

## 201 ADMINISTRATION

- A. Louisiana Soccer Association (LSA) is a non-profit organization incorporated under the laws of the State of Louisiana with 501(c)(3) status.

LSA is affiliated with the United States Soccer Federation, Inc. (USSF) and its affiliates, the United States Youth Soccer Association (USYSA) and the United States Amateur Soccer Association (USASA). LSA is also affiliated with the International Governing Body (Federation de Internationale de Football Association) (FIFA) through the USSF. LSA is subject to the constitution, rules and standing orders of FIFA, USSF, USYSA and USASA.

LSA is governed by its own constitution and rules except when superseded by the authority of the USSF.

The seasonal soccer year of this Association shall begin September 1 and end August 31 of the following year. This Association's constitution and rules are in effect during the twelve months of the seasonal year, which will be the same as the fiscal year of LSA.

In order to abide by the objectives of this organization as listed in Article II of its constitution, LSA provides the following:

- Organization of players by clubs through a registration process.
- A mandatory insurance program for members.
- A referee organization.
- A coaching program.
- A State Select Program as outlined by the United States Olympic Committee (USOC).
- A Young Player Development Program for players Under 10 and below and/or recreational players.
- State Tournaments at the competitive levels.
- A State Office and paid employee(s) to serve the LSA members.

- B. As a State Association affiliated with USSF, LSA incorporates the following duties and policies which take precedence over and supersede any provision entered herein to the contrary:

1. The membership of the State Association and the members of the State Association shall be open to any soccer players, coaches, trainers, managers, administrators, and officials not subject to suspension under section 4 of Bylaw 241, and to any amateur soccer organization in its territory.
2. The State Association will not discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex or national origin.
3. The Federation articles of incorporation, bylaws, policies, and requirements take precedence over and supersede the governing documents and decisions of the State Association and its members to the extent applicable under state law, and the State Association and its members will abide by those articles, bylaws, policies, and requirements.
4. The State Association will not join any organization that has requirements that conflict with the Federation's articles, bylaws, policies and requirements.
5. The State Association shall register all of its players, coaches, teams, referees and administrators with the Federation at least once each year and timely pay all dues and fees of the Federation.
6. The State Association and its members will abide by the Federation's articles, bylaws, policies, and requirements on interplay.
7. The State Association shall have a Board of Directors (or similar body) selected through an open and democratic election process.
8. Actions and policies adopted by the Board of Directors (or similar body), Executive Committee, or officers of the State Association shall be reported to its membership, or their authorized representatives, at least once each year at a meeting of the State Association's membership, with notice and agenda of the meeting at least 15 days in advance of the meeting.

9. The State Association shall provide to the Secretary General of the Federation an annual report on the activities of the Association and most current annual financial statements within 90 days after the start of the Federation's seasonal year.
10. The State Association will (A) provide annually to the Federation copies of the State Association's constitution, bylaws, and other governing documents, (B) submit changes to those documents to the Federation for approval not later than 90 days after adoption, and (C) make copies of those documents available to its members.
11. The State Association will provide equitable and prompt hearing and appeal procedures to guarantee the rights of individuals to participate and compete. Those procedures shall include that all grievances involving the right to participate and compete in activities sponsored by the Federation and the State Association and its members may be appealed to the Federation's Appeals Committee that shall have jurisdiction to approve, modify or reverse a decision.
12. The State Association shall maintain its tax-exempt status under the Internal Revenue Code.
13. The State Association shall adopt policies prohibiting sexual and physical abuse that meet certain minimum criteria established by Federation (subject to any contrary requirements contained in state or local law applicable to the State Association).
14. The State Association will allow the Federation to review the documents and procedures of the State Association, on request of the Federation not less than once every 4 years, to determine compliance with these bylaws.

## **202 OFFICERS / REPRESENTATIVES OF LSA**

### **A. OFFICERS:**

1. President
2. Secretary
3. Treasurer
4. Vice-President - Adults
5. Adult Men's Commissioner
6. Adult Women's Commissioner
7. Vice-President - Youth
8. Youth Premier Commissioner
9. Youth Recreational Commissioner
10. Past President

### **B. APPOINTED POSITIONS**

1. Chairman of the Referee Committee
2. Chairman of Olympic Development Program (O.D.P.) Committee
3. State Coaching Staff

### **C. EMPLOYEES**

1. LSA Office Administrator
2. State Director of Coaching

Duties of the elected officers Chairman of the Referee Committee and the LSA Office Administrator can be found in the LSA Constitution. The State Director of Coaching works under contract drafted by the LSA Executive Committee.

The Louisiana Soccer Association is one organization with two divisions, the Adult Division and the Youth Division. Only the officers named above constitute the LSA Executive Committee. However, the appointed positions and the employees are asked to sit on the Executive Committee to ensure complete communication among all LSA programs. These positions have a voice but not vote. The President has no vote except in a tie.

## D. COMMITTEES:

Standing committee members are appointed as needed and are asked to serve a one-year term, September 1 to August 31. The standing committees, named below, to assist with the administration and recommendation of policy/procedure changes for programs within LSA. Committee persons are volunteers and can be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses incurred for work required by the committee per LSA policy.

