

# OHIO NORTH

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## OHIO YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION NORTH

### RULES, REGULATIONS & POLICIES

Adopted February 16, 2009  
Amended July 28, 2015

**OHIO YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION NORTH  
RULES, REGULATIONS, and POLICIES**

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## **Section 1: General**

### **Rule 1.1: Establishment**

The following rules, regulations, and policies are the standing rules of the Ohio Youth Soccer Association North (hereinafter referred to as OHIO NORTH). OHIO NORTH is a member of US Youth Soccer, which is a member of the United States Soccer Federation (hereinafter referred to as USSF). USSF is the national association member for the United States of the international organization for soccer called FIFA or the Federation Internationale de Football Association.

### **Rule 1.2: Amendments**

The rules, regulations, and policies of this association as now established and as hereafter amended may be altered, repealed or new rules, regulations and policies may be adopted in lieu thereof by a majority of the board of directors then in office and present at the meeting of the board of directors. These rules, regulations, and policies shall take effect on that January 1st that occurs immediately after the amendment is approved, unless specified in the motion when to take effect.

### **Rule 1.3: Members Organization's Prerogatives to Set Rules**

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

### **Rule 1.4: Pleas of Ignorance**

A plea of ignorance to the bylaws and these rules, regulations and policies is not sufficient, and violators may expect appropriate action by the board of directors of this association.

### **Rule 1.5: Matters Not Provided For**

Any matters not provided for in these rules shall be determined by the OHIO NORTH board of directors and decisions so made shall be subject to the approval of the member organizations at the AGM or at a special meeting.

## **Section 2: Administration**

### **Rule 2.1: OHIO NORTH Officers' Expenses**

The officers of the association, as such, shall not be compensated for the performance of services for the association, but may be reimbursed for expenses incurred on behalf of the association, including but not limited to expenses for attendance at meetings of the board of directors.

### **Rule 2.2: Restrictions on OHIO NORTH Officers**

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

**Rule 2.3: Other Administrators**

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

**Rule 2.4: Notice of Meetings**

If notice of a meeting is mailed, the notices shall be directed to each member entitled to notices at its address as it appears on the affiliation form on file with OHIO NORTH unless it shall have filed with the secretary a written request that notices be mailed to some other address, in which case it shall be mailed to the address designated in the request. Each member organization shall name its authorized representative(s) on the affiliation form.

**Rule 2.5: Budget**

- A. The annual budget for the fiscal year will include categories for all the operating programs of OHIO NORTH.
- B. Except for employees or authorized contractors and subcontractors, no private individual, corporation, contributor, or member of this association may be granted or paid any income or interest from the assets or funds of this association.
- C. No part of the activities, assets, or funds of this association shall be committed to the dissemination of propaganda or the attempting to influence legislation or other political action. The association shall not participate or intervene in any political campaign or publish or distribute any statement or spend any funds on behalf of any candidate for public office.

**Rule 2.6: Fees and Fines**

The board of directors may assess fees or require bonds for administrative functions undertaken on behalf of its member organizations or levy fines in specific disciplinary actions.

**Rules 2.7: Investments**

The association shall have the right to retain all or any part of any securities or other property acquired by it and to invest and reinvest any funds held in it, according to the judgment of the board of directors, without being restricted as to the class of investments to be made, provided that no action shall be taken on behalf of the association if that action is a prohibited transaction or would result in denial of tax exemption under Section 503 or 504 of the Internal Revenue Code or the Regulations there under as they now exist or as they may hereafter be amended.

**Rule 2.8 Gifts.**

The board of directors, the president, or any person expressly so authorized by the board of directors may accept gifts on behalf of the association for the general purposes of the association, but no conditional contribution, gift, bequest or devise and no contribution, gift, bequest or devise for a purpose more restricted than the general purposes of the Association shall be finally accepted without prior approval of the board of directors.

**Rule 2.9: Member Organization Responsibilities**

A member organization who fails to fulfill its responsibilities, including supplying their membership data in an OHIO NORTH accepted format, paying current OHIO NORTH fees, and ensuring their administrators, member organizations, clubs, and teams comply with the provisions of the OHIO NORTH Articles of Incorporation, bylaws, rules, regulations, and policies, may result in the member being placed in bad standing by the OHIO NORTH board of directors. A member in bad standing will have no voice or vote(s) at any meeting including special or annual general meetings of this association.

#### **Rule 2.10: Member Organization Bylaws**

Member organizations shall make available to their member teams and clubs copies of these bylaws, rules, and regulations, and other OHIO NORTH approved policies, as well as copies of any other rules pertaining to and adopted by the member organization.

#### **Rule 2.11: Risk Management**

The OHIO NORTH will establish a risk management policy and shall maintain a risk management program to ensure the safety of its members. The risk management program will meet certain minimum criteria established by the USSF. The program will include the use of an employee/volunteer disclosure statement for all volunteers, employees, coaches and program administrators who are involved with any approved or sponsored program of OHIO NORTH or of an affirmed member organization.

#### **Rule 2.12: Insurance**

- A. **Player's Medical Insurance.** All players registered with the Association shall be required to file medical insurance claims with their primary insurance company prior to filing medical claims with the association.
- B. **Directors and Officers Insurance.** All officers of the association and member organization officials of the association, noted on each member organization's affiliation paperwork, shall be protected against general liability claims by OHIO NORTH's insurance carrier for performing acts and duties related to the work of the association. OHIO NORTH assumes the costs of general liability, and all deductibles associated with general liability coverage, to ensure the protection of its officers and member organization officials.
- C. **Report of Insurance Claims.** All injuries from OHIO NORTH or US Youth Soccer activities must be reported, in writing, to both the member organization and OHIO NORTH within 48 hours. OHIO NORTH carries secondary medical coverage. All claims are required to first be made through each member's primary insurance carrier prior to being submitted to OHIO NORTH. Any claims not submitted to OHIO NORTH within 60 days will be denied.
- D. **General Liability Insurance.** All member organizations shall provide OHIO NORTH a list of fields used for games and practices with the owner and the addresses by a specified date and time as determined by the OHIO NORTH board of directors.

#### **Rule 2.13: Non-Member Organizations; Criteria Allowing Recreational/RecPlus Play Against Non-Members; Territorial Affiliations**

- A. **Unaffiliated Organizations.** Any affiliated team or member organization, which plays games or otherwise does business with an organization not affiliated with the USSF or US Youth Soccer, shall face disciplinary action up to and including suspension as determined by

the OHIO NORTH board of directors. OHIO NORTH will not join any organization that has requirements that conflict with the USSF's articles bylaws, policies, and requirements.

