

NTSSA Rule Book

Rule 3.11

3.11 DISCIPLINE

All Member Associations are directed to distribute this rule to every youth and amateur player, every coach, team manager, league administrator, and referee. It is intended that the player and/or coach will make known the contents of this rule to his or her parents and spectators.

3.11.1 Authority

1. All members and participants in youth and adult soccer within the jurisdiction of the North Texas State Soccer Association have requested to participate in our programs. Therefore, these participants have agreed to abide by the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, Rules and Regulations of NTSSA, their local playing association, as well as those of the United States Soccer Federation and its National Associations of which North Texas State Soccer Association is a member. The NTSSA Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws provide that it has jurisdiction over all Member Playing Associations, players, coaches, team managers, administrators, team representatives and referees who choose to affiliate. Any member or participant in youth and adult soccer within the jurisdiction of NTSSA found in violation of the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, Rules and Regulations of NTSSA, their local member association, as well as those of the United States Soccer Federation and its National Associations of which North Texas State Soccer Association is a member, may be subject to publication in the monthly newsletter or NTSSA President's Newsletter of this association of their name, the type of violation, and the disciplinary action taken. Publication will be limited to individuals receiving disciplinary actions of three months or greater.
2. All Member Associations and/or Playing Leagues are directed to form their own Appeals and Disciplinary Committees and to hold hearings -- **With THE PARTIES HAVING THE RIGHT TO BE PRESENT** -- on every player/coach/assistant coach/spectators and/or parents as required for serious misconduct. All Member Associations are required to furnish the State Office with a maintained up-to-date list of their A & D Chairman and Committee members and to include their addresses and phone numbers.

3.11.2 Misconduct of Youth Players/Coaches/Assistant Coaches

1. All Member Associations, Playing Leagues and Tournament Officials are directed to operate and keep records on a "CUMULATIVE CARD SYSTEM" for all players/coaches/assistant coaches. Appeals of cards are not allowed except when the referee admits he made an error in the issuance of the card. Cards issued in league play are cumulative during the entire soccer year. When a player transfers to another team his or her accumulated league play cards count against the cumulative card totals for both his or her old and new teams.
2. A "CUMULATIVE CARD SYSTEM" in league play will be operated as follows:
 - a. Yellow Cards One game automatic suspension for the game following an individual's third league play yellow card. Two game automatic suspensions for the game following such individual's fifth league play yellow card. One game automatic suspension for the game following such individual's sixth league play yellow card

NOTE: A player/coach/assistant coach receiving a second yellow card in a single game is suspended for the balance of that game, and those two yellow cards are then added to such individual's previous total of league play yellow cards to determine whether additional game suspensions, if any, are required. Red cards issued *solely* as a result of a second yellow in a single game will not be added to such individual's league play red card total.

- b. Red Cards One game automatic suspension for the game following an individual's first league play red card. Automatic indefinite suspension from all NTSSA-sanctioned activities following such individual's second league play red card. Red cards issued *solely* as a result of a second yellow

card in a single game will not be added to such individual's league play red card total.

NOTE: In cases where, during a single game, an individual receives a yellow card followed by a "straight red card" (as opposed to a red card issued solely as a result of a second yellow) both cards will be added to such individual's respective total of league play red and yellow cards and punished accordingly. If a Member Association's and/or Playing League's A & D Committee determines that a red card was issued for an infraction that was not an "expulsion" offense in accordance with the FIFA Laws of the Game, such A & D Committee may reduce the red card to a yellow card and assess sanctions accordingly. The Member Association or Playing League may not, however, do away with the card altogether. A full report of this action must be sent to NTSSA.

- c. Seventh Card Any individual obtaining a seventh card in league play shall be immediately suspended, pending a hearing with NTSSA A&D Committee (meaning any combination of yellow and red cards totalling seven).

3. A "CUMULATIVE CARD SYSTEM" for each tournament will be operated s follows:

- a. Yellow Cards One game automatic suspension for the game following an individual's third yellow card. Two game automatic suspensions for the game following such individual's fifth yellow card of the tournament. One game automatic suspension for the game following such individual's sixth yellow card of the tournament.

