

## Summary R&D Decisions for 2005

### 1. U19/1 Terminated Match

The match was terminated by the referee in approximately the 67<sup>th</sup> minute with a score of Team A 2 – Team B 0. Statements were received from all parties. A hearing was held on 13 October 2005.

The match was officiated by a full crew of assigned referees. In the 67<sup>th</sup> minute, a play occurred which caused Coach B to become highly agitated, along with many players on the Team B. The referee reports that he was “surrounded” by Team B players, who inhibited his ability to move about the pitch. Coach B was asked to get control of his players, but he refused to do so. The referee then indicated that unless his directive was followed, he would terminate the match. Coach B then reiterated his refusal, and indicated his contempt for the referee by asking the referee to “please terminate the match.” As the referee was walking from the pitch, an unknown individual threw a partially filled bottle in his direction.

The committee is dismayed by the lack of leadership and responsibility demonstrated by Coach B. At the hearing, the coach admitted to his actions and expressed regret. It was also learned at the hearing that the team manager had held a team meeting as well as a meeting among team leadership regarding the standards of behavior for the coach.

Coach B and Team B are warned any further incidents of this type will be met with increasingly harsh sanction, and may result in referral to the VYSA State Adjudication Committee.

#### Decisions of the R&D Committee:

1. The match is declared a forfeit in favor of Team A: Team A 3 – Team B 0.
2. Coach B is suspended for 1 match. This suspension must be served in the next match actually played, in accordance with all provisions of NCSL Rules and Procedures, Section V.
3. Team B is fined \$250. The fine must be received in the League office during normal working hours, and no later than Friday, 28 October, 2005 4:00pm, EST. Failure to meet this deadline evidenced by non-receipt, late, or incomplete fine will result in forfeiture of at least one match.

### 2. U19/1 Inappropriate Conduct

The League received a report from the match referee of inappropriate conduct by Manager A during and following the subject match. Late in the match, Manager A was sent from the pitch by the referee following a period of persistent dissent. Following the match, Manager A returned to the pitch to demand the blue match card, ostensibly to obtain the names of the match officials or to verify cards. Regardless of the reason(s), this instigated a verbal confrontation with Team A players, team officials and the referee.

R&D is concerned that a team official, present on the team side, instigated the action, and then did not follow through with the proper procedure for having been sent from the pitch. NCSL R&P at V.G requires: “After being ejected from a match, a coach or team official must leave the field area immediately and may not return to the field until after the game is completed. The ejected team official must immediately remove her/himself from the field as directed by the referee but in no case will s/he remain closer to the playing field than 100 yards until 30 minutes after the game is over. During this period, a coach or team official must not be involved in any way with administration or communication with the team at the game site, either directly, or indirectly.” Team A and club representatives stipulated to the facts of the incident, as related by the referee. Team A has voluntarily sanctioned Manager A with a 2 match disciplinary suspension, and reported this to R&D. These two matches are in addition to the automatic suspension earned by Manager A for having been sent off by the referee during the match.

The Committee will endorse club sanctions, if appropriate, in lieu of taking further action at the League level. The sanction issued by Team A is reasonably consistent with actions taken by the Committee for single incidents of affiliate misconduct.

#### Decisions of the R&D Chairman:

1. R&D endorses the club action to suspend Manager A for a total of two additional matches. The total suspension resulting from this incident is therefore 3 matches: 1 for the ejection at the pitch and 2 disciplinary.
2. Team A has been placed on disciplinary probation for the next season in which the team competes in the NCSL. The terms of this probation require that all team officials, to include Coach, Manager, TSL, assistants (if any), maintain a completely satisfactory disciplinary record. Cautions and ejections in matches, supplemental reports from referees and comments on blue match cards, performance of TSL duties, as well as enforcement of NCSL required sit outs on players, will all be evaluated to ensure that the terms of probation have been satisfied by team leadership. Violation of the terms of probation will result in a R&D hearing on the breaching incident, as well as the incident in match #2023. Sanctions will be handed down for both, and will take into account that probation was violated.

### **3. U19/2 Terminated Match**

The match was terminated by the referee in the 75<sup>th</sup> minute, with a score of Team A 3 – Team B 3. The committee received written reports from both teams and the referee. A hearing was held at 8:25pm, 20 April 2005. Officials of both teams were present.

The referee reports that the match was relatively incident free in the first half. In the 63<sup>rd</sup> minute of play, a Team B player was ejected for Serious Foul Play. At that point, the Team B spectators became loud and abusive towards match officials. The referee went to the Team B bench, and stated the play would be suspended until the Team B spectators had vacated the park. After a short time, the referee walked to the center of the pitch to restart the match, and Player B inquired as to the reason(s) that his family was asked to leave. After an outburst of foul and abusive language directed towards the referee, this Player B was ejected and shown a red card. At this point, the referee noticed that the ejected spectators had returned and terminated the match.

This match was terminated with over 15 minutes remaining, and the Team B side playing at 9 men. In general, when matches terminate due to the actions of one team under circumstances such as this, that team is culpable and will be penalized for the early termination. Team B is warned that any further spectator induced incidents of this type will be met with increasingly severe sanction.

#### Decisions of the R&D Committee:

1. The match is declared a forfeit in favor of Team A. The score will be recorded as Team A 3 – Team B 0.
2. Card(s) issued during the match will stand. Sit outs served during the match will be valid.

### **4. U19/3 Violent Conduct/Abusive Language Following Ejection**

The match was played to completion with a score of Team A 2 – Team B 2. Statements were received from all parties. A hearing was held on 10 November 2005.

During the first half of play, Player A was fouled and received a whistle and direct kick from the referee. As the referee was approaching the scene, Player A retaliated by kicking Player B, and attempted to further escalate the confrontation. The referee issued a red card to Player A for violent conduct, and sent him off. At this point, Player A shouted obscenities toward the referee. As he was leaving the pitch, Player A made an obscenity-laced racial comment toward the referee's assistant, and had to be restrained and escorted from the pitch by the coach.

At the hearing, the referees stated that it appeared that the Team A coaching staff was supportive of match officials, and that they tried to control Player A's behavior, but that they were largely unsuccessful. The Team A coaches and club representative stipulated to most of the facts of the case, and apologized for their team's part in the incident. This team was directed to bring all required codes of conduct to the hearing. They were unable to comply.

Prior to the hearing, Team A's Club Representative notified the Committee that the club had taken unilateral action to suspend Player A for the Spring 2006 season, and to require completion of an anger management class prior to reinstatement. The Committee will endorse club sanctions, if appropriate, in lieu of taking further action at the League level. The committee sanctions actions of severe violent conduct, and untoward post-ejection behavior with suspensions if limited to player involvement. The club action is consistent with prior Committee sanctions.

#### Decision of the R&D Committee:

The Committee hereby endorses the sanction of the club. Player A is suspended from play for the Spring 2006 season.

### **5. U17/1 Terminated Match**

The match was terminated by the referee in the 85<sup>th</sup> minute, with a score of Team A 1 – Team B 0. The committee received written reports from both teams and the referee. A hearing was held at 7:30pm, 27 April 2005. Officials of both teams, the Team A club representative, Player B, the referee and the referee assignor were all present.

The referee reports that the match started with the intensity expected for the age group and division. The referee claimed, and officials from both teams admitted at the hearing that numerous comments were made by all parties towards the referee crew during the match. The referee issued a total of 4 cautions and 3 ejections to Team B, and 1 caution to Team A. Ejected Player B was send off in the 38<sup>th</sup> minute after accumulating two cautions, one for unsporting behavior and the other as a substitute entering the pitch without the referees permission. The referee states that she had asked the Head Coach of Team B to help control his players' language, which he did not do. During the hearing, it became apparent that all three of the ejected Team B players remained in the team technical area following their ejections.

In the 85<sup>th</sup> minute, a foul by Player A resulted in commentary from Team B's bench, which was deemed by the AR to be sufficient to ask that both coaches been cautioned for dissent. The center referee approached Team B's bench and warned both coaches, which only resulted in more verbal dissent and they were both shown red cards and dismissed from the match. At the hearing, the Assistant Coach B admitted to having "crossed the line" with his dissent. At approximately the same time, previously sent off Player B returned to the pitch and was asked to leave by the assistant referee. Upon his refusal to do so, the referee reports that she terminated the match. The match was terminated with over 5 minutes remaining, and the Team B side playing at 9 men.

Team B disputes the assertion by the referee that the match was terminated due to the return of the previously ejected player. They claim that the cause for termination was that both coaches had been sent from the pitch. Given the character of the Team B's match play, the number of cards and ejections issued, the admitted dissent of the Assistant Coach B and the composition of Team B's bench, the control of the team exhibited by the coaching staff was seriously deficient. The committee doubts that any other carded team official would enable an orderly resumption of play. Regardless, the fact that all of the Team B ejected players were in the team technical area on the bench is a clear violation of NCSL Rules and Procedures Manual, Section V.G-2. The rule states that ejected players must remain away from the pitch for 20 minutes after the match has ended.

In general, when matches terminate due to the actions of one team, that team is deemed culpable and will be penalized for the early termination by forfeit. Further, the committee is concerned by the lack of control, and the lack of knowledge of League requirements following an ejection, exhibited by Team B officials. It is the responsibility of the Head Coach to maintain team discipline, and to create an environment conducive to success and befitting the character of his team. The Committee finds that this control and environment were seriously lacking of Team B during this match.

#### Decisions of the R&D Committee:

1. The match result is voided, and the match is declared a forfeit in favor of Team A. The score will be recorded as Team A 3 – Team B 0.
2. Card(s) issued during the match will stand. Sit outs served during the match will be valid.
3. Player B is suspended for an additional 2 matches.
4. Head Coach B is suspended for an additional 3 matches. Team B is reminded that these disciplinary suspensions are in addition to those served for the match ejections, must be served in the next consecutive League matches actually played, and must be properly documented in accordance with the R&P Manual.

#### **6. U17/1 Protest**

The match was played to completion with a score of Team A 2 – Team B 2. A protest of the match result was filed by Team B asserting: (1) referee misapplication of procedure; and (2) a violation of NCSL regulations by Team A. Statements were received from all parties. A hearing was held on 18 May 2005, with both teams sending representatives.

The first issue cited by Team B was the improper use of the assigned match assistant referee by the center referee. Both teams noted in their reports that the match was played with one assistant referee and one club linesman. The center referee opted to move the assigned assistant referee at halftime to the opposite end of the pitch. This resulted in a match played entirely with the assigned match assistant referee covering the Team B attacking end, and the club linesman covering the Team A attacking end. The committee advised both parties at the hearing that USSF guidance allows the center referee to use his judgment in the use of assistant referees, citing a specific instance of USSF guidance that dealt specifically with this issue, the use of one assigned assistant referee. USSF indicates that the referee is free to use his judgment in the placement of assistant referee; therefore this may not form the basis for protest.

The second element of protest concerned the presence of "at least one adult on the Team A bench side of the field who did not have an official NCSL pass", and that this person was actively coaching during the match. NCSL Rules allow for a maximum of 4 team officials to be present on a team's bench. Each team is issued 4 NCSL Sideline passes, which shall be used to identify team personnel who may be present on the bench (team) side. There is no NCSL requirement that these team officials be coincident with those on the official state roster. At the hearing, Team A stated that the sideline passes were present with the manager, at the match and on the Team A bench, and available for review. Team A stated that three persons were on the bench: the coach, manager and the individual in question. Therefore, the Committee concluded that this person was permitted to be on the Team A bench during the match. Further, NCSL rules governing protests require the complainant to show how the match result may have been affected. Team B failed to do this in their statement and at the hearing.

