US CLUB SOCCER POLICIES

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US CLUB SOCCER POLICIES

SECTION 1 GENERAL

Policy 1.01 Business Name. The National Association of Competitive Soccer Clubs shall conduct business under the name, US Club Soccer (hereinafter "Organization").

Policy 1.02 Governing Documents. The Organization shall be governed by the NACSC Bylaws; these Policies; and the directives, forms, and procedures promulgated by the Organization administrative offices.

Policy 1.03 Definitions.

"Academy" means a soccer organization which does not meet the definition of a club, formed for the limited purpose of providing training to competitive players, with the permission of the player's primary club or team, as further described in Policy 3.04.

"Adult Player" means any player who is not a youth player, as defined herein. For purposes of this definition only, adult players also include professional players.

"Affiliate Member" means a US Club Soccer Member, such as an academy or league, which has qualified for affiliate, non-voting membership status.

"Allegation of Misconduct" means the written allegation form that is available from the Organization used to commence a disciplinary action against a club, team, or individual.

"Alliance Club" means a club which has been formed consisting of players from other Member Clubs.

"Club" means a competitive soccer organization which is organized for the purpose of developing and providing playing opportunities for soccer players, and complies with at least the minimum US Club Soccer Club Standards then in effect.

"Club League" means a league consisting primarily of soccer clubs.

"Club Player Roster" means the official list of players that are registered with US Club Soccer on the Organization website.

"Competition Authority" means the individual or organization sanctioned to conduct a soccer competition, including a host Club, league, tournament administrator, or others.

"Competitive" means, in the context of a player, team, or club: selecting players via a tryout or selection process based upon ability, playing games outside the club, utilizing coaches holding USSF coaching licenses, and aspiring to play at the highest competitive level in their area.

"FIFA" means the Federation Internationale de Football Association.

"Foreign Team" means a team which is located outside of the 50 States and District of Columbia.

“Good Standing” means an Organization Member which has registered its players pursuant to Organization policies and rules, has paid all required dues and fees, has abided by the Bylaws, Policies, rules, and directives of the Organization, and is not subject to any disciplinary penalties by the Organization or The USSF, or has otherwise been determined to be in “bad standing”.

“Host Club” means the Club, which is sponsoring or conducting a soccer tournament or other event.

“Involuntary Player Release” means the removal of a player from a Club player roster at the request of the Club.

“League” (or “Affiliate League”) means a group of four (4) or more teams that join together for the purpose of inter-team play under a common set of administrative, competition rules, and an established game schedule that is not a club league.

“Member Club” means any Member in good standing of US Club Soccer, which is a soccer Club.

“Organization” means US Club Soccer. These terms are used herein synonymously.

“Organization Member” or “Member” means any US Club Soccer Member in good standing, including clubs, leagues, and league teams.

“Player” means any youth player (unless it specifically references Adult Player) who is registered with US Club Soccer or another USSF-affiliated member.

“Recreational” means a player, team, or club, which does not meet the definition of competitive.

“Registration” means the process of a Member Club joining the Organization, or a player joining a Member Club, and complying with the Organization Policies and rules in doing so.

“Registration Year” means that time period in which a Club’s current Club Player Roster is valid.

“Soccer Club” means a competitive soccer Organization, consisting of coaches, administrators, players, and teams formed at multiple age groups for the purpose of developing player and coaching skills, providing training and competition for its players and coaches, and entering into soccer competitive competitions outside of the Club Organization. As long as it has competitive players and programs, for Organization membership purposes, a soccer Club may also consist of recreational or “select” players and programs, or adult players. While the primary focus shall be outdoor soccer, Clubs may also participate in indoor soccer activities.

“State Association” means a youth or adult soccer organization, governing soccer in one state or a portion of a state, as defined by the Bylaws of The USSF.

“Suspension” means the temporary withdrawal of rights or a privilege afforded an Organization Member, or a player, coach, administrator, or other volunteer of an Organization Member.

"Team" means, for purposes of these Policies only, a group of soccer players playing on the same side in a soccer game, pursuant to FIFA Laws of the Game or other rules authorized for a specific competition.

"Tournament" means a soccer competition other than a league, conducted over a limited period of time with specific playing rules, which consists of more than 5 teams, and is organized by a host Member Club.

"Transfer" means the removal of a player from the player roster of one Club Member, and the contemporaneous addition of the player to the player roster of another Club Member.

"USSF" means the United States Soccer Federation, and is used synonymously with U.S. Soccer.

"U.S. Soccer" means the United States Soccer Federation, which is recognized as the national governing body for soccer in the United States by the United States Olympic Committee, and FIFA.

"U.S. Soccer-Affiliated Members" means Organizations that have been accepted as members by and are in good standing with the USSF, pursuant to the USSF Bylaws.

"Voluntary Player Release" means the removal of a player from a Club's player roster at the request of the player.

"Youth Player" means any player who has not reached nineteen (19) years of age prior to August 1st during any registration year.

SECTION 2 ADMINISTRATION

Policy 2.01 Offices. *Reserved*

Policy 2.02 Administrative Boundaries. *Reserved*

Policy 2.03 Gender Neutrality. Any Policies, directives or other Organization rules shall be deemed to apply in the same regard to both the male and female gender.

SECTION 3 MEMBERSHIP

Policy 3.01 Club Membership. Any soccer Club, as defined by these Policies, which is organized in the United States, may apply for Club Membership if they will register players for competitive teams in at least three (3) age groups.

(a) Upon receipt of a Club application, the Organization staff shall review the Club's background information, including to what extent the Club complies with the US Club Soccer Club Standards then in effect, how long the Club has been in existence, and the circumstances of the Club's original formation.

(b) Based upon the review, the Organization staff shall make a recommendation to the Executive Director as to whether or not to accept the Club as a Member. Based

upon the information provided, the Executive Director, or in the alternative the Organization Board, may accept or deny Club membership in their sole discretion.

(c) The Organization may require an additional minimum number of a Club's teams be registered to participate in certain programs of the Organization.

(d) Clubs shall register with the Organization on an annual basis, pursuant to Policy.

(e) Individual teams may register only as part of a Member Club, a league affiliate Member, or as a tournament team.

Policy 3.02 Recreational Players. The Organization will consider registering recreational players if they have a connection with either a Member Club with vertically integrated teams whose primary function is developing competitive level players, or with a sanctioned affiliate league. See Section 11 for recreational player rules.

Policy 3.03 State Boundaries**.** Clubs shall not be limited by local or state boundaries in registering players or conducting competitions.

(a) No travel permissions shall be required from the Organization for Club Members to attend events in other areas of the United States that are sponsored by other U.S. Soccer-affiliated members. However, see Policy 10 for the applicable insurance requirements.

Policy 3.04 Affiliate Memberships. Soccer academies, Alliance Clubs, and leagues that are not formed as soccer Clubs may apply for non-voting affiliate status.

(a) Academies may apply for affiliate membership if they are formed for the purpose of providing special training to players from other soccer organizations, and while not prohibited from doing so in all cases generally do not field teams to compete in outside competitions. Academies must register a minimum of fifty (50) academy players with US Club Soccer to qualify for Membership, which registration shall occur in the same manner as a Club. In some cases, the Organization may permit dual registration of an academy's and Member Club's players, with the permission of the player's primary club.

(b) Alliance Clubs may apply for affiliate Membership if their purpose is to provide special training to players from a select group of other Member Clubs. Such players may form teams and enter outside competitions, with the permission of the player's regular Member Club. In such cases, players shall be dual registered to both the Member Club and Alliance Club.

(c) Leagues may apply for affiliate status pursuant to Policy 6.

(d) The Organization may establish a non-voting, individual affiliate Membership category for interested and qualified individuals.

Policy 3.05 Tournament Team Membership. For purposes of participating in a Club Member-hosted tournament, a team which is not affiliated with a Club Member may, if necessary to participate, register for the tournament as a Tournament Team Member pursuant to Policy 7.03.

(a) Such membership is only valid for that particular tournament, and tournament teams shall have no voting rights. Each tournament entry is subject to a separate application and fee.

SECTION 4 CLUB AND PLAYER REGISTRATION

Policy 4.01 Registration Year. For purposes of Club and player registration, the Organization registration year shall be from August 1st to July 31st.

(a) Nothing herein shall preclude a Club Member from registering with another USSF-affiliated member in addition to the Organization, but see Policy 10 for the insurance coverage applicable to dual registration.

