



## **POLICY 9**

### **CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE**

#### **A. JURISDICTION AND SCOPE**

1. Rules of conduct and discipline shall as a minimum comply with all United States Soccer Federation (USSF) Procedures and policies.
2. The Tennessee State Soccer Association (TSSA) Board of Directors has the authority to formulate conduct and discipline that is stricter than that of USSF.
3. Every individual that participates in any manner in events under the jurisdiction of TSSA is subject to the policies and procedures of this policy. By returning a participation agreement and agreeing to participate with TSSA Member Clubs, each club and player is bound by the standards set forth in our Conduct and Discipline Policy. Such persons include the following:
  - a. Players, including all substitutes
  - b. Teams, including both traveling and non-traveling Teams
  - c. Coaches, including assistant coaches and team managers
  - d. Spectators, including parents and other family members
  - e. Referees, including assistant referees, instructors, assignors and assessors
  - f. Hosts of tournaments or other events
  - g. Associations, including clubs or leagues
  - h. Association officials and TSSA officials
4. Any of these individuals or groups determined to have violated the letter or intent of the TSSA Constitution, Bylaws, Policies or Procedures shall be subject to disciplinary action by TSSA.
5. Any person not serving their prescribed punishment for violation of these policies shall be subject to a disciplinary hearing and greater penalties may be imposed by that hearing panel.
6. A plea of ignorance of the rules, regulations, policies, requirements and procedures of the governing authority of an organization or competition, including TSSA, United States Youth Soccer (USYS) or USSF, will not be sufficient grounds for any action, a defense for any action, or an excuse for any action.

#### **B. DEFINITIONS**

1. **Suspension** shall be defined as no participation in the area(s) in which an individual is suspended.

2. **Suspension of a team** shall be defined as suspension from any competition for any team having seven or more players who were members of an offending team for the time period specified.
3. **Dissent** shall be defined as anything that demonstrates continuous disagreement with game officials either by action or word.
4. **Threats** shall be defined as remarks, verbal statements, gestures, or physical act not resulting in bodily contact that carry the implied threat of physical harm against another individual or their personal property.
5. **Referee abuse** shall be defined as the use of foul and abusive language toward a referee, spewing any beverage on the referee or their personal property, or verbally threatening a referee.
6. **Assault** is an intentional act of physical violence. Assault includes, but is not limited to, the following acts upon another individual:
  - a. Hitting
  - b. Kicking
  - c. Punching
  - d. Choking
  - e. Spitting at or on
  - f. Grabbing
  - g. Poking
  - h. Deliberate bodily running into
  - i. The act of kicking or throwing an object at
  - j. Damaging personal property

7. **Clarifications:**

- a. A player sent off in a State League (D-1, D-2, D-3, or Soccer Juniors) must sit out the next scheduled State League match.
- b. A player sent off in a USYS Regional or National League match must sit out the next scheduled USYS Regional or National League match. If the match is the final USYS Regional or National League match, the player must sit out the first scheduled match of the State Cup Tournament.
- c. A player sent off in a tournament match must sit out the next scheduled tournament match.
- d. A player sent off in a State Cup Tournament match must sit out the next scheduled State Cup Tournament match. If the match is the final match for the player's team, the red card will carry over to the first match of next year's State Cup Tournament. If the red card occurs in the finals of the State Cup Tournament and the team advances to the Region 3 Championships, the player must sit out the first scheduled match of the Region 3 Championships.
- e. A player sent off in a D4 Recreational/Recreational Plus game must sit out the next scheduled game.
- f. The Point Systems of C.1. and C.2. of this Policy do not apply to D4

Recreational/Recreational Plus Players. Instead, Recreational Player Disciplinary matters will be handled as follows:

- i. For Intraclub Recreational games, the Club will determine appropriate actions consistent with TSSA's and the Club's Bylaws and Policies.
- ii. For Interclub RecPlus League games, local League Policies, if available, will determine Sanctions, otherwise;
- iii. For Interclub RecPlus games, an ad-hoc Disciplinary Panel consisting of the Club Presidents of the teams involved and the local TSSA District Director will determine appropriate sanctions, if any, consistent with TSSA Policies. In cases involving teams from more than one TSSA District, the ad-hoc Disciplinary Panel will also include both TSSA District Directors and the TSSA VP-Youth Recreational.

