



## **PERSONAL CONDUCT POLICY**

It is a privilege to be part of the Great Eastern Football Association. **Everyone** who pays to play in this league must refrain from “conduct detrimental to the integrity of the GEFA. This includes owners, coaches, players, game officials, and any other members of staff.

Conduct by anyone in the league that puts women and children in danger will not be tolerated and puts innocent victims at risk. We must at all times be people of high character; we must show respect for others on and off our field of honor; we must strive to conduct ourselves in ways that favorably reflect on ourselves, our teams, the communities we represent, and the GEFA.

The league will increase education regarding respect and appropriate behavior, will provide resources for everyone associated with the league to assist them in conforming their behavior to the standards expected of them, and will make clear of the league’s goal to prevent violations of the Personal Conduct Policy. In order to uphold our high standards, when violations of this Personal Conduct Policy do occur, appropriate disciplinary action must follow.

This Personal Conduct Policy is issued pursuant to the President’s authority under the Constitution and Bylaws and GEFA Player Contracts to address and sanction conduct detrimental to the league. It applies to all who are apart of this league.

### **Expectations and Standards of Conduct**

It is not enough simply to avoid being found guilty of a crime. We are held to a higher standard and must conduct ourselves in a way that is responsible and promotes the core values of the GEFA.

Players convicted of a crime or subject to a disposition of a criminal proceeding (as defined in this Policy) are subject to discipline. Prohibited conduct includes but is not limited to the following:

- \* Actual or threatened physical violence against a woman or child.
- \* Sexual Assault or any other sexual offense.

- \* Violent or threatening behavior toward a game official or member of the league.
- \* Crimes against law enforcement, such as harming a police officer or other law enforcement officer.
- \* Exploitation of minors and any other child related crimes.
- \* Distribution of “heavy” drugs.
- \* Actual or threatened violence with a firearm or weapon.
- \* Fighting on the field.
- \* Conduct that undermines or puts at risk the integrity of the GEFA or GEFA personnel.

### **What Happens When a Violation of This Policy is Suspected?**

Investigation – Whenever the league office becomes aware of a possible violation of the Personal Conduct Policy, it will go to the disciplinary committee for review. Each incident will be treated as case by case basis and all involved will be presumed innocent until proven otherwise by the legal process.

In addition, the league will not tolerate any retaliation against anyone who in good faith reports a possible violation or provides truthful information during an investigation. Any person who directly or indirectly through others interferes in any manner with an investigation, including by retaliating or threatening to retaliate against a victim or witness, will face separate disciplinary action under this policy. Prohibited retaliation includes, but is not limited to: threats, intimidation, harassment, or any other adverse action threatened, expressly or impliedly, or taken against anyone who reports a violation or suspected violation of this Policy or who participates in an investigation of a complaint.

In investigating a potential violation, the league must rely on information obtained by law enforcement agencies and/or court records. All members of the league are required to cooperate in any such investigation and are obligated to be fully responsive and truthful in responding to whether or not there was a violation of the Policy.

### **Disciplinary Exempt List**

A player may be placed on the Disciplinary Exempt List under the following circumstances:

When a player or any member of GEFA personnel is formally charged with; any act deemed to be in violation of the GEFA core principles may be subject to disciplinary action upon an investigation. Meaning that they are accused of having used physical force or a weapon to injure or threaten a person, of having engaged in a sexual assault by force or against a person who was incapable of giving consent, or having engaged in any conduct deemed inappropriate with a minor. The formal charges may be in the form of an indictment by a grand jury, the filing of charges by a prosecutor, or an arraignment in a criminal court.

Once put on the Disciplinary Exempt List, all decisions will be investigated and a decision will be rendered by the disciplinary committee.

A player who is placed on the Disciplinary Exempt List may not practice or attend games, but with the team's permission he may be present for team meetings or other non-football activities.

A player placed on the Disciplinary Exempt List must be notified and will be given three (3) business days to appeal his placement to the league President. Appeals of placement on the Disciplinary Exempt List will be processed through a chosen handful selected by the President for the Appeal Committee.

Once the legal process has concluded it will be up to the President and the Disciplinary Committee to either allow him to return to football activities or to suspend and/or ban from the league. If a member of the league is found not guilty of a crime and/or violation the league will not press the matter anymore and will allow that member to return to football activities without fear of future reprimand as if nothing ever happened.