### 1. Olympic Development Program (O.D.P.) Committee

The purpose of the O.D.P. Committee shall be to assist LSA in implementing and administering the O.D.P. of the USSF, USYSA and LSA. The Olympic Development Program Committee consists of the Chairman and other members, five to seven volunteers from across the state as nominated by member clubs or LSA Board Members plus one representative from both the boys and girls coaching staff, with the approval of the LSA Executive Committee. Non-voting members of the Committee shall be the LSA Director of Coaching and the LSA Vice President – Youth, who will serve as liaison to the LSA Executive Committee. The Committee duties are to administer and assist the DOC and LSA staff coaches in identifying and developing outstanding youth soccer players within the Association for advancement to the Regional Olympic Development Program, and National Olympic Teams and to help administer programs set forth by the USSF relating to Olympic, CONCACAF, and National Youth teams, and to recommend rules and policies to the LSA Executive Committee to as they pertain to ODP.

### 2. Youth Premier Committee

The LSA Youth Premier Committee will be appointed by the local clubs registering teams to participate in the Premier League. Each participating club will have one vote. The Youth Premier Commissioner shall chair the committee. The committee members will recommend Premier League rule changes to the LSA Youth State Council for approval. They serve as State Representatives at various Premier Club events and administrate the Premier League under the direction of the State Youth Premier Commissioner.

The Premier Committee has the responsibility to approve both the Louisiana Premier League Chairperson and the regional Premier League Chairperson that are appointed annually by the Youth Premier Commissioner. Once approved by the Premier Committee these individuals are then submitted to the LSA Executive Board for final approval.

### 3. Youth Recreational Committee

The Youth Recreational Committee will consist of members appointed by the Youth Recreational Commissioner from volunteers across the State representing recreational programs. The committee members will recommend rule changes for the recreational program and youth recreational tournaments to the LSA State Youth Council for approval. They may serve as the State Representatives at Youth State Tournaments.

### 4. Youth Division 1 Committee

The LSA Youth Division 1 Committee will be members appointed by the local clubs registering teams to participate in Division 1. Each participating club will have one vote. The Youth Recreational Commissioner shall chair the committee. The committee members will recommend Division 1 rule changes to the LSA Youth State Council for approval. They serve as State Representatives at various Division 1 club events and administrate the Division 1 Tournaments under the direction of the State Youth Recreational Commissioner

5. Appeals and Disciplinary Committee

- a. It shall be comprised of the Chairman and a pool of members appointed by the President and approved by the LSA Executive Committee. However, a limit of two members of the Standing Committee from one Member Club is permitted. Three impartial members of this Committee shall constitute a quorum. Should it be impossible for a quorum to be had in order for the Committee to make a ruling within a time period required by these Bylaws, then the Chairman or any other member, if the Chairman is unavailable, shall appoint any impartial person(s) to serve temporarily on the Committee. In such event, the President shall approve the interim appointments. The Chairman shall notify the LSA State Office immediately, in writing, of the rulings of this Committee.

The LSA Referee Committee shall appoint a representative who will serve as an advisor to the Appeals and Disciplinary Committee.

- b. The committee shall have jurisdiction over all appeals from member clubs.

6. Risk Management Committee

To promote the welfare of youth players and to protect coaches, volunteers, and program administrators and the affiliated clubs of the Louisiana Soccer Association. The Risk Management (RMC) Committee will make all initial decisions pertaining to an individual's eligibility to participate with the LSA. The Risk Management Committee has the authority to immediately disqualify an individual based on the results of information provided by the individual or through a third party under contract to LSA Membership to include the LSA Vice President Youth, LSA Vice President Adult, LSA Secretary, and LSA Legal Counsel if appointed. Chairmanship of the Committee is determined by an election by the members annually at the summer meeting.

7. Suspension Review Committee

To review suspensions of members prior to the AGM of each seasonal year.

## 203 MEMBERSHIP

Membership within LSA consists of properly constituted soccer clubs within the State of Louisiana. Each club retains its own autonomy but will adhere to the governing rules of this State Association. Failure to adhere to ALL rules of LSA will render the club "Not in Good Standing" which jeopardizes affiliation with LSA.

### A. MEMBERS ARE DEFINED AS:

1. Club membership – an organization, club or association recognized by the LSA Council as having a Board of Directors, an acceptable constitution and/or by-laws and at least a player membership of 44 (youth or adult) which pays dues to, receives benefits or services from and participates in the policy making processes of LSA.
2. Associate members – Those State Sport Organizations which conduct programs in or allied to soccer as a sport, but do not qualify as a soccer club.

LSA does not recognize individual teams or players as members. LSA does not recognize a club that has only a one member Board of Directors. There must be a group of persons serving as the officers in charge of administering a club.

## B. TO BE IN GOOD STANDING:

1. All clubs, clubs, associations and organizations affiliated with LSA must register and pay the fees required for every soccer player and every soccer team that is sponsored, financed, coached or administered by the club, club, association or organization including but not limited to male or female, members of traveling teams, competitive teams, intramural programs, recreation programs or house programs. Fees will include, but are not limited to: registration fees of players or teams, insurance of players or teams, tournament fees, coaching clinic fees, travel permits, charges for book orders, etc.
2. All affiliated clubs are responsible for ensuring that all their affiliated member players, teams, clubs, associations and organizations adhere to the rules of LSA and its affiliates. Failure to enforce all rules of LSA and its affiliates may result in the club, club, association or organization being declared "not in good standing" by the LSA Council.
3. All affiliated clubs are responsible for ensuring that any form of suspension, penalty or fine ruled upon a member player, coach, club officer, team, club, association or organization must be honored completely to the full extent of the suspension, penalty or fine. Fines must be paid timely and in full for the club to remain "in good standing" with the LSA Council. This applies to all suspensions, penalties or fines whether they are club, State or National in origin.

