

**U.S. SOCCER
DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY
DISCIPLINARY CODE
2009-10**



**U.S. SOCCER FEDERATION
1801 South Prairie Avenue
Chicago, IL 60616**

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With specific reference to Article IX of the U.S. Soccer Development Academy Regulations (Regulations), the Academy Staff of the U.S. Soccer Development Academy (“Development Academy”) enforces the following disciplinary code.¹

I. INTRODUCTION

This code describes infringements of the rules in the Regulations, determines the sanctions incurred, regulates the organization and function of the bodies responsible for making decisions and the procedures to be followed before these bodies.

A. Judicial Bodies

The judicial bodies of U.S. Soccer Development Academy are the Discipline Committee and Academy Staff.

B. Scope

This code governs every subject to which the text or the meaning of its provisions refers. If there are any omissions in this code, the Academy Staff will decide in accordance with rules they would lay down if they were acting as legislators. During all their operations, the judicial bodies of U.S. Soccer Academy shall draw on precedents already established by sports doctrine and jurisprudence. This code applies to every game and competition organized by the U.S. Soccer Development Academy. The following are subject to this code:

- i. Academy Clubs;
- ii. officials;
- iii. players;
- iv. game officials;
- v. spectators.

C. Culpability

Unless otherwise specified, infringements are punishable regardless of whether they have been committed deliberately or negligently. In the case of acts amounting to attempt, the body may reduce the sanction envisaged for the actual infringement accordingly. It will determine the extent of the mitigation as it sees fit; it shall not go below the general lower limit of the fine. Anyone who intentionally takes part in committing an infringement, either as instigator or accomplice, is also punishable. The body will take account of the degree of guilt of the party involved and may reduce the sanction accordingly. It shall not go below the general lower limit of the fine.

D. Discipline Committee—Jurisdiction

The Discipline Committee is authorized to:

- i. sanction any breach of the Development Academy Regulations and this Disciplinary Code;
- ii. sanction serious infringements that have escaped the referee’s attention;
- iii. rectify obvious errors in the referees’ disciplinary decisions;
- iv. extend the duration of a game suspension incurred automatically by an send off; and

¹ Terms referring to natural persons are applicable to both genders. Any term in the singular applies to the plural and vice-versa.

- v. pronounce additional sanctions consistent with the Development Academy Regulations, the Development Academy Marketing Guidelines and this Disciplinary Code.

E. Academy Staff—Jurisdiction

The Academy Staff is responsible for deciding appeals from any Discipline Committee decisions.

F. Composition—Discipline Committee

The USSF Secretary General appoints the members of the Discipline Committee for each hearing. The Secretary General shall designate one (1) national team coach, one former or current FIFA level referee and one elite level athlete to serve on the Discipline Committee. The judicial bodies of the Development Academy pass their decisions entirely independently. The members of the Discipline Committee may not be current members of the USSF Board of Directors.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. Post-game: the time between the final whistle from the referee and the teams' departure from the confines of the facility.

B. Pre-game: the time between the teams' arrival in the confines of the facility and the whistle for kick-off from the referee.

C. Official game: a game organized under the auspices of U.S. Soccer Development Academy.

D. Officials: anyone, with the exception of players, performing an activity connected with soccer at a club, regardless of title, the type of activity (administrative, sporting or any other) and the duration of the activity; in particular, managers, coaches and support staff are officials.

E. Game official: the referee, assistant referees, fourth official, game commissioner, referee inspector, the person in charge of safety and any other persons appointed by USSF to assume responsibility in connection with a game.

F. Warning: a reminder of the substance of a disciplinary rule allied with the threat of a sanction in the event of a further infringement.

G. Reprimand: an official written pronouncement of disapproval sent to the perpetrator of an infringement.

H. Fine: a fine shall not be less than \$50, and not more than \$10,000. The body that imposes the fine decides the terms and time limits for payment. Clubs are jointly liable for fines imposed on representative team players and officials. The fact that a natural person has left a club does not cancel out joint liability.

