



FORT WORTH UNITED SOCCER LEAGUE

Rules

Last Updated May 2026

FWUSL

FORT WORTH UNITED SOCCER LEAGUE

The following rules (the “*Rules*”) of Fort Worth United Soccer League (“*FWUSL*”) have been adopted by the League and govern all FWUSL activities.

1. GENERAL RULES

The following rules apply to FWUSL:

1.1 SOCCER YEAR

The soccer year begins on August 1 of each calendar year and ends on July 31 of the following calendar year.

1.2 PLAYING SEASONS

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Fall Season: | August 1 through and no later than November 30th |
| Spring Season: | February 1 through and no later than May 31st |

1.3 PLAYER PLACEMENT

1.3.1 Any player that meets the age requirements for the league is permitted to register.

1.3.2 A player does not have to belong to a team in order to register.

1.3.3 A player who does not belong to a team may make a friend request and the League will make every effort to place the player on a team with their friend. If a friend request cannot be honored, the League will place the player on a team with players who attend the same school or reside in the same zipcode as the player.

1.3.4 The League cannot add a player to a fully formed team.

1.3.5 If a coach does not designate a player on their team roster during the registration process, that player cannot be added to the roster. Players need to communicate directly with coaches to ensure they are placed on the appropriate roster.

1.4 COACH REGISTRATION/TEAM FORMATION

1.4.1 A coach may register either a fully formed team or a partially formed team during the registration process.

1.4.2 All coaches must be aware of the maximum roster size for each age group as stated in these rules. Coaches are not permitted to add more than the maximum number of players to their roster without prior approval from the League.

- 1.4.3 If a Coach only has enough players for a semi formed team (for example if the maximum roster size is 7 players but the coach only has 5 players) the League will fill the remaining 2 spots on the team with either (1) another registered player from the school or schools the team is formed from or (2) another registered player that resides in the same zipcode as the majority of players on the team.
- 1.4.4 All Coaches must complete a child safety course prior to the first practice of the season or their team will not be permitted to play in their first game.

1.5 PLAYDOWN PROVISIONS

- 1.5.1 Fort Worth United Soccer League (“FWUSL”) will allow a playdown exception solely under the following circumstances:
 - 1.5.1.1 The player is born on or after June 1st of the calendar year for the age group they wish to play for; AND
 - 1.5.1.2 Every play down player acknowledges this exception only applies in this league and this exception will not carry over to any other league, organization or division for either regular or tournament play that is sanctioned by US Soccer.
 - 1.5.1.3 Ex: under the new age charts a 2016 team of boys consists of players born between August 1, 2016 – July 31, 2017. Player A is born on June 16, 2016. This player is permitted to play on the team with their teammates.

1.6 PRACTICES

- 1.6.1 Each coach sets the day and time of the practice prior to contacting the rostered players. Be prepared for practice any day of the week. NOTE: Any conflicts with practice times or days should be resolved between the player and the coach of the team on which the player is rostered. There will be no trading or swapping of players between teams due to practice conflicts. If you want a say in when or where your child practices, it is recommended that you volunteer to coach so you can practice when you want to.

1.7 LEAGUE SUBDIVISION

- 1.7.1 The League consists of girl divisions and boy divisions, each with a league per age group (each a “***League***”): 4 and under (4U), 5U, 6U, 7U, 8U, 9U, 10U, and 11U. Eligibility for each League is based upon age requirements established by FWUSL.
- 1.7.2 Depending on the number of teams registered for each League during a season, the League may combine age group Leagues (e.g., combine 10U and 11U)

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- 1.7.3 The League may appoint one or more commissioners for the Leagues (each a “***League Commissioner***”). The role of a League Commissioner will be to assist with the overall organization and oversight of recreational play in Leagues.

1.8 LEAGUE SCHEDULE

1.8.1 Regular Season Games

- 1.8.1.1 All regular season games will be scheduled on Saturdays throughout the season, subject to field availability, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. In the event of a cancellation due to a force of nature or closure initiated by the Parks and Recreation Department for the City of Fort Worth, the League will reschedule games as quickly as possible. Rescheduled games may take place on Sundays, or any other available day of the week, with some rescheduled games potentially being scheduled on Sunday mornings.

1.8.2 Number of Games Per Season

- 1.8.2.1 U4/U5 – 6 total regular season games– no playoff or championship – awards provided for each player
- 1.8.2.2 U6/U7/U8 – 7 total regular season games + 1 guaranteed playoff game – each team will have at least one playoff game with potential to advance to semi-final or Championship game depending on number of teams in the division
- 1.8.2.3 U9/U10/U11 – 8 total regular season games + 2 guaranteed playoff games - each team will have at least one playoff game with potential to advance to semi-final or Championship game depending on number of teams in the division

1.8.3 Fall Season

- 1.8.3.1 The fall season will end no later than the week before Thanksgiving break
- 1.8.3.2 No games will be played on the weekend of “fall break” as determined by the FWISD calendar each year

1.8.4 Spring Season

- 1.8.4.1 No games will be played Easter weekend
- 1.8.4.2 The Spring season will end no later than May 20th

1.8.5 Game Times

- 1.8.5.1 The League will make every effort to schedule consistent game times

for each age division every week of the season within the parameter of field availability provided by the City of Fort Worth.