## 204 CLUB AFFILIATION

LSA will affiliate as a club any properly constituted local soccer group within the State of Louisiana if all requirements of affiliation are met. To become affiliated local clubs must register every soccer player, every coach and every team that is sponsored, financed, coached or administered by the club including but not limited to members of traveling teams, competitive teams, intramural teams, school teams, recreation programs or in-house programs.

**PROVISIONAL STATUS.** Groups or organizations that are interested in affiliating with LSA may be granted provisional status by a vote of the executive committee. While on provisional status, a group or organization may register players for the purpose of conducting a soccer program and fielding teams. A group or organization on provisional status has no voting rights in LSA, is subject to all the rules and regulations of LSA and cannot participate in state tournaments or travel out of state without LSA approval. Applicants applying for provisional status must first meet the following provisional membership requirements:

1. Provide documentation indicating the formation of a governing body to uphold the LSA Constitution and rules of this organization. The Governing Body should consist of but is not limited to a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. A complete list of the officers with addresses and phone numbers must be submitted to the LSA Office with the application for affiliation and each year thereafter by September 1. Work telephone numbers will be published in the LSA directory unless otherwise indicated. One person does not constitute a governing body.
2. Provide documentation indicating the formation of a constitution and/or by-laws of the organization which are within the guidelines set by LSA and USSF. These governing rules will include organization structure, membership, funding and playing guidelines. These are to be sent to the LSA Office with the affiliation application and changes to these rules each year thereafter by September 1.
3. Provide location of fields to be used and general description of area to be serviced by the club.
4. Provide proof of contact made with the State Referee Assignor as to naming a local referee assignor who will be responsible for assignment of all club games and the State Referee Instructor as far as providing referee clinics.
5. Provide proof of contact with the state Director of Coaching (DOC) as to securing coaching clinics and certification of coaches.

6. To obtain provisional status, the group must register online with LSA a minimum number of four (4) teams.
7. Should a club fail to meet the requirements, fail to adhere to all rules of LSA, fail to pay all monies due LSA or any LSA program or be declared not in good standing, the LSA Executive Committee is empowered to cancel affiliation, place the club on notice to conform and/or place the club in question before the State Council for a ruling.
8. All the necessary fees and dues to LSA, including the mandatory insurance costs, must be paid. The \$25.00 affiliation fee per club is to be paid annually, due by September 1 of the soccer year. A Youth or Adult Division payment form must accompany the \$25 club check. (Refer to the Fees Section, the Youth/Adult Registration Sections and the Forms Section of this manual.)
9. All players must be registered with LSA using the online registration program provided by LSA. Clubs will maintain either a LSA approved registration form or an electronic signature format that will include the required liability waiver and proof of birthdate. Typed or non-LSA computer generated team rosters will not be accepted.
10. Youth and Adult Clubs are required to inspect, using the proper form, all fields used for practice or games. This is MANDATORY and required each year prior to practice or games on any fields. Certificates of Insurance are issued by the insurance company through the LSA Office on each field once the club completes and submits to the LSA Office a "Proof of Insurance Request Form" and a "Goal/Field Inspection Criteria Form" on each field they will use or anticipate using during the soccer year. There is no charge for this. (Refer to the Youth or Adult Insurance Section of this manual.)

When a club is able to provide all of the above information, LSA will grant provisional approval status of affiliation until the next meeting of the LSA State Council. ALL RULES OF THIS ASSOCIATION MUST BE UPHOLD to remain "in good standing" and to secure a vote of approval.

All requests for affiliation with above stated fees and documentation shall be submitted to the LSA Office

## **205 REGISTRATION OF PLAYERS**

ALL organizations affiliated with LSA must register every soccer player, coach and team that is administered by the organization. Clubs should assure, at the time of registration, that there are no currently suspended persons being registered.

All players must be registered on an LSA approved registration form which can be obtained from the LSA Office. Once registered with LSA, through their club, the player is registered with LSA and with that club and team for one soccer year which begins September 1 and ends August 31 of the following year. (Unless released through the transfer process. See Section 306.)

The per player registration fee is set annually at the State Council meeting and is based on the budgetary needs of LSA once the required national affiliation dues have been paid.

(Refer to the Youth and Adult Player Registration and Insurance Sections of this manual.)

## **206 FEES**

Fees required by LSA are as follows:

- Club Affiliation Fees
- Youth and Adult Player Registration Fees
- Youth and Adult Insurance Fees
- Youth and Adult Player Transfer Fees
- Youth and Adult Team Travel Fees
- Youth and Adult Tournament Fees

- Youth and Adult State Select Team Player Fees

*See Policy 206-1 & 206-2 – Youth & Adult Fees*

## **207 VOTING WITHIN LSA**

Voting strengths of LSA are described in Article VII of the Constitution.

