

Georgia State Soccer Association

SAFESOCCKER MISSION STATEMENT

- Georgia Soccer intends to use its reasonable efforts to foster safe and healthful environment for every participant in any activity affiliated with Georgia Soccer.
- Georgia Soccer intends to use its reasonable efforts to inform and educate all players, coaches, administrators, volunteers, fans and employees of the risks connected with our game and to provide information about methods, procedures and practices for increasing safety and reducing unnecessary risk in involvement.
- Georgia Soccer intends to use its reasonable efforts to work with member affiliates for the adoption of programs to inform and educate all their members of the risks connected with the game and to provide information about methods, procedures and practices for increasing safety and reducing unnecessary risk in involvement.
- Georgia Soccer intends to use its reasonable efforts to develop standards of operation that reduce risk in GSSA administration and promote the welfare of its volunteers and staff.

GEORGIA STATE SOCCER ASSOCIATION

Risk Management Committee

RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY (Revised: February 21, 2008)

I. Purpose:

To protect and provide a safe and healthy environment for all members participating in Georgia State Soccer Association's (GSSA) sanctioned clubs, leagues, programs and tournaments. This GSSA policy shall be in keeping with, and shall not contradict, United States Soccer Federation (USSF), United States Youth Soccer Association (USYSA), USASA (United States Adult Soccer Association), or GSSA (Georgia State Soccer Association) policies and bylaws.

II. Background:

In 1994, USYSA approved and implemented the "Kidsafe Program." For soccer in the United States, this was the first recognition of the need to develop a risk management policy within the sport.

The Kidsafe program encourages each State Youth Association to develop safety guidelines and procedures. Central to the Kidsafe program is the utilization of the Employment/Volunteer Disclosure Statement (EVDS), which is to be completed by each adult applicant, as a primary condition of acceptance for a position within GSSA. The original intent of the USYSA Kidsafe program was to exclude those persons who have been convicted of a crime of violence or of a crime against a person. In 2002, the USYSA Kidsafe program was amended to also include felonies as a third classification of criminal convictions that could warrant denying current or prospective members from being associated with GSSA.

In 1999, GYSA adopted preliminary risk management policies that were instituted as voluntary guidelines. This document is to update and revise the original GYSA risk management policy position.

III. Applicability:

This policy is applicable to all GSSA Board members, GSSA Committee Members, Local Affiliate officers, Directors, coaches (including assistants), trainers, referee assignors, referees, and any other volunteers, paid employees, or contractors that have regular contact with any youth players, as identified by the President of GSSA or of each local affiliate, and/or stipulated by the GSSA Board of Directors. For the purpose of this GSSA policy an "adult" is considered to be anyone 18 years or older. The GSSA Board will have final decision on whether a position within GSSA, either at the state level or with a local affiliate, should fall under this policy.

IV. Synopsis:

The primary responsibility for managing the EVDS background screening process lies with the local affiliate association. GSSA will establish the state-wide minimum requirement that all such applicants being considered for a position within GSSA must meet. Each local affiliate is responsible for insuring that all such designated adults meet this minimum requirement as established by GSSA. Each local affiliate may require a more stringent requirement for hiring or appointing an adult to any position within their club but cannot adopt a less strict policy than that as defined by GSSA.

GSSA will coordinate and offer an electronically managed EVDS process. GSSA will be responsible for selecting and coordinating the electronic program that each affiliate will utilize for conducting the EVDS process. The GSSA board will determine the manner in which this electronic EVDS program will be funded.

Each local affiliate should maintain strict confidentiality in the handling and storage of all background information collected.

Additionally, each local affiliate is required to appoint a Risk Management Coordinator (RMC) who will be responsible for conducting and managing the local risk management EVDS program within their local organization. The local RMC will understand the importance of maintaining a highly confidential process for acquiring, handling, and storing candidate information associated with this EVDS and screening program.