1.9 LEAGUE STANDINGS

- 1.9.1 The following point system is used to determine standings within a League or division thereof:
 - 1.9.1.1 No standings will be kept for 6U and below.
 - 1.9.1.2 Points will be awarded for 7U through 11U, as follows:
 - 1.9.1.2.1 3 points for a win.
 - 1.9.1.2.2 1 point for a tie.
 - 1.9.1.2.3 0 points for a loss.
 - 1.9.1.2.4 A forfeited game (including an abandoned game) will be scored at a 3-0 win in favor of the non-forfeiting team. The winning team receives 3 points for the standings.
- 1.9.2 If two or more teams are tied in points after their regular season's games are completed, the following tiebreaker procedures will be used in the following order of priority to determine the team standings:
 - 1.9.2.1 Head-to-Head game results: the team that has won in head-to-head play will win the tie-breaker.
 - 1.9.2.2 Goal Differential: the team with highest goals differential against their opponents will win the tiebreaker. **NOTE:** when reporting scores, the five-goal differential maximum will apply and be used for calculating goal differential. A maximum five-goal differential for any team in any game will be counted and used in calculating goal differentials. **Example:** a 7 - 0 score would be reported as 5 - 0; a 10 - 3 game would be reported as 8 - 3.
 - 1.9.2.3 Fewest Goals Allowed: the team with the fewest goals allowed will win the tiebreaker.
- 1.9.3 The tiebreaker procedures will be applied, in order, to the teams tied in points until one team is selected for advancement in the standings.
- 1.9.4 Championship games will follow regular game format unless otherwise determined by the League.
- 1.9.5 If there are an uneven number of games played by each team in a League or division thereof (*e.g.*, due to game cancellations), "averaging" will be used to determine the standings for that season. "Averaging" means total points earned

by a team divided by that team's total games played.

1.10 AWARDS

- 1.10.1 A participation award may be presented to all players in the 6U and below Leagues. A placement award may be given to teams in 7U and above Leagues as provided below.
- 1.10.2 Any team playing up to higher League (*e.g.*, in the event of a combination of Leagues) will follow the awards rules of the higher League.
- 1.10.3 Place awards may be given for each League (and if subdivided into divisions, for each division thereof) for 7U and above Leagues based on the results of the playoffs conducted in accordance with the playoff format. In the event playoffs are not conducted for a season (*e.g.*, due to weather cancellations or other circumstances), then placement awards may be determined by the League (or division) standings for that season.
- 1.10.4 If there are only two or three teams in a League (or division), only a FIRST PLACE award may be given. If there are four or more teams in a League (or division), only FIRST and SECOND PLACE awards may be given.

1.11 PLAYER ELIGIBILITY AND REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

- 1.11.1 Age of a player as of August 1st of the current calendar year determines the league in which the player will play unless the terms of the Playdown Exceptions apply to the player. Players may play up one (1) age group with a written request from the parent(s) and may play up two (2) age groups with the written request from the parent(s) and approval of FWUSL.
- 1.11.2 No team is permitted to play in a League game without first having turned in the association fee, player's registration, risk management forms for all rostered adults and all pertinent information. No player may be added after the season starts without approval of FWUSL and submittal of the necessary information to the FWUSL office. The playing of any player for whom FWUSL holds no record may result in the forfeiture of all games in which said player participated and suspension of the coach for a period of time determined by FWUSL.
- 1.11.3 For the purpose of League play, only players who are rostered to a team may participate in the League play and no guest players will be allowed on the team.
- 1.11.4 **PLAYERS:** A properly executed registration for each player must be submitted to FWUSL along with the proper player fee prior to the start of the season. A record of the registration will be held by FWUSL. **PROOF OF AGE IS REQUIRED FOR EACH NEW PLAYER BEFORE THEY CAN BE REGISTERED. FWUSL MAY REQUIRE RE-EXAMINATION OF PROOF OF AGE.** A certified birth certificate or valid, government issued passport are the only

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forms of verification that will be accepted.

- 1.11.5 The coach of the team, prior to the first practice, must obtain an original signature of each player's parents/guardian, on a printed medical waiver made available to him/her by FWUSL.

1.12 REFUNDS

FWUSL's registration fee refund policy is set forth as follows: All registration fees are refundable subject to a \$50 processing fee as long as the player is seeking a refund no later than one week prior to the start of the first game of the season.

1.13 TEAM STRUCTURE

- 1.13.1 A coach may register a fully formed team to play and compete in FWUSL provided that each player meets the league eligibility and age requirements. The team is permitted to remain together for as long as the coach and each player seek to remain on the same team.
- 1.13.2 A team (coaches and players) formed by FWUSL and playing in FWUSL the previous season, may remain as a unit provided that they meet the league eligibility and age requirements. At the time of registration, players may request to remain on or be removed from a team and reassigned through the player's pool. A player sitting out one season can return to the player's former team provided space is available and the team is in existence. Otherwise, that player may be reassigned to another team.
- 1.13.3 New teams and returning teams needing additional players will, to the extent possible, have players placed on their team that either (1) attend the school where the players on the team attend or (2) live in the zipcode where the players on the team attend.
- 1.13.4 The number of players on a team roster will be as follows: A COACH MAY REQUEST AN ADDITIONAL PLAYER OVER THE MAXIMUM ROSTER SIZE SO LONG AS THEY ACKNOWLEDGE THIS COULD POTENTIALLY EFFECT PLAYING TIME FOR ALL PLAYERS

| Leagues | Maximum | Minimum |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 6U/5U/4U | 8 | 4 |
| 7U | 10 | 6 |
| 8U | 11 | 7 |
| 9U/10U | 13 | 9 |
| 11U | 13 | 9 |

- 1.13.5 A player can only be on one team roster. A player playing through FWUSL is free to play on another team outside of FWUSL. A player playing on multiple teams shall make every effort to convey the same to the coach of their team and ensure their coach is aware of potential scheduling conflicts and availability.