**Discipline** – A member of the GEFA may violate this policy when they have been accused of a crime. The disciplinary committee will follow the process outlined below to make sure the member of the league in question of violating the policy is treated fairly and without bias.

Members of the GEFA who are subject to discipline will be given notice of the potential violation for which discipline may be imposed. The member in question will be permitted to submit information in writing to rebut or otherwise respond. In addition, they will be allowed to go before the disciplinary committee. In the case of a guilty conviction the disciplinary committee can not add anything more than what was already proven.

Following review, the President, either directly or through a member of the Disciplinary Committee, will communicate the decision regarding any disciplinary action to be taken. Depending on the nature of the violation and the member of the GEFA's record, discipline may be a suspension for a fixed or an indefinite period of time, a combination of the two, or banishment from the league with an opportunity to reapply. In determining discipline, both aggravating and mitigating factors will be considered.

With regard of violations of the Personal Conduct Policy that involve fighting on the field will subject to a baseline one (1) game suspension and hundred dollar (\$100) fine, with consideration given to any aggravating or mitigating factors. The presence of possible aggravating factors may warrant a longer suspension. A second offense will result in a ten (10) game suspension that could conclude in the following season. A person suspended for ten (10) games may petition to have their suspension shortened, but there is no presumption or assurance that the petition will be granted. All other violations, if found true, could be subject to five (5) game suspensions and/or banishment from the league.

Appeals of any disciplinary decision will be sent to the President and their choice for an appeal committee.

**Reporting** – Teams and players are obligated to promptly report any matter that comes to their attention. Teams are expected to create their own code of conduct and handle issues before it reaches league level. Once it has reached the league level, teams are required to educate their staff and players on this obligation to report. Team reports are to be made to the Vice President. Questions about whether an incident triggers a reporting obligation should be directed to the Vice President of the league.

Failure to report an incident will be grounds for disciplinary action. This obligation to report is broader than simply reporting an arrest; it requires reporting to the league any incident that comes to the team or player's attention which, if the allegations were true, would constitute a violation of the Personal Conduct Policy.

It is important to remember that the obligation to report is a continuing one, and is not satisfied simply by making an initial report of an incident. The obligation includes reporting on a timely basis all information of which a team or player becomes aware. If a team learns additional information, including but not limited to information regarding the nature of an incident, the identity of witnesses, statements regarding the incident (including by the accused), or the existence of evidentiary material (such as documents, screenshots, newspaper articles, reports), it must promptly report that information to the league.

Anyone who believes that he or she is a victim of conduct that violates the Personal Conduct Policy or who learns of or witnesses such conduct is strongly encouraged to report the matter to the team or the league. Reports will be addressed promptly and confidentially. Any members of the GEFA with questions regarding either this reporting obligation or any other aspect of this Personal Conduct Policy may contact their team owner or a member of the Player's Committee.

**Disciplinary Committee** – To ensure that this policy remains current and consistent with best practices and evolving legal and social standards. This committee is voluntary and is picked by the two conference directors, who will review this policy at least annually and recommend any appropriate changes in the policy. The committee will receive regular reports from referees as well as issues that are brought to their attention, and may seek advice from the current and former players, as well as a broad and diverse group of outside experts regarding best practices.

### **Definitions -**

“Disposition of a Criminal Proceeding” - Including an adjudication of guilt or admission to a criminal violation: a plea to a lesser included offense: a plea of nolo contendere or no contest: or the disposition of the proceeding through a diversionary program, deferred adjudication, disposition of supervision, conditional dismissal, or similar arrangements.

“Probation Period” - Persons found to have violated this policy may be placed on a period of probation as determined by the Disciplinary Committee. During such period, restrictions on certain activities, limitations on participation in team activities, or other conditions may be imposed. Failure to comply with such conditions may result in additional discipline including an extension of the period of suspension.

“Repeat Offenders” - Persons who have had previous violations of law or of this policy may be considered repeat offenders. When appropriate, conduct occurring prior to the person's association with the GEFA will be considered.

For the duration of this document's noted date forward, the undersigned

---

will be responsible for abiding by the Great Eastern Football Association's Personal Conduct Policy. By signing I agree that I have read and understand the provisions set forth in this Personal Conduct Policy, and understand the consequences that will be handed down from the league should this Personal Conduct Policy be violated at any time after signing.