

Youth Soccer Rules and Conduct Policy

SoccerPlex 2015-2016

The Maryland SoccerPlex Rules for **Indoor** and **Outdoor** Youth Soccer Leagues are governed by FIFA Laws, modified for indoor/outdoor play and the following rules. The following rules shall precede FIFA Laws if conflict with said rules should arise.

I. PRIOR TO THE GAME

- a. **ROSTERS:** A roster must be turned in before the season starts or the team will not be permitted to play. Rosters are frozen before the third game. Players may be multi-rostered if the teams are in different age groups and/or in the same age group but in different divisions that do not play each other.
 - i. **Indoor:** Eighteen (18) player maximum for youth leagues. A maximum of two (2) additional adult personnel, coaches, or otherwise are allowed in the player's box. Non-rostered minors, fans, or parents are not permitted in the player's box.
 - ii. **Outdoor:** U10-U12 **fourteen (14)** player roster maximum, U13 and above **twenty-two (22)** player roster maximum.
 - iii. No individual will be allowed to participate in any league games or other activities unless a waiver form has been properly completed and properly registered.
 - iv. No coaching is allowed from the opposite touchline or from behind the goals.
 - v. Protests of illegal players should be made prior to the start of the game.
Illegal/Ineligible Players include:
 1. Players not listed on the **Official Roster**.
 2. Players not meeting the age requirement for the division.
 3. Players serving a RED CARD suspension.
 - vi. Home Team is listed first on the game schedule.
- b. **COACHES:** In addition to the players, a maximum of two (2) adult supervisors (on **official roster**) are permitted on the player's bench. Anyone else will be asked to leave the player's bench and return to the spectator's side of the field.
- c. **EQUIPMENT:**
 - i. **BALL:** U12 and under will use a Size 4 regulation soccer ball. U13 and above will use a Size 5 regulation soccer ball. Home team is required to provide the game ball.
 - ii. **CLEATS:**

1. **Indoor:** Turf shoes or flats (including black soled) are acceptable footwear indoors. Molded cleats and metal studs are not permitted. Use of molded cleats may result in disciplinary action.
 2. **Outdoors:** Standard molded cleats, turf shoes and flats are the only acceptable footwear.
 - iii. **SHIN GUARDS:** Players may not participate without shin guards. Shin guards are to be worn under their socks during game play.
 - iv. **JERSEYS:** Teams are required to have a dark and an alternate light colored jersey. Home teams are required to change jerseys in the event of similar colored uniforms.
 1. Each player must have a ***PERMANENT visible number displayed on the back of his/her jersey.*** The same number must also be denoted on the roster.
 - v. **JEWELRY:** NO jewelry is permitted to be worn during the course of the game. This includes, but is not limited to rings, piercings, earrings, wristbands, watches, bracelets, hair ties, etc.
 - vi. **OTHER:** Braces, splints, soft casts etc. must be approved by the referee prior to the start of the game. Referee has the final approval on all safety equipment worn during the game, provided it is not a danger to the player or others.
- d. **DURATION OF PLAY:**
- i. **INDOOR:** There will be two (2) twenty-two minute halves with a two-minute halftime.
 - ii. **OUTDOOR:**
 1. **U10-U12:** 30 minute halves
 2. **U13/14:** 35 minute halves
 3. **U15-U17:** 40 minute halves
 - iii. **OVERTIME:** No overtime periods will be played for regular season play.
- e. **NUMBER OF PLAYERS REQUIRED ON THE FIELD:**
- i. **INDOOR:**
 1. **U9/U10:** 7 field players + 1 goalkeeper
 - a. **MINIMUM:** 5 players + 1 goalkeeper
 2. **U11 and up:** 6 field players + 1 goalkeeper
 - a. **MINIMUM:** 4 players + 1 goalkeeper
 - ii. **OUTDOOR:**
 1. **U12 AND UNDER:** 7 field players + 1 goalkeeper
 - a. **MINIMUM:** 6 players
 2. **U13 AND UP:** 10 field players + 1 goalkeeper
 - a. **MINIMUM:** 7 players