### **C. DISCIPLINE AND APPEALS PANEL**

1. The Discipline and Appeals Panel is an internal panel comprised of at least 4 members and are selected based upon the criteria of TSSA Bylaws. This panel is charged with resolving incidents of alleged game, league or cup infractions, and with the authority to issue up to five-game suspensions.
2. The Discipline and Appeals Panel is chaired by the Vice President associated with the level of play. Additional Panel members include the Executive Director of TSSA, the Executive Vice President of TSSA, and a neutral District Director of TSSA.
3. The Discipline and Appeals Panel holds authority to issue up to a five (5) game suspension to any offense listed in this Conduct and Discipline Policy. A TSSA Player, Coach/Club Staff or Club has the right to a formal hearing only if the suspension levied by the Panel exceeds a five (5) game suspension. If there is video evidence, the Panel shall request and use the evidence for appropriate suspensions, fines and sanctions.

### **D. SANCTIONS BY CLASSIFICATION**

Unless otherwise specified, the sanctions provided for in this Policy may be combined.

#### ***Players***

-warning  
-reprimand  
-caution  
-send-off  
-game suspension  
-ban from bench  
-ban from soccer activities  
-fine

#### ***Coaches/Club Staff***

-warning  
-reprimand  
-dismissal  
-game suspension  
-ban from bench  
-ban from game facility  
-ban from soccer activities  
-fine

#### ***Clubs***

-dismissal of club staff  
-transfer ban  
-play game without fans  
-play game on neutral site  
-ban on play at complex  
-annulment of game result  
-forfeit of game  
-exclusion from competition  
-deduction of points

### **E. RECORDS OF SANCTIONS**

1. Records of cautions, send-offs and game suspensions will be maintained by the TSSA. When necessary TSSA will update clubs of suspensions in writing. These updates serve as confirmation; sanctions (cautions, send-offs, automatic suspensions) have an immediate effect on subsequent games even if you have been notified after the next game has been played. It is the responsibility of the Coach/Club Staff/Club to uphold all game suspensions regardless of confirmation from TSSA.

2. All Competitive youth players will operate under a twelve (12) point system for sanctions.
  - a. Point totals accumulate for the seasonal year, August 1<sup>st</sup> to July 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year.
  - b. Point total include ALL cards received from both indoor and outdoor participation.
  - c. Players shall be given one (1) point for each yellow card received.
  - d. If a player receives two (2) yellow cards in a match, they will be two (2) total points.
  - e. Players shall be given two (2) points for each red card received.
  - f. Players that receive a red card MUST sit out the remainder of the game and should be managed on the bench by the coach/club staff.
  - g. Players that accumulate five (5) points MUST sit out an additional next game.
  - h. Players that accumulate nine (9) points MUST sit out an additional next two (2) games.
  - i. Players that accumulate twelve (12) points are suspended for the rest of the seasonal year.
  - j. Players are prohibited from guest play until all suspensions are served.
  - k. A coach/club staff who knowingly plays an ineligible player shall receive a minimum of a one-year suspension from the date of the incident or from the date it is determined the coach guilty of violating this policy.
  - l. Players that are found guilty of referee assault shall receive a minimum of a one-year suspension from the date of the incident.
  
