

WESTERN SUBURBAN SOCCER LEAGUE
RULES AND REGULATIONS
as of February 13, 2018

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Section 1: General

Rule 1.1: Establishment

The following Rules and Regulations are the standing rules of the Western Suburban Soccer League (WSSL). The WSSL is a member of the Michigan State Youth Soccer Association (MSYSA), which is a member of US Youth Soccer, which is a member of the United States Soccer Federation (USSF). USSF is the national association member for the United States of the international organization for soccer called FIFA or the Federation Internationale de Football Association.

Rule 1.2: Amendments

The rules and regulations of the WSSL as now established and as hereafter amended may be altered, repealed or new rules and regulations may be adopted in lieu thereof by a majority vote of the WSSL Charter and Associate membership present at a WSSL General Meeting for Club Representatives. These rules and regulations shall take effect immediately after the amendment is approved by the WSSL Charter and Associate membership, unless specified in the motion when to take effect.

Rule 1.3: Member Organizations Prerogatives to Set Rules

WSSL member organizations may deem fit to enact rules and regulations more stringent than those included herein, but in no case may their rules and regulations be less stringent. However, no member organization may limit those privileges granted to players by the USSF, US Youth Soccer, MSYSA or the WSSL.

Rule 1.4: Pleas of Ignorance

A plea of ignorance to the bylaws and these rules and regulations is not sufficient, and violators may expect appropriate action by the WSSL Executive Board of this League.

Rule 1.5: Matters Not Provided For

Any matters not provided for in these rules and regulations shall be determined by the WSSL Executive Board and decisions so made shall be subject to the approval of the Charter and Associate membership organizations at a WSSL General Meeting for Club Representatives or at a special meeting.

Section 2: General Cases and Line of Authority

Rule 2.1: General Cases

In general cases, the WSSL Executive Board and Administrator shall be responsible for governing those persons associated with its' functioning and operation. It is the duty of all member organizations to report immediately any infraction of these rules and regulations to the WSSL Executive Board President and/or WSSL Administrator.

Rules 2.2: Line of Authority

Should any member organization want to appeal any adverse decision, the line of authority shall be to the WSSL Executive Board and then to the WSSL Board of Directors and then to the MSYSA.

Section 3: Administration

Rule 3.1: Executive Board Member Expenses

The WSSL Executive Board, as such, shall not be compensated for the performance of services for the League, but may be reimbursed for expenses incurred on behalf of the League, including but not limited to expenses for attendance at meetings of the WSSL Executive Board.

Rule 3.2: Restrictions on Executive Board Members

If a business in which an Executive Board member of this League has any interest and wishes to participate in the bidding process to provide goods or services to this League, such business must do so by sealed competitive bid. All such bids are to be opened at the same time and place, and such Executive Board member may not participate in the decision to award the bid.

Rule 3.3: Other Administrators

The WSSL Executive Board may establish other administrative positions by contract if there is remuneration or by appointment for positions without remuneration. All positions shall have written statements of duties and responsibilities. Contracts shall also specify the duration of such commitments and remuneration agreed upon.

Rule 3.4: Special Committees

The WSSL Executive Board may create special or ad hoc committees to deal with matters of a non-permanent nature. Each Special or ad hoc committee shall have a term of six months, with provisions for its renewal to be extended in six month intervals. The membership of special committees shall be chosen by the WSSL Executive Board, and the President shall appoint the chair. The Chair or designee shall report the committee's activities at each WSSL General Meeting for Club Representatives. The committee shall produce a written report at the end of the term.

Rule 3.5: Notice of Meetings

- A. If notice of a meeting is mailed, the notices shall be directed to each member entitled to notices at its address as it appears on file with the WSSL Administrator unless it shall have filed with the WSSL Secretary or Administrator a written request that notices be mailed to some other address, in which case it shall be mailed to the address designated in the request.
- B. Each member organization shall name its authorized representative(s) on file.

Rule 3.6: Fees and Fines

The WSSL Executive Board members may assess fees or require bonds for administrative functions undertaken on behalf of the WSSL member organizations or levy fines in specific disciplinary actions.

