



# Ottawa TFC\*

2075 Trim Road, Orleans Ontario, K4A 3R2  
Tel: 613-573-7627 www.ottawatfc.com



## OTTAWA TFC\*

### COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT POLICY

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## INTRODUCTION

***Note that this policy supersedes (and makes redundant) the Dispute Resolution Policy, dated Sept 15, 2015.***

Ottawa TFC (Ottawa TFC or the Club) is committed to providing a safe environment for its players, coaches, volunteers, employees, members, directors, and officials. The safety, rights and well-being of those participating in Ottawa TFC programs is a priority in the Club's daily operations.

Ottawa TFC conducts itself according to the policies of its governing associations (Canada Soccer, Ontario Soccer, Eastern Ontario District Soccer Association) and may rely on other organizations and international standards for guidance and best practices in developing its policies and processes.

The purpose of this policy is to set out Ottawa TFC's approach to complaint management. The complaints encompassed in this policy are those that are outside of the on-field discipline process. In the event that any member feels that they have sufficient grounds to make a complaint, on the grounds of the Club's *Code of Conduct* or any of the Club's other policies (posted at: <http://ottawatfc.com/documents-and-policies/document-repository>), including but not limited to the *Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination Policy*, *Code of Conduct*, *Policy to Protect Children*, or the *Privacy Policy*, the member is encouraged to follow the procedures outlined herein. This policy and included procedures follow the applicable sections of the Ontario Soccer Policies and Operational Procedures.

## DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy:

“Adult” refers to anyone aged 18 and over.

“Children” or “Child” refers to anyone under the age of 18.

“Complainant” refers to anyone making a formal written complaint against an Ottawa TFC member, coach, staff, team official, or volunteer.

“Evidence” is provided to furnish proof of one's claim. This can take written or video form. All evidence must be provided in either English or French, and if provided in another language must be professionally translated before submission to Ottawa TFC.

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“Respondent” refers to an Ottawa TFC member, coach, staff, team official, or volunteer who has been accused of a complaint by a Complainant.

"Team Officials" are those unpaid individuals who provide services to the Club for the duration of a soccer season and could include, but are not limited to, persons such as team managers, teamtreasurers, equipment managers, and assistant coaches. Individuals who provide unpaid services, often on a one-time basis, such as support at tournaments or fundraising support, are not considered Team Officials.

"Volunteer" is an Adult Participant, as defined above. Volunteers are not Team Officials or Technical Coaches but are individuals who perform voluntary services for Ottawa TFC on an occasional basis, such as at tournaments. Volunteers are representatives of Ottawa TFC and are subject to all Ottawa TFC's policies and guidelines.

## POLICY

### COMPLAINT REPORTING

When making a complaint against another member, coach, staff, team official, or volunteer of the Club, a member, or other stakeholder, (herein now referred to as a “Complainant”) must submit the complaint in writing (in English) and submit all relevant/supporting information and evidence in support of such complaint. This may include, but is not limited to, witness accounts, documents, video, and written accounts. This package must include the following, at a minimum:

- Contact information of the Complainant;
- Name and contact information (if known) of the Respondent;
- Sections of Ottawa TFC (or Ontario Soccer) *Code of Conduct* (or other policy) violated;
- Evidence or statements of such violations; and
- The remedy/sanction that is expected.

The Claimant must be aware that this is possibly the only opportunity to provide information in relation to the complaint, and cannot provide further information unless requested by a Case Investigator, mediator, or Case Review Panel. This complaint package must be submitted to the Club’s Complaints Case Administrator (either by email to: [administrator@ottawatfc.com](mailto:administrator@ottawatfc.com)) or physically hand delivered to the Club at its head office, currently located at 2075 Trim Road in Orleans, ON).

The Club fully supports and endorses informal complaint resolution. After at least a 24-hour “cooling down” period, a Complainant is encouraged to address their issues with the Respondent to attempt an informal solution to the situation. However, the Club recognizes that this may not always be possible or a Complainant may not feel comfortable in addressing a Respondent directly. In this case, the Complainant must recognize that there is



a **maximum of a 14 day period** (herein referred to as the Statute of Limitations), **from the date of the alleged incident**, within which the complaint must be received by the Club's Complaints Case Administrator (herein referred to as the Administrator). If a complaint is received after this 14 day period, the complaint will not be considered. This Statute of Limitations does not apply to serious situations, such as assault or sexual offenses.

The Club recognizes that expedience in complaint matters is in the best interest of the Complainant, the Respondent, and the Club. Upon receipt of a complaint, the Administrator will have 7 days to either notify the Complainant that the complaint is filed within the wrong jurisdiction, does not warrant investigation, does warrant an investigation, or will initiate disciplinary action.

