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Misconduct & Discipline

South Atlantic, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, North Atlantic, Florida Leagues
USYS Conferences
(Amended August 2026)

USSF has modified [the Referee Abuse Prevention Policy \(Policy 531-9 - revised May 2026\)](#) designed to make youth and amateur matches safer. Referee abuse will not be tolerated. Considering this amended policy, the EDP Incident Review Committee will implement USSF abuse guidelines for Referee Abuse

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

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Player Misconduct & Discipline

PLAYER MISCONDUCT

One Game Suspension:

- Resulting from a second caution; (i.e., persistent infringement or dissent by word or action).
- Denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball (this does not apply to a goalkeeper within his own penalty area).
- Denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO) to prevent an opponent moving toward the player's goal without any intention of playing the ball
- Serious Foul Play: defined as using disproportionate and unnecessary strength in a manner likely to hurt or injure an opponent; any tackle from behind which endangers the safety of an opponent.

PLAYER VIOLENT CONDUCT

One game suspension (minor infractions):

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

Three game suspension (major infractions):

- Striking or attempting to strike with the intent to injure.
- Fighting.
- Any intentional exposure of the anatomy which is considered lewd and lascivious; all gestures with any part of the body which implies visual profanity.
- Spitting - defined as spitting on or at an opponent or another person as well as spitting onto their own hand prior to shaking hands with their opponent and/or the referees or other game officials. Gotsport will track the game suspensions and will "redline" a player who is suspended. Once the ensuing game has been completed and the game score is entered into Gotsport, the red line will be erased, and the player will regain eligibility.

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Coach Misconduct & Discipline

(as defined by [US Soccer 531-9](#))

VERBAL ABUSE of Officials by Coaches

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

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

One Game Suspension

- Failure to control parent spectators which results in the termination of the game
- Use of foul, abusive and offensive language - not directed
- Insulting, belittling, insinuating or taunting behavior undermining referee authority.

Four Game Suspension

- Harassment, intimidation, retaliation, abusive or threatening language

PHYSICAL ABUSE of Officials by coaches or players

Three Game Suspension

Minor or slight deliberate touching

TEN Game Suspension

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

In the case of any referee abuse, the USSF Supplemental Referee Report will be forwarded to the State Youth Referee Administrator for review which may result in a hearing and fine.

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Protests and Appeals

Protests on-field referee decisions

Protests will not be reviewed if they are critical of the referee's subjective decisions on or away from the field.

Coaches are expected to monitor their own players and supporters as much as reasonably possible. Continued poor behavior, inappropriate language, harassment of officials, disrespect to opponents or attempts to circumvent rules and regulations are grounds for immediate sanctions.

If League Rules or the Laws of the Game have been ignored or mis-applied, then the Club may forward an APPEAL to the EDP Incident Review Committee.

Definition of an Appeal

An appeal must be filed in writing and must include:

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

Video Recordings and Appeals:

The Incident Review Committee asks that video recordings come from the Head Coach or DOC who has a proper VEO recording unit or something of a similar nature.

EDP discourages handheld parent video recordings and will not accept them for review. The recordings should only be used for club purposes internally and will NOT be used to question or review referee calls. All such evidence, visual or audio, must be conclusive and substantive to support any review. The Committee will only assess video documentation if it is to be documented. Possible serious foul play or violent conduct missed by the game officials. encroachment of coaches or parents onto the playing surface. The use of foul and abusive language is directed at any individual.

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REFEREE EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

The EDP Incident Review Committee will not address the performance or in-game decisions of officials.

EDP does not appoint, train, educate or assess game day officials. They are qualified independent contractors who have been assigned by USSF assignors to officiate EDP games. This Committee relies on their honesty, integrity, and experience in their USSF Supplemental Referee Reports.

The subjective decisions made on the field of play are final. Complaints received from concerned parents will not be reviewed without the inclusion of the DOC and Club President in any communication.

To evaluate and educate game officials, the Committee will gladly forward any observations to the game assignor for review and application.

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Parent Involvement

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

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

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Use of Inappropriate Language

The use of inappropriate language on and off the field of play is unfortunately common and should be disciplined.

The game official oversees that discipline and, if anything is within his earshot, he/she should stop the game and apply immediate disciplinary measures.

If the official does not hear and record this language, players and coaches should report any observed, racial, or insensitive comments immediately to the referee. The game must be stopped, and a dialogue must occur between officials and coaches.

In the USSF Supplemental Referee Report, details of such a dialogue will be needed to apply disciplinary measures or investigations.

Any post-game comments or complaints from individual coaches, players, and parents, without any supporting visual or audio evidence, are only allegations of inappropriate language being used and may go unproven.

Without supporting video or audio evidence, it is a challenge to prove such allegations, but the Committee will ask the opposing club to conduct an internal investigation to advise and educate their players and parents against the use of any inappropriate and insensitive language.

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