- iii. **ALL LEAGUES:** The official will start the game clock as scheduled, but provide teams with fewer than the minimum number of players a five (5) minute grace period to produce the minimum required. The clock runs during the grace period and time is not added to the end of the game. IF the team does not have the minimum number of players required after the grace period, a forfeit shall be awarded to the opposing team, with the resulting score registered as a 3-0 result.
- iv. **IF REFEREE FAILS TO APPEAR:** If a referee should fail to appear for a scheduled match, the Coach/Team representative of the competing teams must agree upon a person to substitute for the referee. The substitute need not be a certified referee. The substitute will officiate until an official arrives. The substitute referee shall have those prerogatives granted to him/her by the "**LAWS OF THE GAME**", as published by FIFA and amended by the Maryland SoccerPlex. Upon completion of their game the **home team** must report to the league's office the final score of the game.
- f. **TERMINATED GAMES:** If the official must terminate a game due to weather or other necessary circumstances, the following rules shall apply:
 - i. If the game is terminated after the first half has been completed, the game will be considered a complete game and the score at the time the game is terminated will stand.
 - ii. If the game is terminated prior to the first half ending, the game will be rescheduled by the Maryland SoccerPlex staff at a later date and the score will revert to 0-0.
- g. **FORFEITED GAMES:** Forfeited games will be recorded as 3-0 scores and 3 points in the standings for the non-forfeiting team. A team that does not show up to the game or does not have the minimum number of players after the five (5) minute grace period forfeits the game. ***In addition, any team walking off the field before the end of either half to protest a referee's decision or Maryland SoccerPlex policies, will forfeit the game, lose 3 points in the standings and disciplinary action will be taken against the coach/team representative.***

II. DURING THE GAME

- a. **KICKOFF:**
 - i. **INDOOR:** The ball may be played in any direction on the first touch. A goal can be scored on the first touch.
 - ii. **OUTDOOR:** The **WHOLE** ball must cross the midline and progress forward on the first touch. A goal can be scored on the first touch.
- b. **SUBSTITUTIONS:**
 - i. **INDOOR:** Unlimited "on the fly" substitutions. Must occur at the halfway line and must not interfere with the flow of play. An indirect free kick (IFK) shall be awarded for any improper substitution. Repeated improper substitutions may result in a YELLOW CARD.

- i. **OUTDOOR:** With the referees consent, a substitution can be made at the following times:
 - 1. Prior to a throw-in, in your favor
 - 2. Prior to a goal kick, by either team
 - 3. After a goal, by either team
 - 4. After an injury, by either team, when the referee stops play
 - 5. Half time
- c. **OFFSIDES:** There is NO offsides for INDOOR.
- d. **SLIDE TACKLING:**
 - i. **INDOOR:** Slide tackling an opponent is *not permitted* under any circumstance. (See rule for goalkeepers.) The minimum penalty will be a direct free kick awarded to the opposing team. Additional disciplinary action (including but not limited to a RED CARD and game suspension) may result for intentional, repeated, or violent slide tackling.
 - ii. **OUTDOORS:** Slide tackling is permitted for **U13 and above age groups only.** Disciplinary action can and will be taken against anyone for intentional, repeated or violent slide tackling.
- e. **RESTART RULES:**
 - i. **The “6 Second Rule”:** A restart must occur within six (6) seconds of placing the ball for a free kick, corner kick, throw-in, or goal kick. Failure to do so will result in a caution and an indirect free kick for the opposing team at the spot, or if the spot is inside the penalty area, immediately outside the penalty area.
 - ii. **The “10 Yard Rule”:** **OUTDOOR.** Opposing players must give ten yards on all direct kicks, indirect kicks, and corner kicks. Failure to do so may result in a re-kick. A YELLOW CARD may be awarded upon the referee’s discretion.
 - iii. **The “12 Foot Rule”:** **INDOOR.** Opposing players must give twelve feet on all kicks, including corner kicks. Failure to do so may result in a re-kick. A YELLOW CARD may be awarded upon the referee’s discretion.
 - iv. **INDOOR:** If a ball strikes the ceiling or a light fixture, the ball will be spotted at the point of contact and an IFK will be awarded to the opposing team.
 - 1. The exception being if the ball is spotted inside the penalty area, the restart will commence from just outside the penalty area.
- f. **SPECIFIC RULES FOR GOALKEEPERS:**
 - i. **INDOOR:** Punts and/or drop kicks are not permitted. The ball must be distributed by a throw, normal place kick, or a kick from a dribble.

