

**NORTH TEXAS STATE SOCCER
ASSOCIATION, INC.**

**COMPETITIVE SOCCER POLICY
MANUAL**

REVISED DECEMBER 2008

NTSSA COMPETITIVE SOCCER POLICY MANUAL

This Policy Manual is intended to be used for informational purposes regarding NTSSA procedures and unwritten policies. This manual will be updated throughout the year as issues arise. Please be aware that this manual is intended for informational purposes only. Not all circumstances and situations that can arise are covered here. In these instances, the NTSSA Youth Commissioner or his designee has the authority to use his/her best judgment in interpreting the rules using the dictates of common sense and precedent. This document in no way circumvents the NTSSA Rules and Bylaws, but merely serves as a reference to set forth common practices.

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PROCEDURES FOR CHANGING A TEAM NAME.

- a. In order to change the name of a youth team during a soccer year, a parent of **every player** on the team must sign a “petition” to North Texas requesting that the team name be changed. A sample Petition to Change Team Name is attached. Each player on the roster must be listed on the sheet, with a corresponding space for a parent’s signature for each player.
- b. If there is a coach, assistant coach, or manager change, this information must also be listed on this petition, as well as on the add/transfer/delete sheet. This petition must be attached to an add/transfer/delete sheet listing the new team name as follows:

TEAM: New Team Name (formerly Old Team Name).

- c. The coach, assistant coach, and manager for the team under the new name must also be listed in the proper places at the top of the add/transfer/delete form. If any of these three people is being replaced, list the new person at the top of the form, and list the person being deleted in the “delete” section of the form. The add/transfer/delete sheet (with the signed petition and original roster attached) must be turned in to the Home Association Registrar. The the signed add/transfer/delete sheet (with attachments) must be received by North Texas State Soccer Association before name change becomes effective.

NOTE: This procedure is necessary, because without 100% agreement of the members of the team, the players who would be on the “new” team would be considered as transferring to another team. Pursuant to USYSA and NTSSA rules, a team is only allowed five transferred players per soccer year in order to be eligible for State Cup competition. Additionally, according to NTSSA rules, players may not transfer during a soccer year except as provided in Rule 3.10.6.

POLICY CONCERNING COMPETITIVE TEAM/CLUB NAMES

- a. NTSSA does not determine team/club names. However, each competitive team must have a distinct designation or identifier to differentiate it from all other competitive teams/clubs.
- b. NTSSA will accept registration from the team/club that has used a name for the longest period of time with no modifications required.
- c. A team/club who chooses to adopt a name that is the same as or substantially similar to a team/club name that is already being used must use some type of identifier to show distinction from the existing team/club name.

FOR EXAMPLE:

A team has used the name Purple Pandas for 2 years. Another team is formed who would also like to be named Purple Pandas. The new team is not affiliated by club with the original Purple Pandas. The new team must add a designation to their name to make it substantially different from the original Purple Pandas. They may be the DNSA Purple Pandas (if both teams are from different home associations or areas); or they may be the Purple Pandas (Smith) to designate their coach's name; or Purple Pandas McKinney; or Texas Purple Pandas, etc. Simply adding a birth year or other generic designation is not sufficient.

PLAYER RELEASES, TRANSFERS, FREE-AGENT STATUS

Player Releases:

Any player is entitled to receive a release to return to recreational soccer at any time prior to April 1 of the current soccer year, even if the player's coach refuses to sign the player release form. **Releases will not be granted after April 1.** The release (submitted prior to April 1) will be granted upon request by the player to NTSSA. It is advisable, but not mandatory, that the player's coach sign the release, mainly so the coach knows that the player has left the team, and the team may file an add/transfer/delete sheet with its home association. All player releases will be stamped "For Recreational Soccer Only." If a player obtains a release, the released player may go through their home associate and be placed on a recreational roster. If a player joins a recreational team after having been released from a competitive team, that player may not be granted a transfer later in the soccer year (July - June). According to NTSSA Rule 4.6, a player may transfer only once during a soccer year.

Player Transfers:

Players desiring to transfer to another competitive team may do so only in limited circumstances in accordance with NTSSA Rule 3.10.6. However, it is the Competitive Committee's policy that transfer requests for the following reasons will be granted without a hearing, after verification with the coach and/or manager of the team:

1. Lack of playing time, i.e., less than approximately 10-12 minutes per game on average;
2. Players wishing to transfer to another team within their club; and
3. Upon finding that a substantial misrepresentation was made on the team/club fact sheet handed out at tryouts and the incorrect information was an influential part of the player's decision to join a team.

