

## **EXAMPLE PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS AND RESOLVING DISPUTES AT CLUB, COUNTY AND REGIONAL LEVELS (WHERE NO OTHER PROCEDURE IS IN PLACE)**

(Note: All complaints relating to safeguarding or anti-doping must be reported to the Archery GB Case Management Panel)

### **Introduction**

In the Articles of Association, it is clear our objectives are to encourage and promote archery. The Articles also expect us to have rules and regulations and to deal with abuse in the sport.

Other than issues relating to safeguarding or anti-doping, concerns and disputes should normally be resolved within the club. Indeed, Archery GB Policy requires that disputes exhaust club procedures before taking an issue to the County, which in turns should exhaust its procedures before approaching the Region. Clearly, if the concern or dispute occurs at a county or region activity then that would be the entry level for resolution, under these circumstances, where it refers to club below read county or region as appropriate.

### **Informal Procedures**

Remember, a simple apology and a commitment not to repeat the behaviour may be enough to keep everyone happy. Ideally, minor disputes can be settled in an amicable and informal manner.

Just in case matters re-occur or escalate at some stage in the future, so that there is an audit trail, clubs are advised to keep a note of any informal agreement.

### **Formal Procedures**

Clubs may have their own policies and procedures for dealing with complaints but if they do not, they can follow these example procedures.

Complaints should be made to the Club Secretary (if the complaint is about the Secretary, then go to the Chairman). All complaints should be taken seriously, and evidence should be gathered and witness statements taken

### **Respondent's Entitlement**

If the matter cannot be resolved informally and disciplinary action is required, the member against whom the complaint has been made (The Respondent) must be:

- informed of the nature of the complaint against him/her.
- provided with copies of any relevant documents and statements supporting the complaint.
- informed of any disciplinary proceeding and which procedures will be used.

The Respondent must be given the opportunity to:

- put forward full details of their position (their side of the argument).
- provide any documents or evidence in support of their position.
- bring a friend or representative to any disciplinary hearings.

### **Setting up a Disciplinary Panel**

The Club should appoint three people to form a panel to hear the complaint and the response. These people should be independent of both sides of the concern/dispute (maybe someone from another local sports club, it does not have to be another archery club, it could be the local tennis, bowls, golf or other club. Alternatively, consider asking a local School Head Teacher, Magistrate or similar who is not connected with the individuals involved).

### **The Disciplinary Hearing**

Set a date for a hearing. This date should be agreed with the Respondent and if possible, any witnesses. The Respondent must be given the opportunity to attend the Hearing.

In advance of the Hearing, the Panel should be provided with all information regarding the complaint and the Respondent's response. All information sent to the Panel should also be made available to the Respondent.

A Club Representative, (who is not the person making the complaint) should present the complaint to the Panel at the Hearing.

The Respondent must be given the opportunity to respond to the complaint at the Hearing.

Where possible, the Panel should give their decision as to whether the complaint has been upheld on the day of the hearing and if appropriate to do so, impose a suitable sanction.

For guidance on sanctions, the Panel should refer to the Archery GB Disciplinary Policy (Part 4).

If the decision cannot be given on the same day, the Respondent should be informed of the decision within seven days of the Hearing.

The Panel should keep a record of:

- The disciplinary Policy and/or Procedure that the Panel followed.
- Any decision(s) made.
- The reasons for that decision(s).

Throughout the process, it must be fair and transparent to all parties involved.

### **Appeal Procedures**

If there is to be a sanction, there should always be a right of appeal, however, this right should be time limited (about 14 days). The Respondent must be made aware of the right of appeal and the time limit.

If there is an appeal, the club should appoint three new people, independent of the previous Disciplinary Panel, to form a panel to hear the appeal. As with the Disciplinary Panel, these people must be independent of both sides of the concern/dispute (also as before, maybe someone from another local sports club, it doesn't have to be another archery club, it could be the local tennis, bowls, golf or other club. Alternatively, consider asking a local School Head Teacher, Magistrate or similar who is not connected with the individuals involved).

The Appeal Panel should then decide what should be done. An appeal can be against either the original decision or the sanction. It is best to refer to the Archery GB Disciplinary Policy (Part 5) to decide if the panel is dismissing, upholding, or amending the original panel decision.

Clubs should exhaust this whole procedure before involving the County Association. The County should exhaust a similar procedure before involving the Regional Society and the Region should exhaust a similar procedure before the Archery GB Case Management Panel would become involved.

### **Archery GB Advice and Support**

Clearly, Archery GB is here to advise and support Clubs, Counties and Regions with their procedures and our Policies and Procedures are available at our website for Clubs to use. These procedures include a library of forms and templates for clubs to adopt/adapt for their own use.

If in doubt, call Archery GB: 01952 677888.