I. Caution—Yellow Card: a decision by the referee to sanction misconduct by the display of a yellow card in accordance with the provision of Law 12 of the Laws of the Game and related official guidance from USSF. Two cautions received during the same game incur a send off (indirect red card) and, consequently, automatic suspension from the next game. The two cautions that incurred the red card are rescinded for purposes of yellow card accumulation. If a player receives a caution in five (5) separate games of the same U.S. Soccer Development Academy Competition, he is automatically suspended from the club's next home fixture in that competition. If an abandoned game is to be replayed, any caution issued during that game shall be annulled. If the game is not to be replayed, the cautions received by the team responsible for causing the game to be abandoned are upheld; if both teams are responsible, all of the cautions are upheld. If a player is guilty of serious unsporting behavior as defined in Law 12 of the Laws of the Game and is sent off (direct red card), any other caution he has previously received in the same game is upheld. Cautions received during one (1) competition year are not carried over to another competition year or from the regular season to the playoffs or from the playoffs to the finals. The USSF Secretary General may depart from this rule in exceptional circumstances.

J. Send off—Red Card: a decision by the referee to sanction misconduct by the display of a red card in accordance with the provisions of Law 12 of the Laws of the Game and related official guidance from USSF. The red card is regarded as direct if it sanctions serious unsporting behavior as defined by Law 12 of the Laws of the Game; it is regarded as indirect if it is the result of an accumulation of two yellow cards. The person who has been sent off may be allowed into the stands (but not in team uniform) unless he is serving a facility ban. The player's team is required to continue play with one fewer eligible players on the field. A send off automatically incurs suspension for the remainder of the fixture date and for a minimum of the subsequent fixture date, even if imposed in a game that is later abandoned and/or annulled. The Discipline Committee may extend the duration of the suspension.

K. Dismissal: a dismissal is not a red card for officials. An official who has been dismissed may give instructions to the person replacing them in the technical area. He shall, however, ensure that he does not disturb the spectators or disrupt the flow of play. Any official dismissed is suspended for the remainder of the fixture date and for a minimum of the subsequent fixture date.

L. Game Suspension: a ban on taking any part in a future game or competition including the area immediately surrounding the field of play. The suspension is imposed in terms of games, days or months. Unless otherwise specified, it may not exceed twenty-four games or twenty-four months. If the suspension is to be served in terms of games, only those games actually played by the team count towards fulfillment of the suspension. If a game is abandoned, cancelled or forfeited, suspension is only considered to have been served if the team to which the suspended player belongs is not responsible for the facts that led to the abandonment, cancellation or forfeit of the game. If a match in which a player or official was suspended for is rescheduled; the Academy Staff will determine the date of suspension based on the change in schedule. If a suspension is combined with a fine, the suspension may be prolonged until the fine has been paid in full. As a general rule, every game suspension (of players and other persons) is carried over from one (1) round to the next in the same competition. Game suspensions in relation to a send off of a player or person outside of a competition (separate game[s]) or not served during the

competition for which they were intended (elimination or the last game in the competition) are carried over as follows: i) U.S. Soccer Development Academy League: carried over to the representative team's subsequent official game. ii) U.S. Soccer Development Academy Playoffs: carried over to the representative team's subsequent official game; iii) U.S. Soccer Development Academy Finals: carried over to the representative team's subsequent official game; Game suspensions resulting from yellow card accumulation issued to a player in different games of the same competition are never carried over to another competition. (We could also say something more concise like a suspension carries over to the club's subsequent official match regardless of the competition being the League, Playoffs or Finals Week). Any send off or dismissal taking place in a team's final game of an Academy Season will result in the suspension being carried over to the subsequent season.

M. Ban from Locker Rooms and/or Substitutes' Bench: deprives someone of the right to enter a team's locker rooms and/or the area immediately surrounding the field of play, and in particular to sit on the substitutes' bench.

N. Ban on Taking Part in Any Soccer-Related Activity: A person may be banned from taking part in any kind of soccer-related activity (administrative, sports or any other).

O. Transfer Ban: prevents a club from registering any player during the period in question.

P. Playing A Game Without Spectators: The obligation to play a game behind closed doors requires a club to have a certain game played without spectators.

Q. Playing A Game On Neutral Ground: requires a club to have a certain game played in an area not associated with a competing team.

R. Ban on Playing in a Particular Facility: deprives a club of the right to have its team play in a certain facility.

S. Annulment of the Result of a Game: the result of a game is annulled if the result reached on the field of play is disregarded.

T. Exclusion from a Competition: the deprivation of the right of a club to take part in the current and/or a future competition.

U. Deduction of Points: a club may have points deducted from those already attained in a current or future championship.

V. Forfeit: teams sanctioned with a forfeit are considered to have lost the game by 3-0. If the goal difference at the end of the game in question is greater than 3-0, the result on the field is upheld.

