

# DISCIPLINE, PROTEST, GRIEVANCE AND APPEAL PROCEDURES

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## 4.1. INTRODUCTION

**PURPOSE** The purpose of the STYSA Discipline, Protest and Grievance Procedures is to promote and ensure uniformity and consistency in the application of the rules and procedures of STYSA, including its Member Associations, USYSA, USSF and FIFA. In addition, it is the purpose of these rules to attempt to regulate and control acceptable, unsportsmanlike and unfair behavior on the part of players, coaches, managers, administrators, fans and supporters, in order to promote the sport of youth soccer.

## 4.2. DEFINITIONS

- 4.2.1. **Appeals** may be submitted following a decision from a protest hearing, administrative action, disciplinary hearing or lower level appeal. Only those parties to the original action shall be allowed to appeal.
- 4.2.2. **Assault** is an intentional act of physical violence. Assault includes, but is not limited to, the following acts: hitting, kicking, punching, slapping, choking, spitting at or on; grabbing or bodily running into; the act of kicking or throwing any object at another that could inflict injury; damaging a uniform or personal property; i.e., car, equipment (cards, whistle, notebook, etc.) or knocking equipment or other objects out of the hand.
- 4.2.3. **Abuse** is a verbal statement or physical act which implies or threatens physical harm to an individual. It also includes verbal abuse which is threatening, cursing, or demeaning a person or any member of his or her family.
- 4.2.4. **Automatic Suspension** shall mean that a coach, assistant coach, player, or spectator shall not participate in any STYSA, USYSA, or USSF sanctioned activity, including but not limited to games, practices, practice games, tournament play, or friendly games. The Member Association shall confiscate all player ID cards of the team members or player(s) suspended, until such person is re-instated. An automatic suspension may only be imposed for allegations of referee assault as per USSF Policy 531-9.
- 4.2.5. **Immediate Suspension** shall mean that a coach, assistant coach, player, or spectator shall not participate in any STYSA, USYSA, or USSF sanctioned activity, including but not limited to games, practices, practice games, tournament play, or friendly games. An Immediate Suspension shall be imposed as defined in section 4.9.3 or 4.9.6. (Added 2.26.2018)
- 4.2.6. **Caution** shall mean when a referee shows a yellow card to a player during a game or issues a verbal warning to a coach, assistant coach, trainer or other individual during a game. All cautions should be recorded on the official game report.
- 4.2.7. **Competition Official.** An individual (paid or volunteer) appointed by an appropriate administrative authority to act in an official capacity as a field marshal, assignor, or scheduler, or in another administrative support role. (Added 2.22.2015)
- 4.2.8. **Ejections** shall mean:
- a. For a player when a center referee shows a red card to a player during a game.
  - b. For a coach, assistant coach, trainer or other individual when the center referee asks that individual to leave the game area.
  - c. All ejections should be recorded on the official game report.

- 4.2.9. **Disciplinary Hearings.** STYSA and its Member Associations may call disciplinary hearings to investigate allegations of misconduct. Allegations of misconduct constitute violations of published rules, regulations / procedures, or match-related violent behavior and misconduct.
- 4.2.10. **Disciplinary Action** may be rendered by STYSA or Member Associations following the completion of a proper hearing. This action may include, but is not limited to: censure, fines as adopted by STYSA, a Member Association or its affiliates, suspensions, institution of probation stipulations, prohibition of participation in specific STYSA sanctioned activities, and removal from office or official position. It shall not include the issuance of penalty points beyond that which is prescribed in the STYSA Progressive Discipline System.
- 4.2.11. **Forms of Play:** STYSA recognizes the following forms of play:
- a. **Practices.** Practices are any event by a team or part of a team for the purpose of instruction, drills, or performance preparation.
  - b. **Practice Games / Scrimmages.** Practice / scrimmage games are any play between two teams that are not season games or tournament play.
  - c. **Season Games.** Season games are those matches scheduled by Member Associations or Inter-Association leagues for play during the Fall or Spring seasons.
  - d. **Tournament Play.** Tournament play is any contest involving teams competing in a series of games. Invitational tournaments are those to which teams apply, and a spoken or written request is provided requesting a team's participation. Post-seasonal tournaments are those in which teams earn the right to participate following season games.
  - e. **Friendly Games.** Games played between teams in a tournament format where awards are not presented and standings are not noted.
- 4.2.12. **Grievance** is any complaint which is not a protest or an appeal, but in the opinion of the complainant is a violation of STYSA, USYSA or USSF Constitution, By-Laws or Rules and Procedures or involves the members of two different STYSA Member Associations. **A grievance also includes any complaint against an administrator (paid or volunteer), officer, or governing board member appointed or elected by a Member Association, Local Association, or Club alleging (i) wrongful, improper, or unlawful behavior, and/or (ii) a violation of published rules, regulations, or procedures of the Member Association, Local Association, or Club.** A grievance shall not encompass allegations of violations of FIFA Laws of the Game or matters of referee judgment. **(Changed 2.22.2015)**
- 4.2.13. **Protest** is related to a specific game and is filed by one of the involved team officials. Only those teams involved are permitted to protest a game result. Protests, on a specific game, cannot be filed by third parties, such as coaches of other teams or league / state administrator(s). A protest may not be based upon the judgment call of a referee.
- 4.2.14. **Referee** includes the following:
- a. All currently registered USSF referees, assistant referees, 4th officials or duly appointed to assist in officiating in a match;
  - b. Any non-licenses, non-registered person serving as a referee;
  - c. Any club linesman.
- 4.2.15. **Season** - The STYSA Fall season shall begin on September 1st and end December 31st of each Seasonal Year. The STYSA Spring / Summer season shall begin on January 1st and end July 15th of each Seasonal Year.

