

# **SOCAL Soccer League**

## **Code of Ethics and Guidelines**



A US Club Soccer Sanctioned League  
Season: 2021/2022

Entering any SOCAL competition is considered to be an automatic acceptance of SOCAL's rules, policies, and procedures including this Ethics Code and Guidelines.

In addition, all teams within a SOCAL Member Club will be held to the standards set forth in this Code of Ethics and Guidelines, regardless of which specific competition they play in (from time to time, when SOCAL rules are in direct conflict with the rules of either US Soccer or US Club Soccer, SOCAL may be restricted from implementing certain rules related to teams not participating in SOCAL competitions). SOCAL's purpose is to set the highest standards for soccer clubs to develop youth players to their fullest potential – physically, emotionally, and ethically. As such, participants must conduct themselves to the highest standard. At all times, adult participants are expected to be role models for the youth involved in this league - exhibiting good sporting behavior in both victory and defeat.

All participants in SOCAL events are members of US Club Soccer and therefore must adhere fully and faithfully, both to the letter and the spirit, to its stated bylaws, rules, and policies, as well as the SOCAL Handbook and the guidelines for new club admittance. In addition to those stated bylaws, rules and policies the following encompasses the SOCAL Ethics Policy:

### **Section 1 - Definitions**

As used herein, the following terms shall have the following definitions:

**Adult Member:** Any Coach, Director of Coaching, Trainer, Manager, Official or other individual 18 years of age or older affiliated with a Club and having access to a Player, the Player's parents or the Player's contact information that is not available publicly.

**Certified Referee Assignor:** Any individual certified by the United States Soccer Federation to serve as a referee assignor.

**Club:** Any club admitted into SOCAL and is a member of US Club Soccer.

**Coach:** Any coach, assistant coach, or trainer employed by or volunteering for a Club.

**Director of Coaching:** Any individual employed by or volunteering for a Club as a Director of Coaching, Executive Director, Technical Director, General Manager or as an assistant to any of the above-listed roles and all Adult Members filling similar roles regardless of title.

**Field:** Any field used by a club to conduct Tryouts, Training Sessions or Games (other than tournament games).

**Game:** Any SOCAL sanctioned game, including all-league, play dates, and State Cup games. For purposes of this Code of Ethics, tournament games sanctioned only by US Club Soccer, CYSA or USYS are not deemed Games.

**Manager:** Any individual employed or volunteering to serve as a team manager, team parent or similar role regardless of title.

**Official:** Any individual serving as a Coach, Director of Coaching, Referee, board member, director or similar role for a Club.

**Player:** Any player holding a valid player pass from US Club Soccer and currently playing for an SOCAL or US Club Soccer Club.

**Referee:** Any referee licensed for the then-current year by the United States Soccer Federation.

**Trainer:** Any adult employed by or volunteering for a Club as a trainer regardless of title. An individual will also be deemed a Trainer if they are privately training Players who play for another Club.

**Training Session:** Any Club sanctioned, or private, training session or practice. Training Sessions are limited to Players carded to play for the Club holding the Training Session.

**Tryouts:** Any Club advertised try-out session, including regularly scheduled tryouts and supplemental tryouts. Tryouts are open to all Players and all youth who are not Players but are interested in becoming Players.

## **Section 2 - Basic Rules**

1. No Adult Member will have in his/her possession or consume alcoholic beverages or legal or illegal drugs while attending an event sanctioned or sponsored by SOCAL
2. All adults, including Adult Members, attending an event sponsored or sanctioned by SOCAL will exhibit and demonstrate good sportsmanship at all times, including, refraining from coaching from the sidelines, harassing Referees, Coaches or Players or behaving in a manner disruptive to the enjoyment of any other spectator.
3. Adult Members shall not attempt to entice a team or player to leave a club to come to another club.
4. No dogs are allowed on the sidelines at any SOCAL game.
5. Smoking is not allowed on the sidelines of any SOCAL game.

6. No noise makers are allowed on the sidelines or any SOCAL game.

7. No weapons of any kind are allowed at any SOCAL game.

### **Section 3 – Clubs**

1. In accordance with US Club Soccer policy, Clubs will release Players who request their release from the Club. However, the SOCL Transfer Policy is in place regarding transfers (see SOCAL Handbook for details of this policy)

2. Clubs are responsible for the conduct of their parents and any spectators on the sidelines of any SOCAL games. Clubs will be held accountable for their parents and spectators at all SOCAL events.