1.14 DISBANDMENT

Any team registered with FWUSL cannot be disbanded without prior approval by FWUSL. Every effort will be made to keep the returning players together before the team would be considered for disbandment. The following steps are to be followed if a coach is not returning to his team:

- 1.14.1 The coach, prior to resigning, must inform FWUSL of his/her intentions. A coach cannot disband a team and should encourage the players to return to the team.
- 1.14.2 If the coach cannot find an eligible successor, the League will work in selecting and securing a new head coach.
- 1.14.3 If a new head coach cannot be found, the League will place each player into the player's pool or will make every effort to find additional players to ensure the team can remain intact.

1.15 PLAYER RELEASE, TRANSFER AND PLAY-UP

FWUSL requires that:

- 1.15.1 A player can request ONLY ONE transfer per soccer year.
- 1.15.2 Players can be released to the player pool at the time of registration by requesting on the application that they be reassigned to the player pool.
- 1.15.3 Any player, who desires to play-up two or more age groups must provide a play-up release form to the League which must be signed by the parents or legal guardian of the player. The play-up release form must be approved by FWUSL.

1.16 COACHES

- 1.16.1 Only players who are currently rostered to the coach's team are allowed to participate in practices and league games for such team.
- 1.16.2 The coach and assistant coach of record are to be active coaches for the team and not in name only.
- 1.16.3 Coaches are responsible for any misbehavior on the part of the team's spectators, parents, and players. This includes any foul and abusive language and any comments directed toward the referees, opposing players, and coaches. Offenders may be cautioned or ejected from the field by the referee or by FWUSL.
- 1.16.4 Coaches are subject to these Rules and all FWUSL policies. Coaches in good standing and teams in good standing are permitted and welcomed.
- 1.16.5 A coach cannot remove a player from a team roster. A coach must not

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knowingly and/or willingly drop a player from the roster or encourage or advise a player not to play for the team, whether through direct or indirect contact or coercion.

- 1.16.6 Coaching players in the FWUSL program is a privilege, not a right. Coaches who do not adhere to the FWUSL Rules and policies may be removed at any time as determined by FWUSL in its discretion, with or without a disciplinary hearing.

1.17 IDENTIFICATION CARDS

- 1.17.1 FWUSL issues identification (ID) cards for each rostered coach, assistant coach and manager upon completing and submitting annual forms as required by FWUSL.
- 1.17.2 Each rostered coach and team manager whose name appears on the team roster is required to visibly wear a valid FWUSL ID card during all games and present to Field Marshals, League Commissioners, Complex Directors, or other authorized FWUSL personnel when requested.

1.18 TEAM PRACTICES

- 1.18.1 Only players who are currently rostered to a team are allowed to participate in practices for such team.
- 1.18.2 Unauthorized usage (*e.g.*, practices, scrimmages, games) of the game fields is not permitted. Under city ordinances, violations are subject to a fine.

1.19 COACHES / PARENTS RESPONSIBILITIES:

Coaches and parents are reminded that there is a responsibility, which must be met not only to their players but also to FWUSL. The following actions by the coaching staff and/or parents are **STRICTLY FORBIDDEN** in all related FWUSL soccer activities:

- 1.19.1 FOUL OR ABUSIVE LANGUAGE
- 1.19.2 HARASSMENT OF PLAYERS
- 1.19.3 HARASSMENT OF LEAGUE OFFICIALS, REFEREES OR SPECTATORS
- 1.19.4 ACTS OF AGGRESSION TO PLAYERS, LEAGUE OFFICIALS, REFEREES OR SPECTATORS
- 1.19.5 CONDUCT CONTRARY TO THE RULES OR POLICIES OF FWUSL, THE COACHES CODE OF ETHICS OR THE PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT
- 1.19.6 VIOLATION OF CITY ORDINANCES AS POSTED
- 1.19.7 FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH ANY DISCIPLINARY ACTION OF

FWUSL.

Any violation of the above may result in a warning, and/or suspension from all FWUSL related activities. Offenders can be subject to suspension from the FWUSL for an indefinite period of time. Parents and interested spectators are expected to display good sportsmanship at all times. It must be remembered that all adults are examples for our youth. The FWUSL Coaches Code of Ethics is set forth on Appendix B and the FWUSL Parent Code of Conduct is set forth on Appendix C.

