The National Cyber League – Where Cybersecurity is a Passion

Ethical Behavior and Rules of Conduct
2018 Season (updated 01/31/18)

Ethics Statement

The NCL aspires to communicate and promote an honor code, ethical values and behaviors that are essential elements of the Information Security workforce. We are not here to help people learn to be Blackhats. Rather, we hope to help develop players to become IT and security professionals who can make a difference in our 21st century information, knowledge and innovation economies.

Contents

The National Cyber League – Where Cybersecurity is a Passion

Rules of Conduct

A. Professional Conduct

1. All NCL participants, including players and coaches, are to behave in a manner befitting professional cybersecurity practitioners during all NCL games, including practice and preparation, meetings, etc.

2. Policies and regulations for the NCL Stadium, Gym, and other host sites apply throughout the games and must be respected by all NCL participants.

3. Activities such as alcohol and drug use, swearing, disrespectful or unruly behavior (including online, e.g. Internet Relay Chat), sexual harassment, improper physical contact, violence, or willful physical damage have no place at NCL events and will not be tolerated.

4. Intentional or malicious violations of the rules, as determined by NCL officials, may be deemed unprofessional conduct and subject the violators to disciplinary actions.

5. Players behaving unprofessionally may receive a warning from the NCL officials for their first offense. Players may have a penalty assessed against their individual/team score, be disqualified, and/or expelled from the NCL game/season for egregious rule violations or for subsequent violations following a warning. Players expelled for unprofessional conduct will be banned from future NCL games for no less than 12 months from the date of expulsion.

6. NCL officials observing spectators, and individuals other than players, behaving in an unprofessional manner may warn against such behavior or ask those misbehaving to leave the physical and/or virtual space entirely.

B. Preseason & Regular Season (Individual) Game Conduct

1. Players are forbidden from accessing or attempting to access another player's machine, or account.

2. Players participating in the NCL Preseason and Regular season games must do so without assistance from anyone, including other players and coaches, from the start of the game to the end of the game. All private and public forms of communication (including but not limited to, phone calls, emails, chat, texting, directed emails, forum postings, verbal and non-verbal conversations, requests for assistance, etc.) with other players and coaches, that would help the player gain an unfair advantage,

capture a flag or solve any of the puzzles, are not allowed and are grounds for disqualification and/or a penalty assigned to the appropriate player.

3. Players are free to examine any target systems. Attacks or other offensive activity against any other player's systems or the NCL systems is forbidden and will not be tolerated. Any player performing offensive activity against other players', or the NCL's systems, will be immediately disqualified and expelled from the game.

4. If there are any questions or concerns during the game about whether or not specific actions can be considered offensive in nature, contact the NCL officials **before** performing those actions (see Section M for contact information).

5. You DO hereby have express permission to attack any asset designated as an NCL game "target," so long as you abide by the game rules and terms of this rules document.

C. Postseason (Team) Game Conduct

1. Players on the same team may and are encouraged to help one another during the Postseason game(s). They may engage in all forms of communication and collaboration. This does not apply to players on different teams, even from the same institution or organization. Otherwise the Preseason/Regular season rules apply.

D. School Representatives

1. Each team must have at least one coach available throughout the length of the Postseason National Championship game to help organize and assist the players. The coach should be a faculty or staff member of the institution the team is representing. In those instances when the team meets in a virtual environment, the coach must also be virtually available in that environment.

2. Once the NCL game has started, coaches may not coach, assist, or advise an individual or their team until the completion of that game.

3. Coaches must not interfere with any other individual or team.

4. The coach, or any non-team member, must not discuss any aspect of the NCL game, specifically game tasks, configurations, operations, or individual/team performance, and must not attempt to influence an individual or team's performance in any way.

The National Cyber League – Where Cybersecurity is a Passion

E. Local (Player and Team) Internet and Site Usage

1. Use of Internet resources such as FAQs, how-to's, pre-existing forums and responses, and publicly accessible company websites, are permitted for game use, provided there is no fee required to access those resources and access to those resources has not been granted based on a previous membership, purchase, or fee.

2. All Internet resources used during the game must be freely available to all players.

3. Where allowed, public Internet activity and access will be monitored, and any player caught viewing inappropriate or unauthorized content will be subject to disqualification and/or a penalty assigned to the appropriate individual/team. For the purposes of the NCL games, inappropriate content includes pornography or explicit materials, pirated media files, sites containing key generators and pirated software, etc. If there are any questions or concerns during the game about whether or not specific materials might be considered unauthorized, contact the NCL officials before using those materials.

4. The game network is publically accessible, not a protected, isolated environment; as such, NCL officials are not responsible for the security of any information, including login credentials, which players place on the game network. It is suggested that competitors NOT use credentials in the NCL environment that are mirrored from any other system.