NOTE: If the player and the coach agree that a transfer is in the best interest of the player, then a transfer can be granted without the necessity of a hearing. If the coach believes there is sufficient reason to withhold approval of the transfer, the coach should disagree with the transfer request. Transfers that are approved by the player's current coach may be granted at any time prior to April 1. Transfers that are contested by the coach may be granted only between December 1 and January 31 for U-11 through U-14 players, and December 1 and March 15 for U-15 through U-19 players. No transfers will be granted after April 1.

Free-Agent Status

Any player who has been released from a competitive team is considered a free agent and may practice with any team he/she chooses while he/she is not rostered to a team. Free agents can guest play with any team he/she chooses after obtaining a guest player release signed by the NTSSA Youth Commissioner. A separate guest player release must be obtained for each tournament a player participates in. All players are free agents after July 1 until they sign with a team.

SIGNING RELEASES

Releases are required for several purposes:

- a. For a player to be released from the team;
- b. For a player to guest play in a tournament for another team;
- c. For a player to attend a skills camp, clinic, practice, etc., with another team.

NOTE: General releases from a competitive team will not be allowed after April 1. Players who do not intend to return to their team the following year and who have not requested a release prior to April 1 are still rostered to the original team through June 30. Therefore, in order to guest play, practice, or otherwise participate in soccer activities with another team, the player must first obtain a guest player release (to guest play in a tournament) from his/her current coach prior to June 30. In order to practice with another team, the player must obtain a written acknowledgement and approval from his/her current coach for the player to practice or otherwise participate in soccer activities with another team prior to June 1. In June, players may practice with any team of their choosing.

If a coach refuses to sign a guest player release for tournament play occurring on or after June 1 (or a tournament that includes June 1), the guest player release may be presented to North Texas Soccer for approval by the youth commissioner. If the player's current team is playing in any USYSA sanctioned tournament or other USYSA sanctioned event during the time specified on the guest player release, permission to guest play will be withheld.

The rules state that the coach or manager has the authority to sign a release. The manager should sign only with permission of the coach. In some cases, it may not be possible for the head coach to sign (if the coach is out of town, if the coach has left the team, or if the coach is otherwise unavailable.) In that case, an assistant coach or a club president may sign.

HOWEVER, it is imperative that the coach and manager are made aware that someone else is signing the release. There should not even be an appearance that any situation is being hidden from the coach and/or manager. When there is a question about notification of someone else signing a release for a player, the authority of the coach and manager will prevail. Signature by a person other than the coach or manager should only be obtained as a last resort, but should never be done without the coach and manager's knowledge. The same theory holds true if a manager signs a release. It should never be done without the coach's knowledge.

Release forms are available on the North Texas Soccer web page to be printed out and filled in by hand or to be downloaded and filled out on your computer. The actual forms should never be altered in any way.

SIGNING CONTRACTS

Contracts may be signed beginning July 1, although signing July 1 is not mandatory. Players who are not or have not been registered to a team for the current soccer year may sign a contract for the current soccer year at any time on or after July 1.

A few hints regarding signing contracts:

1. Players are not required to sign on July 1, but may do so if they so desire.
2. Contracts **MAY NOT** be signed prior to July 1 and post-dated to July 1. Any coach, manager, team or club representative who tries to convince, coerce, force, or otherwise try to obtain a signature prior to July 1 should be reported to North Texas Soccer immediately!
3. Contracts should not be given out prior to July 1. Players should never be asked to make a commitment prior to July 1. It is okay for a coach to make a player aware that he/she is interested in the player, and, likewise, a player can tell a coach that he/she is interested in joining a particular team. However, commitments (oral or written) should not be made prior to July 1.

VIOLATION OF THIS RULE IS GROUNDS FOR SERIOUS SANCTIONS FROM NORTH TEXAS SOCCER, WHICH COULD INCLUDE SUSPENSION OF THE COACH FOR A PERIOD OF TIME TO BE DETERMINED BY THE COMPETITIVE COMMITTEE. SANCTIONS MAY ALSO BE TAKEN AGAINST THE CLUB, TEAM AND/OR THE PLAYERS, IF THE COMPETITIVE COMMITTEE FINDS IT WARRANTED.

