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Original Article

Longitudinal Analysis of the Decisions of the Professional Football Disciplinary Committee in the 2021–2022 / 2022–2023 and 2023–2024 Seasons of the Turkish Football Federation

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What is already known on this topic?

- *Previous studies have also shown that in top leagues, especially the Super League, fans, club managers, and players are the most frequent recipients of disciplinary penalties.*
- *Studies from previous seasons indicate that unsportsmanlike conduct and abusive chanting are commonly punishable offenses.*
- *Research suggests that monetary fines are the most common disciplinary measure for both clubs and individuals, but these penalties can be insufficient to encourage behavioral change.*

What does this study add to the existing knowledge?

- *This study identifies statistical changes and trends across the 2021–2022, 2022–2023, and 2023–2024 seasons by systematically comparing them.*
- *Important data on the total amounts of fines for individuals and organizations (fans, players, and the club president, etc.) reveal the material burden and the effectiveness of punishment.*
- *The study identifies the specific punishments assumed to be inefficient and suggests that the precautionary training related to Law 6.222 should be disseminated and that the fair play awards should be recognized well.*

Abstract

This study compares the disciplinary decisions of the Turkish Football Federation Professional Football Disciplinary Committee across the 2021–2022, 2022–2023, and 2023–2024 seasons. A total of 7603 decisions, announced on the Turkish Football Federation's official website and deemed relevant by the researcher, were analyzed: 2159 from 2021 to 2022, 2818 from 2022 to 2023, and 2626 from 2023 to 2024. A longitudinal research design was employed, and analyses were conducted in SPSS 22.0 using the mean and standard deviation. Findings showed that disciplinary decisions most frequently stemmed from incidents in the Super League (23.21%), 1st League (15.98%), and 2nd League Red Group (13.94%). The primary subjects were spectators (34.84%), club legal entities (16.98%), and players (12.61%). The leading causes of sanctions were violations of regulations (23.18%), unsportsmanlike conduct (21.90%), offensive and abusive chanting (20.28%), and field incidents (14.60%). The most common sanctions were monetary fines (35.97%), warnings (17.12%), and bans from dressing rooms and substitutes' benches combined with fines (13.68%). In terms of monetary penalties, spectators (₺110,096,000), club legal entities (₺53,648,800), club presidents (₺18,697,650), and administrators (₺10,791,850) accounted for the largest shares. Across seasons, disciplinary actions increased in 2022–2023 compared to 2021–2022 (except for a decline in regulation violations) but declined significantly in 2023–2024 (except for an increase in regulation violations).

Keywords: Discipline, football, longitudinal research method, professional football disciplinary committee, Turkish Football Federation

Introduction

The emphasis on sport, love, peace, and brotherhood was also articulated by the founding leader, Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. It is the fundamental pillar of Turkish sport, and the foundation of this group is the spirit of fair play. Fair play can be briefly defined as acting honestly and playing fairly, but this aspect is considered an act beyond ethics (Turkish National Olympic Committee, 2025). Although there are multiple definitions of fair play, Butcher & Schneider (1998) argue that it is best understood as "respect for the game," because this interpretation shows that sport is a motivating factor for justice. Disciplinary sanctions are applied by the committees to ensure that football is played in accordance with the spirit of fair play. So, how effective are these disciplinary sanctions? Their effectiveness is directly proportional to the rate at which the action is repeated. Continued or increasing offenses, continued punishment, decreased punishment, and continued offenses indicate that the applied punishment is appropriate but insufficient.

This research examines the trends and distribution of disciplinary penalties imposed by the Turkish Football Federation Professional Football Disciplinary Committee (TFF PFDC) during the 2021–2022, 2022–2023, and 2023–2024 seasons.

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By analyzing these trends and distributions, this study provides preliminary information on the types of penalties imposed in subsequent seasons and the actions that led to them. This information will enable the implementation of preventive measures to reduce the financial and nonfinancial penalties that clubs may face.

Football

Football is a game in which two teams of 11 players, using any part of their bodies except their hands and arms, try to maneuver the ball into the opposing team's goal. Only the goalkeeper is permitted to handle the ball and may do so only within the penalty area surrounding the goal. The team that scores more goals wins. Fédération Internationale de Football Association, football's governing body, estimated that at the turn of the 21st century, there were approximately 250 million football players and over 1.3 billion people interested in football (Britannica, 2025).

