

The Halifax PLAYS (Players' League for Affordable Yearly Sports) Society:
Official League Disciplinary Policy

Purpose and Context:

Halifax PLAYS is a recreational sport Society, registered as a non-profit under the NS Registry (#3281353). The spirit of rules in all our Programs is to above all to: **Have fun & be safe, treat all players with dignity and respect, and keep competition secondary to having a good time.**

To this end, Halifax PLAYS retains the right to discipline Participants who act against our rules or the spirit of our Programs. In particular, gross unsportsmanlike conduct, such as the utterance of racial, religious or sexist slurs, the instigation of fights, or conducting illegal activities during Program time are Infractions that can result in disciplinary action, guidelines for which are outlined here. League Representatives volunteering on the day, and Organizing Committee Members' responsibilities and obligations are also obligated in this document.

Definitions:

“Program” or **“League”** refers to any one of leagues, games, tournaments, scrimmages or events organized under the Halifax PLAYS Society, by League Representatives approved by its Board.

“League Representative” (LR) describes any person(s) sanctioned by PLAYS to represent the organization in the provision and operation of league or program sessions organized by it. This includes, but is not limited to, organizers, *referees*, game officials, employees & Board members.

“Organizing Committee” (OC) refers to the core of volunteer League Representatives responsible for managing administrative and organizational decisions for a Program. An **OC Member** is any one of this core of volunteers that are part of the Organizing Committee.

The **“Board”** refer to the team of five Board of Directors elected for the Society for the purposes of overseeing its operation, typically at its annual Annual General Meeting.

“Participant” describes any person participating in a Program, including registered players on team rosters, sub players, volunteers, referees & other League Representatives.

“Infractions” refer to instances where Participants have violated the rules, spirit or policies of the Halifax PLAYS Societies or its participating Programs.

“Offending Participant” (OP) refers to a Participants who committed an Infraction. **“Impacted Participant”** (IP) refers to any Participants negatively impacted by the Infraction.

“Team” refers to a larger group of Participants who have typically, but not necessarily, registered as a unit requesting to play together and do so when part of the Program.

“Incident Report” refers to the form, available on-line, that a League Representative must fill, should any serious Infractions likely to require Progressive Discipline occur at a Program.

“Incident Investigation” refers to the process undertaken by Organizing Committee or Board members to investigate circumstances around an Incident, typically involving discussions with and the gathering of Witness statements from Participants involved in a serious Infraction, including the OP, League Representatives, Impacted Participants & other Witnesses.

“**Conflicts of Interest**” are defined as occurring when a OC Member or League Representative with authority to provide Disciplinary Action was involved in the Infraction as its Offending Participant or as an Impacted Participant, was on the the team of the a Participant involved in the Infraction as Offending Participant or Impacted Participant, or has close personal ties with Participants involved in the Infraction as an Offending Participant or Impacted Participant.

Policy Statement

Halifax PLAYS is to employ a **Progressive Discipline Policy**, wherein Participants in violation of Program rules or their spirit may be subject to a range of sanctions, with different levels of severity, depending on the nature of their Infraction. **This includes: (a) Verbal Reprimand, (b) Written Warning, (c) Suspension & (d) Expulsion from a Program or the Society entirely.**

The Policy is intended to empower League Representatives with the ability to discipline Participants, should this prove necessary, while also clarifying the Disciplinary Actions that should be handled by them, Organizing Committees and the Board. This Policy also empowers League Representatives to delegate responsibility to determine Disciplinary Actions where needed to the OC or Board, while further clarifying best practices to be employed when there are reasonable concerns for Conflicts of Interest from certain Infractions.