- 4.2.16. **Standing** - In matter relating to grievances, protests or appeals, only the following will have standing before the STYSA Appeals Committee:
- a. currently registered players [and their legal guardian(s)];
  - b. STYSA coaches;
  - c. an elected / appointed STYSA administrator or committee member;
  - d. any administrator / governing board member appointed or elected by a Member Association or Club in good standing.

4.2.17. **Suspension** is defined as follows:

- a. A coach, assistant coach or trainer may not attend or observe one or more matches and may not participate in warm-up or half-time activities of the match or matches.
- b. A player may not play in one or more matches with the team they are currently rostered to or with another team using the Club Player Pass system. The player may attend the next match or matches played, but not in uniform.
- c. Individual. Any other suspension of a person under these procedures is defined as: The person shall not attend or observe any USSF or STYSA sponsored event including practices, games, tournaments or any other event for the term of the suspension.
- d. **Team**. Team suspension shall be defined as:
  - (1) The team shall not compete in any STYSA or USSF sponsored activity including practices, season games, friendly games, or tournament play.
  - (2) No travel permits may be approved.
  - (3) No more than five (5) players from the suspended team may transfer to or play on any one team.
  - (4) The coach of the suspended team may not coach any of the players of the suspended team during the suspension with the exception of his / her child.
- e. **Association, Club or League**. The suspension of an association, club or league means the loss of rights and privileges including any one or all of the following:
  - (1) loss of right to participate in Fall Championship playoffs, including District and State Tournaments,
  - (2) loss of right to participate in US Youth Soccer National Championship play;
  - (3) fines;
  - (4) loss of voting privileges; and
  - (5) loss of any other right or privilege provided by STYSA, USYSA, USSF and / or FIFA.
- f. **Reciprocity of Suspensions**. STYSA and its Member Associations will reciprocally recognize the suspension of a player, coach, administrator, fan or team imposed by its Member Associations, Texas State Soccer Association South or any other USYSA National State Association.

- 4.2.18. **Coach**. An individual who coaches, trains or manages a team either permanently or temporarily. This includes assistant coaches, trainers and managers.

#### 4.3. **APPEALS COMMITTEE**

- 4.3.1. **Functions of the Appeals Committee**. The STYSA Appeals Committee will hold hearings and exercise and administer powers granted to it in these and other STYSA, USYS, USSF and FIFA rules and regulations.

4.3.2. **Committee Structure**

- a. The STYSA Appeals Committee shall consist of a chairperson and additional appointed members

- b. The chairperson will be appointed in accordance with the STYSA By-Laws for a one-year term beginning April 1st. Associate and assistant chairpersons may be appointed by the STYSA Executive Vice-President.
- c. Seven additional members from each district will be appointed by the Eastern and Western District Vice-Presidents. These additional members shall serve one-year terms beginning August 1<sup>st</sup>.
- d. A STYSA Advocate may be appointed by the STYSA Executive Vice-President to act in the role of prosecutor for cases at the discretion of the Chairperson of the Appeals Committee. One assistant STYSA Advocate from each District may be appointed by the respective District Vice Presidents to serve at the discretion of the Chairperson of the Appeals Committee.

#### 4.4. LINE OF JURISDICTION

- 4.4.1. The line of jurisdiction on protests, appeals, and grievances, except as indicated below, shall be as follows:
  - a. One Member Association appeals body, then
  - b. STYSA Appeals Committee, then
  - c. STYSA Executive Committee only in disputes between Member Associations or their member clubs, then
  - d. USSF National Appeals Committee.
  
- 4.4.2. **Assault of Referee.** In the instance of assault of a referee, the line of jurisdiction shall be as follows:
  - a. STYSA Appeals Committee, then
  - b. USSF National Appeals Committee.
  
- 4.4.3. **Abuse of Referee.** In the instance of abuse of a referee, the line of jurisdiction shall be as follows:
  - a. Member Association or STYSA D & P; then
  - b. STYSA Appeals Committee; then
  - c. USSF National Appeals Committee.
  
- 4.4.4. **Request for Reinstatement** following an Automatic Suspension of a Player for acquisition of excessive penalty points. The line of jurisdiction shall be as follows:
  - a. STYSA Appeals Committee, unless referred to the Member Association by the Committee; then
  - b. USSF National Appeals Committee.
  
- 4.4.5. **Protest of League Play**
  - a. As per local club / member association / playing association rules; then
  - b. STYSA Appeals Committee; then
  - c. No Appeals allowed
  
- 4.4.6. **Protest of Fall District Play-off Competition**
  - a. In accordance with Play-off Rules Section V and handled by the STYSA Appeals Committee or its appointed representative(s);
  - b. No appeals allowed.
  
- 4.4.7. **Protest of Fall State Play-off Competition**
  - a. The STYSA Appeals Committee or their designates will render all decisions.
  - b. No appeals allowed.
  
- 4.4.8. **Protest of US Youth Soccer National Championship Play, STYSA President's Cup, Director's Cup, or South Texas Cup Play.**
  - a. STYSA Appeals Committee or their designees will render all decisions on protests.
  - b. No appeals allowed. **(Changed 2.22.2015)**

- 4.4.9. **Protest of a Yellow or Red Card Booking**  
a. The STYSA Appeals Committee shall render all decisions.  
b. No appeals allowed.
- 4.4.10. **Misconduct related to state team development or Olympic Development:**  
a. STYSA State Team / Olympic Development Committee, then on appeal to:  
b. STYSA Appeals Committee, then on appeal as per 4.4.1.
- 4.4.11. **Invitational Tournaments.** The Tournament Rules shall provide whether protests will be allowed and the requisite procedures for such. No appeals shall be allowed.
- 4.4.12. **Decision Shall Stand Until Overturned.** All decisions at all levels of the appeal / protest procedures shall stand and be in full force and effect until changed by a higher authority and communicated to all of the affected parties in writing.
- 4.4.13. **Exhaust Lower Levels First.** All lower levels of protest / appeal must be exhausted at all lower levels before STYSA Appeals Committee / Executive Committee will hear an appeal.
- 4.4.14. **Appeal to Higher Level.** At all levels of the appeal / protest process, if a decision is not reached within 45 days of receipt of the written appeal / protest, the party filing the appeal / protest may submit the appeal / protest to the next higher level with no additional fee.
- 4.4.15. **Cannot Invoke Aid of Courts.** No official, club, league, association, team coach, referee, fan, supporter or player or their representative may invoke the aid of the courts of any State or of the United States without first exhausting all available remedies within the appropriate soccer organizations as set forth under the lines of authority herein.
- 4.4.16. **Penalty for Failure to Exhaust Administrative Remedies.** Any person(s) or group(s) bringing action through the court system without exhausting the administrative remedies listed herein or in the USYSA / USSF rules is subject to the following:  
a. **Suspension.** The person(s) or group(s) shall be subject to suspension from all soccer activities and forfeit any appeal / protest rights. A hearing will be held by the STYSA Appeals Committee to determine whether suspension is warranted for the specifics of the case.  
b. **Liability for all Costs.** The person(s) or group(s) is / are liable to STYSA and / or its Member Association for all expenses incurred by STYSA, its Member Associations and / or officers, directors or administrators in defending the action, including, but not limited to:  
(1) court costs;  
(2) attorney's fees;  
(3) cost of litigation, including depositions, expert witness fees, etc.;  
(4) reasonable compensation for time spent by STYSA and Member Association administrators and employees in responding to and defending against allegations in the action, including responses to discovery and court appearances;  
(5) travel expenses; and  
(6) expenses for holding special STYSA or Member Association meetings necessitated by the court action.
- 4.5. **FEES FOR HEARING AND APPEALS**
- 4.5.1. The fee to the STYSA Appeals Committee shall be \$250 (refunded if successful) for a protest filed with the Appeals Committee and \$300 (refunded if successful) for an appeal filed with the STYSA Appeals Committee. **(Changed 2.14.10)**
- 4.5.2. The appeal fee to the STYSA Executive Committee shall be \$300, refunded if the appeal is successful. **(Changed 2.14.10)**

4.5.3. All fees will be submitted in the form of cash, STYSA Member Association check, money order, certified or cashier's checks made payable to STYSA.

4.5.4. There shall be no fee for requests for a hearing following an automatic and/or indefinite suspension, an appeal of a Kidsafe/Risk Management denial, or for grievances submitted to the STYSA Appeals Committee. **(Changed 2.14.10)**

#### 4.6. HEARING PROCEDURES

4.6.1. **Original Hearing.** The original hearing of any protest or allegation of misconduct must occur in an open hearing. Subsequent appeal(s) may be heard in either open or closed hearings.

a. **No Conflict of Interest.** Members of any committee hearing a protest, appeal, disciplinary hearing or grievance shall be composed of persons having no conflict of interest in the matters being heard, and having no association with the principal parties in the matters. No person may adjudicate a matter at more than one level.

b. **Secretary of the Hearing.** The chairperson of the committee shall appoint one committee member to make a written record (minutes) of the proceedings.

