



UNITED STATES ADULT SOCCER ASSOCIATION
Member of the United States Soccer Federation
Affiliated with the Federation Internationale de Football Association

Welcome to the **United States Adult Soccer Association National Cups Program**. The State Cup Commissioner is one of the most vital elements of the National Cup Program because the program actually begins with you. You will either make or break this program.

Your selection as the State Cup Commissioner was a process undertaken to provide this program with the best possible person in your State to administer this program. In most cases, your State President recommended you to the Regional Cup Commissioner, who, after serious thought, and perhaps a telephone interview with you, made the appointment to this position based on your qualifications, personality, and knowledge of the administration of soccer programs.

The title of State Cup Commissioner is not to be taken lightly. You are charged with keeping the integrity of this program at its highest level. You have the responsibility of providing information to all teams in your state, and creating excitement at participating in the National Cup Program in your State. You will be given authority to administer a part of the most prestigious soccer competition in the United States Adult Soccer Association. There are aspects of this program that will require serious determination, analytical problem solving, outstanding ethics, and the art of skillful negotiating. The title comes with a price tag on it: you must work towards the goal of having more participation in your State than the previous year, and you must administer the program in fairness and equality to all teams and players.



INTRODUCTION

This handbook has been written for the State Cup Commissioners to help each of you attain the highest level of success in your State. Throughout the handbook we will discuss the rules of the National Cups, some with the examination of the reasons behind the rules. We will discuss marketing strategies and how you can create excitement in your individual states in the promotion of the Cups program. You will also find a section on the most frequently asked questions and how to answer them in an appropriate manner.

Should you have additional questions, please contact the appropriate member of the National Cup Committee, as listed below:

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SECTION 1. STATE CUP COMMISSIONER
Rule 503 of the USASA National Cup Policies

In summary, the duties and responsibilities of the State Cup Commissioner are:

1. **Consulting with the State Association to establish deadline dates for entries in your state, and notifying the Regional Cups Commissioner of all dates, including entry deadlines and intra-state games.**

The Regional Cup Commissioner and the National Cups Committee will establish a date by which all entries must be to them. It is suggested that your entry deadline be not later than one week prior to their deadline to enable you to make copies and mail the information off so that it is received on time by the Cups Commissioner. Failure to do so may result in your teams not being allowed to participate that year.

2. **Marketing the program by distributing entry forms, flyers, emails, rule books, player pool forms, game report forms and other materials to all leagues and teams registered in your state, as well as to all USSF youth organizations whose membership may be eligible for National Cup competition.**

Marketing will be discussed later on this handbook, but it is a necessity to make sure that every single team in your state is notified of the National Cup Competition and that they are eligible to participate in it. It is also your duty to make sure that they get an entry form. This can be done through email, snail mail, faxes, or the internet.

3. **Forwarding all entry forms and fees to the Regional Commissioner in a timely manner.**

Again, it is important that all entry forms, with the fees, are sent to the Regional Commissioner by the deadline established by the region. Failure to do so may result in your teams not being allowed to participate that year.

4. **Scheduling and coordinating all state Cup games, including dates and locations, and recommending to the State Association any “closed” time periods required under Rule 301.**

Once all entries have been received you will be responsible for scheduling all games. In the appendix of this handbook you can find several matrixes of schedules that you can use, or you can use your own. You can request that your State Association have a “closed” period where league games can not be played - thus eliminating the possibility of game conflicts.

- 5. Coordinate with the State Referee Administrator/Committee and assignor, for the scheduling and assignment of all referees in the State Rounds of Competition.**

It is important that as soon as you have developed a schedule, that you notify the appropriate person in your state of the schedule so that they can begin assigning the referees for your games.

- 6. Provide every referee with a copy of the rule book and game report prior to his officiating a game. The game reports should be complete with instructions of where to send the game report when the game is over.**

Send copies of the rule books, and the game reports to the assignor or the referee committee so that they can distribute them to the referees. Make sure that you have placed instructions for where to mail the forms as soon as the game has been completed.

- 7. Resolving all disagreements regarding the dates, locations and times of intra-state Cup games in consultation with the Regional Cup Commissioner.**

It is best that you assign the fields, game times, and date for all State Cup games. However, if you allow the home team to be responsible for getting the fields, then you should pre-determine how you will solve any dispute. Put it in writing to each of the teams.

- 8. Forwarding all copies of the game reports to the Regional Cup Commissioner in a timely manner.**

After you have received the game reports, send a copy to the Regional Cup Commissioner for their records. They may need to check these records at any level of the competition if there is concern of an ineligible player.

