South Texas Champions League

Code of Ethics and Guidelines

A US Club Soccer Sanctioned League

Adopted 4/6/2019
Revised
1/9/2025

Accepting membership into STXCL is an automatic acceptance of STXCL's rules, policies and procedures including this Code of Ethics and Guidelines.

In addition, all teams within a South Texas Champions League ("STXCL") 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. STXCL'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 STXCL are members of US Club Soccer and therefore must adhere faithfully, both to the letter and the spirit, to its stated bylaws, rules, and policies, as well as the STXCL guidelines for new club admittance. In addition to those stated bylaws, rules, and policies the following encompasses the STXCL 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.

Club: Any Club or academy admitted to STXCL and that 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 STXCL sanctioned game, including all league, play date 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 a STXCL or a US Club Soccer Club team.

Recruiting: Clubs are not allowed to have contact with a player who is registered with another STXCL Club during the seasonal year prior to the STXCL Tryout Window, without first receiving written permission from the Director of Coaching of the Player's then current 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, parent or spectator will have in his/ her possession or consume alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs while attending an event sanctioned or sponsored by STXCL.

2. All adults, including Adult Members, parents, and spectators, attending an event sponsored or sanctioned by STXCL will always exhibit and demonstrate good sportsmanship, 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.

Section 3 – Clubs

1. No Club will hire an Adult Member from another Club and within one (1) year allow this individual to work with any players he or she coached in his/her previous Club in the previous year without the written permission of their former Club. In the event the Adult Member's former club will not give their permission the DAP Committee will review and present their findings and recommendations to the STXCL Board of Directors for a final decision. A Club's lack of knowledge regarding an Adult Member's previous association with another Club is not an excuse from sanction for violating this provision.

Notwithstanding the forgoing, serving as a Director of Coaching, Age Group Coordinator or other similar role shall not constitute coaching for the purpose of this rule.

2. A coach who leaves one STXCL Club and moves to another Club within STXCL agrees to not solicit / recruit players prior to or following their departure from their previous Club for a period of one (1) year. Violations of this prohibition will result in disciplinary action against the coach including, but not limited to, suspension from participation in STXCL sanctioned activities for up to one (1) year.

3. In accordance with US Club Soccer policy, Clubs will release Players who request their release from the Club.

4. Clubs will not accept any Player from any other Club if that player has outstanding fees with another Club. Unpaid fees shall include fees for services rendered and shall not include, by way of illustration, fees for services not rendered, reimbursement for scholarships given, or penalties.

5. Clubs are responsible for the conduct of their parents and any spectators on the sidelines of any STXCL games.

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 STXCL 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 other 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 always instruct players to play within the laws of the game and within the spirit of the game.

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 STXCL recruitment, eligibility or other 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 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 STXCL and Member Associations

1. All Adult Members will always adhere to all STXCL, United States Soccer Federation and US Club Soccer rules and policies. Adult Members must follow all rules and policies regarding eligibility, team formation and Recruiting as those rules are mandatory and should never be violated. It is the responsibility of each Adult Member to know and understand these rules.

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 the applicable League Commissioner, Event Coordinator, or the DAP Committee.

3. Responsibilities to the Laws of the Game:
    a. Adult Members should be thoroughly acquainted with and demonstrate a working knowledge of the Laws of the Game.

    b. Adult Members are responsible for assuring their Players understand the intent as well as the application of the Laws of the Game.

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

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

6. 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. Referee game decisions (including yellow and red cards) may not be appealed to either the DAP Committee or the Board of Directors unless it relates to a misapplication of a specific Laws of The Game.

Responsibilities Regarding Scouting and Recruiting

1. All STXCL rules pertaining to Recruiting shall be strictly observed by all Adult Members as well as all official and unofficial team representatives.

2. It is inappropriate to Recruit Player(s) unless the Director of Coaching of the Player's current Club is notified by phone and provides written permission in advance of the initial approach to the Player. If a Player or parent of a Player initiates contact with any Adult Member of another club expressing intent to move to that Adult Member's club, it is the responsibility of that Adult Member or the Adult Member's Director of Coaching to inform the Director of Coaching of the Player's current club.

3. Coaches are not allowed to approach players of another STXCL Club to guest play in tournaments. Directors should contact other clubs to see if the Director is willing to help if they need guest players.

4. It is unethical for a Player to be recruited from any outside program, either by a coach working for such program or any other Adult Member, Player, parent, or Official present at said event.

5. When discussing the advantages of his/her Club with a Player or a Player's parent, the Adult Member has an obligation to be forthright and refrain from making derogatory remarks regarding other Adult Members, Teams, and Clubs.

6. It is unethical for any Adult Member to make a statement to a prospective Player which cannot be fulfilled; illegal to promise any kind of compensation or inducement for play; and immoral to deliver the same.

7. It is unethical for Adult Members to attend Tryouts for other Clubs for the purpose of promotion or recruitment, unless invited by the Club conducting the Tryout in writing, or to have Players attend Tryouts at other Clubs to Recruit Players from the Club conducting the Tryout.