III. SANCTIONS

A. Types of Sanctions

Both individual Academy Players and Academy Clubs are punishable by the following sanctions: a) warning; b) reprimand; c) fine. The following sanctions are applicable only to Academy Players: a) caution; b) send off; c) game suspension; d) ban from any locker rooms and/or substitutes' bench; e) ban from entering a facility; f) ban on taking part in any soccer-related activity. The following sanctions are applicable only to Academy Clubs: a) dismissal of club officials; a) transfer ban; b) playing a game without spectators; c) playing a game on neutral territory; d) ban on playing in a particular facility; e) annulment of the result of a game; f) exclusion from a competition; g) defeat by forfeit; h) deduction of points; i) removal from the Development Academy. Unless otherwise specified, the sanctions provided for in this code may be combined.

B. Records of Sanctions

Records of cautions, send offs and game suspensions will be maintained by the Development Academy. When possible, the Academy Staff will update clubs of suspensions in writing. These updates serve only as confirmation: sanctions (cautions, send offs, automatic game suspensions) have an immediate effect on subsequent games even if the website is updated after the game has been played. It is the responsibility of Academy Clubs to uphold all suspensions regardless of confirmation from Academy Staff.

C. General Rule Regarding Sanctions

The body pronouncing the sanction decides the scope and duration of it. Sanctions may be limited to a geographical area or to one or more specific categories of game or competition. Unless otherwise specified, the duration of a sanction is always defined. The body shall take account of all relevant factors in the case and the degree of the offender's guilt when imposing the sanction, including:

1. Repeated Infringements—Unless otherwise specified, the body may increase the sanction if an infringement has been repeated.

2. Concurrent Infringements—If several fines are levied against someone as a result of one or more infringements, the relevant body bases the fine on the most serious offense committed and, depending on the circumstances, may increase the sanction by up to fifty per cent of the maximum sanction specified for that offense. The same applies if a person incurs several sanctions of a similar type (two or more game suspensions, two or more facility bans etc.) as the result of one or several infringements. The body that determines the fine for concurrent infringements is not obliged to adhere to the general upper limit of the fine.

3. Limit on Sanctions—Unless there are extraordinary circumstances, sanctions shall last no more than two years. The limitation period begins on the day on which the decision comes into force.

IV. OFFENSES

A. Misconduct Against Players or Persons Other Than Game Officials

Including the automatic suspension incurred, the overall suspension imposed on any person receiving a direct red card shall be for:

1. at least one game for denying the opposing team a clear goal-scoring opportunity (particularly by deliberately handling the ball);
2. at least one game for serious foul play (particularly in the case of excessive or brute force) or violent conduct, which may include but is not limited to assaulting (elbowing, punching, kicking, etc.) an opponent or a person other than a game official, at least two games for the second or third red card received for serious foul play or violent conduct during the season, at least three games for the fourth or fifth red card received for serious foul play or violent conduct during the season, the remainder of the season for the sixth red card received for serious foul play or violent conduct during the season;
3. at least one game for unsporting conduct towards an opponent or a person other than a game official;
4. at least six games for spitting at an opponent or a person other than a game official;
5. A fine for the club may also be imposed in all cases.

B. Misconduct Against Game Officials

Misconduct against game officials shall be governed by USSF Policy 531-9. A fine for the club may also be imposed in all cases.

C. Brawl

Anyone involved in a brawl may be sanctioned. Anyone who has tried merely to prevent a fight, shield others or separate those involved in a brawl is not subject to punishment. If, in the case of violence, it is not possible to identify the perpetrator(s), the body may sanction the club to which the aggressors belong.

D. Team Misconduct

The following constitutes misconduct by a team and may be sanctioned by a fine: i) when four players are cautioned during one game; ii) when three players are sent off during one game; iii) when several players together make threats or show force against a game official.

E. Inciting Hatred And Violence

A player or official who publicly incites others to hatred or violence may be sanctioned.

F. Ineligibility

If a player takes part in an official game despite being ineligible, his team may be sanctioned by forfeiting the game. Additional sanctions may be imposed against the player or his club.

G. Abandonment

If a team refuses to play a game or to continue playing one which it has begun, it may be sanctioned by forfeiting the game. Additional sanctions may be imposed against the team's club. In serious cases, the team will also be disqualified from the competition in progress.

H. Offensive Behavior

Anyone who has engaged in objectively insulting behavior, especially by using offensive gestures or language, may be sanctioned.