NOTE: A player/coach/assistant coach receiving a second yellow card in a single game is suspended for the balance of that game, and those two yellow cards are then added to such individual's previous total of yellow cards for that tournament to determine whether additional game suspensions, if any, are required. Red cards issued *solely* as a result of a second yellow in a single game will not be added to such individual's red card total for the tournament.

- b. Red Cards One game automatic suspension for the game following an individual's red card of the tournament. Automatic indefinite suspension from all NTSSA-sanctioned activities following such individual's second red card of the tournament. Red cards issued *solely* as a result of a second yellow card in a single game will not be added to such individual's red card total for the tournament.

NOTE: In cases where, during a single game, an individual receives a yellow card followed by a "straight red card" (as opposed to a red card issued solely as a result of a second yellow) both cards will be added to such individual's respective total of red and yellow cards for the tournament and punished accordingly. If Tournament Officials determine that a red card was issued for an infraction that was not an "expulsion" offense in accordance with the FIFA Laws of the Game, such officials may reduce the red card to a yellow card and assess sanctions accordingly. The Tournament Officials may not, however, do away with the card altogether. A full report of this action must be sent to NTSSA.

- c. Seventh Card Any individual obtaining a seventh card in tournament play shall be immediately suspended, pending a hearing with NTSSA A&D Committee (meaning any combination of yellow and red cards totalling seven).

4. The CUMULATIVE CARD SYSTEM prescribed by these rules defines the **minimum** disciplinary punishment to be taken by all Member Associations, Playing Leagues and Tournament Officials. Nothing herein prevents Member Associations, Playing Leagues or Tournament Officials from enacting more severe sanctions. Each case should be judged on its

own set of circumstances and degree of misconduct or violence, the latter of which must be dealt with swiftly and severely.

5. Any misconduct by a Coach justifying a report by a referee or any other person shall be directed to the State Appeals and Disciplinary Committee as well as to the Member Association and/or Playing League with which the coach is affiliated. The Member Association and/or Playing League shall promptly (within seven (7) days after receipt of the report) rule on the report and send its decision to the State A & D Committee. The State A & D Committee will determine the extent of the punishment, if any, in addition to that taken by the Member Association
6. The State A & D Committee will make its decision based entirely upon the written reports before it, including that of the affected coach, should he or she submit a report. Hearings will not be held by the Committee unless it, of its own volition, chooses to call one.
7. A coach whose conduct is **less than exemplary to his or her players, parents and spectators** will be firmly dealt with by the Member Association or Playing League involved and the State A & D Committee.
8. Game suspensions for Yellow and Red cards (as set forth above) are to be served by the player/coach/assistant coach at the next scheduled game (including league, playoff, championship, cup, and local or state tournament games) that such individual's team is involved in. A suspension imposed by these rules shall be recognized by all affiliated organizations after proper notification. The lack of a hearing or referee report on the offense shall not affect such individual's suspension.
9. All game suspensions must be reported immediately to the State A & D Committee. The Member Association, Playing League or Tournament Officials making the report will forward a copy of any referee's Misconduct Report(s) which underlie the suspension. The State A & D Committee will determine the extent of punishment, if any, in addition to that prescribed by the Member Association, Playing League or Tournament Officials, taking into consideration the severity of the misconduct.
10. The State A & D Committee will issue its decision based entirely upon the officials' reports and any other written reports before it, including that of the affected individual, should he or she submit a report. A hearing will not be held by the State A & D Committee unless it, of its own volition, chooses to call one because of the nature of the case.
11. Extreme Violent Conduct:

Member Associations, Playing Leagues and/or Tournament Officials are directed to extend severe punishment to those players, coaches, and assistant coaches guilty of extreme violent conduct while participating in a match and for violence toward any person or property after being ejected, while on the touchline, or approaching or leaving the game site.