It should be underscored that while an effective EVDS and criminal background screening process is critical to a sound Kidsafe program, this process in and of itself cannot insure a fail-safe environment for our youth. Only in the context of a complete risk management program instituted within each local organization can the risk exposure be minimized.

V. Organization/Procedures:

1. **Organization of the GSSA RMC:** The President shall appoint a Risk Management Committee made up of four (4) members

- The President shall appoint an individual as Chairman of the Committee and a member at-large
- The Vice-President-Adult will recommend one member to the President
- The Vice President-Youth will recommend one member to the President

The Committee shall be responsible for reviewing risk management issues that may come before the Association and shall make recommendations, as necessary, to the Board of Directors for implementation of policies and procedures that protect GSSA and the affiliated membership

2. **State Level GSSA Positions :** All GSSA Directors, Officers, Commissioners, Committee members, state coaching staff, and other state positions, whether volunteers, employees, or contractors, so identified by the GSSA President will be required to submit an EVDS to the SRMC. Each state level GSSA applicant, 18 years or older, will be submitted for criminal background screening. The SRMC will serve as the Risk Management Coordinator for all GSSA state positions.
3. **Referee Program:** All USSF certified referees, instructors, and assignors 18 years and older who desire to participate in GSSA sanctioned games must submit a disclosure each year. The referee program EVD Statements will be processed through the GSSA Risk Management Coordinator or an appointed Referee Program risk management representative.
4. **Local Affiliate RMC:** Each local affiliate will appoint a local Risk Management Coordinator. Each local affiliate will require each employee/volunteer/contractor to complete an EVDS. The local affiliate will conduct a criminal background check on each applicant 18 years of age or older.
5. **EVDS Process:** New Employee/Volunteers will submit a signed and completed EVDS as part of their application process. This process may be entirely an electronic process. It is recommended that returning employees/volunteers resubmit a current EVDS at least once every two years. However, all employees/volunteers/contractors of GSSA and local affiliates can be requested to submit an EVDS at any time, and without cause. Failure to comply with a request to submit an EVDS may be grounds for immediate suspension or termination from GSSA. This program will be conducted with the following understanding:
 - Willfully falsifying or omitting information on the signed EVDS may subject the applicant to denial, suspension or termination from activities within GSSA.
 - All completed EVDS, criminal background reports, and other communication specific to the EVDS and criminal background screening process are to be kept confidential and under secure storage.
6. **Minimum Standard for GSSA Acceptance:** It is the primary intent of this policy to deny GSSA participation to anyone who has been convicted of a felony, crime of violence, or crime against a person. No local affiliate can independently decide to amend this minimum requirement for acceptance into GSSA for any employee/volunteer/contractor.
7. **Stricter Standard for Acceptance:** The local affiliate may also choose to deny participation to any person with a history of lesser criminal convictions other than those described above based upon the nature, age, and frequency of the convictions. The local board may decide in each case whether the pertinent facts surrounding the applicant's convictions

are relevant to the position and responsibilities for which that candidate is applying.

8. **Process for Rejecting a Candidate Failing to Meet Standard:** Any person, new or currently enrolled, denied participation based on the results of the EVDS and criminal background screening process will be informed in writing by a means that provides for delivery verification. All information used in reaching the decision to deny participation should be provided to the applicant. The denied applicant will be advised of the source of the information and given the opportunity to dispute the findings with that source.
9. **Suspension and/or Termination:** Any person currently working within GSSA in any capacity who is formally indicted on any of the three classifications of crimes covered by this policy will be immediately suspended from any further GSSA participation pending the final resolution of the appeal proceeding.

