

EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA YOUTH SOCCER

Rules of the Arbitration Committee

Amended February 28, 2021

1.0 Arbitration Committee and Panels.

1.01 These rules apply to the Arbitration Committee established under the Constitution and By-laws of the organization known as Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer.

2.0 FIFA Laws of the Game Apply.

2.01 The “Laws of the Game” as issued by the International Football Association Board, and as modified for the specific age and competition, shall apply.

3.0 Autonomy and Equal Opportunity.

3.01 In accordance with all applicable Federal and State laws, the requirements of the United States Soccer Federation (USSF) and *Federation Internationale de Football Association* (FIFA), Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer shall be autonomous in its governance of the sport of youth soccer within the boundaries of Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer as established by USSF and shall not delegate its governance responsibilities.

3.02 The Arbitration Committee established hereunder has the authority to sustain, revise or reverse any penalty imposed upon any team, club, league, player, coach, trainer, official, referee within the territorial boundaries of Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer as established by the US Soccer, and to impose, on its own action, penalties upon any such individual or entity as it determines is warranted by the evidence presented in connection with any arbitration hearing described herein.

3.03 Nothing stated herein shall conflict with the minimum standards, rules or regulations established by FIFA, the US Soccer and/or US Youth Soccer. EPYS reserves the right to be more restrictive in its policies, procedures and penalties regarding incidents involving its Clubs, Teams, Coaches, Players, Parents, Referees and other participants. This may include fining Clubs, Teams or other participant(s)/entity(ies) involved in the alleged event.

3.04 Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer as an entity and the Arbitration Committee, as a standing committee of Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer, shall provide an equal opportunity to athletes, coaches, trainers, managers, referees, administrators and officials to participate in amateur youth soccer competitions and, if needed, this appeals process, without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, age, gender, sex or national origin.

3.05 Individuals serving on the Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer Arbitration Committee shall be selected without regard to that individual’s race, color, religion, gender, sex or national origin.

3.06 The President of the Board of Directors shall appoint no less than five individuals to serve on a yearly basis on the Arbitration Committee. The identity of the duly appointed Committee members shall be made public either by posting at the State Office, Official Website or other means. The President shall, if requested, appoint additional members to the Arbitration Committee if required to effectuate consistency with the provisions outlined herein.

3.07 Any Arbitration Panel created under these provisions shall consist of at least three (3) members.

3.08 The decision of the Arbitration Panel, where applicable, shall constitute the full and final decision on the issue before them at Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer. There shall be no further appeal to the Board of Directors or other Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer entity. An aggrieved Party can appeal any decision to the US Soccer.

4.00 Roberts Rules of Order.

4.01 Unless specifically stated otherwise all meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the latest authorized edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

4.02 At no time and for no purpose shall any Federal, State or local Rule of Civil Procedure or Rule of Evidence apply to hearings conducted hereunder.

5.00 Definitions.

5.01 Associate – an organization formed to advance a particular aspect of soccer, but not responsible for recruiting, training, fielding and/or funding of soccer players.

5.02 Athlete – means the individual youth soccer player.

5.03 Board of Directors – means the duly elected Board of Directors of Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer.

5.04 Club – means an organization of one or more soccer teams usually playing within a geographic area.

5.05 Federation – means the United States Soccer Federation, Inc. the national governing body for soccer.

5.06 FIFA – means the *Federation Internationale de Football Association*, the international governing body of soccer, of which the United States Soccer Federation is a national association member.

5.07 League – means an organization that conducts competitions among soccer teams.

5.08 Member – (Constitution, Article VI, sections 2-5) Membership in this organization shall be in one of four classes: Individual Non-voting Member, Full, Provisional or Associate

5.09 Penalty – means any suspension, expulsion, sanction, monetary fine or other disciplinary measures incorporated in the rules or regulations established by FIFA, the US Soccer Soccer, US Youth Soccer, Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer and/or decision made by Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer Administration or Arbitration Panel.

5.10 Referee – means any official acting in the capacity of a Referee, Assistant Referee, or Fourth Official for any competition conducted within Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer territory including, but not limited to, intramural, recreational, travel and/or indoor competitions, be they friendlies, league or tournament. It also includes any individual serving on the joint State Referee Committee" of Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer and Eastern Pennsylvania Soccer Association.

5.11 Team(s) – means a group of soccer players playing on the same side in a soccer match.

6.00 Arbitration Hearing Procedure.

6.01 It is anticipated and understood that any person or entity aggrieved, sanctioned and/or penalized by any Team, Club, League or Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer, shall have the right to file an appeal to the Arbitration Committee. This would include, but not be limited to, decisions of clubs regarding Player(s)' ability to change Leagues, Clubs, and/or Teams; decisions regarding Player(s)' eligibility for any League, Club, Team or Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer competition; decisions regarding referee abuse from any League, Club, Team or Player(s); decisions regarding discipline of Coaches, Managers, Trainers or Administrators. This also includes first time grievances between Clubs, Teams, Referees or other Members in violation of the Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer bylaws, including but not limited to Referee complaints and Solicitation of players. In these first Complaint cases, the aggrieving party shall file a Complaint with Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer accordingly to the procedures set forth in

6.02 An appeal from a decision of any team, club, league, Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer, state tournament, or subcommittee thereof, including but not limited to the Referee Committee shall be made in accordance herewith:

6.021 An appeal or complaint is commenced with the submission to the Chief Executive Officer. A Notice of Appeal must be received within ten (10) days from the date of the decision rendered to the party making the appeal. Copies of the Notice shall be sent to all "opposing" parties, including the other team, and the team, club, league, committee or body whose decision is being appealed.