1. **A throw or restart (goal kick, DFK or IFK) cannot go beyond midfield unless it is touched by another player or hits the ground prior to crossing the midfield line.**
2. **If the ball fails to touch another player or the ground prior to crossing the midfield line then an IFK will be awarded to the opposing team at the spot where the ball crossed the midline.**
 - ii. Goalkeepers must release the ball within six (6) seconds after gaining possession and returning to their feet.
 - iii. Goalkeeper may not use his/her hands if the ball is intentionally passed (with their feet) to him/her by his/her own teammate.
 - iv. Failure to abide by above stated rules will result in an indirect free kick immediately outside the penalty area.
 - v. Goalkeepers may use unlimited steps to bring the ball to the boundary of the penalty area.
 - vi. Goalkeepers are permitted to make sliding saves (slide tackle) within the penalty area up to the referee's discretion.
- g. **INJURIES:** Any player who is bleeding must leave the field of play immediately.
 - i. **INDOOR:** **Time will not be stopped for injuries.**
 - ii. **OUTDOOR:** Referee can stop the official time if the injury is serious enough.
- h. **BALL OUT OF PLAY:** If the WHOLE ball has crossed the goal line or touchline, whether in the air or on the ground, the restart is a goal kick, corner kick or throw-in.
- i. **PENALTY KICKS:** Players taking penalty kicks are limited to the players on the field as time expires.
 - i. **OUTDOORS:** The kicker is not limited to a one-step approach but must wait for the referee to blow their whistle to approach the kick.
 - ii. **INDOORS:** **Penalty kicks will be taken from the CENTER OF THE BLUE LINE (7 YARDS FROM GOAL LINE) INSIDE OF THE BLUE LACROSSE CIRCLE. The kicker is not limited to a one-step approach but must wait for the referee to blow their whistle to approach the kick.**

III. POINTS SYSTEM AND PLAYOFFS

- a. **POINT SYSTEM:** Three (3) points for a win, 1 for a tie, and 0 for a loss.
 - i. There is no overtime in any Maryland SoccerPlex youth soccer games. Games tied at the end of regulation are recorded as ties.
- b. **PLAYOFFS:** Only the top four (4) teams with the most points at the end of the season will advance to the championship rounds. All other teams in the division will play consolation games to finish out the season.
- c. **TIEBREAKERS:** Ties for playoff position and for playoff participation will be broken down utilizing the criteria set forth below:

- i. Head-to-Head result
 - ii. Least amount of goals against in the season
 - iii. Most amount of goals scored in the season
 - iv. Lowest number of forfeits
- d. **NO TIES:** Playoff games must result in a winner.
- i. **INDOOR:** In the event of a tie at the end of regular time in playoffs, there is NO OVERTIME. Teams go directly to penalty kicks. Three (3) kickers for each team. If still tied after three (3) kickers, sudden death penalty kicks will commence.
 - ii. **OUTDOOR:** In the event of a tie at the end of regular time in playoffs, there will be one (1) 5-minute **GOLDEN GOAL** overtime period. If the game is still tied at the end of overtime, teams will go directly to penalty kicks. Three (3) kickers for each team. If still tied after three (3) kickers, sudden death penalty kicks will commence.

IV. CONDUCT POLICY

- a. **SPORTSMANSHIP:** Individuals are expected to play under control and within the rules of the game, and to the best of their ability will avoid causing injury to themselves and others using the facility.
- b. **CARDS:**
- i. **YELLOW CARD:** Any player receiving a YELLOW CARD must return to their bench with a replacement for two (2) minutes.
 - ii. **RED CARD:** A RED CARD will result in the ejection of the player for the duration of the match without replacement. Additionally:
 - 1. The player receiving the RED CARD must leave the field of play immediately.
 - 2. Failure to do so may result in the forfeit of the match for the player's team, suspension of the coach and/or team representative, or other disciplinary action.
 - 3. Further disciplinary action shall be taken against all players receiving RED CARDS pursuant to the rules below.
 - iii. **COACHES/SUBSTITUTES/SUBSTITUTED PLAYERS:** Coaches, substitutes, and substituted players can be issued both YELLOW and RED CARDS and are subject to the same rules as the players on the field.
 - 1. In the event of a coach receiving a RED CARD, the team will play a man down for the remainder of the match and the coach is asked to leave the playing area and go to the parking lot.
 - iv. **GOALKEEPERS:** Goalkeepers must serve their own penalties if issued a YELLOW or RED CARD.
- c. **THE MARYLAND SOCCERPLEX HAS A "ZERO TOLERANCE" POLICY TOWARDS FIGHTING AND OTHER VIOLENT PHYSICAL CONDUCT INCLUDING, BUT NOT**

LIMITED TO SPITTING, PUSHING, STRIKING, KICKING, AND WRESTLING (“VIOLENT PHYSICAL CONDUCT”). ANY PLAYER ENGAGING IN VIOLENT PHYSICAL CONDUCT (AND, IN CERTAIN CASES, THE PLAYER’S TEAM) WILL BE DISCIPLINED PURSUANT TO THE RULES BELOW.

