



## **LONDON AREA DISCIPLINE REPORT - 2024/2025**

1. This year saw the introduction of England Hockey's disciplinary regulations. We have not seen any real difficulties in the transition.
2. The main changes for clubs and individuals to be aware of are:
  - a. The abolition of MMOs, replaced by a post-match red card for up to 30 minutes after the end of a match.
  - b. The abolition of disrepute offences, replaced by the concept of misconduct that is broadly defined in the regulations.
  - c. A formal starting point of 30 days for red cards issued for umpire abuse.
  - d. A broad definition of "violence" in the regulations.
3. Clubs are reminded again that the automatic mandatory minimum suspension for a red card or MMO offence is 16 days. For offences involving violence (threatened, attempted or used) it is 30 days (or 60 days if against an umpire or match official). These are mandatory minimum sanctions that we have no discretion to reduce.
4. This season there were 16 red cards issued to players of London clubs or universities that led to suspensions of 16 days or more. This represents a small decrease in the number of red cards / MMOs as compared with last season (19). No player received more than one red card this season.
5. To put the figures in context, the nationwide total of red cards leading to suspensions was 224 (as compared with 200 last year). The number of red cards issued in London therefore fell as nationwide numbers increased (from c.10% as a proportion of the total to c.7%). This season's figure is in line with the percentage seen in the 22/23 season.
6. We are still observing a greater number of red cards being issued for violent offences. Clubs and players should be aware that the formal definition of violence is broad and essentially covers any deliberate, reckless or negligent physical contact contrary to or outside the rules of hockey. It does not require any intention to harm or injure. We often receive representations seeking to challenge the classification of offences as involving "violence" that are admitted to satisfy this broad definition.



7. We have also received a number of misconduct complaints this year. Four of those have been found proven, in each case leading to lengthy suspensions (ranging from 30 days to 120 days). Clubs and individuals are encouraged to report serious misconduct. However, they should also keep in mind that each misconduct complaint takes a very large amount of volunteer time to investigate and determine. Misconduct complaints should not be used for grievances that could have been resolved between clubs or players on the day, nor is it generally appropriate to report in-game incidents that were not dealt with (or are not considered to have been dealt with adequately) by umpires (unless there is clear (e.g. video) evidence that a serious (e.g. violent) offence was missed).
8. There have been no appeals against decisions of the London disciplinary panel this year.
9. I would like to take this opportunity to repeat a request that I made last year and to ask that all London clubs pass on a reminder to their club umpires in relation to red card report forms.
  - a. It is important that forms are submitted as soon as possible and in any event within 72 hours of the match and that they contain as much information as possible about the offence and surrounding circumstances. We have sometimes been hampered by red card report forms that are submitted late or do not contain enough information to help us decide how to categorise the offence or what sanction to impose without making further enquiries. This is obviously time-consuming and delays our decision-making.
  - b. It is also helpful to receive comments from the supporting umpire - and there is a box for this on the standard template red card report form on the EH website - and video footage if it is available.
10. This season I have been assisted again by two Assistant Area Disciplinary Administrators - Alistair Clift and Marilyn Walker - who have helped manage the workload of the discipline team. Alistair stepped down from his role part way through the season and I wish to record my thanks for his hard work. Marilyn will be continuing in the role next year.
11. I have also decided to step down as London Area Disciplinary Administrator having fulfilled the role for 4 years. I will be replaced by Richard Chere following the AGM. Two further Assistant Area Disciplinary Administrators will also be appointed to assist Richard and Marilyn.

**Rupert Allen KC**  
**London Area Disciplinary Administrator**