:** Referees have discretion to eject players for any action they deem to be a flagrant violation of the rules, even if it doesn't fall into one of the specific categories mentioned above.

When a member is ejected from a football game, they must leave the field immediately and are often required to leave the designated team areas. Ejected players may also face additional disciplinary action, including potential suspension for future games, depending on the nature and severity of the offense.

### 3. Standard Suspensions

The standard suspension for an ejection typically involves the player missing the remainder of the game in which they were ejected. However, the length of the suspension can vary based on the specific circumstances and the type of ejection. Here's a general guideline:

- Standard Ejection:** When a player is ejected for a non-targeting or non-flagrant personal foul (e.g., unsportsmanlike conduct, fighting), the standard suspension is typically that the player must sit out the remainder of the game in which they were ejected. This means they are not allowed to return to the game after their ejection.
- Targeting Ejection:** If a player is ejected for targeting, the standard suspension includes sitting out the remainder of the game, just like a standard ejection. However, there can be additional consequences:



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- **First-Time Targeting:** In most cases, a first-time targeting ejection results in the player being suspended for the remainder of the current game and the first half of the next game. They are not allowed to participate in the first half of the following game.
- **Second Targeting Ejection in a Season:** If a player is ejected for targeting a second time in a single season, they face a more severe penalty, which includes missing the remainder of the current game and the entirety of the next game. This is in addition to the ejection from the current game.

The severity and duration of the suspension can also be influenced by the referee's judgment, video review, and the nature of the foul.

#### 4. Referrals to Tribunal

Should the ejection or complaint be serious in nature, the matter can be referred to the tribunal for further review.

##### 4.1. Complaint Submission:

- a. **Via Officials:**
  - Officials, such as referees, coaches, or league administrators, who witness or become aware of an incident warranting disciplinary action, are responsible for initiating the complaint process.
  - Officials should report the incident to the relevant State League as soon as possible.
  - They should provide a detailed account of the incident, including date, time, location, parties involved, and any supporting evidence, such as photographs or videos.
  - The State League will then initiate the preliminary investigation.
- b. **Via Clubs:**
  - Clubs are also responsible for reporting incidents involving their players or members.
  - If a club becomes aware of an incident, they should notify their State League and provide all relevant details.
  - The State League will initiate the preliminary investigation based on the club's report.

#### 5. Guidelines for Penalties

##### 5.1 Penalties

All charges should be confined to the following categories:

1. Physical
2. Verbal
3. Other

##### 5.2 Standard Penalties Guidelines

\*\* These penalties are guidelines only and the ultimate decision for what penalty is applicable rests with the Board of Management/Tribunal. \*\*



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<b>Physical</b>		
Main Charge	Assault player/coach/sideline staff/spectator (Includes, but not limited to, punching, striking, elbowing, kneeing, spitting, assault with an object)	6 to 50 matches
Lesser Charge	Attempt Assault (as above)	3 to 25 matches
Main Charge	Tripping	3 to 25 matches
Lesser Charge	Attempt Tripping	2 to 12 matches
Main Charge	Fighting	3 to 25 matches
Lesser Charge	Wrestling	2 to 12 matches
Main Charge	Assault Gridiron SA Representative	5 years to Life Ban
Main Charge	Assault Game Official	5 years to Life Ban
Main Charge	Physical Contact of Game Official (other than assault)	3 to 25 matches
Main Charge	Playing with Undue Roughness	2 to 12 matches
	Violently Pushing	2 to 12 matches
<b>Verbal</b>		
Main Charge	Use Threatening Language to Game Official	6 to 50 matches
Lesser Charge	Use Threatening Language to Other Person	3 to 25 matches
Main Charge	Disputing Decisions	2 to 12 matches
Main Charge	Obscene Gestures	2 to 12 matches
Main Charge	Offensive Language	3 to 25 matches
Lesser Charge	Obscene Language	2 to 12 matches
	Abusive Language	2 to 10 matches
	Insulting Language	2 to 8 matches
<b>Other</b>		
Main Charge	Putting a Game Official in Fear of Impending Violence	6 to 50 matches
Main Charge	Threaten Violence	6 to 50 matches
Main Charge	Unsportsmanlike Conduct	2 to 12 matches
Main Charge	Fail to Attend Tribunal	2 matches
Main Charge	Playing/Coaching/ Sideline Staff Whilst Under Suspension	Double Original suspension
Main Charge	Bringing the Game into Disrepute	2 to 50 matches
Main Charge	Breach of the Code of Conduct	2 to 50 matches
Main Charge	Giving False or Misleading Evidence to Tribunal	2 to 50 matches
Main Charge	False, Frivolous, Mischievous or Without Substance, Tribunal requests	2 to 50 matches
<p><b>Note:</b> The date when a player/team personnel can resume the sport shall be fixed by the Board of Management/Tribunal on the basis that the player/team personnel will be debarred from playing for the number of matches appropriate to the penalty.</p>		

