

# **Marin COED Soccer League**

## **Disciplinary Committee Operating Guide**

### **Introduction**

The Marin COED Soccer League is built around recreational play, safety, sportsmanship, community, and fun. Its purpose is to provide adults with a safe and enjoyable opportunity to play coed soccer while building community, fitness, respect, and good sportsmanship.

The Disciplinary Committee (DC) helps protect those values when incidents occur that may affect player safety, fairness, sportsmanship, or the spirit of the League. The League Bylaws establish the DC as the committee responsible for reviewing incidents that may impact these core values.

The DC is not intended to be a punishment-first body. Its role is to review concerns carefully, consider the available information, make fair and consistent decisions, and help teams move forward in a way that protects the League community.

When reviewing an incident, the DC should focus on four questions:

1. What happened?
2. What information can be reasonably verified?
3. How did the conduct affect safety, fairness, sportsmanship, or the spirit of the League?
4. What action best protects the League moving forward?

These questions should guide every discussion, regardless of the type of incident being reviewed

### **The Spirit Behind the Process**

The DC process should reflect the same values we expect on the field.

Players are encouraged to compete and enjoy the game, but emotional and physical safety must always take priority over competitiveness. The DC should approach every case with that principle in mind.

The DC works best when members:

- Stay focused on League values.
- Listen before reaching conclusions.
- Separate facts from opinions.
- Avoid making the process personal.
- Apply standards consistently.
- Communicate clearly and respectfully.
- Look for opportunities to improve future behavior, not simply assign punishment.

The Committee should remember that its responsibility is not to determine whether someone is a good or bad person. Its responsibility is to evaluate conduct and determine whether that conduct was consistent with League expectations.

Because DC members often review incidents they did not personally witness, objectivity is especially important. Reports may include different perspectives, incomplete details, or conflicting accounts.

### **What the DC Reviews**

The DC reviews serious incidents that may affect player safety, fairness, sportsmanship, or the spirit of the League. Examples include:

- Serious foul play.
- Violent conduct.
- Spitting at another person.
- Offensive, insulting, or abusive language or gestures.
- Receiving a red card for any reason.
- Physical or verbal threats.
- Repeated yellow card issues.
- Sideline or post-game incidents that fall outside the spirit of the League.
- Conduct that may not have resulted in a card but still raises a serious safety or sportsmanship concern.

Not every DC matter begins with a referee decision. Some incidents occur away from the referee, after a match, or on the sidelines. Even when no card is issued, the DC may review conduct that raises a serious concern about player safety or the spirit of the League.

### **Team Reps Are the First Line of Support**

Team Reps play a central role in protecting the spirit of the League.

At games, Team Reps promote inclusion, fair play, safety, and sportsmanship. They also work with referees and opposing Team Reps to manage player behavior and help prevent situations from escalating.

When a game begins to feel unsafe, overly aggressive, or unsportsmanlike, Team Reps should act early rather than wait for the situation to worsen. They are expected to:

- Communicate concerns to the opposing Team Rep and referee.
- Take reasonable steps to calm or remove players before behavior escalates.
- Support the referee in maintaining a safe and respectful environment.
- Pause or stop play when necessary to restore control.
- Report serious incidents within 24 hours.
- Communicate DC decisions to their players.
- Act in the best interests of the League, even when doing so may conflict with short-term team interests.

The strongest disciplinary process is one in which Team Reps help address concerns early, before they become formal disciplinary matters.

### **Reporting an Incident**

Serious incidents must be reported to the Disciplinary Committee within 24 hours of the match. Team Reps, Team Captains, and referees should use the League's official [Incident Report Form](#).

The form supports consistent, objective, and complete reporting. This helps the DC understand incidents clearly and apply a consistent approach across cases. Reports should focus on facts and observations rather than conclusions or recommendations.

When completing the form:

- Describe what you personally saw and heard.
- Identify the players, teams, and officials involved.
- Describe any efforts made to de-escalate the situation.
- Note any communication with the opposing Team Rep or referee.
- Describe any injuries, threats, or safety concerns.
- Avoid speculation regarding intent.
- Distinguish factual observations from personal opinions.

The most useful reports allow someone who was not present to understand what occurred based solely on the information submitted.

### **Opening a DC Case**

Once an incident report is received, the DC Chair should acknowledge receipt and determine whether a formal review is necessary.

Not every report requires a lengthy investigation. Some incidents are straightforward and can be resolved quickly. Others may require additional information before the Committee can make a decision.

When opening a case, the Chair should:

- Confirm receipt of the report.
- Schedule a discussion with the DC to review the case and define next steps.
- Coordinate with the Referee Coordinator to get the referee's perspective and report.
- Determine whether additional reports are needed.
- Determine whether any player should be temporarily suspended pending review.
- Create a record in the disciplinary database.

At this stage, the goal is not to reach a conclusion. The goal is to make sure the Committee has enough information to evaluate the incident fairly.

## **Role of the DC Chair**

The Chair is responsible for coordinating the disciplinary process and helping the Committee operate consistently from season to season.

