AGA Fair Play Online Go Tournament Rules and Procedures

Introduction

The core purpose of these rules and procedures is to increase AGA member confidence that online Go tournament complaints follow transparent, fair, and effective guidelines after a player complaint has been filed. These rules and procedures seek to balance the rights and responsibilities of the player filing the complaint, their opponent, the TD, and the other players in the tournament. For more information on the principles dealing with instances of AI cheating complaints specifically, please see the *AGA Principles for Assessing AI Cheating*.

These rules and procedures draw heavily from the US Chess Federation's Code of Ethics and from the wide experiences of current AGA TDs. They are meant to work in tandem with the *Standards of Conduct* that each online AGA Go tournament participant signs. Upon a complaint that a player has violated the *Standards of Conduct,* this document is to be the primary reference point for understanding what should follow.

There are four sections below: first, the *Pool Establishment* section defines how the AGA President sets up and manages two new volunteer bodies: (a) the appeals TD pool and (b) the appeals professionals pool. Next, the *Standards of Conduct Complaint Procedures* section provides step-by-step guidance on how a complaint is processed. Then, the *TD Information Gathering, Analysis, and Decision-Making* section outlines how the TD should go about coming to a fair determination based on the complaint and the information at hand. Finally, the *Sanctions* section delves into how players should be sanctioned based on their violation of the *Standards of Conduct*.

Pool Establishment:

1. The AGA President shall establish two "volunteer pools" of AGA members who agree to assist AGA TDs in the assessment of online sanctions. The first pool shall be the *Appeals TD Pool*, who agree to deal with appeals and cases of TD conflict of interest. The second pool shall be the *Professional Assessment Pool*, who agree to assist with the assessment specifically of whether or not AI was used for cheating.

2. One individual shall be appointed by the AGA President and confirmed by the Board as the *Pools Coordinator* for a term of 2 years. The Pools Coordinator shall consult with TDs when they need to assemble volunteers from either of the two pools. The Coordinator ensures that pool volunteers are properly chosen, notified, and provided all needed information.

4. The Pools Coordinator will assemble the TD pool from experienced TDs who have demonstrated their ability to manage complex tournaments and a basic understanding of AI assessment tools.

5. Any NAGF-certified professional or professional player currently residing in the United States Or Canada may join the Professional Assessment pool.

6. For larger events especially, the TD must reach out to the Coordinator in a timely manner to ensure that Appeals TDs have been chosen before the event begins. The Coordinator should choose these appeals TDs at random.

7. If a randomly selected volunteer appeal TD is either unavailable, declines, has a clear conflict of interest, or are themselves participating in the same event, the Coordinator ensures a new appeal TD is randomly rechosen until a qualified individual is found. Whenever possible, this should be completed before the event begins.

8. In general, less important events may begin with one volunteer appeals TD, whereas larger or more important events require three volunteer appeals TDs.

Standards of Conduct Complaint Procedures

The only individuals that can file a complaint against a player are that player's opponent or the TD. Either individual must strongly believe that the opposing player has violated the Standards of Conduct to file a complaint and have evidence backing up that complaint. Regardless of how the complaint is first lodged, the individual lodging the complaint (either *Player 1* or the TD) and Player 2 are expected to follow the procedures outlined below:

1. If the complaint originates from Player 1, that player informs the TD of their complaint about Player 2 by email to their email address as published in the tournament announcement, including any information they have supporting their complaint, including a copy of or link to the SGF file. Complaints should be made in time for the TD to respond effectively before pairing the next round. A complaint submitted later will be treated as an exceptional case, which may still be investigated, but will not affect the next round pairings.

a. If the TD has a clear conflict of interest (i.e. familial ties, close friendship, professional relationship, etc.), the TD should immediately pass this responsibility to another TD at the tournament, if available. If not available, the TD should immediately inform the Coordinator, who will continue these procedures. The TD should then play no further role in processing the complaint. (But may be called as a witness by those managing the complaint.)

b. Neither player may cause anything to be made public about either the complaint or the process until after a final decision is reached, and accepted by both players. Failure to follow this can result in an immediate adverse decision at the discretion of the TD or elevation of the situation to the Code of Conduct Committee for an assessment of a conduct violation.

2. Regardless of whether the complaint was initiated from the TD or Player 1, the TD informs

Player 2 via email of the complaint and of the information supporting the complaint and asks Player 2 if they would like to dispute it. It is the responsibility of Player 2 to frequently check their email during an event, though efforts should be made to give Player 2 time to reply.

a. If the complaint is not disputed after one week of regular effort to contact Player 2, or after verbal contact is made with Player 2, the TD may sanction Player 2. The TD will then inform Player 1 of this outcome and the complaint ends. A refusal to dispute the complaint by Player 2 is not an admission itself that the player violated the Standards of Conduct, though Player 2 may still be sanctioned. The TD shall have the flexibility to determine if circumstances warrant more or less time to make contact with either Player.

b. If the complaint is disputed, the TD informs both players (separately) that the complaint will be adjudicated immediately.

3. The TD weighs the available information and comes to a decision based on the factors outlined below in the *TD Information Gathering, Analysis, and Decision-Making* section. Barring exceptional circumstances (such as multiple consecutive games on the same day), this should be completed before the start of the next tournament round. If the next round must begin before a final decision is reached, both Players will continue to play their next games. In such cases, the TD will assign a result to the game in question, informing both players of the decision. The assignment may be made at the TD's discretion.

