

Game Day

What is Expected of Coaches, Parents and Players



Presented by NCYSA Discipline and Appeals Education

Overview

- The philosophy of the NCYSA Discipline and Appeals (D&A) is to educate our members, local Associations, Officers, Coaches, Parents, and Players in all areas of soccer as it pertains to our Rules, Regulations, and Code of Conduct.
- For those who violate Rules, Regulations, Code of Conduct, sanctions can be imposed in the form of game sit outs, fines, volunteerism (on the local levels), and/or completing an educational presentation before a group.
- NCYSA Sanctions follow FIFA and US Soccer Guidelines.
- Patterns of behavior will be taken into account and could increase sanctions.
- Egregious violations could result from expulsion from the NCYSA.



Code of Conduct (Handout #1)

- It is the responsibility of the local association to educate its members to the NCYSA Code of Conduct.
- All Officers, Administrators, Coaches, Assistant Coaches, Managers, Parents, and Players should familiarize themselves with the NCYSA Code of Conduct.
- Preseason team meetings are a good place to start this education process, as well as the behavioral expectations.



Unacceptable Conduct

- Vulgarity by coaches, players, or spectators directed towards anyone.
- Harassment of referees, coaches or players by anyone.
- Debasing of referees, coaches or players by anyone.
- Physical Violence or the threat of physical violence.
- Consumption of alcoholic beverages in and around the playing area.
- Use of illegal drugs under any circumstance.



Coaches Conduct

- Coaches are responsible for their own conduct, as well as the conduct of their Assistant Coaches, Players, Team Managers, and Spectators.
- The behavior of the coach is the role model for player and spectator behavior. He or she can exert strong player and spectator control by the example they set, and by a few words of caution directed to the appropriate individuals when necessary.
- ***FACT – Did you know as a coach, you can be cautioned or sent off for the conduct of your spectators? Failure to control spectators could result in the match being abandoned/terminated.***



Parents Conduct

- Parents (and all adults/spectators) can greatly influence the players as the game is being played.
- Your role is to positively support all players with minimal-to-no negative impact.
- Yelling or screaming at players, opponents, the referee or other spectators **WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.**
- Ask the question: “Would I behave like this anywhere else?”



Referees Conduct

- NCYSA expects referees to use their authority in a fair and honorable way, to maintain acceptable conduct on the sideline, as well as on the field.
- Indiscriminate red cards (ejections) should not be the standard. Nor should repeated, idle threats of ejection.
- Referees are expected to use their authority without hesitation when necessary to maintain order at matches.
- ***FACT – Did you know the referee’s match report is the OFFICIAL REPORT, used by NCYSA Discipline and Appeals?***



The Send Off Process

- The NCYSA Discipline and Appeals Manual has a list of suggested MINIMUM sanctions (game sit outs) for various offenses. (Handout #2)
- Please note the word MINIMUM.
- NCYSA receives electronic match reports, with the referee's comments when ejections occur in a match.
- In some cases, D&A will solicit information from the assistant referees.
- This information is forwarded to the D&A Manager for review.
- The D&A Manager determines the sanctions, based on the OFFICIAL REPORT.
- The D&A Administrator sends the sanction info to the local associations.



The Send Off Process

- If an adult is sent off, they are NOT shown the red card. They must leave the area – out of “sight and sound” of the match.
- If a player is sent off (shown the red card), they must remove their jersey and remain on the bench in street attire.
- The coach is responsible for his/her bench, as well as the players and personnel on the bench.
- If an ejected player creates an issue while on the bench, the Coach could face sanctions from NCYSA D&A. The referee could also decide to abandon the match should the bench area not be controlled.



Suggested Sanctions for Ejections

- As adults (coaches, officials and spectators) are considered the role model for the players, sanctions tend to run more severe.
- Most ejections are of the “course of the game” variety. The minimum sanctions are self explanatory. It’s only with more complicated or egregious situations that more than the minimum sanction is given.
- Violent Conduct. When a player is not challenging for the ball and uses excessive force or brutality against an opponent.
- There is a one-game minimum for VC, but it depends on how the referee viewed the incident and writes it up in the Official Report that determines the sanction.



Suggested Sanctions for Ejections

- Serious Foul Play is a tackle or challenge of the ball that uses excessive force or brutality, or endangers the safety of an opponent.
- SFP is a minimum one-game sanction. Depending on how the referee viewed the incident and writes it up in the Official Report, will determine the sanction.
- Fighting (players). If the referee determines punches were thrown – whether they connect with an opponent or not – then fighting is determined to be the result. Minimum two-game sanction.
- Verbal Threats (players). Any threat of violence or harm to an opponent. One-game sanction is the minimum.