### **Section 4 - Code of Ethics**

Purpose: This code of ethics has been developed to clarify and distinguish approved and accepted professional, ethical and moral behavior from that which is detrimental to the development of soccer within SOCAL and US Club Soccer. This Code of Ethics is applicable to all Adult Members and Players though in many cases the Coach will be primarily responsible for ensuring compliance. Punishments for violations of this code of ethics may be imposed upon a Club if committed by an Adult Member or another individual present at a Game or Training Session.

#### **Responsibilities to Players**

1. The Adult Member shall never place the value of winning over the safety and welfare of players.

2. Adult Members shall instruct players to play within the laws of the game and within the spirit of the game at all times.

3. Adult Members shall not seek unfair advantage by teaching or encouraging deliberate unsportsmanlike behavior to players.

4. Adult Members should not tolerate inappropriate or unsportsmanlike behavior at Games or Training Sessions from players or adults regardless of the situation.

5. The demands Adult Members place on Players' time should never be so extensive as to interfere with academic goals or progress.

6. Adult Members must never encourage Players or other adults to violate rules and policies.

7. Adult Members should direct Players to seek proper medical attention for injuries and to follow the physician's instructions regarding treatment and recovery.

8. Adult Members should take an active role in educating their Players about sports nutrition, fitness and about prevention of tobacco use.

9. Adult Members should educate themselves on a constant basis in order to provide their Players with the highest-level instruction possible.

10. Adult Members should always place the Player's development first and place Team success second.

### **Responsibility to SOCAL and Member Associations**

1. All Adult Members will adhere, at all times, to all SOCAL, United States Soccer Federation and US Club Soccer rules and policies.

2. Any issues between Clubs should be addressed between the Clubs first. If the issue cannot be resolved between the Clubs, the involved Clubs should refer the issue to League Office. Responsibilities to the Laws of the Game 1. Adult Members should be thoroughly acquainted with and demonstrate a working knowledge of the Laws of the Game. 2. Adult Members are responsible to assure their Players understand the intent as well as the application of the Laws of the Game.

3. Adult Members must adhere to the letter and spirit of the Laws of the Game.

4. Adult Members are responsible for their players' actions on, the field before and after the game and must not permit them to perform with the intent of causing injury to opposing players.

5. Adult Members must constantly strive to teach good sporting behavior.

### **Responsibility to Referees**

1. Referees must have the support of Adult Members, Players, and spectators. Adult Members must always refrain from criticizing Referees in the presence of Players or spectators.

2. Professional respect, before, during and after the Game, should be mutual. There should be no demeaning or threatening dialogue or gestures between Referee, Adult Members or Players.

3. Adult Members must not incite Players or spectators or attempt to disrupt the flow of any Game.

4. Comments regarding a Referee should be made in writing to the appropriate organization assigning the Referee. For purposes of making such comments, the comments should be directed in writing to the Regional Referee Distributor and the Certified Referee Assignor submitted only by the DOC or President of the Club.

5. Referee game decisions (including yellow and red cards) may not be appealed or protested.

### **Responsibility of Public Relations**

1. Adult Members have the responsibility to assist their players in conducting themselves properly when in public and representing their team, their Club, US Club Soccer and/ or SOCAL.

### **Other Responsibilities**

1. An Adult Member's behavior must be such as to bring credit to himself, or herself his or her Club and the sport of soccer.

2. While the concept of rivalry is wholly embraced, it cannot take precedence over exemplary professional conduct.

3. The attitude and conduct of the Adult Member towards Officials, Players, spectators, and other Adult Members should be controlled and undemonstrative.

4. It is unacceptable for an Adult Member to have any verbal altercation with an opposing Adult Member or Player before, during or after the Game.

5. Adult Members must use their influence on his/her teams' spectators to prevent intimidating and/or unacceptable behavior towards Officials including Referees, Player(s) and opposing team spectators.

### **Section 5 - Referee Code of Ethics**

1. Referees will maintain the utmost respect for the game of soccer, conduct themselves honorably, and maintain the dignity of their position at all times.

2. Referees will always honor an assignment or any other contractual obligation.

3. Referees should educate themselves on a constant basis so as to know the Laws of the Game, their proper interpretation, and their application.

4. Referees will be loyal to their fellow Referees and never knowingly promote criticism of them.

5. Referees will maintain good physical condition so they are capable of discharging their responsibilities on the field.

6. Referees will control the Players and Coaches effectively by being courteous and considerate without sacrificing fairness.

7. Referees will not make statements about any games except to clarify an interpretation of the Laws of the Game.
8. Referees will communicate with players, coaches, and spectators in a clear and professional manner.
9. Referees will arrive timely for all Games.
10. Referees will have appropriate attire, including badges at all Games.
11. Referees are not required to provide their name, badge number or other personal information to any Adult Member or Official other than as required on SOCAL game cards.