10. GSSA Appeal Process:

- Both GSSA and local affiliates have total discretion as to whom they wish to hire and/or accept for volunteer positions, assuming compliance with all employment hiring laws.
- GSSA will consider an appeal of its decision only in those cases where a candidate is denied participation for failing to meet the minimum standard of acceptance defined in this policy.
- Any candidate denied participation in GSSA under this policy may appeal directly to the GSSA Appeal Committee. This process is outlined in amendment A.
- The GSSA Board may determine that more stringent requirements for a particular GSSA state-level position are required than the minimum standard set forth in this policy. In such a case, the candidate may choose to appeal direct to the Appeals Committee.
- Each local affiliate will develop its own policy with regard to appeals for those applicants denied a position based on that local affiliate's more stringent requirements for acceptance than those set forth in this policy.
- Subsequent avenues of appeal will conform to those prescribed under the GSSA appeals process.
- Any applicant denied participation in GSSA based on the results of the background screening can choose to dispute the results with the source of that disputed background information. It will be incumbent upon the applicant to contact the source of the disputed information, request a correction, and subsequently have the source of the disputed information provide the corrected information to GSSA. GSSA assumes no responsibility for correcting information provided from a background check.

For further information or clarification on this policy, please contact the GSSA Risk Management Coordinator.

Appendix A

Back Ground Check Procedure

When the standard background check returns a positive result for an individual, the Executive Director of the Georgia State Soccer Association (GSSA) shall issue a form letter by certified mail to the individual notifying them that they are excluded for all GA Soccer activity and of a hearing before the Risk Management Hearing Committee.

The individual is notified that the committee will make their final determination based on the following:

- a) The facts as represented in the cited report are in error; or
- b) There are extenuating or mitigating circumstances that the committee should take into consideration before reaching a final determination. Extenuating or mitigating circumstances that shall be considered by the committee include:
 1. The length of time that has passed since the act that resulted in conviction (the act);
 2. The conduct of the convicted person during the interval since the act;
 3. The seriousness of the act;
 4. The age and circumstances of the person when the act was committed;
 5. The nature and degree of risk posed to other participants in those Georgia State Soccer Association activities in which the person may participate.

Within ten days following the hearing, a final decision is communicated to the individual by certified mail.

Date: October 5, 2006 UPS Next Day

To:

Re: [Insert citation of the reported conviction.]

Dear:

The Georgia State Soccer Association Risk Management Program has received a report that you have been convicted of a felony or crime of violence. It is the policy of GSSA that any person who has been convicted of a felony, crime of violence or a crime against a person be excluded from participation in all GA Soccer active.

The particulars of the report are:

[Copy and paste conviction description, date, etc. from report.]

You are excluded from participating in all GA Soccer active at this time.

Your attendance is required for a Risk Management Committee hearing at the Georgia State Soccer Association office to appeal this.

Date, Time and Location of hearing

You have the right to have counsel present at this hearing and to have witnesses speak on your behalf. You have the right to submit written material, including statements of support from others, in advance or at the hearing.

The Committee will make its final determination on your participation in GSSA activities based on the following:

- a) The accuracy of the facts as represented in the cited report; or
- b) There are extenuating or mitigating circumstances that the committee should take into consideration before reaching a final determination. Extenuating or mitigating circumstances that shall be considered by the committee include:
 - 1. The length of time that has passed since the act that resulted in conviction (“the act”);
 - 2. The conduct of the convicted person during the interval since the act;
 - 3. The seriousness of the act;
 - 4. The age and circumstances of the person when the act was committed;
 - 5. The nature and degree of risk posed to other participants in those Georgia State Soccer Association activities in which the person may participate.

If you cannot attend on that date, it is your responsibility to contact the offices of Georgia Soccer to request another date no later than three business days before the meeting date. Please direct your inquiries to the Executive Director, Rick Skirvin, in the state office at 770-452-0505 ext. 100, or if outside

the Atlanta local calling area 1-877-231-2661 ext. 100.

The following items are enclosed for your reference:

1. Map to GSSA
2. Copy of the GSSA policy that governs the participation of persons convicted of a felony or violent crime against a person
3. GSSA Hearing Rules and Procedures
4. A copy of the *** Report.

Should you have any questions, you can contact Rick Skirvin at the GSSA office at email gssa_execdir@gasoccer.org.

Sincerely,

Chair, G.S.S.A. Risk Management Committee

Cc: