



# Understanding Discipline in Soccer: A Guide for A & D Personnel

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# Agenda

## Topics Covered

Points of Contact

Authority - Rule 3.11.3

Misconduct towards a Referee

Your Responsibilities as A&D

Complaints

Document Links

# Points of Contact:

If unsure of who to contact please email [A\\_D@ntxsoccer.org](mailto:A_D@ntxsoccer.org)

Jim Mills  
[jmills@ntxsoccer.org](mailto:jmills@ntxsoccer.org)

Questions regarding potential concerns on gameplay ( i.e. illegal player, 50% playtime, illegal players, and youth or adult registration.

David Messersmith  
[david@ntxsoccer.org](mailto:david@ntxsoccer.org)

Questions regarding SafeSport, lawsuits, or any legal matter concerning your association.

Erin Pfarner  
[efarner@ntxsoccer.org](mailto:efarner@ntxsoccer.org)

Questions regarding your Bylaws & Rules ( i.e. they need updating or there is a potential incident with your board following them)

Elena Williams  
[ewilliams@ntxsoccer.org](mailto:ewilliams@ntxsoccer.org)

Questions regarding misconduct with players or coaches ( i.e.- potential referee abuse, coach misconduct, player misconduct

# Authority 3.11.3

All participants in youth and adult soccer within NTSSA jurisdiction agree to abide by:

- Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, Rules, and Regulations of NTSSA
- Local playing association's rules
- USSF and its National Associations' rules
- Violations may result in disciplinary action, including publication in NTSSA suspension list for serious violations.

# Your Responsibilities as A&D

All Member Associations are charged with the responsibility of ensuring NTSSA Rule 3.11 –

Discipline is distributed to every youth and adult player, coach, team manager, league administrator, and referee. It is intended that each player will share the contents of this rule with his or her parents and spectators.

The Member Association's Appeals and Disciplinary Committees are directed to extend severe punishment to those players, coaches, and assistant coaches who are guilty of extreme violent conduct while participating in a match and for violence toward any person or property after being ejected, while on the touchline or approaching or leaving the game site.

If the coach, assistant coach, or manager is unable to control his or her spectators, the Member Association is directed to take appropriate actions toward the identifiable, unruly spectator, or if unidentifiable; towards the coach or team itself.

Please ensure your Referees are submitting their reports on the official U.S. Soccer forms:

- [U.S. Soccer Referee Report](#)
- [U.S. Soccer Supplemental Report](#)

Referees and game officials are instructed to turn in written misconduct reports within 48 hours of game time. Under certain circumstances, this may not be possible, but the Member Association should always require this of their referees, assistant referees, and game day officials. In the event the referee's report comes in after the allotted time period, it should not be considered invalid, but rather given its full weight. Instances where the referee has failed to turn in a misconduct report in a timely manner may necessitate a reminder by the assignor, league official, or Member Association. Continued failure to report misconducts may be forwarded to the NTSSA A&D Committee for appropriate action.

The referee's misconduct report is required to implement league rules concerning suspensions. A written record is required to enable the Member Association A&D Committee to issue additional punishment beyond that required by the rules. Member Association A&D Committees may issue more severe disciplinary action than required by NTSSA rules, but may not reduce disciplinary action below what is required by the rules.

Member Associations must conduct a hearing for a send off issued to a coach.

# Formation of Appeals & Disciplinary Committees

- All Member Associations and Playing Leagues must form their own Appeals and Disciplinary Committees.
- Hearings must allow parties to be present.
- Recreational leagues spanning multiple associations should have representatives from each association in their A&D Committee.



# Misconduct of Youth Players, Adult Players, Coaches & Asst. Coaches

- Cumulative Card System may be implemented. (see NTSSA Guidelines for Misconduct on the website under About Us | Governance | NTSSA Policies)
- Appeals of cards are allowed only if the referee admits error.
- Sanctions for misconduct typically remain within the competition unless deemed serious enough for further review by NTSSA.

## Misconduct of Spectators

- Teams are responsible for spectator conduct.
- Referees can address misconduct, and failure to resolve may lead to match termination.
- Recommended actions for spectator misconduct include suspension, reporting to authorities, team forfeitures, and more.



