



RULES & REGULATIONS

SAN FRANCISCO YOUTH SOCCER

RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR SFYS HOUSE LEAGUE PLAY

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SFYS Rules & Regulations for House League Play

This organization is known as San Francisco Youth Soccer, an association of teams that has centralized certain functions to regulate registration and the implementation of playing leagues. It is hereafter referred to in this document as the “Association.” This Association represents the entire city of San Francisco, and is a custodian of the public trust in balancing the needs of a very diverse community. Our youth come from neighborhoods throughout San Francisco, and from all manner of schools, religious affiliations, soccer clubs, friends networks, and sports programs. We have found common ground on the soccer pitch. All references in this document to the Association website refer to “www.sfyouthsoccer.com.” Eligibility, play and conduct for our games shall be governed by the following regulations:

I. PROVISIONS FOR VARYING TEAM STRENGTH

A. Multiple Leagues & Programs

Our abiding principle is to have all teams play against competition of similar strength, regardless of how the team was formed, whether it has a paid or volunteer coach, whether it belongs to a Club or is independent. To achieve this goal, we administer several programs and leagues, each suited to teams of different strength and interest level. The rules in this document apply to our SFYS house leagues. For information about the Association’s other programs, refer to the Association website.

B. Classification of Registering League

The Association shall have the absolute right to determine the recreational or competitive level of each team which registers with one of its Leagues, and shall classify that team accordingly. In classifying a team, the Association may consider any factors which it deems relevant. The basic factors are: team strength reflected by league record, league association rules, how players are selected, number of practices per week, number of leagues played in each year, coaches’ experience, aggressiveness of coaching and/or playing style, quality of coaching, and tournament play. A team which disagrees with its classification may request reconsideration by the Association, however, any such request must be submitted to the Association office within 5 days of notice of its classification. The request should address the basic factors set forth above, and must include all information or evidence which it wants the Association to consider. The Association will consider the request but, in no event, shall the League have any obligation to change the team’s classification.

Teams promoted to the Travel Program must comply with the “San Francisco Rules for Travel Play,” hosted on the Association website. A team must meet the standard to travel as determined by the Coalition of City Leagues, in cooperation with the San Francisco Recreation & Parks Department.

C. Classification of Strength Bracket

Consistent with our abiding principle to have teams compete against other teams of similar strength, any team will be further placed in a strength bracket where it challenges and is challenged by its opponents. In advance of every season, teams will be given an opportunity to confirm their playing level and division placement, so that the Association has adequate information to make a suitable placement of each team in the best available bracket. A team providing, or not correcting, misleading information or failing to cooperate fully in the assessment of that team’s ability or degree of competitiveness shall be subject to disqualification from playoffs and/or from the League.

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D. Midseason Re-bracketing

To make sure every team has fair competition, the leagues may schedule only half of the season, then re-bracket by strength at the midway point.

E. Lopsided Games

To help teams with lopsided games, the Association may implement “Mercy Rules” in it leagues. Refer to the Association website for specific implementation of such rules each season.

II. PROVISIONS FOR VARYING PLAYER STRENGTH

All teams and coaches are encouraged to find ways to help all players develop and improve during their tenure rostered with a team. At practice, all players should be active and fully participate.

A. Minimum Playing Time for Players & Substitution Rules

In Recreational play, the coach shall play each player present at the start of the game for at least one half of the total game time. The only exceptions are if a player is being disciplined for failing to attend or participate in practice, or for a serious violation of a team rule. It is the responsibility of the coach to set up a system to ensure compliance with this rule. Any intentional or flagrant violation of this rule in any game shall result in a loss to the team for that game, and the coach shall be suspended from League play for a minimum of one game. Any repeated violation of this rule will subject the team and coach to disqualification from League play.

To facilitate this minimum playing time requirement, recreational games at the younger ages (2nd and 3rd grade) are divided into six periods. Each half has three periods. Substitutions are to be made during these stoppages of play. Substitutions may also be made in case of injury. In 4th - 8th grade, there are no specified substitution stoppages, but coaches should still aim to give one half of total playing time.