### **Section 6 - Procedure for Filing and Appealing a PAD Report**

Before an issue or complaint is forwarded to the SOCAL Discipline Committee, every attempt should be made to resolve the issue between the involved Clubs. If the issue cannot be resolved by the involved Clubs, the issue should be forwarded to the League Office. Only the Director of Coaching or President of the Board of Directors of the protesting Club may submit an Incident Report to the League Office. Reports forwarded by individuals other than the reporting Club's Director of Coaching or the President of the reporting Club's Board of Directors will be dismissed by the Discipline Committee.

All issues forwarded to the League Office will be dealt with first by the Discipline Committee, and if necessary, on appeal, by the SOCAL Board of Directors ("BOD"). SOCAL Members alleged to be in violation of any provision herein, or any other stated United States Soccer Federation or US Club Soccer Codes of Ethics or other guidelines will be required to stand before the Discipline Committee. To hear an issue, the Discipline Committee will be made up of at least three who will act as the SOCAL Ethics Committee. Allegations of ethics violations will be made in accordance with United States Soccer Federation and US Club Soccer.

1. Reports alleging violations of any SOCAL Rules, Policies, Bylaws or Codes may be made only by the Director of Coaching or Club President of the Club making the allegation.
2. Only reports referring to specific violations of the SOCAL Code of Ethics & Guidelines will be heard by the Discipline Committee. Event-specific protests such as scheduling or communication issues should be forwarded to the appropriate Event Coordinator. Club issues not covered in this Code of Ethics should be forwarded to the League Office.
3. All reports must be made through email to [michelle@scdslsoccer.com](mailto:michelle@scdslsoccer.com)

4. Upon issuing a report, the Discipline Committee are notified. The Club that is the subject of the report will be notified within 48 hours of the making of the protest. Contact information provided on the SOCAL Website will be used.
5. The Club making the report should electronically forward to the League Office all evidence, including, but not limited to, contact information, emails, statements and other written evidence they wish to have considered.
6. The Club and individual against whom a report has been filed will then have 72 hours to respond in writing to the allegations.
7. The reporting Club will then have 48 hours to respond in writing to the response from the accused Club and individual.
8. The failure of any Club or individual to respond at any point in this process will result in the Committee ruling on the information provided to it.
9. The Committee will then make a decision regarding the report, pending any additional investigation and inquiry, the PAD Committee determines necessary or desirable.
10. The party against whom the PAD Committee ruled will have the ability, for 5 days after the PAD Committee publishes its ruling to appeal the ruling.
11. All appeals must be made in writing to the michelle@scdsoccer.com. To be valid, an appeal must be accompanied by an appeal fee of \$250. The club making the appeal must include the specific grounds for making the appeal and must specifically refer to the SOCAL rule, policy or procedure that was inappropriately applied by the Committee in making its decision. The fee for the appeal must be received by SOCAL within 3 calendar days of being filed and should be sent to SOCAL at: SCDSL 23071 E. LaPalma Ave., Yorba Linda, CA 92887
12. All appeals of Committee decisions will be heard by the SOCAL's Board of Directors (the "Appeal Committee").
13. The Appeal Committee will review the decision of the Discipline Committee.
14. The Appeal Committee will determine if the Discipline Committee misapplied the Rules, Codes, or other documents governing SOCAL and whether the decision of the Committee is in accordance with SOCAL's policies, rules, guidelines and the good of the game.
15. The Appeal Committee can decide to uphold the decision of the Committee, overturn the decision of the Committee or return the protest to the Committee for a rehearing based upon the submission of new evidence that was not available to the Committee when the Committee made its decision. A

failure by a party to timely submit information to the Committee shall not be a reason to order a rehearing.

16. Any appeal from the decision of the Appeal Committee will be made pursuant to SOCAL's rules and regulations of US Club Soccer and the United States Soccer Federation.

### **Section 7 - Penalties for Violations**

Penalties for violations of the Rules, Regulations, Policies and other documents governing SOCAL will include, but not be limited to the following:

1. Probation for the violating Club, Player and/or Adult Member.
2. Suspension of the violating Club, Player, and/or Adult Member.
3. Expulsion of the violating Club, Player and/or Adult Member.
4. Required education of the violating Club, Player or Adult Member.
5. Other penalties as are deemed appropriate by the Discipline Committee.
6. Repeated violations by an Adult Member, Club or Player may result in stricter penalties up to and including expulsion from SOCAL.
7. Violating decisions of the Discipline Committee will result in a stricter penalty.