#### Decision of the R&D Committee:

The protest is denied. The match result stands as played. Team B forfeits the \$200 protest fee.

## **7. U17/2 Inappropriate Player Conduct Following Ejection**

The subject match was played to completion with a result of Team A 0 – Team B 1. The committee reviewed written reports of the match by the referee and team officials of both teams. A hearing was held at the Leis Center on 15 June, 2005 at 8:00pm. Representatives of Team A attended the hearing. Player A waived his right to appear at the hearing.

In the 42<sup>nd</sup> minute of play, a Team A player was shown a red card for violent conduct. At this time, Player A approached the referee and made foul and abusive statements toward him. The referee issued a red card to Player A, which only enraged the player further. The referee reports that he did not immediately leave the pitch, but instead approached the referee and continued a loud and abusive diatribe of foul and abusive language. The assistant referee entered the pitch to help diffuse the situation, and at that point, teammates escorted Player A from the pitch. After leaving the pitch, Player A kicked one or more balls onto the pitch in a further show of dissent.

R&D views any untoward action occurring after ejection as a very serious offense. Ejected personnel are to leave the area of the pitch immediately, and not involve themselves in any aspect of the match. Further, the committee will impose additional sanctions on players and team officials who fail to immediately leave the pitch upon being shown a red card.

### Decision of the R&D Committee:

Player A is suspended for a total of 4 matches: 1 for the Red Card and 3 disciplinary. The suspensions must be served in the next 4 consecutive NCSL league matches Player A is affiliated with, and documented in accordance with provisions of the NCSL Rules and Procedure Manual. Team A is warned that any further indication of ejected players not immediately leaving the area of the pitch will be met with increasingly harsh sanction.

## **8. U17/2 Protest**

Team A protests the results of the subject match based on a misapplication of FIFA Laws of the Game, Law #12, Fouls. The match was played to conclusion, with a result of Team B 2 – Team A 0.

Team A's complaint alleged two instances of improper restarts following fouls which occurred in the penalty area. The referee statement corroborates the allegation that the fouls occurred. In the 35<sup>th</sup> minute of play, a Team A player was fouled in the penalty area, a fact that was acknowledged by the referee. The referee whistled the play, and indicated an indirect free kick for Team A, because the player "did not have possession of the ball and had no chance to score a goal."

In the 70<sup>th</sup> minute, again a Team A player was fouled in the penalty area. The play was whistled by the referee who again awarded an indirect free kick because the player was "brought down by incidental contact" and, in the judgment of the referee, this was a case of "impede[ing] the progress of an opponent".

Law 12 defines "pushing" as a penal foul. The law does not require possession, nor the "chance to score a goal" as a criteria for calling the foul. The prescribed restart for a penal foul is a direct free kick or a penalty kick if the foul is committed by a defender in his own penalty area. Therefore, since the foul was recognized by the referee on the play in the 35<sup>th</sup> minute inside the penalty area, a penalty kick should have been awarded.

Incidental contact is not usually called as a foul. Since the referee whistled the play, the contact, by tactical definition, rises to that level necessary to define a foul. Further, the referee observed contact sufficient to bring the player "down". Impeding is normally defined as a non contact foul. USSF "advice to Referees on the LOTG" states that impeding "requires that the ball not be within playing distance or not capable of being played and physical contact between the player and opponent is normally absent". Incidental contact is NOT a criteria for defining a foul as impeding. Therefore, it appears that this foul should have resulted in a penalty kick as well.

Either one of these errors may have affected the outcome of a closely contested match such as this one.

### Decisions of the R&D Chairman:

1. The protest is granted. The match result is voided, and it must be replayed in its entirety. If possible, Team A shall retain the Home Pitch.
2. Card(s) issued during the match, and sit outs observed and documented, if any, will stand.

Team B is appealing the R&D decision, which voided the match result and directed that the game played against Team A be replayed.

The basis of the appeal is as follows:

1. R&D second guessed the referee's judgment call;

2. R&D defines any contact that causes a player to fall must result in a direct free kick;
3. R&D did not provide for a proper venue of deliberation, i.e. a hearing;
4. The remedy directed by R&D is not appropriate to the asserted mistakes (misapplication); and
5. The decision rewards inappropriate conduct on the part of the opposition.

The assertion that the decision rewards inappropriate conduct on the part of the opposition was provided in the written documentation by Team B but never addressed by Team B during the appeals hearing. This point is irrelevant to the appeal and has no merit.

The R&D Chairman requested input from all parties prior to issuing the decision. Team B provided a minimal response. While the R&D Chairman indicated that a hearing would be held, he is not required to hold a hearing. The chairman acted within league rules when he elected to poll R&D committee members in lieu of holding a hearing.

The contention that the R&D committee second-guessed the referee's judgment call is not correct. Per league rules, judgment calls made by the referee during play may not be protested. There is a significant and fundamental difference between a referee's judgment and whether or not there is a misapplication of the Laws of the Game after this judgment has been made. The R&D committee focused its decision on the restarts of the game as a result of and after the referee made his judgment call.

Therefore, this appeal boils down to whether or not the referee misapplied FIFA Law 12 after he whistled for a stoppage of play in the penalty area at the 35<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> minute.

It is important to point out that the decision issued by the R&D Chairman was not his alone. In reaching the decision, the R&D Chairman polled the entire membership of the R&D committee. The membership of the R&D Committee is comprised of 5 current certified referees.

In its original decision, the R&D Committee evaluated the correct restart of the match after the incidents in both the 35<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> minute. In both instances, the R&D Committee determined that the referee misapplied the LOTG when he awarded an indirect free kick instead of awarding a penalty kick.

During the hearing the Team B representatives argued that, based on their review of the LOTG and USSF Advice to Referees on the LOTG, the proper restart could have been an indirect free kick. R&D committee representatives disagreed and presented their arguments that there was clear misapplication of the LOTG.

The purpose of the appeals hearing is not to substitute the opinion of the appeals committee for the opinion of the R&D Committee but to determine if the R&D Committee made any errors in process or procedure in reaching its decision.

However, in fairness to both teams, the league President requested, prior to the hearing, an independent review by a senior state referee of the application of the LOTG made by the match official. In addition, the league President made available to the Appeals Committee during deliberations a senior state referee who serves as the Chairman of the NCSL/WAGS Referee Assessment Team for advice and consultation.

The original decision issued by the R&D Committee and subsequent independent reviews by senior referees all came to the conclusion that there was clear misapplication of Law 12.

The remaining appeal issue raised was that the remedy issued in the R&D decision was not appropriate to the misapplications. Per NCSL rules, "Alleged misapplication of FIFA Laws of the Game by the referee which may have affected the outcome of the game may be protested." Previous R&D decisions have established precedence that one misapplication of the LOTG, which denies a team goal scoring opportunity in a close match, is sufficient to direct a replay.

In the unanimous opinion of the committee, the R&D Committee made neither error in process or procedures nor in evaluation in reaching its decision.

#### Decision of the Appeals Committee:

The appeal is denied and the league administrator is directed to reschedule the match.

## **9. U17/2 Sit Out Violation**

The match was played to completion with a score of Team A 3 – Team B 2. A report was received asserting that Coach A failed to observe a proper sit out. Statements were received from all parties, and the President of Club A Soccer conducted an investigation.

Club A concluded that Coach A failed to observe a proper sit out. NCSL Rules and Procedures, Section V. G-9, details requirements of a valid sit out for a coach, namely that the coach must not be within 100 yds of the pitch 30 minutes prior to the match until 30 minutes following the match. Team A concluded that the coach remained near the pitch during the match. Further, Team A concluded that Coach A may well have been in cell phone contact with the acting coach.

Based on the above, Club A suspended Coach A for three matches, which is in accordance with the prescribed League sanction for failure to observe a sit out. R&D endorses the Club action, and appreciates the proactive response by Team A in handling its own affairs.

Rules & Procedure Manual, Section V.D-3.3 states that failure to observe sit out procedures will be reviewed by R&D, and may result in forfeits for using suspended personnel. Finally, R&P Sect. V.H-5.b states that all matches played with an ineligible player or coach will be forfeited by the R&D Committee or Chairman.

### Decision of the R&D Chair:

The match result will be recorded as forfeit: Team B 3 – Team A 0.

## **10. U16-1 Terminated Match**

The subject match was terminated in the 75th minute with a score of Team A 2 – Team B 1. The match was reported as a physical encounter, with 3 red cards (1 Team A, 2 Team B) and 2 cautions (Team B) having been shown. In the 75th minute, a hard foul caused a stoppage in play, and the referee reports that a Player B was placed in a headlock by Player A. At about the same time, he observed four Team A players "yelling and posturing at the Team B players so much that [he] feared that a fight would break out". At that point, he terminated the match, listing the cause as: "Team A out of control".

NCSL Rules and Procedures Manual, Section V(D) states, in pertinent part: "In no event will a team gain an advantage if the committee determines it to be responsible for termination of the match." The committee relies on the judgment of match officials present at the pitch in making these determinations, and will not overturn such judgment lacking overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

### Decisions of the R&D Committee:

1. The terminated match is declared a forfeit in favor of Team B: Team B 3 – Team A 0.
2. All cards issued will stand and all sit outs observed will be recorded as valid.

## **11. U16/3 Violent Team Confrontation**

The match was played to completion with a score of Team A 1 – Team B 0. Statements were received from all parties. A hearing was held on 13 October 2005.

The match was officiated by a single assigned referee, and two club linesman. It was tightly contested by the two teams. Reports were received indicating that tensions rose throughout the match, with Team A officials becoming vocally upset at the role played by, and the use made of, the club linesman by the referee. Following the match, heated words were briefly exchanged by the two coaches. Shortly thereafter, a mass brawl broke out among players on both teams. Reports are conflicting and unclear as to the actions which initiated the brawl; however, the referee and others report that the brawl had participation by both teams, and that some parents may have been involved. The referee further reports that none of the untoward conduct was directed at him, and that at no time was he approached or threatened during the post match melee; it was limited to the teams involved. Eventually, multiple law enforcement units arrived at the scene, but the altercation had, by that time, ended.

The committee is dismayed by the lack of leadership and responsibility demonstrated by the teams, especially the coaches. At the hearing, both coaches were asked to identify steps taken since the incident to ensure that future incidents of this type did not occur. Neither coach had implemented any effective strategy, and it was clear that neither had accepted responsibility for their part in the incident, citing alleged officiating errors and /or the behavior of the other side as an excuse for the conditions which incited the brawl.

The committee will harshly sanction incidents of violent conduct with team suspensions and fines. Team leaders will be sanctioned with suspensions.

### Decisions of the R&D Committee:

1. Both teams are each fined \$500. The fines must be received in the League office during normal working hours, and no later than Friday, 28 October, 2005 4:00pm, EST. Failure to meet this deadline evidenced by non-receipt, late, or incomplete fine will result in forfeiture of at least one match.
2. The next regularly scheduled matches for Team B and Team A are declared forfeits due to team suspensions. Match #2081, will be recorded Team B 0 – Team C 3. Match #2083 will be recorded Team A 0 – Team D 3.
3. Coach B and Coach A are each suspended for 1 match. This suspension must be served in the next match actually played, in accordance with all provisions of NCSL Rules and Procedures, Section V.