In Competitive play, the league does not have any policy or rule regarding minimum playing time. Therefore, substitutions follow the main traditions of FIFA: on throw-ins, goal kicks, and on restarts, or as regulated by the USSF-recognized insuring organization.

B. Rostering Protections for Players

The Association does not place players or coaches on teams. Primary responsibility for finding a team rests with the player and his or her family. Teams are formed independently, through schools or neighborhoods, friends, classmates, community organizations, soccer clubs, etc.

Players may only register on ONE team for seasonal play in any of the local and travel leagues, including but not limited to SF Microsoccer, SFYS Recreational, SF Competitive Upper House, SFYS Varsity, CalNorth CCSL and CA Regional League, US Club NorCal Premier and NPL.

Player registration is team-based, with the primary season being the Fall Season. The minimum roster number of unique players have to be fully registered by each seasonal registration deadline in order for a team to be authorized to play.

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Individual players may add later to existing teams (late registration fees apply), but in order for a team to exist, it must meet the roster minimum by the deadline. The implications for players are that if a player is confident about where they want to play, they should register for that team as soon as possible once registration opens. If a player is unsure and doesn't want to commit to a team at this date, it's ok - but there's no guarantee which teams will still have openings after registration closes.

Generally speaking, families control their participation and have the ability to transfer between teams or drop off a team altogether. However, there are limitations to that control when roster minimums are compromised or there are allegations of poaching (reference section II.C below). Players may not be released or transferred if the releasing team will drop below the minimum number of rostered players, rendering the team ineligible to participate. Players must settle any financial obligations with their old team in advance of any release. Refer to the Association website for seasonal roster minimum and maximums as well as transfer fees and protocol.

C. Regulation of Player Poaching

During the seasonal year, each player is registered for the full soccer year (currently August 1 - July 31), not just one season. The team and its coaches make plans for the year based on the fair expectation that all players will remain rostered and playing. The Association prohibits a team or coach poaching another team's players during the seasonal year. Coaches and teams may not approach another team's players or parents thereof to suggest a player change teams prior to the expiration of the seasonal year. A coach or team that poaches any player will be ineligible to participate in Association play.

During the registration period for the following playing year, after a team's Intent to Play form has been filed, any person who intentionally disrupts any team's registration by taking or convincing four or more players to switch teams from the team they'd originally intended to register with, or causes any team to disband, in an attempt to seek advantage for particular players, shall be ineligible to participate in Association activities.

Between seasonal years, players are freely able to choose to move to different teams, with no restriction.

III. PLAYER REGISTRATION REGULATIONS

A. False Rosters or False Players

If a team attempts to play or plays an unregistered player, or a player not on the current season SFYS team roster, or not otherwise eligible for play, the coach will be banned from the Association for one calendar year and the team will be suspended for the balance of the season and all its games will be declared to be forfeits. Any player who attempts to misrepresent themselves as eligible for play shall be banned from the League for a calendar year. If this conduct occurs when three or less regular season games remain to be played, the team, coach and players will all be banned from participation in the subsequent League season. A second violation of this rule by a coach shall result in his or her permanent ban from the Association.

B. Underage Players

Except in the SFYS Varsity league, a player can play up in age, up to two years older, but not more than two years older. The same applies to grade based, recreational play. A second grader may play on a fourth grade team, for example, but

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not a fifth grade team. SFYS Varsity is for high school players only. Middle school players may not be rostered to Varsity teams.

C. Adding Players

The Association shall set a roster cutoff date, which is the last date on which players can be added and still be eligible for playing during the first week of the season. Players may be added additionally after the season commences. Teams should expect at least a 5 business day delay between the time at which complete paperwork is submitted and when the player will be eligible to play. If the season has playoffs, there will be a roster freeze date posted on the Association website in advance of playoffs, which will open again once the season culminates.

D. Disbanded Teams

If a team disbands during the course of the season, the players shall be declared free agents eligible to transfer onto another team in accordance with the USSF organization with which the Association leagues are affiliated.

