




*From Ambition  
to Action*

# National Appeal of Suspension & Grievance Process

November 1, 2025



## USTA National Office Receives a Grievance or Suspension Appeal

Assigned to a Committee Member (Individual)	Chair determines if the matter is to be set for Full Committee Hearing (Quorum)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Grievance:</b> Committee Member (CM) receives a copy of the grievance, rebuttals, and all other information. The CM can now begin their review and investigation. At no point does the CM discuss the grievance with any other Grievance Committee Members or any outside individuals, besides those that must be interviewed as part of the investigation.</li> <li><b>Suspension Appeal:</b> CM is provided the suspension appeal and any supplemental information, as well as the corresponding suspension notification letter and associated Code of Conduct Violation Reports.</li> </ul>	CMs respond to email inquiry about their availability, and the Hearing is scheduled approximately 8-10 days in advance. Parties' names are provided, and CMs advise Chair of any conflicts and recuse themselves. Parties may also raise conflict concerns regarding any CM(s) with the Chair (if applicable), and the Chair will determine whether the applicable CM(s) will not participate in the Hearing, if appropriate.
	Two days prior to the Hearing, all parties and the Grievance Committee receive all documents involved in the matter, and witness participation is advised (if applicable).
	The Grievance Committee convenes for 15 minutes prior to the Hearing to confer as to materials for review and establish the line of questioning.
	The Hearing occurs with active participation by the parties, witnesses (if applicable), and the Grievance Committee.
CM issues an Initial Decision, which is issued from the USTA National Office.	Upon conclusion of the Hearing, the Grievance Committee reconvenes to deliberate and identify the CM who will draft the Decision.
Should a party decide to appeal an Initial Decision, it must notify USTA National (within 30 days) as provided for in the Bylaws, then the appeal moves to Hearing by the whole Grievance Committee and the process in the next column is followed (also see page 6 of this guide).	Generally, the Chair completes the preliminary write up of the Decision and shares the draft with all CMs for any final comments. Within 5 days, a Decision from the Hearing is issued to the parties.
	The Grievance Committee's Decision is issued from USTA National Office.
<b><i>This Presentation is for informational purposes only. The USTA Bylaws and Regulations govern; please see them for the full process and procedures. Please see your Section's Bylaws &amp; Regulations, as well, which govern Section matters.</i></b>	<p>If the party decides to appeal the full Grievance Committee's Decision, and timely files an Appeal, it is then heard by a Special Committee of the USTA Board of Directors. The appealing party is advised that the case's documents will be reviewed and they will be notified if any additional information is needed.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>USTA</b> </p>

## Timeline for a Grievance when assigned to a Committee Member (CM)

Any Grievance must be mailed in within 30 days of the date on which the alleged grievance occurred or else it is time-barred.

A Grievance may also be dismissed (i) if it is determined that the Grievance Committee does not have jurisdiction over the matter raised in the Grievance or (ii) if it is determined that the Grievance Committee does not have jurisdiction over the parties, i.e., one (or more) of the parties is not a USTA Member.

The Grievance Committee shall use best efforts to investigate, hear, and issue a Decision within 30 days of receipt of the Grievance or Appeal from an Initial Decision or Decision. The Chairperson may shorten or lengthen this timeline based upon the facts and circumstances of the matter, e.g., the type of issue raised, the severity of the matter, the time needed to complete an investigation, etc.

When a Grievance is received by the USTA National Office:

1. Staff reviews for timeliness of the Grievance;
2. Staff confirms USTA Membership status of the parties;
3. Staff confers with the Chair as to assignment of the matter, generally taking in Sectional information as well as severity of the matter, and the grievance is either assigned to a CM to investigate and issue an Initial Decision or the Chair determines the matter should be set for a full hearing of the Committee.

- Staff emails Grievant to acknowledge receipt of the filing and advise that Respondent will be asked to respond. Upon receipt of the Respondent's response, Grievant will be asked to provide a rebuttal. This all generally occurs within a 7- to 10-day period.

- The CM is advised of the forthcoming matter and once all documentation is received, the CM is provided a copy of the same and begins their review and investigation.

- The CM issues an Initial Decision. This happens within approximately 2 weeks of receiving all materials.

Within 30 days of the effective date of the Initial Decision, the person penalized or suspended, the person who filed the grievance, or the Sectional Association (but only in the case of a suspension by the Sectional Association) may mail to the Grievance Chairperson, c/o USTA Office of General Counsel, 2500 Westchester Avenue, Suite 411, Purchase, New York 10577, a written request for a hearing before the Grievance Committee. Absent good cause shown, requests for a hearing not mailed within 30 days are time-barred.