### **12. U16/3 Protest**

Team A protests the result of the subject match based on an alleged ineligible player entering the match as a substitute for Team B. The match was played to conclusion, with a result of Team B 1 – Team A 0. Statements were received from all parties, and a hearing was held 2 November 2005.

The match was officiated by a full crew of assigned referees. Both teams reported being short of jerseys prior to the match and the blue match card was noted pen and ink changes to some jersey numbers. No pass check was requested prior to the match by either side.

In approximately the 63rd minute, a collision between a Player B1 and Player A resulted in a severe fracture to the leg of Player B1. The referee suspended the match approximately 25 minutes, to await the arrival of emergency medical personnel and the evacuation of the player. One of the assistant referees was a trained EMT, and helped to stabilize the player. The assistant referee stated in his report that some of the Team B players used their jerseys to put under their teammates head. Several referee reports stated that the Manager B accompanied the player on the ambulance, taking the managers notebook which contained Team B's roster, passes and medical release forms.

The match then restarted. Team B side stated that they were 'surprised' by the decision to finish the match, and that some of the players had already dressed out of the match uniform. However, they further reported that they dressed out in the jerseys that were still at the pitch, and completed the match.

Team A's complaint states that it was at this point that an unidentified and uncarded individual who was not previously in the match, Player B2 entered the match. Following match completion, Team A alerted the referee to this situation and requested a pass check. After some discussion, the referees asked Team B to show the pass of the player in question, but were told that the passes were no longer at the pitch, having gone with the manager to the hospital with the injured player. Team A further states that all three referees saw the player in question exchange jerseys with another player in the Team B technical area following the match.

Team B officials reported that during the match suspension period, most of their players dressed out of the uniform and prepared to leave. When the match was restarted, the already short jersey situation was exacerbated by the fact that some of the jerseys used to comfort the fallen player were loaded into the ambulance, along with the manager and the pass binder. They state that players simply grabbed what ever jersey was at hand to reenter the match. Specifically, they stated that Players B3 and B2 had switched jerseys at this point.

The reports from the referees state that NONE of the assigned crew witnessed any 'jersey switching' following the match. However, a referee assigned to the following match was waiting on the team side and reported that he did observe Player B2 come from the match and exchange his jersey with another player. One of the referee's also reported that he thought he recognized the player in question as being with the team for the entire match.

At the hearing, Team A representatives were shown the player passes from Team B, and asked to identify, if possible, any of the individuals involved. The result was inclusive.

R&D finds that the allegations made by Team A have not been proved. The protest is at odds with the reports made by the assigned match officials. Further, the allegation that the player passes were still at the field is also rebutted by the reports of the assigned officials. Although another official present did observe two players switch jerseys following the match, this is not proof of the illegitimacy of this players standing. The committee finds that no evidence exist to annul a match result reached on the field of play.

### Decisions of the R&D Chairman:

1. The protest is denied. The match result stands as played.
2. Team A forfeits the \$200 protest fee.

### 13. U16/3 Protest

Team A protest the result of the subject match based on a misapplication of FIFA Laws of the Game #11, Offside. The match was played to conclusion, with a result of Team B 2 – Team A 1. Statements were received from all parties, and a poll of the full R&D Committee was taken at the Committee meeting held on 2 November 2005. The R&D Chair recused from the decision, due to a relationship with Coach A. The decision was adjudicated by the Vice Chair.

In approximately the 78<sup>th</sup> minute, Team B scored a goal to go ahead by 2-1. Team A's complaint states that at the moment the shot was taken 2 Team B attackers were in an off-side position near the goal line, and were actively involved in the play because they interfered with Goalkeeper A's ability to get to the ball.

Team B account differed slightly from the Team A complaint, claiming that the attackers in the offside position did not interfere with Goalkeeper A. Team B notes that the center referee conferred with the assigned assistant referee prior to awarding the goal for Team B.

FIFA Law 11 states in pertinent part:

***A player in an offside position is only penalized if, at the moment the ball touches or is played by one of his team, he is, in the opinion of the referee, involved in active play by:***

- ***interfering with play or***
- ***interfering with an opponent or***
- ***gaining an advantage by being in that position***

R&D notes that a judgment call by the referee may not be protested. The fact that the players were in an off-side position is stipulated to by all parties. The referee's judgment as to active involvement in the play by these players formed the basis for the protest. However, the referee's statement indicated that neither he, nor the assistant referee, considered the fact that the players off-side were actively involved in the play by interfering with the keeper. The referee further states that they only discussed if the Team B players had actually touched the ball. Further the referee made the following admission in his statement:

***It is my opinion that I did misapply law 11 in that a player in the offsides [sic] position WAS involved in goalie interference, even though that player did not play the ball.***

#### Decisions of the R&D Committee:

1. The protest is upheld. The \$200 protest fee will be returned to Team A.
2. The match result is annulled. The match is ordered replayed at the first scheduling opportunity.
3. All cards issued during the match will stand; all sit outs observed will count.

### 14. U16/3 Terminated Match

The match was terminated during stoppage time, prior to the end of the first half, with a score of Team A 2 – Team B 1. The committee received written reports from Team A, center referee and one assistant referee.

The center referee reported that the match initially featured exciting and clean soccer. The referee cited a short series of events, occurring between the 27<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> minutes, which led him to believe that he and the crew were in a threatening situation and terminated the match. The referee issued 1 caution to Player A for unsporting behavior and 2 ejections to Team B.

In the 27<sup>th</sup> minute, Player B1 was issued an ejection for violent conduct. In approximately the 37<sup>th</sup> minute, Player B2 was ejected for abusive language. The Center referee stated that, at this point, Player B2 lurched toward him in a threatening manner, but was held back by teammates. He then turned and left the field. Coach B, Assistant Coach B and acting Team B TSL did not dispute the actions of Player B2 and have since released him from the team due, in part, to this particular exhibition of inappropriate behavior. The Committee commends Team B for taking swift disciplinary action.

As play resumed, sideline behavior of the Team B came to the attention of the Center referee when it was realized that the assistant referee was facing away from play and toward their bench. At this point, the center referee determined that Team B players were not under control and he and his crew were in a threatening situation; therefore the match was terminated.

Team B asserts that the referee terminated the match prematurely and that the assistant referee was facing away from play because he was issuing instructions to the 2 ejected players. They claim that sideline behavior deteriorated only after the game was terminated. Team A disputed that claim stating that in addition to the conduct cited by the referee, a Team B player kicked the game ball at them. Team B countered that their player was reacting to inappropriate verbal behavior on the

part of the Team A's trainer. The officiating crew did not witness the aforementioned as their attention was focused on the Team B bench.

In general, when matches are terminated due to the actions of one team, that team is deemed culpable and will be penalized for the early termination by forfeit. While the teams offered different perspectives on the events, the officiating crew clearly stated that the behavior of Team B brought about the termination.

Decisions of the R&D Committee:

1. The match is declared a forfeit in favor of Team A. The score will be recorded as Team A 3 – Team B 0.
2. Cards issued during the match will stand. Player B2 is directed to honor his sit out prior to resuming league play.

**15. U16/3 Inappropriate Behavior toward Referee**

The match was played to completion with a score of Team A 3 – Team B 1. Statements were received from all parties. A hearing was held on 10 November 2005.

In the 24<sup>th</sup> minute of play, Player B became highly agitated by a “non-call” made by the referee. The referee reports that he attempted to calm the player through reasonable conversation, but Player B only became more agitated to the point that he was shouting abuse toward the referee. The referee showed Player B a red card and sent him from the pitch for Foul and Abusive Language. At this point, Player B refused to leave the pitch, and had to be escorted off by his teammates. After leaving, he stayed on the team side and continued his abuse, stating that he would meet the referee in the parking lot after the match.

The referee reports that the Team B coaching staff made little or no effort to diffuse the situation. Further, Player B stayed in the vicinity of the pitch following ejection, contrary to NCSL Rules and Procedures, Sect V (G) requires players ejected from a match to *“immediately remove himself from the field as directed by the referee and remain there until 20 minutes after the game is over.”*

This team was directed to bring all required codes of conduct to the hearing. They were unable to comply.

Prior to the hearing, the Team B Club Representative notified the Committee that the club had taken unilateral action to suspend Player B for the Spring 2006 season, and to require completion of a referee certification class prior to reinstatement. The Committee will endorse club sanctions, if appropriate, in lieu of taking further action at the League level.

The committee is dismayed that team adult leadership did little or nothing to diffuse the situation as it occurred. The coaching staff did nothing proactive to get the player off the pitch, and did not enforce the League rule to keep the player from the pitch following ejection. This contributed to a potentially dangerous situation, and resulted in a threat being issued toward the referee from the player. Further it is evident that the training and oversight by the Team B club is inadequate, as this is the third team to appear before R&D this season unable to provide proof of all codes of conduct.

Decision of the R&D Committee:

1. The Committee hereby endorses the sanctions of the club. Player B is suspended from play for the Spring 2006 season. Further, Player B must successfully complete a referee certification course prior to reinstatement.
2. Team A is fined \$500. The fine must be received in the League office prior to registration of the team for the Spring 2006 season.

**16. U15/1 Team and Spectator Misconduct**

The match was played to completion with a result of Team A 3 – Team B 2. Statements were received from all parties. A hearing was held on 1 June 2005.

The match was officiated by one assigned referee, with the assistance of two club linesmen. The referee reported two red card ejections for Team A, as well as a caution to Coach A, and one other Team A player caution; Team B earned one caution. Reports were received stating that the match was played with near constant heckling of the match referee and abusive language in Spanish from Team A affiliates.

Immediately following the final match whistle, an altercation ensued between Team A and Team B players. The scuffle started between two players, but rapidly escalated to the point that players were coming from the bench, and both teams' coaches ran onto the pitch to begin separating players. The referee reported seeing the initial exchange, and verbally warned the players to separate, while starting to record the jersey numbers of the combatants. At about the same time, a Team A parent entered the pitch and attacked Coach B, striking him in the face. Soon after witnessing this incident, the referee

reports being assaulted by another Team A parent, who lifted the referee up by the shoulders and “threw him back” several feet. He did this more than once, despite being told by the referee to let him go and leave him alone. A third Team A parent then moved into close proximity of the referee (“face to face”), and verbally abused and berated the referee in a loud and threatening tone, causing spit to land on the referee’s face and uniform. At that time, the referee requested a spectator call 911, and report a public disturbance. Police and rescue units responded to the call. The referee submitted a complaint to the Fairfax County Magistrate.

Coach B elected not to pursue a criminal complaint against his attacker. Criminal charges are pending against one Team A parent. At least three assaults were perpetrated by Team A affiliates following this match: one on the opposition coach and two on the referee. The committee condemns these actions, and warns in the strongest possible terms that these actions will be sanctioned to the maximum extent of League rules. Further, NCSL Rules and Procedures Sect V.G-2 requires that players ejected from a match leave the field area (100 yards) and remain away for 20 minutes following the match. Both of the ejected Team A players remained on the team bench, in violation of this rule, contributing to the tensions following the match.

The Committee notes that the referee at no time felt that the match was in danger of early termination. The most extreme abhorrent behavior leading to this incident occurred after the match was completed, and escalated due to the actions of Team A affiliates.