E. Refund Policy

The Association may in its discretion refund part or all of a team's or a player's registration fees, but will not refund player registration processing fees nor league player processing fees. Refer to the Refund Policy as posted on the Association website. As a general policy (but subject to its discretion), the Association will not grant refunds to teams whose Association league play is interrupted as a result of disciplinary actions taken by the Association against the team.

F. Spectator Code of Conduct

In connection with each player's registration, any parent or custodian who might attend games shall be required to sign a statement acknowledging the rules of conduct required for them as spectators.

G. Age Waivers & Age Falsification

Without exception, the Association will not grant any age waivers to players. Any player found to have registered or attempted to register with a falsified age will be suspended from all play for one year. Any coach or administrator involved will also be suspended for a minimum of one year. This also applies to players on teams that are grade-based, misrepresenting the player's grade in order to play on a younger team.

H. Residency

Teams shall follow the rules of residency required by the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department.

I. Non-San Francisco Teams

Teams who reside outside San Francisco may be eligible to play in the leagues we offer, they host their home games on home fields outside San Francisco, as well as provide and pay for referees for their home games. Non-SF Team registration is at the discretion of SF Youth Soccer in consultation with SF Rec & Park.

J. Player and Team Gender

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IV. COACHING, LICENSING, AND DEMEANOR

A. Coaching License and Background Clearance Required

All coaches and assistant coaches must be licensed according to the laws of the USSF-recognized insuring organization that the League is affiliated with. Furthermore, a properly licensed and rostered coach must attend every game and be in the technical area during the game. Any team which does not have a licensed coach present at all times during a game shall forfeit the game and pay the \$100 forfeit fee.

B. Guest Coaching

If allowed by the USSF-recognized insuring organization, guest coaches can coach games for other teams, provided they are also licensed and rostered to at least one other Association team.

C. Coaching only from Technical Area Only

Only a properly licensed coach or assistant coach who is within the team's technical area is authorized to issue tactical instructions or coach any player during a game. No team may have more than two coaches during a game. Any person, whether or not properly licensed, who is not in the team's technical area and who issues tactical instructions or coaches any player during a game shall be subject to removal from the game and discipline by the Association, including being banned from league games and revocation of coaching privileges in the leagues.

D. Coaching Manner & Demeanor

The tone of voice from coaches should be informative and not a harangue. Loud and/or constant sideline coaching is not in and of itself a violation of this section; provided however that sideline coaching must be toned down, reduced or stopped at the discretion of the referee, when in the opinion of the referee, loud and/or constant coaching is intimidating, disruptive, confusing or otherwise unfair or unsporting to the other team. No derogatory, insulting, abusive or offensive remarks or profanity can be used. The penalty for violation of the above shall be ejection from the game and disciplinary action by the Association.

E. Number of Teams

A coach can only be listed as the Head Coach on a maximum of two teams. A coach can be the Assistant Coach on any number of teams.

V. GAME DAY REGULATIONS & PROCEDURES

A. Attire, Equipment, Paperwork

1. Home Team

The home team must provide the referee with a printed photo roster for both teams at least 10 minutes before game time. The home team must also provide the game ball.

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2. Team Colors/Jerseys

Players must wear matching jerseys. Each player on a particular team must have a number on his jersey and such number must be different from the numbers on his teammates' jerseys. The goalie must wear something to distinguish the goalie from the other players on either team. The home team shall have the first responsibility to change colors in case of a color conflict, but both teams shall share the responsibility of resolving any such conflict. The color change may be accomplished with a change in jerseys or, alternatively one team can wear pinnies.

3. Proof of Player Insurance and Emergency Information Required at Each Game

Registration within the Association includes player insurance and emergency information. Therefore, every game, teams must bring official documentation proving the registration of each player to that team - or proof of eligible guest play on that team - and present it to the referee. Refer to the Association website for season-specific requirements (e.g. printed Game Day Photo Roster, which displays both eligible rostered and guest players).

4. Casts, Splints and Jewelry Prohibited

Players wearing orthopedic casts, air-splints, metal splints, earrings, necklaces, bracelets (including string bracelets), jewelry or any other thing which is a danger to another player shall not be eligible to participate or continue to participate in any League game. The only exception is players with a letter from the Association Board President granting exemption for religious reasons, after the Association Board President has examined the jewelry in person. Prescription glasses and prescription sports goggles are allowed as long as they are not tinted.