- 9. Immediately reporting to the Regional Cup Commissioner the final determination of champions in the State Rounds of Competitions.**

As soon as a State Cup Champion has been determined in your State, then it is extremely important to get that information to the Regional Cup Commissioner by fax, phone, or email.

- 10. Administering all suspensions, and recommending to the National Cups Committee player or team suspensions and fines related to breaches of the Laws of the Game or the National Cup Policies.**

If there is a serious breach to the Laws of the game by a team, player, manager, or even a State Association, a letter should be written and submitted to the

National Cups Committee, along with your recommendation, as to what should be done.

11. Assist in the processing and decisions of protests filed for State Rounds of competition.

Protests have to be dealt with in a swift and efficient manner, as most likely they will affect the next level of the competition. It is important that once all documentation has been received, that you the State Cup Commissioner follow up by requesting additional information from your State Association (if necessary). Notify the Regional Cups Commissioner of the protest and forward a copy of all documentation, along with your recommendation, and the protest to the Cups Commissioner. If the National Cups Rules do not specifically identify an answer to the problem, the Regional Cups Commissioner will forward the information to the National Cups Committee for their determination.

12. Other duties assigned by the State Association and the Regional Cups Commissioner.

The single most important thing that each of you should have gathered from the information provided above is that **COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY** to the administration, coordination, scheduling, and success of the National Cups Program.

Most National Cup information, including updates to the program and deadlines will be provided at the Regional Meetings held twice a year. State Representatives are required to be at each of these meetings. Lobby your State hard to send you as one of the State Representatives for these meetings. Let them know the importance of your appointed position and how it is imperative that you get the information provided at these meetings first hand as it may affect your program that year.

SECTION 2. 12 STEPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM

Okay, so now you have accepted the responsibilities of the State Cup Commissioner position and you need to get busy to have a successful program. This isn't a one month out of 12 job. This is a 12 month out of 12 month job. The following steps should help guide you in doing your job well.

1. SET YOUR DEADLINES

The National Cup Committee Chairman will decide a deadline for all entries at the National level. It filters down from there. The Regional Cup Commissioners will set a regional deadline based on the National deadline. This deadline will generally be at least one week prior to the National deadline. The State Cup Commissioner will then need to establish a deadline based on the Regional deadline; again, generally one week prior to the Regional deadline. The U-23 program will most likely have a different deadline than the other cups for the sole

purpose of accommodating teams that consist of a majority of college players who do not return home to play until mid-May.

2. DETERMINE YOUR MARKETING STRATEGY

Once the deadlines have been established, it is important for you to determine what is the best method of getting information out to your teams and to get their interest level peaked. An entire chapter has been devoted in this handbook to marketing strategies. Read this chapter and decide which of these that you can use in your state that will be the most helpful. Outline your strategy on paper so that you have a reliable source of notes to refer to. Keep adequate records of what works and what doesn't work in your state.

3. ESTABLISH A PROPOSED BUDGET

In order to do your job, and do it well, you will need funding from your State Association to pay the expenses of printing, postage, and phone bills. You may find it necessary to travel to leagues within your state to generate interest at the league meetings. You may need funding for your State Finals for fields, referees, etc. Figure out what these costs could possibly be and prepare a budget to submit for approval from your State Association. In the appendix of this handbook, you will find a template for a proposed budget for State Cup expenses.

In many States, there is an additional fee attached to the National Cups fees to help fund the program at the State level. Generally these additional fees are \$25.00.

4. DETERMINE YOUR FORMAT OF CUP PLAY

As the State Cup Commissioner, you have certain latitude in deciding how your State will play the State Rounds of competition in order to determine a State Champion. Will you be playing a round robin format or will you go with a single-elimination? Will you have inter-league play to decide a league champion, and then have intra-league play to decide a State Champion; or, will you throw everyone's name in a hat and have a single tournament to determine your champion? If it is a single tournament, will you have a round robin format, or will you go to a single elimination? Will this be done over a period of several weekends, or will it occur on a single weekend?