**B. Criteria to allow OHIO NORTH Members to Play Against Non-Members.** Any OHIO NORTH member recreational and rec plus league meeting the criteria as outlined below, providing proof of all of the requirements below, and are in receipt of approval from the Executive Director or board of directors of OHIO NORTH may then participate in play against non-members clubs/teams as follows:

- 1) OHIO NORTH member league must be a small **recreational or rec plus** community-based program of less than 3 teams per dual age group; less than 3 teams per single age group.
- 2) Member league must be located in an area where there is no other OHIO NORTH member within a 50 mile radius.
- 3) OHIO NORTH member league President must submit written request to the Executive Director requesting permission to play non-members with reason for the request.
- 4) Request must include the names of the clubs, including the specific teams that will be participating.
- 5) OHIO NORTH member must provide a schedule with dates and location of games.
  - Non-member club/teams **MUST** provide proof of the following:
    1. \$1,000,000 in general liability- produce certificate of liability insurance
    2. Sexual Abuse Policy
    3. Goal Safety Policy

**C. Affiliation Changes.** Teams near the territorial limits of the association may affiliate with other recognized associations. A team may not change affiliated member organizations without the approval of both member organizations for each seasonal year.

#### **Rule 2.14: Seasonal Year; Notices**

**A. Seasonal Year.** The seasonal year of this association shall begin on September 1 and end on August 31 of the following calendar year.

**B. Notices.** Any notice required by statute or by the bylaws to be given to the members, to the directors, or to any officers of the association, unless another requirement is provided herein or in any statute, shall be sufficient if given by depositing it in a U.S. Post Office box or receptacle in a sealed, postpaid wrapper, addressed to the member, director officer at his last address as that appears on the records of the association, and the notice shall be deemed to have been given at the time of the mailing.

#### **Rule 2.15: Administrative Operations Manual**

The administrative operations of OHIO NORTH are outlined in the administrative operations manual located at the OHIO NORTH Headquarters. Changes will be made by the executive director and the president, subject to the approval of the board of directors.

#### **Rule 2.16: Tax and Legal Status**

The accomplishment of its purpose and exercise of its powers by the Association shall be in conformity with the requirements of the Revised Code of Ohio.

OHIO NORTH shall maintain its tax-exempt status under the Internal Revenue Code.

#### **Rule 2.17: Professional Status**

- A. **Definition.** Any player signing a professional contract, or playing with a professional team without the permission of the board of directors shall be declared a professional.
- B. **Play with Professionals.** Only the board of directors along with the Ohio High School Athletic Association may grant a youth amateur permission to play in benefit or exhibition games where professional players are involved.
- C. **Loss of Youth Status.** No player who has signed a professional contract, or played in any game where professional players are involved without the permission of the board of directors will be permitted to be reinstated to a youth amateur status.

**Rule 2.18: Tournament Games, Inter-league Play, All-Star Games, and International Games**

The authority for approval and/or operational control, including dates and times of games that are to be played for these competitions, when played or sponsored by an affiliated team(s) or member organization(s), shall be permissible with prior notification to OHIO NORTH.

**Rule 2.19: Permission to Travel**

Teams that wish to travel out of Ohio to play games must notify OHIO NORTH in accordance with procedures detailed in the US Youth Soccer Travel and Tournament Manual. The board of directors may establish additional requirements.

**Rule 2.20: Permission to Host Foreign and Interstate Teams**

Teams that wish to host teams from another state or another country must request permission from the OHIO NORTH in accordance with procedures detailed in the US Youth Soccer Travel and Tournament Manual. The board of directors may establish additional requirements.

**Rule 2.21: Permission to Host a Tournament**

- A. **Member Organization Tournaments.** Member organizations that wish to host a tournament must request permission from the OHIO NORTH in accordance with procedures detailed in the US Youth Soccer Travel and Tournament Manual. The board of directors may establish additional requirements.
- B. **OHIO NORTH Sanctioned Tournaments.** OHIO NORTH may host a tournament in accordance with procedures detailed in the US Youth Soccer Travel and Tournament Manual. The board of directors may establish rules and additional requirements.

**Rule 2.22: State League Vote**

The OHIO NORTH State League shall have voting powers at the Annual General Meeting exactly like the current members including proxy votes.

**Rule 2.23: Conflict of Interest**

**Rule 2.23.1. Purpose**

The purpose of the conflict of interest policy is to protect OHIO NORTH's tax-exempt interest and to instill trust and confidence in the members and public at large in the actions of OHIO NORTH. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflict of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

## **Rule 2.23.2. Definitions**

### **Rule 2.23.2.1. Interested Person**

Any director, principal officer, staff member or member of a committee with governing board delegated powers, who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person.

### **Rule 2.23.2.2. Financial Interest**

A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:

- A. An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which OHIO NORTH has a transaction or arrangement,
- B. A compensation arrangement with OHIO NORTH or with any entity or individual with which the OHIO NORTH has a transaction or arrangement, or
- C. A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which OHIO NORTH is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.

Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.

A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. Under Rule 2.23.3.2, a person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the appropriate governing board or committee decides that a conflict of interest exists.

### **Rule 2.23.3. Conflict of Interest**

An Interested Person is expected to act at all times in OHIO NORTH's best interests and to exercise sound judgment unclouded by personal interests or divided loyalties. Both in the performance of duties for OHIO NORTH and in any outside activities, an Interested Person shall **avoid the appearance as well as the reality of a conflict of interest**. A conflict of interest exists if the circumstances would lead a reasonable person to question whether the motivations are aligned with OHIO NORTH's best interests. If, for example, an Interest Person is involved in an outside activity or has a financial or other personal interest that might interfere with their objectivity in performing company duties and responsibilities, they may have a conflict of interest.

It is impractical to describe all situations that may create a conflict of interest; however, the following provide guidance about some of the most common conflict of interest situations:

- Use of Confidential OHIO NORTH Information, such as membership lists, for private gain or recruitment;
- Outside Activities with other soccer organizations;
- Employment by other entities in areas related to soccer;
- Service on a Board of Directors;
- Service on Technical Advisory Boards;
- Family and Romantic Relationships;

- Spouses, Domestic Partners, Immediate Family Members or Relatives as Suppliers, Vendors, and other Business Partners;
- Kickbacks and Rebates by Suppliers or Vendors;
- Gifts from Vendors, Suppliers or Customers;
- Honorariums.

The above is not an exhaustive list of examples. Many other situations may also create a potential for a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest. It is the responsibility of each Interested Person to be aware of the potential for a conflict of interest in any particular situation and to resolve the issue in accordance with this policy.

#### **Rule 2.23.4. Procedures**

##### **Rule 2.23.4.1. Duty to Disclose**

In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest or other conflict and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the directors and members of committees with governing board delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.

##### **Rule 2.23.4.2. Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists**

After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he/she shall leave the governing board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.

##### **Rule 2.23.4.3. Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest**

- A. An interested person may make a presentation at the governing board or committee meeting, but after the presentation, he/she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.
- B. The chairperson of the governing board or committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
- C. After exercising due diligence, the governing board or committee shall determine whether OHIO NORTH can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
- D. If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the governing board or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in OHIO NORTH's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination, it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.

