



## **Player & Coach Misconduct & Discipline**

South Atlantic, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, North Atlantic, Florida Leagues  
USYS Conferences  
**(Amended February 2025)**

**USSF has introduced Referee Abuse Prevention Policy (Policy 531-9) designed to make youth and amateur matches safer. Referee abuse will not be tolerated. In light of this amended policy, The EDP Incident Review Committee will implement USSF abuse guidelines to begin in March 2025.**

For in-game misconduct, the **EDP Incident Review Committee** receives a post-game USSF Supplemental Referee Report written by the officials which describes the misconduct of coaches, players and spectators. The Committee expects factual, verbatim and unbiased information in order to determine disciplinary measures for players, coaches, parents and team personnel. The Committee will employ the use of the following guidelines to determine the length of the suspensions.

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### **MISCONDUCT**

#### **One Game Suspension:**

- Resulting from a second caution; (i.e. persistent infringement or dissent by word or action).
- Denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball (this does not apply to a goalkeeper within his own penalty area).
- Denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO) to an opponent moving toward the player's goal by an offense punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick.
- Serious Foul Play: defined as using disproportionate and unnecessary strength in a manner likely to hurt or injure an opponent; any tackle from behind which endangers the safety of an opponent.

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## **OFFENSIVE, ABUSIVE or INSULTING LANGUAGE**

### **One game suspension:**

- Offensive or insulting or abusive language and/or gestures not directed.

### **Two game suspension (New March 2025)**

- For coaches and players, who receive two yellow card cautions for Insulting, belittling, insinuating or taunting comments in the same game to undermine referee authority ([see USSF guidelines](#))

### **Four game suspension: (New March 2025)**

- Offensive or insulting or abusive language and/or gestures directed toward a player, referee, assistant referee, administrator, spectator or game and /or tournament official.

### **Six game suspension (New March 2025 )**

- Offensive or insulting or abusive language and/or gestures directed toward a youth official (minor) will TRIPLE the punishment

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## **VIOLENT CONDUCT**

### **One game suspension (minor infractions):**

- defined as a dead-ball foul that is excessive or with intent to harm or injure; pushing and shoving

### **Three game suspension (major infractions):**

- Striking or attempting to strike with the intent to injure
- Fighting
- Any intentional exposure of the anatomy which is considered lewd and lascivious; all gestures with any part of the body which implies visual profanity.
- Spitting - defined as spitting on or at an opponent or another person as well as spitting onto their own hand prior to shaking hands with their opponent and/or the referees or other game officials.

### **Six game suspension (major infraction)**

- Entering a fight in progress or action resulting in law enforcement being called;
- Once dismissed, entering the field of play and committing any additional offense (e.g. violent conduct, foul or abusive language; this will be in addition to the sanction for the subsequent violation)

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## **VERBAL ABUSE of Officials by Coaches**

In the opinion of the lead official, depending on the severity of the offense, the lead official may take any of the following actions:

- Issue a verbal warning to the offending coach, assistant coach, or bench personnel.
- Caution the offending coach, assistant coach, or bench personnel.
- Eject the offending coach, assistant coach, or bench personnel. Once ejected, the individual will be required to leave the field area immediately.
- Abandon the match, if the coach, assistant coach, or bench personnel do not leave the field area after having been instructed to do so. A USSF Supplemental Referee Report will be required and reviewed by the Committee.

### **One Game Suspension**

- Failure to control parent spectators to cause the termination of the game
- Use of foul, abusive and offensive language not directed.
- Inclusion of player names handwritten onto game cards

### **Two Game Suspension** ([see USSF guidelines](#))

- Two yellow card cautions issued for dissent to coach for Insulting, belittling, insinuating or taunting comments in the same game to undermine referee authority.

### **Four Game Suspension**

- Use of foul, abusive and offensive language directed at any game official or opponents
- Fighting or attempting to fight (swinging a punch) an opponent

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## **PHYSICAL ABUSE of Officials ([USSF GUIDELINES](#)) by coaches**

### **Three Game Suspension**

Minor or slight deliberate touching

### **TEN Game Suspension**

Pushing, Grabbing, Pulling, Squeezing, Pinching, Lightly Slapping, Use of Object in Non Striking Manner, or Physical Property Damage

### **Lifetime Suspension**

Hitting, Punching, Elbowing, Kicking, Biting, Spiting, Choking, Tackling, Throwing or Use of Object or Any Part of Body (Forearm, Knee, Head) in a Striking Manner

**Red Card protests** must be submitted within 48 hours of the game conclusion to allow ample time for review prior to the next league game. Protests will not be reviewed if they are critical of the referee's subjective decisions on or away from the field.

Teams are expected to monitor their own coaches, players and supporters as much as reasonably possible. Continual poor behavior, inappropriate language, harassment of officials, disrespect to opponents or attempts to circumvent rules and regulations are grounds for sanctions and even immediate removal from the balance of the league schedule.

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### **Definition of an Appeal**

An appeal against the decisions of the Incident Review Committee must be filed in writing and must include:

1. The nature and specifics of the complaint.
2. A listing of the policies, rules, and/or procedures that have been violated.
3. A statement of the desired resolution.
4. Copies of all documents relevant to the protest or appeal. An appeal must include the names of the Club President of the team involved.

### **Video Recording and Appeals:**

The Incident Review Committee asks that video recordings come from the Head Coach or DOC who has a proper VEO recording unit or something of a similar nature. EDP discourages hand held parent video recordings and will not accept them for review. The recordings should only be used for club purposes internally and will NOT be used to question or review referee calls.

The Committee will only assess video documentation if it is to document ....

1. possible serious foul play or violent conduct missed by the game officials
2. encroachment of coaches or parents onto the playing surface
3. the use of foul and abusive language directed at any individual

**All such evidence, visual or audio, must be conclusive and substantive to support any review.**

The Committee will not address the performance or decisions of in game officials. EDP does not appoint, train, educate or assess game day officials. They are qualified independent contractors who have been assigned by USSF assignors to officiate EDP games. This Committee relies on their honesty, integrity and experience in their USSF Supplemental Referee Reports. The subjective decisions made on the field of play are final. Complaints received from concerned

parents will not be reviewed without the inclusion of the DOC and Club President on any communication.

## **Parent Involvement in the outcome of the game.**

If parent involvement, mismanaged by the team coach, results in the termination of a game, the Committee will assess the content of the USSF Supplemental Referee Report and may

- Ask club administration to conduct an internal team investigation
- Impose parent bans in future games
- Suspend the coach for failure to control team parents
- Award a game forfeit to the opposition

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## **Suspension Carryover**

Gotsport Software and the Incident Review Committee maintains accurate records of suspensions. Once a suspension is served, Gotsport will erase the 'red line' suspension on game cards and allow the player or coach to participate in the ensuing game.

For teams that participate in leagues that participate in the Fall and continue into the Spring season, suspensions will be carried over. Players and coaches will serve out the length of their Fall suspension in the Spring.