5. Shin Guards

Shin guards are mandatory equipment for all players. Shin guards must be worn beneath the socks.

6. Footwear

Soccer cleats are recommended but players may play with sneakers. Players may NOT play with shoes that have a cleat right under the middle toe, such as baseball shoes and American football cleats.

B. Minimum Number of Players, Delays, No Referee, Kickoff

1. Minimum Number of Players

In order to start playing a game, a team must have the minimum number of players; see Association website for seasonal details.. Failure to have the minimum amount of players checked in within five minutes of the scheduled kickoff will constitute a forfeit and the team subject to the forfeit fee.

2. Game Time and Delays

The referee shall be responsible for keeping the game on schedule. If the game starts late due to the lack of readiness of the teams, the referee will reduce the halves proportionately from when the game actually commences in order to finish play at the scheduled time. If a team delays the start of play by 5 minutes, it shall be awarded a forfeit for that game, subject to forfeit fee. If neither team is ready to commence play, within 5 minutes of the scheduled start time, the game shall be abandoned and both teams shall be given a loss. The game shall be considered forfeit, subject to forfeit fees and will not be rescheduled.

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If a game start is delayed for reasons unrelated to the readiness of the teams, the referee shall still reduce each half proportionately to ensure prompt start of the next game scheduled for that field. If a delayed start will not delay the start of the following game, or if no game follows on that field, the halves will not be shortened.

3. Absence of Referee

In the absence of an appointed referee, there are three options, all allowing the game to be considered officially played:

1. Both team coaches will use their Team STARs. Having the game officiated by a STAR referee constitutes the match being officially recorded and should be an exhausted option prior to coaches taking turns refereeing.
2. Home coach will find a licensed referee.
3. Each coach will referee one half of the game. The home team will referee the first half of the game and the away team will referee the second half of the game. The coaches are responsible for ensuring that the game is played in a safe manner. A coach who is acting as a referee may not coach his team while he is acting as referee.

4. Coin Toss

Prior to the start of play the referee shall conduct a coin toss with the captains of each team. The team winning the toss decides which goal it will defend in the first half of the game. The other team takes the kickoff.

5. Injuries

In case of any injury requiring medical attention during a game or a practice session, the coach or team parent must notify the Association office on the next working day. Players bleeding from a wound must leave the field for treatment.

C. Spectator Location and Conduct

1. Location of Players, Coaches and Spectators

Both teams, including team players and a maximum of two coaches, shall be on one sideline, and all spectators of both teams (including other coaches and team parents) shall set up on the opposite sideline. To reiterate, no more than two rostered coaches are allowed in the technical area. In the event that there is only one side of the field available, each set of spectators and coaches will occupy the sideline of one half of the pitch.

At all 11v11 games at the Polo Fields, spectators must stay off the field and outside the fence. All spectators must sit or stand at least three feet back from the sideline to enable players to use the entire field. The coaches shall be responsible for ensuring that spectators follow this rule.

2. Goal Lines Must Be Clear

The goal lines must be clear of spectators, debris, team equipment and signs at all times. Coaches are required to assist the referee in keeping the goal lines clear. If requested to do so, the coaches shall ask a team parent or spectator to clear the goal line. If any team member, parent or team spectator refuses to move from the goal line, and if the coach refuses to assist the referee, the coach shall be subject to disciplinary action.

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3. No Alcohol

No alcoholic beverages, controlled substances or use of tobacco products are allowed by any team representative, team official, player, parent or spectator at or near a field on which any soccer game is being played. Any violation shall subject the individual to suspension or removal from the venue and/or being banned from League venues, and shall subject the team to disqualification from League play.

4. Coach Responsible for Conduct of Spectators

Coaches are responsible for the good conduct of parents and spectators supporting their team. If, in the opinion of the referee, the coach has failed to control his or her sideline or team parents or spectators, the coach may be ejected. If a coach is ejected, and no other licensed coach can substitute, the match will be considered forfeited by the ejected coach's team, subject to forfeit fee.