3. All Adult players will operate under a twelve (12) point system for sanctions.
  - a. Point totals accumulate for the seasonal year, August 1<sup>st</sup> to July 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year.
  - b. Point total include ALL cards received from both indoor and outdoor participation.
  - c. Players shall be given one (1) point for each yellow card received.
  - d. If a player receives two (2) yellow cards in a match, they will be two (2) total points.
  - e. Players shall be given two (2) points for each red card received.
  - f. Players that receive a red card MUST sit out the remainder of the game and should be managed on the bench by the coach/club staff.
  - g. Players that accumulate five (5) points MUST sit out an additional next game.
  - h. Players that accumulate nine (9) points MUST sit out an additional next two (2) games.
  - i. Players that accumulate twelve (12) points are suspended for the rest of the seasonal year.
  - j. Players are prohibited from guest play until all suspensions are served.
  - k. A player staff who knowingly plays as an ineligible player shall receive a minimum of a one-year suspension from the date of the incident or from the date it is determined the player guilty of violating this policy.
  - l. Players that are found guilty of referee assault shall receive a minimum of a one-year suspension from the date of the incident.

## **F. RESPONSIBILITY FOR REPORTING YELLOW AND RED CARDS**

1. It is the responsibility of game officials to report all yellow and red cards to the appropriate officials in a timely manner using a standard referee report and to complete the TSSA game report.
2. It is the responsibility of tournament officials to ensure that the assignor has all officials complete the TSSA game reports.
3. TSSA is responsible for tracking the points of all players and notifying the players' association president and coach.

4. It is the responsibility of the association president or their designee or the coach to counsel the player.

## **G. MINIMUM SANCTIONS APPLICABLE TO SEND-OFFS/RED CARD**

Including the automatic suspension incurred, the overall suspension imposed on any person receiving a direct red card shall be for:

1. At least one (1) game for denying the opposing team a clear goal-scoring opportunity (particularly by deliberately handling the ball).
2. At least one (1) game for serious foul play or violent conduct. Additional games may be added to serious foul play or violent conduct suspensions in the case of serious or extreme incidents, which may include but is not limited to assaulting or attempting to assault (pushing, elbowing, punching, kicking, head butting, etc.) an opponent or a person other than the game official. Subsequent serious foul play or violent conduct offenses during the season will result in increased suspensions; at least two (2) games for the second offence, at least three (3) games for the third offense, at least four (4) games for the fourth offense, at least five (5) games for the fifth offense and the remainder of the season for the sixth red card received for serious foul play or violent conduct during the season.
3. At least one (1) game for unsporting conduct towards an opponent or a person other than the game official.
4. At least two (2) games for offensive or abusive language towards a game official.
5. At least five (5) games for spitting at an opponent or person other than a game official.
6. At least five (5) games for making racist or discriminatory remarks at an opponent or a person other than a game official.
7. At least
8. At least three (3) months for referee abuse or assault (minor slight touching ONLY)
9. At least six (6) months for all other assault (can warrant longer)
10. At least five (5) years for serious injury assault.
11. At least three (3) years for adult defendant with a minor referee (age 17 or under)
12. If circumstances warrant, longer suspensions may be imposed.
13. In all cases a fine may be imposed.

## **H. MISCONDUCT AGAINST GAME OFFICIALS**

Misconduct against game officials shall be governed by USSF Policy 531-9 available at <https://www.ussoccer.com/about/governance/bylaws>. A fine for the Member Club may also be imposed.

## **I. BRAWL**

TSSA will not tolerate violence. Anyone involved in a brawl may be sanctioned. Anyone who has tried merely to prevent a fight, shield or separate those involved in a brawl is not subject to punishment. If, in the case of violence, it is not possible to identify the perpetrator(s), the body may sanction the club to which the aggressors belong.

## **J. TEAM MISCONDUCT**

The following constitutes misconduct by a team and may be sanctioned by a fine:

- When four (4) players are cautioned (receive yellow cards) during one game;
- When three (3) players are sent off (receive red cards) during one game;
- When several players together make threats or show force against the game official.