In taking into account possible team sanctions, R&D notes that this team was involved in an earlier incident during the Spring 2005 season played on 10 April 2005. Both assigned match officials reported a belligerent lack of support by the Team A manager when asked to help provide a club linesman prior to the match, and a hostile environment created by Team A affiliates. During an incident in the second half of that match, a Team A parent was ejected from the park for harassing match officials. The ejected parent was slow to leave the park and continued to abuse the referees while leaving. The parent was sanctioned by Team A club officials with a 3 match ban. Further, the club held a team meeting to address the general sideline misconduct by Team A affiliates. Club A contacted R&D and requested that the Committee support the club and its internal sanctions.

These incidents are gross violations of League Codes of Conduct. The committee finds that the Team A TSL was negligent in both encounters, and the Manager’s behavior in the match, as well as his judgment in choice of TSL, demonstrates a complete disregard for the Leader’s code of conduct, as well as extreme negligence in failing to promote good sportsmanship throughout the team.

The committee is dismayed at the almost complete breakdown of Team A adult leadership, management, and sportsmanship. Therefore, it is the intent of the committee to enforce sanctions to the maximum extent possible.

#### Decisions of the R&D Committee:

The following sanctions are ordered for Team A:

1. R&D endorses Club A’s ordered sanctions, and incorporates them in this decision. Specifically: (1) All parents are prohibited from attending the final match of Spring 2005 and the next match actually played. Only the coaches and manager are allowed to accompany the team; (2) Parent A1 is suspended from all activities for 1 calendar year; (3) Parent A2 is suspended from all activities for the next 6 matches; (4) Parent A3 will be re-evaluated following completion of future legal proceedings; (5) Player A1 is suspended from the final match of the Spring 2005 season; (6) Player A2 is suspended from the final match of the Spring 2005 season, and the next match he actually plays in the League.
2. Team Suspension for the next two League matches. The results of these matches will be recorded as 3-0 forfeits in favor of the opposition.
3. A fine of \$800. The fine must be received in the League office during normal working hours, and no later than Friday, 17 June, 2005 4:00pm, EST.
4. An additional 5 match prohibition on parent attendance for matches actually played. Further, the committee orders that a League sit out card be signed by the opposition, and countersigned by the match referee, to document that only the carded sideline officials were in attendance. It is the intent of the committee that, when taken together with the Team A club sanctions and the NCSL two-match team suspension, only 1 match will be played with parents in attendance in the next League season actually played by the team. [assumes 10 team division]
5. Manager A and TSL A are suspended from performing any team official duties, including but not limited to Manager and TSL, for 9 matches.
6. If any players/families leave Team A to join another NCSL team, the above sanctions may follow the players and their parents to their new team. In instances of changing teams, players/families may petition R&D to lift or lessen sanctions for specific individuals.

7. The team is placed on R&D probation for 1 calendar year. If the team fails to adhere to the above sanctions, or further severe disciplinary problems arise requiring an R&D hearing, the team will be evaluated for expulsion from the NCSL.

### **17. U15/3 Protest**

Team A protest the result of the subject match based on a misapplication of FIFA Laws of the Game #12. The match was played to conclusion, with a result of Team B 3 – Team A 2. Statements were requested from all parties, and a poll of the full R&D Committee was taken at the Committee meeting held on 2 November 2005. The R&D Chair recused from the decision, due to his son playing within the division. The decision was adjudicated by the Vice Chair.

The match was played with a single assigned referee. Team A's complaint stated that in approximately the 78<sup>th</sup> minute, Player B earned a second caution in the match. However, he was NOT shown a red card for accumulating two cautions, and was not sent from the pitch. Following the match, Team A officials approached the referee to clarify the matter, and the referee admitted his error, and suggested that Team A might want to protest the result.

FIFA Law 12 states in pertinent part:

*A player is sent off and shown the red card if he commits any of the following seven offences:  
(1-6 omitted)  
7. receives a second caution in the same match*

When contacted by R&D, the referee freely admitted his error, stood by his issuance of the cautions to Player B, and apologized for not sending the player off. Team B would thus have finished the match with 10 players. The committee determined that this may have affected the outcome of the match.

#### Decisions of the R&D Committee:

1. The protest is upheld. The \$200 protest fee will be returned to Team A.
2. The match result is annulled. The match is ordered replayed at the first scheduling opportunity.
3. All cards issued during the match will stand; all sit outs observed will count.

### **18. U15/3 Inappropriate Coach Conduct**

The subject match was played to completion with the result of Team A 2 – Team B 1. The committee reviewed written reports of the match by the referee, match assistant referee and team officials of both teams. A hearing was held at the Leis Center on 11 May, 2005 at 8:15pm. The referees and Coach A appeared at the hearing.

In the 60<sup>th</sup> minute, Player B made an unfair and reckless challenge for the ball, resulting in a foul being called and a caution shown for unsporting behavior. While the referee was cautioning Player B, Coach A became irate and loudly issued a threatening statement to Player B. Coach A was shown a red card for abusive language, and ejected from the match. Following his ejection, reports state the he continued to use threatening language towards the opposition player.

There is a disagreement among reports about the exact words used by the coach; however, both the coach and manager of Team A have admitted that an inappropriate threat was issued. At the hearing, Coach A once again admitted his actions.

The committee is disturbed by the lack of emotional control shown by Coach A and the blatant disregard for the NCSL Leaders Code of Conduct. Threatening behavior of NCSL leaders toward youth players will be harshly sanctioned.

#### Decision of the R&D Committee:

Coach A is suspended for an additional 5 matches. The suspensions must be served in the next 5 consecutive NCSL league matches, and documented in accordance with provisions of the NCSL R&P Manual. Further reports of this type of behavior by this coach may be referred to the State Association for Adjudication.

### **19. U15/4 Inappropriate Coach Conduct**

The subject match was played to completion with the result of Team A 3 – Team B 3. The committee reviewed written reports of the match by the referee and team officials of both teams. A hearing was held at the Leis Center on 15 June, 2005 at 8:20pm. Representatives of both teams appeared at the hearing.

The match was reported by all parties as close, intense and physical. In approximately the 75<sup>th</sup> minute of play, with the score Team B 3 – Team A 2, a goal kick was called for Team B. Coach A stated that he felt Team B was wasting time, and encouraged Player B with the ball to "stop wasting time". At that point, the Player B may have issued a foul remark toward Coach A which, by his own admission at the hearing, angered him and caused him to respond to the player. Prior to the

hearing, Coach A provided a written statement to the Committee, stating that he told the player that if his remark had been made during a match in which they were both playing, the “[the player] would end up with a broken leg”. At the hearing, Coach A once again admitted his actions. There is disagreement among reports from Team B and Team A about the exact words used by the coach however, both the coach and assistant manager admitted at the hearing that an inappropriate threat was issued. Team B states that the coach’s remark was far more pointed and threatening towards the player (“I am going to break your [expletive] legs”), and was accompanied by foul language and name calling (“you little [expletive]”), and was made repeatedly over the course of several minutes.

Further, Coach A stated at the hearing that his own behavior had “improved” since he moved to coach in Virginia from New Jersey, stating that he “was much worse in NJ”, thus demonstrating a history of inappropriate behavior. The Committee also notes that the Assistant Manager A who attended the hearing showed disdain for the charges, indicating that the remark made by the player to the coach negated responsibility for the coach to apologize for his actions.

The Committee is disturbed by the lack of emotional control shown by Coach A, and the blatant disregard for the NCSL Leaders Code of Conduct. Threatening behavior of NCSL leaders toward youth players will be harshly sanctioned. The Committee is also concerned that a culture of tolerance for this type of behavior may exist on this team, which does not provide a venue to mitigate this type of inappropriate conduct.

#### Decisions of the R&D Committee:

1. Coach A is suspended for a minimum of 6 matches, and until reinstated by the Committee per item 2, below. The suspensions must be served in the next 6 consecutive NCSL league matches Coach A is affiliated with, and documented in accordance with provisions of the NCSL R&P Manual.
2. Coach A must certify as a **National Double Goal Coach**, by completion of a live workshop conducted by the Positive Coaching Alliance. Coach A will be reinstated upon submission of satisfactory evidence of this certification to the committee, and upon completion of the minimum suspension period noted in 1 above.
3. Coach A is placed on R&D probation for 1 calendar year. Any incident involving foul and/or abusive language, threatening or abusive behavior toward any match participant, as well as an excessive accumulation of match cautions or ejections will result in automatic R&D review for possible expulsion and ban from the League.
4. Team A is fined \$250. The fine must be received in the League office during normal working hours and no later than 4:00pm, Friday, 1 July 2005.

#### **20. U15/5 Alleged Team and Spectator Misconduct**

The match was played to completion with a score of Team A 1 – Team B 1. Statements were received from all parties. A hearing was held on 13 September 2005.

In approximately the 79<sup>th</sup> minute, the referee whistled a foul against Team B. Following this, an altercation (pushing) ensued between the Player A and Player B. Both coaches stated at the hearing that the altercation escalated to the point that players from both teams left their bench and entered the pitch. Numerous eyewitness statements indicate that affiliates of both sides entered the pitch from the spectator side. Match time expired as the altercation wound down and the referee ended the match at full time. Statements received indicate that Team B players may have pursued Team A back toward their bench in another attempt to continue the fracas, and had to be restrained before order was, eventually, restored.

Conflicting reports were received, which render a determination as to the precise sequence of events impossible for the Committee to determine. However, statements made by both parties at the hearing have indicated that neither team had an effective TSL structure in place at the match. Further, both coaches agreed that their benches entered the pitch, thus escalating and enlarging an altercation between on-pitch players into a melee of two whole sides. Lastly, both teams agreed that their parents had entered the pitch prior to the referee signaling full time.

The admitted lack of an effective TSL organization by both teams is disturbing and contributed to the incident at the end of the match. Reports indicate that increased tensions were contributed to by comments of spectators during the match. An effective TSL presence is meant to diffuse such situations. Teams will be sanctioned for ignorance, or token application of, the TSL at League matches. In cases involving parent incidents, combined with ineffective TSL structure, the Committee will impose sanctions relating to match attendance. Sanctions will also be instituted in cases where coaches are unable (or unwilling) to control their bench. In this incident, the failure of several adult positions contributed to the severity of the incident.

#### Decisions of the R&D Committee:

1. Team A is fined \$100 and Team B is fined \$200. The fines must be received in the League office during normal working hours, and no later than Friday, 30 September, 2005 4:00pm, EST. Failure to meet this deadline evidenced by non-receipt, late or incomplete fines will result in forfeiture of at least one match.
2. Both teams are ordered to institute a one match attendance ban for parents/guardians of current players. This sanction will be effective for the next home match actually played by each team. Parents /guardians must observe the sit out requirements imposed on coaches and team officials, as outlined in Rules and Procedures, Sect V.G. Only the head coach and team manager may attend the sanctioned match. A sit out card should be prepared and presented to the opposition for signature as evidence of completion of the attendance ban.

#### **21. U15/5 Inappropriate Behavior towards a Referee**

The subject match was played to completion with a result of Team A 3 – Team B 2. The committee reviewed written reports of the match by the referee, and team officials of both teams. A hearing was held at the Leis Center on 20 April, 2005 at 7:35pm. The referee, Player B and Coach B and team officials appeared at the hearing.

During the second half, Player B was issued a red card for accumulating 2 yellow cards in a match. At his point, Player B initiated a verbal confrontation with the referee. Statements received from the referee and the Manager B indicated that Player B engaged in profanity laced language, and had to be escorted from the pitch by teammates.