Violence in Football

In football, physical strength and fitness must be high, and adrenaline is essential to the sport. Interventions on the field are somewhat understandable; competition is inherent in the spirit of football. In a match, one side will win while the other loses. The winner should appreciate the loser, and the loser should appreciate the winner. Spectators are free to support their team. However, this support should not involve insults or derogatory chants directed at the opposing side. While some chants reflect the team's symbolic values (such as "Come on, Eagle for Beşiktaş (the symbol of BJK)" and "Go, Lion for Galatasaray (the symbol of GS)"), others, like "Hit, break, smash, win this match," can also affect the players. Team managers should assume a regulatory role both on and off the field. It is regrettable to see a growing number of incidents on the field, regardless of whether the team is amateur or professional. One club president even dared to enter the field and punch a referee. While this act did not go unpunished, there is no guarantee that it will not be repeated. Such incidents, which are discussed for days in the international sports arena, have negatively impacted the country's image. The way to prevent these and similar negative actions is through "deterrent punishments." However, since the actions that lead to punishment do not decrease, it follows that simply imposing punishment is not enough. Therefore, the focus should be on actions that teach that sports are about love, peace, and brotherhood. Everyone knows about the friendship between Fenerbahçe's Lefter Küçükandonyanis and Galatasaray's Metin Oktay, two of the greatest players of their time. That a sociological problem exists is shown by the transformation from two individuals who competed on the field and were friends off the field to fans who are attacked with machetes and knives by one another when they meet off the field.

Aggression and Violence in Sports

According to Baron and Richardson, aggression is any action that intentionally aims to harm another party (Baron & Richardson, 1994; cited in Jhangiani & Tarry, 2014). The World Health Organization also defines aggression as harmful actions taken against another person or group, or even against oneself, which can have physiological and psychological consequences (WHO, 2005). There are various types of violence; these include physical violence, sexual violence, emotional violence, economic violence, and cyber violence (Polat, 2016).

In the country, there are various mechanisms to prevent misconduct in sports. The "Law on the Prevention of Violence and Disorder in Sports" (Law No. 6222) is one of them. The purpose of this law is to prevent disorder that may arise before, during, and after a match and to protect sports fans from potential acts of violence (Legislation Information System, 2023).

Promoting the concept of fair play can help prevent aggression and violence in sports. Fair play means honest play and behavior and can also be described as conduct that transcends ethics. Adhering to the rules of the game under all circumstances, being honest with the opponent, and maintaining respect are considered ethical behaviors. According to the Turkish National Olympic Committee, behaviors that do not prioritize personal greed and self-interest are accepted within the framework of fair play (Turkish National Olympic Committee, 2025).

The TFF fair play regulations were enacted to define the organization, duties, powers, and working principles of the Fair Play and Social Responsibility Committee; to determine measures to develop the rules of "fair play" in football, the principles of honesty and sportsmanship, and a sense of social responsibility; and to establish the principles for rewarding fair play (Turkish Football Federation, 2025c).

Turkish Football Federation Professional Football Disciplinary Committee

The purpose of the TFF Football Disciplinary Regulations (FDR) is to ensure discipline in amateur and professional football activities and to establish the formation, procedures, and principles of disciplinary committees, the acts constituting disciplinary violations, their penalties, and the execution of those penalties. The TFF PFDC was established to "decide on disciplinary violations arising from the actions, statements, and deeds of clubs, players, coaches, managers, match officials, and other persons involved in professional football activities" (FDR, Article 64/1) (Turkish Football Federation, 2025a).

The PFDC adjudicates disciplinary violations committed by clubs, players, coaches, managers, match officials, and other persons involved in professional football activities (Article 64/1) (Turkish Football Federation, 2025a).

Individuals punished by the PFDC cannot be pardoned or have their sentences altered by any authority or person, except as provided in this directive (Article 100) (Turkish Football Federation, 2025a).

The executive function of the TFF is carried out by the Committee of Directors, which operates under the authority granted by the General Assembly. In disciplinary matters such as match replays and relegation, the Committee of Directors serves as the first-instance judicial body and issues decisions. The TFF's judicial bodies include the legal committees, the PFDC, and the Arbitration Committee (AC). The legal committees represent the TFF in disciplinary investigations and proceedings. The TFF legal committees comprise legal advisors and disciplinary inspectors who are law school graduates. These professionals, acting almost like a prosecutor's office, base their decisions on reports from representatives and other officials (referees' and referee observers' reports via the Central Referee Committee, and other officials) from professional matches, and initiate the judicial process by referring cases to the PFDC. The legal committee can also initiate investigations and refer cases to the PFDC on its own initiative or upon notification (Yalçınkaya, 2020).

Amateur football clubs are also included within the TFF. An Amateur Affairs Committee has been established within the TFF to deal with amateur football. With the assistance of the Provincial Organizing Committee, which works in conjunction with this committee,

referral procedures for amateur football are carried out. The Provincial Organizing Committee, in accordance with the regulations, refers cases deemed offenses to the Provincial Disciplinary Committee or directly to the Amateur Football Disciplinary Committee (Karağolu, 2017).

Arbitration Committee

Article 5894 of the law on the establishment and duties of the TFF states that the football federation is a private-law entity with legal personality and autonomy. This should not be interpreted to mean that the TFF is a "private-law legal entity." Given its establishment, duties, and powers, the TFF is a public legal entity. Article 59, paragraph three, of the Constitution, titled "Development of Sports and Arbitration," provides that "Against the decisions of sports federations regarding the management and discipline of sports activities, recourse can only be made through compulsory arbitration. The decisions of the AC are final, and no appeal can be made to any judicial authority against these decisions." (Legislation Information System, 2025a).