## **K. INCITING HATRED OR VIOLENCE**

A player, coach or club staff who publicly incites others to hatred or violence may be sanctioned.

## **L. INELIGIBILITY**

If a player takes part in an official game despite being ineligible (suspended), the team may be sanctioned by forfeiting the game. Additional sanctions may be imposed against the player or the club.

## **M. ABANDONMENT**

If a team refuses to play a game or to continue playing once which has begun, it may be sanctioned by forfeiting the game. Additional sanctions may be imposed against a team's club. In serious cases, the team will also be disqualified from the competition in progress.

## **N. OFFENSIVE BEHAVIOR**

Anyone who has engaged in objectively insulting behavior, especially by using offensive gestures or language, may be sanctioned.

## **O. RACISM**

Racism is not tolerated. Anyone who publicly disparages, discriminates against or denigrates someone on account of race, color, language, religion or ethnic origin, or perpetrates any other racist and/or contemptuous deed, may be sanctioned.

## **P. FORGERY AND FALSIFICATION**

Anyone who, in TSSA related activities, forges a document or falsifies an authentic document to deceive in legal relations may be sanctioned.

## **Q. CORRUPTION**

Betting or gambling of any kind on TSSA games is strictly prohibited. Anyone who offers, promises or grants an unjustified advantage to a club, a game official, a player or club staff on behalf of him/herself or a third party to incite it or him/her to violate the rules/policy of TSSA will be sanctioned. Passive corruption (soliciting, being promised or accepting an unjustified advantage) will be sanctioned in the same manner. In serious cases or in the case of repetition, a lifetime ban may be imposed.

## **R. ILLEGAL DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO**

The illegal use of drugs (as determined by federal law), alcohol or tobacco by players, coaches, or officials is strictly prohibited during all TSSA sanctioned events. A violation of this provision may result in sanctions.

## **S. FAILURE TO RESPECT DECISIONS**

Anyone who fails to respect sanctions, fines, or decisions of the governing body may cause fines or sanctions to be brought against the member club. Member clubs that fail to respect sanctions, fines or decisions of the governing body may be placed in bad standing and could lose membership rights and privileges.

## **T. CLUB RESPONSIBILITY TO IMPLEMENT THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

1. Maintaining a safe competitive environment. Member clubs that host games shall:
  - a. assess the degree of risk posed by games and notify TSSA of those that are high risk;
  - b. complies with and implement existing safety rules and take every precaution demanded by circumstances before, during and after the game if incidents occur;
  - c. ensures the safety of game officials, players and officials of the opponent;
  - d. keeps local authorities informed and collaborate with them actively and effectively, promptly reporting all allegations of child abuse to law enforcement authorities as required by Federal law;
  - e. ensure that law and order are maintained in the facilities and immediate surroundings and that games are organized properly;
  - f. Promptly report all alleged violations of sexual abuse or assault to TSSA or the U.S. Center for SafeSport;
  - g. cooperates in good faith with any review or investigation by TSSA or U.S. Center for SafeSport;
  - h. ensure that no one is involved in the management of clubs who is under prosecution for any action unworthy of such a position or has been convicted of a criminal offense involving fraud or moral turpitude in the past five (5) years.
  
2. Any club that fails to fulfill its obligations listed above may be fined. In the case of serious infringement, additional sanctions may be imposed.

## **U. RESPONSIBILITY FOR PLAYER AND TEAM CONDUCT**

1. The coach is ultimately responsible for the actions and personal conduct of all persons involved with the team, including team members, assistant coaches, team manager, parents, family members, and spectators.
2. The coach is responsible to ensure that actions of the team and all persons involved with the team both on and off the field do not bring discredit upon the team, its association, or TSSA.
3. Each team and all persons involved with the team are expected to conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner under all circumstances and to exhibit appropriate behavior before, during, and after a game, in and around lodgings, and on any other occasions when the group could be identified as a team.
4. Traveling teams are expected to attend and participate in all scheduled tournament events and ceremonies with no less than seven players.
5. Teams that intentionally fail to participate in any scheduled tournament event or ceremony shall be subject to disciplinary action by TSSA.