PROCEDURE FOR FILING A COMPLAINT AGAINST COACH, TEAM, CLUB, OR OTHER PERSON.

Every member of North Texas Soccer has the right to file a complaint if they so desire, and that complaint will be heard by an unbiased panel. In most cases, the panel would consist of members of the NTSSA Youth Commissioner's Competitive Committee. When a written complaint is received, we will set up a hearing and notify all parties, the complainant and the accused, by letter. Both parties are required to appear at the hearing. It is very important that both parties bring witnesses and/or written statements from witnesses who cannot be present who have first-hand knowledge of the alleged rules violations.

For clarification purposes, NTSSA is not an investigative agency. NTSSA does not investigate the charges, nor is anyone who could potentially be on the panel allowed to speak with witnesses prior to the hearing. It is up to the person bringing the charges to prove their case. That can only be done by written documentation, personal testimony and/or written statements from people with first-hand knowledge -- no hearsay. The committee will hear the charges, assess the evidence, testimony, written statements, etc., and makes a decision accordingly. It is very important that both parties come prepared. Only evidence and/or testimony presented at the first hearing will be allowed if the decision is appealed to the NTSSA Executive Board.

Procedure:

- a. Person bringing charges must research the rules and provide list of alleged rules violated;
- b. Person bringing charges must send written complaint itemizing alleged rule violations, and enumerating rules allegedly violated. Specifics must be used.
- c. No hearsay testimony allowed – only people with first-hand knowledge of conversations, etc., will be allowed to testify or submit a written statement;
- d. NTSSA does not investigate, per se. Whoever brings the charges is responsible for gathering all pertinent information and documentation.
- e. NTSSA does not require minor players to be at the hearing. They are welcome to come and testify, but it is not mandatory. Parents are permitted to say what happened concerning their child.

TERMINATING A COACH PRIOR TO JULY 1.

TO DELETE (FIRE) HEAD COACH:

1. If Team/Club Fact Sheet says that the club hires/fires the coach, then only the President of the club is authorized to sign the add/transfer/delete sheet changing the coach. If the president of the club is involved with the team in question, or is unavailable for a period of time (i.e., out of town, in the hospital, etc.) and cannot be reasonably contacted, then the remainder of the board of the club can designate another board member to sign the add/transfer/delete sheet. Conflicts of interest should be avoided at all times.
2. If Team/Club Fact Sheet says that the team hires/fires the coach, then the manager must sign the add/transfer/delete sheet. A letter stating the agreement of the majority of the team must be signed by one parent of at least a majority (51%) of the players on the team and must be attached to the add/transfer/delete sheet when submitting it to the home association registrar and to North Texas State Soccer Association.
3. An add/transfer/delete sheet deleting the coach must be filed with home association registrar and turned in to NTSSA prior to becoming effective.
4. As long as the coach is still the official coach of the team, he/she has the authority to sign (or not sign) any documents concerning players on the team, including, but not limited to, guest player releases, general releases, etc.

TO DELETE ASSISTANT COACH/MANAGER:

1. Only the head coach of the team can sign add/transfer/delete sheet.
2. An add/transfer/delete sheet deleting the assistant coach and/or manager must be filed with home association registrar and turned in to NTSSA prior to becoming effective.
3. If the assistant coach puts his/her resignation in writing (including email), then authority for any of the players on the team terminates when he submits his resignation to the coach and/or manager. An add/transfer/delete sheet must also be turned in to the home association registrar and turned in to NTSSA.

DISBANDING TEAMS

Teams that disband must fill out a Release form and fill in Section 5. The coach must sign the form, attach a letter of explanation of disbandment, and send it to North Texas Soccer. The NTSSA Youth Commissioner must sign and stamp **DISBANDED TEAM** across the front. North Texas will send the completed form to the Home Association and Playing League for their information. Player(s) wishing to transfer to a competitive team or back into the recreational pool within his Home Association, must attach a signed release form along with the coach's request for disbandment.

If the team is disbanding because players have left, the team must submit a list to North Texas showing:

1. The players' names who did not leave the team causing it to disband; and
2. The players' names who did leave the team causing it to disband.

Players who leave a team and, by virtue of leaving the team, cause the team to disband, will not be allowed to transfer to another competitive team. They will be released for Recreational Soccer Only. The players who were willing to stay and now have no team because of the disbandment are allowed to transfer to other competitive teams.