5. Any local on-site mechanisms that interfere with game system access or the accuracy or functionality of the scoring engine or manual scoring checks are exclusively the responsibility of the player/team. This includes but is not limited to Internet connectivity, firewall rule, Intrusion Detection/Prevention Systems, Network Access Controls, and other player-side defensive actions.

F. Scorebot Attacks

1. **DO NOT**, under any circumstance, attack the NCL game or scoring systems. This includes, but is not limited to, launching automated scans or tools targeted towards the scoring system, attempting injections, altering targets, or attempting to manipulate data stored within the scoring system. Players found manipulating, or attempting to manipulate, the scoring system will be immediately disqualified from the current and future NCL events.

G. Disabling or Altering Challenges/Puzzles

1. **DO NOT** under any circumstance purposely disable, alter, or damage a challenge/puzzle and/or target in a manner that will disrupt the solution or structure of the puzzle or gameplay. This includes, but is not limited to, changing core system configurations (passwords, firewall rules, services, etc.), manipulating any network settings, and/or altering, introducing, or removing vulnerabilities on the system. Altering public Internet resources related to puzzles are not permitted.

2. Puzzles and targets break, but do not purposefully attempt to limit or disable another player's ability to complete a challenge.

3. Some challenges require you to make changes to a system (adding files, executing commands, exploiting vulnerabilities, etc.). Players should limit their interaction to the scope of the puzzle - don't change the way the challenge works.

4. Players found manipulating the puzzles and targets may be disqualified from playing in current and/or future NCL events and/or have their scores altered.

H. Solution Artifacts

1. Many challenge solutions require the persistent storage of code (be it on a web application or in a file on a system). In some instances, the target systems will automatically revert to a previous known good state to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to exercise exploits against those targets.

I. Collusion/Flag Sharing Violation Repercussions and Actions

1. **DO NOT** provide any other player with answers to challenges and **DO NOT** accept answers to challenges from any player, coach or other source during a game. Questions or artifacts should not be posted during or after a game.

2. A proprietary algorithm and method for determining flag sharing may be employed by the NCL. Participants agree to accept the judgment and findings of the Commissioner as to whether flag sharing has occurred. These findings will become final and binding after the available appeals process has been exhausted.

3. If a player is identified as sharing flags or for rule violations, post-game scoring adjustments will be made. This includes accepting only the first flag capture for that player and invalidating all subsequent flag captures for that flag from players involved in the collusion and rule violations. This allows the player who first

captured the flag to keep his or her points, while their cohorts receive no points for the flags they simply copied.

4. Again, during NCL Postseason game(s), players from the same team are encouraged to work together to solve the challenges.

J. Laws

1. **DO** follow the laws in your area and the United States.

2. **DO NOT** under any circumstance violate any laws or the terms you've agreed to in this Rules document.

3. Violations of Local, State and National laws will be reported to law enforcement.

4. **DO** follow all institutional policies.

K. Scoring

1. Scores will be maintained by the NCL officials and will be shared as soon as possible after the game. The NCL will do its best to periodically update a leaderboard with running totals provided during the game. Any (individual or team) action that interrupts the scoring system is exclusively the responsibility of that individual/team and will result in point penalties/disqualification. Should any question arise about scoring, the scoring engine, or how they function, the Team Captain and/or School Representative should contact the NCL officials.   Leaderboard scores are subject to change after the end of the competition based on analysis of results.

L. Questions

1. Prior to the games, team captains and/or coaches are encouraged to work with NCL officials to resolve any questions before the game begins. Questions can be sent using the following address: support@nationalcyberleague.org.

M. Appeals/Due Process

1. Appeals by any individual(s)/team(s) must be presented by email to the NCL Support Team (appeals@nationalcyberleague.org) within 48 hours of notification.

   a. It is possible that an appeal during an event could have some initial solution that might prevent or allow continued play by a player or team.

   b. If a player or team is allowed to continue after an appeal, any further violations will accumulate and may result in a point penalty and/or disqualification.

The National Cyber League – Where Cybersecurity is a Passion

2. The NCL will act on the appeals within five (5) days of initial individual/team appeal.

3. Individuals/teams might appeal:

    i. Accuracy of a ruling.

    ii. Introduction of new information about the case.

    Appealing party must provide data to support their contention.

    NCL officials will be the final arbitrators for any appeals or questions arising before, during, or after the game.

4. Rulings by the NCL officials and game results are final after the appeals process has been exhausted.

5. In the event of an individual(s)/team(s) disqualification, the player(s)/team(s) must leave the game environment immediately and will be barred from re-entry.

6. Disqualified individuals/teams are ineligible for individual/team awards, certificates of participation, Scouting Reports, scholarships, etc., as defined by the NCL.