- d. COACH/TEAM REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSIBILITY:** It is the responsibility of each player and the coach/team representative to control the conduct of the players on their team and to be aware of the status of their player’s infractions. Failure to comply may result in further disciplinary measures that may include suspension of the team or the coach/team representative, and forfeiture of games played in.
- i.** This includes use of illegal players – those not registered properly on the team roster or not current with the Maryland SoccerPlex’s registration fees.
 - ii.** Coach/team representative are responsible for any player leaving the bench area and entering the field of play during a fight.
- e. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE:**
- i.** The Maryland SoccerPlex will review incidents requiring possible disciplinary action within 5 business days of the incident and issue any of the following disciplinary measures in its sole and absolute discretion:
 - 1.** Player suspension for a minimum of 1 or more games.
 - 2.** Player suspension from other Maryland SoccerPlex activities.
 - 3.** Player suspension for 1 or more years from Maryland SoccerPlex soccer activities and/or other Maryland SoccerPlex activities.
 - 4.** Player’s team forfeits 1 or more games.
 - 5.** Player’s team excluded from playoffs.
 - 6.** Player’s team suspended for the remainder of the season and excluded from additional seasons, without refund.
 - 7.** Player or player’s team permanently excluded from Maryland SoccerPlex soccer activities and/or other Maryland SoccerPlex activities, without refund.
 - ii.** The Maryland SoccerPlex will review and consider, in its sole and absolute discretion, any written statement in the form of a letter or email from the manager, coach, or representative of the offending player’s team, if received within 24 hours of the incident giving rise to the possible disciplinary action. Only reviews regarding violations of the laws of the game or these rules will be permitted.
- f. MINIMUM DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS:** The Maryland SoccerPlex has established minimum disciplinary actions related to the following offenses. Nothing shall prevent the Maryland SoccerPlex from increasing the minimum disciplinary actions in their sole and absolute discretion.

- i. **RED CARD:** Any player receiving a RED CARD shall be suspended for a minimum of 1 game plus suspension from all other Maryland SoccerPlex activities (including games in other leagues/divisions) until that 1 game suspension has been served.
- ii. **TWO SUSPENSIONS:** Any player that receives a second suspension in any session may be suspended from all Maryland SoccerPlex activities for 1 year or more.
- iii. **VIOLENT PHYSICAL CONDUCT:**
 - 1. Any player that engages in Violent Physical Conduct will be suspended at a minimum from all Maryland SoccerPlex youth soccer activities for 1 year from the date of incident, under the discretion of the disciplinary committee.
 - 2. Any team that accrues a second incident of Violent Physical Conduct during a session will be suspended at a minimum from the current session without refund and may also face expulsion from future sessions, under the discretion of the disciplinary committee.
 - 3. Any incident that involves Violent Physical Conduct from more than 1 player on a team (i.e. player leaving the bench area to join a fight on the field) will result in the team receiving a suspension from Maryland SoccerPlex youth soccer activities for a minimum of 1 year from the date of incident, without refund, under the discretion of the disciplinary committee.
- iv. **THREATENING OTHER PARTICIPANTS:** Any player, manager, or coach who verbally threatens another player, coach, official, spectator, or Maryland SoccerPlex staff member will be suspended from all Maryland SoccerPlex activities (including soccer) for a minimum of 1 year from the date of incident, under the discretion of the disciplinary committee.
- v. **VERBAL ABUSE OF OFFICIAL:** Any player, manager, or coach, who approaches an official or other Maryland SoccerPlex staff with abusive language, or a harsh or threatening tone before, during, or after the conclusion of a league game, shall be suspended for a minimum of 1 game, under the discretion of the disciplinary committee.
- vi. **IMPROPERLY ENTERING THE FIELD OF PLAY:** If any player, manager, coach or spectator enters the field of play during a game (except when substituting or when expressly permitted by the official), the official may terminate the game and/or declare a forfeit against the offending team.
- vii. **SPITTING:** Any player, manager, coach, or spectator who spits on an opponent, teammate, official and/or a member of the Maryland SoccerPlex staff will be ejected from the game, asked to leave the playing area and will receive a minimum 1 year suspension from all Maryland SoccerPlex activities, under the discretion of the disciplinary committee.