The Chair serves as the primary point of contact for disciplinary matters and is responsible for keeping cases organized, documented, and moving forward in a timely manner.

Typical responsibilities include:

- Receiving incident reports.
- Organizing supporting information.
- Scheduling DC discussions.
- Facilitating Committee meetings.
- Coordinating communication with Team Reps.
- Drafting decision letters.
- Maintaining the disciplinary database.
- Tracking probation and suspension periods.
- Preserving records for future Committees.

The Chair facilitates the process but should not make decisions independently. Disciplinary decisions belong to the Committee as a whole.

## **Role of DC Members**

DC members are expected to approach every case with fairness, professionalism, and a League-first mindset.

Members should review available information before discussions and participate actively in Committee deliberations. Because disciplinary matters often involve teammates, friends, or long-time League members, DC members must be willing to set aside personal relationships and focus on the facts of the case.

DC members are expected to:

- Review reports and supporting information.
- Ask questions that help clarify facts.
- Listen respectfully to differing viewpoints.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Disclose conflicts of interest.
- Participate in decisions and votes when required.

The Committee works best when members are willing to challenge assumptions, consider alternative explanations, and remain focused on the League's long-term interests.

## **Conflicts of Interest**

Because the League is a close-knit community, conflicts of interest will occasionally occur.

A conflict does not mean someone acted improperly. It simply means there is a relationship or circumstance that could affect, or appear to affect, a member's objectivity.

Examples include:

- Being directly involved in the incident.
- Witnessing the incident as a primary participant.
- Being on the same team as an involved player.
- Having a close personal relationship with an involved player.
- Having already expressed strong opinions about the incident before the review begins.

When a conflict exists, the member should disclose it to the Committee and recuse themselves from discussion and voting.

Maintaining trust in the process is often more important than the outcome of any single case.

## **Reviewing a Case**

The DC's responsibility is to understand what happened as accurately as possible using the information available.

Because Committee members are rarely present during incidents, they often rely on reports from Team Reps, referees, players, and other witnesses. Those reports may contain conflicting perspectives.

When reviewing a case, the Committee should:

- Focus first on facts that can be reasonably verified.
- Identify areas where reports agree and where they differ.
- Consider whether additional information is needed.
- Distinguish observations from opinions.
- Consider the actions of all parties involved.
- Evaluate the impact of the conduct on safety, fairness, sportsmanship, and the spirit of the League.

The Committee should avoid making decisions based primarily on reputation, personal relationships, or assumptions about intent. The question is not "Who do we believe?" but rather "What information is most reliable and what conclusion is supported by the available facts?"

## **Decision-Making**

The Committee should strive to reach consensus whenever possible.

Consensus encourages thoughtful discussion and helps ensure that all perspectives have been considered. However, consensus should not prevent timely decisions.

When consensus cannot be reached, the Chair may call for a vote.

Each participating DC member receives one vote. Members who have recused themselves due to a conflict of interest do not participate in the discussion or voting.

The Committee should document the basis for significant decisions so future Committees can understand how similar situations were handled. Consistency across seasons is one of the most important goals of the disciplinary process.

## **Communication, Confidentiality, and Timeliness**

The effectiveness of the disciplinary process depends on clear communication, respect for confidentiality, and timely decision-making.

### **Communication of Decisions**

The DC communicates its decisions to the Team Reps involved. Team Reps are responsible for communicating those decisions to affected players and helping ensure that any disciplinary actions are carried out appropriately. Team Reps serve as the primary point of contact between the League and their players.

After the DC has issued its final decision, players should not contact individual DC members to request clarification, provide additional context, argue the decision, or seek reconsideration. Any operational questions about implementation should go through the Team Rep. If the DC determines that additional information is needed, the DC Chair will coordinate that communication.

### **Confidentiality**

The DC frequently receives information from Team Reps, referees, players, and witnesses that is intended solely to assist the Committee in conducting an objective review. Maintaining confidentiality encourages honest reporting and helps protect the integrity of the disciplinary process.

Information submitted to the DC should be treated as confidential and used only for disciplinary purposes.

The DC is not required to share incident reports, witness statements, internal discussions, votes, notes, or supporting materials with the parties involved in an investigation. Decision letters should communicate the Committee's conclusions and disciplinary actions without disclosing confidential information provided during the review process.

DC members are expected to maintain confidentiality regarding both the information received and the Committee's internal deliberations.

### **Timely Review of Incidents**

The DC should make every reasonable effort to review incidents promptly.

Timely decisions provide guidance to Team Reps, help maintain consistency in League operations, and reduce uncertainty regarding player eligibility and team management. Because League matches occur weekly, delays may make it difficult for Team Reps to manage players appropriately before the next scheduled game.

Whenever practical, the DC should review reported incidents and communicate its decisions before the next scheduled League match involving the affected team or player.

While thoroughness and fairness should never be sacrificed for speed, timely action remains an important responsibility of the Committee. The Bylaws specifically note that DC members are expected to act promptly in order to provide guidance and resolution to affected teams and players.

