



COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION POLICY

Whitecaps London encourages all members (players, parents, and coaches) to attempt to resolve issues in good faith prior to club intervention keeping in mind the criteria provided in our Club Code of Conduct, but understands that this is not always possible.

Encouraging open communication, WFCL is committed to investigate and act fairly, and without bias upon all complaints or reports of inappropriate behavior pertaining to WFCL soccer related activities.

As with the majority of soccer organizations in Canada, Whitecaps London is a private tribunal, essentially autonomous and self-governing; deriving our authority from our “governing documents” – our policies, procedures and rules. As a tribunal, we are also subject to the rules of procedural fairness. For example, before an organization can make a decision that adversely affects an individual, that individual has a right to know the case against them and to be given a reasonable opportunity to respond on their own behalf.

If the situation warrants, following consultation with our governing bodies, an independent review of complaints will be sought to maintain the fairness of the evaluation. Complaints regarding breaches of the Confidentiality Policy are to be directed to the club Executive Director.

The Club will immediately report all complaints of sexual abuse to the police (with the consent of an individual alleging abuse). The club will immediately report criminal activities to the police without a written complaint.

Complaints regarding club members, staff, volunteers, coaches, players, referees, etc. that require investigation should be submitted in writing to the Executive Director of the Whitecaps London.

Formalizing Complaints

- a) Any complaint can be communicated verbally, initially, to a club official or employee but must be followed up in writing (letter and/or email) in order to be acted upon.
- b) All complaints to the club must be in written form before a complaint is dealt with. A confirmation from WFCL that the complaint has been received will be provided via email if possible; other confirmation forms may include telephone or letter.
- c) Once a written complaint has been filed with the club, a Review Committee consisting of at least two Directors/Staff will be struck to review the complaint and determine if a hearing will be required.

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The Complaints and Dispute Resolution processes shall not be used for soccer game-related discipline - the normal discipline and appeals processes shall be followed.

- d) A Director/Staff member assigned to lead the investigation into the complaint will schedule a Complaint Hearing within ten (10) business days of receipt/filing of the complaint, also providing notice to the individual(s) whom the complaint has been filed against. The individual(s) who are named on the complaint shall be contacted by e-mail and requested to appear at the Complaint Hearing.
- e) Hearings shall be conducted by two (2) Directors/Staff (members who were NOT part of the initial Review Committee wherever possible).
- f) The individual(s) named on the complaint is/are entitled to be present at the hearing. Only individuals called by the committee shall be allowed to participate in a hearing.
- g) Hearings can take place by way of written submissions or oral submissions and with differing degrees of formality and complexity. The main consideration will be to decide upon a process that best allows the affected individual to adequately answer the case against them given the circumstances of the complaint and the nature of the matter being considered.
- h) The committee shall then deliberate following the Hearing with the individual(s) who are named on the complaint.
- i) The decision of the committee shall be communicated to the individual named in the complaint within ten (10) working day of the Complaint Hearing.
- j) Penalties can range from a permanent suspension from the club, suspension for a specified period of time, and a probationary period where the individual is allowed to continue with the club.
- k) All committee decisions are final, and the issuing of "Reasons for Decision" along with the decision is not mandatory due to legislated privacy constraints.
- l) Individual(s) who are charged with a criminal offense involving club related incidents shall be immediately suspended from the club pending resolution of the charges. No Complaint or Discipline Hearing shall take place when an individual is facing criminal charges for club related incidents. Club members who are convicted of a Criminal Code of Canada offense are subject to suspension or removal.
- m) Any individual who is convicted of a criminal offense resulting from sexual or physical abuse shall be banned for life from the club.
- n) Individual(s) who violate the Zero Tolerance Policy for non-criminal activities may apply for reinstatement to the club in writing one month prior to the end of a time specified penalty.

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DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Dispute resolution is defined as “the process of resolving disputes between parties”. In the case of the Whitecaps London, disputes are typically brought to the attention of the club by way of a formal complaint. Resolution is most often achieved following investigation by club officials and follow-up discussions and/or the provision of education/training with the parties involved.

As a member club of the Ontario Soccer Association (OSA), the Whitecaps London fully supports and hereby adopts the OSA Policy 15.0 in respect of Dispute Resolution, which is available at www.ontariosoccer.net/governing-documents-dispute-resolution.

The OSA has also put in place operational procedures for the implementation of Policy 15.0, available at www.ontariosoccer.net/governing-documents-dispute-resolution.