The legislator has closed the avenue of appeal from the AC's decisions. Therefore, appeals against the decisions of the TFF PFDC can be filed only to the AC. The AC may uphold the decision as is or correct it.

Article 6 of Law No. 5894 on the establishment and duties of the TFF, titled "AC" (amended: 22/4/2022-7405/53 art.), states that "The AC is an independent and impartial mandatory arbitration body in accordance with this Law and is the highest legal body of the TFF and has the authority to make final decisions on appeals against the decisions of the authorized organs and committees of the TFF in accordance with the TFF statute and the relevant instructions." In this way, the TFF, stating that it has the authority to make final decisions as stated in the Constitution, has specified in Article 5 of the same law that "The AC examines and finally decides on appeals against the regulations and decisions of the authorized organs and committees of the TFF regarding the management and discipline of football activities. The application period to the AC is 7 days from the date of publication of the instructions on the website, against the instructions of the TFF, and from the date of notification of the decision against the decisions" (Legislation Information System, 2025b).

According to Article 14 of Law No. 3813 on the establishment and duties of the TFF, "The AC examines and finalizes decisions made by the Committee of Directors and the Disciplinary Committee regarding disputes arising between the federation and clubs; between the federation and referees; between the federation and technical directors and coaches; between clubs and technical directors and coaches; between clubs and players; and between clubs themselves, upon appeal by the parties concerned." As stated in both the Constitution and Law No. 3813, the decisions of the AC have the force of final judgment (Legislation Information System, 2025b).

Disciplinary Penalties

The disciplinary penalties listed in the FDR are as follows: Warning (Article 17), Reprimand (Article 18), Fine (Article 19), Return of Awards (Article 20), Expulsion (Article 21), Ban from Matches (Article 22), Ban from Entering the Dressing Room and Bench (Article 23), Ban from Entering the Stadium (Article 24), Disqualification (Article 25), Suspension of License (Article 26), Cancellation of License (Article 27), Transfer Ban (Article 28), Stadium Closure (Article 29), Prevention of Entry to a Match (Article 30), Playing Behind Closed Doors (Article 31), Forfeit (Article 32), Point Deduction (Article 33), Relegation to a Lower League (Article 34), and Substitute and Additional Penalties (Article 35) (Turkish Football Federation, 2025a).

Disciplinary Violations

The disciplinary violations listed in the FDR are as follows: Unsportsmanlike Conduct (Article 36); Deliberately Receiving a Card (Article 37); Statements Regarding Referees and Other Match Officials (Article 38); Security of the Referee's Dressing Room and Corridors (Article 39); Unsportsmanlike Conduct as a Team (Article 40); Collective Intervention Against Referees and Other Match Officials (Article 40); Attack on Personal Rights, Insult, Threat, and Spitting (Article 41); Discrimination and Ideological Propaganda (Article 42); Illegal Actions (Article 43); Assault (Article 44); Fighting (Article 45); Actions Contrary to Instructions (Article 46); Unlawful Use of Documents (Article 47); Forgery and Deception (Article 48); Irregular Spectator Admission and Failure to Leave Stairwells Clear (Article 49); Failure to Comply with Penalties and Measures (Article 50); Failure to Participate in National Competitions (Article 51); Field Incidents (Article 52); Offensive and Abusive Chanting (Article 53); Broadcasting (Article 54); Rules of Conduct (Article 55); Influencing the Outcome of a Competition (Article 56); Betting (Article 57); Failure to Participate in a Competition (Article 58); Negligence and Abuse of Duty (Article 59); Conviction (Article 60); Doping (Article 61) (Turkish Football Federation, 2025a).

Material and Methods

The research examined the disciplinary penalties imposed by the TFF PFDC during the 2021–2022, 2022–2023, and 2023–2024 seasons (Turkish Football Federation, 2025b).

The research falls under the category of "longitudinal research." Longitudinal research consists of repeated studies conducted to determine the direction of change in a subject over a specific period. A disadvantage of this type of research is that it covers only two specific periods, making it costly. However, an advantage is that seeing the direction of change in the subject, based on the research results, can increase the consistency of decisions made about that subject (Bingöl University, 2025).

Decision analyses were performed using the SPSS 22.0 (IBM SPSS Corp.; Armonk, NY, USA) statistical analysis program.

Data Collection, Analysis Preparation Phase, Population, Sample, and Limitations

The research universe comprises TFF PFDC decisions, and the sample includes disciplinary decisions from the 2021–2022, 2022–2023, and 2023–2024 seasons. The data analyzed were collected between February 10, 2025, and April 10, 2025. The data were obtained from publicly available PFDC decisions on the TFF website (https://www.tff.org/default.aspx?pageID=238). The PFDC meeting decisions from the 2021–2022, 2022–2023, and 2024 seasons were copied and exported to Excel. Each row of the exported decisions was coded in a separate column, considering dimensions such as season, league, the action that led to the penalty, the action that caused the penalty, the type of sanction imposed, and the distribution of the most frequently imposed monetary penalty among those responsible. The coded data were analyzed using SPSS version 22.0. Decisions that did not result in disciplinary action were excluded from the analysis. Decisions of the PFDC that were appealed to the TFF AC during the research seasons were excluded from the scope, as they are the subject of a separate research project. Only two decisions identified as

having been addressed during the research seasons were included in the discussion section.

