

Lubbock Soccer Association

General Rules

5. Chapter 5: Discipline, Protests, Grievances and Appeals

The Discipline and Appeals Committee of the Lubbock Soccer Association is the judicial branch of the Association. Appeals about actions and/or decisions of Association officers, coaches, and referees will be filed with the Chairman of the Appeals and Discipline Committee unless an alternate review process is specified in some part of the By-Laws or the Rules & Regulations of the Lubbock Soccer Association. Protests and grievances will also be filed with the Chairman. The referees of Lubbock Soccer Association sanctioned games will file a North Texas State Soccer Association Referee's Report of Misconduct with the Chairman for ALL incidents in which the referee issues a CAUTION, SEND OFF, or suspends a game or alleges misconduct by any person (this includes cases of alleged referee abuse - the referee must file a copy of the Report with the Chairman even though the incident will be adjudicated by the North Texas State Soccer Association).

NOTE: All comments in this chapter regarding the actions of the North Texas State Soccer Association, its officers, and its committees are explanatory in nature and do not bind the State Association in any way. The actions of the State Association, its officers and committees are governed by the North Texas State Soccer Association Administrative Handbook. The explanations included herein are intended to inform the members of the Lubbock Soccer Association of their rights and obligations due to the Lubbock Soccer Association's membership in the North Texas State Soccer Association. In case of conflicts between this chapter and the North Texas State Soccer Association Administrative Handbook, the NTSSA Handbook will be the definitive document.

5.1. AUTHORITY

5.1.1. All members and participants in youth soccer within the jurisdiction of the Lubbock Soccer Association have requested to participate in our programs. Therefore, these participants have agreed to abide by the By-Laws and Rules & Regulations of the Lubbock Soccer Association, as well as those of the North Texas State Soccer Association, the United States Soccer Federation, and the United States Youth Soccer Association. The Lubbock Soccer Association By-Laws provide that it has jurisdiction over all players, coaches, team managers, administrators, referees, and teams who choose to affiliate. Any member or participant in youth soccer within the jurisdiction of NTSSA found in violation of the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, Rules and Regulations of NTSSA, the Lubbock Soccer Association, as well as those of the United States Soccer Federation and its National Associations of which North Texas State Soccer Association is a member, may be subject to publication in the monthly newsletter or NTSSA President's Newsletter of their name, the type of violation, and the disciplinary action taken. Publication will be limited to individuals receiving disciplinary actions of three months or greater.

5.1.2. The Discipline and Appeals Committee of the Lubbock Soccer Association may hold hearings - WITH THE PARTIES HAVING THE RIGHT TO BE PRESENT - on any player/coach/assistant coach sent off or on referee's reports of serious misconduct by spectators and/or parents. Each referee's report received of serious misconduct that resulted in a send-off of a coach/player/assistant coach must be reviewed by the A & D Committee to determine if a hearing is warranted. If such a hearing is warranted, then these hearings will, unless absolutely impossible to schedule, be held and decisions communicated to the involved parties and league officials before the individual involved is scheduled to play another game sanctioned by the Lubbock Soccer Association. The use of tape recorders (audio or video), court reporters, and the presence of attorneys (in their professional capacity) at hearings conducted by either the Discipline and Appeals Committee or by the Board of Directors acting as an appellate body is not allowed.

5.2. MISCONDUCT OF PLAYERS/COACHES/ASSISTANT COACHES

5.2.1. If the Chairman of the Lubbock Soccer Association Discipline and Appeals Committee becomes aware of a pattern of misbehavior by a coach, the coach may be summoned before the Discipline and

Appeals Committee for judgment on fitness to continue coaching youth soccer. A pattern of misbehavior may consist of written complaints made on separate occasions (games, practices, etc.) during the soccer year; may include written complaints from other coaches, or from any Association voting member which are received by the League/Conference Commissioner; and misconduct reports by the Referees. A pattern of misbehavior may consist of as few as one instance of serious misconduct or of several instances of "minor" misbehavior which, taken together, raise a question of the coach's suitability to coach youth soccer.