8. It is unethical for a Team or groups of Players to be recruited from one Club to another Club by an Adult Member working in the Team's present Club, an Adult Member from another Club, or any Adult Member or representative from inside or outside the Club.

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, ECNL RL, and/ or the STXCL.

Other Responsibilities

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

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

3. 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.

4. 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 always maintain the dignity of their position.

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

3. Referees should educate themselves on a constant basis 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 control the Players and Coaches effectively by being courteous and considerate without sacrificing fairness.

6. Referees will not make statements about any games except to clarify an interpretation of the Laws of the Game.

7. Referees will communicate with players, coaches, and spectators in a clear and professional manner.

8. Referees will arrive on time for all Games.

9. Referees will have appropriate attire, including badges at all Games.

10. 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 STXCL game cards.

Section 6 - Procedure for Filing a Code of Ethics Violation

Before an Incident Report is submitted, every attempt should be made to resolve the issue between the involved Clubs. If the issue cannot be resolved by the involved Clubs, the Incident Report should be completed.

Reports alleging violations of any STXCL Rules, Policies, Bylaws or Codes may be submitted only by the Director of Coaching or President of the Board of Directors of the protesting Club.

Incident Reports submitted 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.

STXCL 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 guideline will be required to stand before the DAP Committee.

To hear an issue, the DAP Committee will be made up of at least three who will function as the STXCL Ethics Committee.

Allegations of ethics violations will be made in accordance with United States Soccer Federation, US Club Soccer and STXCL bylaws and operating procedures, with a copy sent to the Chairperson of the DAP Committee.

1. Only reports referring to specific violations of the STXCL Code of Ethics will be heard by the DAP Committee.

2. The Club making the report should fill out the Incident Report and include all evidence but not limited to, contact information, emails, statements, and other written evidence they have to the Director within 72 hours after the game incident, and if applicable the fee should be mailed.

3. The Club and individual against whom a report has been filed will be informed and then have 72 hours to respond in writing to the allegations.

4. The reporting Club will then have 48 hours to respond in writing to the response from the accused Club and individual.

5. The failure of any Club or individual to respond at any point in this process will result in the DAP Committee ruling on the information provided to it.

6. The DAP Committee will then make a decision regarding the report, pending any additional investigation and inquiry the DAP Committee determines necessary or desirable.

7. The party against whom the DAP Committee ruled will have 5 days after the DAP Committee publishes its ruling to appeal the ruling.

Section 7 - Procedure for Filing a Code of Ethics Appeal

All appeals must be made in writing to the DAP Committee. To be valid, an appeal must be accompanied by an appeal fee of **$250**. The fee for the appeal must be received by STXCL within three calendar days of the appeal being filed and should be mailed to STXCL at c/o Pat O'Toole, 18723 Spellman Ridge, Tomball, TX 77377.

The club making the appeal must include the specific grounds for making the appeal and must specifically refer to the STXCL bylaw, rule, policy, or procedure that was inappropriately applied by the DAP Committee in making its decision.

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

All appeals of DAP Committee decisions will be heard by a committee of the STXCL's Board of Directors (the "Appeal Committee").

The Board has limited authority to review any decision of the DAP Committee. The Board may not veto or amend any decision of the DAP Committee.

The Board may review a decision of the DAP Committee and, if, during the review the Board finds that due process did not exist, or, the decision or penalty assessed by the DAP Committee was unfair, unjust, manifestly inconsistent or unacceptable for the severity of the infraction, the Board shall uphold the appeal and ask that a new panel of the DAP committee conduct a new hearing of the matter.

If the Board finds that due process did exist and that the decision or penalty of the DAP is fair, just, consistent, and acceptable, then the Board shall deny the appeal and enforce the decision as rendered by the DAP Committee.

In the event the Board determines that an appeal should be upheld at any time, the incident shall be referred for rehearing to a newly assembled Committee, to be chaired by a member of the Board. Such a rehearing shall occur within two weeks (14 days) of the Board's decision.

A delay of up to 30 days may be granted at the request of the individual or team involved, to ensure the opportunity for full participation.

During rehearing, testimony will be accepted from DAP Committee members of the first committee concerning the basis and reasoning of the original decision, monetary fines assessed in accordance with the DAP decision may be held in abeyance while a rehearing is pending.

Players, Coaches, or other members ordered suspended from participation will remain ineligible until a determination is reached on rehearing.

The decision of the Board may be appealed pursuant to STXCL's Bylaws and the rules and regulations of the United States Soccer Federation.

Section 8 - Penalties for Violations

Penalties for violations of the Rules, Regulations, Bylaws, and other documents governing STXCL 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. And other disciplinary actions and penalties as deemed appropriate by the DAP Committee.
6. Repeated violations by an Adult Member, Club or Player may result in stricter disciplinary actions and penalties up to and including expulsion from STXCL.
7. Violating decisions of the DAP Committee will result in a stricter penalty.