##### c. Types of Hearings

(1) **Open hearings** shall be held with the principal parties, witnesses for both sides, and all necessary evidence, actually appearing before the members of the Hearing Committee. Testimony from witnesses need not be taken in the presence of other witnesses, but the principal parties shall be present for all proceedings except the deliberations of the Hearing Committee.

(2) **Closed hearings** require that all testimony and evidence (including the rules) be submitted in writing. Testimony and evidence may be considered by the committee members on an individual basis, with a decision by mail or conference call.

d. **Notification of a Hearing.** Proper notification of a hearing will be submitted whenever an open hearing is scheduled.

(1) Notification must be received by all parties no later than three (3) days prior to the hearing. Individuals may waive their rights to the three (3) day notice, if done so in writing prior to the start of any hearing.

(2) Proper notification will occur in writing and will be considered received if sent under the following procedures (in descending order of preference): certified mail, return receipt requested at the address of record, express mail with receipt of acceptance, hand delivery with written acceptance or hand delivery without written acceptance but witnessed by two individuals, fax with confirmation of receipt.

(3) Hearing notification letters will contain the following information:

(a) Date of letter

(b) Mode of delivery

(c) Reason for the hearing and case number

(d) Role of the individual being requested to appear at the hearing (i.e., accused, witness, respondent)

(e) Date, time, location (with map) of the hearing

(f) A brief description of the procedures of the hearing.

(g) Note of the specific charges or alleged violations and possible consequences if the charges are found to be true.

e. **Agenda for Open Hearings.** All parties, including witnesses, will be brought into the hearing chamber. The following items will be described by the chairperson:

(1) Names of the parties involved (including team, league, club, association, etc.)

- (2) Specific event involved (game, tournament, etc.)
- (3) Date of occurrence
- (4) Rule numbers and description of rules allegedly violated.

**f. Procedures of Hearing**

- (1) The parties shall be allowed to remain in the hearing chamber. All witnesses are to wait outside of the hearing chamber.
- (2) All written evidence should have been presented in advance for distribution and inclusion in the evidence packet.
- (3) All written evidence presented at the hearing will be passed to the chairperson. The committee will vote on the Chairperson. The committee will vote on its acceptance as proper evidence.
- (4) All questions / statements from involved parties will be addressed to the Chairperson who will ask the appropriate individual for an answer / rebuttal if he / she deems it pertinent.
- (5) Witnesses may be recalled after initial testimony for further testimony and / or clarification.
- (6) All witnesses will then be excused to outer chamber, then:
  - (a) Movant / Appellant will present case.
  - (b) Witnesses for Movant / Appellant will be called individually.
  - (c) Committee members may question parties and witnesses as deemed necessary.
- (7) Respondent / Appellee will present case.
- (8) Witness for Respondent / Appellee will be called individually.
- (9) Committee members may questions parties and witnesses as deemed necessary.
- (10) Any witnesses may be recalled as necessary.
- (11) Movant / Appellant will make a closing statement.
- (12) Respondent / Appellee will make a closing statement.
- (13) Open hearing adjourned. The parties are excused and the committee shall deliberate.
- (14) Participants may have legal counsel present during their involvement in any hearing. Legal counsel shall not have the privilege of addressing the Committee or other parties but may privately advise their clients.
- (15) If the State Association or member of the State Association ("Party") is represented by another individual at any hearing and the hearing panel allows that individual to speak, question the parties and/or witnesses, or grants that individual any other rights, then it shall afford all other parties, or the individual representing the party, including an attorney, the same rights during the course of the hearing as are allowed to the individual representing the Party.
- (16) During the course of the hearing, the party may confer with the individual who is assisting before making a statement or request or prior to responding to questions. The Chairperson may limit the frequency and duration of the conferences so as not to unduly interfere with the proceedings.
- (17) If there is confusion or concern the party may request a recess to confer with the individual assisting the party. The Chairperson shall decide whether a recess shall be granted and its duration.

**g. Evidence and Testimony**

- (1) All evidence, such as identification cards, team rosters, referee game reports, letters, proof of age documents, and other sources of written or printed information shall be original or official only. No copies shall be accepted unless the committee is convinced that the original document has been lost or destroyed.
- (2) All testimony shall be limited to the principal parties, eye-witnesses, and the recognized authorities on the subject (such as the registrar on registration matters).
- (3) If a witness cannot appear at an open hearing, written testimony will be accepted. Notarization may be required at the option of the hearing authority.
- (4) Character witnesses and other third party (non eye-witnesses) shall not be allowed.

- (5) Each party shall have the right to call witnesses and present oral and written evidence and argument.
- (6) Each party shall have the right to confront witnesses, including the right to be provided the identity of witnesses in advance of the hearing.
- (7) Each party shall have the right to have a record made of the hearing if desired.
- (8) The committee may limit the number of witnesses if the testimony is repetitive and in the interest of time.

