

Update on Boys Soccer Disciplinary Policies

Formal Announcement of Sanctions for the 2026 Season

Background

As you know, Boys Soccer was placed on probation due to ongoing concerns related to sportsmanship, specifically a significant number of red cards issued for violent conduct, serious foul play, and the use of abusive language or gestures. These disciplinary issues have continued to increase and have raised serious questions regarding the integrity and safety of high school boys' soccer.

Recent Developments

In response to these challenges, a formal meeting was convened with the Presidents of the Utah High School Soccer Coaches Association to discuss appropriate remedial actions and potential policy amendments. The objective was to establish enhanced measures to address unsportsmanlike conduct and to promote a culture of respect within the sport.

Sanctions Approved for the 2026 Season

Following thorough deliberation, the following policy changes have been officially voted on and approved by the executive committee and will be implemented for the 2026 Boys Soccer season:

- **Increased Game Suspension:** The suspension period following a red card for violent conduct, serious foul play, or abusive language/gestures will increase from two (2) games to **three (3) games** for a first offense for player or coach.
- **Stricter Penalties for Subsequent Offenses:** For a second offense, the suspension will increase from three (3) games to **five (5) games** for player and coach. For a third offense, the player and/or coach is suspended for the remainder of the season.
- **Continuation of Existing Sanctions:** All other current disciplinary measures will remain in effect and continue to be enforced as stipulated.

Next Steps

These augmented sanctions have been instituted to underscore the paramount importance of sportsmanship and accountability within Boys Soccer. All coaches, athletes, and associated personnel are expected to exemplify respectful behavior and adhere to the principles of fair play. The effectiveness of these measures will be monitored and reviewed throughout the season. Following the 2026 season, the red card report will be shared with the executive committee for further review of current policies and make recommendations of additional sanctions if necessary.

Dear Principal and Head Boys' Soccer Coach,

This form is to be signed by your school's principal, athletic director, and head boys' soccer coach. By signing this form, you are stating that you understand the Boys' Soccer Sanctions instituted by the collective groups from the Utah Soccer Coaches Association, Utah Soccer Officials Association, and the Utah High School Activities Association, and approved by the Executive Committee of the UHSAA.

This form must be signed and returned to the UHSAA by email on or before Friday, February 28, 2026. You can email the signed form to submit@uhsaa.org or bjackson@uhsaa.org. We will track the schools who have and have not submitted their form. No school should compete in any matches without this form being submitted. If your school does not comply, further sanctions will apply to your school.

Revised Boys' Soccer Sanctions

1) Any player ejected for violent conduct, serious foul play, insulting, obscene, or abusive language towards any game participant will be removed from the current game, plus receive an automatic 3 game suspension which would be six (6) halves. Any player receiving a second ejection will be removed from 5 additional games, and a third ejection will result in immediate termination from further competition at any level and their season ended.

Example 1: If a player is ejected for violent conduct or foul, serious foul play, insulting, obscene, or abusive language towards any game participant in the 1st half, he would be required to sit out all of the second half and then an additional six (6) halves.

Example 2: Player is ejected for violent conduct or foul, serious foul play, insulting, obscene, or abusive language towards any game participant in the second half, the player would be required to sit out the remainder of the current half, and six (6) additional halves.

2) Any coach receiving a red card for violent conduct or foul, insulting, obscene, or abusive language towards any game participant will be removed from the current game, plus receive an automatic three (3) game suspension. If a coach receives a second card, the penalty will be five (5) game suspension, and if a coach receives a third card, the penalty is a suspension for the remainder of the year.

3) Any VARSITY team that receives five (5) red cards in a season for violent conduct or foul, serious foul play, insulting, obscene, or abusive language towards any game participant, the head coach cannot coach in the post season and the school will be fined \$1,500.

4) UHSAA will create a form that all high school principals, AD's, and head coaches will sign before the season begins stating they understand the "Red Card" sanctions for the 2025-2026 Boys Soccer season. "THIS IS THE FORM"

5) The tournament exemption that allows the teams to play 3-games and count them as 2-games no longer exists for both boys' and girls' soccer.

a. Because of the improvement in the number of "Red Cards" issued, in 2023-24, the Executive Committee has given back 1-game to Boys Soccer Statewide. Girls Soccer will have 18 games, Boys Soccer will continue to have 17 soccer games beginning in the 2024-2025 Boys Soccer season.

Principal Signature: _____ Date: _____

Athletic Director: _____ Date: _____

Head Coach Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name of School: _____