6. For teams whose general conduct is determined by a disciplinary review to be unsatisfactory, the following disciplinary actions may be applied according to the severity and frequency of incidents of misconduct.

- a. Letter of reprimand to the coach and the team with copy to the local association
- b. Team suspension for a period of time, with all games scheduled during that period of time forfeited
- c. Team suspension from competition, i.e., TSSA state tournaments, etc.
- d. Denial of permission to travel interstate either for a period of time or for specific competitions
- e. Dismissal of the team coach or manager
- f. Team disbandment
- g. Loss of bonds and/or travel subsidies
- h. Fines

## **V. COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS**

The Coaches Code of Ethics outlines responsibilities and obligations required of all registered coaches. Coach registration for D1, 2, 3 and Soccer Juniors includes a signed contract with TSSA to uphold this code.

### **Tennessee Soccer Coaches Code of Conduct and Ethics**

- 1. I will conduct myself as a professional in all team training and match activities.
- 2. I will abide by and enforce TSSA policy and procedure and require the same of my team and representatives of my team, including spectators.
- 3. The development of the player's athletic skills, values, and social skills shall be placed above winning.
- 4. I will always display integrity and class and require the same of my team and representatives of my team, including the team's spectators.



5. I will support the match referees in enforcement of the rules and will require the same of my team and representatives of the team, including the team's spectators.
6. I will respect the players right to choose the team on which to participate.
7. I will not engage in illegal/inappropriate recruitment of any players and will require the same of my team and team representatives.
8. I recognize that I represent the TSSA Director of Coaching on behalf of my team and team representatives in all TSSA and USSF sanctioned events.

## **W. UNETHICAL RECRUITING**

1. It shall be deemed unethical behavior to contact a player directly or indirectly, encourage or otherwise entice a player to transfer from one team to another during that team's seasonal year without first contacting the current players coach.
2. Any interested party may request a hearing to seek resolution to disputes over perceived unethical recruiting violations.

## **X. MISCONDUCT OF COACHES**

1. A coach that is ejected from a match for misconduct shall be suspended from all coaching activities for the minimum period of time as decided by the Discipline and Appeals Panel as listed in section C.
2. Suspension from coaching is defined as no participation as a coach or trainer for any USSF, USYS, or TSSA sanctioned teams. This means that an individual coaching multiple teams is suspended from coaching/training activities with all teams for the specified time.
3. Upon review of the referee report, the TSSA Executive Committee or TSSA BOD had the authority to impose a greater penalty than the minimum penalty for coach misconduct
4. A coach may request a formal hearing concerning issues relative to conduct and discipline. The procedure for requesting a hearing is contained in TSSA Policy 8.
5. The minimum penalty for the class of misconduct is enforced until reversed by a formal hearing panel or the suspension period has lapsed.
6. In addition to the minimum penalty, a coach may be subject to a more severe disciplinary penalty based on the recommendations of a formal hearing panel.

7. A coach that also participates in USSF, USYS, or TSSA activities, as a player shall have two points applied to their cumulative point total under the nine-point system for players.
8. A coach found guilty of knowingly playing an ineligible player shall receive a minimum of a one-year suspension from the date of the incident from all coaching activities.
9. The disciplinary actions of TSSA do not replace or preclude a coach from civil and/or criminal prosecution.

## **Y. VIOLATIONS OF SAFE SOCCER FRAMEWORK**

Within the Scope of authority, any alleged violation of the Safe Sport Code (as incorporated into U.S. Soccer's Prohibited Conduct Policy and the Safe Soccer Framework) will be handled according to the type of violation alleged. Allegations of Sexual Misconduct must be referred to the U.S. Center for Safe Sport. Which retains exclusive jurisdiction over such allegations in the context of TSSA and its leagues or approved events. Exclusive jurisdiction requires that TSSA, as a condition of league or event participation, to cooperate with ay Center investigations and to refrain from interfering with the Center's exercise of its jurisdiction. Failure to support an independent investigation by the Center may risk future TSSA league or event participation.