6.022 The Notice of Appeal shall be accompanied by an appeal fee in an amount determined by the Board of Directors. The appeal fee shall be retained by Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer.

6.023 The Arbitration Committee shall within thirty (30) days of receipt of the Notice schedule a hearing on the appeal or complaint.

6.03 In all arbitration hearings conducted under these bylaws the parties shall be accorded the following:

6.031 Notice of the specific charges or alleged violations in writing and the possible consequences if the charges are found to be true.

6.032 Reasonable time between the receipt of the notice and the hearing.

6.033 The right to have the hearing conducted either in person at the state offices or by telephonic conference.

6.034 The right to have the complaint/appeal heard before a panel of disinterested and impartial members.

6.035 The right to be assisted in the presentation of one's complaint/appeal.

6.036 The right to call witnesses, present oral or written evidence and argument.

6.037 The right to confront witnesses, including the right to be provided with the identity of witnesses in advance of the hearing.

6.038 The right to have a stenographic record of the hearing at their cost, if desired.

6.039 A timely written decision, with reasons therefor, based solely on the evidence presented.

7.00 Opportunity to Participate.

7.01 As noted above, fair notice and an opportunity for a hearing shall be accorded to any Player, Coach, Trainer, Manager, Administrator, League, Club, Team or Referee before that individual may be declared ineligible to participate in an Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer sanctioned event or otherwise penalized hereunder.

8.00 Litigation.

8.01 No member, team, club, league, player, coach, trainer, administrator, official or referee may invoke the aid of the courts in the United States or any State without first exhausting all available remedies within the appropriate soccer organization, Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer and the USSF.

8.02 Violation of this provision shall result in the offending party being subject to suspension and fines and shall be liable to Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer for all expenses incurred by Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer and its officers in defending each court action, regardless of the outcome of same. Such expense shall include but are not limited to the following:

8.021 Court costs,

8.022 Attorney's fees,

8.023 Reasonable compensation for time spent by Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer officials and employees in responding to and defending against allegations in the action, including responses to discovery and court appearances,

8.024 Travel expenses.

9.00 Savings Clause.

9.01 Failure of literal or complete compliance with provisions of these rules and procedures by the Arbitration Committee formed hereunder, with respect to dates and times of notice, or the sending or receipt of the same, or errors in phraseology of notice which in the judgment of the Committee do not cause substantial injury to the rights of the appellant, shall not invalidate the actions or proceedings of the Committee so affected.

10.00 Penalties.

10.01 At a minimum the following penalties may apply to the following category of infractions if so found:

10.011 Use of Ineligible Player(s) shall result in a forfeiture of all games played with such players plus a minimum fine (payable by the club) of at least One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) per game for

the first offense and a minimum of Two Hundred Dollars (\$200.00) per game for any subsequent offenses during a given registration year.

10.012 Misconduct toward Game Officials. Recognizing that misconduct toward or against a game official may occur before, during and after the match, USSF has adopted minimum penalties for such misconduct, which are mandatory and incorporated herein by reference. Moreover, in addition to, or in lieu of, any penalty imposed on the individual(s) found to have committed such misconduct, the Panel may also, on its own initiative, impose penalties on the team or club with which that person is affiliated or of which he or she is a member, which penalties may include a monetary fine not to exceed Five Hundred Dollars (\$500) for the first offense and an additional Five Hundred Dollars (\$500) for each offense thereafter during a given registration year.

10.013 Conduct Detrimental to the Good and Welfare of Soccer may result in a suspension from participation in Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer sanctioned Leagues, tournaments, Clubs and/or Teams for a period of up to two (2) years.

10.014 Approaching of Player(s) by another Club, Team, Coach, Manager, Administrator or any other person for the purpose of inducing that Player(s) to leave his current club will result in a suspension from participation in Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer of the Club, Team, Coach, Manager, Administrator or other person for a minimum of six months on the first offense and a minimum one year on the second offense.

10.015 Failure to abide by Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer's Risk Management Policy or other Association administrative functions will result in monetary fines, suspensions or other penalties by the offending Club, Team, Official or other Member. Risk Management violations are further subject to federal SafeSport policies, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and US Soccer.

10.016 Moreover, in addition to, or in lieu of, any penalty imposed above, the Panel may also, on its own initiative, impose penalties on the team or club with which that person is affiliated or of which he or she is a member, which penalties may include a monetary fine not to exceed One Thousand Dollars (\$1000) for the first offense and an additional One Thousand Dollars (\$1000) for each offense thereafter during a given registration year.

10.017 All decisions made through the Arbitration Committee shall be posted on the Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer website.

11.00 Amendments.