### **Possible Outcomes**

The DC has broad authority to determine the response that best protects the League and supports its values.

Possible outcomes include:

- No further action.
- Verbal reminder or coaching conversation.
- Probation.
- Suspension.
- Permanent removal from the League.
- Other actions deemed necessary to protect the League.

Whenever possible, disciplinary actions should encourage learning, accountability, and improved behavior. The goal is to reduce future incidents while maintaining a safe and enjoyable environment for all participants.

## **Suspensions**

A player who receives a red card is automatically suspended for at least one League match. An incident investigation will be opened by the DC. If the DC determines that additional review is required, the suspension remains in effect until the DC completes its review and issues a final decision.

For serious incidents that do not involve a red card, the DC Chair, in consultation with DC members, may impose a temporary suspension when needed to protect player safety, fairness, sportsmanship, or the orderly operation of the League.

When issuing a suspension, the DC should communicate:

- The reason for the suspension.
- The duration of the suspension.
- Any conditions for returning to play.
- Whether probation or additional requirements will apply following the suspension.

All suspensions should be documented in the disciplinary database.

The Team Rep is responsible for ensuring that suspended players do not participate in League activities during the suspension period. Direct communication from the DC to a player is generally only necessary when the DC is conducting an active investigation or determines that direct communication is required.

## **Probation**

Probation is intended to provide players or teams with an opportunity to demonstrate improvement while remaining active in the League.

A player or team on probation may continue participating unless the DC determines otherwise. During the probation period, Team Reps are expected to monitor behavior, address concerns early, and help prevent future incidents.

Probation notices should clearly identify:

- The reason probation was issued.
- The duration of probation.
- Behavioral expectations.
- Consequences for future incidents.

Probation should be documented in the disciplinary database and reviewed at the end of the probation period.

At the conclusion of the probation period, the DC should notify the player and Team Rep that probation has been successfully completed and the matter is closed. The communication should reinforce the League's expectations regarding safety, sportsmanship, and respect moving forward.

### **Permanent Removal from the League**

Permanent removal is the most serious action available to the DC and should be reserved for situations where a player's conduct is fundamentally inconsistent with the League's values of safety, sportsmanship, respect, and community.

A player who is permanently removed from the League is no longer eligible to participate in League activities or future League registration.

The DC should document the basis for the decision and maintain records sufficient to identify suspended and permanently removed players in the future. The disciplinary database should be maintained in a manner that supports consistency, preserves institutional knowledge, and helps prevent permanently removed players from re-entering the League unnoticed.

The Team Rep of the affected team should be notified of the decision and any implications for future registration or League participation.

## Appendix A

### Sample Disciplinary Committee Decision Letter

*Dear Team Reps,*

*The Marin COED Soccer League Disciplinary Committee (DC) has completed its review of the incident reported following the match on [Date].*

*The Committee reviewed the available information, including incident reports, referee information, witness statements (when available), and any other relevant documentation submitted during the review process.*

*After evaluating the information received, the Committee has reached the following determinations.*

#### **1. Findings**

*The Committee determined that certain conduct reviewed during this investigation was inconsistent with the League's expectations regarding safety, sportsmanship, respect, and the spirit of recreational play.*

*The DC's responsibility is to evaluate conduct and its impact on the League community. Decisions are based on the information available to the Committee and are intended to protect player safety, support sportsmanship, and promote a positive playing environment for all participants.*

#### **2. Disciplinary Actions**

*Based on the findings of this review, the Committee has determined the following actions are appropriate:*

*Probation*

*[Player Name]*

*[Player Name]*

*Suspension*

*[Player Name]*

*Duration: [Length of Suspension]*

*Other Actions*

*[Additional actions as applicable]*

*The Committee may apply different outcomes to different individuals based on the conduct reviewed and the circumstances of the incident.*

### **3. Clarification of Probation**

*Probation is a formal disciplinary status intended to provide a player with an opportunity to demonstrate improved conduct while remaining eligible to participate in League activities.*

*Players on probation may continue participating in League matches provided their behavior remains consistent with League expectations.*

*Any future incident involving conduct that violates League standards may result in additional disciplinary action.*

### **4. Expectations for Team Reps**

*Team Reps serve as ambassadors of the League and are responsible for helping maintain a safe, respectful, and enjoyable environment for all participants.*

*Team Reps are expected to:*

- *Address concerns before situations escalate.*
- *Work collaboratively with referees and opposing Team Reps.*
- *Support player safety and good sportsmanship.*
- *Help players understand and comply with League expectations.*
- *Communicate DC decisions to affected players.*

### **5. Closing**

*The purpose of the disciplinary process is not simply to assign consequences. The goal is to protect the values of the Marin COED Soccer League and help ensure a positive experience for all players.*

*Please communicate these decisions to the affected players and contact the DC Chair if clarification is needed regarding implementation of the actions described above.*

*Thank you for your cooperation and continued leadership.*

*Respectfully,  
Disciplinary Committee*