

USA Fencing Black Card Policy

All black cards issued by tournament officials shall be tracked and draw additional action as follows, effective October 18, 2019:

Level 1, Standard Black Card

Standard Black Cards are those issued given for disrespect of referees, staff or other official personnel, unsportsmanlike conduct, throwing of equipment, disruptive behavior, issues of safety and other incidents that are neither administrative nor so extreme or severe as to warrant a Level 2 Black Card. Standard black cards shall be recorded and stored in the USA Fencing National Office database and result in a follow-up email from the USA Fencing National Office (with copies to the Ethics Committee and Black Card Review Group), advising the individual that: 1) the black card has been recorded, 2) the individual has been placed on probation for the remainder of the current season plus 12 months, 3) the black card will be reviewed by National Office Staff and Ethics Committee, and 4) an additional Level 1 Black Card received during the probationary period will trigger a review by the Black Card Review Group, which can determine that the repeated violation warrants a Level 2 Black Card sanction of the individual.

Level 2, Severe Offenses

Level 2 Black Cards are those issued for extreme or severe offenses including but not limited to repeated Level 1 offenses, deliberate physical violence, verbal and verifiable threats, and verifiable cheating.

Level 2 Black Cards may trigger sanctions that could include, but not be limited to, temporary suspension of competition or full membership privileges for a period of up to two months. Such sanctions will be determined in the first instance by the Black Card Review Group. The Black Card Review Group shall make its initial determination upon written submissions required from the issuing referee and Head Referee, and from any written response thereto that the carded individual may timely submit. Following the initial determination, the individual, parent or guardian shall have the right to request a hearing, as set forth below. In the event a hearing is requested, any suspension of membership or competition privileges initially imposed shall be stayed pending the outcome of the hearing. As used herein, "individual" shall include his or her parent or guardian of record, in cases where the individual is a minor.

Promptly following a determination of the Black Card Review Group that upholds a Level 2 Black Card, the USA Fencing National Office shall transmit a follow-up email to the carded individual (with copies to the Ethics Committee and Black Card Review Group), advising the individual as follows:

1) The black card has been recorded.

2) If applicable, a sanction has been issued and recorded. The sanction(s) shall be described in detail.

3) The offending individual has been placed on probation for the rest of the current season plus an additional 12 months.

4) Any additional black cards received during the probationary period will trigger (i) the offending individual's removal from the entirety of the tournament in which the subsequent black card was received and (ii) review by the Black Card Review Group for possible additional sanctions.

5) The individual may, within 5 business days of receiving the follow-up email, demand, via email to the National Office, Ethics Committee and Black Card Review Group, a hearing before the Black Card Review Group, or before members thereof who meet the requirements for a disciplinary panel as set forth in the Athlete Handbook, to challenge the Group's initial determination. If the individual does not demand a hearing, then he or she shall be deemed to have accepted the initial determination. Any hearing demanded by the individual shall be conducted as provided in the Athlete Handbook. Following such hearing, the Black Card Review Group, or its selected members, whoever conducted the hearing, shall issue a final determination, which may adhere to its initial determination or impose measures either more or less stringent. Any suspension of membership or competition privileges shall be subject to Board review as set forth in the Bylaws. The individual shall have rights of appeal according to the procedures set forth in the Athlete Handbook.

Additional Tracking of Rescinded Black Cards

Black cards given and rescinded will be recorded. The referee issuing the rescinded black card, and the Head Referee for the relevant event must each, separately, submit a written report that sets forth in detail: 1) the reason for the initial Black Card, 2) the rationale for rescission of the black card and 3) any disagreement with such rescission. All such reports shall be stored in the Black Card database and available to be reviewed by the Referees' Commission, National Office and Ethics Committee.

Black Card Review Group

The Black Card Review Group shall be comprised of two members each from the Tournament Committee, Athlete Council, Referees' Commission and Ethics Committee. It shall review both given and rescinded Black Cards annually, and it shall convene promptly to review and conduct required proceedings with respect to all Level 2 black cards. The Black Card Review Group shall create, update, and maintain internal guidelines for how various black cards should be handled for how hearings will be conducted. The Black Card Review Group shall react timely when reviewing cases.