

San Francisco Vikings Soccer League
Fair Play Committee Guidelines
August 30, 2009

- I. Introduction.** The San Francisco Vikings Soccer League (the “League”) has strict rules about coach, manager, parent, spectator, team and player (“Participant”) conduct (see http://www.sfvikings.com/about/sfvsl_rules.htm – “Rules”). The Rules are the League’s rules and nothing in this document is meant to contradict or modify the Rules. This document is meant to outline the procedures and sanctions that the Fair Play Committee (“FPC”), the League’s discipline committee, may utilize to address Rules violations by Participants in a wide variety of situations.
- II. Weekly FPC procedure.** During the fall and spring seasons, the FPC generally meets telephonically every week to discuss potential Rules violations. The FPC’s first objective is to review all referee and coach game reports for the previous week. Many of these reports indicate or allege potential inappropriate behavior on the part of a Participant. Each of the allegations is considered a case (“Case”). The FPC’s second objective is, whenever possible, to process all Cases within the same week. If the FPC determines, in its sole discretion, that a violation of League Rules has or is likely to have occurred, the FPC may issue one of the sanctions described in (III), below, and communicate with the Participant(s) involved as well as with the aggrieved party. Prior to resolving any given Case, the FPC may elect to discuss that Case in greater detail with one or more of the individuals involved.
- III. FPC sanctions.** The FPC will generally impose one of three types of sanctions related to a violation or potential violation of League Rules:
- a. **Warnings.** Warnings are typically given in the case of a first time, less severe report of a violation of League Rules or in the case where the FPC has unresolved questions about the facts of the situation. The warning can be verbal or written (better written) and should generally describe the Participant’s actual or potential violation and the alternative, required behavior. Warnings will be taken into consideration if the FPC has to review additional Cases involving the Participant during the current or following seasonal year.
 - b. **Voluntary sanctions.** Voluntary sanctions are typically agreements between the FPC and a Participant that the Participant will not participate in one or more future League games or will perform some service for the League, e.g. referee a number of future League games. Voluntary sanctions are typically agreed to in the case of a second report of an alleged violation of League Rules of a less severe nature or in the case of a first report of a more significant alleged violation of League Rules. The voluntary sanction can be verbal or written (better written) and should

generally describe the Participant's violation, the alternative, required behavior and the agreed to sanction. A voluntary sanction will be considered in any review by the FPC of additional Cases involving the Participant during the current or following seasonal year.

- c. **Involuntary sanctions.** Involuntary sanctions are formal sanctions issued by the FPC according to the Rules and at the discretion of the FPC, upon a determination that a serious violation of League Rules has occurred. An involuntary sanction will be written and becomes part of the Participant's permanent record with the League. Information regarding an involuntary sanction is also shared with CYSA District I staff and CYSA affiliated leagues within District I.

- IV. No obligation.** To be clear, however, it is the FPC's responsibility to enforce the League Rules, and the sanctions applied in a given Case are at the discretion of the FPC. If a Case involves a clear violation of the Rules and/or is severe in nature, the FPC is under no obligation to issue a warning or to discuss a voluntary sanction with the Participant. The FPC can and will issue involuntary sanctions related to a first or second Case involving a Participant.

Also, the FPC is under no obligation to process any Case within a week or any defined time period.

- V. Referee criticism.** One of the most frequent allegations for the FPC to evaluate is referee criticism by Participants. The League Rules contain a flat prohibition against criticism of referees by coaches, parents or any other Participant. The FPC takes violations of this prohibition very seriously, and evaluates allegations of Rules violations involving referee criticism from the point of view of the conduct experienced by the referee and not the intent of the Participant. This is especially true when youth referees are involved. Youth referees and adult Participants may have different interpretations of what is appropriate interaction between an adult and a youth referee. An adult Participant may consider an interaction as constructive and the youth referee may consider it criticism. Given that the League Rules state a zero tolerance approach to referee criticism, the FPC's policy is to view the interactions from the perspective of the youth referee. It is the responsibility of every Participant to read, understand and follow the clear guidance of the League Rules involving referee criticism. The proper place for feedback on the referee's performance is the online coach game report, which League officials read and use for referee training purposes.