3.11.4 Misconduct of Spectators

1. Each team (youth and adult) in NTSSA is responsible for the conduct of its spectators. The referee shall have the authority to caution and/or send off the coach or acting coach from the field for the misconduct of the spectators associated with the team. Therefore, the coach/assistant coach/team manager is expected to control his spectators, especially on non-enclosed fields. If he is unable to do so, Member Associations, Playing Leagues and/or Tournament Officials are directed to take appropriate actions toward the identifiable, unruly spectator, or if unidentifiable, towards the team itself. Member Associations, Playing Leagues

and Tournament Officials shall report spectator misconduct to the State A & D Committee for review and further action if warranted.

2. Suggested action for misconduct of spectators is:

- a. Suspend the spectator from attending future matches.
- b. Report spectator to the local Park & Recreation Department.
- c. Require team to forfeit any games at which spectator is present on the touchline. (Cannot keep from public park)
- d. Require offending team to pay for presence of police at the game.
- e. Revoke and/or refuse registration to the offending team.
- f. Cause the spectator to be placed under a municipal "peace bond".

3.11.5 Misconduct and Punishment of Teams

1. Youth Association Teams

- a. When, during the current soccer year, the players/coaches/assistant coaches of a given team have accumulated a total of seven (7) send-offs in league play (*including* red cards issued as a result of an individual receiving two yellow cards in a single game) or any combination of cards totalling 25 the Member Association and/or Playing League shall notify the team and the State A & D Committee. The team will be fined \$100.00 payable to NTSSA within thirty (30) days of receiving notice of the seventh (7th) send-off or any combination of cards totalling 25. The coach and the players of said team may also be required notified to appear before the committee to explain the team's continued misconduct. Failure of the Member Association or Playing league to notify the State A&D Committee within fourteen (14) calendar days of a team's seventh (7th) send-off or any combination of cards totalling 25 will result in a fine of \$100.00 per week for each week such notice is late. Red cards or send-offs assessed against that team's spectators or against that team during tournament play will be reviewed to ascertain team misconduct tendencies.
- b. When the players/coaches/assistant coaches of a given team have accumulated a total of four (4) send-offs in a tournament (*including* red cards issued as a result of an individual receiving two yellow cards in a single game) Tournament Officials shall notify the team and the State A & D Committee. The team will be fined \$100.00 payable to NTSSA within thirty (30) days of receiving notice of the fourth (4th) send-off. The coach and the players of said team may also be required to appear before the committee to explain the team's continued misconduct. Failure of Tournament Officials to notify the State A&D Committee within fourteen (14) calendar days of a team's fourth (4th) will result in a fine of \$100.00 per week for each week such notice is late. Red Cards or send-offs assessed against that team's spectators or against that team during league play will be reviewed to ascertain team misconduct tendencies.

3. All Association Teams

- a. The NTSSA holds the team and coach jointly responsible for the conduct of his or her players, parents, and spectators.
- b. A coach whose conduct is not considered to be exemplary to his or her players, parents and spectators will be firmly dealt with by the A&D Committee of both the Member Association involved and the NTSSA.

3.11.6 Games Directly Sponsored by NTSSA

Misconduct involving any participant (player, coach, parent/spectator) of State-sponsored games, as opposed to Member Association league play, will be reported directly to the Tournament Officials of the State Cup and Games Committee and will be forwarded to the State Appeals and Disciplinary Committee immediately after the occurrence for appropriate disciplinary action.

3.1.17 Misconduct Toward Referee

1. North Texas State Soccer Association has exclusive jurisdiction over assault or abuse of officials, both referee and assistant referee, in any competition by the State or Member Associations. This jurisdiction includes:
 - a. All USSF registered referees (adult and youth)
 - b. Any non-licensed person serving in any emergency capacity as a game official.
 - c. Any coach, parent, or junior assistant referee, serving as a game official.

2. If there is an assault/abuse of any game official by any person, including players, coaches, managers or spectators; a report of the alleged assault/abuse will be submitted immediately to the appropriate State Commissioner (Amateur Men's, Amateur Women's, Youth or Indoor) and the A&D Committee Chairman. Olympic Development Program Chairman and the Chairman of the State Referee Committee. This subcommittee, chaired by the appropriate commissioner, shall review and investigate the report(s) as submitted, and upon proper investigation shall determine the seriousness of the alleged assault/abuse report(s) in a timely manner.