Suggested Sanctions for Ejections

- Violent Conduct, with intent to injure. Violently kicking an opponent while the ball is not in playing distance would be an example. Minimum of five-game sanction.
- Racial or Discriminatory Abuse. This will NOT be tolerated! Use of racial epithets, gender debasement, slurs regarding Nationality are all examples of this type of abuse. Five-game sanction is the minimum. (Handout #3)
- Spitting at or On an Opponent. Minimum two-game sanction.
- Foul/Abusive Language. Generally a one-game sanction, unless directed towards an individual, or especially egregious.



Misconduct Towards Game Officials

- Incidents involving coaches, spectators, and players relating to referees are set by the US Soccer Federation (Policy 531-9), and could require a hearing with an NCYSA D&A Panel.
- Misconduct can occur before, during and after the match, including travel to and from the match (and at later times, if directly related to the match).
- Referee Abuse. Minimum 3-game sanction. Verbal statement or physical act NOT resulting in bodily contact. Foul or abusive language, spewing any beverage on a referee's personal property, spitting at (not on) a referee or verbally threatening a referee.



Misconduct Towards Game Officials

- When an allegation of abuse is received by the State Office, the accused shall be suspended and banned from participating or being involved in all NCYSA sanctioned events until a hearing is conducted (or the suspension is served).
- Referee Assault. Minimum three-month sanction. An intentional act of physical violence at or upon a referee.
- “Intentional Act” shall mean an act intended 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.
- As well as physical contact with the referee, damaging their personal property or uniform is considered “Referee Assault”.



Misconduct Towards Game Officials

- Referee Assault requires a hearing in front of an NCYSA Discipline and Appeals Panel. The accused is automatically suspended upon receipt of the complaint.
- Misconduct Towards a Junior Referee. The accused is automatically suspended until a hearing in front of an NCYSA D&A Panel.
- Those found guilty of Abuse of a Junior Referee will receive a minimum of a six-game sanction.
- Those found guilty of Assault of a Junior Referee will receive a minimum sanction of three-years.



Card Accumulations During League Play

- Cards accumulated during league play, only apply to league play.
- Cards accumulated carry over to the next season (Fall to Spring) for those teams that participate in two seasons.
- Cards accumulated are wiped clean at the start of the new Seasonal Year (Fall Season).
- Penalties unfulfilled at the end of the seasonal year WILL carry over to the next seasonal year.
- Players who change teams and have penalties for accumulated cards, those penalties follow the PLAYER to their new team.



Card Accumulations During League Play

- Players receiving cautions (yellow cards) in four (4) separate matches, must sit out their next match. (Two yellows in the same match do not count towards this total.)
- If the same player receives two (2) subsequent yellow cards in the same seasonal year, they will receive an additional one-game sit out – and a one-game sit out for each subsequent two (2) yellow cards.
- If a player receives a third (3rd) red card in a seasonal year, they will sit out the required sanctions of the ejection, and a one (1) game sit out for the third red card.



Card Accumulations During League Play

- Coaches receiving three (3) cautions (verbal) in separate matches in the seasonal year will receive a one (1) game sit out. (Two cautions in one match do not count to this total).
- Coaches receiving an additional (1) caution during the same seasonal year will be required to sit out an additional match. There will be a one game sit out for each additional caution in the seasonal year.
- Coaches sent off two (2) times in a seasonal year will sit out the required sanctions for the ejections, and a one (1) game sit out for the second ejection.



Association Responsibilities for Cards

- A player who receives their sixth (6th) yellow card, or fourth (4th) red card;
- A coach who receives their fourth (4th) caution or third (3rd) send off;
- A team has had three (3) or more players reach the sixth (6th) yellow card or fourth (4th) red card plateau.
- The Association President or their designee must provide a written report of the offending individuals completing one of the following tasks:
 - Attend a rules clinic by a referee approved by the NCSRA; or
 - Complete four (4) hours of community service at the discretion of the Association President or their designee.



Everyone Judges Us, But Who Corrects the Referee . . .

- We can tell you who does **NOT** correct the referee. **YOU, the coach.** Nor do your spectators, bench or players on the field during the match.
- If you (the coach) feels the officiating was suspect, you report to your Director of Coaching (DOC) and if they agree, they send a written report to the NCYSA D&A Administrator.
- The D&A Administrator then forwards to the D&A Manager and/or D&A Chairman, and to the Chairman of the SRC (State Referee Committee).
- Those individuals will proceed and report back to the D&A Administrator.



Everyone Judges Us, But Who Corrects the Referee . . .

- While incidents involving inappropriate conduct or officiating issues have been few, the SRC has sanctioned referees in the past for their conduct.
- But that process NEVER begins with the coach or their team inappropriately engaging with an official during or after a match!
- If a coach feels they have a legitimate complaint regarding an official, always report through your DOC, who will, after determining the legitimacy of the complaint will report to NCYSA D&A.