Because the research data is publicly available on the official website, ethical committee approval was not required.

Results

This section of the research analyzes the decisions of the TFF PFDC taken during the 2021–2022, 2022–2023, and 2023–2024 seasons. The distribution of penalties by season was examined in the analysis.

A total of 2.159 decisions (28.40%) were examined in the 2021–2022 season; 2.818 (37.06%) in the 2022–2023 season; and 2.626 (34.54%) in the 2023–2024 season (Table 1).

The study identified 7603 disciplinary actions across the seasons under consideration. By league category, the Super League had the most disciplinary actions ($n=1765$, 23.21%), followed by the 1st League ($n=1215$, 15.98%) and the 2nd League Red Group ($n=1060$, 13.94%). Across seasons and leagues, the 2021–2022 season saw the highest number of disciplinary actions in the Super League ($n=438$, 20.29%), followed by the 2nd League Red Group ($n=401$, 18.57%) and the 1st League ($n=347$, 16.07%). In the 2022–2023 season, the Super League continued to lead ($n=679$, 24.10%), followed by the 1st League ($n=484$, 17.18%) and the 2nd League White Group ($n=379$, 13.45%). In the 2023–2024 season, the Super League again led ($n=648$, 24.68%). It was followed by the 1st League, which retained its leading position from the 2021–2022 season ($n=384$, 14.62%), and the 2nd League Red Group, which regained its leading position from the 2022–2023 season and ranked third ($n=349$, 13.29%) (Table 2).

The study revealed that fans were the most frequent perpetrators of disciplinary actions during the seasons under review ($n=2649$, 34.84%). They were followed by club officials ($n=1291$, 16.98%) and athletes ($n=959$, 12.61%). When examining perpetrators by season, the 2021–2022 ranking was as follows: fans ($n=646$, 29.92%), club officials ($n=401$, 18.57%), and athletes ($n=300$, 13.90%). The ranking remained unchanged for the 2022–2023 season: fans ($n=1157$, 41.06%), club officials ($n=368$, 13.06%), and athletes ($n=367$, 13.03%). The rankings remained unchanged in the 2023–2024 season as well; the rankings for fans ($n=846$, 32.22%), club legal entities ($n=522$, 19.88%), and athletes ($n=292$, 11.12%) held steady (Table 3).

The most common actions leading to disciplinary action across the seasons studied were violation of instructions ($n=1762$, 23.18%), unsportsmanlike conduct ($n=1665$, 21.90%), and offensive and abusive chanting ($n=1542$, 20.28%). By season, the 2021–2022 rankings were: violation of instructions ($n=598$, 27.70%), unsportsmanlike conduct ($n=471$, 21.82%), and offensive and abusive chanting ($n=315$, 14.59%). For the 2022–2023 season, violation of instructions ranked first ($n=407$, 14.44%), offensive and abusive chanting came in second ($n=736$, 26.12%), and unsportsmanlike conduct dropped to third ($n=653$, 23.17%). In the 2023–2024 season, violation of instructions showed no intention of relinquishing the top spot ($n=757$, 28.83%). Unsportsmanlike conduct regained second place after a one-season hiatus ($n=541$, 20.60%), while offensive and abusive chanting, which had held second place the previous season, dropped to third ($n=491$, 18.70%) (Table 4).

Table 1.
Seasonal Distribution of Total Number of Punishments

Season	*n*	%
Season of 2021–2022	2159	28.40
Season of 2022–2023	2818	37.06
Season of 2023–2024	2626	34.54
Total, *N*	7603	100.0

Table 2.
Distribution of Punishments Over the Last 3 Years by Season and League

Distribution of Leagues and Disciplinary Punishments	Distribution of Last 3 Years		2021–2022		2022–2023		2023–2024	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Super League	1765	23.21	438	20.29	679	24.10	648	24.68
1st League	1215	15.98	347	16.07	484	17.18	384	14.62
2nd League - Red Group	1060	13.94	401	18.57	310	11.00	349	13.29
2nd League - White Group	800	10.52	137	6.35	379	13.45	284	10.81
3rd League 1st Group	740	9.73	262	12.14	315	11.18	163	6.21
3rd League 3rd Group	704	9.26	269	12.46	232	8.23	203	7.73
3rd League 2nd Group	692	9.10	231	10.70	243	8.62	218	8.30
Türkiye Cup	210	2.76	35	1.62	104	3.69	71	2.70
3rd League 4th Group	207	2.72	–	–	–	–	207	7.88
3rd League Play Off	92	1.21	19	0.88	28	0.99	45	1.71
2nd League Play Off	68	0.89	14	0.65	22	0.78	32	1.22
1st League Play Off	44	0.58	6	0.28	17	0.60	21	0.80
Super Cup	5	0.07	–	–	5	0.18	–	–
Special Game	1	0.01	–	–	–	–	1	0.04
Totals	7603	100.00	2159	100.00	2818	100.00	2626	100.00