5. GET APPROVAL FROM YOUR STATE ASSOCIATION

Once you have set your deadlines and determined how you want to market the program in your State, the format of play, and the budget needed in order to carry out your responsibilities, it is time to approach your State Association with a plan in hand. Provide each member of the State Board with a written proposal of how

you want to administer the Cups program this year, and ask that this be approved by your council. There are several reasons for this:

- A. By having a written list of dates to work from, your State Association can make sure that there are no conflicts on the State Calendar of Events.
- B. Each league will have an indication of when the games will be played so that they can plan their league schedule around this.
- C. The State may possibly, upon your request, issue a “black-out” period so that league games can not be played while National Cups are going on. By preventing this type of conflict between National Cup games or league games, you take the pressure off the teams of having to make a choice of whether or not to participate.
- D. With the approval of your State behind your plan, you will garner more support for the program itself. The State can issue a directive to the State Registrar to provide you with information that is critical to the success of your program.
- E. The State can approve your funding requests, and your requests for additional fees charged to the entries for associated costs.

6. GATHER INFORMATION

The single most important reason that there is not higher participation in your State is simply because people don't know about the program. Communication is vital and it is your responsibility to get this information out to each team. The first step you must take is to get the database from your State of all registered/affiliated teams in your State. If the current year information is not yet available, work off of last year database. You will need the team name, contact persons name and address and an email address if available.

If your State Association is a joint Youth and Adult Association, the same registrar can provide you with the same information for the Youth teams that are in the category of U-19 teams. If your State is not a joint association, request a meeting with the Youth Association and/or Registrar to get this information from them. The U/19 teams should be encouraged to participate because these are our future adult players. Provide them with a transitional bridge by getting this information out to them.

Contact the Regional leagues or the National League teams in your area. This information is readily available from the USASA website at www.usasa.com. Or in some cases, your Regional website, Get all of their contact information so that you can notify these teams as well.

Contact the unaffiliated leagues in your state and ask for a database from each of them of teams. By sending each one of these teams information on the Cups Program you may generate enough interest that the team and league may want to

become affiliated; thus serving a dual purpose for your state and the National Cups program.

7. CREATE A PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION BOOK

Now that you have begun to gather information, you need to be sure that you are organized and can find the information at a moments notice. The simplest and most effective way to do this is to create a binder for yourself with dividers in it. Suggested sections that are commonly used by Cup Commissioners are:

- Budget and Expenses
- Communications from National Cup Committee
- Communications from States/Leagues
- Contact Information
- Database
- Letters Written
- Marketing
- Team Entries
- Schedules
- State Cup Finals
- Master Forms
- Rules/Policies

8. KNOW THE RULES OF THE NATIONAL CUP PROGRAM

Sit down and read the rules of the National Cups. Know these rules. Memorize these rules. If you have questions, contact your Regional Cup Commissioner for clarification of the rules. It is important that you know and understand each rule of the program so that you can enforce the rules without deviation. If you know the rules and follow them, you will drastically reduce the possibility of a protest in your State.

9. DETERMINE YOUR POLICIES

Before sending information out to any team, you should be confident in how you will administer the program this year so that all teams will know what to expect up front. If the State has written policies regarding State Cup games or Championship games, have that available to you. Determine how you will handle a tie game in your State and the methods and order of a tie-breaker. **THINK** through the entire process and put down any possible problems on paper. **EVALUATE** their importance. **MAKE DECISIONS** on how you will handle certain scenarios. The one thing you do not want to have happen is to make a last-minute decision off-the-cuff. It is guaranteed failure because someone will be very unhappy no matter what you do. If everyone knows what to expect up-front, it levels the field and eliminates potential problems.

10. CREATE AN INTERESTING FLYER OR LETTER

Once you have accumulated the information, and decided how you will organize your Cup Program during the current year, it is time to sit down and create a flyer or a letter describing the National Cup Program and how it will be administered this year. You will also need to have enough copies of the entry form to send to every single team in your state. Be sure to include information as to where they should return the entry form and fees to. Get the information out in a timely manner. The rule of thumb is to get the information to each team one month in advance of the deadline. This gives them enough time to contact their team to decide whether or not they wish to participate and to get the entry forms back to you. If you send the information out too early, the forms will be lost and forgotten. If you send it out too late, teams will say they just couldn't get it done in time.

11. FOLLOW-UP

Well, come on! Don't just sit there! So, you sent out the letters and you did everything this handbook said to do to get prepared. Sorry, but you aren't finished yet. Now it is time to follow-up on those letters. Start calling the teams. Talk to them.

If they say they aren't interested, find out why. Ask them questions like "what will it take to get you interested?" Meet their objections head-on.

12. COMMUNICATION, DOCUMENTATION and RECORDKEEPING

The team entries and fees are coming in now. Don't lose them. Take care of them immediately upon receipt. If you put them in that pile of "things to do" chances are they are going to disappear. Don't let that happen to you.