No disciplinary action beyond what is required by the rules may be issued without the individual being given the opportunity to appear before the A&D Committee. A suspension must never be handed down before a hearing to an individual without the person having the right to a hearing with the exception where there is concern for the safety of the participants at stake, or the issue is in regards to referee assault.

# Misconduct toward a Referee



All Referee Reports containing Referee Assault, Referee Abuse, or Misconduct Towards a Referee must be sent to North Texas Soccer for review.

Any written report alleging misconduct by a referee must be submitted to North Texas Soccer for review and handling. All matters involving apparent misconduct by a referee or game official will be the responsibility of the NTSSA A&D Committee.

[A\\_D@ntxsoccer.org](mailto:A_D@ntxsoccer.org)

Once we receive the referee report it will be sent to the NTSSA Sub-Committee for review.

The SubCommittee will make one of the following determinations based on the information in the report:

1. Remand back to the Member Association/Playing League A&D to handle
2. Issue a 3 game Suspension
3. NTSSA Board of Directors to hold a formal hearing

# Recap on Receipt of Referee Report

Referee Abuse/Assault	Referee Misconduct	Player/Spectator Misconduct	Coach Misconduct
Send to North Texas A_D@ntxsoccer.org	Send to North Texas A_D@ntxsoccer.org	Review report to determine if up to a 3 game suspension is warranted. If you determine more is warranted then an A&D Hearing must be held	A&D Hearing must be held

# What do you do when you receive a complaint?

- Members of your Association occasionally raise concerns that they believe warrant a formal hearing.
- Various people such as parents, park and city officials, coaches, etc., may request a hearing by submitting a written complaint containing the complainant's name.
- If the complaint is not submitted in writing, no further action by the Member Association A&D Committee is necessary.
- Anonymous complaints are not accepted at any time.
- The Member Association A&D Chairman has the authority to determine the validity of a requested hearing.



# Example of Valid & Invalid Complaints

## Valid:

- Lack of 50% playing time by a recreational coach
- Allegations of possible misconduct in practice methods employed by a coach
- Misbehavior of a coach, parent, or spectator during a game
- Questionable draft procedures or illegal recruiting

## Invalid

- Disputes regarding the ability or judgment of a referee
- Personality conflicts between coaches
- Reports lacking specific or tangible occurrences of misconduct
- Oral or anonymous reports

# I have the Complaint in writing, now what?

The A&D Chairman's role is pivotal in ensuring fair and unbiased hearings. Upon receiving a written complaint, the A&D Chairman assesses its validity and may seek clarification from the complainant if necessary.

- The primary objective is to ensure a fair and impartial hearing to resolve the issue or complaint.
- Only the A&D Chairman should be aware of the subject matter beforehand to maintain impartiality.
- The A&D Chairman acts as the presiding authority, akin to a judge, while the Committee serves as the jury. The complainant is the accuser, and the defendant is the party for whom the hearing is requested.
- The A&D Chairman's role is to validate the reason for the hearing without conducting investigative work.
- If the A&D Chairman deems there is insufficient material for a hearing or if the matter can be resolved amicably, consultation with the Member Association A&D Committee is advisable.
- The A&D Chairman must have adequate knowledge of the situation to select an unbiased panel.
- Consultation with the NTSSA A&D Chairman is recommended if uncertainties arise regarding the rights of the complainant or accused.

# You have determined the Referee Report or Valid Complaint requires an A&D Hearing...

1. Notification of Hearing - Unless competition dictates otherwise, a minimum of seven (7) days and a maximum of 14 days should be allowed for the accused to adequately prepare their defense.
2. Select your A&D panel members - It is highly recommended to have Committee Members who have varying degrees of experience and cover different ages, teams, or leagues inside your organization. This provides the Chairman the opportunity to select panel members who are as far removed from the case as possible. In no case, however, should minors be a part of an A&D Committee.
3. Hearing Preparation - In person - Hearing packet made for all panel members, 2 for defendants table and 2 for complainants table. Via Tele-conference - Meeting link and Hearing packet sent to all panel members, defendant, and complainant. Send separate email to each group.

Always make sure you are following the Rights of the Parties to avoid having your panels decision overturned on appeal.

# Helpful Document Links:

- [Rights of the Party](#)
- [Right to Appeal](#)
- [Sample Notification Letters](#)
- [Sample Hearing Cover Sheet and Procedure](#)
- [Sample Appeal Form](#)



# Thank you!

for attending our A&D Webinar