5.2.2. The Lubbock Soccer Association will operate and keep records on a "CUMULATIVE CARD SYSTEM" for all players/coaches/assistant coaches. Appeals of cards are not allowed except when the referee admits he made an error in the issuance of the card. Cards issued in league play are cumulative during the entire soccer year. When a player transfers to another team his or her accumulated league play cards count against the cumulative card totals for both his or her old and new teams. Player suspensions mentioned in this section, including automatic suspensions "from all NTSSA sanctioned activities," include all games (including indoor), organized scrimmages, friendly games, and the like, but do not include team practices.

A "CUMULATIVE CARD SYSTEM" in league play will be operated as follows:

a. Yellow Cards One game automatic suspension for the game following an individual's third league play yellow card. Two game automatic suspension for the game following such individual's fifth league play yellow card. One game automatic suspension for the game following such individual's sixth league play yellow card.

NOTE: A player/coach/assistant coach receiving a second yellow card in a single game is suspended for the balance of that game, and those two yellow cards are then added to such individual's previous total of league play yellow cards to determine whether additional game suspensions, if any, are required. Red cards issued solely as a result of a second yellow in a single game will not be added to such individual's league play red card total.

b. Red Cards One game automatic suspension for the game following an individual's first league play red card. Automatic suspension, pending a hearing, from all NTSSA-sanctioned activities following such individual's second league play red card. Red cards issued solely as a result of a second yellow card in a single game will not be added to such individual's league play red card total.

NOTE: In cases where, during a single game, an individual receives a yellow card followed by a "straight red card" (as opposed to a red card issued solely as a result of a second yellow) both cards will be added to such individual's respective total of league play red and yellow cards and punished accordingly. If the Discipline and Appeals Committee determines that a red card was issued for an infraction that was not an "expulsion" offense in accordance with the FIFA Laws of the Game, the Discipline and Appeals Committee may reduce the red card to a yellow card and assess sanctions accordingly. The Committee or the Lubbock Soccer Association may not, however, do away with the card altogether. A full report of this action must be sent to NTSSA.

c. Seventh Card Any individual obtaining a seventh card in league play shall be immediately suspended pending a hearing with NTSSA A&D Committee (meaning any combination of yellow and red cards totaling seven).

5.2.3. These are minimum disciplinary punishments to be taken by the Discipline and Appeals Committee. Nothing herein prevents the Committee, or the Board of Directors as an appellate body, from enacting more severe sanctions. Each case should be judged on its own set of circumstances and degree of misconduct or violence, the latter of which must be dealt with swiftly and severely.

5.2.4. Game suspensions for Yellow and Red cards (as set forth above) are to be served by the player/coach/assistant coach at the next scheduled game (including league, playoff, championship, cup, and local or state tournament games) that such individual's team is involved in. A suspension imposed by

these rules shall be recognized by all affiliated organizations after proper notification. The lack of a hearing or referee report on the offense shall not affect such individual's suspension.

Exceptions For misconduct cards issued during State Cup, Regional, or National competitions (US Youth Soccer), the misconduct will be handled within that competition.

5.2.5. All game suspensions must be reported immediately to the State A & D Committee. The LSA Discipline and Appeals Committee will forward a copy of any referee's Misconduct Report(s) which underlie the suspension. The State A & D Committee will determine the extent of punishment, if any, in addition to that prescribed by the LSA Discipline and Appeals Committee taking into consideration the severity of the misconduct.

5.2.6. Any misconduct by a coach justifying a report by a referee or any other person shall be directed to the North Texas State Soccer Association Appeals and Disciplinary Committee as well as the Lubbock Soccer Association Discipline and Appeals Committee. The LSA Committee shall promptly (within five days after receipt of the report) rule on the report and send its decision to the State A & D Committee. The State Committee will determine the extent of the punishment, if any, in addition to that taken by the Lubbock Soccer Association.

5.2.6.1. The North Texas State Soccer Association Appeals and Disciplinary Committee will make its decision entirely upon the written reports before it, including that of the affected coach should he submit a report. Hearings will not be held by the State Committee unless it, of its own volition, chooses to call one.