#### **Rule 2.23.4.4. Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy**

- A. If the governing board or committee has reasonable cause to believe an interested person has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the interested person of the basis for such belief and afford the interested person an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
- B. If, after hearing the interested person's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the governing board or committee determines the interested person has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action, including suspending the person for an indefinite period of time.
- C. It shall be a violation of this Conflict of Interest Policy for any Interest Person to obtain a list of Players or Members registered with OHIO NORTH or its Affiliates for personal or private solicitation purposes during the term of their affiliation with OHIO NORTH.

#### **Rule 2.23.4.5. Conflicts of Interest Involving Game Officials**

USSF Policy 531-10 shall govern conflicts of interest involving the refereeing of a match or the conduct of referees.

#### **Rule 2.23.5. Records of Proceedings**

The minutes of the governing board and all committees with board delegated powers shall contain:

- A. The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the governing board's or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
- B. The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

#### **Rule 2.23.6. Compensation**

- A. A voting member of the governing board who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, or who has an immediate family member who receives compensation from OHIO NORTH for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's or family member's compensation.
- B. A voting member of any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives or whose immediate family member receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from OHIO NORTH for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's or family member's compensation, including but not limited to the hiring or retention of the member or family member.
- C. No voting member of the governing board or any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from OHIO NORTH, either individually or collectively, is prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.

- D. Staff who receive compensation from OHIO NORTH, whether directly or indirectly or as employees or independent contractors, are precluded from membership on any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters.

**Rule 2.23.7. Annual Statements**

Each director, principal officer and member of a committee with governing board delegated powers and every other Interested Person shall annually sign a statement, which affirms such person:

- A. Has received a copy of the conflicts of interest policy,
- B. Has read and understands the policy,
- C. Has agreed to comply with the policy, and
- D. Understands that OHIO NORTH is charitable and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

**Rule 2.23.8. Periodic Reviews**

To ensure the Organization operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

- A. Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information, and the result of arm's length bargaining.
- B. Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to OHIO NORTH's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit or in an excess benefit transaction.

**Rule 2.23.9 Use of Outside Experts**

When conducting the periodic reviews as provided for in Article VII, the Organization may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the governing board of its responsibility for ensuring periodic reviews are conducted.

**Rule 2.23.10. Statement to be Executed as Required by Rule 2.23.7**

As an Interest Person associated with Ohio Youth Soccer Association North (hereinafter "OHIO NORTH"), I shall not derive any personal profit or gain, directly or indirectly, because of my participation in the activities of Ohio Youth Soccer Association North. I shall disclose to OHIO NORTH any personal interest, which an immediate family member or I may have in any matter pending before the organization and shall refrain from participation in any decision on such matter. I shall refrain from obtaining any list of registered players or members for personal or private solicitation purposes during the term of my affiliation with OHIO NORTH.

In addition to my service for OHIO NORTH, at this time I am a Board member, or I receive compensation as an employee or independent contractor in excess of \$1,000 annually from the following:

- 1.
- 2.

- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

This is to certify that I, except with regard to carrying out my duties as an officer, director or staff member of the OHIO NORTH or as described below, am not now nor at any time during the past year have been:

- 1) A participant, directly or indirectly, in any arrangement, agreement, investment, or other activity with any vendor, supplier, or other party; doing business with the OHIO NORTH which has resulted or could result in personal benefit to me, except as described fully below.
- 2) A recipient, directly or indirectly, of any salary payments or loans or gifts of any kind or any free service or discounts or other fees from or on behalf of any person or organization engaged in any transaction with the OHIO NORTH.

Any exceptions to 1 or 2 above are stated below with a full description of the transactions and of the interest, whether direct or indirect, which I have (or have had during the past year) in the persons or organizations having transactions with the OHIO NORTH.

I further certify that I have received a copy of, read and understand OHIO NORTH Rule 2.23, Conflict of Interest, I agree to follow and be bound by Rule 2.23, and I understand that OHIO NORTH is charitable and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Section 3: Registration**

#### **Rule 3.1: Individuals or Teams**

Registration is done through a member organization of OHIO NORTH for teams; individual registration is done through OHIO NORTH.

Out of State Players/Teams Registration with State Association (OHIO NORTH):

- A) A youth player must register each seasonal year in the State Association in which the player resides. Note: Ohio North and Ohio South are separate states for soccer purposes. Any questions on residency may be determined by the State Association in which the player is registered to vote or holds a current driver's license.
- B) Any youth player wishing to play on a team of a member of a State Association where the player is registered must receive written permission from:
  - 1) the State Association where the player is registered;
  - 2) the other State Association of the team on which the player wishes to play;
  - 3) permission must be obtained each seasonal year.

- C) All teams wishing to compete in a league operating in a state association other than the state in which they reside;
- 1) must first register with the home state association;
  - 2) receive out of state permission to play from the state in which they reside and from the other state association in which they wish to play.

**Rule 3.2: Age Limit Definition**

- A. **Youth Player.** The term “youth player” shall mean an amateur player who has not attained his or her nineteenth (19th) birthday before the first day of August preceding the seasonal year in which he or she applies for registration.
- B. **Attaining Age Limit.** Players attaining the limited age for any age group on or after August 1 will be eligible to play for the full seasonal year.
- C. **Age Groups.** All member organizations, unless otherwise sanctioned by the board of directors, shall divide play among teams as listed below. Member organizations may utilize two (2) year age groups for age groups U19 and below without specific board of director’s approval. Age divisions shall consist of players who on the first day of August preceding the current seasonal year, are:

Under 19 years	Under 14 years	Under 9 years
Under 18 years	Under 13 years	Under 8 years
Under 17 years	Under 12 years	Under 7 years
Under 16 years	Under 11 years	Under 6 years
Under 15 years	Under 10 years	Under 5 years

- D. **Authority to Contest Age.** Any player may be called upon to prove his legal age by the board of directors, by a district commissioner, by their member organization, or by a majority vote of the teams in any given member organization.
- E. **Legal Proof of Age.** A birth certificate, passport, driver’s license, board of health records, certificate of naturalization, or alien registration card shall be sufficient for proof of age, except in those competitions which specifically state otherwise.

**Rule 3.3: Maintaining Youth Eligibility**

- A. A youth player who has reached age 17 by August 1 of the seasonal year may be permitted to play an unlimited number of senior games without losing youth eligibility if approved by OHIO NORTH.
- B. Any youth playing for a senior club without OHIO NORTH approval shall be declared ineligible for youth games.
- C. Any youth team using an ineligible player shall forfeit all games in which that player took part under the forfeiture provisions of Rule 4.10: Ineligible or Improperly Registered Player.
- D. **Reinstated Player.** A reinstated player shall mean a player who has been reinstated to an amateur youth status.