Voting rights depend on the above status and fees properly paid to LSA. Voting rights also depend on the number of players recorded in the LSA Office thirty (30) days prior to any scheduled meeting of this association and the voter being “in good standing” with this Association (Refer to the Membership Section of this manual.)

Voting strengths are in effect at ALL meetings of this Association.

## **208 FINANCES OF LSA**

LSA will be provided funds appropriated from each division from its player registration fees, affiliation fees, referee fees and from revenues of LSA soccer events. These funds are used for:

- National player affiliation fees
- National team affiliation fees
- National referee fees
- Insurance dues
- Coaching program expenses
- Referee program expenses
- Operating expenses of LSA:
  - Administrative supplies, printing, postage, labor
  - Office equipment, rent, utilities
  - Meetings
  - Newsletter
  - Travel and lodging
  - Patches and awards

Annual budget approval is needed by the State Council at the AGM of the membership, to operate this organization. LSA shall send a copy of proposed budget to all LSA affiliates, 30 days prior to the Annual winter council meeting and summer AGM.

### **A. CHARITABLE TAX STATUS**

1. LSA has been granted Charitable Tax Exempt status, 501(c)(3), by the Internal Revenue Service. LSA must file an annual information return with the IRS. Form 990 shows the income and expenses of the previous year. The LSA fiscal year begins September 1. Each local association with 501(c)(3) status must also file a return. Failure to file a return can lead to re-classification as well as subject it to fines.
2. LSA and all associations with paid employees must file wage-reporting documents just as any business might. Failure to collect and pay social security and income tax withholding would subject the organization to penalties and interest. Failure to properly handle wage taxes can lead to personal liability for the organization’s director, officers, and administrators for payments due to IRS.
3. The LSA 501(c)(3) exemption is not an umbrella status for other soccer associations. Each must apply for its own exemption.

4. Contribution deductions are allowable to donors only to the extent that their contributions are gifts, with no consideration received. Dues, subscriptions, ticket purchases, and similar payments may not necessarily qualify as deductible contributions, depending on the circumstances.
5. In the event fund raising activities are conducted, such as sales of merchandise or admission tickets to benefit performances, the full purchase price of such item may not be represented as entitling the patron to a deduction for federal income tax purposes. In those cases in which the fund raising activity is designed to solicit payments which are in part a gift and in part the consideration for goods, services, or other benefits, it must be determined in advance of solicitation the amount to be attributed as the consideration and the amount to be attributed as a gift. These respective amounts should be clearly indicated in the publicity for such activity and upon any ticket, receipt, or other evidence issued in connection with payment. Moreover, the amount attributable to the consideration must reflect the fair market value of such goods, services, or other benefits and be reasonable in comparison with those for which there are established charges.

#### B. NON-PROFIT STATUS, POST OFFICE

LSA has a non-profit mailing permit issued by the U.S. Postmaster in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Approval of permits is at the discretion of the local postmaster. A permit is issued only for the location of that postmaster; therefore LSA can presently mail by bulk rate only from Baton Rouge.

LSA strongly advises all clubs to make sure that the above laws are adhered to and to make sure that members are aware of these laws. When dealing with the IRS, everything must be correct.

#### C. EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT POLICIES

Reimbursement of expenses incurred in the scope of LSA business can be made following the procedures below and with prior approval.

1. All eligible expenses for officers are accepted as legitimate; however, if charging the travel/expenses to a program not under your authority, approval must be received from the officer in charge of that program. Consult the Treasurer or the approved budget.
2. All eligible expenses of a committee person, State Select Team coaches, or persons other than officers must have advance approval from the LSA Officer in charge of the program being charged and reimbursement forms must be signed by that officer. Each LSA Officer is responsible for the expenses being charged to the programs they handle.
3. Director of Coaching and State Coaching Staff must have advance approval from the Vice-President - Youth or the LSA President. Expense reimbursement forms must be signed by the officer giving advance approval.
4. The LSA Office Administrator must have advance approval from the Treasurer or the LSA President. Expense reimbursement forms must be signed by the officer giving advance approval.
5. All expense reimbursement forms must be approved by the appropriate program person and then submitted to the LSA Office. Reimbursement will then be made within thirty (30) days. Expenses submitted to the LSA Office ninety (90) days after they are incurred will not be paid. **EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT FORMS ARE NOT TO BE MAILED DIRECTLY TO THE TREASURER.**
6. **BE CONSERVATIVE!** Do not send more people than necessary or authorize unnecessary items.

7. LSA does not pay for alcoholic beverages!
8. Be specific when coding expense account forms. If you are requesting reimbursement for more than one type of coding (i.e. boys State Select Team, girls State Select Team, youth tournament, etc.) it might be best to use a separate expense form for each program.