Rule 3.7: Member Organization Responsibilities

- A. **Failure.** A member organization who fails to fulfill its responsibilities, including paying WSSL fees, registering WSSL players/coaches/team officials/teams with the WSSL online registration system, and ensuring their members comply with the provisions of the WSSL Membership Agreement, WSSL Rules and Regulations and any other rules or policies of WSSL, may result in the member being placed in bad standing by the WSSL Executive Board or may lead to the expulsion of the offending team and/or member organization from membership in the WSSL by the WSSL Board of Directors. A member in bad standing will have no voice or vote(s) at any meeting including, special, delegates, or annual general meetings of this League.
- B. **Rules and Regulations Available to Individuals.** Member organizations shall make available to their members copies of these rules and regulations, as well as copies of any other rules or policies pertaining to and adopted by the WSSL or the member organization.
- C. **Other Responsibilities.**
 - a. Member organizations with teams participating in WSSL play must provide a home field with nets, corner flags and field markings according to the WSSL Laws of the Game, unless otherwise noted upon their agreement of acceptance into WSSL as a member organization.
 - b. Member organizations are responsible for obtaining and paying referees at home games.
 - c. Member organizations are responsible for scheduling home games according to the terms set by the WSSL Administrator.
 - d. **Adult Team Officials**
 - i. All adult team officials will be appointed by their member organizations.
 - ii. All adult team officials are responsible for the conduct of the players, parents and spectators associated with their team. All adult team officials found guilty of unsportsmanlike conduct among players, parents spectators may be suspended from participating within the WSSL.
 - e. **Uniforms:**
 - i. Each member organization will be responsible for acquiring its own uniforms
 - ii. Member organizations may display their member organization team name or logo on the front of the jersey.
 - iii. A sponsor patch or logo may be on the jersey.
- D. **Disciplinary Action.**

- a. **Failure to Appear.** Any member organization coach, manager, adult team official or player who fails to appear at a scheduled disciplinary hearing without due cause and seventy-two (72) hours notice will be suspended from all WSSL activities until such time another hearing can be scheduled.

Rule 3.8: Risk Management

The WSSL will adhere to the Risk Management Policy and Program established by MSYSA to ensure the safety of its members.

Rule 3.9: Insurance

- A. **Player's Medical Insurance.** All players registered with the WSSL shall be required to file medical insurance claims with their primary insurance company prior to filing medical claims with the Michigan State Youth Soccer Association.
- B. **Report of Insurance Claims.** All injuries from WSSL, MSYSA or US Youth Soccer activities must be reported, in writing, to both the member organization and MSYSA within 7 days. MSYSA carries secondary medical coverage. All claims are required to first be made through each member's primary insurance carrier prior to being submitted to MSYSA. Any claims not submitted to MSYSA within 30 days will be denied.
- C. **General Liability Insurance.** All member organizations shall provide the WSSL/MSYSA a list of fields used for games and practices with the owner and the addresses.

Rule 3.10: Soccer Year and Seasons

- A. **Soccer Year.** The soccer year of this League shall begin on July 1 and end on June 30 of the following calendar year.
- B. **Seasons.** Each year will be divided into two seasons: Fall Season and Spring Season.

Rule 3.11: Miscellaneous

- A. **Activities.**
 - 1. Except for employees or authorized contractors and subcontractors, no private individual, corporation, contributor, or member of the WSSL may be granted or paid any income or interest from the assets or funds of the WSSL.
 - 2. No part of the activities, assets, or funds of the WSSL shall be committed to the dissemination of propaganda or the attempting to influence legislation or other political action. The WSSL shall not participate or intervene in any political campaign or publish or distribute any statement or spend any funds on behalf of any candidate for public office.
 - 3. The WSSL shall maintain its tax-exempt status under the Internal Revenue Code.
- B. **Gifts.** The Executive Board, the president, or any person expressly so authorized by the Executive Board may accept gifts on behalf of the WSSL for the general purposes of the WSSL, but no conditional contribution, gift, bequest or devise and no contribution, gift, bequest or devise for a purpose more restricted than the general purposes of the WSSL shall be finally accepted without prior approval of the Executive Board.
- C. **Investments.** The WSSL shall have the right to retain all or any part of any securities or other property acquired by it and to invest and reinvest any funds held in it, according to the judgment of the Executive Board, without being restricted as to the class of investments to be made, provided that no action shall be taken on behalf of the League if that action is a prohibited transaction or would result in denial of tax exemption under Section 503 or 504 of the Internal Revenue Code or the Regulations there under as they now exist or as they may hereafter be amended.

Rule 3.12: Tournaments

- A. **Member Organization Tournaments.** Member organizations that wish to host a tournament must request permission from MSYSA in accordance with procedures detailed by MSYSA and in the US Youth Soccer Travel and Tournament Manual.
- B. **WSSL Tournaments.** The WSSL may host a tournament in accordance with procedures detailed by MSYSA and in the US Youth Soccer Travel policies and Tournament Manual. The Executive Board may establish rules and additional requirements.