Procedures

- 1) Infractions will be adjudicated as belonging to the following four categories, based on the the schedule below, determined by their severity:
 - **Category 1:** Consuming Alcohol, cigarettes or other substances not allowed by facility regulations or Program rules; loudly protesting against other Participants and/ or League Representatives during games; breaking rules that promote safety (e.g. slide tackles); taunting a Participant, or other Infractions as determined by a League Representative.
 - **Category 2:** Repeated Category 1 Infractions; coming to a Program intoxicated; consuming legally prohibited substances at the Program; cursing directly at a specific Participant; using equipment in anger or in a dangerous fashion (e.g. throwing a bat); making a generalized threat to use physical violence; encouraging physical violence by other Participants (e.g. supporting a fight); or other Infractions as determined by a League Representative.
 - **Category 3:** Repeated Category 1 & 2 Infractions; making a threat of physical violence towards a *specific* Participant; making disparaging remarks of a sexist, racist, homophobic, trans-phobic or faithist nature; or other Infractions as determined by a League Representative.
 - **Category 4:** Repeated Category 1, 2 & 3 Infractions; fighting or assaulting a Participant with a risk, intent or result of causing physical harm; causing physical harm by other intentional actions (e.g. hitting someone with a ball on purpose); repeated use of negative or disparaging language; or other similar Infractions as determined by a League Representative.
- 2) In response to any of the above Infractions, **any authorized League Representative** is able to exercise any of the following disciplinary actions at the time of the incident:
 - **Verbal Reprimand:** Wherein the League Representative may verbally warn or advise a Player, and/ or his or her team, about the unacceptability of an Infraction.
 - **Request to Leave Premises for Date of Incident:** Wherein the League Representative may request any player to be excused from any Premises used by the Program at the date of the incident, until such time that an Incident Investigation is conducted.

- **Request to Temporarily Excuse Oneself from Game:** Wherein the League Representative may request any Participant to leave the Program temporarily, step off the field or play or otherwise take a break designed to help an agitated Participant calm (“cool”) down.
 - **League- Specific Disciplinary Techniques:** Wherein the League Representative may exercise any of the techniques specific to the Program described in its rules, such as handing out yellow/ red cards for soccer, ejections for softball or penalties for ball hockey.
- 3) **Reporting Requirements:** In response to any Infraction above, an Organizing Committee is required to submit an **Incident Report** via an on-line form to the Board within 24 hours of the Incident. Should it requested of the Board, or Infractions be of a level Category 3 or higher, full **Incident Investigations** should be conducted, with the Board informed promptly of relevant additional information that may arise. However, the Organizing Committee also has the right to request the Board conduct Incident Investigations or Disciplinary procedures in its place.
- 4) In response to any of the above Infractions, the **Organizing Committee** may able to exercise further disciplinary actions as it deems necessary. Depending on the nature of the infractions, recommendations for further discipline are outlined in the Schedule below:
- **Level 1- Verbal Reprimand:** Recommended for Category 1 Infractions, this should also include a notification that repeated Infractions may result in further Progressive Discipline & may be done in addition to a Verbal Reprimand done by another League Representative.
 - **Level 2- Formal Written Warning:** Recommended for Category 2 Infractions & ideally accompanied by a verbal reprimand, this involves a notification in writing (i.e. e-mail) describing circumstances of the Infraction, reasons for the unacceptability of the Infraction and a warning that repeated Infractions could result in further Progressive Discipline.
 - **Level 3- Suspension:** Recommended for Category 3 Infractions & always accompanied by written notice, this involves describing circumstances of the Infraction, summary of Incident Investigation without naming of other Participants involved in Investigation, reasons for the unacceptability of the Infraction & determination for the number of games Participant is suspended from, which may extend to future seasons as required.
 - **Level 4- Seasonal Expulsion for Program:** Recommended for Category 4 Infractions & always accompanied by written notice, this involves describing circumstances of the Infraction, summary of Incident Investigation without naming of other Participants involved in the Investigation, reasons for the unacceptability of the Infraction & determination that the Participant will not be allowed to participant in the Program for the Season.
- 5) An **Organizing Committee also has the right to request the Board to take over Discipline for Infractions**, & must do so in case the Board requests to take over this Process.
- 6) In case of **Conflicts of Interest** involving an OC or Board Member, the Member should excuse themselves from any Disciplinary Proceedings, either by not being involved in the decision-making of the Organizing Committee except as a Witness, or by requesting Board members uninvolved in an Infraction oversee Disciplinary Action for it. Should Conflicts of Interest be suspected, the Board has the authority to excuse the OC Member from Disciplinary Actions.
- 7) Additionally, all cases of **Seasonal Expulsion** will be examined by the Board, with consultation from the OC & their Incident Investigation. Depending on the severity of the Infraction, a determination could be made to extend an Expulsion across multiple Programs or seasons. In case of an **Extended Expulsion (Level 5 Discipline)**, the OP may **Appeal** the Board to rejoin Halifax PLAYS Programs after serving 2 years of an Extended Expulsion, although will be unable to join any Programs where OC members do not consent to their participation.

