



# Great Falls-Reston Soccer Club's

## Rules & Disciplinary Procedures

***Great Falls-Reston Soccer Club adheres to Rules & Discipline Procedures set forth by the United States Soccer Federation and Virginia Youth Soccer Association.***

### **United States Soccer Federation, Inc.**

#### **Policy 531-9—Misconduct Toward Game Officials**

##### Section 1. General

Misconduct against referees may occur before, during and after the match, including travel to and from the match. Misconduct may occur also at later times when directly related to duties of a game official as a referee.

##### Section 2. Rule Application

(A) This policy shall supersede any inconsistent rules of Organization Members that pertain to assaults or abuse upon Federation referees, assistant referees, the manner and means of hearings, appeals, and rehearings in matters pertaining thereto.

(B) Nothing in this policy rule shall be construed to restrict or limit any league, event/tournament or Organization Member from applying equal or greater restrictions to anyone not listed in section 4(a)(1) of this policy (i.e., a spectator associated with a club or team).

(C) This policy shall not apply to players, coaches, managers, club officials, or league officials while participating in Professional League Member activities.

##### Section 3. Terms and References

As used in this policy—

(1) "Referee" includes the following:

(a) all currently registered USSF referees, assistant referees, 4th officials or others duly appointed to assist in officiating in a match.

(b) any non-licensed, non-registered person serving in an emergency capacity as a referee (under Rule 3040).

(c) any club assistant referee.

(2) "Hearing" means a meeting of at least three neutral members, one of whom is designated or elected to serve as chairman. The hearing shall be conducted pursuant to guidelines established by the Organization Member.

(3) (a) (i) Referee assault is an intentional act of physical violence at or upon a referee.

(ii) For purposes of this policy, "intentional act" shall mean an act intend to bring about a result which will invade the interests of another in a way that is socially unacceptable. Unintended consequences of the act are irrelevant.

(b) Assault includes, but is not limited to the following acts committed upon a referee: hitting, kicking, punching, choking, spitting on, grabbing or bodily running into a referee; head butting; the act of kicking or throwing any object at a referee that could inflict injury; damaging the referee's uniform or personal property, i.e. car, equipment, etc.

13

(4) (a) Referee abuse is a verbal statement or physical act not resulting in bodily contact

which implies or threatens physical harm to a referee or the referee's property or equipment.

(b) Abuse includes, but is not limited to the following acts committed upon a referee: using foul or abusive language toward a referee that implies or threatens physical harm; spewing any beverage on a referee's personal property; or spitting at (but not on) the referee.

#### Section 4. Jurisdiction and Hearings

##### (A) General

(1) When any amateur or professional player, coach, manager, club official or game official assaults or abuses a referee, the original jurisdiction to adjudicate the matter shall vest immediately in the responsible Organization Member which is affiliated with the United States Soccer Federation.

(2) When an allegation of assault is verified by the Organization Member, the person is automatically suspended until the hearing on the assault.

(3) The Organization Member must hold a hearing within thirty (30) days of the verification by the Member of the abuse or assault or, if applicable, the thirty-day period provided by subsection (B)(3) of this section. If the Member does not adjudicate the matter within that period of time, original jurisdiction shall immediately vest in the Federation's Appeals Committee to adjudicate the matter, to which the same provisions as to the term of suspension shall apply.

(4) Failure to hold the initial hearing shall not rescind the automatic suspension.

##### (B) Events and Tournaments

(1) In the event an assault or abuse of a referee occurs in an event outside the alleged offender's home state, the referee shall (A) immediately notify the Event/Tournament Chairman, and (B) forward a copy of the game report and his/her comments on the incident to the Event/Tournament Chairman.

(2) The Event/Tournament Chairman shall have the right to immediately convene a hearing at the site of the Event/Tournament, at which the alleged offender, the coach of the alleged offender when the offender is a player, and the game official should be present. Information presented at this hearing shall promptly be relayed to the alleged offender's Organization Member President by the Event/Tournament Chairman, both orally and in writing; however, failure to provide written information shall not restrict the offender's Organization Member from taking action with regard to any referee abuse or assault.

