



Complaints Policy

Last updated 23/10/2022

Purpose

Complaint resolution procedures ensure consistency, fairness and impartiality when handling complaints. This complaints policy lays out options for individuals and details the procedure the Belnorth Football Club Committee follows in the event of an official written complaint.

The process

Concerns and complaints should always be raised and handled at the lowest level first, wherever possible (as per the [Football Australia National Complaints Procedure](#)). This means that the club is often the first point of contact.

Depending on the nature of the concern or issue, it may be appropriate to pursue it through an external body such as an anti-discrimination agency, the Fair Work Commission or a law enforcement agency, such as the local police. An external body can be contacted at any time in the process.

Options

The options for managing complaints are detailed below, ranging from simple first steps to more formal options. All members are encouraged to consider the options below before taking action.

1. Self-management

Self-management of complaints generally involves respectfully talking to the subject of the complaint and can quickly resolve many lower-level and 'accidental' issues, but is not always appropriate. Sometimes the subject of the complaint may not be aware that they have caused offence.

When talking with a person with whom you have an issue:

1. Stay calm and polite
2. Focus on the behaviour, not the person
3. Describe the impact of the behaviour on you
4. Include a clear and simple request that the behaviour does not happen again
5. Check that the request was heard and understood.

2. Obtain information and support

Further information about the complaints process can be sought from:

- This policy
- The 'Resources' section at the end of this document
- The Belnorth Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO) or any other MPIO
- A Belnorth Coach, Manager, or Committee member
- State or National Sports Organisations
- Anti-discrimination or child protection agency
- State department of Sport and Recreation
- The Play by the Rules website (<https://www.playbytherules.net.au/>).

3. Formal process

The Belnorth Committee handles formal written complaints according to the process outlined below. Disclosure to the committee is confidential, with due regard for the rights of all parties involved.

1. The Committee contacts the complainant to confirm the nature of the complaint and any clarification that may be required.
2. Within seven days of confirming a written complaint, the Belnorth Committee nominates a sub-committee to investigate the complaint.
3. All parties involved are notified that a complaint has been received and asked to provide any pertinent information that may assist investigation of the matter.
4. The sub-committee reviews the information provided and makes any further queries as required.
5. The sub-committee prepares a report that summarises the investigation and recommends an outcome.
6. All parties involved are notified of the outcome.

Appeals process

Either party (i.e. the individual making the complaint or subject of the complaint) is entitled to one appeal if unhappy with the outcome of the formal complaint resolution process. In an appeals process, the complaint is revisited by a Committee member who was not involved in the original sub-committee and the decision is reviewed.

6. External options

The complainant may approach an external body for advice or to lodge a complaint at any time during the process.

These bodies include:

- The Capital Football MPIO
- Anti-discrimination agencies
- Child protection agencies
- Governing bodies
- Departments of Sport and Recreation
- Alternative Dispute Resolution bodies
- Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS: Oceania Register)

Resources

When facing an issue and considering making a complaint, members may find the following resources helpful.

Play by the Rules website

<https://www.playbytherules.net.au/>

Provides information, resources, tools and free online training to increase the capacity and capability of administrators, coaches, officials, players, parents and spectators to assist them in preventing and dealing with discrimination, harassment, child safety, inclusion and integrity issues in sport.

Capital Football's Member Protection webpage

<https://capitalfootball.com.au/member-protection/>

Provides links and contacts.

Football Australia's Member Protection Framework

<https://www.footballaustralia.com.au/member-protection-framework>

Assists Football Australia in ensuring that every person involved in football in Australia is treated with respect and dignity, and is kept safe and protected from abuse, bullying and harassment and discrimination. Includes a complaints procedure.

Sport Integrity Australia

<https://www.sportintegrity.gov.au>

Provides advice and assistance to counter the:

- use of prohibited substances and methods in sport
- abuse of children and other people in a sporting environment
- manipulation of sporting competitions
- failure to protect people in a sporting environment from bullying, abuse, intimidation, discrimination or harassment.