**Rule 3.4: Player Registration, Member Organization Entry, and Team Affiliation Requirements**

**A. Proper Registration Procedure.**

1. Each seasonal year, all players are required to submit a properly completed member organization player registration and medical consent form (electronically or manually) to the team. (The club or league should keep these forms for at least 3 years.) The submittal of a member organization player registration form signed by the player and his/her parent or guardian (if the player is under 18 years of age) and OHIO NORTH player fees binds that player to that team for the seasonal year unless granted a release. (see Rule 3.6: Player Release, Transfer, Dual Registration)
2. Each team shall be required to submit to the appropriate member organization officer various forms as may be required for the operation of the association and pay all dues, fees, or fines that may be levied by the member organization or association. Also, each team is responsible for sending proper member organization affiliation forms and fees directly to the person responsible in its member organization.
3. Each member organization shall be responsible for ensuring proper registration of the players, affiliation of the teams, proper accounting of fiscal transactions and accurate reporting to the OHIO NORTH board of directors.
4. A registered player shall be committed to a team for a full seasonal year. Once registered and in the absence of mitigating circumstances, a player must remain with the same team until the completion of the spring session for the member organization in which his team participates. Any attempt to induce a player to change teams for either the current or the following seasonal year prior to the end of the seasonal year shall be poaching in violation of Rule 3.7. During the time during which a team has suspended member organization play, players and club or team officers or representatives may freely discuss new affiliation for the following seasonal year.

**B. Date of Registration.** A player is registered the moment the player and his/her parent or guardian (if the player is under 18 years of age) signs the member organization player registration form and has submitted OHIO NORTH player fees to a responsible team/member organization official.

**C. Registration and Transfer Cut-off Dates.** The board of directors may set cut-off dates for player transfer for each playing season or seasonal year. Transfer and registration dates will be announced by the OHIO NORTH State Office. The board of directors shall have the authority to accept player registration after these dates and such late registration shall be subject to a fee as approved by the board of directors.

**Rule 3.5: Roster Limit**

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

<b>Playing Format</b>	<b>Age Level</b>	<b>Roster Maximum</b>	<b>Roster Minimum</b>
3v3	U5-U6	8 (5 recommended)	3 (Play day format recommended)
4v4	U7-U8	10 (6 recommended)	4 (Play day format recommended)
6v6	U9-U10	12 (10 recommended)	6
8v8	U11-U12	14	7
11v11	U13-U15	22	9
11v11	U16-U19	22*	9

**\* The game roster for U13-U19 shall have a maximum of eighteen (18) players and a minimum of seven (7) players.**

### **Rule 3.6: Player Release, Transfer, and Registration**

#### **A. Player Release.**

1. **Voluntary release** means the removal of a player from a team's roster at the request of the player or parent/guardian. A voluntary release will be granted if:
  - a. The original team suspends operations for the remainder of the seasonal year, or
  - b. The player moves to a new address, a distance which in the opinion of the OHIO NORTH Registrar, would make it impractical for him/her to continue with the original team, or
  - c. There are mitigating circumstances, which in the opinion of the OHIO NORTH Registrar justifies a release.
2. **Involuntary release** means the removal of a player from a team's roster at the request of team authorities. An involuntary release will not be granted if the parent/player signatures do not appear on the OHIO NORTH Release Form and will be granted only if the player is unable to play for one of the following reasons:
  - a. The player has violated rules of this Association and has been suspended for a period greater than five (5) games, or
  - b. The player is injured in such a manner that the player will not be able to participate for the remainder of the season, or
  - c. The player moves to a new address, a distance that in the opinion of the OHIO NORTH Registrar would make it impractical for him to continue with the original team and has demonstrated an inability to continue in participation on the soccer team.
  - d. Intra-league releases may be approved by league registrars.
  - e. Requests for inter-league releases must come to the OHIO NORTH State Office. Registration with another league can occur within 48 hours of OHIO NORTH receiving the inter-league transfer.

Once a player is released from a team he/she is eligible to apply for a player transfer. Once the player transfer is approved, that player may register with another team in an OHIO NORTH recognized member organization. However, obtaining a player release does not guarantee the player a roster spot on another OHIO NORTH team, nor is player transfer guaranteed.

#### **B. Player Transfers (Competitive/Premier Players):**

1. A player may apply for a player transfer once they have been granted a player release.
2. All player transfers to new leagues must come to and be approved by OHIO NORTH, the member organization and/or member organizations before OHIO NORTH will consider approving the transfer.
3. Coach's signatures on the OHIO NORTH transfer form are not required for the consideration of a player transfer by OHIO NORTH.
4. The new team must have a spot on their roster to accept the transfer player.
5. For teams, in the U-13 through U-18 age groups, who participate in the OHIO NORTH State Cup competition, a team may have no more than five (5) transfer players at the time OHIO NORTH State Cup Rosters are frozen.

6. A player may transfer between OHIO NORTH teams in the same member organization and/or club between seasons of a seasonal year.
7. All transfers must be in compliance with the member organization's transfer rules, policies, procedures, or bylaws.

### **C. Registration.**

1. Players may register to more than one (1) competitive/premier club during each seasonal year.
2. Players registered to more than one (1) team must designate the primary team with OHIO NORTH.
3. A player may play for more than one (1) team in the same competition (if allowed by tournament or league competition), excluding the US Youth Soccer National Championships (See US Youth Soccer National Championships Policy, Rule 224).
4. In all cases of rostering involving a Midwest Regional League team (MRL), the MRL team must be the primary team.
5. If the coach of any team disagrees on the designation of the primary team, the player may not play until the issue has been resolved through the OHIO NORTH appeals process.
6. Player and coach member pass cards are required to be printed on US Youth Soccer card stock supplied by US Youth Soccer or OHIO NORTH. A player shall be issued US Youth Soccer pass cards for each team on which the player is rostered.
7. Any player who registers for a team without informing the responsible team official(s) and member organization official(s) that they already registered with other team(s) may forfeit all games for affected teams for the time period that the player has not obtained the approved registration form(s) from OHIO NORTH.

### **Rule 3.7: Poaching/Illegal Recruitment**

Any club or team which, through its responsible officers or representatives:

- A. Attempts at any time prior to June 1<sup>st</sup> or after July 31<sup>st</sup> of any seasonal year to induce a registered player (or their parent or guardian) of any team under the jurisdiction of this association to leave their team before the end of the current season; or
- B. Attempts at any time prior to June 1<sup>st</sup> or after July 31<sup>st</sup> of the seasonal year to induce the player to leave their team for the following seasonal year shall be deemed to have committed a poaching offense and shall be dealt with by the OHIO NORTH board of directors.
- C. Examples of illegal recruitment, not limited to, include: email communication, phone calls, and/or approaching a registered player.
- D. Penalties of illegal recruitment and/or poaching shall be at the discretion of the OHIO NORTH Board of Directors.