(3) Final jurisdiction shall vest with the alleged offender's Organization Member. A hearing shall be held by that Organization Member within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the initial report of the abuse or assault on a referee.

#### Section 5. Penalties and Suspensions

##### (A) Assault

(1) The person committing the referee assault must be suspended as follows:

14

(a) for a minor or slight touching of the referee or the referee's uniform or personal property, at least 3 months from the time of the assault;

(b) except as provided in clause (i) or (ii), for any other assault, at least 6 months from the time of the assault:

(i) for an assault committed by an adult and the referee is 17 years of age or younger, at least 3 years; or

(ii) for an assault when serious injuries are inflicted, at least 5 years.

(2) An Organization Member adjudicating the matter may not provide a shorter period of suspension but, if circumstances warrant, may provide a longer period of suspension.

##### (B) Abuse

The minimum suspension period for referee abuse shall be at least three (3) scheduled

matches within the rules of that competition. The Organization Member adjudicating the matter may provide a longer period of suspension when circumstances warrant (e.g., habitual offenders).

#### Section 6. Appeals

A person who is found to have committed the abuse and/or assault may appeal to the Appeals Committee by following the procedures of Federation Bylaw 705 within ten (10) days from receipt of the decision of the Organization Member.

#### Section 7. Procedure for Reporting Assault and Abuse

(A) Procedures for reporting of referee assault and/or abuse shall be developed and disseminated by the National Referee Committee to all Federation registered referees.

(B) Referees shall transmit a written report of the alleged assault or abuse, or both, within 48 hours of the incident (unless there is a valid reason for later reporting) to the designee of the Organization Member and the State Referee Administrator. For tournaments or special events, the referee shall transmit a written report to the tournament director on the day of the incident and to his home state SRA within 10 days of the incident.

### **Bylaw 701- HEARING PROCEDURES**

In all hearings conducted under these bylaws, the parties shall be accorded —

- (1) notice of the specific charges or alleged violations in writing and possible consequences if the charges are found to be true;
- (2) reasonable time between receipt of the notice of charges and the hearing within which to prepare a defense;
- (3) the right to have the hearing conducted at a time and place so as to make it practicable for the person charged to attend;
- (4) a hearing before a disinterested and impartial body of fact-finders;
- (5) the right to be assisted in the presentation of one's case at the hearing;
- (6) the right to call witnesses and present oral and written evidence and argument;
- (7) the right to confront witnesses, including the right to be provided the identity of witnesses in advance of the hearing;
- (8) the right to have a record made of the hearing if desired;
- (9) a written decision, with reasons for the decision, based solely on the evidence of record, issued in a timely fashion;
- (10) notice of any substantive and material action of the hearing panel in the course of the proceedings; and
- (11) equality concerning communications, and no ex parte communication is permitted between a party and any person involved in making its decision or procedural determination except to provide explanations involving procedures to be followed.

### **Policy 701-1—Right to Assistance at Hearings**

This policy provides the minimum rights that each party would have at a hearing with respect to the right to assistance in presenting one's case at a hearing, as must be allowed under Federation Bylaw 701(5). These minimum rights apply to hearings conducted by State Associations and their members or other hearing body. A copy of these minimum rights should be delivered to the parties with the notice of the hearing.

(A) Each party at a hearing shall have the right to have an individual present at the hearing to assist the party in presenting the party's case. Such individual may, but shall not be required to, be an attorney.

(B) If the State Association or member of the State Association ("Complainant") 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 is allowed to the individual representing the Complainant.

(C) If an attorney is present at a hearing to assist a party in presenting the party's case, it shall be made clear at the commencement of any such hearing that the hearing shall proceed in accordance with the State Association's hearing rules and procedures. All Federal, State or local Rules of Evidence or Civil Procedure shall not be applicable.

(D) A State Association may provide, as part of its hearing rules and procedures, that an individual assisting a party may be allowed to speak on behalf of the party, make requests or ask questions at the hearing.