5.2.6.2. A coach whose conduct is not considered to be exemplary to his players, parents, and spectators will be firmly dealt with by the LSA Discipline and Appeals Committee and the State Appeals and Disciplinary Committee.

5.2.7. The Lubbock Soccer Association Discipline and Appeals Committee is directed to extend severe punishment to those players, coaches, and assistant coaches guilty of extreme violent conduct while participating in a match and for violence toward any person or property after being sent off, while on the touch-line, or approaching or leaving the game site.

5.3. MISCONDUCT OF SPECTATORS

5.3.1. Each team in the Lubbock Soccer Association is responsible for the conduct of its spectators. The referee shall have the authority to caution and/or send off the coach or acting coach from the field for the misconduct of the spectators associated with the team. Therefore, the coach, assistant coach, and team manager are expected to control the spectators. If he is unable to do so, the Lubbock Soccer Association will take appropriate actions toward the identifiable, unruly spectator, or, if unidentifiable, towards the team itself. The action of the Association shall be sent to the North Texas State Soccer Association Appeals and Disciplinary Committee for review and further action if it feels it is warranted.

5.3.2. Possible actions for the misconduct of spectators are:

5.3.2.1. to suspend the spectator from attending future matches.

5.3.2.2. to report the spectator to the Lubbock Parks and Recreation Department.

5.3.2.3. to require the team to forfeit any games at which that spectator is present on the touch-line.

5.3.2.4. to require the offending team to pay for the presence of police at the game.

5.3.2.5. to revoke and/or refuse registration to the offending team.

5.3.2.6. to cause the spectator to be placed under a municipal 'peace bond'.

5.4. MISCONDUCT AND PUNISHMENT OF TEAMS

5.4.1. When, during the current soccer year, the players/coaches/assistant coaches of a given team have accumulated a total of seven (7) send-offs in league play (including red cards issued as a result of an individual receiving two yellow cards in a single game) or any combination of cards totaling 25 the LSA Discipline and Appeals Committee shall notify the team and the State A & D Committee. The team will be fined \$100.00 payable to NTSSA within thirty (30) days of receiving notice of the seventh (7th) send-off or any combination of cards totaling 25. The coach and the players of said team may also be required notified to appear before the LSA Discipline and Appeals Committee to explain the teams continued misconduct. If desired, the LSA Discipline and Appeals Committee may waive the holding of a local hearing and refer the matter to the State A&D Committee. Failure of the LSA Discipline and Appeals Committee to notify the State A&D Committee within fourteen (14) calendar days of a team's seventh (7th) send-off or any combination of cards totaling 25 will result in a fine of \$ 100.00 per week for each week such notice is late. Red cards or send-offs assessed against that team's spectators or against that team during tournament play will be reviewed to ascertain team misconduct tendencies.

5.4.2. When the players/coaches/assistant coaches of a given team have accumulated a total of four (4) send-offs in a tournament (including red cards issued as a result of an individual receiving two yellow cards in a single game) Tournament Officials shall notify the team and the State A & D Committee. The team will be fined \$100.00 payable to NTSSA within thirty (30) days of receiving notice of the fourth (4th) send-off. The coach and the players of said team may also be required to appear before the committee to explain the team's continued misconduct. Failure of Tournament Officials to notify the State A&D Committee within fourteen (14) calendar days of a team's fourth (4th) will result in a fine of \$ 100.00 per week for each week such notice is late. Red Cards or send-offs assessed against that team's spectators or against that team during league play will be reviewed to ascertain team misconduct tendencies.

5.4.3. The Lubbock Soccer Association will not hesitate to deny teams, coaches, managers, team representatives, or players within its jurisdiction the privilege of further participation in all or selected soccer activities within its jurisdiction for repeated offenses and for serious offenses considered to bring the game into disrepute. A probation period and/or other sanctions may be rendered to teams, coaches, managers, team representatives, or players for violations of the Association's rules.

5.4.4. The Lubbock Soccer Association does hold the team and its coach (es) jointly responsible for the conduct of the players, parents, and spectators.

