



# Policy 531-10|Misconduct of Game Officials

## Section 1 |Terms and References

(A) “**Game officials**” includes the following:

1. all currently registered USSF referees, assistant referees, fourth officials or others appointed to assist in officiating in a match.
2. any non-licensed, non-registered person serving in an emergency capacity as a referee (under Rule 3040).
3. any club assistant referee.
4. any referee development program person performing any official function at a match.

(B) “**Referee development program person**” includes any referee, referee administrator, referee assessor, referee instructor, referee assignor, or other person serving in such capacity in a line or supervisory position, including members of any referee committee appointed by the Federation, its Divisions, Affiliates or Associates, a State Association, or a competition, tournament or other appropriate authority.

(C) “**Hearing**” means a meeting of at least five members, one of which is designated or elected to serve as Chairperson. The Chairperson of a hearing shall not vote except to break a tie vote. Such members, including the Chairperson, shall not be the State Referee Administrator, the State Director of Referee Instruction, the State Director of Referee Assessment, a Federation National or FIFA Referee, or any other member of the State Referee Administration.

(D) “**State Association**” shall be that State Association through which the game official is registered or referee development is appointed. Where a state has both Amateur and Youth National State Associations, the reference shall mean that State Association which has legal authority within its state to administer the registration of the referee or the appointment of the referee development program person charged.

## Section 2 | Procedures

(A) **Misconduct at a Match** | When any game official is accused of having committed misconduct toward another game official, participant, or spectator at a match, or of having a conflict of interest, the original jurisdiction to adjudicate the matter shall vest immediately in the State Association or Organization Member through which the accused game official is registered. In the situation where Amateur and Youth State Associations exist in a state, and the incident of alleged misconduct occurred at a match sanctioned by one State Association, jurisdiction shall vest with the State Association sanctioning the match in question.

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

(C) Any allegation of misconduct or of conflict of interest by a game official as described by subsection (A) of this section, or of unethical conduct, misuse or abuse of authority or conflict of interest as described by subsection (B) of this section, shall be made in writing to the State Referee Administrator or to the State Association(s) or Organization Member that shall report all such allegations including any allegations against the State Referee Administrator, to the State Association(s) or Organization Members through which the accused game official is registered or through which the accused referee development program person is appointed.

(D) Upon receipt by the appropriate Organization Member of a verified written complaint, a hearing shall be conducted within thirty (30) days from verification pursuant to guidelines established by the Organization Member having jurisdiction as provided by subsection (A) or (B) of this section. The guidelines may include referring the complaint to the State Referee Committee for the hearing. The hearings and appeal process shall provide for adequate due process for the accused person including proper notice of charges, the right to bring witnesses in defense, and the right to confront and to cross-examine the accusers.

(E) The Chairman of the hearing committee shall transmit the findings of the committee in writing to all parties concerned including the accused and the accusers and to the State Association(s) or Organization Member within seven (7) days of the hearing.

(F) Any party subject to penalties shall receive, at the time of notification of the decision, a notice of the rights of appeal and a copy of the procedures and deadline dates required for such an appeal to be properly considered. Time for filing an appeal shall start with the date of official receipt of the decision by the party making the appeal.

### **Section 3 | Penalties**

(A) The severity of the penalty imposed upon an individual shall be determined by the decision-making body having jurisdiction.

(B) Penalties may be among the following:

1. letter of reprimand;
2. a fine;
3. suspension from all active participation as a Federation-sanctioned referee for a fixed period of time;
4. suspension from all active participation in the Federation for a fixed period of time;
5. any combination of clauses (1), (2), (3) or (4) of this subsection; and
6. dismissal from the Federation.

(C) Any individual while under suspension from all Federation activity may not take part in any activity sponsored by the Federation or its members.

### **Section 4 | Appeals**

(A) Any game official who is found guilty of misconduct as defined in this rule may appeal the decision of the hearing committee as follows:

1. to a Referee Disciplinary Committee jointly appointed by the Amateur and Youth State Associations.
2. to the Federation Appeals Committee as provided under Federation Bylaw 704.

(B) The party appealing the decision of a committee shall have ten (10) days to file the notice of appeal of a decision. Time for filing an appeal shall start with the date of official receipt of the decision by the party making the appeal.