D. Guest Player Policy

Guest play is designed to allow teams to field a team when they are in jeopardy of forfeit due to not having enough players. It is not designed to give teams unfair advantages in matches. In the event that a guest player is not being used in the spirit of good sportsmanship, this privilege may be revoked. Guest Players must be authorized by the original team coach to the guest team (Push, not Pull) within the scheduling system so that they appear on the Game Day Photo Roster. Guest players who do not appear on the Game Day Photo Roster are not eligible to participate, even if they are registered on another Association team. Refer to the Association website for seasonal limitations on the number of guests allowed.

VI. REFEREE AUTHORITY

A. Offensive Remarks to Players, Referees or Others

No coach, team parent, player, substitute player or spectator is to use profanity or make any derogatory, insulting, abusive or offensive remarks or gestures to anyone at the game including referees, their own or other players, substitutes or spectators.

B. Referee Decisions Final

The decision of the referee will be final on all matters concerning the rules of the game, and except for actions, decisions or awards by League Officials, the referee shall be the final authority concerning the control of the players, conduct of the coaches and spectators, and all matters concerning the playing field. No one may indicate in any way their displeasure or disagreement with the actions of the referee (whether it is the direction of a throw in, the award of a penalty kick, or otherwise). If someone feels after the game that the referee was not competent, they may submit a written report to the League and/or Association office. There is a space to provide comments on the referee when reporting scores though the Association's website. The League keeps a record of such reports on referees.

C. Disagreeing With or Criticizing Referee is Prohibited

Any person disputing (in any manner), criticizing, questioning or refusing to comply with any decision of the referee, or guilty of abusive language or conduct to a referee before, during or after a game, shall be subject to suspension or

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ejection from the game, and, along with the team such person is associated with, further discipline from the League, which may include probation, further suspensions and/or being banned from League games. The sole exception to this rule is if a coach feels that a game has become dangerous to the players, then the head coach may approach the referee and confer with the referee and the other coach. If after discussion the complaining coach is not satisfied, his only recourse is to abandon the game and accept a loss. The League may condition probation and/or suspension of any discipline upon apology to the referee, completion of a test on the laws of the game, and/or completion of a coaching or referee seminar or course. This rule will not apply to complaints issued directly to the Association in the format set by the League.

D. Youth Referees

Youth referees (referees under 18 years of age) have the same power as adult referees. Youth referees are only responsible for communicating with the coaches and players concerning game issues. A youth referee need not communicate with any other adults before, during, or after a game. While at the field (even when not officiating), a youth referee at any time and at their discretion may approach the coaches and make "a demand for support" concerning the conduct of an adult or player at the field, including the other coach. Once a demand for support is made, the coach(es) shall work with the youth referee to resolve the situation including conveying the ruling, caution or red card of the youth referee to an offending coach, adult, or player and protecting the youth referee from any resulting abuse, particularly coach or adult abuse. Any abuse will be reported to the Association by email the same day by the coach(es) and the youth referee. The Association shall take disciplinary action in its discretion. At the check-in of teams by a youth referee, each coach shall state to the referee that he is aware of this rule.

Because of the special issues presented by youth referees, the Association shall have wider authority regarding games which were referred by youth referees. The Association shall take reasonable steps to investigate allegations of abuse, criticisms, humiliation, embarrassment, or other actions towards a youth referee. The League may impose game sanctions after the fact, including without limitation: awarding of red cards; coach gag orders with respect to future games; suspensions or other discipline of teams, team officials or team affiliated persons; forfeiture of games; or any other sanctions the board or disciplinary committee feels is warranted by the facts.

E. Referee May Submit Report to the League

If a referee sees a coach or team violating any League rules, the referee may submit a report to the Association office (without announcing it at the game) and the Association will take appropriate actions including suspending or expelling the coach or the entire team, issuing coach gag orders or other action.