## COMPLAINT FACT-FINDING

Upon receipt of a written package detailing a complaint, the Administrator will review the package and may consult with the Complainant. This consultation may include questions of clarification with respect to the complaint (which will require a resubmission of the complaint), ensuring that the Complainant acknowledges that any and all material provided in the complaint will be provided to the Respondent, and ensuring that the Complainant recognizes that they may be called upon as a witness should the complaint be escalated to a hearing. At this point, the Complainant still has the option to withdraw their complaint. It is acknowledged, however, that if the Administrator has been made aware of an issue that should be referred to the police (most notably in the form of abuse or sexual offense), the Administrator is bound to make such a police report, even if the formal complaint with the Club has been rescinded by the Complainant.

The Administrator will then inform the Respondent in writing that a formal complaint has been lodged against them (and if there is an immediate suspension in place). **This written communication will be accompanied by all of the evidence brought forward by the Complainant.** The communication will also advise the Respondent that any communication on the issue is to only be directed to the Administrator and not the Complainant. The Administrator will advise the Respondent that a response is required within a certain timeline (generally 7 days). The response from the Respondent must also be written, and provide any evidence or support that he/she can provide that should be considered. The Respondent must be aware that this is possibly the only opportunity to provide information in relation to the complaint, and cannot provide further information unless requested by a Case Investigator, mediator, or Case Review Panel.

Upon receipt of a response from the Respondent, the Administrator will review the material provided and may request a meeting with the Respondent to clarify any questions, or further explain any procedural issues. After review of the response, the Administrator will either work with both parties (the Complainant and the Respondent) to come to an amicable resolution, or will direct the case to be investigated by a Club Complaint Case Investigator (herein referred to as an Investigator). An Investigator will have up to 45 days to review the

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case (understood that time if of the essence), make any and all interviews with the Complainant, Respondent, or witnesses, and provide such report to the Administrator.

## COMPLAINT VERDICT

Upon receipt of the Investigator's report, the Administrator will appoint a Case Manager who will review all material, including the initial complaint, the response, and all investigator notes. Within 7 days, the Case Manager will either:

- Dismiss the complaint, if it is deemed to be frivolous or outside of the Code of Conduct, or other policies as quoted in the originally filed complaint;
- Propose mediation between the Claimant and Respondent;
- Facilitate an exchange of written submissions between the Claimant and Respondent; or
- Appoint a Decision-Making Panel.

## DECISION-MAKING PANEL

In the event that the Case Manager is unable to arrive at an amicable solution between the parties, the Case Manager will appoint a Decision-making Panel (herein referred to as the Panel). Such a Panel will be composed of 3 members. The Case Manager and the Panel will confer on the case and the severity of it. Based on this (and any relevant other factors), they will decide on the format of the hearing, whether it is written, by telecommunication, or in-person.

The Panel has the option to suspend the Respondent from all Club soccer activities until the hearing outcome. In the event of an in-person hearing, all relevant parties will be advised of the hearing date, with a minimum of 7-day notice. Should a postponement of the hearing be required, a written request must be submitted to [discipline@ottawatfc.com](mailto:discipline@ottawatfc.com) at least four days in advance of the stated hearing date, including the reason for the postponement. A postponement fee is also due to the Club. Any failure to attend a hearing will also incur a fee. All fees are posted in the Ottawa TFC *Discipline Policy*.

If called to a hearing, only the Claimant, Respondent, or witnesses, may attend. In addition, each of the Claimant and Respondent are allowed one other representative, and if anyone is under the age of 18, an accompanying **adult must** also attend.

Within 7 days of the review/hearing, the Panel will distribute its decision, which will include a summary of facts, verdict, reasons for the decision, and the penalty (if applicable).

A written verdict will be provided to the Claimant and Respondent. The verdict will include a summary of facts, verdict, penalty (if applicable), the reason for the decision, and



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information relating to any appeal.

## REQUEST FOR APPEAL

Should a party decide that an appeal is warranted on appropriate grounds, a written appeal should be made to the governing soccer association, the Eastern Ontario District Soccer Association (EODSA). All rules and regulations surrounding such an appeal will be subject to those of the EODSA.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Club warrants that any of the positions noted in this policy (including the Administrator, Investigator, Case Manager, or the Panel) will not be in a conflict of interest with any of the relevant parties. If any conflict is found to appear at any stage, the affected person holding the position will advise the parties and excuse him/herself from the complaint process.

## COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS

All comments or questions relating to this Policy and its related processes, may be directed to [discipline@ottawatfc.com](mailto:discipline@ottawatfc.com). Any comments or questions regarding specific discipline matters must be directed to [discipline@ottawatfc.com](mailto:discipline@ottawatfc.com).

Approved by Board of Directors  
February 7, 2022

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