1.20 GAME PROCEDURES

- 1.20.1 Each player, when present at a game, must be allowed to play a minimum of 50% of the time, unless the player's time has been reduced for medical or disciplinary reasons, in which case the coach must notify the player, the referee and the opposing coach prior to the beginning of the game that the minimum time has been reduced (non-attendance at practice and non-payment of fees may be cause for disciplinary action). **Any reduction in playing time as a disciplinary action may only be used in 8U and above.**
- 1.20.2 Spectators must always remain on the sideline on the opposing side of the field from the players and coaches. No spectators are allowed behind the goal-line.
- 1.20.3 Players, rostered coaches, and team managers (such rostered coaches and team managers, "***Team Personnel***") must remain within the technical area as marked on the sideline. There must not be any coaching other than from the designated location for Team Personnel (and technical areas for 9U and above). If no technical area is marked, players and Team Personnel remain at least 3 ft. from the sideline during play, stay on their side of the center mark and not go beyond the halfway point between the center line and the top of the penalty area on their side of the field. Team Personnel should use cones or other markers to make a technical area if there is no technical area marked.
- 1.20.4 For 6U and below age groups ONLY, one rostered coach is allowed on the field from each team to assist players.
- 1.20.5 For 7U and older age groups, coaches are not allowed on the field except with the referee's approval during a stoppage of play. Failure to comply may cause forfeitures and/or abandonment of the game.
- 1.20.6 The home team is responsible for providing contrasting jerseys/shirts in the event of conflict of color. The referee has the final decision on whether there is a color conflict.
- 1.20.7 The home team is responsible for providing the match ball.
- 1.20.8 10U and above: A game roster must be submitted by the coach to the referee prior to every game. Failure to comply may cause forfeitures and/or abandonment of the game.

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1.20.9 A “Sit Out Verification Form” is required for any member (coach, player, parent, *etc.*) who is required to sit out a game due to disciplinary reasons. This form must be submitted to the referee for his/her signature prior to the game. The Sit Out Verification Form must be submitted to the League within 48 hours of the game completion.

1.20.10 Game Forfeiture

1.20.10.1 The score for forfeiture is 3-0. The following constitutes a game forfeiture.

- a. No rostered coach present.
- b. Fielding an ineligible player or a player under suspension.
- c. A ten-minute grace period will be allowed after the starting time. After ten minutes, forfeiture for the team not fielding the minimum number of required players will be declared. A double forfeit will be declared if neither team fields the minimum number of required players within ten minutes of game time. A FORFEIT is equivalent to a LOSS. No points will be accumulated for forfeiting teams. Coaches must not assume that a game has been postponed.
- d. Violation of the minimum playing requirement for any player.
- e. Abandoning a game prior to the end of play. An abandoned game will not be replayed.

1.20.10.2 If a team intentionally forfeits a game that team (Team Personnel and/or other responsible party) may be required to appear before a disciplinary hearing to present the reason for the forfeit. A team found guilty of intentionally forfeiting a game may:

- a. Be prevented from participating in any further games during the season;
- b. Be ineligible for any awards.
- c. Be prevented from participation in any playoff games.
- d. Be subject to a penalty or other discipline determined in a disciplinary hearing.

1.20.10.3 Any team with knowledge of an upcoming need to forfeit a game must notify the FWUSL office at least 48 hours prior to the game

if possible.

1.20.11 To promote sportsmanship and player welfare the “mercy rule” allows an early conclusion of a recreational match when one team holds a significantly large goal advantage. The mercy rule is only applicable in games that are officiated by a certified referee.

1.20.11.1 Invocation: If at halftime, the goal differential between the two teams is nine (9) goals or more, the coach of the trailing team may elect to end the game. The trailing team’s coach must notify the referee and opposing coach of the intent to invoke the mercy rule prior to the start of the second half.

1.20.11.2 Effect of Invocation: Once the mercy rule is invoked:

- a. The match will be considered complete at halftime and no second half will be played.
- b. The winning team will be credited with the final score as recorded at halftime, subject to goal differential rules.
- c. The requirement for each player to receive a minimum of 50% playing time will not apply for the purpose of this match only.
- d. All other game procedures and rules will apply.

1.20.11.3 Referee Responsibilities: The referee will document in the match report that the match was stopped in accordance with the mercy rule and will include the halftime score.

1.20.11.4 Sportsmanship Encouragement: Coaches and team personnel are reminded of their responsibility to demonstrate good sportsmanship and respect for all participants.

1.21 FOUL WEATHER PROCEDURES:

1.21.1 An onsite FWUSL representative may postpone a game because of weather or field conditions. Their decision will be based on the conditions of the playing field, player safety and well-being, or in accordance with the policies and procedures of the City of Fort Worth.

1.21.2 An onsite FWUSL representative may call a stoppage of play due to lightning or threat of lightening, in accordance with the policies and procedures of the City of Fort Worth.

1.21.3 Teams **MUST** report to the playing fields ready to play unless previously **OFFICIALLY NOTIFIED**.

1.21.4 If a game is suspended because of **FOUL WEATHER** before the first half has

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completed, that game will be replayed from the start. If a game is suspended after the first half has completed, the game will be considered a FULL GAME and will not be replayed.

- 1.21.5 The League may implement cold and hot weather policies as it may communicate to the members from time to time.

1.22 RESCHEDULING GAMES

- 1.22.1 If a coach is the head coach of two or more FWUSL teams, FWUSL will consider this a conflict and may schedule games to reasonably avoid any overlap in game times.
- 1.22.2 Reasonable efforts will be made to meet a team's conflict provided that the conflict would result in the team's inability to field the standard (not minimum) number of players required to play a game due to a school related event conflict and provided that the head coach submits the FWUSL Conflict Form prior to the designated deadline for submission. Any request submitted after the deadline may be considered by FWUSL on a case by case basis with no guarantee that the conflict will be resolved.

1.23 GUEST PLAYERS

There are no guest players allowed for FWUSL games.