(b) Pursuant to U.S. Soccer Policy, all Clubs, and their players, coaches, and administrators must register annually with the Organization.

(1) A player who registers for a Club during a registration year shall pay the registration fee for the entire year, and must re-register during the next registration year.

(2) A Player who reaches 19 years of age during a registration year shall be allowed to compete for his Club during that entire registration year.

Policy 4.02 Club Registration. Clubs shall register with the Organization in each registration year on the designated online form. The Club registration fee shall be established by the Board, which amount may, at the discretion of the Board, be credited against player registration fee monies that are due.

Policy 4.03 Player Rules. Rules for Organization players are found in the US Club Soccer Player Rules (Policy Attachment B).

SECTION 5 PARTICIPATION PERMISSIONS

Policy 5.01 Domestic Travel Permission. Permission for a Club Member in good standing to travel within the United States to participate in a soccer event hosted by an Organization Member or other USSF-affiliated member shall not be required. Notice of intent to travel may be required for certain activities.

Policy 5.02 Permission to Participate. To ensure that insurance coverage is available and that the event is otherwise appropriate, permission must be obtained to participate in a soccer event, which is hosted or sponsored, by an individual or entity other than an Organization Member or USSF-affiliated member. A request to participate must be submitted to the Organization on the appropriate form at least 30 days prior to the event.

Policy 5.03 International Travel and Hosting Permission. Permission for a Club Member to travel outside the United States or to host foreign teams in the United States is processed and approved by the USSF National Office. USSF's international travel and hosting application forms can be obtained from the Organization office.

(a) A copy of the international travel or hosting application shall initially be submitted to the Organization office along with the required U. S. Soccer fee. The Organization will then forward the application to USSF. A Club must be in good standing to be granted such travel permission.

(b) Permission to undertake international travel is contingent upon the Club securing adequate participant medical insurance.

(c) Clubs, which are approved for international travel, must contact the appropriate officials in each country in which they will be traveling to determine what documents are required for entry and playing games.

SECTION 6 LEAGUE RULES AND SANCTIONING

Policy 6.01 League Sanctioning. The Organization will consider applications to sanction club leagues, and recreational and competitive leagues, if the league consists of a minimum of four (4) teams per age group, and meets any other established criteria. The Executive Director, or in the alternative the Organization Board, may accept or deny league membership in their sole discretion. League sanctioning fees and other league sanctioning criteria shall be reviewed on a regular basis.

(a) Any current Club Member's teams are eligible to join a league if they otherwise meet the league criteria.

(b) Teams that are not Club Members may apply to participate in the league by:

(1) Registering their team players with US Club Soccer, pursuant to the US Club Soccer Player Rules and paying the applicable player registration fees.

(2) Being accepted by US Club Soccer and the league as a team that can reasonably be expected to compete at the league's competition level.

(c) Leagues will not be limited by state boundaries, and pursuant to Policy 5.01, no travel permissions will be required.

Policy 6.02 League Sanctioning Application. Any group of Member Clubs or other organization desiring to form a US Club Soccer-sanctioned league shall submit a fully completed league application at least 60 days prior to the proposed commencement of league play. The Organization may waive deadlines in cases that, in its sole discretion, are justified. Applications may be obtained on the US Club Soccer website, or from the Organization office.

(a) Among other information, the application shall contain the following information: name, address, and other information of the league administrator; source and assignment of referees; League Member Clubs and teams; league fees (note fees are limited to an amount reasonably necessary to administer the league); and copies of all administrative forms and reports.

(b) Additional submittals shall include: the proposed schedule of games; bylaws and rules of the league; discipline procedures and committee; roster size, freeze, and other roster rules; and competition rules.

(c) In all league competitions, players shall utilize their Club player pass, and may play up to an older age group without restriction.

Policy 6.03 Application Review. The Organization shall review the application, and may ask for additional information before deciding on sanctioning.

(a) Approval is contingent upon the league administrator providing a sufficient level of administrative support including: serving as the point of contact with the Organization, overseeing competition and collecting game reports, assuring that competent referees are assigned, maintaining the schedule and league standings, assuring compliance with all league and Organization rules and procedures, and administering disciplinary matters.

Policy 6.04 Application Approval. League approval is conditioned upon the league and its member teams complying with all US Club Soccer Bylaws, Policies, Disciplinary Procedures, and other Rules.

(a) In most cases, League sanctioning shall be for no longer than one playing season, not to exceed twelve (12) months in time. Leagues must re-apply for sanctioning annually.

(b) At the end of the league season, the league administrator shall submit to US Club Soccer a league report in the designated format.

SECTION 7 TOURNAMENT RULES AND SANCTIONING

Policy 7.01 Tournament Sanctioning. Club, Leagues, and League Team Members in good standing may apply to US Club Soccer to sanction tournaments of five (5) or more teams.

(a) The tournament application and agreement must be received from the host Club at least forty-five (45) days prior to the tournament, indicating number of projected teams, tournament fees to be charged, competition format, roster and playing rules, and other information requested on the application form.

(b) If approved, a report shall be submitted by the host Club within 30 days after the tournament, indicating teams attending and other information requested on the tournament report form.

(1) Any incident of alleged referee assault or abuse or other incidents of a violent or serious nature shall be reported to the Organization within 48 hours of the incident. The US Club Soccer Disciplinary Rules and Procedures shall be followed as applicable.

Policy 7.02 Non-Member Teams. A team, which is not affiliated with a Club Member, may participate in the tournament if it is a member of another organization, which is a USSF--affiliated member.

(a) Such team shall provide proof of travel permission, if such is required by the team's sanctioning organization, and proof of medical insurance coverage.

(b) If a non-member team cannot comply with subsection (a) above, it may attend the tournament if it registers as a US Club Soccer tournament team, and obtains medical insurance coverage through the Organization.

Policy 7.03 Tournament Teams. To apply as a tournament team, a non-member team shall contact US Club Soccer to determine the specific procedures. The Member Club tournament host is encouraged to help facilitate this process. The team shall register their players with US Club Soccer, and pay the required registration fees and insurance premium, and will then be qualified to participate in the tournament. The tournament team membership is only valid for the specific tournament at issue.

Policy 7.04 General

(a) Teams participating in a US Club Soccer-sanctioned tournament will not be limited by state boundaries, and pursuant to Policy 5.01, no travel permissions will be required.

(b) The US Club Soccer player pass shall be utilized for all Member Club teams, and Club players may play up to an older age group without restriction. The pass shall not be modified or marked upon in any way. Non-member teams may use their USSF Affiliate's player pass.

(c) Hosting foreign teams as part of a tournament is governed by Policy 5.03.

(d) It is anticipated that USSF-registered referees will be utilized for all tournaments. Tournament hosts shall provide information on the source and assignment of referees in the application.

(e) Tournament hosts Clubs should review and follow to as great an extent as practical the US Club Soccer Tournament Protocols, available as part of the tournament application.

(f) The tournament-sanctioning fee shall be determined by the US Club Soccer Board.

Policy 7.05 Club Host Sanctioning. A Member Club in good standing may host up to three (3) other clubs (four (4) clubs in total) for the purposes of playing informal, competitive games at any time without submitting a tournament-sanctioning request or seeking other approval. Hosting more than three (3) other clubs requires US Club Soccer approval, or completion of a tournament application. A notice on the designated form shall be submitted to the Organization at least 14 days prior to such hosting.

(a) No fee shall be charged for such game hosting, and Organization insurance shall apply for Member Clubs if the notice provisions have been met.

(b) No travel or other permissions shall be required. However, if a team that is not affiliated with a Member Club is planning to attend, proof that the team's medical insurance will be in effect for the event is required at the time of notice.

SECTION 8 TECHNICAL PROGRAMS AND COMPETITION RULES

Policy 8.01 Technical Director. The Organization shall hire a Technical Director who shall report to the Executive Director. He shall work closely with the Board and Technical Committee to assist Clubs in improving their technical and player development programs.

Policy 8.02 Technical Committee. A Technical Committee shall be appointed by the Organization Board to assist the Board and Technical Director in program development and implementation. Representation shall include individuals from boy's and girl's soccer programs, collegiate soccer, professional soccer, and the national teams' programs.

Policy 8.03 Roster Rules. Roster rules shall be established for each sanctioned competition and the Organization shall be informed of such rules on the appropriate request or notice form. The online Club Player Roster shall be accepted as an official roster for all US Club Soccer competitions.