- Suspended sentences are permitted for persons having a good record. (1<sup>st</sup> offence only).
- Fines, in lieu of suspensions for players are NOT permitted.
- Fines not exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100) may be imposed on a non-player.
- Fines not exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500) may be imposed on a team.
- A player may be placed on a Good Behaviour Bond not exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100).
- A team may be placed on a Good Behaviour Bond not exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500).
- A penalty may be increased by up to a maximum of eight (8) matches if that person has incurred a previous penalty from the Tribunal.



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- An additional penalty of up to sixteen (16) matches may be applied if injury is caused, contempt is shown for the Board of Management or Tribunal, or for any other extenuating circumstances or reasons determined by the Tribunal and notified at the time the decision is announced.
- More severe penalties may be imposed when a team or group participates in a brawl.
- Refusal of future admission of such teams or persons to the Gridiron SA competition may be recommended to the Board.
- Charges arising from one incident shall be considered together. The maximum penalty for a composite group of offences shall be for the most serious offence, plus eight (8) matches.

## 6. State-Level Tribunal:

### 6.1 Preliminary Investigation:

- Any incident or behaviour warranting disciplinary action should be reported to the relevant State League initially.
- Upon receiving a complaint, the State League will appoint an investigator to gather evidence. This may involve interviewing witnesses, reviewing video footage, and collecting statements from all parties involved.
- Players involved will be notified of the allegations against them.

### 6.2. Tribunal Formation:

- If disciplinary action is deemed necessary, a state-level tribunal will be convened.
- A tribunal should be held on the Thursday of each week during season, or as required.
- The state-level tribunal should consist of four members, including a chairman, and impartial members with knowledge of the sport.
  - The tribunal should comprise of a member of the state body, and members of non-related clubs. The tribunal chairman will default to the member of the State Sporting Organisation and then via popular vote.

### 6.3. Tribunal Hearing:

- The tribunal will schedule a hearing, ensuring all parties involved have an opportunity to present their case.
- Witnesses and evidence will be presented.
- Legal representation may be allowed for both the player and the NSO.

## 7. Tribunal Process:

### 7.1. Introduction:

- The tribunal chairman or presiding officer opens the hearing, welcomes all participants, and outlines the purpose and rules of the hearing.
- The parties involved in the hearing include:
  - The Complainant (official, club representative, or Gridiron SA)
  - The Respondent (the player or member facing disciplinary action)
  - Witnesses (if applicable)
  - Legal representatives (if applicable)
  - Tribunal members



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### **7.2. Statement of Allegations:**

- The complainant presents a clear and concise statement of allegations against the respondent. This statement outlines the nature of the incident, the date, time, location, and any other relevant details.
- The respondent is given an opportunity to respond to the allegations, either by admitting or denying them.

### **7.3. Complainant's Presentation:**

- The complainant presents their case, including any evidence they have gathered to support the allegations.
- Witnesses may be called to testify, and their statements are recorded.

### **7.4. Respondent's Defence:**

- The respondent presents their defence, providing their side of the story and any evidence or witnesses to support their defence.
- Witnesses may be called to testify, and their statements are recorded.

### **7.5. Questioning:**

- After the initial presentations, the tribunal members, and legal representatives, if present, may ask questions to clarify the statements and evidence provided by both parties.
- Cross-examination of witnesses may occur.

### **7.6. Rebuttal and Surrebuttal:**

- The complainant and respondent may have the opportunity for rebuttal and surrebuttal to address any new information or points raised during questioning.
- This phase allows for clarification and counterarguments.

### **7.7. Closing Statements:**

- Both the complainant and respondent have the opportunity to make closing statements summarizing their positions and arguments.
- They may emphasize key points and evidence presented during the hearing.

### **7.8. Deliberation:**

- The tribunal members deliberate in private to reach a decision.
- They review all evidence, statements, and arguments presented during the hearing.
- The chairman or presiding officer ensures a fair and impartial deliberation process.

