



Grievance and Penalty Procedure Policy

“The heart of Little League baseball is what happens between manager and player. It is the manager more than any other single individual who makes the program a success or failure. He controls the situation in which the player may be benefited or harmed...”¹

PURPOSE

We want you and your child to have a fun and positive experience with 4S Ranch Little League. Sometimes conflicts arise among players, umpires, parent/guardians, managers and coaches. For example, a parent/guardian might not approve of the behavior and/or actions of a manager or coach. Occasional as they are, these situations can be distressing and take the fun out of the game. This is particularly so when those problems fester.

Actions of our managers and coaches must be held to the highest standards. Managers deserve understanding parent/guardians whose actions should not interfere with the legitimate goals of the team.

We are committed to making sure conflicts are resolved quickly, objectively, and equitably with the very first consideration being given to the welfare of the children. Therefore, the 4S Ranch Little League has adopted the following Grievance and Penalty Procedure Policy.

WHO MAY COMPLAIN

The parent/guardian/guardian of any adversely affected league participant may complain under this policy. In addition, managers may complain whether or not their team or its participants are impacted. Board members may institute a complaint any time for any reason.

¹ http://www.littleleague.org/Assets/forms_pubs/asap/LLGreatestChallenge.pdf

COMPLAINT CATEGORIES

Complaints come in five forms:

1. Umpiring—Umpiring complaints concern staffing of and behavior/performance of umpires that do not involve violations of the 4SRLL or County Codes of Conduct. Example: umpire training.
2. General—General complaints are those complaints not addressed by the above categories. Examples: Snack bar staffing, uniform issues.
3. Draft—Draft complaints concern the composition of the team immediately following the draft. Examples: pre-existing irreconcilable differences between a player and the Manager, Coach, Teammates, or Parent/guardians.
4. Unqualified—unqualified complaints are team/player/game concerns that do not violate the 4SRLL or County Code of Conduct that relate to players and the team. Example: playing time and positioning concerns.
5. Qualified—Qualified complaints are when a manager, coach, or parent/guardian violates the 4SRLL or County Code of Conduct. Example: A coach is drinking beer in the dugout.

HOW AND TO WHOM DO I COMPLAIN?

1. UMPIRE COMPLAINTS

Complaints concerning staffing and performance of umpires shall be submitted by a manger only to the Umpire in Chief. The Umpire in Chief may consult some or all of the Board if he/she wishes. There is no appeal from the complaint disposition.

2. GENERAL COMPLAINTS

General complaints shall be made to the Board Member assigned to the subject matter at issue. For example, if the complaint is regarding uniforms, the complaint should be made to the Uniform and Trophy Director. If the complaint is not resolved, the complaint may be elevated to the Vice President. The complaint will be reviewed by the Vice President and at least two other Board members within 72 hours of receipt. The Vice President shall respond to the complaint, in writing, within 96 hours of receiving the General Complaint. There is no further appeal.

3. DRAFT COMPLAINTS

Concerns or complaints about the team upon which a child is drafted should be made as soon as possible after team announcement. They are directed to the Player Agent. The Player Agent will investigate and arrange any remedial action they deem appropriate. There is no appeal from the decision of the Player Agent.

4. UNQUALIFIED COMPLAINTS

Complaints must be communicated with the manager in one of two ways, either:

Option 1

The parent/guardian should discuss the issue directly with the manager. The Board prefers complaints handled in this manner. These discussions should not take place in front of any children, other parent/guardians, nor during a game or practice. If the issue cannot be resolved directly between the parent/guardian and the manager, then the complaint should be made by the parent/guardian to the Division Director and Player Agent. The Division Director and/or Player Agent shall then discuss the issue with the manager within 48 hours. If the issue still cannot be resolved, or if it continues, the parent/guardian may file a formal grievance under the Qualified Complaint process. Or;

Option 2

In the rare circumstance where the parent/guardian would prefer to have a 4SRL Board member present for the initial conversation with the manager, the parent/guardian may elect to write a letter to the Vice President. The letter must outline the specific area(s) of concern, provide only facts, not include judgments or conclusions. Within 48 hours of receipt of the letter, the Vice President shall forward the letter to the manager to make them aware of the concerns. The Division Director or Player Agent will then schedule a meeting providing an opportunity for the parent/guardian(s), manager, and Division Director or Player Agent to resolve the conflict. This provides both the parent/guardian and manager an independent third party to help facilitate the conversation. The Board expects the manager and parent/guardian will work together to facilitate a positive resolution

5. QUALIFIED COMPLAINTS

Unqualified complaints that are handled pursuant to the procedure outlined Section 4, but are not resolved, may be elevated to a Qualified Complaint.