Section 4: Registration

Rule 4.1: Age Limit and Competitive Level Definitions

- A. **Youth Player.** The term "youth player" shall mean an amateur player who has not attained his or her nineteenth (19th) birthday before the first day of January preceding the Seasonal Year in which he or she applies for registration.
- B. **Attaining Age Limit.** Players attaining the limited age for any age group on or after January 1 will be eligible to play for the full seasonal year.
- C. **Age Groups.** All member organizations, unless otherwise sanctioned by the Executive Board, shall divide play among age groups as listed below.
 - a. Age groups shall consist of players who on the first day of January preceding the current seasonal year, are:
 - Under 19, also referred to as U19/HSO
 - Under 15 years
 - Under 14 years
 - Under 13 years
 - Under 12 years
 - Under 11 years
 - Under 10 years
 - Under 9 years
 - Under 8 Years
 - Under 7 years
 - b. If there are not at least four (4) teams registered in an age group per competition level, there will be no division for that particular age group per competition level.
 - c. No team shall be allowed to roster players who are too old for the age group they are playing in.
 - d. No player may be rostered to a team more than two (2) age groups older except if playing in the U19/HSO age group.
- D. **Authority to Contest Age.** Any player may be called upon to prove his legal age by the Executive Board, the WSSL Administrator or by their member organization.
- E. **Legal Proof of Age.** A birth certificate, passport, drivers license, board of health records, certificate of naturalization, or alien registration card shall be sufficient for proof of age.
- F. **Alteration and/or Falsification of Birth Records and/or Rosters.** Any WSSL affiliated person who knowingly alters any roster or game card or causes any roster or game card to be altered or falsifies any birth date or causes any birth date to be falsified, or affixes or causes to be affixed to any passcard a photograph of any person other than the person named thereon may receive up to a seven (7) year suspension from the WSSL.
- G. **Competition Level.** One of the following levels must be specified for player/adult team officials/team when a player/team registration is submitted by the WSSL member organization via the WSSL online registration system.
 - a. **Recreation:** A player/adult team official registered on teams formed in a manner described here; Recreation teams must have an open sign-up period, which does not exclude any player except based on age or gender outside of the program scope or missing registration deadline. Recreation teams must be formed in accordance with the practice of their member organization, using a method that does not intentionally attempt to group more skilled players into a more competitive team or teams, to the disadvantage of other players or teams. Member organizations should be prepared to define the method they use for recreation team formation and should be prepared to explain this method in the event that challenges are raised by other member organizations regarding the compliance with the spirit of this rule.
 - b. **Select:** A player/coach/team official registered on any team formed from a selection or try-out criteria, and a player/coach/team official on a team that designates itself as select. Select designation applies regardless of player age, selection/try-out criteria and team travel distances.

Rule 4.2: Player Registration, Member Organization Team Entry, and Team Affiliation Requirements

- A. **Proper Registration Procedure.**

1. All players are required to be registered through the WSSL online registration system. All select team players are required to submit a properly completed player registration form. The submittal of a player registration form signed by his/her parent or guardian (if the player is under 18 years of age) binds that player to that organization for the seasonal year unless granted a release. (see "Rule 4.4: Player Release, Transfer, Dual Registration")
 2. Each member organization shall be required to submit to the WSSL Administrator and/or Executive Board member various forms as may be required for the operation of the WSSL and pay all dues, fees, or fines that may be levied by the WSSL. Also, member organizations are responsible for sending proper WSSL affiliation forms and fees directly to the person responsible in the WSSL.
 3. Each member organization shall be responsible for ensuring proper registration of its players and teams, proper accounting of fiscal transactions and accurate reporting via the WSSL online registration system to the WSSL Administrator and/or Executive Board.
 4. All teams competing in WSSL shall be entered for competition by a WSSL member organization. The member organization shall be responsible for the conformity of their teams.
 - i. A team is composed of the eligible individuals listed on the official team roster that is on file with the WSSL Administrator.
 - ii. While the WSSL maintains and encourages separate age groups for boys and girls, both genders may play on the same team.
 - iii. Any team that has one or more male players shall be considered a boys team and placed in a boys division unless designated as a co-ed team and placed in a co-ed division.
 5. A registered player shall be committed to an organization for a full soccer year. Once registered and in the absence of mitigating circumstances, a player must remain with the same organization until the completion of the spring season for the member organization in which his/her team participates. Any attempt to induce a player to change member organizations for either the current or the following seasonal year prior to the end of the seasonal year shall be poaching in violation of "MSYSA Rule 3.7". During the time during which a team has suspended WSSL play, players and club or team officers or representatives may freely discuss new affiliation for the following seasonal year.
 6. Tryouts for all WSSL select team players for the fall and/or spring season of the soccer year will be held in accordance to the tryout start date set by MSYSA. For high school age boys teams playing only in the spring session, tryouts may be held from the tryout start date set by MSYSA until the start of high school practice and after the high school season ends in the fall. Member organizations having tryouts prior to the tryout start date set by MSYSA and/or charging any type of fee for tryouts are not eligible for any WSSL sponsored events.
 7. Registered players on high school age girl's teams who play only during the fall season with WSSL member organizations are expected to play in tournaments and cup games with the team to which they are rostered through June 30 of the seasonal year or until granted a proper transfer or release.
 8. If a fall season girls team disbands or suspends play for the spring season because a majority of the team is playing high school spring sports, those players wishing to play on a WSSL affiliated team in the spring season shall not be considered transfer players.
- B. **Date of Registration.** A player is registered the moment the player and his/her parent or guardian (if the player is under 18 years of age) signs the WSSL player registration form and has submitted the member organization player fees to a responsible member organization official.
- C. **Registration and Transfer Cut-off Dates.** The Executive Board and/or WSSL Administrator may set cut-off dates for player transfers for each playing season or seasonal year. If changing from previous season, transfer and registration dates will be announced via the published WSSL calendar. The WSSL Administrator shall have the authority to accept player registration after these dates and such late registration shall be subject to a fee as approved by the Executive Board.