#### D. ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

1. TRAVEL: Price per mile to be set using IRS guidelines for non-profit organizations for travel over 35 miles one way to be adjusted annually beginning each LSA fiscal year. Group travel by persons living in the same area should be considered whenever possible. Air travel will be booked using the lowest air fares and from the major airport closest to your home. If it is necessary to fly from a different city due to the availability of flights, LSA will pay mileage to and from the airport. Parking will be paid only if necessary. Officers flying from the city of their residence will not be reimbursed for parking or mileage to and from the airport. AIR TRAVEL MUST BE BOOKED THIRTY (30) DAYS OR MORE IN ADVANCE AND NO ONE-WAY TICKETS TO DESTINATION OR ONE-WAY TICKET RETURNING FROM DESTINATION ARE PERMITTED. One-way tickets might be purchased if party has another way home at no expense to LSA. LSA will not reimburse for changes made after ticket is booked or purchased except in extreme emergencies.
2. LODGING: For actual expenses. Find lodging that is reasonable. Receipts are required. No expenses paid for Pay-TV channels. No expenses paid on items from a personal bar in the hotel room but this could be counted in meal allowance expense except for alcohol. Tips will be paid at reasonable costs, maximum of \$4.00 check-in and \$4.00 check-out.
3. MEALS: When overnight travel is required, reimbursement for meals will be limited to actual expenses up to \$25.00 per day maximum—receipts are not required. If the event attended has certain meals included such as luncheons, banquets, etc. attendance is expected at these events, thus cutting down on the cost of meals. NO MEALS WILL BE REIMBURSED FOR ONE-DAY TRAVEL. LSA DOES NOT PAY FOR THE MEALS OF GUESTS. Tips will be counted in the per day allowance.
4. REGISTRATION FEES: LSA will pay all required registration fees for officers attending approved functions. Late fees will not be paid unless the error in submitting such fees in a timely manner lies with LSA or if the late fees are approved by the Executive Committee and/or the Program Chairman. LSA does not pay registration fees for family or guests.
5. TELEPHONE CALLS: Telephone expenses of officers and/or authorized committee persons will be paid at actual costs. Avoid credit card calls, third party calls or mobile car telephones as they are at higher rates. LSA does not pay for air time on mobile telephones. Submit an expense reimbursement form with a copy of your telephone bill with the LSA calls highlighted and a copy of the long distance log sheet. When overnight travel is involved, \$5.00 per day for telephone calls is allowed.

Exceptions to any of the above can be made by the appropriate officer if necessary. Exceptions should be documented.

## 209 INSURANCE

LSA requires mandatory liability insurance for both Youth and Adult Divisions. The Adult Policy is through the USASA Division. It has one million-dollar coverage per occurrence and the fee is \$25.00 per adult team registered. The Youth Policy is through Bene-Marc Insurance, with one million dollar coverage per occurrence and the fee is included in the per player registration fee. This liability coverage on both protects the landowners of the fields we play on, the club and the State Association against legal actions.

LSA requires mandatory youth and adult player medical insurance coverage. This is a secondary policy which pays benefits not paid by the player's primary carrier. Primary carrier is the medical insurance coverage the player has through employment, group policy, HMO, PPO, individual policy, or parent's policy; Champus is considered a primary carrier. The youth policy is with Bene-Marc and the cost is negotiated each year based on loss ratio. The Adult policy is through the USASA.

(Refer to the Youth and Adult Insurance Sections of this manual for further details on cost, benefits, requirements and filing procedures. Pay particular attention to the paperwork needed to fulfill requirements to obtain this coverage.)

## **210 TEAM TRAVEL PROCEDURES**

All team travel to and from soccer games or events within the State of Louisiana will be under the control and approval of each club.

All team travel out of the State of Louisiana is under the control and approval of the LSA Executive Committee and coordinated through the LSA Office.

All team travel out of the United States is under the control and approval of the USSF through its respective divisions upon submission of said travel request and fee that is coordinated through the LSA Office.

LSA teams are not permitted to travel out-of-state or out-of-country, play non-affiliated teams or play in non-sanctioned events without permission from the LSA Executive Committee or its designee. Sanctions, penalties or fines against the team/club could result as well as the player's, club's or state's loss of medical and liability insurance coverage.

(Refer to the Youth or Adult Travel Sections of this manual.)

## **211 HOSTING INTERNATIONAL GAMES**

Any foreign youth or adult team wishing to enter Louisiana to play friendly games or in a tournament with LSA affiliated teams MUST CONTACT THE LSA OFFICE.

*See Policy 211-2 Hosting International Games*

## **212 MISCONDUCT, FIGHTS, OTHER MATCH DISTURBANCES**

As a result of the increasing amount of fights, threats and use of weapons by players and spectators, etc. at soccer matches, the State level policies, adopted in 1985, will be implemented.

With this in mind, the following policy was adopted:

Actions by persons affiliated directly or indirectly with this Association including but not limited to players, club officials, club officials, state officials, referees, coaches, fans of a particular club, managers, trainers, sponsors, administrators, etc. which cause disturbances at affiliated activities including but not limited to games, tournaments, camps, clinics, conventions, meetings, etc., shall be automatically suspended for a period of one (1) year, minimum. "Actions of person" is herein defined to be such things as, but not limited to, starting or participating in fights; threatening, assaulting (except for referee assaults), harassing, insulting, invading the field of play; carrying, brandishing, or using weapons of any sort; persistent use of foul and abusive language, and the like.

Actions by persons not directly or indirectly affiliated with this Association (fans not associated with a particular club, spectators, and members of the general public) which cause disturbances shall be reason for referees, club and/or state officials to investigate on the spot and identify and report to security or local

police departments the person or persons causing the disturbance. A written report within 48 hours of said disturbance shall be forwarded to the LSA State Office which shall contact the appropriate LSA Officer to initiate disciplinary or criminal proceedings against the person or persons in question, as necessary.