Policy 8.04 Competition Rules. As a general rule, FIFA Laws of the Game shall be the competition rules that apply to all competitive team games. However, limited rule variations (i.e. substitutions, tie-breakers, etc.) may be established for each sanctioned competition. The US Club Soccer Technical Committee may choose to issue guidelines that all competitions are encouraged to adopt. The Organization shall be informed of competition rules to be utilized on the appropriate request or notice form.

(a) Substitutions *Reserved*

(b) All players must wear shin guards in any US Club Soccer sanctioned event. The FIFA Laws of the Game shall apply to other equipment restrictions.

Policy 8.05 Competition Protests and Appeals. Any protest arising out of a US Club Soccer sanctioned competition shall first be determined by the competition committee for that event, pursuant to its rules for such matters. After a determination, the party adversely affected may then file a protest appeal with the US Club Soccer Protest Appeals Committee. This Policy does not apply to disciplinary action against an individual or Organization Member, whether or not arising out of a competition. For such actions, see US Club Soccer Disciplinary Rules and Procedures (Policy Attachment C)

(a) The protest appeal shall be in writing on the designated form and mailed overnight or faxed to the Organization office, no later than seventy-two (72) hours after the adverse ruling, and accompanied by a fee of $150. If not on the designated form, while not fatal to the right of appeal, the petitioner will be asked to complete the designated form. Only those Club coaches or team administrators directly involved in the matter may protest a competition matter.

(b) The Committee may speak to the parties involved, or ask for additional information, and shall then render a written decision as expeditiously as possible. An open hearing with all parties present shall not occur for competition protests. However, the Committee may, at its option, conduct a conference call of all interested parties.

(c) All protests regarding the field, the game, the published rules of competition or the competition administration shall be submitted to the referee and the competition committee before the game, unless the reason for the protest occurs during the game. Referee decisions related to the FIFA Laws of the game are final. The

Committee shall not entertain protests of red or yellow cards or coach send-offs issued by a game referee.

(d) Any allegation of referee assault or abuse shall be forwarded directly to US Club Soccer and processed under the US Club Soccer Disciplinary Rules and Procedures (Policy Attachment C).

Policy 8.06 Travel and Training Documents

(a) Coaches or team managers should carry their player's proof of birth date to all competitions.

(b) Official rosters should be printed from the Club's official, online US Club Soccer player roster, and such rosters shall be accepted in any US Club Soccer-sanctioned competition.

(c) Coaches or team managers shall carry their player's original medical release and consent form to all competitions and training sessions.

SECTION 9 DISCIPLINE

Policy 9.01 Membership Termination. Termination of Club and other Organization Members is governed by Bylaw VII (1).

Policy 9.02 Removal from Office. Removal of Organization Officers and Board Members is governed by Bylaw X.

Policy 9.03 Organization Discipline. The Organization Board or its Discipline Committee shall have the authority to suspend or fine a Member; or may suspend, fine, or declare ineligible a player, coach, or administrator for violations of Organization Bylaws, Policies, other Rules or directives, non-payment of monies due, or conduct detrimental to soccer or the Organization. The Executive Director of US Club Soccer may take the same actions, but is limited to an Organization Member fine of $1,000 and an individual fine of $250, and any suspension of rights or privileges to no more than 30 days. Inactive status, however, does not require a hearing or other action, and may remain in effect until the payment of monies due or compliance with registration requirements. Rules for disciplinary hearings and appeals are contained in the US Club Soccer Disciplinary Procedures, which is Attachment C of these Policies.

Policy 9.04 Other Discipline. Organization Members may adopt and enforce their own disciplinary rules. Organization sanctioned competitions shall adopt disciplinary rules and procedures for that competition. Appeals procedures from such discipline are set forth in Policy Attachment C.

(a) Discipline, which does not extend beyond the end of a tournament, shall not be appealable.

Policy 9.05 Discipline Reciprocity. Recognition of disciplinary actions imposed by other USSF-affiliated members shall be in accordance with USSF Bylaw 241.

Policy 9.06 Conduct Generally. Each Club or League Member, or their players, coaches, administrators, or tournament personnel shall be primarily and solely accountable for the conduct of themselves, and the persons associated with them. Conduct subject to discipline

may also include that which is adverse to the best interests of soccer or the NACSC, or other unlawful conduct. Such organizations and individuals shall be subject to all rules pertaining to misconduct contained herein, including caution, ejections, fines, and suspensions, as well as in the case of Club or League Members possible membership termination.

(a) Any other individuals who may be reasonably construed as being associated with a Club or team, such as relatives or spectators, shall also be subject to the jurisdiction and authority of the Organization. Club coaches or administrators shall be held responsible for the actions of any individual at any game who, in the opinion of the referee or competition authority, is a supporter of that Club or team.

(b) During any game sanctioned directly or indirectly by the Organization, a referee may stop the game and eject any coach, player, or spectator from the grounds (the field of play and areas surrounding the field on which the game is being played) if, in the opinion of the referee, the offender is guilty of violent conduct, serious foul play, or the use of foul or abusive language, or if the conduct is deemed to be interference by the offender as defined in FIFA Laws of the Game 5(d). At no time will foul or abusive language be permitted at any field. Alcohol or illegal drug use, or possession or transportation of a weapon without a valid permit, shall not be permitted at any time.

(c) For any incident of individual or Organization Member misconduct, including playing an ineligible player or another roster abuse, the League, tournament host, referee, or other competition authority shall file with the competition authority disciplinary committee a Competition Incident Report within 48 hours of the incident, or if warranted a written allegation (utilizing the Allegation of Misconduct Form). Except in the case of an assault or abuse of a referee, the original jurisdiction shall rest with the competition authority disciplinary committee.

Policy 9.07 Suspension Because of Litigation. Any person participating in any Organization sanctioned or sponsored competition or event who becomes involved as a defendant in legal action detrimental to the welfare of youth players, or in legal action based on alleged activities detrimental to the welfare of youth players, shall be disqualified by the Organization from all soccer-related activities until completion of such legal action, pursuant to the Organization's Risk Management Policy in Policy Attachment A. The person's status shall be reviewed by the Organization's Executive Director or Discipline Committee at the conclusion of the legal action. Matters detrimental to the welfare of youth players shall include crimes of moral turpitude and felonies.

Policy 9.08 Protest and Appeals. Protests relating to the competition itself, rather than participant discipline arising from that competition, are found in Policy 8.05.

Policy 9.09 Disciplinary Procedures. Procedures for the administration of disciplinary matters are contained herein as Attachment C.

SECTION 10 INSURANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Policy 10.01 Player Medical Coverage. All registered US Club Soccer players, coaches, and administrators are covered by secondary medical insurance for US Club Soccer sanctioned events, and for other events sanctioned by a USSF-Affiliated Member if coverage is otherwise not available through that Affiliated-Member. A copy of the medical claim form may be obtained by contacting the Organization office. A player's coach shall complete the Organization's form,

certifying the injury occurred while participating in a US Club Soccer sanctioned activity, prior to any claim being forwarded to the Organization's insurance carrier.

(a) Medical coverage applies when a player or staff has completed the registration process, as set forth in Attachment B, Rule 102, the applicable fees for that individual have been paid, and in the case of competitive players a passcard has been issued.

Policy 10.02 Dual Registration. In cases where a Member Club or its players or staff are registered with the Organization and also with another USSF-Affiliated Member, the applicable medical insurance shall be determined by which Organization a player or staff is participating in or training for, as evidenced by which Members passcard is utilized for a given competition.

Policy 10.03 Organization and Member Liability Coverage. Liability coverage for both the Organization and its Members shall be available through US Club Soccer. Members shall notify the Organization of any lawsuit, claim, or attorney correspondence received or filed against it, or one of its coaches or administrators functioning in their capacity as a club employee, contractor, or volunteer, or of any other communication that would indicate a lawsuit may be possible in the future. Any questions regarding liability coverage should be directed to the Organization office.

(a) Liability coverage applies to a Member when it has fulfilled the minimum requirements of membership. In the case of a Member Club, this shall be the registration of the Club and its acceptance by the Organization, and the registration and payment of fees for at least three (3) teams. League teams are provided coverage after registering a single team.

(b) Members may request a certificate of insurance by obtaining a form from the Organization office or from the US Club Soccer website.

Policy 10.04 Tournament Insurance. The Organization may, through its insurance carrier, make tournament insurance available to its Members in cases where it is desirable to insure all non-member tournament attendees. Such insurance will be optional for the tournament host and incur an additional premium cost.