4. If the TD feels that they do not have the time or resources to resolve the situation, they may elevate it to the appeals committee at their sole discretion, with or without a recommendation about the resolution of the situation.

5. The TD informs the two players (separately) of their determination. Both players have the option to appeal the TD's decision to the AGA Coordinator if they so choose and include a

statement as to why they believe the TD's decision was wrong. If either player wishes to appeal the TD's decision, barring exceptional circumstances, they must do so within 24 hours and before the next tournament round begins (if rounds are at least 24 hours apart) by sending an email to both the AGA Appeals Coordinator and the TD of their decision to appeal and their statement.

a. If the decision is not appealed, the TD shall determine the sanctions for Player 2 in accordance with the *Sanctions* section below.

b. If the decision is appealed, the TD provides the Coordinator with all the information they have gathered. For all major events (and whenever possible otherwise), the Coordinator shall have already designated the volunteer appeals TDs prior to the start of the tournament from the pool. If they are already selected, they are to be immediately notified that they are needed. Otherwise,

the Coordinator is responsible for swiftly finding a volunteer appeal TD. The volunteer appeal TD(s) should try to come to a decision before the next round of the tournament or within 72 hours, whichever is later. There is no further appeal beyond this point.

TD Information Gathering, Analysis, and Decision-Making:

1. All sanctions in the next section save for Official Warnings shall require "*clear and convincing*" evidence before any sanction is levied. Official Warnings may be levied with only a "*preponderance of the evidence*" standard. All sanctions must be approved by both the Appeals TDs and the Pool Coordinator.

2. If needed, the TD may request additional information from one or both players during their analysis. It is the responsibility of both players to answer TD requests for information promptly and truthfully; lack of a prompt reply will be seen as no comment.

3. Either player directly violating the Procedures listed above can be grounds for an automatic determination against that player at the discretion of the TD even if the TD would have ruled in that player's favor otherwise. In such a case, the game will be ruled a double forfeit.

4. In the case of an "AI cheating" complaint specifically, the following are considered relevant facts for the purposes TD analysis and decision-making:

- Approved (by the Pools Coordinator) AI analysis tools § This may only be used if the TD has completed the training for how to interpret AI outputs (AGA must create and disseminate training for this) ○ Professional assessment

    - 4 Professional assessment shall be done through the Coordinator, who shall contact the Professional Assessment Pool for a volunteer.

- Player statements provided to the TD ○ Webcam footage of player behavior during the game, particularly:

    - 4 Sudden/repeated disconnects

    § Mics not being open

    § Screen cannot be clearly seen

    § Player constantly looking elsewhere besides screen

Sanctions:

The TD has complete authority to levy sanctions that apply to the tournament only. All other sanctions must be approved by the Pools Coordinator.

1. If the TD (or in cases of appeal, the chosen volunteer appeal TDs) determines that the Standards of Conduct was violated, the sanctions against them should follow the guidelines laid out in this document.

2. There is no single, universal standard of what sanctions should occur for what Standards of Conduct violation – the circumstances can vary widely and require flexibility

3. For sanctions that go beyond the tournament level, the AGA Code of Conduct Committee shall have the final say on sanctions, and their findings may be posted in a limited form on the AGA website. The findings will not be published publicly but will be maintained by the AGA Appeals Coordinator. The AGA website will not publicly disclose the reason for the game nullification or any additional sanctions levied against the player. The TD will not share this information with anyone except for the Coordinator. This is in order to carefully balance the needs of transparency, the fact that no set of procedures will be perfect in their accuracy, and the need to protect against reputational damage particularly when a mistake may have been made.

4. If Player 1 is found to have repeatedly and excessively made disproven complaints against opponents, sanctions can be levied against Player 1. In order to ensure this doesn't happen, the AGA shall maintain a database history of all player complaints. Any TD may insert a new entry, but the Coordinator shall control access to existing information in the database given the sensitivity.

5. Below is the list of possible sanctions:

    - Official Warning from the TD regarding the Player's conduct. This is not published publicly. Like with those making complaints, official warnings are stored in a database that any TD can add to but only the TD Appeals Coordinator and designated AGA officials can access.

    - Disqualification from game, ineligible for tournament prize money/awards;

    - Disqualification from current event, ineligible for tournament prize money/awards;

    - Request to the Code of Conduct Committee that the player receive a harsher sanction, including a time-specified ban from AGA rated in-person/online events.

6. Important factors that may impact TD determinations around sanctions include but are not limited to:

- Severity – was the violation major and intentional? A *major* violation is one that had a significant impact on the result of a game; a reasonable observer would conclude that the course of the game would likely have been significantly altered without the violation. An *intentional* violation is one done not simply through ignorance or mistakes, but as a premeditated action.
- Player age - players under the age of 18 should be treated consistent with their age and generally given lighter sanctions than adults
- Previous instances of accepted complaints – players that have previously violated the Standards of Conduct may be given stronger sanctions
- Tournament level – top-level tournaments with significant cash prizes or international representation at stake may be given stronger sanctions
- Player 2 voluntarily admitting to violating the Standards of Conduct immediately after the TD brings the complaint to their attention should result in lesser sanctions, particularly for a first instance