I. Racism

Anyone who publicly disparages, discriminates against or denigrates someone in a defamatory manner on account of race, color, language, religion or ethnic origin, or perpetrates any other racist and/or contemptuous deed, may be sanctioned.

J. Forgery And Falsification

Anyone who, in U.S. Soccer Development Academy related activities, forges a document or falsifies an authentic document or uses a forged or falsified document to deceive in legal relations may be sanctioned.

K. Corruption

Anyone who offers, promises or grants an unjustified advantage to a club, a game official, a player or an official on behalf of himself or a third party in an attempt to incite it or him to violate the regulations of the Development Academy will be sanctioned. Passive corruption (soliciting, being promised or accepting an unjustified advantage) will be sanctioned in the same manner. In serious cases and in the cases of repetition, a lifetime ban may be imposed.

L. Illegal Drugs, Alcohol And Tobacco

The illegal use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco by players or officials in the U.S. Soccer Development Academy is strictly prohibited during all Academy related activities. A violation of this provision may result in sanctions.

M. Failure To Respect Decisions

Anyone who fails to pay an Academy Club or the Development Academy a sum of money in full or part, where such sum is related to Development Academy activity, even though instructed to do so by a body or committee of the Development Academy, or anyone who fails to comply with another decision passed by a body or committee of the Development Academy: 1) may be fined for failing to comply with a decision; 2) may be granted a final deadline by the judicial bodies of USSF in which to pay the amount due or to comply with the (non-financial) decision; 3) (only for clubs:) may be warned and notified that, in the case of default or failure to comply with a decision within the period stipulated, points will be deducted or removed from the Development Academy. A transfer ban may also be pronounced. If points are deducted, they shall be proportionate to the amount owed. A ban on any U.S. Soccer Development Academy-related activity may also be imposed against natural persons. Any appeal against a decision passed in accordance with this article shall immediately be lodged with the Academy Staff.

N. Academy Club Violations

1. Clubs that organize games shall:
 - (a) assess the degree of risk posed by games and notify the USSF of those that are especially high-risk;

- (b) comply with and implement existing safety rules and take every safety precaution demanded by circumstances before, during and after the game and if incidents occur;
- (c) ensure the safety of game officials, players and officials of the visiting team during their stay;
- (d) keep local authorities informed and collaborate with them actively and effectively;
- (e) ensure that law and order are maintained in the facilities and immediate surroundings and that games are organized properly.

2. Any club that fails to fulfill its obligations listed above may be fined. In the case of a serious infringement, additional sanctions may be imposed. The right is reserved to pronounce certain sanctions for safety reasons, even if no infringement has been committed.

3. The home club is liable for improper conduct among its spectators, regardless of the question of culpable conduct or culpable oversight, and, depending on the situation, may be fined. Further sanctions may be imposed in the case of serious disturbances. The visiting club is liable for improper conduct among its own group of spectators, regardless of the question of culpable conduct or culpable oversight, and, depending on the situation, may be fined. Further sanctions may be imposed in the case of serious disturbances. Improper conduct includes violence towards persons or property, letting off incendiary devices, throwing missiles, displaying insulting slogans in any form, uttering insulting words or sounds or invading the field. The liability described above also includes games played on neutral ground.

4. Clubs shall also:

- (a) actively vet the age of players shown on the identity cards they produce at competitions that are subject to age limits;
- (b) ensure that no one is involved in the management of clubs who is under prosecution for action unworthy of such a position (especially doping, corruption, forgery, etc.) or who has been convicted of a criminal offense involving fraud or moral turpitude in the past five (5) years.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Hearing

Unless otherwise provided for in this Code or the Development Academy Regulations, USSF Bylaw 701 and Policy 701-1 shall apply to all hearings conducted by the Discipline Committee. The members of the judicial bodies shall ensure that everything disclosed to them during the course of their duty remains confidential (facts of the case, contents of the deliberations and decisions taken). Only the contents of those decisions already notified to the addressees may be made public. In the unlikely event that a member of the Discipline Committee has an interest in the matter before the Committee, the Academy Staff may appoint a replacement member for that hearing only. These hearings may take place by phone.

B. Commencement of Proceedings

Disciplinary infringements are prosecuted ex officio. Any person or body may report conduct that he or it considers incompatible with the regulations of the Development Academy to the Academy Staff. Such complaints shall be made in writing. Game Officials should report violations which have come to their notice.