1.24 TRYOUTS AND RECRUITING

- 1.24.1 THERE MUST BE NO TRYOUTS. If a team and/or coach violate the rules concerning tryouts, the coach and/or team involved must appear before a disciplinary hearing.
- 1.24.2 THERE MUST BE NO RECRUITING. It will be assumed that a team has recruited if it can be established that any representative of that team in question has directly or indirectly solicited a player to another team to join their team by talking to any team member, parent of any team member, coach of any team member or having anyone else talk to the team members or their parents without the written permission from the head coach and/or League Commissioner over that League. For any violation of this Rule, the coach or coaches concerned and all offending parties must appear before a disciplinary hearing.
- 1.24.3 An indoor soccer league has no affiliation with FWUSL. Team rosters of teams organized outside of FWUSL will not be considered for FWUSL team formation.

2. RECREATIONAL DIVISION PLAYING RULES

The rules of play for the Recreational Division will be the Laws of the Game modified as

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provided below.

2.1 LAW I – THE FIELD OF PLAY

The field and goal sizes below are recommended but may vary depending on municipal parks.

| Age Group | Field Width | Field Length | Goal Size |
|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 10U/11U | 60 yds | 70 – 89 yds | 7ft x 21ft |
| 9U/8U | 45 – 55 yds. | 70 – 80 yds. | 6.5ft x 12ft |
| 7U | 30 – 45 yds. | 50 – 65 yds. | 6.5 ft. x 12 ft. |
| 6U and younger | 15 – 25 yds. | 25 – 35 yds. | 3 ft. x 5 ft. |

9U and 10U: There is to be a “build out line”, which should be equal distance between the penalty area line and the halfway line.

2.2 LAW II – THE BALL

Ball sizes for various age groups will be as follows:

| Age Group | Ball Size |
|------------------|------------------|
| 11U/10U/9U | # 4 |
| 8U and younger | # 3 |

2.3 LAW III – THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTIONS

2.3.1 Game format by age group

| Age Group | Game Format | Minimum Players on Field |
|------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| 11U/10U | 9 v 9 | 7 |
| 9U/8U | 7 v 7 | 5 |
| 7U | 5 v 5 | 4 |
| 6U and younger | 4 v 4 | 3 |

2.3.2 There is no goalkeeper for 6U and younger age groups.

2.3.3 Substitution Rule for 8U and below:

2.3.3.1 At any time

2.3.4 Substitution Rule for 9U and above:

2.3.4.1 At a throw-in, by team in possession only; if team in possession is substituting, the team not in possession may also substitute.

2.3.4.2 Either team, at a goal-kick.

2.3.4.3 Either team, after a goal is scored.

2.3.4.4 Either team at an injury, when the referee stops the play.

2.3.4.5 At halftime.

2.3.4.6 When a caution (yellow card) is given, that player may be substituted for.

2.4 LAW IV – THE PLAYERS EQUIPMENT

2.4.1 Players must wear a numbered shirt (number must be on the back of the shirt) of the same colors as their teammates. Each player on a given team must wear a different number. The referee will make the final decision in allowing or disallowing a player to participate.

2.4.2 The two teams must wear colors that distinguish them from each other and the referees. The referee will make the final decision on whether there is a color conflict.

2.4.3 Each goalkeeper must wear colors that distinguish the goalkeeper from the other players and the referee. The referee will make the final decision on whether there is a color conflict.

2.4.4 A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous.

2.4.5 All items of jewelry are forbidden and must be removed.

2.4.6 Using tape to cover jewelry is not permitted.

2.4.7 Gym shoes, tennis shoes, or soccer boots must be worn by all players. All footwear must be of soft toe and have no metal studs (screw-ins) or any other exposed metal. Baseball cleats are not allowed.

2.4.8 Shin guards are mandatory for all players and must be covered by the socks.

2.4.9 Casts will not be allowed unless properly padded. The referee will have the final decision as to whether padding is sufficient.

2.4.10 Under foul weather conditions, additional garments may be worn as long as the team jersey is on the outside.

2.5 LAW V – THE REFEREE

2.5.1 FWUSL will endeavor to assign USSF certified referees for 7U and above games. Certified referees will not be assigned for 6U and below games.

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- 2.5.2 For 9U and above games, there must be at least one USSF certified referee to officiate the game. If there is not at least one certified referee for a 9U and above game, that game will be cancelled and rescheduled, if possible.
- 2.5.3 For 4U/5U and 6U, the coaches permitted on the field as provided in Rule 1.18.4 will cooperate in good faith to act as co-referees.
- 2.5.4 For 7U and 8U, if a certified referee is not assigned to a game (due to lack of availability) or an assigned certified referee does not show up for a game, then the coaches will mutually agree on a single person to act as referee (and may split the duty between two persons, one serving each half).
- 2.5.5 Each coach that is acting as a referee must in good faith call the game to the best of his/her ability in accordance with these Rules (including this Rule 2). This includes: calling ball in/out of play, fouls (only indirect kicks may be awarded for any infraction), directing the start, restart, and stop of play, resolving jersey conflicts, enforcing substitution rules, enforcing equipment rules (*e.g.*, no jewelry, proper equipment like ball size, footwear, and shin guards), *etc.*
- 2.5.6 Coaches acting as referees must take direction and guidance from any certified referee with FWUSL or FWUSL personnel as to the enforcement of these Rules. Failure to adhere to these Rules may result in disciplinary action.
- 2.5.7 A referee’s decision on issues of fact connected to the game is final.
- 2.5.8 All rule infractions must be briefly explained to the offending player.
- 2.5.9 Only certified referees have the power to caution or send off players, Team Personnel, and spectators. A coach acting as referee cannot issue any caution or send off any player (*i.e.*, no yellow cards or red cards).