**h. Document Directory**

- (1) A document directory shall be created by the committee and maintained at each level thereafter. It is strongly recommended that a document directory be developed on the local and / or Member Association level.
- (2) All documentary evidence received shall be listed on the directory. The minutes and decision shall be added to the directory as the last documents.

**i. Decision**

- (1) The decisions of the committee shall respond only to the specific issues and allegations contained in the complaint or appeal.
- (2) Any other issue and / or rule violation, which may become known or apparent during the hearing, shall be referred to either the convening authority or a lower level authority, except for physical violence or assault on a referee which shall go immediately to the STYSA Appeals Committee. This referral may be accompanied by a recommendation for appropriate action.

**j. Notification of Decision - Hearing or Appeal**

- (1) The parties may obtain an oral decision within 72 hours of the decision by contacting the STYSA State Office. The parties shall also be notified in writing within ten (10) business days of the hearing by one of the following methods (in order of preference):
  - (a) Overnight delivery service, delivery confirmation, adult signature required; **(Added 2.26.12)**
  - (b) Certified mail, return receipt requested;
  - (c) Hand delivery;
  - (d) Telecopy (FAX) with verbal confirmation;
  - (e) Mailgram; or E-mail with delivery / read acknowledgement
  - (f) Telegram with confirming copy.
- (2) Written notification shall contain:
  - (a) date of the hearing;
  - (b) decision including any disciplinary action and the effective dates;
  - (c) the right methods and requirements of appeal;
  - (d) in cases where the next level of appeal is the STYSA Appeals Committee, the following phrase will be included in the addition to a copy of Form 1: "This decision may be appealed to the STYSA Appeals Committee, c/o STYSA State Office. Any appeal must be submitted in writing (with four copies), and sent by certified, return receipt within seven (7) days of the receipt of this decision. The appeal must be accompanied by a \$300.00 non-refundable filing fee and the enclosed appeal form. A copy of the appeal must be submitted to the opposing party and the Member Association President / Appeals Committee Chairman at the time of the original filing."

**4.6.2. Statute of Limitations.** Disciplinary hearings must be conducted as soon as is reasonable, but no later than 6 months after the alleged misconduct in all instances except referee abuse or assault. In referee abuse / assault cases, hearings must be conducted in accordance with USSF Policy 531-9.

**4.7. APPELLATE REVIEW**

#### 4.7.1. **Appeal Procedure**

- a. **Documentation.** An appeal, with the appropriate fee, must be in writing and consist of the "Notice of Appeal - Form 1" which shall be mailed to the STYSA State Office, all opposing parties, and the appeals committee or other body whose decision is being appealed.
- b. **Time for Filing.** The appeal must be filed within twelve (12) days from the receipt of the decision of the lower authority.
- c. **Respondent Reply.** The lower authority whose decision is being appealed shall, within seven (7) days of the date of the notice of appeal, forward to the STYSA Appeals Committee the official record utilized by it in making its decision. Parties shall not resubmit documents contained in the official record. The official record shall be limited to all of the material considered at the Member Association level.
- d. Within ten (10) days of the date of the notice of appeal, the appealing party shall submit to the STYSA Appeals Committee any argument it wishes to make in support of the appeal and shall furnish copies of the argument to all opposing parties and to the original hearing committee.
- e. Within twenty (20) days of the date of the notice of appeal, all opposing parties shall submit to the STYSA Appeals Committee any argument they wish to make in opposition to the appeal.
- f. **Information Access.** Parties filing a protest / appeal / grievance shall have access to all pertinent information regarding their protest / appeal / grievance. Member Associations shall not deny access to any information that could apply to the protest / appeal / grievance.
- g. **Modification of Time Requirements.** Notwithstanding the above, the STYSA Appeals Committee Chairperson and / or the President of STYSA, shall, in their sole discretion, have the authority to amend and / or adjust the notification requirement in the event of extenuating circumstances.
- h. **Information to be Submitted by Appellant**
  - (1) Date of the occurrence in question
  - (2) List of all person involved including their names, addresses and telephone numbers and other identification. Persons shall include:
    - (a) Both coaches;
    - (b) Assistant coaches;
    - (c) Referees and linespersons;
    - (d) Any players involved in the matter protested;
    - (e) Any witnesses.
  - (3) A short plain statement of the matter appealed setting forth the specific law or rule involved in the appeal.
  - (4) The lower authority decision which is being appealed.
  - (5) Action that Appellant desires STYSA to take.
  - (6) Copies of any applicable rules, regulations, Constitutional or By-laws provisions.
- i. **Information to be Submitted by Respondent**
  - (1) A copy of the original documents submitted during the initial hearing.
  - (2) A copy of the original decision rendered.
  - (3) A short plain statement of the matters setting forth the specific facts involved.
  - (4) Copies of any applicable rules, regulations, Constitutional or By-Laws provisions.