Rule 4.3: Roster Limit

No Recreational or Select roster may exceed the maximum roster limit for the specific age levels. See chart below:

Playing Format	Age Level	Roster Maximum	Roster Minimum
4v4(no GK)	U7 & U8	8	4
7v7(6v6 with GK)	U9Y, U9 & U10	12	6
7v7(6v6 with GK)	U15-U19/HSO small sided	22*	7
9v9(8v8 with GK)	U11 & U12	16	9
11v11(10v10 with GK)	U13Y, U13, U14, U15 – U19/HSO	22*	9

***The game roster for 7v7 U15-U19 and 11v11 U15-U19 shall have a maximum of eighteen (18) players.**

Rule 4.4: Player Release, Transfer, Dual Registration

A. Player Release.

1. **Voluntary Release** means the removal of a player from a team's roster at the request of the player or parent/guardian. A parent/player must approve the voluntary release. **A voluntary** release will be granted if:
 - a. A parent/player request to be released.
 - b. The player moves to a new address, a distance which in the opinion of the WSSL Administrator and/or Executive Board, would make it impractical for him/her to continue with the original team or,
 - c. There are mitigating circumstances, which in the opinion of the WSSL Administrator and/or Executive Board justify a release.
2. **Involuntary Release** means the removal of a player from a team's roster at the request of team authorities. An **involuntary** release will be granted only if the player is unable to play for one of the following reasons:
 - a. The original team suspends operations for the remainder of the seasonal year or;
 - b. The player has violated rules of the WSSL or of the WSSL member organization and has been suspended for a period greater than five (5) games or,
 - c. The player is injured in such a manner that the player will not be able to participate for the remainder of the season or soccer year or,
 - d. The player moves to a new address, a distance that in the opinion of the WSSL Administrator and/or Executive Board would make it impractical for him to continue with the original team and has demonstrated an inability to continue in participation on the soccer team.
 - e. There are mitigating circumstances, which in the opinion of the WSSL Administrator and/or Executive Board justify a release.

In any of the above cases, where a player seeks a voluntary release or a member organization official seeks to involuntarily release a player, a WSSL Player Release must be requested in writing to the WSSL Administrator and/or Executive Board by the player/his/her parent or guardian (if the player is under 18 years of age) and/or a member organization official. Player/parent signatures are not required for involuntary release. The member organization must validate the request before player release is approved. Once a player is released from a team he/she is eligible to apply for a player transfer. **However, obtaining a player release does not guarantee the player a roster spot on another WSSL team, nor is approval of player transfer guaranteed.**

B. Player Transfers.

1. A player may apply for a player transfer once they have been granted a player release.
2. **All** player transfers must be approved by the player's existing team member organization and new team member organization before the WSSL Administrator and/or Executive Board will consider approving the transfer. Application for a player transfer must be made to the WSSL member organization in writing. It is the responsibility of the new team member's organization to verify the player has been released from the existing team and is eligible for a transfer.

3. The new team must have a spot on their roster to accept the transfer player.
4. Player transfers will only be processed during the transfer period set aside per MSYSA. Player transfers will not be processed during any other period expect for extraordinary circumstances.

C. Dual Rostering.

1. A WSSL player may dual roster with an in-house team from their same WSSL member organization. The WSSL team will be the player's primary team. In-house teams are those teams whose roster and game schedule are organized by member organizations and who only play within the same member organization. These teams do not play in any other WSSL or MSYSA league competition
2. A WSSL select team player may dual roster with an MSPSP or DA team from their same WSSL member organization. The MSPSP team or DA team will be the player's primary team.
3. A WSSL select team player may dual roster with a team in another MSYSA league from their same WSSL member organization.
4. A WSSL Select team U15-U19 player may dual roster with a team from another Club and/or League.

Rule 4.5: Poaching

Poaching is considered a significant offense by the WSSL and any league, club, or individual found to have committed a poaching violation shall be subject to a significant sanction as determined by the WSSL Executive Board and/or Disciplinary and Appeals Committee. Such sanctions may include a financial penalty of \$2,000 or more, loss of coaching privileges for a year, and ineligibility to participate in WSSL authorized events or any other appropriate sanction. Any club, team, or league which through its responsible officers or representatives,