At the hearing, Player B admitted his actions and expressed regret. The Coach B also indicated that he had imposed an additional 1 match suspension on Player B, above the 1 match earned for the red card.

The committee will impose additional sanctions on players and team officials who fail to immediately leave the pitch upon being shown a red card.

#### Decisions of the R&D Committee:

1. Player B is suspended for a total of 3 matches: 1 for the Red Card and 2 disciplinary.
2. Upon written certification by Coach B, the additional suspension which was imposed by Team B will be counted as valid for one of the 2 disciplinary suspensions. Team B is reminded that an official NCSL sit out certification is required to document the red card sit out.
3. In addition to the 10 points for the red card earned in this match, an additional 5 disciplinary points is added to Player B's record, bringing his total to 15 for the match.

#### **22. U14/1 Alleged Inappropriate Conduct**

The match was played to completion with a score of Team A 1 – Team B 0. Statements were received from all parties. A hearing was held on 28 September 2005.

In approximately the 79th minute, an offside call was made by the center referee which Coach B and Team B parents did not agree with. When the final match whistle was blown, Coach B immediately started walking toward the center referee demanding to talk to him. At this same time, some of the Team B parents commenced a verbal confrontation with the referee. This continued as the referee made his way across the pitch to his gear. It was also reported that several Team B parents “surrounded” the referee and referee’s assistant following the match. Manager B and STAR B both reported intervening to disperse the irritated and abusive Team B parents, reporting that two Team B parents were “out of control”. During the hearing, Team B was questioned about TSL role and procedures, and stated that the Manager was serving as TSL, but was stationed on the team side of the pitch. Further, NONE of the required pre-game introductions/procedures required by League rules were followed by the Team B TSL.

The admitted lack of an effective TSL organization is disturbing and contributed to the incident at the end of the match. Reports indicate that increased tensions were contributed to by comments of spectators during the match. An effective TSL presence is meant to diffuse such situations. Teams will be sanctioned for ignorance, or token application of, the TSL at League matches. In cases involving parent incidents, combined with ineffective TSL structure, the Committee will impose sanctions relating to match attendance.

In this case, although Coach B's actions following the match (and possibly his demeanor during a close contest) contributed to heightened tensions for Team B affiliates, the committee notes that the referee did not sanction the coach with a booking at the pitch. Generally, the committee defers to referee action, or failure to act, as the best indication of the severity of the incident. However, Coach B is warned that any further indication of behavior which may result in a R&D hearing for his actions, will be considered together with this incident as a pattern of behavior.

#### Decisions of the R&D Committee:

1. Team B is fined \$200 for failure to implement the TSL role as required by NCSL Rules and Procedures. The fine must be received in the League office during normal working hours, and no later than Friday, 14 October, 2005 4:00pm, EST. Failure to meet this deadline evidenced by non-receipt, late, or incomplete fine will result in forfeiture of at least one match.
2. The two Team B parents identified by the Team Manager B are each suspended for the next two Team B matches. Team B management must submit a plan in writing to R&D, fully identifying these two individuals to the committee by name. This plan must also stipulate the Team B official responsible for ensuring that the suspended parties fulfill the suspension. This plan will be forwarded to the opposition by R&D for the scheduled matches requiring the sit out. A League sit out certification must be submitted to the opposition for signature verification, and then mailed to the League.

### **23. U14/2 Inappropriate Team Conduct**

The subject match was played to completion with the result of Team A 2 – Team B 1. The committee reviewed written reports of the match by the referee, match assistant referees and team officials of both teams. A hearing was held at the Leis Center on 11 May, 2005 at 7:30pm. The referee and Team B club officials appeared at the hearing.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> minute, a Team B spectator disruption caused the referee to suspend the match. Coach B was asked to help remove the spectator from the park, and the match was suspended until this was done. Tensions escalated in the second half and, at some point, it was reported by the referee crew and opposition coach that the previously ejected spectator returned, and resumed dissenting referee calls. Team B, however, disputes the return of the ejected spectator. Referees report that Coach B was cautioned during the match for dissent, and that the general demeanor and actions for the Team B sideline was abusive throughout. Toward the end of the match, Player B was shown a red card for foul and abusive language. Following his ejection, Player B continued to verbally abuse match officials on his way off the pitch. Following the match, referees report that they were approached by their gear and “verbally accosted” by several Team B supporters, and that a derogatory racial remark was made toward the center referee.

The committee is disturbed by the hostile match environment which was instigated by Team B. Parents, players and team officials are all bound by the League Codes of Conduct, and will be held to their principals. Team B players, leaders and spectators all violated the required Codes of Conduct. Teams are required to utilize the TSL. Multiple failures of the Team B TSL to adequately control spectator behavior during and after the match have been cited. It is the responsibility of the Head Coach to maintain team discipline, and to create an environment conducive to success and befitting the character of his team. The Committee finds that this control and environment were seriously lacking of Team B during this match. Further, the Leaders Code of Conduct states in part: *“As a head coach, I understand I am responsible for the behavior of my teams’ assistants, parents and fans at League games.”* Finally, the Committee views any untoward action occurring following an ejection as a serious offense. At this point, match officials have little recourse within the Laws of the Game (except for match suspension and termination), and must rely on action by the R&D process to ensure discipline.

#### Decisions of the R&D Committee:

1. Team B is fined \$600. The fine must be received in the League office during normal working hours, and no later than Friday, 20 May, 2005 4:00pm, EST. Failure to meet this deadline will result in forfeiture of any matches scheduled for 21 and 22 May. Future matches are also subject to forfeit until the fine is satisfied.
2. Coach B is suspended for 1 match. The suspension must be served in the next NCSL league match, and documented in accordance with provisions of the NCSL R&P Manual.
3. Player B is assessed an additional 5 disciplinary points.

### **24. U14/3 Protest**

The match was played to completion with a score of Team A 4 – Team B 0. A protest of the match result was filed by Team B, asserting a misapplication of FIFA Laws of the Game #12, stating the referee issued 2 cautions to the same player, but did not send the player off for accumulating 2 cautions in a single match. Statements were received from all parties. A hearing was held on 1 June 2005, with both teams sending representatives.

In the first half of the match, Player A1 received a yellow card. In approximately the 50<sup>th</sup>-55<sup>th</sup> minute of play, the referee issued a second caution to Player A1. However, the red card was not shown for accumulating 2 cautions in a single match. Despite the animated remonstrations by the Team B side, the referee claimed that the caution issued in the first half was to Player A2 not Player A1 and therefore, no send off was required. The assistant referee reported that he tried to get the attention of the referee at this point, but was unsuccessful. The score at this time is in dispute; Team B claimed the score was still 1 – 0, but Team A claimed that the score could have been 2 – 0 at that point. Statements received from both teams and the assigned match assistant referee all indicated that Player A1 was booked twice, and was therefore deserving of a send off.

The committee considered all the evidence and finds that it is highly likely that the match referee erred in his record keeping, and therefore, should have sent off Player A1 for earning 2 cautions in a single match. Given that the score at the time was either 1-0 or, at most 2-0, and that approximately 15-20 minutes remained to be played, a fair result for the match was compromised by this error, given that Team A would have been a man down for the duration. Therefore, a match replay must be awarded.

Decisions of the R&D Committee:

1. The protest is upheld. The protest fee will be returned to Team B.
2. The match result will be voided and the match rescheduled and replayed in its entirety.
3. All cards issued during the match will be voided, and will not count.
4. All sit outs for points, red cards and disciplinary reasons observed during the match will not count and must be reserved.
5. Subject to item 4, all eligible rostered players may participate in the match.

**25. U14/4 Alleged Team and Spectator Misconduct**

The match was played to completion with a score of Team A 2 – Team B 1. Statements were received from all parties. A hearing was held on 18 May 2005.

Team A scored its second goal in the second half. The player scoring the goal left the field to give his mother a hug, and was awarded a caution for leaving the pitch without the referee's permission. Further, the referee reports telling the player to "knock off the b.s." using the full text version. Following the match, Manager A approached the referee crew in an attempt to get their names, stating that she wanted to report the crew for using obscenities on the pitch. This resulted in a confrontation between at least one Team A parent and player and the referee crew. Statements from the referees report that they were approached *en masse* by affiliates of Team A, prompting them to call for a police presence to ensure their safety. The Center Referee reports that he made the call, but did not talk with authorities after they arrived. He also indicated that he did not personally feel threatened, and that he called at the suggestion of an assistant referee to ensure their safe passage to their vehicles. A report received from the opposition coach reported that he was among the last to leave the pitch, and that he did not see anything unusual occurring following the match.

R&D notes that this particular pitch, on any given match day, supports a large population of the local community that are not, necessarily, affiliates of NCSL teams playing that day. Given the disparity in the reports received, it is likely that these non-affiliates were mistaken for Team A supporters, and that one or more of the referees may have "overreacted" to the misperceived situation.

Although regrettable, the referee's vulgar remark to a Team A player cannot be used as an excuse to approach and confront the referee crew. The Team A acting TSL was ineffective in diffusing this situation. Teams are warned that, following a match, any confrontation with the referee crew by affiliates of a team will result in sanction.

Decision of the R&D Committee:

Team A is fined \$100. The fine must be received in the League office during normal working hours, and no later than Friday, 3 June, 2005 4:00pm, EST. Failure to meet this deadline will result in forfeiture of future matches until the fine is satisfied.

**26. U14/4 Ineligible Player**

Team A played U14, Division 4 for the Fall 2004 season. Well after the season concluded, the committee received a report from the former Assistant Coach stating that an ineligible player was used in at least three matches during the season. The official team roster was obtained from the team's Maryland Registrar, and compared to the blue match cards from all of the Team A's Fall 2004 matches. Statements were solicited from the Manager, Coach, Assistant Coach, Registrar and Club Representative. A hearing was held with the Manager and Club Representative.

The player in question did not appear on Team A's official Maryland roster. A written statement by the registrar stated that Player A was never rostered to the team during the Fall 2004 season. However, Player A was entered on 8 of the team's 9 match rosters as evidenced by the blue match cards; only the first match roster was identical to the official Maryland registrar's. Not one of the team officials stated that they were present for every match; therefore, none had absolute knowledge that the player was present or not for every single match played. Further, the Club Representative stated at the hearing that he was unable to get an affirmative statement from any team parent, stating the Player A did or did not play matches for Team A in the Fall. Team A did submit two ambiguous statements from the coach and a parent of Player A.

The team manger acknowledged responsibility for maintenance of the team's roster, player cards and blue match cards. He stated Player A was on the roster for a pre-season tournament, but then backed out prior to the season start, and claims that

his name on the blue match cards were merely an oversight from those circumstances. The manager made conflicting and misleading statements over the course of the investigation to the committee. At various times, the manager stated that: (1) he couldn't remember the player playing; (2) he wasn't at every match; (3) the player never played and; (4) the player played one match only.

The committee finds that credible evidence exists to support the claim that the un-rostered player participated during the season for Team A. The documentary evidence is clear, and the statements made, and unmade, lead to the conclusion that Player A participated. Further, the committee is disturbed by the lack of responsibility shown by Team A and, to a lesser degree, both current and present club representatives in dealing with the situation. Attempts to mislead and deceive the committee will always result in more severe sanctions.