Not Considered a Valid Complaint

This referee didn't have a clue how to call this level of play – they were in over their head.

Gee. We've never heard that one before.

Let's look at some numbers from 2010 and 2017.

- In 2010 there were 768 Classic spring teams
- In 2017 there were 1147 Classic spring teams. Up 67%.
- In 2010 there were 3180 certified referees.
- In 2017 there were 2874 certified referees. Down 10%.



What Does That Mean?

While competitive teams rose 67%, our referee pool dwindled 10%. Is it not logical that there could be inexperienced officials doing matches?

So What is the Solution

The three solutions that come to mind are:

1. Know you *may* have matches where the referee's experience level may be tested, and make the best of it without (potentially) driving another referee away from the game;
2. Create an education program, with NCYSA and NCSRA partnering to help monitor and evaluate entry level officials;
3. Limit the number of Classic teams based on available, experienced referees.



Limit the Number of Teams?

We don't believe anyone (NCYSA, NCSRA or our members) want to limit the number of Classic teams eligible to participate.

That said, the first two options are the most viable – be patient and understanding with a new official (not all-knowing and condescending) and let's work together to improve the quality of officiating.

Just as it is with players, being patient and allowing the player the opportunity to play, will greatly enhance their development. The same goes for referees. How many 10-12 year players have you seen struggle, only to become really good as they became older and more experienced!

Let's give the referees the same chance.



Not a Valid Complaint

The Referee was letting them get too physical. I was afraid for my players' safety.

It isn't surprising to get different versions of a match description (or the description of any one incident), based on eye witness statements. What one person sees as "physical" another sees as using their physicality within the Laws of the Game.

Soccer is a physical game. Discrepancies in size, speed and physical play can elicit emotion from the less physical team. Just because a player falls down, doesn't mean they are fouled.

Of course, if a player uses physicality beyond the Laws, we expect the referee to make the call accordingly. But it's their eyes, not the coaches who determine that call.



Not a Valid Complaint

I Was Ejected and Did Not Deserve it. I Want to Appeal My Send Off.

No. There is no appeal of an ejection. When the referee red cards (or ejects) an individual, it is – it is their decision that individual needed to be sent off. You cannot appeal a decision of the referee.

So I Just Have to Take it?

No. There is an appeal process for the SANCTION attached to the send off. (Handout #4) Fill out the Appeal Form and submit to the NCYSA D&A Administrator within 48-hours of notification of your sanction, along with a non-refundable \$100 appeal fee. The appeal goes to the Executive Board to render a decision. **The sanction remains in place until the appeal is decided.**



Why Use Only the Referee Report

***Facts contained in Match Officials' reports are presumed to be accurate. –
FIFA Disciplinary Code***

This is the standard used by NCYSA Discipline and Appeals. Contrary to some thoughts, referees are considered to be neutral, only upholding the Laws of the Game.

But my player was pushed, got up and tried to defend himself, then was ejected. The first player didn't even get a warning.

First, the player ejected was sent off because they did something wrong. Secondly, it's apparent the officials did not see the first offense. Sometimes it's better to walk away than try to "defend oneself".



Why Use Only the Referee Report

The Coach, the bench, the players and all of the spectators saw . . .

While we can appreciate what everyone “saw”, they aren’t refereeing the match.

So the Referee is Always Correct and Everyone Else is Wrong . . .

Technically, yes. But there are always extenuating circumstances. We have had, on occasions, reports submitted by referees, where we’ve solicited more information – from coaches and other referees at the match. Because of that new information, sanctions have been altered.

If there is an ejection in your match and you have strong feelings it was in error, send an email to the NCYSA D&A Administrator that day (mark@ncsoccer.org), detailing any information you think may be helpful. Don’t wait until sanctions have been determined.



As a Spectator, I Can Say What I Want

I pay dues, I will not be quiet . . . Do your job and I'll stop yelling . . . Call it both ways . . .

You can, but there could be consequences. Everyone expects spectators to cheer for their kids and teammates. However negative comments should be avoided.

Speaking directly to an opponent (in a negative manner) or the referees should never be tolerated.

The referee will only entertain comments from spectators at their discretion. If an official feels your comments are a detriment to the match, they can ask the coach to remove you from the playing area. Your refusal to leave could result in the match being terminated and/or abandoned.



Summary

Educate your Coaches, Spectators, Players and Bench on appropriate behavior.

Try to be reasonable in your communication with referees. They listen to you at their discretion.

Try to be understanding if a novice referee appears to struggle. Even the novice referee is in charge! If you try to correct or speak in a condescending manner, it probably will go well for either of you.

A coach is responsible for their spectators and bench area. A big part of that would be preseason education!

And try to have fun and enjoy the game!