When you receive an entry form and fee, write that team a quick note or postcard and say that it was received. You will accomplish two things by doing so: 1) You relieve them by verifying that you have the information, 2) You light a spark of trust and respect for yourself by letting that team know that you care. It's the simple things in our lives that make us so happy!

Begin very careful recordkeeping. As you receive an entry, use a ledger form of some type to record the date you received it, whom it was from, which league, how much money accompanied it (broken down by who gets what ... ie, National Cups, Region, State). Record the check number. Make a copy of the check and attach it to your copy.

Now, make copies of each form for your records. Send the original form, with the fees to the Regional Cup Commissioner. Be sure that you send the right amounts

to the Regional Cup Commissioner in the form of a cashier check, money order or a State Association check. Do not forward CLUB, LEAGUE or PERSONAL checks as they will be returned to you. In the appendix of this handbook, you will find a sample of a letter to a Regional Cup Commissioner listing all the teams and fees accompanying the entry forms. Please use this, or something similar to it.

Now, the easy part is over with. It's time for the competition..... and your real work just begins!

SECTION 3. NATIONAL CUP RULES

Regional Commissioners will provide each State with current copies of the National Cup Rules. These rules can also be found on the website at www.usasa.com as well as Regional websites, if applicable. It is important that each team be provided a copy of these rules, or given the information to access these rules from the website. In addition, to help you as a State Cup Commissioner, you should provide each team with a TEAM MANAGER CHECK LIST to be completed and returned to you. This check list can be found in the appendix. It is an important tool and it is suggested that you not allow a team to play even one game of the competition without a signed copy of this checklist on file. The check list will most likely eliminate any protests. It has been designed for the purpose of having each team manager acknowledge that they have read and understood the rules. It is one of the most helpful tools that the National Cup Committee has developed in order to help the State Cup and Regional Cup Commissioners.

Keep these Check Lists on file. When a State Champion has been determined, forward the Check List to the Regional Cup Commissioner for those teams going forward. If that team continues forward from the Regional Competition, the forms will also be forwarded to the National Cup Chairman.

The National Cup Rules have been developed and fine-tuned over many years of experience. The rules are in existence because there was a need for each one, and because it is important that we have a fair and equitable competition for every single team participating in this program. As the program develops and changes over the course of time, some rules become obsolete and are either deleted or replaced. It is a constantly changing process and therefore needs to be revisited every single year. You, as the State Cup Commissioner must keep yourself abreast of any changes and relay that information to your teams.

In this section, we are going to highlight some of the rules of extreme importance.

TEAM ELIGIBILITY

1. ANY team that is affiliated in a State Association, National League, Regional League, or an Affiliate of USASA may participate. Any youth team whose players are registered through the USSF may play in the Open Cup, Amateur Cup, or U/23 Cup competitions.
2. All teams must be playing as a team in a regular league competition of at least four teams, unless there is no competition-specific league in their home state

within an 80 mile radius of that team.

3. Any team that is playing in any type of competition at the State Level that will ultimately determine the State Champion at the Regional Finals MUST enter the National Cups program and pay the entry fees. There are no exceptions to this rule.
4. If a team has been disqualified at any level of the competition from the prior year, they may not participate the following year. On the same token, any team that uses a disqualified player from the prior's year competition will be disqualified.
5. Any game(s) that results in a team being declared the State winner in any competition must be entered and the fees be paid for all teams that play. What this means is that you ABSOLUTELY ARE NOT ALLOWED to hold a tournament in your state in any shape, form or manner to declare a State Champion and then ONLY enter that team in the National Cups. Every single team MUST be entered and the fees paid for those teams PRIOR to a competition being held.
6. No game may be played without the entry form and fees received by the State Cup Commissioner and forwarded and received by the Regional Cup Commissioner. If you schedule a game, and play it, prior to the Regional Cup Commissioner having received the entry form and fees, the Regional Cup Commissioner may require that this game be replayed. Don't do that!

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

1. All players must be registered to that team at least ten (10) days prior to any game in the competition in which that player participates in. This means the player must be registered with the STATE Association (not just the league), USASA or an affiliate member, or the USSF.
2. Professional players can play in all cups EXCEPT the Amateur Division. HOWEVER, know that if a professional player is playing, he/she must be registered as a Professional Player in the State Association and his/her name must be noted on the Player Pool Form as a Professional Player. Only when he/she has received Amateur Reinstatement from the USSF may he be listed as an Amateur. A State Association is not allowed to register a professional player on an amateur form: the player must register on a Professional Player form.