- A. Attempts at any time prior to the approved tryout start date of any seasonal year to induce a registered player (or their parent or their guardian) of any team, or any team as a whole, club, or league under the jurisdiction of the WSSL to leave their current affiliation before the end of the current seasonal year will be considered a poaching violation.
- B. Attempts at any time prior to the approved tryout start date of any soccer year to induce a registered player (or their parent or their guardian) of any team, or any team as a whole, club, or league under the jurisdiction of the WSSL to leave their current affiliation for the following soccer year will be considered a poaching violation.
- C. Teams or clubs requesting to change leagues during the seasonal year must obtain written permission of the president of the WSSL before that move is permitted.
- D. In those instances in which a coach moves from one member organization to another separate and distinct club at the end of the seasonal year, the coach may not coach players of the same gender and succeeding age group for that seasonal year. In addition, the coach may not serve as a rostered team official or non-rostered trainer for the same gender and succeeding age group for that seasonal year. For example, if a U11 boys coach moves to another club, the coach may not coach a U12 boy's team the following seasonal year. These prohibitions shall last one seasonal year. If a coach moves from one club to another separate and distinct club during the seasonal year, the prohibitions shall be enforced for the remainder of that seasonal year and the following seasonal year. This rule does not apply under the following:
 - a. The coach's club dissolves.
 - b. The coach moves 100 miles making the commute to the coach's existing club impractical.
 - c. The appropriate prior club representative, the club president or DOC, agrees in writing to the coach's move to a different club.
- E. For purposes of this rule, contact is not limited to personnel contact, but will include contact by phone, text, emails, face book and all other social media. Responsible representatives include but are not limited to parents of team members, trainers, team managers, club or league board members, and club or league directors of coaching. The appropriate response by the responsible representative to player-initiated contact is to provide requested information. Any recommendation for the player to attend training, tryouts or any other team, club or league soccer event by the representative would be inappropriate and considered an attempt to induce a player to leave their

present soccer organization. A club or league advertising on their own website is not considered poaching. Attendance by the player at such events when initiated by the player or player's parents will not be considered poaching.

Section 5: Rules of Play

Rule 5.1: Rules of Play

Rules of play for the WSSL shall be the "WSSL Laws of the Game," as published by the WSSL Laws Coordinator.

Section 6: Ignorance of the Rules and Regulations

It is the responsibility of each member organization and any person affiliated with it, to know and understand the Rules and Regulations of the WSSL. Ignorance of these Rules and Regulations will not be considered an excuse for failure to follow them and will not be considered as a defense in any disciplinary action taken by the WSSL Executive Board or Administrator.

Section 7: Interpretation of the Rules and Regulations

Any interpretation of the WSSL Rules and Regulations shall not be considered as an official interpretation until the interpretation is rendered in writing and signed and dated by an authorized Board of Directors or Executive Board member or the WSSL Administrator.

Section 8: Ruling of the WSSL Executive Board

Any ruling of the WSSL Executive Board shall be incorporated as a part of these rules and regulation through reference. Rulings shall be documented by the WSSL Executive Board and shall be published.

APPENDIX

The content of this Appendix is not meant to be rules that may be amended by the WSSL. The information provided herein is for reference and any changes by the WSSL, MSYSA or USSF will be effective immediately upon any subsequent amendments by the WSSL, MSYSA or USSF and this Appendix will be updated as quickly as possible.

USSF Policy 531-9 – Misconduct Toward Game Officials

Section 1. General

Misconduct against referees may occur before, during and after the match, including travel to and from the match. Misconduct may occur also at later times when directly related to duties of a game official as a referee.

Section 2. Rule Application

- a. This policy shall supersede any inconsistent rules of member organizations that pertain to assaults or abuse upon Federation referees, assistant referees, the manner and means of hearings, appeals, and rehearings in matters pertaining thereto.
- b. Nothing in this policy rule shall be construed to restrict or limit any league, event/tournament or member organization from applying equal or greater restrictions to anyone not listed in this policy (i.e., a spectator associated with a club or team).
- c. This policy shall not apply to players, coaches, managers, club officials, or league officials while participating in Professional League Member activities.

Section 3. Terms and References

As used in this policy –

1. “Referee” includes the following:
 - a. All currently registered USSF referees, assistant referees, 4th officials or others duly appointed to assist in officiating in a match.
 - b. Any non-licensed, non-registered person serving in an emergency capacity as a referee (under Rule 3040).
 - c. Any club assistant referee.
2. “Hearing” means a meeting of at least three neutral members, one of which is designated or elected to serve as Chairperson. The hearing shall be conducted pursuant to guidelines established by the MSYSA.
3. (a)(i) Referee assault is an intentional act of physical violence at or upon a referee.
(ii) For purposes of this policy, “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. Unintended consequences of the act are irrelevant.
(b) 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.
4. (a) 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.
(b) Abuse includes but is not limited to the following acts committed upon a referee: using foul or abusive language toward a referee that implies or threatens physical harm; spewing any beverage on a referee’s personal property; spitting at (but not on) the referee.