16

(E) Regardless of whether the State Association allows the individual assisting the party the rights to speak, make requests or ask questions, as noted in Paragraph 4 above, an individual assisting the party in presenting the party's case shall have the right to be physically present in the hearing room, and so as not to interfere with the hearing procedure, it is also recommended that the individual be seated close to the party (either behind or next to the party) so that the party may seek assistance when desired during the course of the hearing.

(F) During the course of the hearing, the party may confer briefly with the individual who is assisting before making a statement or request or prior to responding to a question. The panel conducting the hearing may limit the frequency and duration of the conferences so as not to unduly interfere with the proceeding.

(G) If there is confusion or concern, the party may request a recess to confer with the individual assisting the party. Such a request should be granted unless the number of requests by a party becomes unreasonable or the length of a requested recess is deemed by the hearing panel to be unreasonable.

(H) An individual assisting a party may prepare written materials for the party and collect documents for the party. However, the party must submit or present the materials and documents as materials and documents of the party, and not of the individual assisting. The party has complete responsibility for those materials and documents and is subject to questioning about them.

(I) Nothing contained in this policy shall prevent a State Association from allowing greater rights to assistance than those set forth in Paragraphs 1-8 above. For example, a State Association may, but shall not be obligated to, allow more than one individual to assist a party at any given time.

(J) The rights, either mandatory or permissible under this policy, shall be consistently applied, and the State Association should not arbitrarily allow or disallow the rights set forth above to those individuals assisting a party in the presentation or defense of the party's case.

## **Virginia State Soccer Association's Rules and Discipline Guidelines**

### **ADJUDICATION, ENFORCEMENT, AND DISCIPLINE**

#### **Section 1. Hearing and Appeal Procedures.**

VYSA will provide equitable and prompt hearing and appeal procedures to guarantee the rights of individuals to participate and compete. These procedures shall include that all grievances involving the right to participate and compete in activities sponsored by the Federation and VYSA and its members may be appealed to the Federation's Appeals Committee that shall have jurisdiction to approve, modify or reverse a decision.

#### **Section 2. Jurisdiction of the Adjudication Committee.**

a. The Adjudication Committee shall have the following jurisdiction:

- (1) to consider and adjudicate decisions of members of the association;
- (2) to consider and adjudicate decisions of any individual, committee, or group having responsibility for administering an activity conducted or sponsored by the Association; and
- (3) to consider and adjudicate allegations of assaults and abuses on referees as provided under USSF policies.

b. All protests and appeals procedures must be exhausted before a matter will be considered by the Adjudication Committee.

13

c. The appeal of a decision under subsection a (1) or (2) of this section must be submitted to the Adjudication Committee within 48 hours of the decision. Any appeal shall be in writing and shall be accompanied by cash, certified check, or money order for the current amount established by the VYSA Board of Directors and made payable to "VYSA".

d. All decisions of the Adjudication Committee shall be by majority vote and in writing.

e. A decision of the Adjudication Committee is the final decision of the Association. The decision may only be appealed to the Federation's Appeals Committee that shall have jurisdiction to approve, modify or reverse the decision.

### **Section 3. Jurisdiction of the Board of Directors.**

a. The Board of Directors of the Association shall have original jurisdiction over matters relating to the accomplishment of its purposes as set forth in, and the enforcement of, its articles of incorporation, bylaws, and rules and policies and the constitution, rules, and policies of USSF and USYSA.

b. Except as provided in section 2. a. (3) of this article, the Board of Directors shall have the sole right and authority to suspend, expel, or otherwise discipline for violating the Association's articles of incorporation, bylaws, rules, and policies or for other misconduct, the following:

- (1) any member, player, coach, manager, or other principal of any component or affiliate of a member;
- (2) any official of a member or a member's affiliates;
- (3) any official of the Association; and
- (4) any spectator at a function sponsored or conducted by the Association or a member of the Association.