RECRUITING GUIDELINES

As of January 2006, a definition of recruiting was added to the North Texas rulebook, as follows:

1. Allowing a player to participate in practice or games with a team on which the player is not rostered unless such participation is otherwise expressly authorized by these NTSSA rules, and all paperwork incident to said authorization has been fully completed prior to such participation.
2. Allowing a player to participate in camps, skills, clinics, academies or other training activities unless such participation is otherwise expressly authorized by NTSSA rules, and all paperwork incident to said authorization has been fully completed prior to such participation.
3. The act of committing to register a player or encouraging a player to register with a particular team if either such commitment or encouragement to commit occurs prior to the date upon which NTSSA rules permit such commitments to be offered or accepted. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a coach may inquire as to the future plans of players already on his roster.
4. Actively soliciting a player to break a commitment to his current team in order to join another team. This rule does not apply to Free Agents.
5. Making false, misleading, and/or negative statements which could reasonably be expected to influence the decision of a player regarding his choice of teams.
6. Offering anything of monetary value to anyone to induce a player to commit to play for a particular team; provided, offering to pay, waive or reduce a player's expenses associated with participating with a particular team does not constitute recruiting so long as (i) the offer is, in good faith, based on demonstrable financial need and (ii) any value received is in fact applied to the reasonable and necessary expenses of associated with such players participation.
7. As long as the above rules are observed, nothing herein is intended to restrict the ability of a player at any time express an a general interest in a prospective team or for a prospective team to express at any time a general interest in a prospective player.

So, please be aware that players and coaches may speak to each other. They may express a desire to be part of the same team, the coach may tell a player that he/she would like the player to come play for the team, and so on. But what cannot be done is commitment. A commitment on either side is not allowed prior to July 1.

PLAYERS WITH FOREIGN BIRTH CERTIFICATES

Every player 12 years old or older with a foreign birth certificate must fill out the USSF International Clearance Waiver form.* If the player is 12 through 16 years old and answers NO to all the questions on the Waiver (that he/she has not signed a professional contract or has not received any money or remuneration for playing soccer), the player must submit the completed Waiver form, and a \$10.00 fee (check or money order) to USSF via U. S. Mail. Immediately upon doing so, the player may be placed on a team's roster. You will need to put a copy of the paperwork sent to USSF with the player's registration paperwork.

If the player is 17 through 19 years old or answers YES to any one of the questions on the Waiver form, he/she must fill out the International Clearance Request Form* and email or fax it to USSF for approval. A copy must also be sent to Jackie at NTSSA so Jackie can be expecting the approval or denial. The player cannot be placed on the roster until NTSSA receives approval from USSF. However, if there is no response from USSF within 30 days, the player may be placed on the roster with a completed Waiver form. If you have not received notification from NTSSA in 30 days saying whether the player is approved or denied, please call or email Jackie at jackie@ntxsoccer.org or fax 972-242-3600 and she will get the Wavier from USSF.

***EXCEPTIONS:** The following groups of players do not need to fill out a waiver or clearance form:

Players with foreign birth certificates that are 4 through 11 years old.

Players with foreign birth certificates that have lived in the United States since before they were twelve (12), only need to show proof that they have lived in the US since before they were twelve (12) (school records, registration with NTSSA, doctor etc.).

Players with foreign birth certificates that have become American citizens need to show proof of their American citizenship.

PREMIER LEAGUE POLICIES

The USYS Premier League rules state that North Texas Soccer determines the teams that may apply for acceptance into Premier League to represent North Texas Soccer.

It is the intent of North Texas Soccer to choose the 4 highest finishing returning teams from the U13-U17 Division 1 of the Boys' Classic League and from the Lake Highlands Girls Classic League from the previous soccer year (to be U14 – U18 teams for the upcoming soccer year). A “returning” team is defined as a team that has at least eight (8) players returning from the team as of April 1 of the previous soccer year.

If fewer than four teams in Classic League Division I meet the 8-returning-player requirement, North Texas Soccer will field two (2) teams for Premier League play, provided two teams have 8 returning players. If less than 2 teams have 8 returning players, North Texas Soccer will not field any teams in that age division. Division I teams that return at least 8 players from the previous soccer year must be playing in Classic League Division I the following soccer year to be eligible for Premier League.

North Texas Soccer reserves the right to change the policy as circumstances dictate.