Table 3.
Distribution of Individuals Awarded Disciplinary Punishments Over the Last Three

Individuals Awarded Disciplinary Punishments	Distribution of the last 3 years		2021–2022		2022–2023		2023–2024	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Fans	2649	34.84	646	29.92	1157	41.06	846	32.22
Club (the legal entity)	1291	16.98	401	18.57	368	13.06	522	19.88
Player	959	12.61	300	13.90	367	13.02	292	11.12
Staff/Officer	752	9.89	264	12.23	216	7.67	272	10.36
Coach	486	6.39	115	5.33	203	7.20	168	6.40
Team	394	5.18	139	6.44	109	3.87	146	5.56
Administrator	336	4.42	90	4.17	117	4.15	129	4.91
Technical Officer	262	3.45	72	3.33	112	3.97	78	2.97
Club President	245	3.22	56	2.59	83	2.95	106	4.04
Goalkeeper Coach	113	1.49	33	1.53	46	1.63	34	1.29
Masseur	65	0.85	24	1.11	18	0.64	23	0.88
Physician	24	0.32	7	0.32	11	0.39	6	0.23
Equipment Officer	11	0.14	3	0.14	5	0.18	3	0.11
Assistant Coach	10	0.13	7	0.32	2	0.07	1	0.04
Translator	6	0.08	2	0.09	4	0.14	–	0.00
Total	7603	100.00	2159	100.00	2818	100.00	2626	100.00

When the disciplinary penalties given during the seasons covered by the study are examined, it is seen that the most common penalty was a fine (*n*=2735, 35.97%), followed by a warning (*n*=1302, 17.12%), and then a fine and a ban from entering the dressing room and the substitutes' bench during official matches (*n*=1040, 13.68%). Looking at the distribution of disciplinary penalties by season, in the 2021–2022 season, the disciplinary penalties were, in order: fine (*n*=873, 40.39%), warning (*n*=379, 17.55%), and a fine and a ban from entering the dressing room and the substitutes' bench during official matches (*n*=261, 12.09%). In the 2022–2023 season, fines remained the most common penalty (*n*=868, 30.80%). In the first season examined, fines and bans from entering the dressing room and the substitutes' bench during official matches moved up from third to second place (*n*=461, 16.36%), while warnings dropped to third place (*n*=390, 13.84%). In the 2023–2024 season, fines maintained their leading position (*n*=995, 37.89%). Warnings, which had lost their second-place position in the previous season, regained it (*n*=533, 20.30%). Fines and bans from entering the dressing room and the substitutes' bench during official matches, which they had previously held, could not maintain their second place and dropped to third place (*n*=318, 12.11%) (Table 5). The study revealed that the total amount of fines for disciplinary penalties imposed during the seasons under review was ₺214,266,400, of which: ₺25,012,450 was imposed in the 2021–2022 season, ₺69,965,050 in the 2022–2023

Table 4.
Distribution of Acts Awarded Disciplinary Punishments Over the Last 3 Years

Acts Awarded Disciplinary Punishments	Distribution of Last 3 Years		2021–2022		2022–2023		2023–2024	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Violation of instructions	1762	23.18	598	27.70	407	14.44	757	28.83
Unsportsmanlike conduct	1665	21.90	471	21.82	653	23.17	541	20.60
Offensive and abusive chanting	1542	20.28	315	14.59	736	26.12	491	18.70
Field incidents	1110	14.60	320	14.82	426	15.12	364	13.86
Insult	609	8.01	195	9.03	245	8.69	169	6.44
Violent action toward an opposing team player	243	3.20	64	2.96	117	4.15	62	2.36
Failure to keep stairwells clear	208	2.74	59	2.73	88	3.12	61	2.32
Serious foul against an opposing team player	169	2.22	55	2.55	61	2.16	53	2.02
Assault	163	2.14	46	2.13	51	1.81	66	2.51
Failure to comply with penalty/measure	65	0.85	19	0.88	25	0.89	21	0.80
Unlawful use of documents	56	0.74	17	0.79	9	0.32	30	1.14
Fighting	11	0.14		0.00		0.00	11	0.42
Total	7603	100.00	2159	100.00	2818	100.00	2626	100.00

Table 5.
Distribution of Disciplinary Punishments Issued, Seasonally, Over the Last 3 Years