Policy 10.05 Risk Management. The Organization is committed to a safe environment for its Members and participants, and to preventing abusive conduct in any form. The US Club Soccer Risk Management Policy has been adopted by the Board as Attachment A to these Policies.

(a) All club coaches and administrators shall comply with the Risk Management Policy prior to and during their participation in club activities.

SECTION 11 RECREATIONAL PLAYERS

Policy 11.01 Recreational Player Programs. Prior to Member Clubs or affiliate leagues registering any recreational players, the organization shall contact US Club Soccer and provide information on the nature of their recreational programs. For purposes of these Policies, whether an organization qualifies as a recreational program shall be reviewed on a case by case basis. Criteria among others include: age of the players, whether or not tryouts are held, whether small-sided games are played, if the group is part of a vertically integrated club program, if competition only occurs in house (i.e. only among the organization's teams). Any competition with other organizations, such as open tournaments, qualifies the team as competitive, and its players are required to be carded.

Policy 11.02 Super Rec Player Category. The Organization shall also establish a category of players termed Super Rec. These players are similar to rec players in that they play primarily in an in-house program (i.e. they are not competitive nor play on a travel team). However, they shall receive a player pass and may play in competitive games against other rec teams in the same general geographical area. Different fees and registration requirements may apply to Super Rec players.

SECTION 12 ADULT PLAYERS

Policy 12.01 Adult Player Registration. Member Organizations may register adult players with US Club Soccer, pursuant to the procedures posted on the Organization website. Clubs are encouraged to develop adult player programs, and the Organization will assist in that process.

Policy Attachment A

US Club Soccer Risk Management Policy

Rule 101. Policy Guidelines

US Club Soccer is committed to providing a safe environment for its Members and participants, and to preventing abusive conduct in any form. Every Organization Member and its personnel are responsible for protecting participants and ensuring their safety and well being while involved in sponsored activities.

To this end, the following guidelines of behavior and procedures have been adopted for US Club Soccer Organization Members, staff, volunteers and participants. All Organization Members, as well as parents, spectators and other invitees, are expected to observe and adhere to these guidelines.

Violation of these guidelines may be used as a basis for an Organization Member or its staff's suspension or other disciplinary action, or a staff's disqualification from registration.

(1) Abuse of any kind is not permitted within the Organization. Physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse or misconduct from our players, coaches, officials, volunteers, parents or spectators shall not be tolerated.

(2) Physical and sexual abuse, including, but not limited to, striking, hitting, kicking, biting, indecent or wanton gesturing, lewd remarks, indecent exposure, and any form of sexual contact or inappropriate touching, are strictly prohibited within the Organization.

(3) Emotional abuse or verbal abuse is also prohibited. These include, but are not limited to such forms of abuse as: insulting, threatening, mocking, demeaning behavior, or making abusive statements in regard to a person's race, gender, religion, nationality/ethnicity, sex or age.

(4) US Club Soccer is committed to providing a safe environment for players, participants and staff. Every Member of this Organization is responsible for reporting any cases of questionable conduct or alleged mistreatment toward our Members by any coach, official, volunteer, player, parent, sibling or spectator.

(5) US Club Soccer will respond quickly to any and all allegations of abuse within the Organization. The alleged offender will be notified of such allegations promptly.

(6) Each staff who is required to be registered shall also submit to a background check. Failure to submit a background check application before participating with US Club Soccer registered players, or falsifying the application in any way, shall be grounds for immediate suspension from US Club Soccer. The staff's Member organization may also be terminated if they are aware of a staff falsifying an application, or are in active non-compliance with this

Policy. Any staff who completes an application on behalf of another staff is also subject to suspension or other discipline, and in addition may be subject to criminal or civil liability.

Rule 102. Staff Background Check Obligations

All coaches and other staff who are required to register with US Club Soccer pursuant to Rules 105 and 106 of the US Club Soccer Player Rules shall, as part of that registration process, complete a risk management application, which can be accessed online via the US Club Soccer website. The required frequency and other procedures for the background check shall be posted on the US Club Soccer website. Failure to complete or falsification of the application can result in immediate disqualification or suspension.

Rule 103. Disqualification of Individuals

(1) The Organization may deny registration to and disqualify any individual, or deny Membership to or otherwise discipline any Club which continues to employ or utilize any individual who either fails to comply with the these registration procedures, falsifies information, completes an application on behalf of another, or as a result of such procedures is determined by the Organization to be unfit to continue in his current position, and is thereby disqualified.

(2) The Organization may use any information and its absolute discretion in determining disqualification, but at a minimum such information may include conviction of any felony, gross misdemeanors, violation of these guidelines, or driving offenses, including loss of license, reckless driving, impaired driving, or a DUI.

(3) Any person accused of a sexual crime or one involving physical violence may be asked to resign voluntarily or may be suspended by US Club Soccer until the matter is resolved. Regardless of criminal or civil guilt in the alleged abuse, the continued presence of the person could be detrimental to the reputation of the Organization and could be harmful to the participants. A person, who is accused, but later cleared of charges, may apply to be reinstated within the Organization. Reinstatement is not a right, and no guarantee is made that he or she will be reinstated to his/her former position.

(4) In addition, an individual's actions may give rise to a suspension instead of a disqualification under the Organization's Disciplinary Rules.

(5) The Organization and its Members shall further comply with U.S. Soccer's Risk Management Bylaws, Rules, and Policies, including Bylaw 212, and Policies 212 and 601-10.

Rule 104. Mid Year Reporting of Potential Risk Management Problems

Irrespective of any reporting requirements or periods, between such reporting periods, all Organization Members, including clubs, teams, and leagues, shall have an affirmative duty to report potential risk management problems that they become aware of which involve their US Club Soccer registered staff, pursuant to the procedures the Organization may establish. Failure to so report, shall subject the Member to the discipline set forth above.

Rule 105. MEMBER CONDUCT RECOMMENDATIONS

While the following are considered guidelines, failure to establish or comply with these or similar internal organization policies and procedures may be considered as evidence of non-compliance with the US Club Soccer Risk Management Policy.

(A) US Club Soccer promotes good sportsmanship throughout the organization and encourages qualities of mutual respect, courtesy and tolerance in all participants, coaches, officials and volunteers. It advocates building strong self-images among the youth participants. Children with a strong self-image may be less likely, but nevertheless targets for abuse; similarly, they may be less likely to abuse or bully others around them.

(B) Buddy System: It is recommended that every activity sanctioned by the Organization establish a "Buddy System". Each youth participant should be assigned a buddy during sponsored activities. No child should go anywhere--to the bathrooms, locker rooms, or other location- -without his or her buddy.

(C) To further protect youth participants, as well as coaches, officials and volunteers, it is strongly recommended that no adult person allow him/herself to be alone with a child (unless their own child) or with any group of children during games, practices, or other sponsored activities. In particular, it is recommended that coaches or other adult Members of this organization:

- Do not drive alone with a child participant in the car.
- Do not take a child alone to the locker room, bathrooms or any other private room.
- Private conversations with youth participants should occur within the view of others, in the gym or on the field, instead of a private office.
- Coaches and other adult members of the organization should not socialize individually with participants outside of sponsored activities.\

D) Supervision/Chaperone ratio: It is recommended that for any sponsored activity, especially on overnight trips, the ratio of adults to youth participants be 1:8, or 1 adults for every 8 children, with a minimum of 2 adults for every activity.

(E) When traveling overnight with youth participants, children should be paired up with other children of the same gender and similar age group, and with chaperones in separate, but nearby rooms. It is the responsibility of the chaperones to supervise the activities of the players at all times.

(F) No child should be left alone at a training session or at any other time until they are picked up by their parent, older sibling, or other designated adult.. It is recommended that the last adult in addition to the coach or trainer wait at the site as well until the child is picked up.

(G) We want to empower our children to trust their feelings and let them know that their concerns, fears and hopes are important by listening to them. Open communication between children and parents, or between children and other adults in the organization, may help early warning signs of abuse to surface.

Policy Attachment B

US CLUB SOCCER PLAYER RULES
TABLE OF CONTENTS

These Player Rules represent a portion of the US Club Soccer Policies, and should be read in conjunction with the definitions and other Policies. In all references to Clubs, such rules also apply to other categories of Members (i.e. league teams, academies, state cup teams, etc.), unless specifically stated otherwise.