#### Decision of the R&D Committee:

1. Manager A is suspended for the Spring 2005 NCSL season; a total of 9 sit outs is owed to the League
2. Results of the following matches are voided and declared forfeit in favor of the opposition. All cards issued and sit outs observed will remain valid.
  - Team B 3 - Team A 0
  - Team C 3 - Team A 0
  - Team D 3 - Team A 0
  - Team E 3 - Team A 0
  - Team F 3 - Team A 0
  - Team G 3 - Team A 0
  - Team H 3 - Team A 0
3. The results of all other matches are recorded as played:
  - Team I 1 - Team A 0 (player not on roster this date)
  - Team J 3 - Team A 0 (match played to conclusion)
4. The team is fined \$300 for using the illegal player. The fine must be received in the League office prior to the start of play for Spring 2005 matches.
5. The committee will review the role of the Coach and Assistant Coach in this matter and may convene a future hearing to adjudicate its findings.

#### **27. U14/4 Protest**

Team A protests the results of the subject match based on an alleged change in call by the referee, which was allegedly improperly influenced by a club linesman, and which affected the outcome of the match. The match was played to conclusion, with a result of Team B 3 – Team A 1. Statements were received from all parties, and a hearing was held 13 October 2005.

The match was officiated, at the outset, by one assigned center referee (Grade 8), one certified and rostered STAR from Team B and one club line from Team A. Team A club line who served in the match was not currently certified, nor was he listed on the team's roster as a STAR. The original STAR from Team B, had told the center referee that he had a later, commitment and that he would only serve through the first half. He was replaced by another Team B volunteer, who was not currently certified, and was therefore a club linesman.

Team A's complaint alleged that, late in the match with the score at 1 each, a ball was being played by Team B deep in the Team A defensive zone. Team A contends that the ball crossed the goal line having last been touched by a Team B player, and that the referee signaled with a motion of his arm, but no whistle, for a goal kick. The complaint further states that all Team A players had stopped playing the ball thinking that a goal kick had been awarded. A Team B forward then passed the ball into the penalty area, and a Team A player at that point "touched the ball with his hand to prepare for the goal kick", according to the complaint. At that point, Team A states that the STAR began to yell "hand ball, hand ball" and to "wildly gesture with his flag". At his point, the referee signaled for a penalty kick, using both whistle and arm signal. Team B converted successfully, and the score was then Team B 2 – Team A 1.

Team A complains that the STAR influenced the referee to change his call from a goal kick to a penalty kick, and that this influence was improper, and that the referee had already stopped play for a goal kick using a hand signal.

Statements from Team B and the referee disagree with the material facts of Team A complaint. They are in agreement with each other, and contend that:

- No whistle was blown at any time prior to the handball as a signal to stop play, nor did the referee signal for a goal kick

- The assistant referee at the end of the pitch in question never signaled for the ball being over the goal line for a goal kick
- An attacking Team B player near to the goal line struck the ball, and a defender stuck his arm out – deliberately in the opinion of the referee - at which point the whistle was blown.
- At that point, since there was a natural stoppage in play, he took the opportunity to consult with the assistant referee to make sure the ball had not crossed the goal line for a goal kick.

FIFA Laws of the Game, Law 5, states in pertinent part that the referee:

- *controls the match in co-operation with the assistant referees*
- *The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play are final.*
- *The referee may only change a decision on realizing that it is incorrect or, at his discretion, on the advice of an assistant referee, provided that he has not restarted play or terminated the match.*

FIFA Laws of the Game, Law 6, states in pertinent part, that the assistant referee's duties, subject to the decision of the referee, shall be to indicate:

- *when the whole of the ball has passed out of the field of play*
- *which side is entitled to a corner kick, goal kick or throw-in*

FIFA Laws of the Game, Law 12, states in pertinent part, that a direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player:

- *handles the ball deliberately (except for the goalkeeper within his own penalty area)*
- *A penalty kick is awarded if .... the above .... offence is committed by a player inside his own penalty area*

USSF Policy 531-8, Sect 3 states:

- *When neutral assistant referees are not assigned or fail to appear for a match as assigned, the match referee may seek the assistance of club linesman whose duties shall be as delegated to them by the referee.*

The referee's statement regarding the position of the ball in relation to the goal line, and the referee's judgment of the deliberate nature of handling the ball by the Team A defender, must be taken as fact per Law 5. Further, realizing that he could not change his decision after the penalty kick restart, the exercised good judgment in conferring with the assistant referee regarding the ball in or out of play over the goal line. Lastly, the referee was proper in awarding a penalty kick for the infraction (Law 12).

Even though it is not in evidence from the statements of the referee, who states that he only conferred with the assistant referee/club line to determine the position of the ball, HAD he conferred on the penalty, he would have been proper in doing so because per USSF policy, it is the referee who delegated the duties of the club linesman.

The committee finds that the determination of the penalty assessed against Team A was properly made, and all actions of the referee were in accordance with the Laws of the Game and /or USSF policy.

#### Decisions of the R&D Chairman:

1. The protest is denied. The match result stands as played.
2. Team A forfeits the \$200 protest fee.

#### **28. U14/5 Inappropriate Parent/Spectator Conduct**

The match was played to completion with a score of Team A 1 – Team B 0. Statements were received from all parties. A hearing was held on 20 September 2005.

The match was played with an assigned center referee and two STARS. The match was reported as a close match played by two near-even sides on a pitch in poor condition. Following the match, the center referee reported that the STAR A and some parents from Team B engaged in a heated verbal confrontation. Conflicting reports as to what transpired on the pitch immediately following the match were received by the Committee. However, most reports agreed that the confrontation continued into the parking lot, and that it was only through the action of Manager B that the situation was diffused and the would-be combatants were separated to go their own ways.

The Committee is disturbed that parent-referee tensions during a match involving STARS escalated to the point that a confrontation occurred on the pitch. Further, carrying the situation away from the pitch into the parking lot is a direct and clear violation of the parent's code of conduct. Teams, and individuals when known, will be held to the letter and spirit of these Codes. In this instance, the identities of those responsible for escalating the tensions are known. The proactive action taken by Team B is noted. The Committee thanks Manager B for his actions in stabilizing the situation after the match.

Decision of the R&D Committee:

Parent B and Parent A are each suspended for two matches for violation of the Parent's Code of Conduct. The committee recognizes that Team B imposed 1 match suspension of Parent B (already served), who will therefore owe 1 more match. These individuals must follow the guidance in the NCSL R&P manual regarding suspensions of coaches and team officials, and must remain at least 100 yds from the pitch for the period 30 minutes before to 30 minutes following the match.

**29. U13/1 Failure to Notify Opponent of Referee Family Relationship**

The match was played to completion with a score of Team A 5 – Team B 0. Statements were received from all parties. A hearing was held on 28 September 2005.

A referee officiated the match in which his son participated as a player. Prior to the match, Manager B stated that she approached the referee with the blue match card, and upon greeting him, recognized him from a previous encounter. Team B states that the manager specifically asked the referee if he was related to anyone on Team A, to which he answered in the negative. The referee's statement conflicts with Team B, stating that Team B remarked that they had seen him at a tournament prior, but that no specific question was asked about familial relationships.

Coach A's written statement indicates, in part: *"At no point in time did any Team B official ask me, my assistant coaches or my manager about [the /referee] and a possible conflict of interest because we have no reason to deny the fact that he is a parent on our team"*. At the hearing, Coach A stated that the Team A staff did not take the proactive approach to inform Team B that the referee assigned was the father of a Team A player.

Coach A stated that, in a conversation with the parent/referee the week before the match, he learned that the referee would be at the OBGC complex, officiating a match on another pitch. Upon arrival at OBGC, it was apparent that no other matches were scheduled, and that the parent/referee's assignment had the incorrect field listed, and that he was indeed assigned to there match. Coach A stated that he did not feel compelled by league rule to inform his opponent of the familial relationship between the referee and the Team A player.

The referee stated that he was surprised to learn that he was assigned to his son's match, he was somewhat embarrassed, thinking he was assigned to the pitch next to his son's match. The referee stated that it was only at the pitch, when he compared the match number with his assignment, that he realized he was assigned to his son's match. Questioning of the referee at the hearing revealed that he was unaware of the referee code of conduct, which discourages officiating matches of family members, and in divisions in which family members are placed. Further, the referee stated that he was unaware the previous week where his son's match was, and that he did not have the purported conversation with the coach regarding the assignment on the pitch next to his son's match. The referee reports that he was approached by Manager B, who stated that she did recognize him, but his statement omits any mention that Manager B asked about his relationship with Team A players.

NCSL Rules and Procedures, Sect IV.B stated that BOTH the referee crew and the team utilizing the family member as a referee, has an obligation to inform the opposition and to get agreement of both coaches, which must be not on the blue match card. Clearly, Team A was negligent in the informed consent and written agreement requirements of the Rules and Procedures. Further, League rules suggest that teams should *"err on the side of informing their opponent that an apparent conflict of interest exists."*

The committee is disturbed by the cynical attempt to manipulate both the match official and the hearing proceedings. Team A displayed blatant disregard for the hearing notice, arriving late and without the team manager and disrupting the proceedings when the committee attempted to question the match referee. A separate report on this subject has been filed with the League President. The committee will sanction any willful violations of the hearing notice, with no prior attempt to communicate with the committee. Further, any untoward behavior displayed at the hearings not in accordance with the NCSL Leader's Code of Conduct will be sanctioned.

Decisions of the R&D Committee:

1. The match result is voided, and declared a forfeit: Team B 3 – Team A 0. All cards issued during the match will stand, and all sit outs observed will be valid.
2. Team A is fined \$200 for actions related to the hearing:
  - Manager A's failure to show as required by the hearing notice, with no prior communication for reschedule or notification of conflict.
  - Coach A's disruption of the hearing, attempting to silence the testimony of the match referee, resulting in termination of the hearing proceedings.

The fine must be received in the League office during normal working hours, and no later than Friday, 14 October, 2005 4:00pm, EST. Failure to meet this deadline evidenced by non-receipt, late, or incomplete fine will result in forfeiture of at least one match.

### **30. U13/2 Coach and Team Misconduct Following Match**

The match was played to completion with a score of Team A 1 – Team B 1. Statements were received from all parties. A hearing was held on 2 November 2005.

The referee reported that the match was played with no incidents or cards being shown during play. On one occasion, the referee reports that Coach A was verbally warned (no card) to cease making comments on calls, but that this was a minor situation.

During the team handshake following the match, Player A called Player B a derogatory name. Player B became enraged, challenged Player A, and moved toward him in an aggressive manner. At this point, Coach A entered the conflict, stepped between the two players, and physically grabbed Player B. Reports conflict as to the exact extent of this action, however all are in agreement that Coach A did grab the youth player. Team B contends that Player B was shaken with sufficient force that he almost lost his balance. Further, Team B contends that Coach A issued a challenge for the youth to fight him. Coach A states that he did intercede, grabbed Player B by both arms and walked him away towards the Team B bench.

Following these actions, the referee became aware of the situation and approached the scene, having been previously engaged in a conversation at midfield. The referee witnessed a confrontation between Coach B and Coach A. The referee reports that the coaches were embroiled in aggressive and abusive behavior towards each other, which involved the use of threats by both and obscenities by Coach B. The referee reports that he should have shown both a red card at that point, but did not due to confusion over FIFA and NCSL directives.