## **Section 4: Rules of Play**

### **Rule 4.1: Rules of Play**

Rules of play for youth shall be the "Laws of the Game" as published by FIFA. Modifications, as permitted for local associations and youth soccer, shall be published. All contests sanctioned by this Association shall abide by the "Laws of the Game," and the modifications as published by this Association.

### **Rule 4.2: Modifications**

Players U5 to U12 shall play by the modified rules for small sided games as published by US Youth Soccer unless modified herein.

**Rule 4.3: Field of Play**

A. **General conditions.** The field of play shall be reasonably flat and free from structures which may endanger the players. The field must be rectangular. The length of the touchline must be greater than the length of the goal line. The home team will be responsible for the condition of the grounds, the proper field markings and proper equipment. Nets and corner flags are recommended. Goals are required to be properly installed. All affiliated clubs and affiliated leagues must submit Goal Safety Policies. Moveable goals must be anchored. The game will not be permitted to start if the movable goals are not anchored. (Refer to documents: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission’s web site at <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/5118.pdf>).

B. **Dimensions.** The field dimensions by age group shall be as follows:

Age	Field Size	Length	Width
U13- U19	Required	100-120 yards	60-75 yards
U11-U12	Required	75-80 yards	50-55 yards
U9-U10	Required	55-60 yards	40-45 yards
U7-U8	Required	35-40 yards	25-30 yards
U5-U6	Required	20-25 yards	12-15 yards

**Rule 4.4: Recommended Length of Games and Size of Ball**

The length of games and the ball size shall be as follows:

Age	Length of Game	Ball Size
U17-U19	2-45 min. halves	Size 5
U15-U16	2-40 min. halves	Size 5
U13-U14	2-35 min. halves	Size 5
U11-U12	2-30 min. halves	Size 4
U9-U10	2-25 min. halves	Size 4
U7-U8	4-12 min. quarters	Size 3
U5-U6	4-8 min. quarters	Size 3

**Rule 4.5: Substitutions**

The number of substitutions shall be unlimited unless competition under OHIO NORTH jurisdiction determines otherwise. Substitutes may not enter the field of play until receiving a signal to do so from the referee and must do so at the half line. Substitutions may be made by either team at the following times:

A. Any stoppage of play per FIFA Rules.

#### **Rule 4.6: Player Equipment**

Player equipment shall consist of a jersey or shirt, shorts, stockings, footwear and shin guards. Shin guards are mandatory. Shin guards are covered entirely by the stocking, are made of suitable material, and shall be properly sized to provide a reasonable degree of protection.

#### **Rule 4.7: Uniforms**

With the exception of the goalkeepers, opposing teams shall be differentiated from each other. Goalkeepers must wear colors that differentiate them from the field players.

#### **Rule 4.8: Home Team Responsibilities**

- A. If both teams wear uniforms that are of the same or similar colors, the home team must effect a change to colors that are distinct from those of the opponent if requested by the referee.
- B. The home team shall be responsible for the condition of the grounds, the proper field markings, and proper equipment. Goal nets and corner flags are recommended.
- C. The home team shall be responsible for providing a game ball.
- D. In the event the referee declares the condition of the grounds improper, the game is to be rescheduled.

#### **Rule 4.9: Member Passcards**

- A. If required, all players and coaches shall present to the referee their member passcards before the start of the game.
- B. All passes are to be returned to the player or coach from the referee after the game is completed.
- C. Should a player misplace their card, the player shall be permitted to play in the game. However, the player shall be open to “challenge” by the coach of the opposing team.
  - 1. If a coach desires to challenge, the coach shall notify the referee and the opposing coach that the player is under “challenge” (not to be confused with protest) prior to the start of the game.
  - 2. The player(s) being challenged shall give their name, signature, and date of birth to the referee, who shall note this information on his “game report.” The referee shall make this information available to the coach making the challenge at the conclusion of the game.
  - 3. The challenging coach shall then contact the member organization registrar or OHIO NORTH for verification that the challenged player(s) is properly registered within 72 hours.
  - 4. If the registrar’s records show the player is properly registered, the matter is finished. If the player is not properly registered, the forfeiture provisions of Rule 4.10 Ineligible or Improperly Registered Player apply.
  - 5. The above are minimum standards; leagues can have more stringent rules as it relates to policies relating to membership passes.

#### **Rule 4.10: Ineligible or Improperly Registered Player**

- A. Any team playing a player, who is ineligible, whether accidentally, intentionally, or otherwise, shall forfeit the game(s) in which that player takes part and shall face further disciplinary action by the member organization and/or the OHIO NORTH board of directors, depending upon the nature of the violation.
- B. In case of forfeiture, the score shall stand 1-0 against the forfeiting team, unless the member organization or competition has a different forfeiture score.

#### **Rule 4.11: Misconduct**

Coaches and other team officials shall be subject to all rules pertaining to misconduct contained herein and as published by the USSF, including cautions, ejections, and standard suspensions. Any coach or team official shall be held responsible for the actions of any individual(s) who violate these rules and who in the opinion of the disciplinary authority, is a supporter of that team.

### **Section 5: Discipline Policies**

#### **Rule 5.1: Responsibility for Discipline**

- A. **General Cases.** In general cases, the member organizations shall establish an OHIO NORTH approved Code of Conduct and be responsible for governing those persons associated within their operation, and shall establish procedures to that effect. However, it is the duty of all member organization officers, coaches, referees and assistant referees to report immediately any infraction of “Misconduct Toward Game Officials” and “Misconduct of Game Officials” (see Appendix).
- B. **Member Organization Discipline and Appeal Procedures.** Member organizations shall provide procedures for discipline, protest and appeals for their affiliated members. All grievances involving the right to participate and compete in activities sponsored by the USSF and the OHIO NORTH and its members may be appealed to the USSF’s appeal committee that shall have jurisdiction to approve, modify, or reverse a decision. All hearings shall comply with USSF Bylaw 701 and USSF Policy 701-1 (see Appendix).
- C. **Line of Authority.** Should any person, team or member organization want to appeal any decision, the line of authority shall be from the member organization to the OHIO NORTH discipline and appeals committee, to the line of authority as specified by USSF.

#### **Rule 5.2: Discipline and Appeal Filing Procedure**

- A. **Types of Discipline and Appeals.** The OHIO NORTH discipline and appeals committee shall only hear appeals from decisions of lower authority, cases concerning referee assault and referee abuse, or matters referred by the board of directors.
- B. **Line of Authority.** The line of authority for an appeal is:
  - 1. Member organization;
  - 2. OHIO NORTH discipline and appeals committee;
  - 3. The line of authority as specified by the United States Soccer Federation.