Disciplinary Punishments Issued	Distribution of Last 3 Years		2021–2022		2022–2023		2023–2024	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Money	2735	35.97	872	40.39	868	30.80	995	37.89
Warning	1302	17.12	379	17.55	390	13.84	533	20.30
Money and official competition ban: Entry ban to the dressing room and bench	104	13.68	261	12.09	461	16.36	318	12.11
Monetary penalty and ban from official competitions	711	9.35	217	10.05	289	10.26	205	7.81
Disqualification	277	3.64	104	4.82	75	2.66	98	3.73
Monetary penalty and disqualification	263	3.46	54	2.50	116	4.12	93	3.54
Blocking of cash and electronic ticket cards in matches where the club is the home team	262	3.45	80	3.71	136	4.83	46	1.75
Blocking of electronic ticket cards in matches where the club is the home team	252	3.31	71	3.29	82	2.91	99	3.77
Blocking of cash and electronic ticket cards during matches where the club is the visiting team	222	2.92	–	–	138	4.90	84	3.20
Banned from official competitions	176	2.31	55	2.55	62	2.20	59	2.25
Money and official competition playing at home without spectators	133	1.75	20	0.93	89	3.16	24	0.91
Warning and blocking of electronic ticket cards in matches where the club is the visiting team	88	1.16	1	0.05	55	1.95	32	1.22
Warning and blocking of electronic ticket cards in matches where the club is the home team	45	0.59	19	0.88	25	0.89	1	0.04
Ban from entering the dressing room and the substitute bench during official matches.	32	0.42	6	0.28	10	0.35	16	0.61
Playing the official match at home without spectators	23	0.30	18	0.83	5	0.18	–	–
Money and official matches played away without spectators	11	0.14	–	–	8	0.28	3	0.11
Blocking of electronic ticket cards during matches where the club is the visiting team	7	0.09	–	–	2	0.07	5	0.19
(0–3) Forfeit and (3) point deduction	5	0.07	–	–	–	–	5	0.19
Money, playing the official match at home without spectators and blocking of electronic tickets in the match where the club is the home	5	0.07	–	–	1	0.04	4	0.15
5 years of disqualification and permanent disqualification	3	0.04	–	–	–	–	3	0.11
Playing the official match away without spectators	3	0.04	–	–	3	0.11	–	–
(0–5) Forfeit	2	0.03	–	–	1	0.04	1	0.04
(3–0) Forfeit	2	0.03	1	0.05	–	–	1	0.04
(30) Declared lost by default expulsion from the Turkish Cup competitions, exclusion from the Türkiye Cup in the following season.	2	0.03	–	–	2	0.07	–	–
(0–3) Default loss	1	0.01	1	0>05	–	–	–	–
Money and (3–0) Default loss	1	0.01	–	–	–	–	1	0.04
Total	7603	100.00	2159	100.00	2818	100.00	2626	100.00

season, and ₺119,288,900 in the 2023–2024 season. The highest amount of fines in these seasons was due to disciplinary actions caused by fans (*n*=₺110,096,000, 51.38%), followed by fines imposed for actions that led to disciplinary action under the club's legal entity (*n*=₺53.648,800, 25.04%), and then fines imposed for disciplinary actions caused by the club president (*n*=₺18,697,650, 8.73%). When the fines imposed and the total financial damage caused by each season are examined, the following is observed: In the 2021–2022 season, fines totaling ₺10,527,300 were imposed on fans, ₺8,604,000 on the club's legal entity, and ₺1,084,800 on administrators. In the 2022–2023 season, fines totaling ₺40,015,400 were imposed on fans, ₺15,601,000 on the club's legal entity, and ₺3,704,000 on the club president. In the 2023–2024 season, fines totaling ₺59,553,300 were imposed due to fans, ₺29,443,800 due to the club's legal entity, and ₺14,123,500 due to the club president (Table 6).

Discussion

This study, which examines the distribution of disciplinary penalties imposed by the TFF PFDK in the 2021–2022, 2022–2023, and 2023–2024 seasons, analyzed 7603 decisions: 2159 (28.40%) in the 2021–2022 season; 2.818 (37.06%) in the 2022–2023 season; and 2.626 (34.54%) in the 2023–2024 season (Table 1). The analyses revealed that disciplinary penalties were most frequently imposed for incidents in the Super League (*n*=1765, 23.21%), 1st League (*n*=1215, 15.98%), and 2nd League Red Group (*n*=1060, 13.94%)

Table 6.
Distribution of Most Issued Disciplinary Punishment (Money), Seasonally, Over the Last 3 Years

Individuals Caused the Disciplinary Punishment (Money)	Distribution of the last 3 years		2021–2022		2022–2023		2023–2024	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Fans	110,096,000	51.38	10,527,300	42.09	40,015,400	57.19	59,553,300	49.92
Clube	53,648,800	25.04	8,604,000	34.40	15,601,000	22.30	29,443,800	24.68
Club President	18,697,650	8.73	870,150	3.48	3,704,000	5.29	14,123,500	11.84
Manager	10,791,850	5.04	1,084,800	4.34	3,107,000	4.44	6,600,050	5.53
Player	5,448,450	2.54	929,400	3.72	2,215,950	3.17	2,303,100	1.93
Coach	3,923,650	1.83	452,150	1.81	1,576,900	2.25	1,894,600	1.59
Officer	3,548,650	1.66	463,900	1.85	1,098,500	1.57	1,986,250	1.67
Technical Staff	3,151,000	1.47	409,700	1.64	1,268,100	1.81	1,473,200	1.23
Team	2,722,750	1.27	504,750	2.02	741,000	1.06	1,477,000	1.24
Goalkeeper Coach	1,464,050	0.68	1,002,750	4.01	237,200	0.34	224,100	0.19
Masseur	328,050	0.15	78,050	0.31	166,000	0.24	84,000	0.07
Physician	171,500	0.08	20,500	0.08	64,000	0.09	87,000	0.07
Translator	131,000	0.06	13,000	0.05	118,000	0.17	–	–
Equipment Officer	110,500	0.05	19,500	0.08	52,000	0.07	39,000	0.03
Assistant Coach	32,500	0.02	32,500	0.13	–	–	–	–
Total	214,266,400	100.00	25,012,450	100.00	69,965,050	100.00	119,288,900	100.00