This is a tricky one. Sometimes a player thinks that because they haven't played as

a professional in a year or two that they are automatically reinstated. That simply is not the case. The best thing to do is to have the team manager ask every single player on the team if they have EVER signed a contract to play professionally. If they reply yes, they need to show their reinstatement to amateur form, or the form needs to be completed and submitted to USSF for reinstatement.

3. O/30 players must not play in any game of the competition until they have actually turned 30 years old, even if they are listed on the player pool form.

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4. U/23 players can play only if they are born on or after the following dates for the following years:
2007 August 1, 1983
2008 August 1, 1984
2009 August 1, 1985
5. A player cannot play for more than one team in the same competition. A player may be registered and play in different competitions on different teams, however, a player **MUST HAVE A PASS CARD** for each team playing on.
6. Any player under suspension may not play in a National Cup game until that suspension has been served.

PLAYER POOL

1. No more than 22 players may be on a player pool form.
2. State Cup Commissioners must have the Player Pool Forms not later than 15 days prior to any State Cup game, unless you have waived or modified that rule.
3. The Player Pool form **MUST BE** signed by a team official and it **MUST BE** verified and signed by the State Registrar (or other appointee).
4. Each team must provide the other team with a copy of the player pool form at least 7 days before the originally scheduled game. This roster may not be changed for replayed or postponed games. This can be accomplished by mail, fax, or email, but a verification that the opposing team received it must be followed up. Some Cup Commissioners do this themselves and take that responsibility off of the teams.
5. No game may be played without a player pool form having been received from each team.

PLAYER PASSES

1. Each player must have an approved USASA pass bearing the player's photograph and indicating the player's membership on a team. The pass must be laminated, or otherwise tamper-resistant. The pass must be presented to the referee before entering a game.
2. Each player must have a pass for **EACH TEAM** the player is playing on. If it is a club team playing in more than one division, the player must still have a pass for each team playing on.

NOTIFICATION OF GAMES

1. As the State Cup Commissioner, it is your job to notify each team in the competition as to when their next game is and this must be done not less than 7 days prior to the scheduled date of the game, unless both teams waive this in writing.

UNIFORMS

1. In case of a color conflict, the home team changes its uniform, unless the visiting team is wearing a color different than those submitted on the entry form. In that case, the visiting team must change.
2. Each uniform must have a clear, visible number, at least 6 inches high on the back of the player jersey. Each number must be PERMANENTLY attached which means it has to be sewn, pressed or silk-screened on. Each player on the team must have a different number.
3. **GOALKEEPERS** must have numbers on the back of their jerseys as well.

PLAYING RULES

As the State Cup Commissioner, you get some flexibility here... BUT, you may not change the rules!!!!

1. No more than 18 players from the Player Pool may be in uniform for a game. These players must be identified prior to the start of each game.
2. **In the Men's Open Cup there is a maximum substitution of 4 players per game. (Region IV adopted to let 7 substitution when there is a a one weekend round robin format)**
3. In all other competitions, you may allow a maximum of 7 substitutions. You can modify this rule if you want and limit the number of substitutions. But at the Regional Cups and at the National Finals, seven substitutions will be allowed.
4. A player who has been replaced by a substitute player may not re-enter the game at any time. No exception to this rule.
5. You may organize the State Cup format in a manner agreed to by your State Association. This may include round robins, double eliminations or single eliminations. You may not however decide on the length of games. Each game must be a full 90 minutes.

PLAYER DISCIPLINE

1. If a player is sent off the field by a referee for a second cautionable offense, the player must sit out the next game. Exhibition games and indoor games do not count. Scheduled league games are included.
2. If a player is sent off the field by a referee for any other reason, the player must sit out the next two games.
3. If a player is playing in more than one National Cup competition, that player will be suspended from the next one or two games of all competitions in which he is registered to compete.
4. You may not overturn a referee's decision because you saw the game and thought he made a bad call. Don't even try it. It isn't negotiable.

Bottom line is, if you follow the rules and make no exceptions to the rules, you will most likely have a successful State Cup program. If you deviate from the rule, or try to use common sense, it just won't work. The rules provide consistency for all teams, as well as equality and fair play.

