



# THREE STRIKE POLICY

## Purpose

All members of the Queensland football community play a role in promoting a positive environment and supportive behaviours within our game.

The elimination of poor behaviour both on and off the field, whether aimed at referees, supporters, coaches, players or club members, is crucial to ensuring football remains an inclusive and welcoming game for all Queenslanders.

Under the State and National Disciplinary Regulations and Code of Conduct, a club is responsible, and liable, for the conduct and behaviour of its supporters, whether they are playing a fixture at home or at an away facility.

It is the host club's responsibility to ensure the [Football Australia Spectator Code of Behaviour](#) is implemented and enforced in relation to all attendees. An away club is also responsible and liable for improper conduct among its own group of supporters at any fixture.

Referees represent a crucial part of our game, yet in the past few seasons Football Queensland has seen an unacceptable increase in referee abuse by both players and spectators.

A direct impact of this can be seen in the 'First Year Referee Program' which is designed to attract and recruit new referees to the game. Each year many of these first-year referees choose not to continue as a result of referee abuse and in 2022, more than 50% of first-year referees did not return to the game.

The Three Strike Policy was implemented in 2022 to reinforce acceptable standards of interpersonal conduct between participants and referees in the game. With the increasing trend of abuse toward match officials, FQ has further developed and strengthened the policy for 2023 and beyond.

The policy's aim is to reduce and eliminate any form of abuse and inappropriate behaviour during **any** football activity and to provide an even more robust framework for dealing with circumstances where any form of abusive behaviour is exhibited.

The Three Strike Policy outlines stronger measures, deployed to ensure that there is no ambiguity around the consequences for bad behaviours and that such behaviour will be dealt with accordingly.

## Process

The Three Strike Policy **applies to clubs** where instances of abuse or misbehaviour directed at referees or other members of the football community, from spectators, club officials, team officials, players and clubs are reported.

Strikes do not replace sanctions or penalties that may be applied or issued to **individuals**, as a consequence of breaches of the FQ Disciplinary Regulations, or any other conduct that may have occurred in circumstances associated with the determination of a strike. The enforcement outcome of a strike will always be 'in addition to' any individual's disciplinary determination.

All strikes will be implemented and enforced in the following manner by Football Queensland's Match Review Panel, disciplinary and integrity units:

### Strike 1

- Show Cause Notice will be issued to the offending club and will provide particulars of the allegations
- Any response made by the offending club to the Notice will need to sufficiently demonstrate all measures the club has or will implement, to address the specific particulars detailed within the Show Cause Notice and provide clear direction as to how this will mitigate future incidents of referee or other abuse at the club
- Football Queensland's disciplinary and integrity units will make a determination
- The specific team (or teams) involved in the incident may be issued a 3-point deduction penalty
- All members of the offending club or clubs will be advised in writing by Football Queensland of the strike, alongside any details of the sanctions handed down
- The strike will remain valid and on the club's record for 12 months from the date of offence
- Public notification of the strike will be published on Football Queensland's website
- There is no appeal after a strike has been issued

### Strike 2

- Show Cause Notice will be issued to the offending club and will provide particulars of the allegations
- Any response made by the offending club to the Notice will need to sufficiently demonstrate all measures the club has or will implement, to address the specific particulars detailed within the Show Cause Notice and provide clear direction as to how this will mitigate future incidents of referee or other abuse at the club
- Executive officials from the offending club or clubs will be required to attend a hearing with Football Queensland's Match Review Panel to discuss the particulars of the Show Cause Notice and the response tabled by the club
- Football Queensland's Match Review Panel will make a determination