The complainant may file a formal grievance in writing with the Vice President. The written grievance should contain the following:

1. The name, telephone number and email address of the person filing the grievance;
2. The name of the person(s) against whom the grievance is filed;
3. The nature of the complaint;
4. The relevant dates and locations;
5. The desired resolution.
6. If the matter began as an unqualified complaint, a description of the procedural history of the complaint.

The grievance will be reviewed by the Vice President and the appropriate Player Agent within 48 hours of receipt to determine if the grievance should be reviewed at a grievance hearing.

If the grievance will be heard, the Vice President shall convene a meeting of the Grievance Committee giving the committee members at least 48 hours notice of the meeting. The Grievance Committee shall be comprised of the Vice President (as Chair), Player Agent, Umpire-In-Chief, and the Secretary. Quorum for this meeting is established by whomever among the Committee is available

If the grievance will not be heard, the Vice President will notify the parent/guardian in writing why the grievance was dismissed. The grievance dismissal action of the Vice President shall be final unless the person who filed the grievance decides to appeal the decision to the full 4SRL Board. The appeal must be by written request to the President within 48 hours of the dismissal by the Vice President (see "Right to Appeal" below).

The Grievance Hearing

1. Both the person filing the complaint and the person against whom the grievance is filed, may produce witnesses to speak on their behalf (no children witnesses). The witnesses must provide their written statements to the Chair no later than 24 hours prior to the hearing.
2. The Committee shall hear testimony in the following order:
 - i. The parent/guardian filing the complaint (10 min max);
 - ii. Witnesses for the parent/guardian (2 min each);
 - iii. The person against whom the grievance is filed (10 min max);
 - iv. Witnesses for the person against whom the grievance is filed (2 min each).

Statements should be recorded by the Secretary and should only address the issue at hand and not reference any past accusations or violations, if any. Only facts may be presented, not assumptions or preconceived conclusions. No questions shall be allowed during testimony. After the statements are made, the Chair may allow questions from Committee members. The parties shall then be dismissed.

3. After the parties are dismissed, the Grievance Committee shall then discuss the case in private and reach a decision as to the imposition of any disciplinary action by majority vote. The Chair shall issue a letter to the person against whom the grievance is filed as soon as practical after the decision of the Committee, informing the person whether the complaint was dismissed, if there will be disciplinary action, or know the issues raised in the complaint were resolved by the Committee. The person filing the complaint shall also be promptly informed in writing of the Committee's decision.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

The Grievance Committee may impose sanctions as follows:

Dismiss the action without sanction;
Written warning from the Chair;
Suspension from one or more games or practices;
Recommendation against post season positions;
Removal from League position;
One year suspension from League; and
Recommendation for criminal prosecution or civil action.

The decision of the Grievance Committee shall be final unless the person against whom the grievance the action is filed decides to appeal the Committee decision to the full 4SRLL Board. If so, the person must appeal by written request to the President of the 4SRLL Board within 48 hours of receiving the decision of the Grievance Committee.

RIGHT TO APPEAL

The 4SRLL Board President shall schedule the appeal for the next regularly scheduled board meeting (a minimum of 72 hours notice is required). The President shall Chair and conduct the appeal in the same manner as the Grievance Hearing (above). A final decision will be made by majority vote of all board members present at the meeting. The President shall issue letters to both the person against whom the grievance was filed and the person who filed the complaint, within 72 hours of the hearing informing that person of the outcome. This decision will be final with no further appeals.

RETALIATION

Retaliation will not be tolerated. An important purpose of this policy is to foster open communication between the volunteers who manage/coach the teams and the league participants. Communication between managers/coaches and parent/guardians must be able to occur with no fear or concern of retaliation. Retaliation is defined as an observed change in playing time, position, batting order, or disposition. All concerns of retaliation will be fully investigated by the

Grievance Committee, which shall have original jurisdiction to hear any retaliation complaint, or raise it on their own. If the Committee determines the player has been subjected to retaliation the manager/coach will be suspended indefinitely.

RECORDS RETENTION

All complaints, resolutions and disciplinary letters must be retained by 4SRLL and passed on to the President of the incoming Board. Records will be destroyed after 3 years of the final decision. These documents are confidential and shall not be disseminated except for a compelling reason such as to satisfy judicial process.

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