Referees and club officials are hereby instructed to:

1. Abandon matches at which disturbances of the type described above occur regardless of whether or not the perpetrators are affiliated with this Association;
2. Investigate and identify the person(s) involved as far as possible under the given circumstances;
3. Call in security or local police if necessary;
4. Send a written report to the LSA State Office within 48 hours.

The one (1) year minimum suspension cited above shall be from all soccer activities, shall not be reduced by any affiliated club rules governing similar actions, and shall be increased as necessary by the appropriate LSA Division if, upon review of the written report, the appropriate division deems it necessary to do so.

NOTE: It shall be the policy of this Association that any fan of a particular club who causes a disturbance such as those referenced above shall be given a term of suspension (one year, minimum) during which time a second disturbance caused by him/her shall be grounds for automatic (without further investigation) disbanding and dissolution of the particular club.

(Refer to Procedures to Conduct a Hearing or Appeal and Assaults sections of this manual.)

## **213 PROCEDURES TO CONDUCT A HEARING OR APPEAL**

### **A. PURPOSE**

1. To provide guidelines and recommendations for LSA and its member clubs, clubs, and district or regional jurisdictions who may convene Hearings/Disciplinary Action Boards or Protest/Appeals Committees to review club or LSA Constitutional By-laws or Rules/Regulations violations and further, to assure that such hearings are convened under fair and equitable circumstances for all parties involved.
2. Teams/Clubs/Clubs should establish written procedures for resolving internal disputes or violations of their individual club or club by-laws or rules and regulations to include established lines of protest/appeal for individuals who may wish to appeal a club ruling or imposition of a disciplinary action.
3. Individuals are normally called before Disciplinary Action Committees and Hearing Boards for specific rule(s) violations or for conduct detrimental to the aims and objectives of LSA or its affiliated members. They deserve a fair and impartial hearing.
4. The line of authority for LSA protests/appeals is provided for in the LSA Constitution and by-laws. All avenues of appeal must be exhausted at all levels below this body before LSA will consider hearing an appeal.

### **B. DISCIPLINARY ACTION COMMITTEES / HEARING / PROTEST / APPEAL COMMITTEES:**

1. Three (3) to five (5) members to include a chairman, none of whom have a direct tie to parties in dispute, or where a direct conflict of interest is readily apparent or could be reasonably claimed.
2. One vote per member with the Chairman voting only in a tie.

3. Members of the LSA Executive Committee shall serve as the LSA Appeals/Hearing Committee(s) (per the LSA constitution) depending on the level of the offense.
4. Members should be thoroughly knowledgeable of club/club and LSA rules and regulations, policies and procedures, findings of previously convened boards having heard similar cases, Laws of the Game, etc.
5. Chairperson should be an individual who can fully accept responsibility for carrying out ALL details of conducting a hearing/appeal with special emphasis on the pre-hearing and post-hearing details.
6. No member of the LSA Executive Committee shall serve on any Appeal of Hearing Board below the state level. Once a person serves as a member of a hearing/appeal board on any matter, that person shall not be eligible to serve on an appeal board considering the same matter.

## C. HEARING PROCEDURES

### 1. PRE-HEARING

- a. Hearing Board (Disciplinary Action Committee/Protest Committee) must be called by the convening authority it represents: i.e. Club, Club, District Commissioner, Regional Vice-President, etc. For LSA, it is the Board of Directors/Executive Committee (per the LSA Constitution/By-Laws). The Convening Authority must have received a protest or request for review of a disciplinary action in writing, stating the specific nature of the charges or the rationale for the protest or complaint.
- b. Chairperson of the Hearing Board to be convened must notify, in writing, all parties directly involved, advising the individual(s) of the nature of the charges filed, or protest/complaint submitted, the sponsor of the complaint (individual or association), along with the date/place/time for the scheduled hearing. (NOTE: Recommend such notice be by Registered Certified Mail/Return Receipt Requested to assure proof of notification).
- a. Unless circumstances require an immediate hearing (48-72 hours), such hearings take place within two weeks with advance notice given, and are scheduled at a readily accessible location, and at a time/date convenient to all interested parties.
- b. The Chairperson should advise that either party(s) to the hearing may bring with them witnesses who have direct knowledge of facts pertinent to the subject matter under review; however, parties called before hearing boards are not allowed to be represented by attorneys unless and until all avenues of administrative appeal are exhausted within the structure of organized soccer (from club through USSF).
- c. The Chairperson may request a more detailed report of incidents described in a normal Referee Report Form/Misconduct Report Form, unless the Referee/person reporting is personally appearing at the hearing.
- d. The Chairperson should advise all parties involved and/or witnesses that any documentation presented at the hearing cannot be marked as confidential. If anyone has a report of the incident or is giving testimony and they wish it to be confidential, it must be disregarded and cannot be used in any way.

