

6 – Misconduct Toward Game Officials

NCYSA Discipline and Appeals will handle all misconduct towards game officials, according to USSF Policy 531-9.

Referees shall transmit a written report of the alleged assault or abuse, or both, within 48-hours of the incident (unless there is a valid reason for later reporting) to:

1. If occurring at a sanctioned League Match in North Carolina, to the State Referee Administrator and the NCYSA Discipline and Appeals Administrator.
2. If occurring at an in-state Event/Tournament (in North Carolina), to the Event/Tournament Chairperson, Event/Tournament Referee Assignor or Liaison, on the day of the incident, and within 48-hours to the State Referee Administrator, and the NCYSA Discipline and Appeals Administrator.

Misconduct may occur before, during and after the match, including travel to and from the match. Misconduct may also occur at later times when directly related to the duties of a game official as a referee involved in NCYSA Youth Matches (not including Professional League Member activities).

- “Referee” includes: All currently registered USSF Referees, Assistant Referees, 4th Officials or others duly appointed to assist in officiating in a match.
- Any non-licensed person serving in an emergency capacity as a referee.
- Any Club Assistant Referee.

1. Hearings will be held in accordance to the guidelines stated in this Manual.
2. Referee Assault is an intentional act of physical violence at or upon a referee.
 - a. 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.
 - b. Unintended consequences of the act are irrelevant.
 - c. 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 (car, equipment, etc.).
3. 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.
 - a. 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 non on) the referee, or verbally threatening a referee.
 - b. 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.
4. When an allegation of abuse or assault is received by the State Office, the accused shall be suspended and banned from participating or being involved in all NCYSA sanctioned matters until a hearing is conducted.

6-A – Misconduct Toward a Junior Referee

A Junior Referee is identified as being 17 years of age or younger. Abuse and Assault are defined the same as in Sections 6-2a-b-c, and 6-3a-b above.

In allegations of abuse and assault by an individual against a Junior Referee, the accused shall be suspended and banned from participating or being involved in all NCYSA sanctioned matters until a hearing is conducted, including, but not limited to: coaching, refereeing, managing a team, playing, or spectating.

Individuals found guilty of Abuse of a Junior Referee shall be suspended from all NCYSA sanctioned events for a period of no less than six (6) scheduled matches of the team playing when the abuse occurred. Should the individual be involved with more than one (1) team, then the suspension is for ALL teams in which they are registered. The period of suspension may be modified at the discretion of the D&A Committee:

- If the team is a single season team and the suspension would carry over to the next season;
- If the team will not form in the next season;
- If the abusing individual is involved with multiple teams.

NOTE: Adults are held to a higher standard in regards to misconduct toward a Junior Referee and these minimum sanctions will be upheld. Players (under the age of 18) involved in misconduct toward a Junior Referee will be handled on a case-by-case basis by NCYSA Discipline Appeals.

6-B – Hearings Regarding Misconduct of Referees

1. When any amateur or professional player, coach, manager, club official or game official assaults or abuses a referee, the original jurisdiction to adjudicate the matter shall vest immediately in the responsible State Association which is affiliated with the United States Soccer Federation.
2. When an allegation of assault is verified by the State Association, the person is automatically suspended until the hearing on the assault/abuse.
3. The State Association must hold a hearing within thirty (30) days of the verification of the abuse or assault, or if applicable, the thirty-day period provided by the subsection below (Misconduct of Referees at Events and Tournaments). If the State Association does not adjudicate the matter within that period of time, original jurisdiction shall immediately vest in the Federation's Appeals Committee to adjudicate the matter, to which the same provisions as to the term of suspension shall apply.
4. Failure to hold the initial hearing shall not rescind the automatic suspension.
5. In cases of report of referee abuse, a hearing is held only when requested by the alleged assailant or otherwise deemed appropriate by the convening authority.

6-C – Misconduct Toward Referees at Events and Tournaments

1. In the event an assault or abuse of a referee occurs in an event outside the alleged offender's home state, the referee shall:
 - a. Immediately notify the Event/Tournament Chairperson;
 - b. Forward a copy of the game report and their comments on the incident to the Event/Tournament Chairperson.
2. The Event/Tournament Chairperson shall have the right to immediately convene a hearing at the site of the Event/Tournament, at which the alleged offender, the coach of the alleged offender when the offender is a player, and the game official should be present. Information presented at this hearing shall promptly be relayed to the alleged offender's State Association President by the Event/Tournament Chairperson, both orally and in writing. However, failure to provide written information shall not restrict the offender's home State Association from taking action with regard to any referee abuse or assault.

3. Final jurisdiction shall vest with the alleged offender's home State Association. A hearing shall be held by that State Association within thirty (30) days of receipt of the initial report of the abuse or assault on a referee.
4. In the event an assault or abuse of a referee occurs in an event in North Carolina, the referee shall:
 - a. Immediately notify the Event/Tournament Chairperson and onsite Referee Assignor/Liaison.
 - b. Forward a copy of the game report and their comments on the incident to the Event/Tournament Chairperson and onsite Referee Assignor/Liaison.
5. The Event/Tournament Chairperson shall have the right to immediately convene a hearing at the site of the Event/Tournament, at which the alleged offender, the coach of the alleged offender when the offender is a player, and the game official should be present. Information presented at this hearing shall promptly be relayed to the NCYSA President and the NCYSA D&A Administrator by the Event/Tournament Chairperson, in writing. Failure to provide written information could result in consideration of future sanctioning of the event, and shall not restrict NCYSA Discipline and Appeals from taking action with regard to any referee abuse or assault.
6. Final jurisdiction shall vest with the NCYSA Discipline and Appeals. A hearing shall be held within thirty (30) days of receipt of the initial report of the abuse or assault on a referee.

6-D – Penalties and Suspensions for Misconduct Toward Referees

Individuals found guilty of committing referee assault are 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. For any other assault, at least six (6) months from the time of the assault, unless stated otherwise in this section.
3. For an assault committed by an individual and the referee is 17 years of age or younger, at least three (3) years. If the assault results in serious injuries, at least five (5) years.
 - a. If the assault is committed by a youth player, the D&A Chairperson has the authority to amend the suspension lengths above.
4. Adjudicating the matter of assault by an adult may not provide a shorter period of suspension, but if circumstances warrant, may provide a longer period of suspension.

Individuals found guilty of committing referee abuse are automatically suspended as follows:

1. The minimum suspension period for referee abuse shall be at least three (3) scheduled matches, within the rules of that competition.
2. NCYSA Discipline and Appeals may provide a longer period of suspension when circumstances warrant (e.g., habitual offenders, egregious behavior, etc.)

6-E – Appeals for Penalties and Suspensions of Misconduct Toward Referees

Individuals found guilty of committing referee assault or referee abuse may appeal to the USSF, following the procedures of Federation Policy 705 within ten (10) days from receipt of the decision of the hearing.