



## **USA PICKLEBALL COMPLIANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR CREDENTIALLED OFFICIALS**

Effective September 30, 2020

### **Why a Compliance Policy and Procedure are Needed**

Credentialed officials (Line Judges and Level 1, Level 2 and Certified Referees) are expected to strictly adhere to the USA Pickleball Rules and to use the Best Practices contained in the current *USA Pickleball Officiating Handbook*. As a pre-condition to becoming a credentialed official, candidates agree to comply with those best practices after accepting their credentials as a Line Judge or Level 1, Level 2 or Certified Referee. This compliance policy and procedure has been developed to address those occasional situations in which credentialed officials are not correctly applying the USA Pickleball rules, refereeing best practices, or are exhibiting behavior inconsistent with respect and professionalism. This compliance policy is also applicable in situations where a credentialed official is not performing official duties at the time of their misconduct. In those cases, the alleged offending conduct will be deemed detrimental to the credentialed official programs and USA Pickleball.

### **Compliance Policy**

USA Pickleball has the authority to take corrective action against any credentialed official who, by conduct or neglect, acts in a manner detrimental to the purpose and mission of USA Pickleball or its credentialed official programs or violates the USA Pickleball bylaws, rules, or ethical standards.

Any action taken by a credentialed official that reflects poorly upon USA Pickleball or is inconsistent with USA Pickleball Best Practices will lead either to corrective action or immediate termination of the credentialed official's position. These offending actions include, but are not limited to, those found in the *USA Pickleball Officiating Handbook* or Code of Conduct.

The main objective of this Compliance Policy is to return the credentialed official to compliance with the rules and best practices.

Corrective actions include, but are not limited to, verbal warnings, mentoring, written warnings (with or without restrictions), probation, suspension, or revocation of credentials.

## Compliance Procedure

The compliance procedure is designed to quickly establish the facts and consistently deal with compliance issues. When USA Pickleball receives written notice of a complaint regarding the conduct or neglect of a credentialed official, it will take the following actions under normal circumstances:

- The matter or complaint will be referred to the USA Pickleball Director of Officiating or their designee.
- The USA Pickleball Director of Officiating will review the matter or complaint to determine whether the alleged behavior reflects negatively on USA Pickleball, violates USA Pickleball policy, fails to adhere to the *USA Pickleball Officiating Handbook* or hinders others' duties.
  - Note: In most cases, the alleged official will be placed on short term suspension from any line judging, refereeing, training, or mentoring functions until an investigation is completed.
- The USA Pickleball Director of Officiating will assign valid complaints to the appropriate National Officiating Committee Section Leader.
- In cases involving certified referees, the assigned National Officiating Committee Section Leader shall refer the complaint to the referee evaluator who certified the referee, if available. Should the certifying evaluator not be available, the matter will be assigned to another evaluator. The chosen evaluator will contact the accused offending referee to discuss the complaint.
- In cases involving Line Judges, or Level 1 or Level 2 Referees, the assigned National Officiating Committee Section Leader shall normally refer the complaint to a certified referee within the same USA Pickleball region.
- The investigating evaluator or certified referee will thoroughly document their findings and provide a written report within 15 days to the assigned National Officiating Committee Section Leader and the USA Pickleball Director of Officiating.
- Within 15 days after the interview, the accused official may provide a written statement to the assigned National Officiating Committee Section Leader, addressing their defense as it relates to the complaint.
- Based upon the evaluator or certified referee's report and the official's written defense, if any, the National Officiating Committee, by majority vote, will decide whether to seek additional information, dismiss the complaint, require remedial training, or recommend a penalty from temporary suspension up to and including removal of credentials.
- The USA Pickleball Director of Officiating notifies the official of the outcome of the National Officiating Committee vote.
- The decision of the National Officiating Committee is final, except in the case where the charged official feels that the National Officiating Committee should consider additional or new information. In such cases, the official will present

the additional or new information to the USA Pickleball Director of Officiating in writing within 15 days of the date of the decision.

- The National Officiating Committee will reconvene to consider the request for reconsideration and will involve USA Pickleball's counsel, who will be added as a non-voting member of the National Officiating Committee. The purpose of the USA Pickleball's counsel is to advise on the procedure followed by the National Officiating Committee and whether or not the committee's decision is adequately supported by the facts, observations and statements discovered in the initial investigation.
- The National Officiating Committee's reconsidered decision is final.
- A record of any retraining, written warning, suspension, restriction or termination will be the record of compliance action taken and shall be permanently maintained in the subject's file pursuant to the USA Pickleball's retention schedule.

**Examples of Issues Potentially Warranting Compliance Action  
(include, but are not limited to):**

- Consistently misinterpreting or not adhering to the Rulebook and/or the *Referee Handbook*.
- Demonstrating disrespect or unprofessional behavior toward players and/or spectators, tournament directors, or other officials in a tournament setting or on social media.
- Demonstrated lack of support for the governing body or those who volunteer to help make it successful.
- Not allowing a player to receive medical attention when requested.
- Showing bias towards or against a player or team.
- Allowing players or spectators to impact the referee's decisions.
- Intentionally hindering the performance of a USA Pickleball volunteer's job functions.
- Engaging in inappropriate behavior in or out of uniform.

**Levels of Corrective Action**

In most cases, progressive discipline will be used, but the severity of the infraction could cause any of the following actions to be applied:

- **Verbal Warning:** For minor infractions that need to be made a matter of record but do not require additional penalty.
- **Mentoring:** For more than minor infractions that need to be made a matter of record but do not require additional penalty. Mentoring is conducted by an assigned USA Pickleball certified evaluator or certified referee.

- **Written Warning:** Issued by USA Pickleball Director of Officiating. The written warning documents infraction(s) and includes corrective measures that need to be followed. Failure to comply will result in probation.
- **Probation:** While on probation, the official will be required to complete remedial training but will still be permitted to officiate as a USA Pickleball credentialed official at tournaments although he/she will be monitored by an assigned certified evaluator or certified referee or designated representative to ensure compliance. Further reports of deficiencies while on probation will result in the official being suspended or having their credentials revoked.
- **Long-term Suspension:** While on long-term suspension, the official will be required to complete retraining and will only be permitted to officiate as a credentialed official under the direct supervision of a USA Pickleball certified evaluator or certified referee. The suspended official will be required to pass the USA Pickleball Referee Test and Line Judge Test before the suspension is lifted. The imposed suspension will be lifted upon written recommendation by the assigned certified evaluator or certified referee. Should the suspended official not overcome their deficiencies, the assigned certified evaluator or certified referee will provide written notification to the National Officiating Committee. Suspended officials that are unable to overcome their deficiencies will have their credentials revoked. Additionally, a suspended official that violates the terms of their suspension will have their credentials automatically revoked.
- **Revocation:** The official will be removed from the program and will no longer be permitted to officiate, train, mentor, or otherwise present themselves as a USA Pickleball credentialed official. The USA Pickleball provided credentials must be returned. Tournament Directors and Ambassadors in the official's local region, as well as other areas of frequency, will be advised of the official's revocation. Officials whose credentials have been revoked will be eligible to re-apply 12 months after their revocation date, unless a longer term is imposed.