- (5) If there is no response filed, the Committee shall proceed to hear the case without further notice. However, the burden is still on the Appellant to show that he / she / they are entitled to the relief which is sought.

4.7.2. **Review of Appeal.** The Appeals Committee Chairperson / STYSA President shall review the appeal or protest and rule as to whether the proper procedures have been followed. If not, the Chairperson / President shall notify the requesting party that their appeal or protest is being denied without a hearing, the reason for the denial, and the fact that no further action will be taken. If the protest or appeal merits a hearing, the Appeals Committee Chairperson / President shall call the Appeals Committee / Executive Committee together in person or by telephone conference call and render a decision on the appeal in the manner in which the committee deems appropriate.

#### 4.8. **GRIEVANCES**

4.8.1. **Notifications.** Grievances should be directed to the STYSA State Office (Attention Appeals Committee). The State Office shall notify the Appeals Committee Chairperson and the STYSA President of any grievance received.

4.8.2. **Grievance Fee.** There is no fee for a grievance.

4.8.3. **STYSA Action.** The Appeals Committee Chairperson will review all grievance letters and in his / her sole discretion take whatever action is deemed appropriate. At a minimum all such letters will be acknowledged. Such additional action may include:

- a. No action required.
- b. Request that the STYSA Executive Committee approve a formal state investigation;
- c. Refer to member association Appeals Committee with request to notify Appeals Committee Chairperson on what action was / is to be taken, if any; or
- d. Any other action the STYSA Appeals Committee Chairperson deems appropriate considering the circumstances.

#### 4.9. **PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE SYSTEM**

4.9.1. **Purpose.** Misconduct of players, coaches and fans continues to be a problem in soccer. More emphasis is needed to promote proper conduct and good sportsmanship, especially in our youth competition. The following system is an effort to discourage violent play and misconduct.

##### 4.9.2. **Responsibilities of Coaches, Players and Associations**

- a. **Maintain Control of Fans and Sideline.** Coaches are required to maintain control of their players and the team's fans on the sideline. A coach or an assistant coach may be cautioned and / or ejected by a referee for the misconduct of a fan of the team which he / she coaches.
- b. **Penalty Points.** Coaches are responsible for maintaining their individual penalty points and the individual penalty points of their players. Players are also responsible for maintaining their individual penalty points.

4.9.3. **Misconduct by Fan / Supporter.** The parents, fans or supporters of any STYSA team by attending a STYSA sponsored event subject themselves to the jurisdiction of the member association and its affiliates, the STYSA Appeals Committee, Executive Committee and the STYSA Governing Board. **Therefore, misconduct by a spectator, parent, fan or supporter can be investigated and disciplinary action can be taken by any of the various levels which have jurisdiction over the team involved. Spectators, parents, fans, or supporters of any STYSA team who are sent away from the field of play by a referee or a competition official shall receive an immediate two (2) week suspension or until a hearing is held, whichever comes first, and may not be present at any STYSA or USYSA sanctioned**

**activity, including but not limited to games, practices, practice games, tournaments, or friendly games, during such period.**

If **disciplinary sanctions in addition to the above automatic suspension are not imposed at** the local level, the STYSA Appeals Committee may investigate the matter and hold a hearing to determine what **disciplinary actions**, if any, should be provided, **and pursuant to such hearing, may impose such additional disciplinary sanctions as it determines to be appropriate.** Such discipline can include, but is not limited to, prohibiting the **spectator**, parent, fan or supporter from attending any STYSA sponsored event, including games, practices and tournaments, for a period of time or indefinitely. The failure to comply with the discipline **imposed, either automatically or at any level of authority**, shall be **sufficient** cause for the STYSA Appeals Committee to discipline the player related to the spectator, parent, fan or supporter; the team which the **spectator**, parent, fan or supporter supports; and/or the coach of such team. **(Changed 2.22.2015)**

4.9.4. **Penalty Points Awarded.** Penalty points shall be awarded to all individual players and coaches only as follows:

a. **Recorded cautions:** 3 points per caution to the individual

b. **Recorded ejections:** 9 points per ejection to the individual.

4.9.5. **Disciplinary Action for Penalty Point Accumulation.**

An accumulation of penalty points shall result in the following disciplinary actions:

a. **Individual Penalty Points:** An individual player or coach shall be suspended as follows:

(1) Nine (9) penalty points

(a) Player - Suspension for the next game actually played by the team to which the player is currently rostered. Suspension shall not be served in forfeited, friendly or invitational tournament matches.

(b) Coach, Assistant Coach or Trainer Not Ejected – If a coach, assistant coach or trainer is not ejected or asked to leave a game by the referee, but reaches nine (9) penalty points, then suspension for the next game actually played by the team which played the game in which the coach reached his / her ninth (9<sup>th</sup>) penalty point. Suspension shall not be served in forfeited, friendly or invitational tournament games.

