

North Texas State Soccer Association, Inc.
2022/2023 Bylaws and Rules

3.11 DISCIPLINE

All Member Associations are directed to distribute this rule to every youth and adult player, every coach, team manager, league administrator and referee. It is intended that the player and/or coach will make known the contents of this rule to his or her parents and spectators.

3.11.1 Authority

1. All members and participants in youth and adult soccer within the jurisdiction of **NTSSA** have requested to participate in our programs. Therefore, these participants have agreed to abide by the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, Rules and Regulations of **NTSSA**, their local playing association, as well as those of the **USSF** and its National Associations of which **NTSSA** is a member. The **NTSSA** Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws provide that it has jurisdiction over all Member Playing Associations, players, coaches, team managers, administrators, team representatives and referees who choose to affiliate. Any member or participant in youth and adult soccer within the jurisdiction of **NTSSA** found in violation of the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, Rules and Regulations of **NTSSA**, their local member association, as well as those of the **USSF** and its National Associations of which **NTSSA** is a member, may be subject to publication in the monthly newsletter of **NTSSA** association 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.
2. All Member Associations and /or Playing Leagues are directed to form their own Appeals and Disciplinary Committees and to hold hearings--**WITH THE PARTIES HAVING THE RIGHT TO BE PRESENT**--on every player/coach/assistant coach/spectators and/or parents as required for serious misconduct.
3. Should a recreational Playing League cover multiple Associations, the members of the Appeals and Discipline Committee for this league should be comprised of representatives from each available association represented. The **NTSSA** A&D Committee shall serve as the first level of appeal involving complaints from participants of differing Associations. If a Playing League is hosted by a primary Association, the Appeals and Discipline Committee may be comprised of members of that Association.

As guidance, if the issue at hand was as a result of play, the Playing League will handle the disciplinary matter. All other matters shall be directed to coach/individual/teams home Association.

3.11.2 Misconduct of Youth Players/Coaches/Assistant Coaches

1. Member Associations, Playing leagues and Tournament Officials may institute their own "CUMULATIVE CARD SYSTEM" for players/coaches and assistant coaches or additional sanctions as they see appropriate. Appeals of cards are not allowed except when the referee admits he made an error in the issuance of the card. Sanctions for misconduct will remain within the competition where they are earned unless the violation happens in the last game of that competition and the Member Association/Player League or Tournament Officials deem that it is serious enough to forward to North Texas A & D for consideration of further sanctions.
2. **Yellow Cards** A player receiving a second yellow card in a single game is suspended for the balance of that game and the next game within that competition.
3. **Red Cards** A player receiving a red card or a coach/assistant coach who is sent off is suspended for the balance of that game and the next game within that competition, or if in the last game of the competition, may be referred to North Texas for further sanctions.

If a Member Association's and/or Playing League's A & D Committee determines that a red card was issued for an infraction that was not an "expulsion" offense in accordance with the IFAB Laws of the Game, such A & D Committee may reduce the red card to a yellow card and assess sanctions accordingly. The Member Association or Playing League may not, however, do away with the card altogether. A full report of this action must be sent to

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NTSSA.

3.11.3 Misconduct of Adult Players/Coaches/Assistant Coaches

Member Associations, Playing leagues, and Tournament Officials shall institute their own “MISCONDUCT SYSTEM” for players/coaches and assistant coaches for sanctions as the see appropriate. Appeals of cards are not allowed except when the referee admits he made an error in the issuance of the card. Sanctions for misconduct will remain within the competition where they are earned unless violation happens on the last game of that competition and the Member Association, Player League, or Tournament Officials deem that it is serious enough to forward to North Texas Soccer A&D for consideration of further sanctions.

1. A player/coach/assistant coach receiving a second yellow card in a single game is suspended for the balance of that game, and shall sit out the following game.
2. A player/coach/assistant coach receiving a red card is suspended for the balance of that game, and shall sit out a minimum of the following game.