SECTION 4. PROTESTS EQUAL NIGHTMARES

A protest is not a pretty thing, nor a good experience. We try to avoid a protest at all costs. The most effective way to do avoid one, is to not let there be grounds for one in the first place. The way to do that is as follows:

1. Make sure your teams sign the Team Manager Check List so that they each verify that they have read and understood the rules.
2. Prior to the start of all competitions, make sure your State Registrar is familiar with the National Cup rules regarding team and player eligibility. Make sure he/she knows that a player must be registered to a team 10 days prior to any game in which that player is playing on and that there is no exception to that rule. It cannot be waived, or modified, by anyone except the general council of the USASA.
3. Make sure the State Registrar understands that a player must have an approved, laminated or tamper-resistant player card for each team the player is playing with.
4. Make sure the State Registrar understands that all players in the National Cups must be registered with the State on the appropriate form: Professional Player form if a professional on any team, and an Amateur Player form if an amateur player. A smart State Registrar will send all rosters to the USSF for verification of Amateur status prior to the first games. If the State Registrar doesn't take the time to do it, then it is suggested that the State Cup Commissioner follow up in doing this. To do so, just send a cover sheet to ***Elena Petry, USSF*** at fax # ***312-808-9263*** and ask that she have the players on the teams checked out. Include the completed Player Pool Form for each team and fax it over.
4. Follow the rules implicitly and make no exceptions to the rules.

Having said all that, and realizing that someone, somewhere is going to find a reason to protest, let's take a look at what to do if you receive a protest:

1. If the protest is based on the alleged use of an ineligible player listed on the Player Pool Form, the protest must be lodged with the referee and the opposing team for that game.
2. In all other protests, it must be made in writing, and must describe in detail the grounds for the protest.
3. All protests must be accompanied by the \$100.00 protest fee. The protest fee may only be in the form of a cashiers check, certified check, or money order and must be made out to USASA.
4. The original, signed protest and five additional copies must be submitted to the

State Cups Commissioner for all State Rounds of competitions within three days of the game to which the protest relates. A copy of the protest must be forwarded to the opposing team of that game. The State Cup Commissioner must provide a written receipt of receiving the copy to the protester.

5. The opposing team has seven (7) days in which to respond. The response is to be submitted to the State Cup Commissioner, with a copy submitted to the opposing team either via receipted hand delivery or by overnight delivery.
6. The State Cup Commissioner, having received a protest must immediately notify his State Association panel and the President will select a panel of three impartial individuals to review the protest along with the State Cup Commissioner, and they must make a decision within three days of receipt of the protest.
7. The Cup Commissioner must not put into writing the decision of the panel and the reason for that decision. That letter, along with the protest, the rebuttal, and any supporting documentation must be forwarded to the Regional Cups Commissioner immediately so that the Regional Commissioner can make a decision and send that decision in writing to all parties.
8. Protests will not be entertained if they based upon an issue that a player has not obtained international clearance.

RECORDKEEPING

It is important that you retain copies of all documentation for at least three years. If you have a team that is disqualified, you need to make sure to “red flag” that team as they may not be allowed to participate in the National Cups the following year.

HOW TO HANDLE A DISPUTE

First of all, you should understand the difference between a “protest” and a “complaint”. A protest meets all the requirements of Rule 309, whereas a complaint is just that - hot air being blown. Frequently a team will want to “complain” because their team lost because something bad happened to them. A phone call with a lot of griping does not constitute a protest. Listen politely, if you have the time, and even sympathetically. Ask the caller if they wish to initiate a protest, and if they reply affirmatively, refer them to the appropriate rules regarding protests. If they do not wish to register an official complaint then you are done. There is no action to take.

You should NEVER comment on a protest or a potential protest. Keep your mouth shut. Do not express an opinion. It may come back to haunt you.

SECTION 5. GAME SCHEDULING AND ADMINISTRATION

As stated earlier, the State Cup Commissioner has the authority to set up their respective State Cup’s administrative procedure and the format of their games. . Some states have a National Cup meeting to which league commissioners bring the team entry forms and fees from their league and hand deliver it to the State Cup Commissioner. The Cup Commissioner then holds a “draw” to determine who will play who in the opening games of the competition. A

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schedule is then made and the league commissioners are able to take the schedule back to their leagues immediately. Other states opt to submit their forms by mail to the Cup Commissioner and let the Commissioner work out a schedule for the teams based on locations, etc. When making a schedule it is important that this be done with attention to other events on the state calendar, including that of the Youth Division, and with the advice of the assembled representatives. The format of the tournament is the responsibility of the Cup Commissioner and whether or not you seek or solicit the advice of other state or league representatives is entirely up to you.

