

UGSA Ethics Committee - Standard Operating Procedures

Purpose: The following process is established to provide an avenue through which persons can file complaints about the ethical conduct of members, participants and employees of the Union Girls Softball Association.

Ethics Committee: Formation

- UGSA will appoint someone to be the head of the Ethics Committee. In the event that UGSA cannot find someone to lead the ethics committee, UGSA will appoint a board member per incident, outside of the division the incident is occurring in, to the ethics committee. All Coaches/Managers are automatically part of the Ethics Committee and may be called upon to help investigate/interview and provide a recommendation if a complaint is filed.

The convened Ethics Committee has the authority to:

- Investigate a complaint, mediating when possible.
- Determine the validity of a complaint.
- Conduct interviews related to a complaint.
- Recommend to the USGA Board a disposition on a valid complaint, up to and including suspension and expulsion.
- Dismiss invalid complaints.

Ethics Committee: Rules and Policy:

- The Ethics Committee will have access to relevant documents on the USGA Board. The respondent and complainant will be notified that the Ethics Committee has opened a complaint and for what purpose. **The manager(s) will be informed a complaint has been filed, with the assigned Ethics Committee member(s) investigating to determine extent of information to be provided.**
- The Ethics Committee shall hold all information and communications pertaining to the review process confidential. Members of the Ethics Committee may be referred for an ethics violation if believed to have broken confidentiality.
- In the event the complainant withdraws the complaint, the Ethics Committee reserves the right to proceed to consider the circumstances in the interest of the USGA.

Basis of Complaint or Request for Ethics Review:

- Complaints may be filed against UGSA members, Board of Directors, employees and/or spectators

Filing a Complaint:

- Any individual may file a complaint against a UGSA member, Board of Directors and/or employee by submitting a UGSA Ethics Referral through the committee email ethics@unionsoftball.com or turning it in to a committee member. (Forms can be found on the UGSA website, Facebook Page or be attained from an Ethics Committee member.) Complaints should include:
 - The full name, phone number and, if available, email of complainant.
 - The full name and any contact information known of respondent.
 - The date and time of incident.
 - A concise statement of the facts, which clearly and accurately describe the allegations against the respondent. When possible witnesses should be included.
 - No USGA member, Board of Directors and/or employees should attempt to influence members of the Ethics Committee on the issue outside of official procedures.

Handling of a Submitted Complaint:

- Once the chairman of the Ethics Committee receives a written complaint, within 24 hours the chairperson will identify one member of the committee to interview (can be done via phone or email) each involved person including, but not limited to, complainant, respondent, and witnesses. The chairperson will provide each committee member charged with conducting an interview a copy of complaint.
- The chairman will notify UGSA Board of Directors of a complaint immediately and the Board may vote to place a respondent on leave from duties pending Ethics Committee investigation.
- Selected committee members should make every attempt to conduct interviews within 24 hours of being assigned.

- **Within 48 hours of interviews the investigating Ethics committee members will call a meeting and, with majority vote of attendees:**
 - Determine more information is needed, establish a plan of action and schedule the next review meeting,
 - Determine a violation has occurred and develop a recommendation for disposition to be submitted to the UGSA Board,
 - Determine a complaint is invalid.
- The Ethics Committee will notify the complainant and respondent, in writing, if the complaint is determined to be invalid.

Handling of Harassment:

- A member of the Ethics Committee, in front of a quorum, may move to find filed complaint(s) harassment if:
 - Excessive complaints are repetitively filed against a person or persons and are found invalid,
 - The same person continually files complaints that are consistently found to be invalid.
- If a majority of a quorum of the Ethics Committee determines harassment, the committee can excuse the chairman from following investigation procedures for future claims.

Investigation Policy

- Failure of the complainant to participate in the investigation may result in the dismissal of the complaint.
- The UGSA Ethics Committee reserves the right to interview other persons in reference to the complaint.
- The final recommendation rests with a majority vote of the Ethics Committee in attendance.
- The final decision on disposition, when determined to be a valid complaint, lies with the UGSA Board.

Appeals:

- The respondent may appeal the disposition according to the appeals process as outlined hearing. The individual must file the appeal within 30 days of the notification of the final disposition letter from the UGSA Board. When hearing the appeal the UGSA Board and Ethics committee will meet jointly, with a majority of each in attendance, and may take any of the following action:
 - Uphold the decision of the original disposition
 - Change the disposition base on new evidence submitted
 - Increase or decrease the original disposition

Appeals Process:

- The appeal process with consist of the individual sending an appeals request to the Ethics Committee at ethics@unionsoftball.com within 30 days of receiving the final disposition letter.
- The Ethics Committee will acknowledge receipt of appeal within 3 days.
- An Appeals Committee will be formed consisting of a majority of individuals from the UGSA Board and Ethics Committee. (All member **not involved** may participate.)
- A formal appeals hearing will be held within 60 days of receipt of the appeal. The President of the UGSA Board and the Ethics Committee chairman will set the hearing at a date and time when an Appeals Committee is available.
- The respondent will have 30 minutes to present their appeal to the Appeals Committee.
- The final decision rests with a majority vote of the Appeals Committee and the respondent will be notified in writing within 30 days.