**Table Tennis Ireland Sanctions Scheme**

**January 2020**

**1. Introduction:**

Table Tennis Ireland acknowledges that the majority of players and coaches in our sport behave impeccably during tournaments. However, there are some who do not live up to the standards that we would expect.

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

There are, built into the ITTF Rules and Regulations warnings and penalties for such behavior. These are communicated to the offending person by means of Red and Yellow cards shown by the Umpire or Referee. However there is a problem with this system, they apply to the current, match or event only. This means that person could behave badly in every single match that they were involved in, be given a Yellow Card (warning) each time, and receive no actual penalty at all!

Table Tennis Ireland has implemented a Sanctions Scheme to deal with such behaviour. At its most straightforward, it amounts to: If you as a player, coach or adviser, behave in such a manner that you are awarded cards as laid out in detail below, you will receive a sanction of being banned from participating the next appropriate tournament.

The Board of TTI has asked the Umpires and Referees Group (URG) to administer and manage the Sanctions Scheme on behalf of the Board. It has also authorized the URG to collect and maintain a database of the information required to implement the scheme. Under the GDPR it will be necessary to be careful with this information, keeping only what is required for as long as it is required, and distributing it only to those who need it (tournament organisers, etc.)

**2. Sanctions Scheme:**

1. The Sanctions Scheme will apply to participants at TTI events, whether as coaches, players or advisers who are or should be members of TTI. The Scheme also applies where the same people are participating in an event run by another Association or by the ITTF.
2. Spectators are members of the public and should be dealt with by the Tournament Organisers.
3. The precise circumstances in which an individual can be “carded” by a match official (Umpire or Referee) are covered in The ITTF Handbook 2019 V2. Section 3.5. Discipline. Please read this section of the Handbook carefully.
4. There are therefore 5 ways in which a participant can be “carded”.
5. **YC (yellow card)** to participant as a coach or adviser as a warning for illegal advice or other misbehavior. Issued by Umpire.
6. **RC (Red Card)** to participant as a coach or adviser for a repeat of item 1. Issued by Umpire result participant is dismissed from the playing arena for the duration of the match.
7. **YC** to participant as a player as a warning for bad behaviour. Issued by the Umpire
8. **YR** (yellow and Red together) as a penalty for repeat misbehavior after item 3. Issued by the Umpire. Result an award of point(s) to the opponent.
9. **RC** to a participant, issued by the Referee as disqualification from the event either as a consequence of repeated bad behavior (items 1 to 4); or for one or more serious acts of bad behavior (see 3.5.2.8)

Participants will be sanctioned for accumulating cards on a number of occasions.

This can happen in two ways:

1. If a participant is carded 3 times in a single event, he/she will be sanctioned. An event may take place over one or more days, e.g. “the Munster Open” is a single event, “The British League” is a single event. There can be multiple competitions within a single event. e.g. The Ladies singles is a competition within an event e.g. “The Irish Open”. So a participant can reach their limit of carded 3 times, by receiving cards in different competitions, and in different roles, player, coach, adviser; or any combination of these as long as they were awarded at a single event.
2. If a participant is carded 5 times within a rolling 12 month period, he or she will be sanctioned.

A participant can reach his/her limit of being carded 5 times, by receiving cards in different events, different competitions, and in different roles, player, coach, adviser; or any combination of these.

There is a potential for confusion here, e.g. a participant who has 4 cardings in the last 5 months, and then was carded 3 times during a single event, this would bring his/her 12 month total to a total of 7. The procedure would be that the 3 cards in the single event would take precedence. The person would be sanctioned for receiving 3 cards in a single event and would miss the next appropriate event. Then the three cards would be deleted from their record, leaving them with the 4 cards to carry forward.

Similarly if someone is sanctioned for reaching the limit of 5 cards within 12 months, he/she would miss the next appropriate event, and the cards would be deleted from their record.

**Note, multiple sanctions do not run concurrently, they must be served consecutively.**

**3. Appeal Procedure:**

The following will have the right to appeal as to whether a card or cards should be included in the person’s record for the purposes of the Sanctions Scheme: The player/coach/adviser concerned, or their parent/guardian; the officials concerned; or the Association, represented by the Management or Umpires Committees, or Board.

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 deliberately partisan manner, or had erred in the application of the rules in issuing the card(s) in the first place.

b) 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 deliberately partisan 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.

**4. Appeals Committee:**

The Committee will consist of three qualified umpires, one at least to be an International Umpire, selected by the U&R Committee. The Committee will exclude any officials involved in the issuing of the card(s) under appeal.

**5. National and Provincial Application:**

(a) Table Tennis Ireland recognises 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 Sanctions 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/event/league 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, DL 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.

**Administration of the records.**

Under GDPR there are requirements to only keep data that is necessary, and to only keep it for as long as necessary.

Obviously we must maintain a register of the cards awarded, and need to take advice on who it needs to be shared with. Clearly we need to communicate the knowledge of who is currently subject to a ban under the Sanction Scheme, but do we need to communicate this register to the Table Tennis Ireland Events Unit and Provincial Branch Secretaries; and are we allowed to under GDPR.

Equally, tournament organisers must advise the U&RA of any cards awarded at their tournaments.

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

1. Ideally the timetable would look like this:

At an event a participant is awarded card/s that make his/her liable to sanctions.

The referee would report that to the U&R Group within a week.

The U&R Group would communicate with the participant informing them that he/she is liable to a sanction and have one week to either accept the Sanction or to appeal. In the event of no response then the sanction goes ahead at the next appropriate event.

c) In the event of a person appealing and that appeal failing, then the ban will apply to 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 another event or represent a team in another league 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.

Therefore the Board of TTI reserves it’s right to amend when a sanction should be served, taking into account the best interests of Irish Table Tennis.

c) 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.

d) Where the conduct and card accumulation of a player is such as indicates a protracted period of offence, the matter may be referred to a Disciplinary Committee of the Association, who will have powers to apply penalties in excess of the minimum listed above.

**Table Tennis Ireland Board**

**January 2020**