(c) Ejected Coach, Assistant Coach or Trainer – If a coach, assistant coach or trainer reaches nine (9) penalty points during a match in which he / she is ejected or asked to leave a game by the referee, then suspension:

(1) for the remainder of that day; and

(2) for the next regularly scheduled match day; and

(3) for the next game actually played by the team which played the game from which he / she was ejected.

Suspension will not be served in forfeited, friendly or invitational tournament matches.

(2) Eighteen (18) penalty points

(a) Player - Suspension for the next two (2) regularly scheduled games actually played by the team to which the player is currently rostered. Suspension shall not be served in forfeited, friendly or invitational tournament matches.

(b) Coach, Assistant Coach or Trainer Not Ejected – If a coach, assistant coach or trainer is not ejected or asked to leave a game by the referee, but reaches eighteen (18) penalty points, then suspension for the next two (2) games actually played by the team which played the game in which the coach reached

his / her eighteenth (18<sup>th</sup>) penalty point. Suspension shall not be served in forfeited, friendly or invitational tournament games.

- (c) Ejected Coach, Assistant Coach or Trainer – If a coach, assistant coach or trainer reaches eighteen (18) penalty points during a match in which he / she is ejected or asked to leave a game by the referee, then suspension:
  - a. for the remainder of that day; and
  - b. for the next two (2) regularly scheduled game days; and
  - c. for the next two (2) games actually played by the team which played the game from which he / she was ejected.Suspension will not be served in forfeited, friendly or invitational tournament matches.

- (3) Twenty-four (24) penalty points - Suspension for the next three (3) additional games actually played by the team to which the person is currently rostered; suspension shall not be served in forfeited matches or invitational games.

- (a) Player - Suspension for the next three (3) regularly scheduled games actually played by the team to which the player is currently rostered. Suspension shall not be served in forfeited, friendly or invitational tournament matches.

- (b) Coach, Assistant Coach or Trainer Not Ejected – If a coach, assistant coach or trainer is not ejected or asked to leave a game by the referee, but reaches twenty-four (24) penalty points, then suspension for the next three (3) games actually played by the team which played the game in which the coach reached his / her twenty-fourth (24<sup>th</sup>) penalty point. Suspension shall not be served in forfeited, friendly or invitational tournament games.

- (c) Ejected Coach, Assistant Coach or Trainer – If a coach, assistant coach or trainer reaches twenty-four (24) penalty points during a match in which he / she is ejected or asked to leave a game by the referee, then suspension:
  - a. for the remainder of that day; and
  - b. for the next three (3) regularly scheduled game days; and
  - c. for the next three (3) games actually played by the team which played the game from which he / she was ejected.Suspension will not be served in forfeited, friendly or invitational tournament matches.

- (4) Thirty (30) penalty points

- (a) Player - Suspension for the next four (4) regularly scheduled games actually played by the team to which the player is currently rostered. Suspension shall not be served in forfeited, friendly or invitational tournament matches.

- (b) Coach, Assistant Coach or Trainer Not Ejected – If a coach, assistant coach or trainer is not ejected or asked to leave a game by the referee, but reaches thirty (30) penalty points, then suspension for the next four (4) games actually played by the team which played the game in which the coach reached his / her thirtieth (30) penalty point. Suspension shall not be served in forfeited, friendly or invitational tournament games.

- (c) Ejected Coach, Assistant Coach or Trainer – If a coach, assistant coach or trainer reaches thirty (30) penalty points during a match in which he / she is ejected or asked to leave a game by the referee, then suspension:
  - a. for the remainder of that day; and
  - b. for the next four (4) regularly scheduled game days; and
  - c. for the next four (4) games actually played by the team which played the game from which he / she was ejected.

Suspension will not be served in forfeited, friendly or invitational tournament matches.