Rule	
101	**Player Registration**
102	**Competitive Player Registration Procedures**
103	**Recreational Player Registration Procedures**
104	**League Player Registration**
105	**Coach and Administrator Registration**
106	**Coach and Administrator Risk Management Policy**
201	**Player, Coach, and Administrator Cards**
301	**Player Movements**
302	**Player Registration Renewals**
401	**General**
Attachment A	**Dual Registration Rules and Procedures**

US CLUB SOCCER PLAYER RULES

SECTION 1

Rule 101. Player Registration

Note that all references to club players also apply to league team players unless otherwise indicated. The US Club Soccer (the Organization) player registration year (that time period for which Clubs register their players) shall be from August 1st to July 31st. Note however, that in the case of some recreational and adult programs and leagues, the registration year may be a different twelve month period. Clubs must register or re-register players each year, pursuant to the rules and procedures herein. Players who are not re-registered are automatically considered released.

(a) The Organization shall abide by the seasonal year age groups commonly utilized in youth soccer. Such groups are comprised of youth players who are, before the first day of August, under 6 years of age through under 19 years of age.

(1) A player who reaches 19 years of age during any youth seasonal year shall be allowed to complete that seasonal year. A player who reaches 19 years of age during August of one seasonal year shall be allowed to complete all of the next seasonal year.

(b) Player registration fees shall be established annually by the Organization Board at least thirty (30) days prior to the end of the registration year.

(c) Clubs must register a minimum of three (3) competitive teams at different age groups, and all other competitive players who participate in the activities of the Organization, as those activities are defined by the Organization.

(d) No player may be registered on two US Club Soccer Member Clubs at the same time, other than as set forth in Policy Section 3 and Rule 301 and Attachment A herein. Club's players may be registered to another USSF member organization at the same time.

(e) In the case of first time player registrations, a player will be deemed registered by the first Club that completes the player registration process as set forth in these Policies. Refer to Rule 302 for player registration renewal rules.

(f) Teams registering as tournament teams shall comply with Policy 7.03.

Rule 102. Competitive Player Registration Procedures

Clubs shall assign a registrar to be the primary person responsible for the registration process herein. The registrar may delegate the registration process to additional administrative staff. Clubs shall register their players with the Organization pursuant to the following procedures:

(a) Clubs shall register their players with the Organization utilizing the online registration program. Players may be registered to an entire Club as an open player, or on a team-by-team basis as competitive teams are formed for the year.

(b) A player shall not be officially registered with a Club, nor shall such player be insured, until:

--The player has been entered onto the Club's online database;

--The player's card has been requested and the registration fee paid;

--A copy of proof of date of birth is submitted to the Organization (This need not be resubmitted by the same Club in successive years);

--A copy combined consent for medical treatment/player registration form (#R002) has been executed (Note the Club shall retain this form, and only submit it to the Organization upon request);

--A player card has been issued by the Organization.

(1) The consent for medical treatment/paper registration form (#R002) shall be signed by the player's parent or guardian. The form need not be notarized. In the case of forms submitted for the same player by two separate Clubs, the form first signed in each registration year shall be recognized. The form shall be held by the player's club, and submitted to the Organization only upon request.

(2) Acceptable date of birth proof shall include: a birth certificate, a birth registration issued by the appropriate government agency, a passport, an alien registration card issued by the U.S. Government, a certificate issued by the INS attesting to age, a certification of a United States citizen born abroad issued by the appropriate government agency, or a current driver's license. Hospital, baptismal, or religious certificates shall not be accepted.

(c) As soon as practicable after the player pass is received, the Club shall complete the pass as set forth in Rule 201(a)(1).

(d) Additional players may be registered by a Club throughout the registration year by completing the online form, submitting the information in 101(c) above, and paying the annual player registration fee. Fees shall not be prorated for partial year registrations.

(e) International Player Clearances. Any player who comes to the United States on or after 14 years of age must receive an international clearance from the USSF. However, an international clearance is not required of a player who is 14, 15, or 16 years of age if the player and the player's parents sign a statement that the player has not signed a professional contract or received money from a professional team for playing soccer. Such statement shall be submitted with the player's paper registration form.

(f) For purposes of tracking scouting information for possible U.S. National Teams participation, US Club Soccer will track citizenship information on the online Club player roster.

(g) Clubs may utilize their online Club player roster database to print copies of team rosters. For competition purposes, such printed copies are deemed official, if accompanied by valid player cards.

(h) All competitive and adult player releases shall be submitted online by the Club registrar.

Rule 103. Recreational Player Registration Procedures

Recreational and intramural players, who do not need player cards pursuant to Policy 11.01 shall register as set forth in Rule 102, with the following exceptions. As with competitive players, insurance coverage for recreational players shall not apply until the registration process has been completed, as set forth below.

(a) The players shall not be registered online unless approved to do so by the Organization. Players shall otherwise be registered by utilization of the Organization's official player roster in an Excel format.

(b) Rosters shall be submitted to the Organization, together with the applicable registration fees.

(c) Proof of date of birth shall not be required by the Organization, but may be by the Club or League.

(d) The medical treatment form shall be collected and held by the Club or League, as set forth in Rule 102.

Additional recreational players may be registered throughout the registration year as set forth above. Players registered as recreational players can be registered as competitive players at any time pursuant to Rule 102. Note that leagues classified as Super Rec shall register players and staff online in the same manner as competitive players.

Rule 104. League Player Registration

Procedures for registering players with a League Member may vary with regard to the collection and review of proof of birth, registration fee collection and payment, and the collection and retention of medical treatment forms. Teams registering through a League Member shall check the applicable procedures for its League.

Rule 105. Coach and Administrator Registration

USSF rules require the registration and carding of all coaches, assistant coaches and team managers who are assigned to a team, whether or not they are volunteers or paid staff, and whether or not they are also registered with another USSF member organization. Such individuals must be carded prior to participating with a Team, and a registered head coach must be assigned to a team prior to player cards being issued. Registrations shall occur in the same manner as players, on the US Club Soccer website. For programs that meet the definition of recreational programs pursuant to Policy 11.01, at least one coach per team must be registered.

(a) Coach and administrator fees shall be established annually by the Organization Board.

(b) Coach and administrator passes shall be issued pursuant to Rule 201.

Rule 106. Coach and Administrator Risk Management Policy

All Organization Members shall abide by the Organization's Risk Management Policy (Attachment A of the US Club Soccer Policies). Any coach or administrator who is required to register shall also comply with the registration provisions of this Policy.

Rule 201. Player, Coach, and Administrator Passes

(a) Member Player Pass. All non-rec players registered with an Organization Member shall receive a player pass, which shall allow such player to play on any team in that Club at his/her age level or older, without limitations. That is, in any competition sanctioned by US Club Soccer, a Member's player may "play up" within his Club at any time. The team designation on the player pass shall not be considered. Rather, the official roster from the Club's online player roster shall be controlling. The US Club Soccer player pass shall be utilized for all competitions sanctioned pursuant to these Policies.

(1) When received from US Club Soccer, the Club shall affix the player's picture (I" x 1.5" maximum size) and shall have the pass laminated. The pass need not be signed by the player.

(2) The player pass shall expire on the 1st day of August. The pass shall be re-issued at the time of annual registration, or if a player changes Clubs within the registration year. Once a pass has expired, it may no longer be used. The Club shall destroy the pass, or forward it to the Organization if requested to do so.

(b) If a Club is participating in an event sanctioned by an entity other than US Club Soccer, the Club should ascertain what documentation in addition to the Club player pass and roster may need to be presented at the event.

Rule 301. Player Movements

The rules in this section <u>do not apply</u> to player movements between Clubs at the end of the US Club Soccer registration year, at which point any player is free to re-register, or register with a new Club. All mid-registration year releases shall be controlled by this section, and approved by the Organization.

The Organization, as a courtesy, has established a procedure by which a player's prior Club is given notice for a limited period of time that one of it's former players is in the processes of registering with a new Club (see section 301 herein). To expedite this process, it is important that a Club release any players they do not intend to re-register at the end of the registration year.

(a) Mutual Release. A Club and its player may agree at any time to a release, irrespective of any league roster freeze rules. It is recommended that the parties sign a document memorializing the release, but it is not necessary to send any document to the Organization. The Club shall submit an online release to the Organization.

(b) Involuntary Player Release. Players may be released by their Club at any time, unless Club rules prohibit it by:

--Providing written notice to the player, and only sending the notice to the Organization <u>if requested</u> by the Organization;

--Completing the online release request;

-- Mailing the player pass to the Organization office on the next business day, if requested by the Organization.