NOTE: *If the Member Association A&D Committee determines that a red card was issued for an infraction that was not an “expulsion” offense in accordance with the IFAB Laws of the Game, the Member Association may reduce the red card to a yellow card and assess points for the yellow card. The Member Association may not, however, do away with the card altogether.*

3.11.4 Misconduct of Spectators

1. Each team (youth and adult) in **NTSSA** is responsible for the conduct of its spectators. The referee has the authority to insist that the coach or acting coach deal with the misconduct of the spectators and resolve the problem. Failure to do so may result in the coach's dismissal from the field and/or termination of the match. Therefore, the coach/assistant coach/team manager is expected to control his spectators, especially on non-enclosed fields. If he is unable to do so, Member Associations, Playing Leagues and/or Tournament Officials are directed to take appropriate actions toward the identifiable, unruly spectator, or if unidentifiable, towards the team itself. Member Associations, Playing Leagues and Tournament Officials shall report spectator misconduct to the **NTSSA** A&D Committee for review and further action if warranted.
2. Suggested action for misconduct of spectators is:
 - a. Suspend the spectator from attending future matches.
 - b. Report spectator to the local Park & Recreation Department.
 - c. Require team to forfeit any games at which spectator is present on the touchline (cannot keep them off public street or out of parking lot.)
 - d. Require offending team to pay for presence of police at the game.
 - e. Revoke and/or refuse registration to the offending team.
 - f. Cause the spectator to be placed under a municipal “peace bond”.

3.11.5 Misconduct and Punishment of Teams

1. League Play

- a. When, during the current soccer year, the players/coaches/assistant coaches of a given team have exceeded the misconduct limit set by the member association (if none are in place, NTSSA Misconduct Guideline will be used) in league play the Member Association and/or Playing League shall notify the team and the State A & D Committee. The team will be fined \$100 payable to **NTSSA** within thirty (30) days of receiving notice of the exceeded limit. The coach and the players of said team may also be required to appear before the Member Association and/or Playing League Disciplinary Committee to explain the team’s continued misconduct. If desired, the Member Association and/or Playing League may waive the holding of a local hearing and refer the matter to the **NTSSA** A&D Committee. Failure of the Member Association or Playing League to notify the **NTSSA** A&D Committee within fourteen (14) calendar days of a team’s exceeded misconduct limit will

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result in a fine of \$100 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.

- b. 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 NTSSA A & D Committee. The team will be fined \$100 payable to NTSSA within thirty (30) days of receiving notice of the fourth 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 NTSSA A&D Committee within fourteen (14) calendar days of a team's fourth will result in a fine of \$100 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.

2. All Association Teams

- a. The NTSSA holds the team and coach jointly responsible for the conduct of his or her players, parents, and spectators.
- b. A coach whose conduct is not considered to be exemplary to his or her players, parents and spectators will be firmly dealt with by the A&D Committee of both the Member Association involved and the NTSSA.

3.11.6 Games Directly Sponsored by NTSSA

Misconduct involving any participant (player, coach, parent/spectator) of State-sponsored games, as opposed to Member Association league play, will be reported directly to the Tournament Officials of the State Cup and Games Committee and will be forwarded to the NTSSA Appeals and Disciplinary Committee immediately after the occurrence for appropriate disciplinary action.

3.11.7 Misconduct Toward Referee

1. NTSSA 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.
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 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 Committee Chairman, shall review and investigate the report(s) as submitted, and upon proper investigation shall determine the seriousness of the alleged assault/abuse report(s) in a timely manner.
3. Should the majority of the members of the subcommittee listed above in Paragraph 3.11.7.2 determine there is sufficient evidence to consider the incident referee assault or referee abuse, a formal hearing will be held within thirty (30) days of verification of the incident. An intentional act upon or towards a game official as defined in Paragraph 3.11.7.1 above shall be deemed "referee assault" or "referee abuse" in the NTSSA under the terms, references, and conditions of USSF 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, as noted in Paragraph 3.11.7-2 above, determine the action committed to be Misconduct Towards a Referee rather than Referee Assault or Referee Abuse;

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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** Board of Directors hearing as described in Paragraph 3.11.7.4.

4. **NTSSA** Board of Directors Hearing

Assault hearings shall be conducted by the State Board of Directors in the following manner:

- a. The alleged offending party should be present at such hearings; however, if he is not present, the **NTSSA** Board of Directors will act upon the matter with the information before it.
- b. The game official(s) are required to be present at the hearings. However, if they are not present, the **NTSSA** Board of Directors will act upon the matter with the information before it.
- c. It is intended that the officials' reports be clear and that no explanations are required at the hearing. Only the **NTSSA** Board of Directors will question the official(s). If the offending party or any other party or any other person(s) need explanation, such queries will be addressed through the Chair.