The committee is dismayed by the lack of leadership and responsibility demonstrated by the teams, especially the coaches. At the hearing, both coaches were asked to identify steps that could have been taken to ensure that future incidents of this type did not occur. Neither coach would accept responsibility to implement an effective strategy, citing the need for match officials to be available to monitor the post-match interactions.

The committee will harshly sanction incidents of egregious violation of NCSL Leader's Code of Conduct with suspensions. Players responsible for instigating confrontations will be sanctioned with suspensions.

The Committee also finds that Coach A's action in touching a youth player in a state of agitation and anger was totally inappropriate. The committee especially notes that the argument between the players was limited to verbal taunts and posturing prior to the coach's involvement; no blows had been struck. Coach A had many options available to diffuse the situation, including inserting himself between the potential combatants, use of dialog and pulling back Player A (his son), rather than touching an opposition player.

Due to the seriousness of this incident, and the fact that Coach A was sanctioned for 5 matches in Spring 2005, the Committee debated, at length, the notification of VYSA under Article VII, Section 7 of its bylaws. This article enables a member organization to increase the scope of sanctions to all VYSA members. The decision of the Committee on this matter is detailed in item (3) below.

#### Decisions of the R&D Committee:

1. Player A and Player B are each suspended for 1 match. This suspension must be served in the next match actually played, in accordance with all provisions of NCSL Rules and Procedures, Section V.
2. Coach B is suspended for 2 matches. This suspension must be served in the next two consecutive matches actually played, in accordance with all provisions of NCSL Rules and Procedures, Section V.
3. Coach A is suspended from all NCSL related team and club activities, inclusive of recruiting, team meetings, practices and league matches, until 30 June 2006. This suspension includes serving as a team or club official in any capacity. Further, Coach A is banned from attending any NCSL match, practice or event as a spectator. Failure to abide by this suspension order will result in a disciplinary hearing, and possible further sanction, and will automatically trigger notification to VYSA under Bylaw Article VII, Section 7.
4. Coach A is ordered to complete the course offered by the Positive Coaching Alliance, and submit proof prior to reinstatement as a team official.

Team B appealed both suspensions and requested the one game suspension to Player B be reduce to a warning and the two game suspension to Coach B be reduced to one game

The basis of the Team B appeal can be summarized as follows:

1. R&D wrongly decided the merits of the case;
2. R&D misapplied sanctions to the coach and player; and
3. R&D decisions were inconsistent with established precedent.

During the appeal hearing, Team B representatives spent considerable time explaining what happened at the conclusion of the match. Team B's position was Player B did nothing to warrant the one game suspension and the foul and abusive behavior of Coach B did not rise to a level to warrant a two game suspension. In the opinion of Team B, the sanctions issued to Player B and Coach B were excessive. Team B representatives were unable to identify any errors that R&D made.

The R&D Chairman stated that in the opinion of the committee, Player B did participate in the altercation at the end of the match. R&D further stated Coach B's behavior violated the Leaders Code of Conduct. In its deliberations, the R&D Committee considered all the written statements and oral testimony presented by both teams during the hearing. In the opinion of the R&D Chairman, the sanctions issued by the committee were consistent with established precedent.

The purpose of the appeals hearing is not to substitute the opinion of the appeals committee for the opinion of the R&D Committee but to determine if the R&D Committee made any errors in process, procedure, or precedent in reaching its decision.

In the unanimous opinion of the appeals committee, the R&D Committee made neither error in process or procedures nor in evaluation in reaching its decision.

#### Decision of the Appeals Committee:

The appeal is denied and the suspensions must be served as directed in the R&D decision issued on November 7, 2005.

#### **31. U13/3 Protest**

The match was played to completion with a score of Team A 3 – Team B 1. A protest of the match result was filed by Team B asserting that Coach A failed to observe a proper sit out. Statements were received from all parties. A hearing was held on 18 May 2005, with both teams sending representatives.

The Team B protest alleged that Coach A was present within 30 yds of the pitch, immediately, prior to, during and immediately after the match. Statements received from Team A prior to the hearing admitted that this was true, a fact which was affirmed at the hearing. Further, Team B alleged that Coach A was in cell phone contact with the bench, and interacted with players both prior to and after the match. This fact was disputed by Team A. Prior to the hearing, the Team A Club Representative informed the Committee that, based on its own investigation, Team A had decided to suspend Coach A for 3 matches. Team A contends that the match result was in no way affected by the presence of Coach A.

Aside from the requirements that protests indicate how the match result may have been affected, League rules are clear on the definition and prescribed sanctions for failure to observe proper sit outs. NCSL Rules and Procedures, Sect. V. G-9, details requirements of a valid sit out for a coach, namely that the coach must not be within 100 yds of the pitch 30 minutes prior to the match until 30 minutes following the match. R&P Sect. V.D-3.3 states that failure to observe sit out procedures will be reviewed by R&D, and may result in forfeits for using suspended personnel. Finally, R&P Sect. V.H-5.b states that all matches played with an ineligible player or coach will be forfeited by the R&D Committee.

The prescribed sanction for failure to observe a sit out is a three match suspension. R&D endorses the Team A Club action, and appreciates the proactive response by Team A in handling its own affairs.

#### Decision of the R&D Committee:

The protest is granted and the fee will be returned to Team B. The match result will be recorded as forfeit: Team B 3 – Team A 0.

#### **32. U13/3 Coach Ejection and Failure to Leave the Pitch**

The match was played to completion with a score of Team A 4 – Team B 2. Coach A had been dissenting of the referee's and assistant referee's calls throughout the match. In approximately the 43<sup>rd</sup> minute of play, Team B was awarded a penalty kick. At that point, Coach A's behavior became "unbearable" in the words of the referee. The referee then asked the coach to control his temper, but the coach only responded with more agitation and told him that he would "see him after the game." Following this, the referee ejected Coach A, and suspended the match awaiting the coach's departure. Coach A left the team technical area, but only went as far as the area behind the opponent's goal and sat there. The referee then demanded that

Coach A vacate to the parking lot, and he was escorted there by one of the team's parents. Following the match, Coach A returned to apologize for his behavior to the referee, who advised that "his apology was accepted".

Coach A's ejection from the match required that he immediately leave the pitch, and retire at least 100 yards, until 30 minutes after match completion. (R&P Manual Sect. V.G-1). Coach A did not adhere to this requirement, and caused the match to be delayed for a period of time. In addition, although the coach returned to apologize to the referee for his actions, he returned to the pitch before the 30 minute exclusionary period had expired. Team officials MUST be aware of sit out and ejection rules and follow these precisely. Many of these rules are in place to protect match officials, as well as the coach.

#### Decision of the R&D Committee:

In addition to the red card suspension for the ejection Coach A is suspended 1 additional match. This additional suspension must be served in the next regularly scheduled game and played NCSL League contest, and documented in accordance with the R&P Manual. The committee warns that any further ejections of this type will be met with increasingly harsh sanction.

### **33. U13/5 Protest**

Team A protest the result of subject match. The match was played to conclusion with a result of Team B 1 – Team A 0. Team A's complaint alleges that the assigned match referee misapplied League Rules pertaining to the use of STARS, which affected the outcome of the match. Team A request that the result be annulled and declared a 0 - 0 draw.

To be valid, a protest must allege a misapplication of FIFA LOTG, or League Rule; judgment calls of the Referee may not be protested (R&P V.C). Appendix X of the NCSL Rules and Procedures Manual does NOT require the referee to use two STARS from one team, as the complaint alleges. The wording is "may use". Therefore, the League rule does leave the use of STARS to the judgment of the referee. In this case, I find that the referee exercised reasonable judgment in his decision to use one STAR and one Club Linesman there was no misapplication of League rule. Further, USSF Policy 531-8 grants wide discretion to the referee in his choice of, and use of, match officials who are neither neutral nor assigned.

The R&D Chairman reviewed the subject protest in accordance with NCSL R&P Manual, Section V.C. and found that this protest is NOT VALID. Therefore, no further action will be taken by R&D. Since the protest is not valid, the protest fee will be returned to Team A.

### **34. U13/6 Inappropriate Team Conduct**

The subject match was played to completion with a result of Team A 7 – Team B 0. The committee reviewed written reports of the match by the referee, match assistant referees and team officials of both teams. A hearing was held at the Leis Center on 13 October, 2005.

In approximately the 67<sup>th</sup> minute, a caution was issued to the Team B goalkeeper. This action was reported as inciting Team B affiliates into a continuous string of dissent through the end of the match. Following the match, referees report that they were approached as they were walking to their gear, and verbally accosted by several Team B supporters and team officials. The match officials asked that the Team B affiliates leave their area and desist in their comments, more than once. A derogatory racial remark was then made toward the referee crew by an individual who was originally identified as Assistant Coach B. The center referee issued a red card for Foul and Abusive Language, per Laws of the Game, Law 12. At the hearing, it was determined that the individual in question was NOT one of the rostered Team B officials, but was seen on, and had spent some time on, the Team B side during the match. Further, the referee testified that he had seen this same individual escort a Team B player from matches in other weekends of play at this same pitch. The Team B and club officials were unable, or possibly unwilling, to identify the individual to the committee.

The hearing summons required Team B to bring a copy of their official MSYSA roster, as well as signed codes of conduct for all team parents, players and leaders. Team B was only able to produce 7 of 17 parents signed codes, all of which had been signed in the previous week. Further, none of the leader's had a copy of the signed code. The committee noted that the signed codes were not the same as that found in the NCSL Rules and Procedures Manual, Appendix II-IV. The Team B Club Rep stated that he was unaware of the existence of these codes, or the requirement to have them signed. He further stated that the club had attempted to generate a code for signature prior to the hearing, but was unable to do so for all parties involved.

The committee is disturbed by the hostile match environment which was instigated by Team B affiliates. Parents, players and team officials are all bound by the League Codes of Conduct, and will be held to their principals. Team B players, leaders and spectators all violated the required Codes of Conduct. The club has inadequate training, and no written requirements regarding these codes. The TSL function was not in evidence, and in fact, no TSL had even signed the blue match card. It is the responsibility of the team adult leadership and the Head Coach to maintain team discipline, and to create an environment conducive to success and befitting the character of his team. The Committee finds that this control and

environment were seriously lacking on the Cosmos following this match. Finally, the Committee views any untoward action occurring following a match which requires an ejection as a serious offense. At this point, match officials have little recourse within the Laws of the, and must rely on action by the R&D process to ensure discipline.

#### Decisions of the R&D Committee:

1. Team B is fined \$600. The fine must be received in the League office during normal working hours, and no later than Friday, 28 October, 2005 4:00pm, EST. Failure to meet this deadline evidenced by non-receipt, late, or incomplete fine will result in forfeiture of at least one match.
2. Team B is ordered to institute a one match attendance ban for parents/guardians of current players. This sanction will be effective for the next home match actually played by each team. Parents/guardians must observe the sit out requirements imposed on coaches and team officials, as outlined in Rules and Procedures, Sect V.G. Only the Head Coach and team manager may attend the sanctioned match. A sit out card should be prepared and presented to the opposition for signature as evidence of completion of the attendance ban.
3. Team B Club Representative is responsible for validating the sit out, either through personal observation or delegated to another member of the Team B organization who is NOT affiliated with the team. Team B must submit the name of the designated person to R&D prior to the match requiring the suspension.