### 2. HEARING

Hearings shall be tape recorded by the Hearing Board ONLY. If the decision of the hearing board is appealed, a transcribed copy of the taped hearing shall be made available to the Appeal Board. The Chairman of the Hearing Board shall verify the accuracy of the transcribed copy.

a. Format of Hearing

- 1) All concerned should understand that hearings of protest and appeals, disciplinary actions imposed, etc., are not legal proceedings and that LSA merely provides a procedure for resolving internal disputes or imposing discipline for violations of its Constitution, By-laws, Rules and Regulations.
- 2) The individual(s) filing the charge should present their issues first and following ample time for questions and answers for the hearing committee, should then be excused.
- 3) The individual(s) named in the charge, should then present their responses to these issues and, following ample time for questions and answers from the hearing committee, should then be excused.
- 4) The Hearing Board will limit the hearing to only those matters specifically identified in the charge.
- 5) The principle parties involved should be advised that the Hearing Board will review and evaluate all testimony and supporting documentation and will make their decision and render sentence; however, the principle parties and witnesses should be advised that they WILL NOT be advised of the decision on the date of the hearing—that notice will be in the form of a letter within fourteen (14) days of the hearing. If possible, telephone calls to the accused and to the individual filing the charge can be made by the Chairman to inform them of the decision made but this must be followed by written notice.

b. Principal Parties, Witnesses

- 1) The Hearing Board will not allow contesting parties and witnesses to testify together or to be in the hearing room together during the proceedings (to eliminate cross-discussion, charges and counter charges, etc.). If at all possible, it is advised that parties be separated in separate rooms while waiting to be heard.
- 2) Contesting parties and witnesses are not allowed to be represented by legal counsel.
- 3) If testimony is given by a minor, it is recommended that he/she be accompanied by a parent.
- 4) Following testimony and completion of questions and answers by the Hearing Board, the witness or party may be excused and not encouraged to remain at the hearing site.

c. Deliberation and Hearing Board Report

- 1) The Hearing Board will deliberate and arrive at a decision of guilt of innocence and render sentence if needed. The Hearing Board will compile the following report to be sent to the Convening Authority:
  - (a) Names of Hearing Board Members/Chairpersons.
  - (b) Date/Place/Time hearing was conducted.
  - (c) Names and addresses of principal parties and witnesses.
  - (d) Detailed nature of charges.
  - (e) Tape
  - (f) Decision reached and sentence given (majority decision), along with minority report, if applicable.
  - (g) Rationale for decision (specific rules violation, violation of constitution, by-laws, precedent from previous decisions made, etc.).
- 2) If a strong minority position exists, the hearing board should notify the convening authority.
- 3) Disciplinary action decided should be reasonable within the concept of the "punishment fits the crime". Excessive disciplinary actions can be expected to result in continuing appeals.

4) Hearing Board members should receive copies of above report to verify accuracy.

### 3. POST HEARING

- a. The Hearing Board Chairman will see that all parties (person filing charge and accused) and LSA are notified within fourteen (14) days of the outcome and any disciplinary decision taken. This notification shall be conveyed in writing and include a specific rule violation and a specific sentence rendered.
- b. Such notification shall also include the procedure and appropriate line of appeal within the LSA organizational structure and/or higher, if applicable, should either party(s) wish to appeal further.
- c. Notifications should be sent Registered Certified Mail/Return Receipt Requested.

## D. APPEAL PROCEDURES TO LSA

### 1. APPEAL PARTY OBLIGATIONS

- a. The appeal must be in writing and describe in detail the grounds for the appeal. The notice of appeal shall be completed and signed by the appealing party. It shall be sent by Registered Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested to the Convening Authority to hear the appeal. This must be done within seven (7) days of receipt of the adverse ruling of the hearing board. The postmark date must be within the time for filing an appeal. Only the Appeal Committee Chairman can extend the time needed to submit the appeal. The appeal and all appeal documentation shall include an original and four (4) copies including:
  - 1) A list of all documents placed in evidence at the original hearing/appeal level below the State level. The list will state which documents are in the hands of the appealing party and what documents are in the hands of the opposing party.
  - 2) Copies of all documents in the hands of the appealing party (evidence not listed in the notice of appeal may not be submitted without the advance permission of the Appeal Chairman).
  - 3) Arguments supporting the appealing party's position on each of the issues.
  - 4) A statement that a copy of the appeal documentation has been mailed or delivered to the opposing party.
- b. The appeal will be sent to the LSA Office with the applicable fee of \$200.00 in the form of a money order, certified check, or cashier's check made payable to LSA. If the appeal is upheld, the fee will be returned.
- c. A copy of the appeal with all documents shall be sent to the other party in the controversy by the appealing party.
- d. Parties filing an appeal shall have access to all pertinent information regarding their appeal. Affiliated soccer organizations shall not deny access to any information that could apply to the appeal.

### 2. HEARING BOARD OF THE APPELLANT:

- a. Within seven (7) days after receipt of the notice of appeal, the hearing board of the appellant shall send the LSA Appeal Committee and the appealing party copies of the documents stated in the notice of appeal to be in the opposing party's hand or an explanation of their absence.