F. Trained Volunteer Specially Trained Assistant Referees (STARs)

Every team is required to provide a STAR referee (Specially Trained Assistant Referee) per season of participation. Our local referee association's referee pool has not been able to accommodate the rapid growth of teams and games in a given weekend. To supplement this, each team is required to select a representative to take the STAR training. Upon completion, that individual may train another person within the team to share the role. Each team is required to have a STAR at every match. STARs will primarily run the lines of the match to support the referee officiating as the center. In the event that a referee does not show up to officiate the game, each team will have their STAR center for a half, unless both teams agree that one STAR will do the full match. The match will be considered as an official match in the standings.

A STAR referee may be a representative for no more than 3 teams. Failure to provide a STAR by a team on a given match day will result in penalties. If a team fails to register, train and supply a STAR to its games, the team may be referred to the Disciplinary Committee, which may decline the team's registration, impose a financial penalty, or decrease its priority ranking in practice field requests.

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G. Red Cards and Send-Offs

Any player receiving a red card shall be suspended for the remainder of that game, and for at least the next game, and for additional games as provided by affiliated league rules for the offense for which the red card was issued. A coach receiving a send-off shall be automatically suspended for the remainder of that game, and for at least the next game, and for additional games as provided by affiliated-league rules for the offense for which the red card was issued. Issuance of a red card shall be reported to the Association Disciplinary Committee for review, and further action, if warranted. Any protest or appeal of the issuance of the red card, or any additional discipline, must be submitted as provided in these rules. No player or coach shall participate in an Association game during the suspensions provided by this rule.

VII. VIOLATION OF LEAGUE RULES AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION

A. Association and League Officials and Authority

Association and League Officials are the officers, directors, staff, age group commissioners and any other persons appointed by the Board President to an Association or League position. League Officials have the authority to monitor and control all League activities and venues, and shall have authority over all persons present. League Officials have the authority to temporarily halt, suspend or terminate any game or activity, if in their opinion any unsafe, violent or condition in violation of League rules exists. Any person who interferes with or disputes the actions or decisions of a League Official shall be automatically suspended or banned for at least two games, and shall be subject to further discipline including loss or suspension of coaching privileges and being banned from all League activities. A League Official may award a loss to any team which persists in conduct after being instructed to cease or correct the conduct. Any person who strikes or physically touches a League Official in a hostile manner shall automatically be banned from League activities for a minimum of one year, whether or not the actions or decisions of the League Officials are upheld.

B. Violation of Rules

Violations of the Association rules by any team or person will constitute grounds for disciplinary action by the Association which may include suspension, expulsion, banning from Association league games, awarding losses, loss of coaching privileges, and other measures the Association deems appropriate. Each coach, player or other person participating in or attending any Association league game or activity shall be responsible for knowing the minimum suspension or discipline for violation of Association league rules, and upon being informed that he or she has violated any Association league rule shall be deemed to have notice of any applicable minimum suspension or discipline, including suspensions or ejections for red cards. Any protest or appeal of any such decision or award must be submitted in accordance with these rules.

C. Disciplinary Committee

An Association disciplinary committee shall be appointed by the Association's Board President and shall be empowered to review all violations of League rules, and impose discipline or sanctions, in addition to any required or minimum discipline or sanctions provided by affiliated-league or association rules.

D. Protest and Appeals

Any protest or appeal of any discipline, decision or award must be in writing and postmarked not later than 72 hours after notice (Sundays and holidays excluded). Notice of any discipline, decision or award is deemed given at the time the

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discipline, decision or award is announced, which shall include the awarding of any red card. Notice of any discipline or penalty in excess of any minimum or automatic discipline or penalty shall be deemed given upon receipt either orally or in writing. Any protest or appeal must set forth in detail the grounds for the protest or appeal and contain all documents, evidence and information which the person submitting it desires the Association to consider, and shall be accompanied by a fee of two hundred dollars (\$200.00), which shall be returned if the protest or appeal is upheld. Failure to submit a proper protest or appeal within the time allowed, or without the fee, shall constitute a waiver of any protest or appeal and acceptance of the discipline, decision or award. Upon proper submission of a protest or appeal, a hearing shall be held with not less than seven days notice. Only the evidence or information contained in the written protest or appeal, and any referee report or other information or evidence gathered by the League, shall be considered at the hearing. At the hearing any discipline, decision or award may be increased, decreased or affirmed.