Section 4. Jurisdiction and Hearings

A. General

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 WSSL which is affiliated with the MSYSA.
2. When an allegation of assault is verified by the WSSL, the person is automatically suspended until the hearing on the assault.
3. The WSSL must hold a hearing within thirty (30) days of the verification by the WSSL of the abuse or assault or, if applicable, the thirty-day period provided by subsection (b)(3) of this section. If the WSSL does not adjudicate the matter within that period of time, original jurisdiction shall immediately vest in the MSYSA 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.

B. 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, and (B) forward a copy of the game report and his/her 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 WSSL President by the Event/Tournament Chairperson, both orally and in writing; however, failure to provide written information shall not restrict the WSSL from taking action with regard to any referee abuse or assault.
3. Final jurisdiction shall vest with the WSSL. A hearing shall be held by the WSSL within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the initial report of the abuse or assault on a referee.

Section 5. Penalties and Suspensions

A. Assault

1. The person committing the referee assault must be suspended as follows:
 - a. For a minor or slight touching of the referee or the referee's uniform or personal property, at least 3 months from the time of the assault;
 - b. Except as provided in clause i. or ii., for any other assault, at least 6 months from the time of the assault:
 - i. For an assault committed by an adult and the referee is 17 years of age or younger, at least 3 years; or
 - ii. For an assault when serious injuries are inflicted, at least 5 years.
2. The WSSL in adjudicating the matter may not provide a shorter period of suspension but, if circumstances warrant, may provide a longer period of suspension.

B. Abuse

The minimum suspension period for referee abuse shall be at least three (3) scheduled matches within the rules of that competition. The WSSL in adjudicating the matter may provide a longer period of suspension when circumstances warrant (e.g., habitual offenders).

Section 6. Appeals

A person who is found to have committed the abuse and/or assault may appeal to the MSYSA within ten (10) days from receipt of the decision of the WSSL.

Section 7. Procedure for Reporting Assault and Abuse

- A. Procedures for reporting of referee assault and/or abuse shall be developed and disseminated by the National Referee Committee to all Federation registered referees.
- B. 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 the designee of the WSSL and the MSYSA State Referee Administrator. For tournaments or special events, the referee shall transmit a written report to the tournament director on the day of the incident and to his home state SRA within 10 days of the incident.

USSF Policy 531-10 – Misconduct of Game Officials

Section 1. Terms and References

- A. "Game Officials" includes the following:
 1. All currently registered USSF referees, assistant referees, 4th officials or others appointed to assist in officiating in a match.
 2. Any non-licensed, non-registered person serving in an emergency capacity as a referee.
 3. Any club assistant referee.
 4. Any referee development program person performing any official function at a match.
- B. "Referee Development Program Person" includes any referee, referee administrator, referee assessor, referee instructor, referee assignor, or other person serving in such capacity in a line or supervisory position, including members of any referee committee appointed by the Federation, its Divisions, Affiliates or Associates, a State Association, or a competition, tournament or other appropriate authority.
- C. "Hearing" means a meeting of at least five members, one of which is designated or elected to serve as a Chairperson. The Chairperson of a hearing shall not vote except to break a tie vote. Such members, including the Chairperson, shall not be the State Referee Administrator, the State Director of Referee Instruction, the State Director of Referee Assessment, a Federation National or FIFA Referee, or any other member of the State Referee Administration.
- D. "State Association" shall be that State Association through which the game official is registered or referee development is appointed. Where a state has both Amateur or Youth National State Associations, the reference shall mean that State Association which has legal authority within its state to administer the registration of the referee or the appointment of the referee development program person charged.

Section 2. Procedures

A. Misconduct at a Match

When any game official is accused of having committed misconduct toward another game official, participant, or spectator at a match, or of having a conflict of interest, the original jurisdiction to adjudicate the matter shall vest immediately in the WSSL. In the situation where Amateur and Youth State Associations exist in a state, and the incident of alleged misconduct occurred at a match sanctioned by one State Association, jurisdiction shall vest within the State Association sanctioning the match in question.

B. Misconduct Away from a Match

When any game official, referee, referee assistant or referee development program person is accused of unethical conduct, misuse or abuse of authority or conflict of interest in any matter in the pursuit of or may affect the individual's official dealings within and as authorized by the Federation, its Divisions, Affiliates or Associates, a State Association or the WSSL, or a competition, tournament or other appropriate authority, the matter shall vest immediately in the State Association through which the accused game official is registered or through which the referee development program person is appointed.

- C. Any allegation of misconduct or of conflict of interest by a game official as described by subsection (A) of this section, or of unethical conduct, misuse or abuse of authority or conflict of interest as described by subsection (B) of this section, shall be made in writing to the State Referee Administrator or to the State Association(s) or the WSSL that shall report all such allegations including any allegations against the State Referee Administrator, to the State Association(s) or the WSSL through which the accused game official is registered or through which the accused referee development program person is appointed.
- D. Upon receipt by the appropriate the WSSL of a verified written complaint, a hearing shall be conducted within 30 days from verification pursuant to guidelines established by the WSSL as having jurisdiction as provided by subsection (A) or (B) of this section. The guidelines may include referring the complaint to the State Referee Committee for the hearing. The hearings and appeal process shall provide for adequate due process for the accused person including proper notice of charges, the right to bring witnesses in defense, and the right to confront and to cross-examine the accusers.
- E. The Chairperson of the hearing committee shall transmit the findings of the committee in writing to all parties concerned including the accused and the accusers and to the State Association(s) or the WSSL within seven days of the hearing.
- F. Any party subject to penalties shall receive, at the time of notification of the decision, a notice of the rights of appeal and a copy of the procedures and deadline dates required for such an appeal to be properly considered. Time for filing an appeal shall start with the date official receipt of the decision by the party making the appeal.