3. Should the majority of the members of the subcommittee listed above in paragraph 3.11.7.2 determine there is sufficient evidence to consider the incident a referee assault, a formal assault hearing will be held within thirty (30) days of the incident. An intentional act of physical violence upon a game official as defined in 3.11.7.1 above shall be deemed "referee assault" in the NTSSA under the terms and conditions of USSF Rule 3042.

NOTE: Assault includes but is not limited to the following acts committed upon a referee: hitting, kicking, punching, choking, spitting at or on, grabbing or bodily running into a referee; the act of kicking or throwing any object at a referee that could inflict injury; damaging the referee's uniform or personal property, i.e. car, equipment, etc.

4. Assault hearings shall be conducted by the State Executive Committee in the following manner:
 - a. The alleged offending party is requested to be present at such hearings, however, if he is not present, the State Executive Committee will act upon the matter with the information before it.
 - b. The game official(s) are required to be present at the hearings. However, if they are not present, the State Executive Committee will act upon the matter with the information before it.
 - c. It is intended that the officials' reports be clear and that no explanations are required at the hearing. Only the State Executive Committee will question the official(s). If the offending party or any other party or any other person(s) need explanation, such queries will be addressed through the Chair.

If any assault is found to have been made on an official, the State is obligated to suspend the person making the assault from all soccer activities (outdoor and indoor) for a minimum of one year. Stiffer penalties may be imposed by the State Executive Committee at its discretion. If the State Executive Committee finds the actions to be a case of referee abuse, it shall follow the rules found in section 3.11.7- 7 (a).

5. Any party guilty of referee assault shall have the right to appeal, within thirty (30) days of receipt of the decision, to the USSF Appeals Board, following USSF Rule 2104.

6. ***Amateur Rules***

7. Referee Abuse:

- a. Should the subcommittee, as noted in Paragraph 3.11.7-2 above, determine the action referee abuse as explained in Paragraph (l) below, it shall impose not less than a three (3) game suspension. A formal hearing will not be held unless it is requested. Should a formal hearing be held, it shall be chaired by the appropriate Commissioner in accordance with Paragraph (3.11.7 -2) and the procedure of hearing Shall be the same as 3.11.7-4.
 - (l) Referee abuse is a verbal statement or physical act which implies or threatens physical harm to a referee or the referee's property or equipment. Abuse includes, but is not limited to the following acts committed upon a referee: using foul or abusive language toward a referee; spewing any beverage on a referee's personal property; verbally threatening a referee. Verbal threats are remarks that carry the implied or direct threat of physical harm. Such remarks as, "I'll get you after the game" or "You won't get out of here in one piece", shall be deemed referee abuse.
 - (2) Findings of this subcommittee and/or hearing may be appealed directly to the State Executive Committee within seven (7) days of the date of the letter of notification to the offending party. Copies of this notification shall be sent to the offending party, the coach, and/or team manager, if applicable, complainant and the President of the Member Association in which the abuse took places.
8. Any assault or abuse charges must be postmarked within forty-eight (48) hours (unless there is a valid reason for later reporting). No complaints will be processed by NTSSA if not received within fourteen (14) days of the alleged incident.

3.1.1.8 Misconduct of Referees

When any referee is alleged to have committed misconduct toward any participant, spectator of a match or toward another referee, the State A & D Committee will hear such allegations and assess punishment concerning the Referee in regard to his activities.

3.1.1.9 *Appellate Procedures*

3.1.1.10 Records

The Appeals and Disciplinary Committee will maintain a permanent file of all reports sent to it and the action taken. When any one person or a team shows a trend towards numerous misconduct reports, the Committee will contact such person or team for the purpose of warning or may call such person or team before it.

3.1.1.11 Association to Comply

When any Member Association or a member thereof, fails to send in reports as required by this Rule, NTSSA will take any action it considers proper, including fine not to exceed Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00). Repeated violation by Member Association can result in such association being declared not in good standing.