5.4.5. A coach whose conduct is not considered to be exemplary to his or her players, parents and spectators will be firmly dealt with by both the Lubbock Soccer Association Discipline and Appeals Committee and the North Texas State Soccer Association Appeals and Discipline Committee.

5.5. MISCONDUCT TOWARD REFEREE [See North Texas Soccer Rule 3.11.7]

5.5.1. North Texas State Soccer Association has exclusive jurisdiction over assault or abuse of officials, both referee and assistant referee, in any competition by the State or Member Associations. This jurisdiction includes:

- a. all USSF registered referees (adult and youth).
- b. any non-licensed person serving in any emergency capacity as a game official.
- c. any coach, parent, or junior assistant referee serving as a game official.

5.5.2. If there is an assault/abuse of any game official by any person, including players, coaches, managers, or spectators, a report of the alleged assault/abuse will be submitted immediately to the **NTSSA A & D Committee Chairman, the appropriate State Commissioner (Adult Men's, Adult's Women's, Youth or Indoor), the Olympic Development Program Chairman, and the Chairman of**

the State Referee Committee. This subcommittee, chaired by the NTSSA A & D Chairman, shall review and investigate the report(s) as submitted, and upon proper investigation shall determine the seriousness of the alleged assault/abuse in a timely manner.

5.5.3. Should the majority of the members of the subcommittee **listed above** determine there is sufficient evidence to consider the incident a referee assault **or referee abuse**, a formal assault hearing will be held within thirty (30) days of verification of the incident. An intentional act upon **or towards** a game official shall be deemed 'referee assault' **or referee abuse** in the North Texas State Soccer Association under the terms, **references**, and conditions of the United States Soccer Federation Policy 531-9.

If the subcommittee determines there is sufficient evidence to consider the incident referee assault, the committee, at its discretion, may suspend the individual involved until the hearing on the alleged assault.

Should the subcommittee determine the action committed to be Misconduct towards a Referee rather than Referee Assault or Referee Abuse, it shall impose an administrative punishment of a three (3) game suspension. A formal hearing will not be held unless it is requested by the suspended party. Should a formal hearing be requested and held, it shall be an NTSSA Executive Committee hearing as described above.

5.5.4. Assault hearings shall be conducted by the State Executive Committee in the following manner:

5.5.4.1. The alleged offending party is requested to be present at such hearings, however, if he is not present, the State Executive Committee will act upon the matter with the information before it.

5.5.4.2. The game officials are required to be present at the hearings. However, if they are not present, the State Executive Committee will act upon the matter with the information before it.

5.5.4.3. It is intended that the officials' reports be clear and that no explanations are required at the hearings. Only the State Executive Committee will question the officials. If the offending party or any other party or any other person(s) need explanation, such queries will be addressed through the Chair.

5.5.5. Terms and References

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

5.5.5.2 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. Abuse includes, but is not limited to the following acts committed upon a referee: using foul or abusive language toward a referee; spewing any beverage on a referee's personal property; spitting at (but not on) the referee; or verbally threatening a referee. Verbal threats are remarks that carry the implied or direct threat of physical harm. Such remarks as, "I'll get you after the game" or "You won't get out of here in one piece", shall be deemed referee abuse.

5.5.5.3. Misconduct at a referee means persistent statements or physical acts directed toward a referee during or after a game, that do not constitute referee assault or abuse as provided under United States Soccer Federation policy 531.9, but that mistreat the referee or are inappropriate or unacceptable statements or acts, and may include the following:

- a. excessive incidences of foul or abusive language at the referee;
- b. statements that diminish the authority of the referee;
- c. statements or acts that serve to intimidate without threatening physical harm to the referee.
- d. examples of misconduct that arise under the description above include the following:

- 1. confronting the referee without physically threatening the referee;
- 2. spitting on the ground or in the air but not at the referee;
- 3. throwing or kicking an item as a sign of disrespect or dissent but without the chance of hitting the referee;
- 4. re-entering the field.

These are only some of the examples of possible misconduct and are not all-inclusive, but apply only in the following situations:

- a. if a proceeding is brought against an individual for referee assault or abuse, or both, under Federation Policy 531.9: or
- b. if the individual is ejected from a game and, after the ejection, engages in conduct that is misconduct under this policy.