#### **35. U12/1 Protest**

This match was played to completion, using a volunteer center referee and two STAR Assistant Referees. Prior to the match, agreement was reached, per Rules and Procedures Sect. IV.B, by both sides, that the substitute Center Referee was acceptable. Team B's complaint states that Team A was awarded a goal when the ball was not completely over the goal line, as required by FIFA Laws of the Game # 10. Further, Team B states that this was corroborated by the assistant referee at the end of the pitch in question.

To be valid, a protest must allege a misapplication of FIFA LOTG, or League Rule, which affects the outcome of the match. Judgment calls of the Referee may not be protested (R&P V.C).

FIFA LOTG #5 states the following:

The decision of the referee regarding the facts concerned with the match are final.

IFAB decision # 3 associated with Law 5:

Facts connected with play shall include whether a goal is scored, or not, and the result of the match.

Judgment calls of the referee may not be protested, and the fact that the ball has completely crossed the goal line is a judgment of the referee. Further, Law 5 clearly gives responsibility for award of a goal to the referee, not the assistant referee or any other personnel. Therefore, the basis for the Team B complaint is invalid. Therefore, no further action will be taken by R&D. The protest fee will be returned to Team B and the match result stands as played: Team A 3 – Team B 2.

#### **36. U12/2 Coach Sit out Violation/Forfeit Match**

Team A and Team B played a match to completion, with the result Team A 1 – Team B 1. Prior to the match, Manager A was approached by Assistant Coach B and asked to sign a sit out certification for Coach B, who had earned a red card in a match played the previous day. The Manager A complied with the request. During the first half of the match, Team A personnel noticed the suspended coach sitting together with other team parents observing the match from the spectator's side of the pitch. The Manager A asked the group if one of them was the red carded coach who she had just certified as sitting out. The Team B group denied the presence of the coach. At half time, the Manager A asked Assistant Coach B if the suspended coach was on the spectator side of the pitch. Assistant Coach B denied his presence. Manager A then requested to see the Team B player and team official passes, and upon checking Coach B's pass, confirmed that he was indeed at the pitch. When notified of the investigation by the R&D Committee, Coach B provided a statement indicating that he was at the match, as did other members of the Team B staff and team

League rules and sanctions relating to non-observance of sit outs, and playing with suspended personnel are clear. Further, the committee is disturbed by the contempt for suspension requirements shown by Team B, and the attempt to deceive an official of an opponent. Sit out certifications are a requirement of the League and R&D Committee. Team officials are acting as an agent of this committee in certifying the observance of sit outs by opponents. Blatant and cynical attempts to deceive a certifying agent will be met with additional sanction.

#### Decisions of the R&D Committee:

1. The result of the match is voided, and declared a forfeit with a score of Team A 3 – Team B 0.
2. Card(s) issued during the match, if any, will stand.
3. Coach B is suspended for 3 matches: 1 for the original red card, and 2 disciplinary. These suspensions must be served in the next three consecutive matches actually played by Team B. Team B is reminded to observe all sit out procedures as outlined in the Rules and Procedures Manual, Section V.
4. Team B is fined \$300. The fine must be received in the League office no later than Friday, 29 April, 2005 4:00pm, EST. Failure to meet this deadline will result in forfeiture of all future matches until the fine is satisfied.

#### **37. U12/3 Inappropriate Conduct**

The League received a report from the match referee of inappropriate conduct by affiliates of Team A during and following the subject match. Team Sportsmanship Liaison A was unaware of his duties during the match, and became embroiled in a verbal confrontation with the referee and a couple of Team A parents regarding a throw-in call. Following the match, Team Sportsmanship Liaison A approached the referee and began a verbal tirade, including the phrase: "I don't want to see you again." The referee discussed the incident with the Coach A, who was present, and promptly made a report to the League.

Team A representatives stipulated to the facts of the incident, as related by the referee. Team A voluntarily sanctioned Team Sportsmanship Liaison A with a 3 match suspension, and reported this to R&D.

The Committee will endorse club sanctions, if appropriate, in lieu of taking further action at the League level. The sanction issued by Team A is consistent with actions taken by the Committee for single incidents of affiliate misconduct.

#### Decisions of the R&D Committee:

1. R&D endorses the club action to ban Team Sportsmanship Liaison A for a total of three matches. Team A is warned that further incidents of this type will result in an R&D hearing, taking into account the pattern of actions related to this incident. Sanctions will be levied based on the pattern, as well as the individual incident being investigated.
2. Team Sportsmanship Liaison A is barred from serving as Team Sportsmanship Liaison for any NCSL team for the Spring 2006 season.

#### **38. U12/5 Abandoned Match**

The match was abandoned in approximately the 35<sup>th</sup> minute with the score Team A 2 – Team B 2. Statements were received from all parties and a hearing was held 20 September 2005.

No referee was assigned to this match. The coaches mutually agreed to have an affiliate of Team A volunteer referee the match, in accordance with NCSL Rules and Procedures IV.B. The first half ended with some controversy surrounding the award of a penalty to Team A, which was successfully converted with a score of Team A 2 – Team B 1. Prior to the second half, both teams agreed that the volunteer referee should revert to that of a Team B affiliate. Statements received from all parties indicate that calls made in the second half were more controversial than those in the first, with one report of a "heated" exchange between the two coaches. Shortly thereafter, the coaches agreed to abandon the match because, as one coach related "the entire game was devolving into a mess."

All teams must be aware of their rights and responsibilities relating to match day preparations. These are clearly outlined in Rules and Procedures, Sect IV. It appears that some pressure was applied by Team B to elicit the agreement of Team A to play a match with a volunteer referee. Further, teams should be aware that once agreement is reached to play a match with a volunteer referee, the match is an official match under all rules of the League, cognizant state association and USYSA. The volunteer referee can officiate the match with the assurance that match incidents will be adjudicated just as if the match had an assigned neutral official.

In this case, the team's agreement to change referees at half time, without a valid medical or other acceptable reason, was an incorrect application of League and USSF procedure. Further, once begun, a match must be played to completion unless earlier terminated or abandoned by the match referee for reason(s) outlined in League rules or FIFA Laws of the Game. None of these conditions existed, and the coaches agreement to voluntarily abandon the match because they did not like nor agree with calls by the referee is a breach of League rules and the Leaders Code of Conduct. Teams are reminded that volunteer/emergency match officials MUST be accorded the same authority and respect as neutral assigned referees.

#### Decision of the R&D Committee:

The match is declared a "non-match." No score will be recorded and no points will be awarded. It will not be replayed and will be removed from the division schedule.

Team A appealed the R&D decision and requested that the game be rescheduled as previously agreed among the coaches and managers of both teams at the pitch when the game was abandoned.

The basic facts as to what happened are not in dispute:

1. no assigned referee showed to center the match
2. both teams agreed to play the match with a volunteer from the WSC team
3. both teams agreed at half time to allow a volunteer from the STER team to referee the second half
4. both teams had problems and disagreements over calls made by both volunteer referees
5. both teams agreed to abandon the match after the start of the second half and request that the league reschedule the match

The basis of the appeal can be summarized as follows:

1. R&D erred in its review of the underlying facts and the reasons for the abandonment of the match.
2. R&D erred in its application of NCSL and FIFA rules and procedures.
3. R&D erred by ignoring established NCSL precedent in dealing with abandoned matches.

During the appeal hearing, Team A emphasized that the reason the match was abandoned, in the second half, was due to the fact that the Team B volunteer lost his composure and temper. Team A asserted that when both teams recognized that the Team B volunteer could not complete the match, both coaches agreed to abandon the match. Team B representatives did not dispute the basic facts or assertions made by Team A.

The R&D Chairman stated the following during the appeal hearing:

1. both teams were ignorant of League rules and procedures relating to playing with a volunteer match official
2. the decision to commence the match with a volunteer was a joint decision and once commenced the match was a legitimate match
3. the first chosen volunteer was summarily dismissed by joint decision of the two coaches
4. at the point that the original volunteer was dismissed the match was technically abandoned by both teams

NCSL rules states "in no event will a team gain an advantage if the committee determines it to be responsible for termination of the match." In the opinion of the R&D Committee, both teams were responsible for the termination of the match and therefore concluded that the teams should not be rewarded with a replay.

The purpose of the appeals hearing is not to substitute the opinion of the appeals committee for the opinion of the R&D Committee but to determine if the R&D Committee made any errors in process or procedure in reaching its decision. In the opinion of the appeals committee, the R&D Committee made neither error in process or procedures nor in evaluation in reaching its decision.

Decision of the Appeals Committee is as follows:

The appeal is denied.

### **39. U12/6 Inappropriate Conduct**

The League received a report from the match referee of inappropriate conduct of Team Affiliate A following the subject match. Team Affiliate A approached the referee and began a profane and vulgar tirade related to the ability of the referee and his calling of the match. The referee waited out the incident, approached Team A officials to learn the identity of the belligerent party, and promptly made a report to the League.

Team A club representative and manager stipulated to the facts of the incident, as related by the referee. Team A voluntarily sanctioned Team Affiliate A with a 3 match suspension, and reported this to R&D.

The Committee will endorse club sanctions, if appropriate, in lieu of taking further action at the League level. The sanction issued by Team A is consistent with actions taken by the Committee for single incidents of affiliate misconduct.

Decisions of the R&D Committee:

1. R&D endorses the club action to ban the Team Affiliate A for a total of three matches. Team A is warned that further incidents of this type will result in an R&D hearing, taking into account the pattern of actions related to this incident. Sanctions will be levied based on the pattern, as well as the individual incident being investigated.

#### **40. U10/R Alleged Coach Misconduct**

The match was played to completion with a score of Team A 4 – Team B 2. Statements were received from all parties. A hearing was held on 20 September 2005.

The referee reported that Coach A had questioned several calls and loudly commented on several decisions from the outset of the match. In approximately the 15<sup>th</sup> minute, Player A went down and the referee whistled a foul against Team B. As the referee was walking toward the fouled Player A who was already on his feet, Coach A ran onto the field without getting the referee's permission. The coach was warned to stay off the pitch until summoned by the referee.

In the 45<sup>th</sup> minute, Team B scored on a play in which the Team A keeper was injured. Again, Coach A sprinted onto the field without the referee's permission. At the hearing, it was learned that the keeper was the coach's son. After the injury was attended to, and the keeper was removed from the match, the referee ejected Coach A from the match. The referee reported that the coach was reluctant to leave, but finally did so when urged by Assistant Coach A. As the coach was leaving, he said to the Assistant Coach that "he wasn't done with him [the referee] yet."

NCSL rules require that coaches and team officials ejected from a match must immediately leave the pitch. Further, the statement made by the coach as he left comes very close to the VYSA Policy on Misconduct by Coach's definition of a threatening statement towards a referee. In this particular case, the referee was very experienced. However, coaches must be mindful, especially in the younger U9 and U10 divisions, which youth referees may be assigned to officiate matches and that behavior and statements of this type will not be tolerated, and could result in severe sanctions, and the involvement of the state association.

The Committee views any untoward actions following ejection as a serious offense. The match official has no recourse, other than match suspension or termination, after an ejection is issued. In this case, R&D must act to preserve the integrity of the game.

#### Decisions of the R&D Committee:

1. Coach A is ordered to attend the next NCSL sponsored Positive Coaching Alliance Workshop, Monday, 17 October 2005, 7:00pm. Failure to attend and complete this workshop will result in suspension until reinstated by the Committee.
2. Should Coach A be issued another card in the Fall 2005 season, the card will carry an additional 5 disciplinary points, i.e. the next yellow card will carry a total of 15 points, and the next red card a total of 20 points.