2.6 LAW VI – THE ASSISTANT REFEREE

- 2.6.1 Certified referees must be used as assistant referees for 9U and older, provided that if a certified referee is unavailable to act as assistant referee, a certified referee center may employ a “club line” (*i.e.*, volunteer) to act as an assistant referee. In such circumstance, the volunteer assistant referee will be limited to only calling the ball in/out of play (and indicating direction). A volunteer assistant referee cannot call offside or fouls.
- 2.6.2 There are no assistant referees for 8U and younger.

2.7 LAW VII – THE DURATION OF MATCH

| Age Group | Length of Periods |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| 11U | 2 x 30 min. |
| 10U | 2 x 25 min. |

| | |
|----------------|-------------|
| 9U | 2 x 25 min. |
| 8U | 2 x 20 min. |
| 7U | 4 x 12 min. |
| 6U and younger | 4 x 8 min. |

2.7.1 Half-time break will be 5 minutes.

2.7.2 Quarter-time breaks will be 2 minutes.

2.8 LAW XI – OFFSIDE

2.8.1 For 8U and younger there is no offside.

2.8.2 For 9U and 10U offside is determined from the build-out line.

2.9 LAW XII – FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

2.9.1 Charging the goalkeeper in possession of the ball is NOT ALLOWED. Possession is defined as; One or two hands on the ball, holding it, bouncing it, tossing it up and then catching it or patting it along the ground.

2.9.2 10U and 9U: no punting or “drop-kicking” is allowed. All attacking players must move behind the build out line, which should be equal distance between the penalty area line and the halfway line.

2.9.3 11U and younger: a player must not engage in heading, either in practices or in games. When a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If the deliberate header occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred. If a player does not deliberately head the ball, there is no foul and play should continue.

2.9.4 It is not intentional “hand-ball” offense for any player to attempt to protect the vital body areas (chest, crotch, face) by placing hands or arms across them to protect themselves from being struck at close range by the ball. The match referee will be the sole judge of whether the hands or arms were used to deliberately handle the ball (for example, moving the hand/arm towards the ball).

2.9.5 Coaches and assistant coaches are subject to the same game disciplinary procedures by the referee as the players are, *i.e.*, cautions and/or ejections.

2.10 LAW XIII – FREE KICKS

2.10.1 All free kicks are indirect kicks in 8U and younger and opponents must be at least 10 feet from the ball.

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2.11 LAW XIV – PENALTY KICK

2.11.1 There are no penalty kicks in 7U and younger.

2.12 LAW XV – Throw-in

2.12.1 7U and 8U are allowed a re-throw.

2.12.2 6U and younger may use a kick-in.

2.13 LAW XVI – Goal Kick

2.13.1 For 8U and younger the opponents must be at least 10 feet from the ball.

2.13.2 For 9U and 10U, all attacking players must move behind the build out line.

2.14 LAW XVII – Corner Kick

2.14.1 For 8U and younger the opponents must be at least 10 feet from the ball.

APPENDIX A – DISCIPLINE

DISCIPLINE

FWUSL shall distribute this rule to every coach, team manager, league administrator and referee. It is intended that the player and/or coach will make known the contents of this rule to his or her parents and spectators.

Misconduct of Youth Players/Coaches/Assistant Coaches

1. FWUSL may institute its own “CUMULATIVE CARD SYSTEM” for players/coaches and assistant coaches or additional sanctions as they see appropriate. Appeals of cards are not allowed except when the referee admits he made an error in the issuance of the card.
2. **Yellow Cards** A player receiving a second yellow card in a single game is suspended for the balance of that game and the next game within that competition.
3. **Red Cards** A player receiving a red card or a coach/assistant coach who is sent off is suspended for the balance of that game and the next game within that competition, or if in the last game of the competition, may be extended to the following season.

Misconduct of Spectators

4. Each team is responsible for the conduct of its spectators. The referee has the authority to insist that the coach or acting coach deal with the misconduct of the spectators and resolve the problem. Failure to do so may result in the coach's dismissal from the field and/or termination of the match. Therefore, the coach/assistant coach/team manager is expected to control his spectators, especially on non-enclosed fields. If he is unable to do so, FWUSL is directed to take appropriate actions toward the identifiable, unruly spectator, or if unidentifiable, towards the team itself.
5. Suggested action for misconduct of spectators is:
 - a. Suspend the spectator from attending future matches.
 - b. Report spectator to the local Park & Recreation Department.
 - c. Require team to forfeit any games at which spectator is present on the touchline (cannot keep them off public street or out of parking lot.)
 - d. Require offending team to pay for presence of police at the game.
 - e. Revoke and/or refuse registration to the offending team.
 - f. Cause the spectator to be placed under a municipal “peace bond”.

Misconduct and Punishment of Teams

6. League Play

- a. When the players/coaches/assistant coaches of a given team have accumulated a total of four (4) send-offs in a season (including red cards issued as a result of an individual receiving two yellow cards in a single game) FWUSL shall notify the team. The team will be fined \$100 payable to FWUSL within thirty (30) days of receiving notice of the fourth send-off. The coach and the players of said team may also be required to appear before a committee to explain the team's continued misconduct. Red Cards or send-offs assessed against that team's spectators or against that team during league play will be reviewed to ascertain team misconduct tendencies.

