**Table Tennis Ireland Sanctions Scheme.**

**(version 3 to apply from January 2016)**

**1. Introduction:**

a) Table Tennis Ireland acknowledges that the majority of players and coaches in our sport behave impeccably during tournaments. However, there are some who demonstrate behaviour which may unfairly affect an opponent, offend spectators and/or bring the sport into disrepute.

b) This behaviour is described in the ITTF regulations as follows:

‘Players, coaches and other advisers shall refrain from behaviour that may unfairly affect an opponent, offend spectators, or bring the sport into disrepute.’

c) Table Tennis Ireland has implemented a Sanctions Scheme to deal with such behaviour. This behaviour can consist of, among other things, using abusive language, deliberately breaking the ball or hitting it out of the playing area, kicking the table or surrounds and disrespect of match officials.

**2. Sanctions Scheme:**

a) Sanctions are penalties, over and above ITTF rules, which Table Tennis Ireland will impose on players or coaches who misbehave or bring the game into disrepute.

b) Sanctions will apply when a player or coach receives a yellow card on three occasions during a specific tournament, or accumulates five cards at any time during a season. The sanction will result in the player or coach being deemed ineligible to compete in, or coach at, the next equivalent tournament, at either international, national or provincial level as specified in section 5 below. Where the player or coach receives a yellow card on three occasions in last tournament of the season or receives a fifth card in the last tournament of the season, the sanction will apply to the first equivalent tournament of the subsequent season.

c) To ensure clarity, being carded three times in a tournament, is any combination of the following:

i. A player or coach who is yellow carded in three separate matches, either Junior or Senior, whether on the same day or on different days, of the same tournament;

ii. A player or coach who is yellow carded in a match, and receives a yellow/red card in the same match, who has already been carded in an earlier match, or is subsequently carded in a later match.

e) If a player or coach is carded five times during a season in two or more separate tournaments, he/she will be ineligible for the next equivalent tournament. Cards received at Junior and Senior tournaments will be aggregated, and will result in a sanction for the next equivalent tournament;

f) Cards awarded to an individual as a coach or adviser in either Junior or Senior matches will be aggregated with those awarded to the individual as a player.

**3. Appeal Procedure:**

a) In the first instance, an appeal should be to the Referee, on the day of the tournament, who would have to be convinced that the Umpire(s) in question had acted in a partisan or unreasonable manner, or had erred in the application of the rules in issuing the card(s) in the first place;

b) While it is not mandatory that the player/coach appeals to the referee on the day of the tournament - the Referee may be one of the Officials who issued the card(s) - the fact that an appeal was not lodged on the day may be taken into account if an appeal is subsequently lodged;

c) The second level of an appeal is to the Umpires & Referees Appeals Committee, who would also need to be convinced that the Umpire(s) and/or Referee had acted in a partisan or unreasonable manner, or had erred in the application of the rules in issuing the card(s) in the first place. This appeal must be lodged within 7 days of receiving the card(s) and the appeal determined, where practical, within 14 days of the tournament concerned;

d) The Umpire’s decisions as to matters of fact are not open to appeal.

**4. Appeals Committee:**

The Committee will consist of three qualified umpires, chaired preferably by an International Umpire, selected by the committee of Umpires & Referees Association. The Committee will exclude any umpires involved in the issuing of the card(s) under appeal.

**5. National and Provincial Application:**

Table Tennis Ireland recognise the difficulties and constraints of umpire availability at National and Provincial tournaments, which could give rise to inconsistencies in the application of the rules. Therefore, this Sanction Scheme will be applied to two specific categories of tournaments;

i) **Provincial:** All Provincial Ranking and Non-Ranking tournaments including leagues, whether open or closed to players from outside the respective province. Card(s) awarded in these tournaments will be regarded for Provincial sanction, the penalty being ineligibility for the next provincial tournament within the province where the cards were awarded;

ii) **International and National**: All International tournaments and National Ranking Tournaments, specifically the Irish National Championships, Irish National Classifications and Qualifier, Leinster GP/Open, Ulster Open, Munster Open, Connacht Open, Fermanagh Open, National Team Tournament and Junior and Senior Inter-Provincial Championships, in addition to any representative matches under the auspices of Table Tennis Ireland. Cards awarded in these tournaments will be regarded for National sanction, the penalty being ineligibility for the next National tournament (as listed above). Cards awarded in International tournaments, whether hosted by Table Tennis Ireland or any other official Table Tennis Association, will be regarded for National sanction.

**6. New Season**:

a) All players and coaches will commence each season with zero cards recorded, but any outstanding sanction from the previous season (as noted in 2.b) will apply.

b) The Umpires and Referees Committee will maintain a register of the cards awarded, and will communicate this register to the Table Tennis Ireland Events Unit and Provincial Branch Secretaries on a monthly basis during the season. Equally, tournament organisers must advise the U&RA of any cards awarded at their tournaments.

c) Reports and Updates will be provided during the season by the U&RA as required to Table Tennis Ireland.

**7. When does a ban take effect**.

a) In the event of a player submitting a notice of immediate acceptance of the sanction within three days of the ending of the relevant tournament (being the tournament in which the person was carded three times, or their year-to-date accumulation of cards reached five), then the ban will be the next equivalent tournament, as specified above, after the lodgement of the notice of acceptance;

b) In the event of a person not submitting a notice of acceptance, and not lodging an appeal within seven days of the tournament, then the ban will be the next equivalent tournament, as specified above, after the seven day appeal period;

c) In the event of a person appealing and that appeal failing, then the ban will be the next equivalent tournament, as specified above, after the hearing of the appeal.

d) A ban cannot be served while a player is playing in another tournament - e.g. where the next equivalent tournament is the Leinster Open, the player will not be permitted to play in the Jersey Open on the same weekend.

**8. Exceptions:**

a) Sanctions are intended to penalise the individual player or coach concerned for his/her bad behaviour, and should not impact any potential International team mates. It is therefore important to ensure a sense of proportionality in matching the punishment to the offence.

b) The following International team events will not qualify as events for which a ban can be served:-

 World Championships

 European Championships

 c) The ban will be served as stated in Section 7 ignoring the events listed in Section 8 above

d) The provisions of this policy will not affect the right or responsibility of the Board to protect the reputation of Table Tennis Ireland, by directing those responsible for player selection not to select a player whose behaviour is viewed as unacceptable and/or brings the sport into disrepute.

**9. Season dates**:

For the purposes of the Sanction Scheme the season shall run from the 1st July until the following 30th June.

**Table Tennis Ireland Board**

**January 2016**