- 8) Further, with any Infraction or incident within the Program, all Participants, including League Representatives, are empowered and encouraged to call **Emergency Authorities** (i.e. police or paramedics) when they feel it will be helpful. Upon arrival of any Authorities, all Participants must cooperate fully with the Authorities who upon arrival have full jurisdiction of proceedings.
- 9) **Equity:** To ensure equity in the Disciplinary process, disciplined Participants are entitled to **Appeal** any decisions involving their removal from a game, suspension or seasonal expulsion by contacting the Board (Halifaxplays@gmail.com), upon which time Incident Reports will be examined to uphold, revise or reverse the decision of an OC. During the time of Discipline, the Participant is not allowed to participate in the Program where the Infraction has occurred.
- 10) **No Refund Policy:** Offending Participants who miss time in a Program due to Disciplinary determinations against them are not entitled to return of Program fees, in full or in part, regardless of any results from an Appeal process.
- 11) **Confidentiality:** Except where required by law, any discussions of Disciplinary Action against specific Participants or Teams are confidential & should not be discussed with players outside of League Representatives, the Organizing Committee, the Halifax PLAYS Board or Team captain(s) of Offending Participants. However, an Organizing Committee is encouraged to share this Disciplinary Policy with players & is permitted when asked to discuss precedences from previous Disciplinary Action, provided no specific Participant or Team is named or implied.
- 12) All **players must have access to the Disciplinary Policy**, and it is recommended to attach this Policy to any written notifications of Discipline provided to Offending Participants.

Team Discipline

- 13) Halifax PLAYS recognizes Infractions may be committed by Teams as a whole, either through collective action (e.g. making a disparaging chant) or through the culmination of several individual Infractions (e.g. several Teammates consuming alcohol during Program time). As such, it **empowers League Representatives to use their discretion to discipline teams with the same authorities provided them in Section (2) of this Policy**. Thus, Disciplinary means available to them is included but not limited to: Verbal reprimands of team captains; Ending games early or requesting a team leave Program Premises; Pausing game proceedings to allow teams to calm/ “cool down” & any other discipline techniques available to them in Program rules.
- 14) Halifax PLAYS also recognizes serious or repeated Infractions may require further sanction & thus **empowers Organizing Committees to use their discretion to discipline teams with the same authorities provided them in Section (4) of this policy**, with the same rights of Appeal to the Board for teams that are so sanctioned. Thus, Disciplinary means available to them is included but not limited to: Verbal reprimands; Written warnings; Suspension from games; or Expulsion from the Program, the last of which may be investigated by the Halifax PLAYS Board to determine if further sanction of Expulsion is warranted.
- 15) In addition to previous Infractions, a Team may be sanctioned for a Category 1 Infraction of **“Exclusionary behavior,”** wherein the Team is seen to have alienated a Participant assigned to their roster, for instance by providing the Participant with unequal playing time, limiting the Participant’s involvement in games due to a desire to win, contrary to the Society’s Purpose, or any other actions which can be reasonably seen as excluding another Teammate in the Program.

16) **Appeal for Individuals on Offending Teams:** Should particular individuals feel they have been unfairly disciplined for actions of their Team or other parties, due to lack of involvement in Infractions that result in sanction against their Team, they have the right to **Appeal** the application of a disciplinary action to their individual Persons, which shall then be adjudicated by the Program’s Organizing Committee or where needed, the Halifax PLAYS Board.

Guidelines

The **Board empowers League Representatives & Organizing Committees** to make Disciplinary Decisions, in accordance with these rules,. However, it maintains the **right to revise these decisions** if deemed necessary through process of Appeal or otherwise. As well, League Representations & OC Members reserve the **right to excuse** themselves from deciding Discipline, should they choose (wherein Disciplinary responsibility automatically shall transfer to the Board), but are always obligated to follow **all Reporting Requirements**.

The Board also provides a schedule summarizing **Discipline Recommendations & Disciplinary Authority for 4 Categories of Infractions**. Specified below:

Type of Infraction	Recommended Discipline for First Time Offense (Escalate to Next Category Grouping if Offense is Repeated)	Authority to Hand Out Type of Discipline
Category 1	Level 1 Discipline: Verbal Reprimand; Request to Leave Premises Temporarily or for Game; League-Specific Discipline (e.g. Penalties)	All League Representatives, Including Referees
Category 2	Written Reprimand Accompanied by Verbal Discussion	Organizing Committee or Board
Category 3	Suspension	Organizing Committee or Board
Category 4	Seasonal Expulsion	Organizing Committee or Board
Extremely Serious Infractions	Extended Expulsion	Only Board

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