### **7.9. Verdict:**

- The tribunal announces its decision, which may include sanctions such as warnings, fines, suspensions, or other appropriate measures.
- The decision is based on the balance of probabilities, meaning that the tribunal believes it is more likely than not that the alleged misconduct occurred.



#### **7.10. Reasons for Decision:**

- The tribunal provides written reasons for its decision, outlining the rationale behind the verdict. - This document is typically shared with the parties involved.

#### **7.11. Post-Hearing Procedures:**

- If applicable, the tribunal discusses the implementation of sanctions and any further steps to be taken.

#### **7.12. Adjournment:**

- The tribunal chairman formally closes the hearing, and participants are excused.

Throughout the tribunal hearing, it's crucial to maintain a respectful and professional atmosphere, ensuring that all parties have a fair opportunity to present their case. Legal representatives, if present, should adhere to relevant legal and procedural rules. Transparency, fairness, and adherence to established rules and regulations are essential to the integrity of the tribunal process.

#### **7.13. Appeal Process:**

The appeals process is designed to provide a mechanism for players, clubs, or Gridiron Australia to challenge and seek a review of the decisions made by the state-level tribunal. Below is a detailed outline of the appeals process:

### **8. Initiation of Appeal:**

#### **8.1. Notification:**

- The party seeking an appeal (the appellant) must notify Gridiron Australia of their intent to appeal the decision of the state-level tribunal.

- This notification must be submitted in writing within a specified timeframe after the receipt of the state-level tribunal's decision, typically within two days.

#### **8.2. Grounds for Appeal:**

- The appellant must clearly state the grounds for the appeal. Common grounds for appeal may include:

- Error in the application of rules or procedures during the state-level tribunal hearing.
- New evidence that was not available at the time of the state-level hearing.
- A belief that the sanctions imposed were unjust or disproportionate.
- Violation of the appellant's rights during the tribunal process.

#### **8.3. Review Panel Formation:**

##### **a. Appointment:**

- Gridiron Australia will appoint a review panel consisting of impartial members who were not involved in the state-level tribunal proceedings.

- The panel will include a chairman, legal counsel, and individuals with knowledge of the sport.



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- The national-level tribunal should consist of five members, including a chairman, and impartial members with knowledge of the sport.
  - The tribunal should comprise of a member of the Gridiron Australia, and members of non-related states. The tribunal chairman will default to the member of the National Sporting Organisation and then via popular vote.

b. **Conflict of Interest:** - Any panel member with a conflict of interest related to the case will be disqualified from participating in the appeal.

#### c. **Submission of Appeal Materials:**

- a. **Appellant's Statement:** - The appellant must provide a comprehensive written statement outlining the grounds for appeal, supporting arguments, and any additional evidence.
- b. **Response from State Body:** - The state-level tribunal that issued the original decision may submit a response to the appeal, providing its perspective on the case.

#### 8.4. **Appeal Hearing:**

a. **Scheduling:** - The review panel will schedule an appeal hearing within a reasonable timeframe after receiving the appeal materials.

b. **Oral Presentations:** - Both the appellant and the state-level tribunal (if they choose to attend) will have the opportunity to present their cases orally during the appeal hearing. - Witnesses may be called, and evidence may be presented.

#### 8.5. **Decision of the Review Panel:**

a. **Deliberation:** - The review panel will deliberate privately to reach a decision. - The chairman or presiding officer ensures a fair and impartial deliberation process.

b. **Verdict:** - The review panel will announce its decision in writing, typically within two days of the appeal hearing. - Possible outcomes may include upholding, modifying, or overturning the decision of the state-level tribunal. - The decision of the review panel is final and binding.

#### 8.6. **Implementation of Appeals Decision:**

- Gridiron Australia and the relevant State League will be responsible for implementing the sanctions or actions determined by the review panel.
- Sanctions may be modified based on the appeals decision.

#### 8.7. **Transparency:**

- All documentation related to the appeal, including the decision of the review panel, will be documented and maintained for transparency and reference.



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#### **9 Review and Continuous Improvement:**

- Gridiron Australia should periodically review the tribunal process to ensure it remains fair, effective, and in line with legal and ethical standards.

This tribunal process aims to uphold the integrity of Gridiron Australia and provide a fair and transparent system for addressing disciplinary matters involving players, with an option for appeal at the national level when necessary.