Misconduct Toward Referee

7. **FWUSL** has exclusive jurisdiction over assault or abuse of officials, both referee and assistant referee, in any competition. This jurisdiction includes:
 - a. All **USSF** registered referees (adult and youth).
 - b. Any non-licensed person serving in any emergency capacity as a game official.
 - c. Any coach, parent or junior assistant referee, serving as a game official.
8. If there is an assault/abuse of any game official by any person, including players, coaches, managers or spectators; a report of the alleged assault/abuse will be submitted immediately to FWUSL. A committee shall review and investigate the report(s) as submitted, and upon proper investigation shall determine the seriousness of the alleged assault/abuse report(s) in a timely manner.
9. Should the majority of the members of the committee determine there is sufficient evidence to consider the incident referee assault, the committee, at its discretion, may suspend the individual involved until the hearing on the alleged assault. Should the committee determine the action committed to be Misconduct Towards a Referee rather than Referee Assault or Referee Abuse; it shall impose an administrative punishment of a three (3) game suspension. A formal hearing will not be held.

10. Terms and References

- a. Referee assault is an intentional act of physical violence at or upon a referee, (an act intended to bring about a result that will invade the interests of another in a way that is socially unacceptable. Unintended consequences of the act are irrelevant.). Assault includes but is not limited to the following acts committed upon a referee: hitting, kicking, punching, choking, spitting

on, grabbing or bodily running into a referee; head butting; the act of kicking or throwing any object at a referee that could inflict injury; damaging the referee's uniform or personal property, *i.e.* car, equipment, *etc.*

- b. Referee abuse is a verbal statement or physical act not resulting in bodily contact, which implies or threatens physical harm to a referee or the referee's property or equipment. Abuse includes, but is not limited to the following acts committed upon a referee: using foul or abusive language toward a referee; spewing any beverage on a referee's personal property; spitting at (but not on) the referee; or verbally threatening a referee. Verbal threats are remarks that carry the implied or direct threat of physical harm. Such remarks as, "I'll get you after the game" or "You won't get out of here in one piece", shall be deemed referee abuse.
- c. Misconduct towards a referee means persistent statements or physical acts directed toward a referee during or after a game, that do not constitute referee assault or abuse as provided under Federation Policy 531-9, but that mistreat the referee or are inappropriate or unacceptable statements or acts, and may include the following:
 - i. excessive incidences of foul or abusive language at the referee;
 - ii. statements that diminish the authority of the referee;
 - iii. Statements or acts that serve to intimidate without threatening physical harm to the referee.
 - iv. Examples of misconduct that arise under the description above include the following:
 - 1. confronting the referee without physically threatening the referee;
 - 2. spitting on the ground or in the air but not at the referee;
 - 3. throwing or kicking an item as a sign of disrespect or dissent but without the chance of hitting the referee;
 - 4. Re-entering the field.

These are only some of the examples of possible misconduct and are not all-inclusive, but apply only in the following situations:

- i. if a proceeding is brought against an individual for referee assault or abuse, or both, under Federation Policy 531-9; or
- ii. If the individual is ejected from a game and, after the ejection, engages in conduct that is misconduct under this policy.

11. Penalties and Suspensions

a. Referee Assault

The person committing the referee assault is automatically suspended as follows:

1. for a minor or slight touching of the referee or the referee's uniform or personal property, at least three (3) months from the time of the assault;
2. except as provided in clause one (1) or two (2), for any other assault, at least six (6) months from the time of the assault;
3. for an assault committed by an adult and the referee is seventeen (17) years of age or younger, at least three (3) years; or
4. for an assault when serious injuries are inflicted, at least five (5) years.

b. Referee Abuse

The person committing the referee abuse shall be suspended for a minimum of three (3) games.

c. Misconduct Towards a Referee

The person committing the misconduct towards a referee shall be suspended for a minimum of three (3) games.

- d. Any suspension assessed against an individual under this section does not effect any other suspension and/or fine that may be imposed on the individual by an association or league for a violation that is not referee assault or abuse.

Misconduct of Referees

When any referee is alleged to have committed misconduct toward any participant, spectator of a match or toward another referee, FWUSL will hear such allegations and assess punishment concerning the Referee in regard to his activities.

APPENDIX B – Coaches Code of Ethics

CODE OF ETHICS/CONDUCT

CODE OF ETHICS FOR COACHES

This code of ethics has been developed to clarify and distinguish approved and accepted professional, ethical, and moral behavior from that which is detrimental to the development of the sport of soccer. (The term “Coach” shall include, but is not limited to Head Coach, Assistant Coach(s), Manager/Trainer and/or Team Representative.)

ARTICLE I - RESPONSIBILITIES TO PLAYERS

1. The coach must never place the value of winning over the safety and welfare of players. Winning should be the result of preparation and discipline with emphasis placed on the highest ideals and character traits.
2. Coaches shall instruct players to play within the written laws of the game and within the spirit of the game at all times.
3. Coaches shall not seek unfair advantage by teaching deliberate unsportsmanlike behavior to players.
4. Coaches should not tolerate inappropriate behavior from players regardless of the situation.
5. Demands on players’ time should never be so extensive as to interfere with academic goals and progress. Motivation for excellence should include academics as well as athletics.
6. Under no circumstances should coaches authorize or encourage the use of medicinal or performance enhancing drugs, or supplements of any kind whether legal or illegal, prescription, or over-the-counter. Medication and supplementation of any kind should be the responsibility of the parents and/or legal guardian. Players should be directed to seek proper medical attention for injuries and to follow the physician’s instructions regarding treatment and recovery. At no time should a player be put at risk by returning from injury prematurely or by being forced to play while injured.
7. A coach's dealings with players and parents must be upfront, honest, and forthright. Coaches must always be honest and refrain from misrepresentations to players and parents.

