Guidelines for Conflict Resolution

Any Club member or Official (e.g. Officers, coaches, referees) who has a concern or disagreement with the actions of any other Club member or Official is advised to wait for a period of 24 hours before raising their issues. If after the ‘cooling off’ period the issue is still worthy of comment please follow the following guidelines pertaining to your situation. If you have an issue with another member of our Club, please try to approach them directly to discuss it and come to a resolution. Please do not involve other people (whether through gossip or sending Club-wide emails) in what could potentially be a very personal issue.

* + Assume Good Intentions: We all care about the kids playing in our Club and share in the goal of providing these kids with a competitive youth soccer environment, whereby each of them can enjoy a fun, positive experience, while learning and playing soccer on a competitive team.
  + Build Positive Relationships: Showing appreciation when things are going well will go a long way toward creating good will.
  + Be Respectful When Communicating: Being respectful of time, feelings, and privacy in all of our interactions can lead to better communication.
  + Solve Problems Effectively: Productive resolution of problems is possible when we focus on the player; share ideas and feelings only with those directly involved; and remain focused, respectful, and honest.
  + Be a Role Model: Parents and soccer staff who work together successfully can act as role models for our children and other players.

The Club reserves the right to withhold any Club Members status of “good standing” with the Club for an indefinite period. Members not in “Good Standing” will not be able to attend any official Club meetings or Team meetings. They will lose their right to vote in any Club elections and will be prevented from holding office within the Club.

# If You Are a Parent Who Has a Conflict with a Coach:

1. **Contact your coach:** Parents are advised to speak directly to the coach. Ask questions in an appropriate tone and at an appropriate time. Please be sensitive to the fact that before and after practices and games is not the best time to have a conversation. Not only could your conversation be overheard, but also often the players are standing around either waiting to play or waiting for a ride. Email can be an effective tool to use when either alerting someone to a concern or trying to set up a time to meet. However, you should avoid using email if the situation is very complex. Just as in face-to-face communication, in email you should focus on the problem you are trying solve and not on assigning blame or being negative. The following are some reminders of strategies to use for respectful and productive discussions:
   1. Allow time for dialog and response. Some problems can’t be addressed immediately. Schedule a time that is mutually convenient.
   2. Discuss your child – not others. Parents should frame their concerns and questions in terms of the effect on their child only. For example, saying, “I am really concerned about my son. He doesn’t feel that he is getting much playing time. He feels that he works really hard in practice, but he doesn’t get to show what he’s learned in games” is a much more appropriate approach than, “Marcus and Andy show up to practice late every week, why are they getting more playing time than my son?”
   3. Use “I” messages that frame your concerns from your perspective. For example, you could say, “I am concerned that Amy is not enjoying practice” rather than “Why are you yelling at Amy so much during practice?”
   4. Follow up with the coach or parent. If the person handles the problem well, take the time to thank him/her. If the problem is unresolved or resurfaces, communicate clearly and promptly to the appropriate people as described below.
2. **Contact the Club Directors of Coaching:** The primary responsibility of our DOCs is to oversee the coaching and player development. In order to ensure their ability to deliver those objectives, parents are encouraged to use the above two approaches to resolve any conflicts with coaches first. Parents are also encouraged to talk to board members also if conflicts are not resolved using the above two approaches. In cases when the conflict is related to coaching performance, as determined by the team manager or board member, such as a coach missing practices or games, or a player leaving the team rather than continuing with the coach, then the DOCs need to know and the parents are encouraged to contact the DOCs, with the support of the team manager.

# If You Have a Conflict with a Referee:

After a suitable cooling off period parents or other personnel with concerns about referees should contact the Referee Coordinator

# If You Are a Coach Who Has a Conflict with a Parent:

**Contact the Directors of Coaching**: The DOCs will investigate the complaint and decide whether the issue can be mediated at this level or if it needs to be reported to the Board of Directors.

# If You Have a Conflict with the Directors of Coaching:

If you are unable to work out your conflict directly with our DOCs, please contact the Club President. He will work with both parties to mediate the situation and decide whether the issue needs to be brought to the Board’s attention.

# If You Have a Conflict with a Board Member:

If you are unable to work out your conflict directly with the Board Member in question, please contact anyone on the Board of Directors (or the Directors of Coaching) with whom you are most comfortable. That person will work with both parties to mediate the situation and decide whether the issue needs to be brought to the Board’s attention.

**Conflict Mediation by the Executive Board of Directors:**

In the event that conflict mediation is required from the Executive Board of Directors, all decisions made by the Executive Board are final, and may not be appealed.