- C. **Grounds for Appeal.** Appeals must be in writing, either on forms specified by the OHIO NORTH or providing the information requested on such forms, and describe in detail the grounds for the appeal.
- D. **Appeal Fee and Time Limit.** The written appeal must be mailed within ten (10) days of the receipt of a written decision from a lower authority and must be accompanied by all supporting documents and by the \$250 fee in the form of a money order or cashier's check.
- E. **Loss or Return of Fee.** The appeal fee paid by the prevailing party will be returned; however, the fee shall not be returned if the appeal is denied.
- F. **Decline to Hear Appeal.** Authorities responsible for hearing appeals may decline a hearing if:
  - 1. The appeal does not pertain to the original protest or the decision of a lower authority;
  - 2. The appeal is filed by a party other than the original parties to the protest/appeal.
- G. **Timeliness of Response.** At all levels of the appeals process, if a decision is not reached within thirty (30) days of receipt of the written appeal, the party filing the appeal may submit the appeal to the next higher level and the appeal fee submitted will be applied to the next level.
- H. **Status of Decisions.** All decisions at all levels of the appeal process shall stand and be in full force and effect until changed by a higher authority.
- I. **Ultimate State-level Authority.** Decisions of the OSYAN discipline and appeals committee shall be binding unless the decisions are overturned by a higher authority. Failure to abide by decisions of the committee shall be grounds for disciplinary action by the OHIO NORTH board of directors.

**Rule 5.3: Disciplinary Rulings, and Minimum Punishments (All sections listed below are minimums)**

- A. **Minimum Penalties.** A member organization may adopt more stringent penalties, which will prevail, but in no event may penalties be less than those listed.
- B. **Player Fighting.** A player guilty of fighting before, during or after games shall receive a two-game (2) suspension.
- C. **Player Profanity.** A player guilty of using profanity, either by word or sign, against another player, coach, spectator, or any member organization official shall receive a minimum two-game (2) suspension.
- D. **Player Threats.** A player guilty of making threatening gestures against another player, coach, spectator, or any member organization official shall receive a minimum two-game (2) suspension. Verbal threats are remarks that carry the implied or direct threat of physical harm. (See Appendix USSF Policy 531-9).
- E. **Player Striking Official.** A player guilty of pushing or striking any coach, or any member organization official shall receive a minimum one-year (1) suspension.
- F. **Misconduct Toward a Referee.** Any player, coach, manager, or official committing some misconduct as defined by USSF Policy 531-9 shall be dealt with in accordance with that policy. Reporting procedures are included in the policy.
  - 1. Referee abuse is a verbal statement or physical act not resulting on bodily contact which implies or threatens physical harm to a referee or the referee's property or equipment.
  - 2. 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 property; spitting at (but not on) the referee; or verbally threatening a referee.

3. Referee assault involves physical contact with the referee, or the referee's uniform or personal property.

**G. Coach Threats.** Coaches or team officials who make threatening gestures or use threatening language to other players, coaches, or any member organization officials shall be disciplined according to the following schedule:

1. First Time: Minimum two-game (2) suspension.
2. Second Time: The offender shall appear before the OHIO NORTH board of directors and be suspended for a minimum of four (4) games.
3. Third Time: The offender will be suspended for not less than one (1) year.

**H. Misconduct of Spectators.** Any other individual who may be reasonably construed to be associated with a team, such as relatives and supporters, shall also be subject to the jurisdiction of this association.

1. **Assault or abuse of a referee by a spectator.** If an individual who supports a team abuses or assaults a referee, such action shall be deemed loss of control by the coach and other team officials. Upon receipt of a report of an assault or abuse of a referee by a spectator, the chairperson of the discipline and appeals committee, or their designate, will form an ad hoc committee composed of the chairperson (or their designate) and two (2) individuals on the OHIO NORTH board of directors who are not members of the member organization(s) involved in the case. The chairperson will perform a preliminary investigation and disclose the results of the investigation to the ad hoc committee. The ad hoc committee will determine if there is enough evidence to sustain a charge of assault or abuse. If not, no action will be taken. If there is enough evidence, a letter will be forwarded to the team informing them of the requirement to post a cash bond up to \$1,000 with the OHIO NORTH. After receiving written notification of the requirement for a bond, the team shall have forty-eight (48) hours to post the bond with OHIO NORTH. Failure to remit that bond to this Association shall place that team temporarily under suspension and not in good standing. Any games missed or games played after the forty-eight (48) hour period but prior to the posting of said bond will be considered forfeit.
2. The matter will be referred to the discipline and appeals committee for a complete investigation and hearing. Said hearing will be conducted with the same procedures established for hearings conducted for assaults of referees by players, coaches or other team officials. After hearing all the evidence the discipline and appeals committee may return the bond if the charges prove untrue; may continue the bond for a period of time not less than one (1) year; may increase the amount of the bond to a maximum of twice the amount of the original bond; or may reduce the amount of the bond; depending on the severity of the offense.
3. If a second such offense occurs involving any supporter of the same team within a period of two (2) years, the amount of the bond shall be doubled. The original bond, if still in effect, will be forfeited.
4. If a third such offense occurs involving any supporter of the same team, the team shall be suspended from all competition under the auspices of the OHIO NORTH. Provisions will be made to prevent the reforming of the same team members with a new team name.
5. The OHIO NORTH shall return the bond at the end of the period determined by the discipline and appeals committee.

- I. **Misconduct of Game Officials.** In case of misconduct by referees or other game officials, USSF Policy 531-10 shall apply, including reporting procedures (See Appendix).
- J. **USSF or Other State Association Suspension.** The OHIO NORTH shall recognize suspensions and other rulings of USSF and of other state associations of which it has been officially notified, and which comply with the rules and regulations of USSF.

### **Section 6: Coaching License**

All competitive and premier coaches registered as of April 1, 2011 must hold a minimum of the US Soccer U-10/12 Module (or US Soccer equivalent) by the beginning of the Fall season, August 1, 2012. Starting the fall of 2011, the 12 month allowance starts for all coaches going forward.

**\*This policy applies to all Leagues without a certification policy. Leagues currently with a license certification requirement will not be required to follow these dates providing their policy is within these guidelines.**

## **APPENDIX**

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

### **USSF Policy 531-9 – Misconduct Toward Game Officials**

#### **Section 1. General**

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

#### **Section 2. Rule Application**

- A. This policy shall supersede any inconsistent rules of organization members that pertain to assaults or abuse upon Federation referees, assistant referees, the manner and means of hearings, appeals, and rehearings in matters pertaining thereto.
- B. Nothing in this policy rule shall be construed to restrict or limit any league, event/tournament or organization member from applying equal or greater restrictions to anyone not listed in Section 4(a)(1) of this policy (i.e., a spectator associated with a club or team).
- C. This policy shall not apply to players, coaches, managers, club officials, or league officials while participating in professional league member activities.