ARTICLE II - RESPONSIBILITY TO THE LAWS OF THE GAME

1. Coaches should be thoroughly acquainted with and demonstrate a working knowledge of the laws of the game of soccer. Coaches are also responsible to ensure that their players understand the intent as well as the application of the laws.
2. Coaches must adhere to the letter and spirit of the laws of the game. Those coaches who circumvent the rules to gain advantage have no place in soccer.
3. Coaches are responsible for their players’ actions on the field and must not permit them to perform with the intent of causing injury to opposing players.
4. If coaches permit, encourage, or condone performance that is not in the letter or spirit of the laws, they are derelict in their responsibility to players. The coach must strive

constantly to teach good sporting behavior.

ARTICLE IV - RESPONSIBILITY TO OFFICIALS

1. Officials must have the support of coaches, players and spectators. Criticism of officials undermines their purpose in the game. Coaches must always refrain from criticizing officials in the presence of players.
2. Coaches should strive to develop a line of communication with officials, giving each an opportunity to better understand the problems relating to their specific area. This section shall not be taken as an encouragement to debate referee decisions during the match.
3. On game day, officials should be treated with respect before, during, and after the game. Officials should be addressed as "Referee" or "Mr. /Ms. Referee" and not by name. Professional respect should be mutual and there should be no demeaning dialogue or gesture between official, coach, or player. Coaches must not incite players or spectators or attempt to disrupt the flow of play.
4. Comments regarding an official should be made in writing to the appropriate organization assigning the official.

ARTICLE V - RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING SCOUTING AND RECRUITING

1. It is unethical to scout any team, by any means whatsoever, except in regularly scheduled games.
2. The use of videotape or motion picture equipment to scout an opponent's regularly scheduled games for the purpose of recruiting is unethical.
3. It is unethical to recruit player(s) actively playing for another team.

ARTICLE VI - RESPONSIBILITY OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

1. Coaches have a responsibility to promote the game of soccer to the public. Comments and critiques of governing bodies, teams, coaches, players, parents, or the media should be positive and constructive, never prejudicial or inflammatory.
2. Coaches have the responsibility to assist their players in conducting themselves properly when in public while representing their team
3. Publicly predicting a win is folly and serves no useful place in a coach's public image.
4. Comments stressing injuries, team, personnel conflicts, or disciplinary problems as an excuse for a loss or unsuccessful endeavor are detrimental and should be avoided.
5. The media should be allowed access to the players for comment. Players should be instructed in how to conduct themselves during an interview.

ARTICLE VII - GAME DAY AND OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. A coach's behavior must be such as to bring credit to himself, his organization, and the sport of soccer. This is never more evident than on the day of the contest.
2. Rival coaches should meet prior to the game and exchange friendly or professional greetings. While the concept of rivalry is wholly embraced, it cannot take precedence over exemplary professional conduct.

3. During play, coaches have a responsibility to be as inconspicuous as possible. Coaches shall exhibit a respectful attitude towards players. The coach must confine him/herself to the coaching area. The attitude of the coach towards officials, spectators, opposing players and coaches should be controlled and undemonstrative.
4. It shall be unethical for a coach to have any verbal altercation with an opposing coach or bench during the game. Hostile physical contact with a player is considered highly unethical.
5. The coach's foremost post-game responsibility is his/her team.
6. Coaches should use their influence on unfriendly spectators that demonstrate intimidating behavior towards officials and opposing teams.
7. Coaches must act in a professional manner at all times when in the presence of players, whether at games, practices, or in any other setting. A coach demonstrating behavior that could be considered by a reasonable person to be irrational, inappropriate, or unbecoming an adult will not be tolerated. Examples of such behavior include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Lewd gestures or remarks
 - Overly critical remarks
 - Ranting and raving
 - Snide or demeaning remarks
 - Threatening behavior or remarks
 - Physical confrontations
 - Temper outbursts

APPENDIX C– Parent Code of Conduct

PARENT’S CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Parents are responsible for their children’s behavior. All children look to their parents for how to behave and carry themselves. Lead by example.
2. Be kind to your child’s coach and officials. The coach is a volunteer, giving of personal time and money to provide a recreational activity for your child.
3. The opponents are necessary friends; without them, your child could not participate.
4. Applaud good plays by your team and by members of the opposing team.
5. Do not openly question an official’s judgment and honesty. Officials are symbols of fair play, integrity, and sportsmanship.
6. Accept the results of each game. Encourage your child to be gracious in victory, and to turn defeat into victory by working towards improvement.
7. Remember your child is involved in organized sports for their enjoyment
8. Encourage your child to always play by the rules.
9. Teach your child that honest effort is as important as victory so that the result of each game is accepted without undue disappointment.
10. Remember that your child learns by example. Children mimic what their parents say. Criticism of the coach, officials, teammates, and/or opponents fosters bad attitudes and can only lead to a negative experience for your child.
11. Parents should remember that a coach has an entire team of players to consider when making decisions regarding position, playing time, substitutions, and strategy. The team does not revolve around one player.
12. A parent must never misrepresent to their team their child's eligibility to play on that team, and must be honest in dealings with FWUSL.
13. A parent must never be verbally or physically violent or threatening with any coach, parent, player, or representative for any team they interact with.