1. Establish a deadline for all state cup entries
2. Establish a deadline for which all games must be completed, based on the Regional deadline. It is advisable to leave at least two weeks open after the games are scheduled to be completed and before the Regional deadline date in case of rain-outs, etc.
3. Make a schedule of games. Provide this schedule to all participating teams, along with a copy of the rules, enough copies of the Player Pool Form for each game they might possibly play, Game Rosters, the Team Manager Check List, and instructions on how to properly complete the Player Pool Form.
4. Provide the schedule, the Referee Check List, Game Rosters, the method and rate of payment to the referees for each game, and a copy of the rules to the Referee Administrator. It is his responsibility to distribute this to the referees.
5. Send the original entry forms, fees, a copy of the schedule, and the deadline dates to the Regional Cups Commissioner.
6. To insure that there is no excuse for a team not knowing the schedule, send copies of the schedule to the following: team manager, league presidents, state association president, coaches, league commissioner, state secretary, state referee administrator and the state referee assignor.

Depending on the size and scope of your competition, you may not be able to personally attend each game. It is best that you appoint a “Deputy Commissioner” to be there for you. Some states enlist the help of State or League Officers to do this. Some states charge the referees with this responsibility. In any case, it is important that there is one designated person at each game to insure that the paperwork is taken care of and that there is a “neutral” observer there in case of a protest or other problem that might arise.

REPORTING

At the end of the game, the fourth official should complete the Official Referee Report and have the game official review it and sign it. In the absence of a fourth official, of a neutral observer, the referee should sign the report and have the coaches of each team also sign it. The game report should then immediately be sent to you within 24 hours after the completion of the game, The person handling the paperwork should also call or fax you the results of the game and any incidents which need reporting immediately upon completion of the game. Make sure your

address is on the game report form, or has been provided separately to each person responsible for submitting the game report. All game reports should then be forwarded to the Regional Cup Commissioner.

REFEREE SCHEDULING

The State Cup Commissioner must coordinate with the State Referee Administrator the scheduling and assignment of referees for all intrastate games. As National Cup games have the highest precedence of all games in your state, it is important that the best referees in your state are appointed to these games. Have the Referee Administrator help you in the scheduling of the games so that you each have input. When scheduling officials it is important to remember that an official who is a present, or past member within the past 2 years, of either of the competing teams may not be a game official for the game between the two teams, unless both teams waive this in writing.

REFEREE INSTRUCTIONS

It is advisable to provide the State Referee Administrator a written outline of how you wish to have things done at all State Cup games. This would include: ID verification of players, bench personnel, kick-off, substitutions, and game reports, referee payments. The State Referee Administrator is then charged with distributing this information to each official.

GAME REPORTS

Game reports should be called in to the State Cup Commissioner the same day of the game, and the written reports should be sent the very next day. If a Commissioner or observer is not present at the game, it is important that the referee know he is responsible for getting this information to you.

SEND OFFS

It is especially important to pay attention to send-offs listed on each game report. The player pass card of the player sent off must be retained and mailed with the report to the State Cup Commissioner. Reports dealing with referee assault, including the player pass, are to be sent directly to the State Secretary. A copy of this information must also be sent to the Regional Cups Commissioner. It is strongly recommended that you send a copy of this report to the League from which the offending player is registered to. Be sure to include addresses on all forms.

SECTION 6: DECLARING STATE CHAMPIONS

Congratulations! Your job for this year is almost complete. But wait, not quite yet!

INFORMING THE REGION OF STATE CHAMPIONS

Once the state winner has been determined in any competition you must immediately inform the Regional Cup Commissioner of that winner and the competition it has won. You must immediately forward a \$500 bond check for each winner (if the same team has won more than one division, there must be a separate bond for each division playing in). The bond must be in the form of a cashier's check, certified check, money order or a State Association check. NO OTHER FORMS of bond money will be accepted. They will be returned to you. Once a team has been eliminated from the Regional Cup competition, that team will receive their bond money back. If the team is declared the Regional Cup Champion, the money will be forwarded to the USASA office and will be returned once the team has completed their obligations at the National Rounds of competition.

Fifteen days before any game at the Regional Rounds of competition, a player roster must be received by the Regional Cup Commissioner. It is your job to collect these player rosters, get them to the State Registrar for verification and make sure that the Regional Cup Commissioner receives these on time. Make sure that if the team manager or coach has changed addresses or phone numbers that you update the Regional Commissioner.