#### **Section 3. Terms and References**

As used in this policy–

1. “Referee” includes the following:
  - a. All currently registered USSF referees, assistant referees, 4th officials or others duly appointed to assist in officiating in a match.
  - b. Any non-licensed, non-registered person serving in an emergency capacity as a referee (under Rule 3040).
  - c. Any club assistant referee.
2. “Hearing” means a meeting of at least three neutral members, one of which is designated or elected to serve as chairperson. The hearing shall be conducted pursuant to guidelines established by the organization member.
3. (a)(i) Referee assault is an intentional act of physical violence at or upon a referee.  
(ii) For purposes of this policy, “intentional act” shall mean an act intended to bring about a result which will invade the interests of another in a way that is socially unacceptable. Unintended consequences of the act are irrelevant.  
(b) Assault includes, but is not limited to the following acts committed upon a referee: hitting, kicking, punching, choking, spitting on, grabbing or bodily running into a referee; head butting; the act of kicking or throwing any object at a referee that could inflict injury; damaging the referee’s uniform or personal property, i.e. car, equipment, etc.

4. (a) Referee abuse is a verbal statement or physical act not resulting in bodily contact which implies or threatens physical harm to a referee or the referee's property or equipment.  
(b) Abuse includes, but is not limited to the following acts committed upon a referee: using foul or abusive language toward a referee that implies or threatens physical harm; spewing any beverage on a referee's personal property; spitting at (but not on) the referee.

## **Section 4. Jurisdiction and Hearings**

### **A. General**

1. When any amateur or professional player, coach, manager, club official or game official assaults or abuses a referee, the original jurisdiction to adjudicate the matter shall vest immediately in the responsible organization member which is affiliated with the United States Soccer USSF.
2. When an allegation of assault is verified by the organization member, the person is automatically suspended until the hearing on the assault.
3. The organization member must hold a hearing within thirty (30) days of the verification by the member of the abuse or assault or, if applicable, the thirty-day period provided by subsection (b)(3) of this section. If the member does not adjudicate the matter within that period of time, original jurisdiction shall immediately vest in the Federation's Appeals Committee to adjudicate the matter, to which the same provisions as to the term of suspension shall apply.
4. Failure to hold the initial hearing shall not rescind the automatic suspension.

### **B. Events and Tournaments**

1. In the event an assault or abuse of a referee occurs in an event outside the alleged offender's home state, the referee shall (A) immediately notify the event/tournament chairperson, and (B) forward a copy of the game report and his/her comments on the incident to the event/tournament chairperson.
2. The event/tournament chairperson shall have the right to immediately convene a hearing at the site of the event/tournament, at which the alleged offender, the coach of the alleged offender when the offender is a player, and the game official should be present. Information presented at this hearing shall promptly be relayed to the alleged offender's organization member president by the event/tournament chairperson, both orally and in writing; however, failure to provide written information shall not restrict the offender's organization member from taking action with regard to any referee abuse or assault.
3. Final jurisdiction shall vest with the alleged offender's organization member. A hearing shall be held by that organization member within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the initial report of the abuse or assault on a referee.

## **Section 5. Penalties and Suspensions**

### **A. Assault**

1. The person committing the referee assault must be suspended as follows:
  - a. For a minor or slight touching of the referee or the referee's uniform or personal property, at least 3 months from the time of the assault;

- b. Except as provided in clause (i.) or (ii.), for any other assault, at least 6 months from the time of the assault:
  - (i.) For an assault committed by an adult and the referee is 17 years of age or younger, at least 3 years; or
  - (ii.) For an assault when serious injuries are inflicted, at least 5 years.
2. An organization member adjudicating the matter may not provide a shorter period of suspension but, if circumstances warrant, may provide a longer period of suspension.

#### **B. Abuse**

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

#### **Section 6. Appeals**

A person who is found to have committed the abuse and/or assault may appeal to the appeals committee by following the procedures of Federation Bylaw 705 within ten (10) days from receipt of the decision of the organization member.

#### **Section 7. Procedure for Reporting Assault and Abuse**

- A. Procedures for reporting of referee assault and/or abuse shall be developed and disseminated by the national referee committee to all federation registered referees.
- B. Referees shall transmit a written report of the alleged assault or abuse, or both, within 48 hours of the incident (unless there is a valid reason for later reporting) to the designee of the organization member and the state referee administrator. For tournaments or special events, the referee shall transmit a written report to the tournament director on the day of the incident and to his home state SRA within 10 days of the incident.

### **USSF Policy 531-10 – Misconduct of Game Officials**

#### **Section 1. Terms and References**

- A. Game Officials” includes the following:
  1. All currently registered USSF referees, assistant referees, 4th officials or others appointed to assist in officiating in a match.
  2. Any non-licensed, non-registered person serving in an emergency capacity as a referee (See Section 2 of Policy 531-8).
  3. Any club assistant referee.
  4. Any referee development program person performing any official function at a match
- B. “Referee Development Program Person” includes any referee, referee administrator, referee assessor, referee instructor, referee assignor, or other person serving in such capacity in a line or supervisory position, including members of any referee committee appointed by the federation, its divisions, affiliates or associates, a state association, or a competition, tournament or other appropriate authority.
- C. “Hearing” means a meeting of at least five members, one of which is designated or elected to serve as a chairperson. The chairperson of a hearing shall not vote except to break a tie vote. Such members, including the chairperson, shall not be the state referee administrator, the state director of referee instruction, the state director of referee assessment, a federation national or FIFA referee, or any other member of the state referee administration.

- D. "State Association" shall be that state association through which the game official is registered or referee development is appointed. Where a state has both amateur or youth national state associations, the reference shall mean that state association which has legal authority within its state to administer the registration of the referee or the appointment of the referee development program person charged.

## **Section 2. Procedures**

- A. **Misconduct at a Match.** When any game official is accused of having committed misconduct toward another game official, participant, or spectator at a match, or of having a conflict of interest, the original jurisdiction to adjudicate the matter shall vest immediately in the 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 within the state association sanctioning the match in question.
- B. **Misconduct Away from a Match.** When any game official, referee, referee assistant or referee development program person is accused of unethical conduct, misuse or abuse of authority or conflict of interest in any matter in the pursuit of or may affect the individual's official dealings within and as authorized by the federation, its divisions, affiliates or associates, a state association or 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 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 chairperson of the hearing committee shall transmit the findings of the committee in writing to all parties concerned including the accused and the accusers and to the state association(s) or organization member within seven days of the hearing.
- F. Any party subject to penalties shall receive, at the time of notification of the decision, a notice of the rights of appeal and a copy of the procedures and deadline dates required for such an appeal to be properly considered. Time for filing an appeal shall start with the date official receipt of the decision by the party making the appeal.

### **Section 3. Penalties**

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

### **Section 4. Appeals**

- A. Any game official who is found guilty of misconduct as defined in this rule may appeal the decision of the hearing committee as follows:
  - 1. To a referee disciplinary committee jointly appointed by the amateur and youth state associations.
  - 2. To the federation appeals committee as provided under USSF Bylaw 705.
- B. The party appealing the decision of a committee shall have ten (10) days to file the notice of appeal of a decision. Time for filing an appeal shall start with the date of official receipt of the decision by the party making the appeal.