- (5) For the purposes of this section only, "regularly scheduled" means the game days routinely scheduled by a competition's scheduler. "Regularly scheduled" does not mean make-up games scheduled on a day when the competition as a whole is not scheduled to play.
  - (6) Maximum accumulation of penalty points in one game by a coach or player shall be nine (9) points.
  - (7) Coaches will acquire penalty points cumulatively as a single entity, person or individual regardless of the number of individual teams he / she coaches or trains. Example: A coach with three (3) teams who accumulates three (3) points in a game with each team has a total of nine (9) points.
  - (8) **Penalty Point Carryover**
    - (a) **Post-season Games Play.** Individual penalty point accumulations received during season games' play shall be extended into the respective post-season tournament play (i.e., Western / Eastern District tournament play, STYSA Fall tournament play, President's Cup tournament play, Director's Cup tournament play, South Texas Cup tournament play, and USYSNC tournament play). Individual penalty point accumulations shall not be continued into USYSNC Regional and National tournament play. Game suspensions received due to penalty point accumulations in STYSA USYSNC tournament play that have not been completed in state tournament play shall be served after completion of USYSNC Regional and National tournament play and will be served in the next season's matches. Each member association shall be responsible for reporting such point accumulations for each player and coach within the association who will participate in the tournament(s) to the respective tournament coordinators.
    - (b) **Next Season.** Penalty points obtained by individuals during specific season's games, including post-season tournament play, shall not be carried over into the next season's games.
    - (c) **Invitational Tournaments.** Unless an individual is under suspension / probation or other disciplinary action, penalty points for cautions and ejections obtained during invitational and / or commercially sponsored tournaments shall not count in the STYSA Discipline, Protest and Grievance Procedures, Progressive Discipline System; however, disciplinary action for improper conduct at such events may be taken.
  - (9) **Suspension Carryover.** Suspension shall carryover into the next season. If a player, coach or assistant coach is suspended during one season, but because of the number of games remaining in that season, does not serve the full suspension, then the number of games suspended but not served shall be served in the first and, if required, the second game of STYSA tournament play or the next season, if the person does not participate in STYSA tournament play.
  - (10) **Player Transfers.** If a player transfers to another team, he / she shall retain his / her individual penalty points.
- b. **Penalty Point Challenge.** Any challenge to penalty points must be by protest at the game in which the points are accumulated. A protest must be filed before or just after the end of the game. The protest must be made known to the opposing coach and the referee. Furthermore, the protest may not be based upon a judgment call of the referee. Within forty-eight (48) hours of the game, a written protest must be placed in the mail to

the STYSA State Office that will forward it to the Appeals Committee Chairperson for investigation and a hearing. The STYSA Appeals Committee Chairperson or his / her designee may refer the matter to a Member Association or Local Association / Club for the hearing. No appeal shall be allowed from the decision of the committee hearing the matter.

- 4.9.6. **Additional Suspensions.** Reports of assault which do not involve referee assault and reports of ejections for the acts of misconduct listed below (based upon the referee's statements on the Game Report and supplemental USSF Referee Reports or statements from competition officials) shall result in an immediate two (2) week suspension or until a hearing is held, whichever comes first, of all identified participants (players, coaches, trainers, spectators), and they may not be present at any STYSA or USYSA sanctioned activity, including but not limited to games, practices, practice games, tournament play, or friendly games during such period. A minimum of one game shall be added to the suspensions provided for in 4.9.5.
1. Violent Conduct, including but not limited to the aggression of a player towards an opponent with clearly no intent to play the ball, or fighting with, hitting or punching a player, coach, trainer, spectator, referee or administrator.
  2. Offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures directed toward a player, coach, trainer, spectator, referee or administrator.
  3. Spitting on or at a player, coach, trainer, spectator, referee, or administrator.
- 4.9.7. **Revocations of Cautions, Ejections and Penalty Points.** Cautions, ejections and penalty points may only be revoked by the STYSA Appeals Committee.
- 4.9.8. **Forfeits.** Any team that forfeits two games in a season shall be brought before the STYSA Appeals Committee for possible disciplinary action.
- 4.9.9. **Ineligible Player.** Any coach or assistant coach who is responsible for knowingly playing an ineligible player will be subject to suspension from participation in any STYSA sanctioned program.
- 4.9.10. **Team Forfeits.** Any team shall forfeit any game(s) in which it played an ineligible player.
- 4.9.11. **Club Pass System Violations.** The player, coach (of both the Primary and guest team), and the coaching director of each club are responsible for monitoring and complying with the Club Pass System rules. All adults found to have failed to properly monitor and comply with the Club Pass System rules are subject to penalty. Based on the circumstances of the violation, all adults responsible for monitoring and complying with the rules will receive a minimum of a four (4) game suspension and /or be barred from using the Club Pass System for a period of time set by the STYSA Appeals Committee. **(Added 2.26.12)**
- 4.10. **REFEREE INVOLVEMENT.** The minimum suspension period for referee abuse shall be at least three (3) scheduled matches within the rules of the competition. Longer periods of suspension may be provided when circumstances warrant.
- 4.11. **MEMBER ASSOCIATION RECORDKEEPING AND REPORTING**
- 4.11.1. **Implementation.** Each STYSA Member Association must appoint or employ a person responsible for implementing a workable procedure for frequently and regularly recording, maintaining, and reporting cautions and ejections for coaches, assistant coaches and players. The person's name, address, and telephone number are to be provided to the STYSA State Office each seasonal year. Additionally, these organizations are responsible for reporting to Texas State Soccer South any misconduct on the part of the referee.

4.11.2. **Report all Suspensions.** Each member association must report any violation that requires or results in any suspension to the respective STYSA District Vice-President, STYSA State Office and the STYSA Appeals Committee Chairperson within thirty (30) days of the suspension. Such notification must be in writing and include the reason for and period of the suspension.

4.12. **FINES FOR FAILURE TO COMPLY.** The STYSA Executive Committee is hereby authorized to levy fines against any member association which does not comply with these rules and procedures or any decision(s) of the STYSA Executive Committee or STYSA Appeals Committee.