matches (Table 2). The leading causes of disciplinary action were fans (*n* = 2649, 34.84%), club legal entities (*n* = 1291, 16.98%), and athletes (*n* = 959, 12.61%) (Table 3). The most common disciplinary penalties were for violations of instructions (*n* = 1765, 23.18%), unsportsmanlike conduct (*n* = 1665, 21.90%), offensive and abusive chanting (*n* = 1542, 20.28%), and pitch incidents (*n* = 1110, 14.60%) (Table 4). The most common penalties were fines (*n* = 2735, 35.97%), warnings (*n* = 1302, 17.12%), and bans from entering the dressing room and the substitutes' bench during official matches (*n* = 1040, 13.68%) (Table 5). In terms of amount, the highest fines in Turkish Lira were imposed on fans (*n* = ₺110,096,000, 51.38%), the club's legal entity (*n* = ₺53.648,800, 25.04%), the club president (*n* = ₺18,697,650, 8.73%), and the administrator (*n* = ₺10,791,850, 5.04%) (Table 6).

Şirin and Sevilmiş reported that in the 2016–2017 Spor Toto Super League season, the most frequent disciplinary violations were offensive and abusive chanting, followed by pitch incidents, failure to comply with instructions, and unsportsmanlike conduct (Şirin & Sevilmiş, 2018). Çiçek, in his study of the 2017–2018 season, found that the most common reason for fines was offensive and abusive chanting, followed by pitch incidents and failure to comply with instructions (Çiçek, 2018). Şimşek and Or reported that in the 2021–2022 season, failure to comply with instructions was the most common disciplinary action (Şimşek & Or, 2023). Şimşek and Kesler reported that in the 2022–2023 season, offensive and abusive chanting was the most common action leading to penalties (Şimşek & Kesler, 2024). In the 2023–2024 season, failure to comply with instructions once again took the top spot. While there may be instances of ranking changes in this context, the disciplinary actions in the seasons under consideration fluctuated between failure to comply with instructions and offensive and abusive chanting.

In his study of the direction of change in disciplinary penalties during the 2016–2017, 2017–2018, 2018–2019, and 2019–2020 seasons, with the introduction of Video Assistan Referee (VAR) technology, Eryılmaz stated that the club's legal entity and athletes were the primary perpetrators of actions leading to disciplinary penalties (Eryılmaz, 2021). Şirin and Sevilmiş listed the perpetrators of actions leading to penalties in the 2016–2017 season as fans, the club's legal entity, and athletes (Şirin & Sevilmiş, 2018: 328). Şimşek and Or, in their study covering the 2021–2022 season, stated that the most penalties were given due to negative actions by fans, the club's legal entity, and athletes, respectively (Şimşek & Or, 2023). Şimşek & Kesler (2024) stated that in the 2022–2023 season, the main causes of penalties were fans, club legal entities, and athletes. In the present research, which also included the 2023–2024 season, it was found that fans, club legal entities, and athletes were the primary causes. Yalçın Sarıbey & Canbolat (2024) stated that in the 2021–2022 season, matches played with spectators by all teams after COVID-19 resulted in more penalties than those played without spectators, and that the spectator factor was an important variable in the number of penalties. It was observed that there was no concentration of penalties in matches played without spectators during the pandemic period, and that penalties for violating regulations were widely applied. Çeribaş & Özbek (2021) examined the decisions of the Disciplinary Committee of the Turkish Athletics, Basketball, and Volleyball Federations between January 1, 2014, and January 1, 2019, using document analysis, a qualitative research method. They categorized the decisions examined based on the parties involved, the types of disciplinary violations and penalties, and whether they were appealed to the AC, and classified them by outcome. According to the research results, disciplinary proceedings were most frequently conducted in athletics for anti-doping rule violations, in basketball for actions contrary to instructions, and in volleyball for rude, mocking, humiliating, and insulting behavior. Regarding the parties involved, they stated that in athletics, athletes and coaches were most frequently subject to disciplinary action, while in basketball and volleyball, athletes and sports clubs were most frequently involved. Thus, although the ranking may vary by branch and season, the actions leading to penalties and the groups

exhibiting them are almost always the same, with the spectator factor being a significant contributor.

