

CLUB INDEPENDENT (CI) GRIEVANCES PROCEDURE POLICY – CI-POL-005

PURPOSE

To establish a policy and procedure for grievances within Club Independent (CI), referred to in this document as the Club, so a process is available to communicate grievances and allow for appropriate and timely resolution.

No Club Director, parent, player, coach, team, club or team official may invoke the aid of the courts of the United States or the State of Alabama without first exhausting all available remedies within the appropriate soccer organizations, and as provided within United States Youth Soccer (USYS). Grievances involving individuals, teams, clubs or leagues outside the Club shall be dealt with according to Alabama Youth Soccer Association Rules and Regulations and USYS Bylaws 701 and 704.

The Club Board of Directors, referred to in this document as the Board, strongly encourages the resolution of grievances and conflicts at the team or lowest level whenever possible. The Board recognizes that certain situations may not be satisfactorily resolved at the team or lowest level possible, requiring intervention at a higher level within the club organization. Consequently, this document outlines the Club's procedure and policy relating to the resolution of grievances.

APPLICABILITY

The procedure contained herein is applicable when resolving grievable issues, as defined below, involving players, parents, coaches, and other individuals who serve the Club. Failure to follow these guidelines will be grounds for corrective actions of up to and including expulsion from the Club. In certain situations, players may be penalized for the actions of their parent(s) or spectator(s)/supporter(s) found to be associated with them.

DESCRIPTION OF GRIEVANCES

Grievances may include, but are not limited to, incidents during Club sponsored events, inappropriate behavior by a coach, player, parent or other individual affiliated with or attending a Club sponsored event. Note: Issues specifically related to team formation/composition and team management matters such as coaching philosophy, decision making, style and playing time should be resolved by speaking directly with the coach.

The Club Board of Directors does not consider team formation/composition and team management matters to be grievable issues.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE:

Step 1. Discuss and report the grievance with the head coach of the appropriate team. This can be accomplished by personal notification or email. If this is not feasible or fails to satisfactorily resolve the issue, then proceed to Step 2.

Step 2. Discuss and report the grievance to the team manager. This can be accomplished by personal notification or email. If this is not feasible or fails to satisfactorily resolve the issue, then proceed to Step 3.

Step 3. Discuss and report the grievance to the Club Director of Coaching (DOC). This can be accomplished by personal notification or email. If this is not feasible or fails to satisfactorily resolve the issue, then proceed to Step 4.

Step 4. The final step is to write a formal grievance to the Club Board with the detailed grievance along with a detailed explanation of actions taken to date to try and resolve the situation and which addresses Steps 1, 2 and 3 above. This can be accomplished by personal notification or email. The detailed written grievance should include:

1. Date of the grievance filing/submission
2. Name, phone number and e-mail address of the person(s) filing the grievance
3. Name of player(s)
4. Team identification, including: a. Name of team b. Age group c. Name of head coach 5. Complete description of issue (include as much detail as possible, including date(s), time(s), location(s), names of witness(es), etc., if relevant) 6. Detailed step by step explanation of actions taken to date in an effort to resolve the problem.

The Club Board will determine if the actions taken to date were appropriate and no further action is required; or whether the grievance requires further investigation. If the Board determines that further review is necessary, a minimum of a three (3) member Grievance Task Committee will be appointed by the Club Board to investigate and present recommendations to the full Board. The individual filing the grievance is welcome to be present at any Board meeting, including the meeting during which their grievance is presented. However, the Committee reserves the right to deliberate in private if they feel the situation so requires.

GRIEVANCE TASK COMMITTEE

The Grievance Task Committee, referred to in this document as the Committee, shall meet to consider the grievance within fifteen (15) days of the Committee formation with a final report to be provided to the Board within thirty (30) days of the Committee's receipt of the grievance. Throughout the Committee's efforts, the President of the Club, along with the club member's representative to the Board, shall be kept informed of their progress and serve as a point of guidance if any concerns arise. The Committee's process should be as follows:

1. An investigation will take place to interview and conduct a collection of facts with coaches, players and all parties involved, as determined by the Committee, to determine what transpired during the said grievance concern.
2. A Committee meeting shall be conducted to review the concerned grievance. At the discretion of the committee, those involved may be notified of the meeting and requested to be present. The committee may use any means deemed appropriate at their discretion to gather information substantial to determining a resolution of the grievance. The Committee shall discuss all issues to determine the degree and severity of the behavior and the subsequent recommendation for corrective action(s), if necessary.
3. The Committee shall complete a written report on the facts identified during their investigation along with recommendations which they will present to the Board within thirty (30) days of receiving the grievance.

POTENTIAL OFFENSES ALONG WITH POTENTIAL CORRECTIVE ACTIONS:

Offenses may include, but are not limited to, misconduct/unsportsmanlike behavior, disrespect, vulgarity, endangerment to others/fighting, verbal and/or physical harassment. Corrective actions may include, but are not limited to, verbal warning, accompanied by a meeting with the Board; Suspension from all team participation for a specified period of time; Suspension from all team participation for the remainder of the season; Suspension from the team; Suspension from all Club participation for a specified period of time; Suspension from Club participation for remainder of the season; Suspension from the Club; and/or other actions as deemed appropriate by the Board for the particular situation.

BOARD REVIEW AND DETERMINATION

The Club Board will review the recommendations of the Committee and determine the appropriate action(s) to properly address the grievance. The Board decision stands as the final action at the Club level. The Club Board will reply in writing or email to the submitter(s) of the grievance on its findings and final determination. If the final determination by the Board allows for a suspension for a particular amount of time, the Board shall include the specified amount of time in the final disposition. To be eligible to return after any suspension, a meeting shall be required with the Director of Coaching (DOC) and/or a set of Board members, as determined by the Board. Upon conclusion of the final determination, the Club Board will create a case file consisting of all documents associated with the investigation and fully document the final disposition.

FILING PERIOD OF GRIEVANCES

The filing period of a grievance shall be allowed at any time during the calendar year with the exception of a blackout period beginning 60 calendar days prior to and 30 calendar days following completion of the annual state league tryout period. This blackout period shall be utilized to ensure all issues are resolved and affected parties addressed prior to the annual formation of teams.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Club recognizes the sensitive nature of certain grievances and will take all reasonable steps to insure that the information reported and gathered through investigations shall be kept confidential and only shared with those individuals with a need to know in order to resolve the grievance. All parties directly involved and/or affected by a filed grievance and who are allowed to continue to be members of the Club, will not and should not be subjected to future retaliatory-like actions as a result of the filed grievance. The Club will abide by the laws of the State of Alabama and are required by law to report any suspicion of illegal activity to the appropriate authorities.