

SAMFA CONFLICT AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROTOCOL

Principles:

SAMFA recognizes the right of all members of the St. Albert football community (playing children, parents/guardians, coaches, volunteers and SAMFA executive) to voice their concerns in an appropriate manner to the appropriate SAMFA personnel.

The use of wide spread media communication channels (e-mails to 'all' in a group e-mail list, open letters, etc.) to communicate any such conflicts is not appropriate. These types of 'mass' communication methods carry significant risk of legal liability (e.g. for defamation), damaging reputations, escalating tensions and emotions and detracting from SAMFA's ability to resolve such disputes in a timely and equitable fashion.

SAMFA has a responsibility to facilitate communication and conflict resolution by providing procedural direction to persons who initiate complaints or voice concerns. SAMFA confirms its responsibility to deal with any such concerns in a timely and fair fashion. SAMFA will strive to achieve a mutually acceptable solution.

All parties in a conflict situation shall be treated with, and must treat others involved with respect, dignity and fairness. All parties shall respect the principles of this protocol when addressing conflict situations.

Procedures:

Except under circumstances where serious abuse or harassment is alleged, the guiding principle for conflict resolution shall be "first contact". Parents/players are to address concerns directly with the SAMFA individual involved in the conflict before raising the concern with other parents and SAMFA officials.

- i) For situations directly related to a player's team commitments or treatment as part of the team (including issues with playing time, position, fees or practice activity), the parent/guardian of the player must address the concern with the coaching staff. The Head Coach, with responsibility for the overall team operation, will make all reasonable effort to resolve the situation in a fair and equitable manner.

In the event the head coach and parent/guardian cannot resolve the situation to their satisfaction, the matter may be referred to the SAMFA Vice-President responsible for Coaches and, if necessary, to the President of SAMFA or his designate. If the situation is still not resolved in a mutually satisfactory manner, the President may, at his discretion, appoint a committee of Directors to address the concern on behalf of the SAMFA Board, or bring the issue directly to the Board of Directors for final resolution. At the President's discretion, the parent/guardian and/or player may be invited to provide a written or oral presentation to the Board.

The Board of Directors is the final authority on behalf of SAMFA in the conflict resolution process.

- ii) For issues not directly related to a specific team, the spirit of first contact is to be maintained and the person with the concern shall approach the SAMFA individual directly involved in the dispute to resolve the issue. If the first contact does not resolve the situation, the matter is to be referred to the President or designate for further action consistent with the procedure described in i) above.
- iii) Where allegations of abuse or harassment of a serious nature are involved, the concerned party is to contact the President directly, or if the President is potentially involved in the incident, one of the two Vice-Presidents. The President, or Vice-President as applicable, will address such concern on a priority basis and will have the discretion to involve legal and law enforcement resources as considered necessary, and seek initial legal guidance on an emergency basis, with advice to the executive to be provided as soon as reasonably possible.
- iv) Parents can also contact police directly if they believe a criminal act has been committed.