An action under this subsection may be based either on an original complaint filed with the Association or on the Board's own motion.

c. Disciplinary action taken by the Board of Directors shall be by majority vote in writing.

d. A decision of the Board of Directors under this section is a final decision of the Association. The decision may be appealed only to the USYSA or USSF, as the case may be, as provided in their rules.

e. The Board of Directors may delegate to a committee any of its powers under this section.

**Section 4. Due Process.** In any hearing proceeding before the Adjudication Committee and the Board of Directors, any party in interest shall be afforded any

14

opportunity to appear personally and to submit matter in support, rebuttal, mitigation, or extenuation in regard to the party.

### **Section 5. Instituting Legal Proceedings.**

a. No party may invoke the aid of any court without first exhausting all administrative

remedies provided in these bylaws and in the rules of USYSA and USSF.

b. For violating this section, the offending party is subject to sanctions and fines, and is liable to the Association for all expenses the Association and its officers, employees, and agents incurred in defending any court action, including but not limited to the following:

- (1) court costs;
- (2) attorney fees;
- (3) reasonable compensation for time spent by the Association, its officers, employees, and agents in the action, including responses to discovery and court appearances;
- (4) travel expenses; and
- (5) expenses for holding special meetings necessitated by the court action.

### **Section 6. Recovery of Grievance Expenses**

a. In this section, "party" means a Member of VYSA, as an official league, club, team, player, coach, administrator, or referee.

b. If a party brings a grievance against VYSA and does not prevail in the grievance, that party shall be liable to VYSA for expenses incurred by VYSA and its officials and staff in defending the grievance, including the following:

- (1) grievance costs;
- (2) attorney's fees;
- (3) reasonable compensation for time spent by VYSA officials and staff in responding to and defending against allegations involved in the grievance, including responses to discovery and appearances regarding the grievance; and
- (4) travel expenses.

c. If the party fails to pay to VYSA the expenses due under subsection (b) of this section, the party may be suspended or the party's membership or position terminated in VYSA and all of its Members.

**Section 7. Indemnification.** Every trustee, officer, member of the Board of Directors, committee member, employee, or agent of VYSA, and other persons specified from time to time by the Board, shall be indemnified by VYSA against all expenses and liabilities, including legal fees, reasonably incurred or imposed in connection with any action, suit, or proceeding, civil or criminal, to which he or she may be a party, or in which he or she may become involved, by reason of being or having been a trustee, officer, Board member, committee member, employee, or agent of VYSA, except those matters to which the trustee, officer, Board member, committee member, employee, or agent is adjudged to be liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance of his or her duties to VYSA. A conviction or judgement (whether based on a guilty plea or plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent, or after trial) in a criminal action, suit, or proceeding shall not be deemed an adjudication of liability for negligence or misconduct in the performance of duty to VYSA if the trustee, officer, Board member, committee member, employee, or agent acted in good

faith in what he or she considered to be the best interests of VYSA and with no reasonable cause to believe that the action was illegal.

### **Section 8. Recognition of Disciplinary Actions.**

a. Any disciplinary action imposed by VYSA shall be recognized by every member, official, and employee of VYSA.

b. Any disciplinary action taken by a member of VYSA within its jurisdiction shall be recognized by VYSA and its officials and employees and every other member of VYSA if-

- (1) the party on whom the discipline is imposed has been provided in substance with the opportunity to have a hearing and procedural rights provided by Bylaw 701 of the United States Soccer Federation;
  - (2) the penalty imposed is reasonable, fair, customary, and consistent;
  - (3) the party has been informed in writing of the party's rights to appeal any final decision of the member to the VYSA Adjudication Committee;
  - (4) the party's time to file an appeal with the Adjudication Committee has expired;
  - (5) the member provides to VYSA in writing, within 10 days after the party's time to file an appeal has expired–
    - (A) a request that the disciplinary action be recognized;
    - (B) information about the disciplinary action that is to be recognized; and
    - (C) information showing that clauses (1) and (3) of this subsection have been satisfied; and
  - (6) VYSA determines that clauses (1) - (5) of this subsection have been complied with.
- c. Disciplinary actions to be recognized under this section shall be recognized on notice posted as specified by the VYSA Board of Directors.