### **Strike 2 cont.**

- If a determination is made by Football Queensland that a strike is to be issued to an offending club within 12 months of a Strike 1 being issued, it will be considered as Strike 2
- Additional measures or requirements may be set down by the Match Review Panel, which may involve further oversight and review of the implementation and ongoing compliance of proposed measures taken by the club in relation to the Strike 1
- Every competitive team (that plays for points) at the offending club will receive a mandatory 3-point penalty (a maximum of an additional 3 points deduction may be further issued, if determined by the Match Review Panel – 6-point deduction in total)
- The offending club or clubs will receive a mandatory \$2,000 fine for any second strike
- All members of the offending club or clubs will be advised in writing by Football Queensland of the strike, alongside any details of the sanctions handed down
- The strike will remain valid and on the club's record for 12 months from the date of offence
- Public notification of the strike will be published on Football Queensland's website
- There is no appeal after a strike has been issued

### **Strike 3**

- Show Cause Notice will be issued to the offending club and will provide particulars of the allegations
- Executive officials from the offending club or clubs will be required to attend a hearing with Football Queensland's Integrity Unit and Executive Management team to discuss the particulars of the Show Cause Notice and the response tabled by the club
- Football Queensland's Integrity Unit and Executive Management will make a determination
- If the alleged behaviour has been proved and a determination is made by Football Queensland that a strike is to be issued to an offending club, within 12 months of a Strike 2 being issued, it will be considered as Strike 3
- If a Strike 3 has been issued, Football Queensland may, after providing natural justice to the offending club, terminate their affiliation to Football Queensland
- In circumstances where affiliation is not revoked under a Strike 3, one or more teams involved in the offending conduct or incident, across any number of competitions the club may be involved in, could be removed by Football Queensland from those competitions for the remainder of the season
- Every remaining competitive team at the offending club will be given an automatic forfeit, with no matches played for the next competition round, after the determination has been made by Football Queensland
- The club will receive a mandatory \$5,000 fine
- The strike will remain valid and on the club's record for 12 months from the date of offence
- Public notification of the strike will be published on Football Queensland's website
- There is no appeal after a strike has been issued

*If a club accumulates more than three strikes (fourth strike) within a 12-month period:*

*Show Cause Notice will be issued to the offending club and will provide particulars of the allegations.*

*Executive officials from the offending club or clubs will be required to attend a hearing with Football Queensland's Integrity Unit and Executive Management team to discuss the particulars of the Show Cause Notice and the response tabled by the club.*

*Football Queensland's Integrity Unit and Executive Management will make a determination.*

*If the alleged behaviour has been proved and a determination is made by Football Queensland that a strike is to be issued to an offending club, within 12 months of a Strike 3 being issued, Football Queensland will, after providing natural justice to the offending club, terminate their affiliation to Football Queensland and remove all teams from all relevant competitions.*

*A \$10,000 fine will be issued to the club by Football Queensland.*

*Re-affiliation of the offending club will be considered at the commencement of each season during the Football Queensland Club Affiliation window, subject to all fines being paid and adherence to an agreed road map between the club and executive of Football Queensland.*

## **Implementation**

A club can receive a strike for on or off field behaviour of any club member, or attendee at their grounds.

If a strike is issued to a club as a consequence of abusive behaviour of a coach directed towards a match official, the coach will be given an additional suspension to the club penalty in line with the FQ Disciplinary Regulations.

Each strike will remain valid for 12 months from the date it was issued. Each issued strike will expire after 12 months. Strikes are cumulative within a 12-month period; for example, if an additional strike is issued before an earlier strike has expired within the 12-month period, the club will be on their second strike until their first strike expires.

As an example, if a club receives a first strike on 20 January 2023 and receives a second strike on 7 September 2023, the club will be on two strikes until 20 January 2024, when their first strike will expire and they will revert back to one strike.

Every club and venue in Queensland is required to display the Protect Our Game - Three Strike Policy signage in key, visible locations. The digital artwork will be provided to each club by Football Queensland together with a QR Code that must be displayed to inform spectators and members how to report abuse and inappropriate behaviour.

### **How to Report Abuse**

Abuse and inappropriate behaviour should be reported using the supplied QR code.

All Football Queensland clubs and venues are required to install clear and visible signage around their club (change rooms, bathroom and clubhouse) showing how members can report abuse using this QR code.

Football Queensland's Member Protection team will monitor all reported abuse and take action as appropriate.