All other allegations of violations of the Safe Soccer Framework should be referred to the Member Club Staff and TSSA Staff, who will retain the authority to review such issues in the context of the Member Club and TSSA.

## **Z. PROPERTY DAMAGE**

1. A player or team responsible for accidental or willful damage to property shall be required to pay all lawful claims within 45 days of receiving said claim.
2. If claims are not paid within the prescribed time period, the player or team may be placed on travel restrictions until all claims are paid in full.
3. Reinstatement of travel privileges shall not be considered until all lawful claims are paid in full.
4. If the damage to property is determined to be other than accidental, the players and/or team are subject to disciplinary action for assault as defined in this policy.

## **AA. HOSTS**

1. Associations hosting tournaments or other events and found to have violated the letter or intent of TSSA policies are subject to disciplinary action by TSSA.
2. The following punishments may be applied according to the severity and frequency of incidents of misconduct:
  - a. Withdrawal of sanctioning or approval of the event
  - b. Loss of good standing for the association
  - c. Loss of the privilege of hosting a tournament or other event during the current seasonal year or following year(s)
  - d. Loss of the privilege of travel for its teams for the remainder of the current seasonal year
  - e. Fines

## **BB. DOCUMENTS AND FUNDS**

1. Individuals or groups found guilty of the following acts are subject to disciplinary action by TSSA:
  - a. Falsification of documents including but not limited to registration data, birth certificates, player passes, coaches registration/passes, rosters, insurance claims, tournament reports or proxies
  - b. Allowing unregistered players to participate in games or other events
  - c. Misappropriation or mishandling of TSSA, member association, or TSSA registered team funds
2. The disciplinary actions listed below shall be applied by TSSA according to the severity and frequency of the incidents:
  - a. Letter of reprimand to the offending party with copy to the local association
  - b. Suspension for a period of time
  - c. Suspension from specific competitions
  - d. Loss of the privilege to host a tournament or other event
  - e. Loss of the privilege of travel
  - f. Loss of bonds and/or travel subsidies
  - g. Fines
  - h. Loss of good standing for the association
  - i. Removal from office

## **CC. MISCONDUCT OF GAME OFFICIALS**

1. Game officials shall be defined as:
  - a. All currently registered USSF referees, assistant referees, 4th officials or others appointed to assist in officiating the match
  - b. Any non-licensed, non-registered person serving in an emergency capacity as a referee under USSF Rule 3040
  - c. Any club assistant referee
  - d. Any referee development program person performing any official function at a match
  - e. When a game official is accused of having committed misconduct either at or away from a match, the jurisdiction to adjudicate the matter rests with the National State Association in which the referee is registered.
2. Misconduct may include the following:

- a. Violation of the Code of Ethics for Referees as defined in USSF Policy 531-11, Subpart C
  - b. Abuse of authority
  - c. Conflict of interest
  - d. Failure to submit Referee Game Reports as indicated in Section D of this policy
3. Reports of misconduct or written complaints shall be sent to the TSSA Executive Director and should be consistent with TSSA and USSF policies and bylaws.
  4. The TSSA Executive Director shall send a copy of the complaint, within 10 days, to the SRA and the accused official for their records.
  5. If a hearing is to be conducted it shall be conducted per the TSSA policy and procedure for hearings.
  7. A hearing, or official's agreement of guilt is required for an individual to be found guilty of misconduct. Penalties may include the following:
    - a. Letter of Reprimand
    - b. Fine
    - c. Suspension for a defined period
    - d. Any combination of a, b, or c
    - e. Dismissal from USSF