(c) Voluntary Player Release. Unless and until US Club Soccer adopts a rule regarding the procedure for player-requested releases, each Club may establish its own rule. However, as amateur players are not under contract, as a general rule they may request and receive a release from their Club at any time. The Club shall submit an online release to the Organization.

(d) New Club Mid-Year Registration. A player may register mid year with another Club as soon as his former Club submits an online release by completing the player registration process with his new Club and paying the US Club Soccer annual registration fee. Such registration is subject to the Organization's approval of the original release. Annual registration fees shall not be pro-rated between Clubs. The Organization shall determine the actual release date should any disputes arise.

(1) The player is eligible to play for his new Club as soon as the new Club registration process has been completed and the original release is approved by the Organization.

(2) If the player's former Club refuses to release the player, and the new Club has obtained a written registration form (#R002) from the player and his parent, they should complete Form #R006A and contact the Organization.

(e) Player Transfers Between Club Teams. There are no restrictions in transferring players between teams within the same Club at the same or older age group. The Club may choose to modify its online Club player roster to reflect such transfers.

(f) Player Transfers Between Clubs. No players may be transferred between Clubs. Rather, the appropriate release and new player registration forms shall be executed by the Clubs.

(g) Dual Player Registration. Other than as set forth herein and in Attachment A herein, players may not be registered to two (2) US Club Soccer members at the same time.

(1) Players may be registered to a Club or League team and to a Regional League team, Academy, or Adult team pursuant to Attachment A herein.

(2) League Members may allow dual registrations within their League, but only with the agreement of the two registering Clubs, the player, and the League.

(h) Player Loans. In any competition, the loaning of US Club Soccer players between Clubs shall be determined by the competition rules. All competitions are encouraged to allow such loans to occur for the purposes of providing players with a meaningful playing opportunity.

(1) To accomplish such a loan, a player loan form must be executed by the Clubs and presented to the competition officials together with the team roster. The player shall use his regular US Club Soccer player pass. The loan need not be approved by the Organization, but a copy of the loan form shall be mailed to the Organization office prior to the competition by the Club receiving the loaned player.

Rule 302. Player Registration Renewals

For the purpose of renewing player registrations in subsequent registration years, the Organization shall set an annual date by which a player shall be presumed to be in the process of re-registering through the same Club (note a different date will apply to players with a 12/31 card expiration).

(a) Until such date, should another Club attempt to register such player, unless the player has already been released by his former Club, the Organization will notify both Clubs of the potential dual registration.

(b) It is expected the player and the Clubs shall agree on which Club shall register the player, and only submit one registration request. In case of a dispute, the earliest player registration form (#R002) executed by the player for that registration year shall in most cases be controlling.

(c) Subsequent to the beginning of the registration year, up until the date referred to in subsection (a) above, a player and his new club may complete and submit form #R006A if the player intends to register with a new Club and his prior club has not responded to a release request.

(d) After the date referred to in (a) above, the Organization shall presume the player has been released by his former Club and will release the player from his former club, and process a registration request for a new Club without further notice.

(e) To expedite the registration process at the end of each registration year, Clubs are requested to submit an online release for all players they know will not be returning to their Club.

Rule 401. General

(a) Falsification. The falsification or attempt to falsify records, documents, Club player passes, or any other official form or knowingly withholding or misusing a player pass, or utilizing an expired pass, shall be grounds for immediate suspension from membership in US Club Soccer, participation in its competitions, or other disciplinary action.

(b) Registration Fee Payment. Failure to pay the required registration fees in a timely manner, or failure to annually register the minimum number of teams for the appropriate member category may place a Club and all its players in bad standing, and cause suspension from participation in US Club Soccer competitions and events.

(c) Use of Ineligible Players. A team shall forfeit any game in which an unregistered or improperly registered player was placed on the game roster, whether or not he actually played. The Club and player are also subject to further disciplinary action.

(d) Official Rosters. The official US Club Soccer roster, printed from the online Club player roster, when accompanied by valid player cards, shall be accepted as an official roster for all USSF affiliate competitions.

(e) Professional Players. Any player who signs a letter of intent, retains a professional agent, or receives compensation for playing soccer, or violates any other National Collegiate

Athletic Association (NCAA) amateur athlete restrictions shall be declared a professional player and may not further register or participate as a US Club Soccer Club youth player. Notwithstanding the foregoing, subject to NCAA rules a youth player may otherwise be able to play on the same team as a professional player.

(1) Unless this section applies, players shall not otherwise lose their youth eligibility if they play on an adult team.

US CLUB SOCCER DUAL REGISTRATION POLICY

This rule applies to all teams registered with US Club Soccer and members that have been either granted Academy status, or are Adult teams.

1. Dual Youth Registration. A player may not be registered to more than one US Club Soccer youth member at a time, other than as set forth herein. There is no limit on the number of Adult member teams (U-20+) on which a player may be carded.

2. Permitted Dual Registration. A player may be dual registered with a US Club Soccer youth team and an Academy, U.S. Soccer Development Academy, ECNL, or Adult team if:

A. The two organizations and the player agree on the player's playing and training schedule, and any other conditions for dual carding.

B. Both organizations confirm this agreement in an email sent to US Club Soccer.

C. The dual carding is approved by US Club Soccer.

3. Sanctioned Leagues. Leagues may have different dual carding rules for teams within the league, if the rules are approved by US Club Soccer.

4. National Cup. For participation in the US Club Soccer National Cup, a player is Cup tied to the team with which he plays his first Regional game if that team advances to the Finals. If it does not advance, the player may play in a later Regional on another team in the same club, or with another team on which he is properly dual carded pursuant to this Policy.

5. Releases. A member may release a player, and thereafter another member may register the player, at any time. However, such a procedure should not be used so that the player may play in one, specific competition.

6. Player Loans. Loans are permissible between two member teams, pursuant to Player Rule 301(h), but should not be used for more than one competition (i.e. single game or tournament).

Policy Attachment C

US Club Soccer Disciplinary Procedures
(and Matters of Alleged Referee Assault or Abuse)

Rule 101. General

The authority to discipline Organization Members and its players, coaches, and administrators is contained in the US Club Soccer (NACSC) Bylaws and Section 9 of the Policies, or the rules of an individual competition, and these procedures shall be read in conjunction with those documents.

Outlined herein are the Procedures for disciplinary actions and Appeals for Organization Members, their coaches, administrators, players, fans, and other personnel, as well as for other affiliated events and organizations (i.e. tournaments and leagues) sanctioned by US Club Soccer.

For purposes of these Rules, a hearing committee may hear either a matter of original jurisdiction, or an appeal. There are two categories of hearing committees:

--***Disciplinary Committee***, which shall refer to a hearing committee other than at the US Club Soccer level (i.e. tournaments and leagues); or a

--***Discipline Committee***, which shall refer to a US Club Soccer hearing committee.

These Rules and Procedures include the following actions:

(a) Appeals-- That arise from an adverse decision from a hearing held at a lower level which was either an Appeal, an original disciplinary hearing, or denial of membership . Other than a parent or guardian who files for a minor child, only those principal parties adversely affected by the original action shall have standing to Appeal.

(1) Generally, an Appeal shall not have the effect of staying a previous decision, which remains in force and effect pending the results of the Appeal. A decision may only be stayed if the hearing committee determines that:

i. The appellant will suffer irreparable harm if the decision is not stayed; and,.

ii. The Appeal has a reasonable likelihood of success.

(2) An Appeal is not a retrial, and generally shall be limited to a review of the matters raised at the hearing. A hearing committee may ask for additional information

from the parties in exceptional circumstances. In all Appeals, however, the parties may present written arguments in support of their positions.

(3) The hearing committee must find the prior decision was clearly erroneous or the appellant's right to due process was violated to reverse a prior decision.

(4) The imposition of discipline which does not extend or have consequences beyond the tournament competition itself shall not be appealable.

(5) If US Club Soccer refuses to take an Appeal, the appellant is then permitted to appeal the matter to U.S. Soccer, which may or may not accept an appeal, depending upon their rules.

(b) Discipline Hearing-- Is an original US Club Soccer hearing that results from a charge brought against a Club or League Member, or an individual, from either the US Club Soccer Board of Directors or Executive Director; or from a written allegation, such as a game incident report or other Allegation of Misconduct, brought by a Member Club or other Organization Members, U.S. Soccer, or US Club Soccer sanctioned Leagues, tournaments, or other events, and includes referees' allegations of assault or abuse.