Section 3. Penalties

- A. The severity of the penalty imposed upon an individual shall be determined by the decision-making body having jurisdiction.
- B. Penalties may be among the following:
 - 1. Letter of reprimand;
 - 2. A fine;
 - 3. Suspension from all active participation in the Federation for a fixed period of time;
 - 4. Any combination of clauses (1), (2), or (3) of this subsection; and
 - 5. Dismissal from the Federation.
- C. Any individual while under suspension may not take part in any activity sponsored by the Federation or its members.

Section 4. Appeals

- A. Any game official who is found guilty of misconduct as defined in this rule may appeal the decision of the hearing committee as follows:
 - 1. To a Referee Disciplinary Committee jointly appointed by the Amateur and Youth State Associations.
 - 2. To the Federation Appeals Committee as provided under USSF Bylaw 705.
- B. The party appealing the decision of a committee shall have ten (10) days to file the notice of appeal of a decision. Time for filing an appeal shall start with the date of official receipt of the decision by the party making the appeal.

Section 5. Hearing Procedures

In all hearings conducted under these rules and regulations, the parties shall be accorded:

1. notice of the specific charge or alleged violations in writing and possible consequences if the charges are found to be true;
2. reasonable time between receipt of the notice of charges and the hearing within which to prepare a defense;
3. the right to have the hearing conducted at a time and place so as to make it practicable for the person charged to attend;
4. a hearing before a disinterested and impartial body of fact-finders;
5. the right to be assisted in the presentation of one's case at the hearing;
6. the right to call witness and present oral and written evidence and argument;
7. the right to confront witness, including the right to provide the identity of the witness in advance of the hearing;
8. the right to have a record made of the hearing if desired;
9. a written decision, with reasons for the decision, based solely on the evidence of the record, issued in a timely fashion;
10. notice of any substantive and material action of the hearing panel in the course of the proceeding; and
11. quality concerning communications and no ex parte communication is permitted between a party and any person involved in making its decision or procedural determination except to provide explanations involving procedures to be followed.

MSYSA Policy: Hearing Procedures

This policy provides the minimum rights that each party would have at a hearing with respect to the right to assistance in presenting one's case at a hearing, as must be allowed under Federation Bylaw 701(5). These minimum rights apply to hearings conducted by State Associations and their members or other hearing body. A copy of these minimum rights should be delivered to the parties with the notice of the hearing.

- (A) Each party at a hearing shall have the right to have an individual present at the hearing to assist the party in presenting the party's case. Such individual may, but shall not be required to be, an attorney.
- (B) If the State Association or member of the State Association ("Complainant") is represented by another individual at any hearing and the hearing panel allows that individual to speak, question the parties and /or witnesses, or grant that individual any other rights, then it shall afford all other parties, or the individual representing the party, including an attorney, the same rights during the course of the hearing as is allowed to the individual representing the Complainant.
- (C) If an attorney is present at a hearing to assist a party in presenting the party's case, it shall be clear at the commencement of any such hearing that the hearing shall proceed in accordance with the State Association's hearing rules and procedures. All Federal, State or local Rules of Evidence or Civil Procedure shall not be applicable.
- (D) A State Association may provide, as part of its hearing rules and procedures, that an individual assisting a party may be allowed to speak on behalf of the party, make requests or ask questions at the hearing.
- (E) Regardless of whether the State Association allows the individual assisting the party the rights to speak, make requests or ask questions, as noted in Paragraph D above, an individual assisting the party in presenting the party's case shall have the right to be physically present in the hearing room, and so as not to interfere with the hearing procedure, it is also recommended that the individual be seated close to the party (either behind or next to the party) so that the party may seek assistance when desired during the course of the hearing.
- (F) During the course of the hearing, the party may confer briefly with the individual who is assisting before making a statement or request or prior to responding to a question. The panel conducting the hearing may limit the frequency and duration of the conferences so as not to unduly interfere with the proceeding.
- (G) If there is confusion or concern, the party may request a recess to confer with the individual assisting the party. Such a request should be granted unless the number of requests by the party becomes unreasonable or the length of a requested recess is deemed by the hearing panel to be unreasonable.
- (H) An individual assisting a party may prepare written material for the party and collect documents for the party. However, the party must submit or present the material and documents as material and documents of the party, and not of the individual assisting. The party has complete responsibility for those materials and documents and is subject to questioning about them.
- (I) Nothing contained in this policy shall prevent a State Association from allowing greater rights to assistance than those set forth in Paragraphs A-H above. For example, a State Association may, but shall not be obligated to, allow more than one individual to assist a party at any given time.
- (J) The rights, either mandatory or permissible under this policy, shall be consistently applied, and State Association should not arbitrarily allow or disallow the rights set forth above to those individuals assisting a party in the presentation or defense of the party's case.