A search for "arbitration" in the decisions of the seasons under investigation yielded only two results. These records showed that both penalties had been increased. In the 2021–2022 season, following the TFF AC decision dated 09.12.2021, numbered 2021/432 E. 2021/423 K., regarding the İstanbulspor A.Ş. Altaş Denizlispor Spor Toto 1st League match played on November 27, 2021, and in accordance with the supplementary referral made by the legal counsel dated December 14, 2021, İstanbulspor A.Ş. coach M*** G*** Ö*** was penalized with a 1-match ban from entering the dressing room and the substitute bench, and a fine of ₺6500, in addition to the decision given at the PFDC meeting number 27 on December 2, 2021, pursuant to articles 41/1-c and 35/4 of the Football Disciplinary Regulations(FDT), for insulting the match referee after being sent off. The decision regarding the punishment is as follows: "In the 2023–2024 Season: Following a re-examination in accordance with the AC's decision dated 20.10.2023, numbered 2023/337E 2023/378K; A*** G*** is punished with a 1-year ban from all football-related activities pursuant to Article 56/2-a of the FDR for attempting to influence the outcome of the Darıca Gençlerbirliği A.Ş. Kalecik Futbol Kulübü TFF 3rd League 2nd Group match played at Darıca Stadium on May 7, 2022." As can be seen, the TFF AC does not intervene much in decisions regarding penalties awarded.

Şirin and Sevilmiş, in their study of the 2016–2017 Super League season, identified the most common penalties as fines, match entry bans, pitch entry restrictions, warnings, match suspensions, dressing room and substitute bench bans, and disqualifications (Şirin & Sevilmiş, 2018). Şimşek and Or, in their study of the 2021–2022 season, corroborated these findings, reporting that fines were the most frequently applied penalty (Şimşek & Or, 2023). The present research likewise found that fines were the most frequently applied penalty. All three studies converge on the same result.

Şimşek and Or reported that monetary fines were predominantly applied in the 2021–2022 season (Şimşek & Or, 2023). Şimşek and Kesler also reported that monetary fines were the most common disciplinary penalty in the 2022–2023 season (Şimşek & Kesler, 2024). In addition to the seasons mentioned in the text, the present research examined the 2023–2024 season, during which monetary fines were predominantly imposed. All three studies report the same finding.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study, which analyzes the decisions of the TFF PFDC during the 2021–2022, 2022–2023, and 2023–2024 seasons, examined 7603 decisions. A longitudinal research method was used in the study. The analysis revealed that the highest number of disciplinary penalties was issued for incidents occurring in Super League, 1st League, and 2nd League (Red Group) matches. The primary groups responsible for actions leading to penalties were found to be fans, club legal entities, and athletes. The most common disciplinary penalties were for actions violating regulations, followed by unsportsmanlike conduct considered contrary to the spirit of sport, and, unfortunately, offensive and abusive chanting. The most frequent disciplinary penalties were monetary fines, warnings, and bans from entering the dressing room and the substitute bench during official matches. The highest number of monetary fines was issued for negative actions exhibited by fans, club legal entities, and club presidents. Looking at the seasons, it has been observed that disciplinary penalties for the 2021–2022 season continued to increase in 2022–2023 (excluding violations of regulations, which decreased), but there was a noticeable decrease in 2023–2024 (excluding violations of regulations, which increased).

- First and foremost, an analysis should be conducted to determine whether the disciplinary penalties imposed are purely punitive or merely deterrents. It is also necessary to investigate why clubs, despite the most frequent penalty, choose to pay this amount and continue committing the actions for which they are being fined.
- Those who receive fair play awards from the TFF, along with the actions that led to these awards, should be reported more widely across print, visual, and social media. This should not be limited to the TFF website; the TFF should make a separate effort to reach a wider audience.
- The fact that actions contrary to the instructions are repeated so frequently indicates either that the instructions are very weak and easily violated, that there are difficulties in their implementation, or that they are vulnerable to violation by those willing to pay the penalty. In this context, it is suggested that TFF officials conduct further research into why the instructions are so frequently violated.
- Considering that the fans, an indispensable part of football, are the ones who cause the most fines to be imposed on clubs, club entities, and managers, educational activities should be carried out specifically targeting this group.
- Actions that have no place in the present culture, such as offensive and abusive chanting, are not punished on the first offense. This practice, in which only a warning is issued for the first instance of such behavior, may encourage individuals or institutions to engage in similar actions. To prevent this, if a team that competed in the same league in the previous season exhibits the same behavior in the following season, the penalty could be applied without treating it as a first offense.
- Organizing training seminars to raise awareness among sports clubs about Law No. 6222 on the Prevention of Violence and Disorder in Sports and to explain the financial penalties clubs will face for noncompliance with the law's provisions, through these and similar initiatives, could motivate clubs to reduce negative actions.

Data Availability Statement: The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

Artificial Intelligence Usage Statement: This study used Google Translate and Grammarly Plus solely to improve language and edit grammar.

Ethics Committee Approval: Because the research data is publicly available on the official website, ethical committee approval was not required.

Informed Consent: Informed consent was not required for this study, as the research involved the retrospective analysis of publicly accessible administrative data and did not involve direct interaction with human subjects.

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