In the case of any offense or abuse committed against any referee or Association or Association league official, the correctness or incorrectness of any decision or award precipitating the offense shall not be considered as a ground for protest. The only proper places to raise any complaints about such decisions or awards are with the League or referee association.

In the matter of protests and appeals, no person associated with the operation of this Association shall invoke the aid of the courts of any state or of the United States without first exhausting all available remedies within the appropriate soccer organizations, including a final appeal to the annual general meeting of the USYSA.

VIII. SEASON FORMAT, PLAYOFFS & AWARDS

A. Season Format

Scheduling for the season attempts to equally balance these conflicting desires: 1) the need for teams and referees to know their schedule well in advance and accommodate scheduling requests; 2) the desire to play opponents of equal strength, and 3) the desire to play a wide variety of teams, not just the same few teams over and over. By creating larger brackets, teams get more variety of opponents. By creating smaller brackets, teams can be sure to be facing close competition. Playoff games are thrilling, but they can't be planned in advance for referees or families.

To simultaneously address these various priorities, the leagues shall have the freedom to do a mix of group play games, playoff round games, and playoff games, of varying bracket sizes. The leagues shall occasionally poll teams to ask which of the varying priorities matters most to them.

B. Determination of Season Winners

If there are playoffs in a season, standings will determine seeding into the playoffs, with the winners of each bracket determined by playoff results. If there are no playoffs in a season, winners will be determined by standings. Each season has different formats. Refer to the website for season overview and format.

C. Playoffs and Modification of Playoff Format

The season format will be posted no later than one month before the season commences. In addition, the League office may modify the playoff format at any time in the event of rain or other field closures in any manner that is deemed necessary to complete the season.

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D. Tiebreakers & Standings Calculations

The Association will determine how to best account for the event of uneven games scheduled or played and to remove discrepancy. Refer to the Association website seasonal format, posted no later than two weeks prior to season.

Should teams still be tied per calculated points in the Standings table, the order of tiebreaker rules are:

1. Head to Head (playoff round)
2. Head to Head vs next strongest common team (playoff round)
3. Goal Differential vs next strongest common team (playoff round)
4. Goal Differential across all playoff games (max +3/game)
5. Goals Against across all playoff games
6. Goals For across all playoff games
7. Coin Toss

E. Awards

Medals acknowledge a player's participation in a season. Trophies recognize the perseverance to best quality opponents. While trophies make children happy, their meaning becomes devalued if they are too easy to earn. The Association will determine in advance of each season whether the league of play will have medals, trophies, or some other form of recognition.

IX. SCHEDULING REQUESTS, RAINOUTS, POSTPONEMENTS, FORFEITS

A. Scheduling Requests

Teams with scheduling requests should file a Scheduling Request form according to the date(s) specified on the Association website (usually not less than four weeks prior to the publication of the schedule for the season). Verbal and emailed requests will be ignored. The notification should include the request and the reasons for the request. Teams may only request one bye weekend per season. Though **there is no guarantee** the leagues can accommodate any single requests, the leagues will make reasonable efforts to accommodate requests according to the following priorities:

1. Requests related to religious holidays, such as Yom Kippur (Recreational league only)
2. Season-related requests for teams that volunteer time for the league, doing such tasks as lining fields, setting up goals, administering clinics, and processing paperwork.
3. One-time requests for SAT, ACT or SSAT testing
4. Approved tournament weekends for competitive teams, if the request is on file prior to the season being scheduled, but not if the team decides to attend a tournament after the scheduling is underway.
5. One-time requests for a game at a specific part of the day to accommodate a school event that affects a significant portion of the team's players.

The Leagues will not resolve scheduling conflicts caused by players participating in other San Francisco leagues or sports. Teams with players playing in another league or concurrent sport outside the purview of SFYS enter our leagues at their own risk and will be subject to the penalties described in Section VII if they forfeit a game due to a conflict. Teams who provide substantial volunteer assistance to the League will get first priority in scheduling requests.