5. Terms and References

- a. Referee assault is an intentional act of physical violence at or upon a referee, (an act intended to bring about a result that 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.
- b. 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.
- c. Misconduct towards 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 Federation Policy 531-9, but that mistreat the referee or are inappropriate or unacceptable statements or acts, and may include the following:
 - i. excessive incidences of foul or abusive language at the referee;
 - ii. statements that diminish the authority of the referee;
 - iii. Statements or acts that serve to intimidate without threatening physical harm to the referee.
 - iv. 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:

- i. if a proceeding is brought against an individual for referee assault or abuse, or both, under Federation Policy 531-9; or
- ii. If the individual is ejected from a game and, after the ejection, engages in conduct that is misconduct under this policy.

6. Penalties and Suspensions

a. Referee Assault

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

1. for a minor or slight touching of the referee or the referee's uniform or personal property, at least three (3) months from the time of the assault;
2. except as provided in clause one (1) or two (2), for any other assault, at least six (6) months from the time of the assault;
3. for an assault committed by an adult and the referee is seventeen (17) years of age or younger, at least three (3) years; or
4. for an assault when serious injuries are inflicted, at least five (5) years.

b. Referee Abuse

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

c. Misconduct Towards a Referee

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

- d. Any suspension assessed against an individual under this section does not effect any other suspension and/or fine that may be imposed on the individual by an association or league for a violation that is not referee assault or abuse.

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**.

8. Assault On Officials By An Adult Player

Should a player (male or female) be found guilty of referee assault, the **NTSSA** Board of Directors 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 a 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 that 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.

3.11.8 Misconduct of Referees

When any referee is alleged to have committed misconduct toward any participant, spectator of a match or toward another referee, the **NTSSA A&D Committee** will hear such allegations and assess punishment concerning the Referee in regard to his activities.

3.11.9 Appellate Procedures

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1. All those under the jurisdiction of **NTSSA** are reminded that they must exhaust all appellate procedures of the Member Association on all matters not covered by these Rules before **NTSSA** can acquire jurisdiction to hear the appeal under its rules.
2. Member Associations are reminded that they may 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. It may also determine whether it wants to allow closed or open hearings.
3. Member Associations and their committees are urged to refuse to hear any appeal when any person is threatening a lawsuit. You should pass the appeal to the next higher forum which would hear it. This is a sport to which we are giving freely of our time, and none of us needs to take the trouble and expense to appear in court.
4. To allow the use of tape recorders, court reporters and the presence of attorneys at hearings is optional with the Member Associations
NTSSA will refuse to allow such recording devices, and the presence of attorneys at hearings is optional with the Member Associations.
5. Should any aggrieved party resort to the courts without exhausting all avenues of appeal including through to the **USSF**, **NTSSA** may, at its discretion, suspend such person or refuse to accept further registration in soccer activities within its jurisdiction.
6. An appeal of decisions pursuant to Rule 3.11 made by Member Associations, after Member Association's appeal procedures have been exhausted, will be made to the **NTSSA** A&D Committee in accordance with procedures established by this section.
7. An appeal of decisions made by the State A&D Committee will be made to the **NTSSA** Board of Directors in accordance with procedures established in this section.
8. An appeal of decisions presented to the **NTSSA** will be:
 - a. In writing.
 - b. Made to the Executive Director of **NTSSA** within five (5) days of receipt of written notice of the lower level authority's decision(s).
 - c. Fees, as specified, will be in cash or certified check and will accompany the written notice of appeal.
9. Filing fees for appeals will, under no circumstances, be waived. Fees will be refunded to the appealing party only if the previous decision is overruled. Fees will be:
 - a. All Player Appeals- \$50 - (\$25 paid by the player and \$25 paid by the coach)
 - b. All Coach Appeals & Referee Appeals - \$100
 - c. All Team Appeals - \$100

3.11.10 Records

The Appeals and Disciplinary Committee will maintain a permanent file of all reports sent to it and the action taken. When any one person or a team shows a trend towards 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.

3.11.11 Association to Comply

When any Member Association or a member thereof, fails to send in reports as required by this Rule, **NTSSA** will take any action it considers proper, including fine not to exceed Five Hundred Dollars (\$500). Repeated violation by Member Association can result in such association being declared not in good standing.

3.12 REFEREE SYSTEM

3.12.1