- b. At the same time, arguments of the issues shall be sent to the LSA Appeal Committee and the appealing party.
  - c. If there is a transcript of the hearing, this shall also be sent to the LSA Appeal Committee.
3. LSA APPEAL BOARD AUTHORITY
- a. The Appeal Board will either meet to discuss the appeal or accomplish this by telephone. A full hearing with parties involved need not be held unless it is felt that it would benefit the appeal board members.
  - b. The LSA Appeals Committee shall have the right to decline a hearing if:
    - 1) The appeal does not pertain to the original protest or the decisions of the lower appeal/hearing authority;
    - 2) The appeal is filed by party other than the original party to the protest/appeal;
    - 3) The proper procedures have not been followed in appeal to LSA; or
    - 4) The information necessary to make a fair and just decision on the appeal has not been furnished.
  - c. Only the issues of the appeal can be addressed. No new evidence can be introduced that does not pertain to the appeal issues.
  - d. A decision must be reached within thirty (30) days of receipt of the notice of appeal. If a decision is not reached within thirty (30) days, the party filing the appeal may submit the appeal to the next higher level without determination and the appeal fee submitted will be applied at the next level.
  - e. LSA relinquishes its appeal authority on protests or appeals related to State Tournament Competitions involving individuals/teams that would advance in those competitions to the competition committee(s) of those competitions to hear the protest or appeal and render a decision. Their decision is final. It is the responsibility of these competition committee(s) to establish the line of authority for appeals and publish it in the rules of the competition.
  - f. In the case of decisions rendered on protests or appeals related to State Tournament Competitions where individuals/teams would not advance in those competitions, normal appeal procedures apply.
  - g. A written notice to the appealing party and the hearing board of the appellant will be sent by Registered Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested detailing the outcome of the appeal and the procedures for further appeal.

#### E. APPEAL TO USSF

Appellant has ten (10) days from date of receipt of the decision within which to file a "Notice of Appeal" with the United States Soccer Federation, Inc. National Appeals Committee, to the attention of the person and at the address provided.

The "Notice of Appeal" form will be mailed with the decision.

#### F. PENALTIES

- 1. Decisions of all levels of hearing/appeals shall be binding and in full force throughout all levels unless the decision is overturned by a higher authority. Failure to abide by decisions of the committee(s) shall be grounds for disciplinary action by LSA.
- 2. No local association, official, club, club, team, coach, referee, or player or their representative, may invoke the aid of the Courts of any State or of the United States without first exhausting all available remedies within the appropriate soccer organizations as set forth in the USSF Administrative Rule Book.

3. For violation of this rule, the offending party shall be subject to the sanctions of suspension and fines, and shall be liable to LSA or higher authorities for all expenses incurred by LSA and its officers in defending each Court action, including but not limited to the following:
  - a. Court Costs
  - b. Attorney Fees
  - c. Reasonable compensation for time spent by LSA officers and employees in responding to and defending against allegations in the action, including responses to discovery and court appearance.
  - d. Travel expenses
  - e. Expenses for holding special LSA meetings necessitated by court action.

## **214 ASSAULTS**

The USSF gives jurisdiction of hearing referee assaults to the responsible State Association which is directly affiliated with the USSF and in which association is vested the highest appellate jurisdiction in which the offense shall occur. LSA has formed the LSA Referee Assault Committee to hear such cases. This committee is comprised of the Vice-President - Adults and at least two committee persons appointed from the LSA State Council. A five (5) member committee shall be appointed by the LSA President, with the approval of the Executive Board, to serve for a term of one (1) year beginning each September 1<sup>st</sup>. The committee shall be composed of a chairman, (non-voting except to break a tie) plus two members from the Adult Division and two members from the Youth Division all of whom must be knowledgeable of the current FIFA Laws of the Game and LSA rules. One alternate from each Division to be selected to serve as substitutes so the committee can consistently seat 5 members. A member of the LSA State Referee Committee shall serve as a non-voting rules advisor at the hearings.

Assault Hearings are conducted in compliance with US Soccer Federation Policy 531-9 and 531-10, and Bylaw 701.

## **215 REVIEW REQUIREMENTS FOR SUSPENDED MEMBER**

Any LSA suspended member who requests a suspension review and reinstatement must comply with these requirements:

Length of Time Served and Bond

1. Five (5) years or less suspension – a minimum of one year must be served before the suspended member may ask for a suspension review and reinstatement. The suspended member must post a \$100.00 bond (certified or cashier's check only, made payable to LSA).
2. More than five (5) years suspension – a minimum of two years must be served before the suspended member may ask for a suspension review and reinstatement. The suspended member must post a \$200.00 bond (certified of cashier's check only, made payable to LSA).
3. A letter from a current or past club or State officer requesting a suspension review and reinstatement for the suspended member, listing club affiliation and title.
4. A letter from one other LSA member requesting a suspension review and reinstatement for the suspended member, listing club affiliation.
5. A letter from the suspended member requesting a suspension review and reinstatement. The suspended member should state which club he was affiliated with at the time of suspension, the date of the suspension and the sentence imposed, and which club or sponsoring officer and other LSA member are submitting letters requesting a suspension review and reinstatement for the

suspended member. The suspended member should PRINT CLEARLY his FULL NAME, address and telephone number.

NOTE: All letters should be submitted in English.

All requirements for a suspension review and reinstatement must be submitted to the Suspension Review Committee at the LSA State Office by June 1 of that seasonal year. The Suspension Review Committee will review suspensions prior to the AGM of each seasonal year.

Upon receipt of the requirements by a suspended member for a suspension review and reinstatement, notification will be sent to Suspension Review Committee members, the clubs involved, and the suspended member.