5.5.6. Penalties and Suspensions

5.5.6.1 Referee Assault

The person committing the referee assault is automatically suspended as follows:

- (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 (c) or (d), for any other assault, at least 6 months from the time of the assault;
- (c) for an assault committed by an adult and the referee is 17 years of age or younger, at least 3 years; or
- (d) for an assault when serious injuries are inflicted, at least 5 years.

5.5.6.2. Referee Abuse

The person committing the referee abuse shall be suspended for a minimum of three (3) games.

5.5.6.3. Misconduct towards a Referee

The person committing the misconduct towards a referee shall be suspended for a minimum of three (3) games.

5.5.6.4. Any suspension assessed against an individual under this section does

not affect any other suspension and/ or fine that may be imposed by an association or league for a violation that is not referee assault or abuse.

5.5.7 Any party found to have committed the act of referee assault, **referee abuse, or misconduct towards a referee** shall have the right to appeal, within ten (10) days of receipt of the decision, to the USSF Appeals Board, following USSF Bylaw 705.

5.5.8 Assault On Officials by an Adult Player

Should a player (male or female) be found guilty of referee assault, the State Executive Committee may, at its discretion, impose upon the team of which the player is a member, the requirement of posting a \$1,000 cash bond to be held in the treasury of NTSSA without interest for period of one (1) year after posting. This cash bond will be required to be posted before the team may engage in any further games within the boundaries of NTSSA. Should any other member of said team be found guilty of a referee assault during that one (1) year period, the team shall forfeit the bond, and another similar bond will be required before the team can continue in competition. If no member of the team commits a referee assault during the one (1) year period, the bond will be returned to the person or persons designated to receive such payment. No member of such team which has failed to post such bond will be permitted to register with another team until that member has posted a \$50 bond with NTSSA; nor shall any new member be allowed to register on that team until such member has posted a \$50 bond, such bonds to be held under the same terms and conditions as the team bonds

5.6. MISCONDUCT OF REFEREES

5.6.1. When any referee is alleged to have committed misconduct toward any participant, spectator or a match, or toward another referee the North Texas State Soccer Association Appeals and Discipline Committee will hear such allegations and assess punishment concerning the Referee in regard to his activities.

5.6.2. When any referee is alleged to have miss-interpreted the Law of the Game but does not admit to such miss-interpretation, the complainant will submit a letter to the Lubbock Soccer Association Referees' Representative who will present the matter to the local Referees' Committee. The Referees' Committee will deliver to the Board of Directors its findings in regard to the alleged miss-interpretation. NOTE: If the referee admits to have miss-interpreted the Laws, the complaint will be handled as a game protest and will be submitted with the appeal deposit of \$30 to the Discipline and Appeals Committee Chairman.

5.6.3. When any referee is alleged to have carried out his duties in less than a professional manner, the complainant will submit a letter to the Lubbock Soccer Association Referees' Representative who will present the matter to the local Referees' Committee. The Referees' Committee will deliver to the Board of Directors its findings in regard to the alleged breach.

5.7. APPELLATE PROCEDURES

5.7.1. All complaints, protests, grievances, misconduct reports, and appeals of the decisions or actions of any official of the Lubbock Soccer Association will, unless directed elsewhere in the Association By-Laws and General Rules, be submitted, in writing, to the Chairman of the Discipline and Appeals Committee within forty-eight (48) hours of the matter concerned. The Committee may, at its discretion when requested in writing to do so, waive the time limit for filing matters before it, but in no case will grant an extension of more than ten (10) days. Many matters submitted to the Committee must be accompanied by a cash bond (see the later paragraph about filing fees).

Definition of a grievance: a wrong, real or fancied, considered as grounds for complaint against an unjust act.