GLOSSARY

For the purpose of interpretation, these definitions are offered but are not meant as rules themselves.

1. **Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)** Soccer's world governing body is the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), which is headquartered in Zurich, Switzerland. The delegates of the association of France, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland signed the articles of foundation. In 1905 the English Football Association enrolled in FIFA along with Scotland, Wales and Ireland.

FIFA is comprised of each country's national soccer associations and is responsible for promoting and organizing the game of soccer throughout the world. FIFA also determines the basic playing "Laws of the Game." Those laws are available from the Federation in a special booklet. Today more than 150 million people throughout the world play soccer and in a given year up to 1 million referees officiate more than 20 million matches. FIFA governs all aspects of the game.
2. **United States Soccer Federation, Inc (USSF)** United States Soccer Federation, Inc (USSF) is the national governing body for all levels of soccer in the United States. It was formed in 1913 and affiliated with FIFA the following year. U.S. Soccer is recognized by the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) as provided in the Amateur Sports Act of 1978. The constitution, rules, policies, and procedures of the Federation have evolved over a period of time to govern the game of soccer and protect the interests of all participants, players, officials, administrators, clubs, member organizations, national states associations, and the Federation. Therefore, they must be accepted and observed by all members of the Federation until changed in accordance with the procedure provided.
3. **United States Youth Soccer Association, Inc. (USYSA; U.S. Youth Soccer)** United States Youth Soccer Association, Inc. (USYSA; US Youth Soccer) is the largest member of the United States Soccer Federation (USSF). US Youth Soccer is a non-profit and educational organization whose mission is to foster the physical, mental and emotional growth and development of America's youth through the sport of soccer at all levels of age and competition. Beginning in 1974, US Youth Soccer has always been recognized as a leader in youth sports organizations. Through a democratic structure, the membership of US Youth Soccer is able to provide uniform rules and guidelines. These guidelines facilitate intra-state, inter-state and international play. The national administration of US Youth Soccer is conducted by a nine member board of directors consisting of a chairman, vice chairman, secretary, treasurer, four regional directors, and a member at large. Each of these board members are elected into office by delegates from the 55-member State Associations. A tenth position that of past president is held by the past president for a single term of two years. The US Youth Soccer membership is divided into four regions, each with a director elected to the board of directors. The regions are essentially East (Region I), Midwest (Region II), South (Region III) and West (Region IV). Each State Association has a board of directors, elected by delegates from their member organizations, clubs or teams.
4. **"National State Association"** means an affiliated member association of US Youth Soccer representing all clubs, member organizations, teams, players, coaches, and administrators, within the territory assigned to the National State Association by the USSF National Council. The administrative body within the territory determined by the National Council to carry out the Federation's programs for amateur youth or amateur adult players or both.
5. **"Amateur Sports Act"** means the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act (chapter 2205 of title 36, United States Code).
6. **"Appeal"** means a procedure to be followed which provides that such matters be resolved on as low an organizational level as possible. This process is for disputes outside the decisions made by a referee on the field during the course of a match.
7. **"MSYSA"** means Michigan State Youth Soccer Association which is a National State Association.
8. **"WSSL"** means the Western Suburban Soccer League which is a member of MSYSA.
9. **"Board of Directors"** means the Board of Directors of the WSSL.
10. **"Executive Board" or "Board"** means the Executive Board of the WSSL.
11. **"Member Organization" or "Club"** means an organization providing soccer to youth players that is either a direct member of the WSSL or that registers players with the WSSL through an affiliated member. In the case where a member organization sets up one or more satellite organizations in the State, those satellite organizations may only be considered part of the main member organization if all the following criteria are met: 1. The main member organization and satellite organization have the same Board of Directors. 2. The main member organization and

satellite organization have the same Tax ID number. 3. The main member organization and satellite organization are in the same WSSL District as determined by the WSSL Executive Board.

12. **“District”** means a geographical subdivision of the State of Michigan.
13. **“League team”** means a team that participates in regularly scheduled WSSL play.
14. **“Protest”** means a complaint about field or referee qualifications prior to the start of a game, or the misapplication of rules or procedures during a game.
15. **“Standing Rules”** means rules and regulations of the Western Suburban Soccer League.
16. **“Team”** means a group of soccer players playing on the same side in soccer games.
17. **“Youth player”** means an individual who has not reached 19 years of age prior to January 1 immediately before the start of any soccer year. A player who reaches 19 years of age during a soccer year is allowed to complete that soccer year.