C. Investigation

The staff liaison carries out the necessary preliminary investigation under the Academy Staff's guidance.

D. Information Provided by the Parties

The parties must comply with requests for information from the judicial bodies. If the parties are dilatory in responding, the chairman of the judicial body may, after warning them, impose a fine. If the parties fail to comply, especially if they ignore the stipulated time limits, the judicial bodies may reach a decision on the case using the file in their possession.

E. Time Limits

Time limits will be set by the Discipline Committee. If the last day of the time limit coincides with a weekend or public holiday, the time limit will expire on the next day that is not a weekend or public holiday.

F. Right to be Heard

The parties shall be heard before any decision is passed. They may, in particular: a) refer to the file; b) present their argument in fact and in law; c) request production of proof; d) be involved in the production of proof; e) obtain a reasoned decision. This right to be heard shall be satisfied by providing an opportunity for written arguments. Special provisions may apply in certain circumstances. The right to be heard may be restricted in exceptional circumstances, such as when confidential matters need to be safeguarded.

G. Evidence

Any type of evidence may be produced. Proof that violates human dignity or obviously does not serve to establish relevant facts shall be rejected. The following are admissible: reports from referees, assistant referees, fourth officials, game commissioners and referee inspectors, declarations from the parties and witnesses, material evidence, expert opinions and audio or video recordings. The bodies will have absolute discretion regarding proof. They may, in particular, take account of the parties' attitudes during proceedings, especially the manner in which they cooperate with the judicial bodies and the staff liaison. They decide on the basis of their personal convictions.

H. Language Used in Proceedings

The languages used in proceedings will be English. If the first language of a person concerned is not English, the person concerned will be responsible for translation.

I. Addressees

1. All of the parties are notified of the decisions.
2. Decisions and other documents intended for players, clubs and officials are addressed to the club concerned on condition that it forwards the documents to the parties concerned. In the event that the documents were not also or solely sent to the party concerned, these documents are considered to have been communicated properly to the ultimate addressee four days after communication of the documents to the Academy Club.

J. Deliberations

The Discipline Committee deliberates outside the presence of the parties to the hearing. The Discipline Committee may choose to engage in deliberations by phone conference or other similar method.

K. Decisions

The Discipline Committee shall issue a written decision. The decision contains: a) the composition of the committee; b) the names of the parties; c) a summary of the facts; d) the legal reasons for the decision; e) the provisions on which the decision was based; f) the terms of the decision; g) notice of the channels for appeal. The decisions are signed by the staff liaison. Decisions communicated by email, telefax and registered letter shall be legally binding. Decisions come into force as soon as they are communicated.

L. Appeals

1. An appeal may be lodged to the Academy Staff against any decision passed by the Discipline Committee, unless the sanction pronounced is: a) a warning; b) a reprimand; c) a suspension for less than three games or of up to two months; d) a fine of less than \$200 imposed on a club or of less than \$100 in other cases.

2. Anyone who is affected by a decision and has an interest justifying reduction of a punishment or cancellation of the decision may submit it to the Academy Staff. Clubs may appeal against decisions sanctioning their players, officials or members. They shall have the written agreement of the person concerned.

3. Any party intending to appeal must inform the Academy Staff of its intention to do so in writing within three (3) days of notification of the decision. Reasons for the appeal must then be given in writing within a further time limit of seven (7) days. This seven-day period begins after the first deadline of three (3) days has expired. If this requirement has not been complied with, the appeal will be rejected, unless the appealing party shows good cause for the delay.

4. The appellant may object to inaccurate representation of the facts and/or wrong application of the law.

5. The appellant shall submit a petition of appeal. The petition shall include the claim as well as the reasons and means of proof and be signed by the appellant or his representative.

6. Anyone wishing to lodge an appeal shall submit an appeal fee of \$300 to the Development Academy within seven (7) days of receipt of the decision. If this requirement has not been complied with, the appeal will be denied. This amount will be reimbursed to the appellant if he wins the case.

7. An appeal results in the case being reviewed by the Academy Staff. The appeal does not have a suspensive effect except with regard to orders to pay a sum of money.

M. Review

A review may be requested after a legally binding decision has been passed if a party discovers facts or evidence that would have resulted in a more favorable decision and that, even with due diligence, could not have been produced sooner. A request for review shall be made within ten (10) days of discovering the reasons for review. The limitation period for submitting a request for review is one (1) year after the enforcement of the decision.