



Atlanta Fire United Soccer Association

Policy Number: B008

Policy Name: Grievances

General:

The following guidelines for addressing grievances within the Atlanta Fire United Soccer Association (AFU) allow for the communication of grievances as well as appropriate and timely responses and resolution.

Grievances involving individuals, teams, clubs or leagues outside AFU will be dealt with according to Georgia Soccer, US Club Soccer, or USSF protocols.

The AFU Board of Directors strongly encourages the resolution of grievances and conflicts at the lowest level possible. The Board understands that certain situations may not be satisfactorily resolved at the lowest level, requiring the intervention at a higher level within the club.

Application:

These guidelines apply when resolving grievances involving players, parents, coaches, team officials, club officials or other individuals that serve AFU. Failure to follow these guidelines will be grounds for corrective actions.

Definition of Grievance:

Grievances may include, but are not limited to, incidents during AFUSA sponsored events, inappropriate behavior by a player, parent, coach or other individual affiliated with or attending an AFUSA sponsored event. Concerns related to team composition and/or team management such as coaching philosophy, decision making, style and playing time should be resolved by speaking directly with the coach.

Incidents that result in a grievance may include, but are not limited to:

- Misconduct
- Unsportsmanlike Behavior
- Disrespect
- Vulgarities
- Endangerment to others
- Fighting
- Verbal Harassment
- Physical Harassment

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Communication Process:

1. Discuss and report the grievance with your assigned Coach. If this is not feasible or fails to satisfactorily resolve the issue, then proceed to Step 2.
2. Discuss and report the grievance to the Program Director. This can be accomplished by personal notification or email. If this is not feasible or fails to satisfactorily resolve the issue, then proceed to Step 3.
3. Discuss and report the grievance to the current Ethics, Grievance, and Professional Standards Contact. This can be accomplished by personal notification or email. If this is not feasible or fails to satisfactorily resolve the issue, then proceed to Step 4.
4. The final step is to write a formal grievance to the AFUSA Board of Directors along with a detailed explanation of actions taken to date to try and resolve the situation and which addresses Steps 1, 2 and 3 above. The detailed written grievance should include:
 - Date of the grievance filing/submission
 - Name, phone number and e-mail address of the person filing the grievance
 - Name of player(s)
 - Team identification: name of team, age group and name of head coach
 - Complete description of issue (include as much detail as possible, including date(s), time(s), location(s), names of witnesses, etc., if relevant)
 - Detailed, step-by-step explanation of actions taken to date in an effort to resolve the problem

Upon receipt of a formal grievance, the AFUSA Board will determine if the actions taken to date were appropriate and no further action is required; or whether the grievance requires further investigation. If the Board determines that further review is necessary, a Grievance Task Group may be appointed to investigate and present recommendations to the Board. The individual filing the grievance is welcome to be present at any Board meeting, including the meeting during which their grievance is presented. However, the Committee and/or Board reserves the right to deliberate in private if they feel the situation so requires.

**** At any point in time, a coach or program director can choose to involve the Ethics, Grievance, and Professional Standards Contact or the Board of Directors to help resolve a grievance that has been brought to their attention. ****

Grievance Task Group:

If appointed by the Board, the Grievance task group should be made up of the current Ethics, Grievance, and Professional Standards Contact, the Vice President, the Referee Assignor and the EDOC or DOC. The aim of this task group is to represent and examine all aspects of the situation. If one of these individuals has a direct conflict of interest with or was directly involved in the situation, they should be replaced with another individual of similar position/experience.

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The Task Group shall meet to review/discuss the grievance within seven (7) days of the Task Group's formation with a final report to be provided to the board within fourteen (14) days of the receipt of the grievance. Throughout the Task Group's efforts, the President shall be kept informed of their progress and serve as a point of guidance if any concerns arise. The committee's process should be as follows:

1. An investigation will take place to interview and conduct a collection of facts with coaches, players and all parties involved, to determine what transpired during the said grievance concern.
2. A committee meeting shall be conducted to review the concerned grievance and all those involved shall be notified of the meeting and shall be requested to be present. The committee shall discuss all issues to determine the degree and severity of the behavior and the subsequent recommendation for corrective action(s), if necessary.
3. The committee shall complete a written report on the facts identified during their investigation along with recommendations which they will present to the Board within fourteen (14) days of receiving the grievance.

Corrective Actions:

Corrective actions may include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal warning
- Written warning, accompanied by a meeting with the EDOC and/or Board of Directors
- Suspension from participation with AFU for a specified period of time
- Suspension from participation with AFU for remainder of season
- Suspension from participation with AFU indefinitely
- Other actions as deemed appropriate by the Board of Directors for the particular situation

Board Review and Determination:

Any decision made by the Board, after reviewing a grievance and any task group recommendations, stands as the final action at the club level. The Board will reply in writing to the submitter of the grievance and inform them of its findings and final decisions. Upon making a final determination, the Board will create a case file consisting of all documents associated with the investigation and fully document the final determination.