**Informational Purposes Only. Please see your Section's Bylaws & Regulations, which govern Section matters.**



## Timeline for a Suspension Appeal when assigned to Committee Member (CM)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upon accumulation of 10 suspension points, the Jr. Competition office issues a letter to a junior player, informing the player of the accumulation of points and that a suspension will start 30 days after the date.</li> <li>• Typically, a player's suspension is not instituted until after the hearing concludes and an Initial Decision or Decision is issued.</li> </ul>	<p>When a Suspension Appeal is received by the USTA National Office:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Staff reviews the timeliness of the Suspension Appeal;</li> <li>2. Staff confirms USTA Membership status of the parties;</li> <li>3. Staff confers with the Chair as to assignment of the matter, generally taking in Sectional information as well as severity of the matter, and the Suspension Appeal is either assigned to a CM to investigate and issue an Initial Decision or the Chair determines the matter should be set for a full hearing of the Committee.</li> </ol>
<p>Any appeal of Suspension must be mailed in within 30 days of the date on which the final suspension occurred or else it is time-barred.</p>	
<p>The Grievance Committee shall use best efforts to investigate, hear, and issue a Decision within <u>30 days of receipt</u> of the Suspension Appeal or Appeal from an Initial Decision or Decision. The Chairperson may shorten or lengthen this timeline based upon the facts and circumstances of the matter, e.g., the type of issue raised, the severity of the matter, the time needed to complete an investigation, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff emails Appellant to acknowledge receipt of the filing and provide the Appellant an opportunity to supplement their appeal information further within a short window of time.</li> <li>• The CM is provided the suspension appeal and any supplemental information, as well as the corresponding suspension notification letter and associated Code of Conduct Violation Reports. The CM then begins their review and investigation.</li> <li>• The Committee Member issues an Initial Decision. <u>This happens within approximately 2 weeks of receiving all materials.</u></li> </ul>
<p>Within 30 days after the effective date of the Initial Decision, the person penalized or suspended, the person who filed the grievance, or the Sectional Association (but only in the case of a suspension by the Sectional Association) may mail to the Grievance Chairperson, c/o USTA Office of General Counsel, 2500 Westchester Avenue, Suite 411, Purchase, New York 10577, a written request for a hearing before the Grievance Committee. Absent good cause shown, requests for a hearing not mailed within 30 days are barred.</p>	

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## Full Committee Hearing Process

Staff emails Grievance Committee Members to ascertain their availability to conduct a Hearing, which may be scheduled no sooner than 8 days (per Bylaws), but within an approximate 10-day window by practice. Parties' names are provided, and CMs advise Chair of any conflicts and recuse themselves. Parties may also raise conflict concerns regarding any CM(s) with the Chair (if applicable), and the Chair will determine whether the applicable CM(s) will not participate in the Hearing, if appropriate.

Two Days Prior to the Hearing	All parties and the Grievance Committee receive all documents involved in the matter, and witness participation is advised (if applicable). The schedule for the Hearing is re-iterated.
15 minutes Prior to the Hearing	The Grievance Committee convenes to confer as to materials for review and establish the line of questioning.
Hearing Duration: Approximately 45-90 minutes	<p>The Hearing occurs with active participation by the all parties, witnesses (if applicable), and the Grievance Committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 minutes for initial presentation of each party's position</li> <li>• 5 minutes for rebuttals</li> <li>• Committee questions throughout</li> </ul> <p>***Any witness(es) that a party desires to participate may do so, understanding this will be included in their presentation time.</p>
Post-Hearing Deliberation: Approximately 15-30 minutes	Upon conclusion of the Hearing, the Grievance Committee reconvenes to deliberate and identify the Committee Member who will draft the Decision.
Within 5 days of the Hearing	A Decision from the Hearing is issued to the parties.

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### Teleconference Schedule

5:30 pm ET  
5:45 pm ET  
6:15 pm ET

Pre hearing discussion. Committee ONLY (use #1)  
Hearing Begins (use #2)  
Committee ONLY post-hearing discussion (use #1)







## Anti-Retaliation Provision

USTA has zero tolerance for retaliation against people who make good faith grievances and/or appeals of suspension or those who cooperate with investigations of the same. Retaliation, for the purposes herein, is defined as any adverse or discriminatory action, or the threat of an adverse or discriminatory action, carried out against an athlete, employee, board member or officer, member, committee member, task force member, hearing panel member, volunteer, or others associated with USTA as a result of any grievance, report, appeal, complaint, or other communication reporting misconduct of any kind to USTA, the USOPC, the USOPC's Office of the Athlete Ombuds, any law enforcement agency or government entity, or employees of these organizations.

USTA, nor any of its employees, contractors, agents, or volunteers, shall take or threaten to take any action against an athlete as a reprisal for disclosing information or seeking assistance from the Office of the Athlete Ombuds.

Athletes who compete at Operation Gold events (referred to by the USOPC as Team USA athletes) may contact the Athlete Ombuds for independent and confidential advice on sport-related matters, including their rights, applicable rules, policies, or processes, and questions related to resolving disputes and grievances. The Athlete Ombuds can also help Team USA athletes connect with legal counsel or mental health resources, if needed. All other USTA athletes (i.e., athletes competing domestically at the masters or youth level, recreational athletes, foreign athletes) are welcome to visit the Athlete Ombuds website to review informational resources and should work directly with the USTA to understand additional resources and options available to them.

Email: [ombudsman@usathlete.org](mailto:ombudsman@usathlete.org)

Website: [www.usathlete.org](http://www.usathlete.org)

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# Additional Notes

- ❖ Hearings are conducted via call-in; the Committee does not utilize Zoom/Meet.
- ❖ Please have your phone on mute during committee hearings unless you are speaking.
- ❖ When Hearings are scheduled, best efforts are made to accommodate time zones.
- ❖ The Grievance Committee does not accept nor utilize digital/electronic match recordings.
- ❖ For Suspension Appeal hearing, the Grievance Committee reviews whether all points were assigned appropriately and if there is any new evidence being provided.
- ❖ The Grievance Committee has the ability to determine if an incorrect violation was assigned, but not to simply change suspension point assignments.

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# Questions

- Lena Litvak – USTA National Grievance Committee Chair
- Lopa Zielinski – USTA National Grievance Committee Vice Chair
- Staciellen Stevenson Mischel – USTA Deputy Chief Legal Officer & AGC



Thank you.