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B. Rainouts

Rained out games will be called by the League office in consultation with SF Rec and Park. Notice of rainouts will be posted on the Association website. It is the responsibility of each team to check the website. If a team fails to show up for a game that has not been canceled, it shall be awarded a loss and be required to pay the forfeit fee.

C. Cancellation of Games/Practices due to Environmental Issues

Practices and games may be cancelled by the League office for environmental issues in consultation with SF Rec and Park and SF Department of Health. Notice of cancellations due to environmental issues will be posted on the Association website and an email will be sent to all coaches and each team's authorized parent representative. It is also the responsibility of each team to check the website. If a team fails to show up for a game that has not been canceled, it shall be awarded a loss and be required to pay the forfeit fee. Cancellations due to environmental issues are not eligible for registration refunds; see the posted Refund Policy posted on the Association website for more information.

D. No Schedule Changes Once Schedule is Published

Once league schedules for the season have been published, it shall be Association policy not to grant a schedule change except based on substantial justification undiscoverable before or arising after the schedule was published. Conflicting games in other leagues, long weekends, team parties, or similar events are not considered substantial justification. If a schedule change is granted, it is the responsibility of the requesting coach to coordinate with the opposing team and will be subject to a schedule change fee, as noted on the Association website. All rescheduling or cancellations must be approved by the League office staff.

E. Forfeit Fee for Forfeited Matches

If a team will be unable to make a scheduled game it must notify the opposing coach and the League office by email, as soon as possible but no later than Monday prior to the subject game. Except in the case of exigent circumstances, any team that forfeits a game will be assessed the forfeit fee as posted on the Association website (regardless of notice given). The fee will be due before the next scheduled match and shall be paid to the Association.

Teams which fail to provide the notices described above will be subject to additional penalties. Additional forfeit fees apply for every game forfeit after the original forfeit. Teams failing to pay fees beyond the season will not be scheduled in the next season until paid. The Association reserves the right to refuse registration and/or suspend coaches and managers of teams that forfeit three (3) or more games in one season.

Matches considered Forfeits are:

- Failing to have a minimum number of eligible players to commence a match.
- Attempting to field players that are not on the team's roster..
- Failing to have a rostered, licensed, background-cleared coach.
- Failing to have the minimum number of players and coach 5 minutes after the stated kick-off time.
- A forfeit is a forfeit, even if the two teams scrimmaged during the scheduled game time.

Teams that withdraw from the season after the final schedule has been posted are subject to forfeit fees for all scheduled matches.

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X. AGE GROUP MODIFICATIONS TO LAWS OF THE GAME

By and large, the Association leagues will follow the FIFA Laws of the Game, and we seek to have as few age modifications as possible, for the following two reasons: 1) rules modifications are very hard for referees to keep straight, so it results in either incorrect calls or arguments on the field, and 2) players, coaches and spectators should see the game as it is played professionally and historically. There are only a few exceptions:

A. Offside Rule

The offside rule is observed at all levels. See Association website for seasonal specifics.

B. Ball Size

See Association website for seasonal specifics on ball size. When two teams play across age, the game shall defer to the younger team's ball size, unless both teams agree to use the larger ball.

C. Free Kick Wall and Penalty Distances

At all ages, penalty kicks and direct kicks are called by the Laws of the Game.

However, wall distances are as follows: In 7v7 and 9v9 games, 8 yards. In 11v11 games, 10 yards.

In addition, penalty kick distances are as follows: In 7v7 games, 8 yards. In 9v9 games, 10 yards. In 11v11 games, 12 yards.

D. Game Duration

See the Association website for current seasonal game durations.

E. Number of Players on Field

In order to start playing a game, a team must have the minimum number of players checked in and ready to play. See Association website for seasonal details.

F. Build Out Line and Goalkeeper Punt Limitations

The Association follows the US Soccer mandates for build out lines and goalkeeper punt limitations. For all 7v7 games, including U9-U10, when the goalkeeper has the ball, either during play or from a goal kick, the opposing team must move behind the build out line. Once the opposing team is behind the build out line, the goalkeeper can pass, throw or roll the ball to a teammate. Punting the ball is not allowed. After the ball has been touched by a teammate, the opposing team can then cross the build out line and play can resume as normal.