(1) An Allegation of Misconduct is a written allegation which outlines in detail the facts and alleged misconduct or a referee report and supplemental referee information. All allegations must be in writing.

(c) Member Termination Hearing-- Is an original action against a Member Club or League pursuant to Section VII of the Bylaws.

(d) Inactive Status-- Need not result from a disciplinary action pursuant to these rules. It is the result of an administrative action taken by US Club Soccer for non-payment of financial obligations or not registering the requisite number of teams to maintain active status.

(e) Ineligibility-- Does not result from a disciplinary action (as opposed to suspension), but from a failure of a player or coach to comply with administrative rules and procedures, such as registration requirements or roster rules.

(f) Disqualification-- Is limited to staff, pursuant to Policy Attachment A, and arises out of information provided on the staff background check application, falsification of or failure to submit an application, or the background check itself. Disqualification is from all US Club Soccer-affiliated activities, and potentially all U.S. Soccer affiliates' activities. There is no right to an Appeal from a Disqualification.

(g) Protests-- For any matters arising from a competition which do not involve the discipline of a Club, player, or other individual are considered protests, and are set forth and in US Club Soccer Policy 8.05.

Rule 102. Levels of Authority

The levels of disciplinary authority are as set forth herein. Unless stated otherwise herein, or otherwise precluded based on a US Club Soccer Bylaw or Policy, the next level shall hear Appeals from decisions of the next lower level:

(a) Level #1: Competition Disciplinary Committees and Actions by the US Club Soccer Executive Director.

(1) Leagues, tournaments, and other competitions sanctioned by US Club Soccer shall establish their own protest and disciplinary committees and procedures, which must be approved by US Club Soccer at the time of sanctioning. Other than an allegation of referee assault or abuse, all protest and disciplinary matters arising out of these competitions may be heard by these committees. If the Disciplinary Committee fails to take any action on a written allegation, the petitioner may forward the matter to the US Club Soccer Discipline Committee.

(2) Penalties levied by a tournament disciplinary committee shall not extend beyond the tournament, other than the possibility of suspension from the same tournament in the future. The committee may file an Allegation of Misconduct with the US Club Soccer Discipline Committee if they believe other action may be warranted. All passes shall be returned to the team at the end of the tournament, other than in the case of an alleged referee assault or abuse.

(3) The US Club Soccer Executive Director may take disciplinary action pursuant to Policy 9.03, but shall not have authority to hear Appeals.

(b) Level #2: US Club Soccer Discipline Committee.

(1) The US Club Soccer Discipline Committee shall be appointed by the US Club Soccer Board Chairman, or his designee. It may hear Appeals from 102(a) actions, hold original hearings on matters forwarded to them without action by a competition's Disciplinary Committee or the US Club Soccer Executive Director, may hold original disciplinary hearings based on an Allegation of Misconduct, and shall hear all charges of referee assault or abuse. Whether or not to assume jurisdiction or hold a hearing is a decision for the Discipline Committee.

(c) Level #3: Organization Board (i.e. US Club Soccer Board).

(1) The Organization Board may hear any Appeals from disciplinary actions or Appeal decisions of the US Club Soccer Discipline Committee, except for appeals from a finding of referee assault or abuse, which are appealable directly to the USSF Appeals Committee. The Board Chairman may appoint a subset of the Board (consisting of a minimum of three (3) Board members) to conduct a hearing. If the Board chooses not to hear an Appeal, the appellant may then appeal directly to the USSF Appeals Committee.

(2) Pursuant to Bylaw VII, other than in the case of non-payment of dues and fees where a hearing is not required, any hearing to terminate an Organization Member shall be before the Organization Board.

Rule 103. General Procedures

The following procedures shall apply to all levels of authority:

(a) Any hearing under these rules shall be the result of a written allegation, with an Allegation of Misconduct being the preferred format. No hearing shall result from circumstances which are only communicated orally.

(b) No person may sit on a hearing committee when any conflict of interest exists. Any such individual shall recuse himself from such committee. If a league or tournament authority has an institutional conflict of interest with the issue being adjudicated, then the matter shall be forwarded to the Discipline Committee.

(c) The hearing and adjudication of any written allegation should be completed within thirty (30) days of its filing (however, a competition protest shall be heard as expeditiously as possible). If a decision is not reached within the thirty (30) day period, the matter may be submitted by the petitioner to the next discipline level and any fee previously submitted shall be applied.

(d) The decisions and/or disciplinary sanctions imposed as the result of a hearing shall be binding on all disciplinary authorities, and shall be recognized by all US Club Soccer-affiliated organizations.

(e) Official notifications and discipline decisions may be sent by email, but also by certified or registered first class mail—return receipt requested, or by two-day or overnight service, to the address indicated on the Club registration or roster form, or on the petitioner's written allegation.

Rule 104. Filing Requirements

(a) An Appeal or allegation shall be in writing (i.e. written allegation) and include:
--The nature and specifics of the complaint;
--A list of the Bylaws, Policies, or rules that have been violated;
--A statement of the requested result;
--The applicable filing fee, if any.

(b) A written allegation, along with all supporting documents, shall be forwarded by Registered or Certified U. S. Mail--return receipt requested to the disciplinary committee set forth in the competition rules, or to the US Club Soccer Discipline Committee at:

192 East Bay St.
#301
Charleston, SC 29401

(c) In the case of an Appeal to US Club Soccer, the Appeal must be placed in the mail and postmarked within five (5) days of the receipt by the appellant of the decision being appealed (Sundays & Holidays excluded), unless the rules of the competition state otherwise, and sent to the address in (b) above.

(d) Appeals and Allegations of Misconduct shall be submitted on the required form, although failure to do so shall not be fatal to the cause of action or rights of the petitioner. An allegation of referee assault or abuse may be submitted on an Allegation of Misconduct form, a competition incident report, or a referee report.

(e) The schedule of filing fees and number of copies required are as follows:

(1) Competition Disciplinary Committee: The filing fee and number of copies shall be established by the competition authority.

(2) Appeal to the US Club Soccer Discipline Committee or US Club Soccer Board: Filing fee for an Appeal: $200, and 5 copies of all relevant documents. If the Appeal is granted, the filing fee shall be returned to the appellant.

(3) Allegation of Misconduct to US Club Soccer: Filing fee of $200 and 5 copies of all relevant documents.

(4) Allegation of referee assault or abuse: No fee and only the original report must be filed initially.

Rule 105. Pre-hearing Procedures

Upon receipt of a written allegation, the hearing committee (Disciplinary Committee, US Club Soccer Discipline Committee, or Organization Board) shall initially determine if the parties have standing and if the matter has been properly filed. It will also determine if it has the necessary information to adjudicate the matter, including contact names and addresses for official notifications, statements of fact, and relevant documents, and in the case of an Appeal the prior official document directory. The hearing committee may ask for additional information or clarifications, or may hold an initial conference among the parties to discuss procedural matters.

(a) In the case of an Appeal, all original copies of evidence submitted shall be retained by the hearing committee at which the evidence was first submitted. The official document directory submitted to the Discipline Committee or Organization Board in an Appeal shall be a true and exact copy of all original evidence submitted and accepted at the lower-level hearing. The directory shall be numbered, indexed, and signed as verified by the original hearing chairman and forwarded by certified mail, with a duplicate packet sent to the petitioner/appellant. In special circumstances, the hearing committee may require the original copy(s) of a specific document(s).

(b) The defendant in a disciplinary hearing shall receive a written notice of the charges and the possible consequences if determined to be true.

(c) The hearing committee shall establish a time schedule for the parties to provide a list of witnesses and copies of any evidence to be presented, which the committee shall then provide to the other party. The committee shall establish a time frame for the defendant or respondent to file a rebuttal to the charges, allowing a reasonable amount of time to do so, and an additional period for the appellant or petitioner to respond.

(d) The date for the hearing shall be published in a notice of hearing, and sent to all parties and hearing committee members. A reasonable time shall be allowed from the time of notice of the charges and the hearing date to allow for preparation, and the hearing shall be held at a time and place so as to make it reasonably practical for the defendant to participate.

Rule 106. Hearing Procedures

(a) A closed hearing will normally be held in the case of an Appeal to the Disciplinary Committee or Organization Board, although the Committee may conduct a live hearing if it so chooses.

(b) An open hearing, in person, must be held in any matter before a competition disciplinary committee. All other original jurisdiction hearings or Appeals may be in person or by teleconference.