5.7.2. The Discipline and Appeals Committee will act on all matters submitted to it within five (5) days after receipt of the complaint or report by the Chairman. All involved parties (referees, linesmen, coaches, players, parents) will be notified of the hearing date and time and are expected to be present. However, if any person is not present, the Committee may proceed with the hearing. The Committee will hear all sides of the incident according to the Committee's established procedures, then will request that all involved parties leave so that the Committee may deliberate on the matter (no decision will be made by the Committee while the involved parties are present). The Chairman of the Committee will make the results of the Committee's deliberations known to all involved parties as soon as possible.

5.7.3. The Board of Directors of the Lubbock Soccer Association may bring any matter directly before the Board as a judicial body when the Board feels it is necessary in order to render a decision and to speed

the normal process for matters of utmost importance.

5.7.4. All decisions of the Discipline and Appeals Committee, except those which are appealed directly to the North Texas State Soccer Association Appeals and Disciplinary Committee, may be appealed to the Board of Directors of the Lubbock Soccer Association. Those decisions which are appealed directly to the State Appeals and Disciplinary Committee are enumerated in other sections of the General Rules. All decisions by the LSA Discipline and Appeals Committee which are appealed to the Board of Directors, and most of those which are appealed to the State, require the posting of a cash bond.

5.7.5. All decisions of the Board of Directors of the Lubbock Soccer Association may be appealed to the Appeals and Disciplinary Committee of the North Texas State Soccer Association. Such appeals may require the posting of a cash bond.

5.7.6. All decisions of the Appeals and Disciplinary Committee of the North Texas State Soccer Association may be appealed to the State Executive Committee.

5.7.7. All appeals at all levels are subject to a complete rehearing of the initial incident or action. No appeal level will lessen the punishment assessed by a lower level in any case in which the lower level decision is upheld. Higher appeal levels may, at their discretion, increase the punishment assessed by a lower judicial body.

5.7.8. All those persons under the jurisdiction of the Lubbock Soccer Association are reminded that they must exhaust all appellate procedures of the Association before they may appeal to the North Texas State Soccer Association or other governing bodies.

5.7.9. The Lubbock Soccer Association Discipline and Appeals Committee will set the rules of hearings and may restrict the number of witnesses, and the time allotted to each, so long as fair hearings are held. The Committee may also determine whether it wants to allow closed or open hearings.

5.7.10. The Lubbock Soccer Association and its Committees will refuse to hear any appeal when any person is threatening a lawsuit. Such appeals will immediately be passed to the North Texas State Soccer Association. This is a sport to which our local officers and officials are giving freely of their time, and none of them need to take the trouble and expense to appear in court.

5.7.11. The Lubbock Soccer Association and its Committees and the North Texas State Soccer Association and its Committees will refuse to allow the use of recording devices, court reporters, and the presence of attorneys acting in their professional capacity at all hearings.

5.7.12. Should any aggrieved party resort to the courts without exhausting all avenues of appeal including through to the United States Soccer Federation, the Lubbock Soccer Association may, at its discretion, suspend such person or refuse to accept further registration in soccer activities within its jurisdiction.

5.7.13. Any appeal, to any reviewing body in either the Lubbock Soccer Association or the North Texas State Soccer Association, will be:

5.7.13.1. in writing.

5.7.13.2. made to the appropriate person within five (5) days of receipt of written notice of the lower level authority's decision(s). The appropriate person is the:

Chairman for the LSA Discipline and Appeals Committee.
President for the LSA Board of Directors.

Chairman for the NTSSA Appeals and Disciplinary Committee.
General Manager for the NTSSA Executive Committee.

5.7.13.3. accompanied by the specified fees in cash or certified check.

5.7.14. Filing fees for appeals will not be waived. Filing fees for protests, grievances, and complaints may be waived by the LSA Discipline and Appeals Committee for good reason. Filing fees will be refunded to the appealing party only if the previous decision is overruled. Fees will be:

5.7.14.1. \$30 for all matters at either the LSA Discipline and Appeals Committee or Board of Directors.

5.7.14.2. \$100 for all appeals to the North Texas State Soccer Association.

5.8. RECORDS

The Discipline and Appeals Committee will maintain a permanent file of all reports sent to it and the action taken. When any one person or team shows a trend toward numerous misconduct reports the Committee will contact such person or team for the purpose of warning or may call such person or team before it.