### **Bylaw 701. Hearing Procedures**

In all hearings conducted under these bylaws, the parties shall be accorded:

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

### **Policy 701-1 Hearing Procedures**

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

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

- J. The rights, either mandatory or permissible under this policy, shall be consistently applied, and state association should not arbitrarily allow or disallow the rights set forth above to those individuals assisting a party in the presentation or defense of the party's case.

## **GLOSSARY**

For the purpose of interpretation, these definitions are offered but are not meant as rules themselves. Updates to this glossary may be made by the executive director at any time as needed.

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

FIFA is comprised of each country's national soccer associations and is responsible for promoting and organizing the game of soccer throughout the world. FIFA also determines the basic playing "Laws of the Game." Those laws are available from the Federation in a special booklet. Today more than 150 million people throughout the world play soccer and in a given year up to 1 million referees officiate more than 20 million matches. FIFA governs all aspects of the game.

2. **United States Soccer Federation, Inc (USSF)** United States Soccer Federation, Inc (USSF) is the national governing body for all levels of soccer in the United States. It was formed in 1913 and affiliated with FIFA the following year. U.S. Soccer is recognized by the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) as provided in the Amateur Sports Act of 1978. The constitution, rules, policies, and procedures of the Federation have evolved over a period of time to govern the game of soccer and protect the interests of all participants, players, officials, administrators, clubs, member organizations, national states associations, and the Federation. Therefore, they must be accepted and observed by all members of the Federation until changed in accordance with the procedure provided.

3. **United States Youth Soccer Association, Inc. (USYSA; U.S. Youth Soccer)** United States Youth Soccer Association, Inc. (USYSA; US Youth Soccer) is the largest member of the United States Soccer Federation (USSF). US Youth Soccer is a non-profit and educational organization whose mission is to foster the physical, mental and emotional growth and development of America's youth through the sport of soccer at all levels of age and competition. Beginning in 1974, US Youth Soccer has always been recognized as a leader in youth sports organizations. Through a democratic structure, the membership of US Youth Soccer is able to provide uniform rules and guidelines. These guidelines facilitate intra-state, inter-state and international play. The national administration of US Youth Soccer is conducted by a nine member board of directors consisting of a chairman, vice chairman, secretary, treasurer, four regional directors, and a member at large. Each of these board members are elected into office by delegates from the 55 member State Associations. A tenth position that of past president is held by the past president for a single term of two years. The US Youth Soccer membership is divided into four regions, each with a director elected to the board of directors. The regions are essentially East (Region I), Midwest (Region II), South (Region III) and West (Region IV). Each State Association has a board of directors, elected by delegates from their member organizations, clubs or teams.

4. **“National State Association”** means an affiliated member association of US Youth Soccer representing all clubs, member organizations, teams, players, coaches, and administrators, within the territory assigned to the national state association by the USSF National Council. The administrative body within the territory determined by the national council to carry out the federation’s programs for amateur youth or amateur adult players or both.
5. **“Amateur Sports Act”** means the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act (chapter 2205 of title 36, United States Code).
6. **“Appeal”** means a procedure to be followed which provides that such matters be resolved on as low an organizational level as possible. This process is for disputes outside the decisions made by a referee on the field during the course of a match.
7. **“OHIO NORTH”** means Ohio Youth Soccer Association North which is a National State Association.
8. **“board of directors”** or **“Board”** means the board of directors of OHIO NORTH
9. **“Club”** means an organization that is a member (directly or indirectly) of OHIO NORTH that has identifiable membership of youth soccer players on whose behalf the organization conducts or engages in youth soccer activities for one (1) or more soccer teams usually playing within a geographic area.
10. **“District”** means a geographical subdivision of the State of Ohio
11. **“League”** or **“member organization”** a structured group of four (4) or more teams joined for the purpose inter-team play under a common set of administrative rules.

**OHIO NORTH Competition Levels**

**A. Recreation League**

1. Recreation leagues are designated for local, in-house play and can be structured around formal teams or as an academy-based format. The use of tryouts, invitations, recruiting or any like process to register players selectively to any team on the basis of ability is prohibited; and member leagues must accept any and all eligible youth players (subject to reasonable terms of registration).
2. Recreation leagues may maintain standings and hold end-of-season play-offs and players must participate in at least half of each game.

**A. Recreation Plus League**

1. Recreation Plus leagues are formed to provide small or isolated Recreation members with the opportunity to engage in competition with other Recreation members. League membership is often formed around zip codes, school zones, social club membership, or church affiliations.
2. The use of tryouts, invitations, recruiting or any like process to register players selectively to any team on the basis of ability is prohibited; and member leagues must accept any and all eligible

youth players (subject to reasonable terms of registration).

3. Recreation Plus leagues may maintain standings and hold end-of-season play-offs.

#### **B. Competitive (Comp-II) League**

1. Competitive (Comp II) leagues provide an elevated level of competition for players who are more motivated to train, improve their skills, and compete against like-skilled and like-minded opponents. Comp-II has an associated rise in the cost of participation, training and administrative expectations, and travel distances. Playing time is not guaranteed.
2. Comp-II players generally develop from Recreation and Recreation Plus programs and league membership is generally based on local zip codes, but can also include teams from Comp-I clubs.
3. Try-outs can be used as the basis for team formation and players can be assigned to teams on the basis of ability.
4. Comp-II teams can compete in Comp-I competitions, such as state league and state cup.

#### **C. Premier (Comp-I) League**

1. Premier (Comp-I) is the most competitive tier of the youth soccer pyramid at the state level and neither playing time nor roster places are guaranteed. Comp-I clubs actively recruit players and tier their teams on the basis of ability. Larger clubs may have players and teams competing at each of the three lower levels.
2. Club rosters will generally include players from multiple communities and may include out of state players. The associated costs of participation and travel are significant; and professional coaching is the norm. Comp-I clubs compete in state, regional and national leagues. (June 18, 2012)

12. **“League team”** means a team that participates in regularly scheduled member organization play.
13. **“Protest”** means a complaint about field or referee qualifications prior to the start of a game, or the misapplication of rules or procedures during a game.
14. **“Standing Rules”** means rules, regulations and policies of OHIO NORTH.
15. **“Team”** means a group of soccer players playing on the same side in soccer games.
16. **“Youth player”** means an individual who has not reached 19 years of age prior to August 1 immediately before the start of any seasonal year. A player who reaches 19 years of age during a seasonal year is allowed to complete that seasonal year. A player who reaches 19 years of age during August of one (1) seasonal year shall be allowed to complete all of the next seasonal year.
17. **“USOC”** means the United States Olympic Committee that is the corporation established under the Amateur Sports Act to oversee all amateur athletic activity in the United States.