

13.0 Dispute Resolution

Purpose: This process ensures that disputes are handled fairly, promptly, and efficiently, starting with parent liaisons as the initial point of contact.

Scope: The guidelines are designed to ensure clear, respectful and productive interactions among all members of our community, including players, coaches, parents, officials and volunteers.

Responsibilities: Players, coaches, parents, guardians, family, officials, and volunteers.

Procedure:

Step 1: Self-Resolution

- **Direct Communication:** If a dispute arises, the involved parties should first attempt to resolve the issue through direct, respectful communication. Refer to the SLLA Communication Guidelines for guidance on conducting these conversations.
- **Timing:** Address issues as soon as they arise to prevent escalation. Aim to resolve minor disputes within 48 hours.

Step 2: Involvement of Parent Liaison

If the dispute is not resolved through direct communication, the next step is to involve a parent liaison.

- **Contact Parent Liaison:** The concerned party should contact the designated parent liaison for their team. Provide a brief, clear description of the issue, including any relevant details and previous attempts to resolve it.
- **Parent Liaison Role:** The parent liaison will act as a neutral intermediary, facilitating communication between the parties. They will:
 - Listen to both sides of the dispute.
 - Encourage open, respectful dialogue.
 - Help identify possible solutions.
- **Timeline:** The parent liaison will aim to facilitate a resolution within one week of being contacted.

Step 3: Mediation by Coaches or Team Officials

If the parent liaison is unable to resolve the dispute, it will be escalated to the coaches or team officials.

- **Escalation:** The parent liaison will refer the matter to the coach or a designated team official, providing a summary of the issue and steps taken so far.
- **Mediation Meeting:** A meeting will be scheduled with the involved parties, the parent liaison and the coach or team official. The goal of this meeting is to mediate the dispute and reach a mutually acceptable resolution.
- **Documentation:** The coach or team official will document the dispute and the outcomes of the mediation meeting.

Step 4: Involvement of SLLA Board

If the dispute remains unresolved after mediation by the coach or team official, it will be escalated to the SLLA Board.

- **Formal Complaint:** The involved party should submit a formal written complaint to the SLLA Board, including all relevant details and documentation of previous resolution attempts.
- **Board Review:** The SLLA Board will review the complaint, gather any additional information if need, and schedule a hearing with the involved parties.
- **Board Decision:** After the hearing, the SLLA Board will make a final decision on the dispute. This discussion will be communicated in writing to all parties involved.
- **Finality:** The decision made by the SLLA Board is final and binding.

Step 5: Special Procedure for Issues Involving Board Members or Their Children.

If the dispute involves a board member or their child, follow these additional steps:

- **Direct Communication:** Attempt to resolve the issue through direct communication, following the SLLA Communication Guidelines.
- **Contact Parent Liaison:** If unresolved, contact the parent liaison, as outlined in steps above.
- **Board Review or Escalation to Independent Mediator:** If the dispute cannot be resolved through the parent liaison and involves a board member or their child, the issue will be brought to the SLLA Board to review and decide upon, excluding the involved board member from the decision-making process.
- *The Board may choose to bring the matter to an independent mediator appointed by the SLLA.*
- **Appointment of Mediator:** The SLLA will appoint an impartial mediator who is not a board member and has no direct ties to the parties involved.
- **Mediation Process:** The mediator will conduct a thorough review, including interviews with the involved parties, and facilitate a mediation meeting.
- **Resolution:** The mediator will provide a recommendation to the SLLA Board, excluding the involved board member from the decision-making process.
- **Board Review and Final Decision:** The SLLA Board, excluding the involved board member, will review the recommendation and make a final decision. This decision will be communicated in writing to all parties involved and is final and binding.

Conflict Resolution Best Practices

- **Respect and Confidentiality:** Maintain respect and confidentiality throughout the dispute resolution process. Only those directly involved should have access to information about the dispute.
- **Documentation:** Keep thorough documentation at each step, including emails, meeting notes and any other relevant records.
- **Follow-Up:** After a resolution is reached, follow up to ensure that the agreed-upon actions are implemented and effective.
- **Support:** Provide support to all parties involved in the dispute to foster a positive environment and prevent future conflicts.

Flow Chart