(1) If by teleconference, the Committee shall assume the cost, and the connection must allow all parties to hear each other.

(c) At the original hearing on any issue, all documentary evidence such as player passes, team rosters, referee game reports, letters, proof of age documents, photographs and other sources of written or printed information shall be an original or official version only. No photocopies or other reproductions shall be acceptable without the prior written permission of the hearing chairman.

(1) A referee game report is considered the official report of the game. The referee and/or assistant referee shall be present if a live, open hearing, or available telephonically if a teleconference, to answer questions at the hearing.

(d) Testimony shall be limited to the principle parties, eyewitnesses, and recognized authorities on the subject (such as a registrar on registration matters). Character witnesses and other third-party witnesses shall not be allowed. The parties shall have the right to question each other's witnesses.

(1) A party may have the hearing recorded, but the hearing committee shall determine the method of recording and may charge parties a reasonable amount for a copy of such recording.

(e) Minors under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.

(f) Testimony and the number of witnesses may be restricted with respect to time as stipulated in the notice of hearing sent to the principle parties.

(g) In the event of the defendant's inability, failure, or refusal to participate after being properly notified, the hearing committee may either reschedule the hearing or proceed with the hearing using the evidence on hand to render a decision.

(h) The order of testimony shall be:

--Petitioner or appellant presents case;
--Witnesses for petitioner called individually;
--Defendant or respondent presents case;
--Witnesses for defendant called individually;
--Recall any witnesses as necessary;
--Petitioner or appellant closing statement;
--Defendant or respondent closing statement.

(i) It is not the intention of the hearing to abide by strict rules of evidence as would occur in a court of law. The hearing chairman may exercise latitude in attempting to determine the facts of the case. The basic tenant to be followed is that each party shall be afforded an equal opportunity to present their case.

(j) Petitioners and defendants are allowed to remain in the hearing room or on the phone throughout the testimony phase of the hearing. They must be allowed to examine any and all documentary evidence presented and accepted at the hearing. Witnesses shall only be in the hearing room or on the phone when they testify.

(k) Copies of all written evidence that a party wishes to present shall be given to the hearing committee, defendant, and petitioner.

(l) All questions or statements from involved parties shall be addressed to the hearing chairman who will ask the appropriate individual for an answer or rebuttal if the chairman deems the question pertinent.

(m) Witnesses may be recalled after initial testimony for further questioning and/or clarification of earlier testimony.

(n) An attorney or other advisor may counsel either party at a hearing; however, the advisor may not participate directly in the proceedings and will restrict his comments and advice to the party he is advising. An advisor may not question the witnesses, present oral arguments, or interrupt or object to the conduct of the proceedings. A disciplinary hearing is an administrative hearing, not a court of law. The hearing chairman may order an advisor out of the hearing room or off the call if he fails to properly conduct himself according to this paragraph.

(o) The hearing committee may also be advised by an attorney.

(p) No ex parte communication shall be allowed between a party and any person involved in making a decision or procedural determination except to provide explanations involving procedures to be followed.

(q) After the hearing, the parties shall be excused and the hearing committee shall commence its deliberations. The committee can choose to recess and meet during the hearing for a short period of time if it so chooses.

Rule 107. Decisions

(a) The members of a hearing committee shall decide each issue arising from the hearing, but respond only to the specific issues and allegations contained in the written Appeal or allegation. Any other issue and/or rule violation, which may become known during the course of the hearing, shall be referred to the appropriate authority. This referral may be accompanied with a recommendation for appropriate action. Notice of the referral shall be included in the written decision.

(b) The hearing committee shall announce its decision in written form and provide it to the parties, if possible, within seventy-two (72) hours of the conclusions of deliberations (Sundays and holidays excluded).

(1) Notification of the decision shall be communicated to the principle parties at the same time and by the same method, as set forth in Rule 103 (e) herein. It is recognized, however, that it may be prudent to also communicate the decision to the parties orally.

(2) In the case of competition disciplinary committee decisions, the decision shall also be sent to the US Club Soccer office set forth in 104 (b) herein.

(c) Written notification of the decision shall include a statement of the procedure for Appeal.

Rule 201. Misconduct Towards A Game Official (Referee or Assistant)

These rules shall be read in conjunction with Policies and Bylaws of U.S. Soccer, and in particular Policy 531-9 (definition, procedures, and penalties for abuse or assault) and Bylaw 705 (appeals). Misconduct against referees may occur before, during, and after the game, including travel to and from the game. Misconduct may also occur at later times when directly related to duties of a game official as a referee.

(a) When any affiliated player, coach, manager, assistant coach, club league official or game official allegedly assaults or abuses a referee, the original jurisdiction to adjudicate the matter shall vest immediately in US Club Soccer's Discipline Committee.

(1) When an allegation of assault is verified by the Organization, the accused shall be automatically suspended until the alleged assault is adjudicated.

(b) The Discipline Committee shall hold a disciplinary hearing within 30 days of the alleged assault. If the Committee does not adjudicate the matter within that period of time, original jurisdiction shall immediately vest in the U.S. Soccer Appeals Committee to adjudicate the matter.

(1) Failure to hold the initial hearing shall not rescind the automatic suspension.

(e) Anyone who is found to have committed the assault or abuse may Appeal the decision directly to U.S. Soccer, pursuant to Bylaw 705, and the related Policies.

Rule 202. Reporting Referee Assault and Abuse

(a) If procedures for the reporting of referee assault or abuse are not established by U.S. Soccer, the procedures herein shall apply.

(b) Referees shall transmit a written report of the alleged assault and/or abuse within forty-eight (48) hours of the incident (unless there is a valid reason for later reporting) to the Organization, utilizing either a referee game report and supplemental report or a competition incident report. For tournaments or special events, the referee shall transmit a written report to the tournament director on the day of the incident. In determining to which USSF affiliate organization to send the report, the referee shall note which USSF affiliates' registration passcards were utilized during the game at issue.

(c) Upon any allegation of an assault on a referee or assistant referee, the original jurisdiction to adjudicate the matter shall immediately vest in the Organization, which shall inform the competition authority and request further information, if available.

Rule 203. Reporting Misconduct towards a Non-Referee

When it shall be alleged that any US Club Soccer-affiliated player, coach, administrator, or other Club personnel or fan has committed an assault upon another at any US Club Soccer-sanctioned game or event, the league, tournament host Club, or other competition authority shall immediately notify the Organization within seventy-two (72) hours of the alleged offense by completing a competition incident report. The Organization will determine whether to file an

Allegation of Misconduct if one is not filed by another individual and refer the matter to the competition's disciplinary committee or the Organization Discipline Committee.

(a) Upon receipt of a competition incident report that an affiliated player, coach, administrator, or member, has committed an assault upon another, the adjudicating authority shall immediately suspend the accused individual(s). The Disciplinary Committee or Discipline Committee shall have full authority to assess penalties such as, but not limited to, suspension, revocation, or probation prior to a hearing.

(b) The definition of "assault" for this Rule shall include, but is not limited to the following act or acts committed upon an affiliated player, coach, administrator, member, or spectator at an affiliated game: *the act of kicking, punching, choking, spitting on, grabbing or bodily running into, the act of kicking or throwing any object at another player, coach, administrator, or spectator that could inflict injury or damage to said person or his/her personal property, i.e., car, equipment, etc.*

(c) Disciplinary sanction or suspension, imposed as the result of an assault, shall remain in full force and effect and unless it is overturned on Appeal or review, regardless of the level at which it was imposed.

Rule 301. Exhausting Remedies

No US Club Soccer-sanctioned league, Organization Member, coach, administrator, team, referee, player, member or their representative may invoke the aid of the State or Federal courts without first exhausting the Organization's appeal rules, and any applicable U.S. Soccer Policies, including grievance and appeal actions. Any person invoking such aid shall be subject to the penalties cited below:

--Court costs.
--Attorney fees.
--Reasonable compensation for the time spent by Organization Officers and employees in responding to and defending allegations in the action, including responses to discovery court appearance.
--Travel expenses.
--Expenses for holding special Organization Board or Committee meetings necessitated by Court action.

Rule 302. Interference and Non-Participation

(a) Any person who directly or indirectly attempts to threaten, dissuade, interfere, influence or impede any witness, petitioner or other party in connection with any disciplinary action or investigation is subject to the sanctions of probation, suspension, and fines.

(b) Any person who fails to appear after receiving a written notice to appear as a witness or as a defendant at a disciplinary hearing is subject to the sanctions of probation, suspension, and fines.