When you receive the player roster, make sure it is legible. If not, it may be kicked back to you from the Regional Commissioner. It is always best to download the player pool form directly from the USASA website, or a regional website if applicable. Type the form, print it out, have it signed and verified and then return to the Regional Cup Commissioner. If the form is typed, the Regional Cup Commissioner will love you.

If a player pool form is not received within fifteen days of the regional cup competition, a fine will be assessed to each team of \$100 for every day it is late. If it is late on the 6th day, the Regional Cup Commissioner will request the entire roster of players registered to that team from your State Registrar. The first 22 players (listed alphabetically) on the roster will become the roster for the team at the regional competition.

REPRESENTING YOUR TEAMS AT THE REGIONAL COMPETITION

It is important that all State Cup Commissioners attend the Regional Cup competition as a representative of their team. If there is a protest or some kind of disturbance, the State Cup Commissioner should be there to follow through in the appropriate manner. The Regional Cup Commissioner will NOT discuss problems with team managers or coaches. They will discuss it with you. Your presence at these games is critical in that YOU are the representative of the State.

And yes, now you are finished! Relax and enjoy your time. The competition will begin again soon!

SECTION 7: MARKETING YOUR PROGRAM

1. GATHER INFORMATION

- A. From your Registrar get a database of all teams and contacts for each team in your State.
- B. From the Youth Association in your state, do the same for all U/19 and U/16

teams.

- C. Contact Regional and National leagues for teams that are domiciled in your state and get the contact information for each one of those teams.
- D. Find out the team names and contacts for unaffiliated teams playing in an unaffiliated league. Send them information as well. They may decide to affiliate. A real plus for both the program and the State.

2. GET SPONSORSHIP

As soon as you are appointed the State Cup Commissioner, begin working on sponsorships from businesses within your state. Even a \$100 donation to your program can do great things for your program. Getting ten \$100 donations is even much better.

3. USE INCENTIVES

With approval from your State Board of Directors, come up with a “gimmick” or an incentive for getting teams to enter the National Cup program.

A National Cup incentive is that any State with 50 or more teams registered in a single competition will receive \$5000.00 to go to the State Winner of that competition. You could do this on a smaller scale by collecting an additional team fee for your State of perhaps \$25.00. The league commissioner that has more entries in a division could receive that money as a bonus. That is one way to get the League Commissioners to work for you!

Get a sponsor to provide you with a “goodie bag” of items or a cash allotment and give to the player (both men and women) that scores the most goals throughout the competition. You can have an additional “goodie bag” to be presented to the goalkeepers who prevent the most goals scored throughout the tournament.

Use your imagination!

2. ANNOUNCE THE PROGRAM

- A. A sample brochure is included under Section 8: Tools. Modify it for your usage.
- B. A sample flyer is included under Section 8: Tools.
- C. Place information on your State Association website for all to see. If the State Association does not have a website, create one. If you need assistance in creating a website for just the National Cups or for your State Association, contact Debra Sober, the Region II Cup Commissioner and she will be glad to assist you.
- D. Send information about your program to the USASA website administrator. See www.usasa.com
- E. Send out emails to all contacts in your State with an email address. Keep them updated frequently.

3. VISIT THE LEAGUES IN YOUR STATE

- A. Visit each league in your state at a League Meeting and talk about the National Cups Program.
- B. Visit each league in your state during game play and talk to each team on the fields.
- C. Keep one thing in mind: you may get the information out to the leagues - but they don't always get the information to their teams. Information is crucial! If the TEAMS don't know about the National Cups - they won't know to enter.

4. USE YOUR IMAGINATION! BE CREATIVE!

- A. If you have contacts with any of the local media (newspapers, radio stations, television stations, etc.) perhaps they will help you write a public service announcement and air it free for you. Of course, you have to know some REALLY well for that to happen.
- B. Post flyers
- C. Have a National Cup Promo Party.
- D. Get volunteers in each league to go to the games and tell the teams about the program.
- E. Get people excited so that they get others excited.
- F. Plan a Participant's Party
- G. Use the internet.

SECTION 8: TOOLS

The following forms, letters and tools are included to help you have a successful program in your State. Feel free to use these letters, or modify them for your own use.

NATIONAL CUP OFFICIAL FORMS (do not alter these forms).

- A. Open Cup Entry Form
- B. Amateur Cup Entry Form
- C. Player Pool Roster
- D. Team Manager Rules Check List
- E. Game Report form
- F. International Clearance form
- G. Amateur Reinstatement form