UNITED RECREATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

Games will be according to FIFA Laws of the Game with the following modifications

Roster size:
No maximum, however, clubs should take fairness into consideration when fielding teams and the amount of playing time that can be afforded to players on teams with very large rosters. It is the aim of the league that all players play at least half the game.
Each team must have a distinct roster
Players may only be rostered to one team
While roster sizes are unlimited in the league, any team with a base roster with fewer than the proscribed USYS roster limit may not have a number of Club Pass Players that would cause the number of players playing in a game to exceed the USYS game day roster limit
7v7 - Gameday roster limit 12
8v8 - Gameday roster limit 14 (URSL)
11v11 - Gameday roster limit 18

Game Format:
3rd and 4th grade - 7 v 7, 6 field players and a goalkeeper.
Minimum number of players on a team to start a game is 5

5th and 6th grade - 8 v 8, 7 field players and a goalkeeper
Minimum number of players on a team to start a game is 6

7th and 8th grade - 11 v 11, 10 field players and a goalkeeper
Minimum number of players on a team to start a game is 7

7th and 8th grade - 7 v 7, 6 field players and a goalkeeper.
Minimum number of players on a team to start a game is 5

High School divisions - 11 v 11, 10 field players and a goalkeeper
Minimum number of players on a team to start a game is 7

High School divisions - 7 v 7, 6 field players and a goalkeeper.
Minimum number of players on a team to start a game is 5

The Ball:
3rd and 4th/5th and 6th grade - Size #4
7th and 8th grade and older - Size #5

Duration of play:
3rd and 4th grade - 2 x 25 minute half, 5 minute halftime
5th and 6th grade - 2 x 30 minute half, 5 minute halftime
7th and 8th grade - 2 x 35 minute half, 5 minute halftime
High School divisions - 2 x 35 minute half, 5 minute halftime

Field of play:
3rd and 4th grade - Width: minimum 30 yards, maximum 45 yards
Length: minimum 45 yards, maximum 75 yards
Recommended size – Width: 40 yards, Length: 60 yards

5th and 6th grade - Width: minimum 45 yards, maximum 55 yards
Length: minimum 75 yards, maximum 85 yards
Recommended size – Width: 50 yards, Length: 80 yards

7th and 8th grade 11v11 divisions - Width: minimum 50 yards, maximum 80 yards
Length: minimum 100 yards, maximum 130 yards
Recommended size – Width: 65 yards, Length: 100 yards

7th and 8th grade divisions and older playing 7 v 7 – See 5th and 6th grade field recommendations

For all fields, the length MUST be greater than the width

Goals:
3rd and 4th grade - 6’ x 18’ or 6.5’ x 18.5’ Both goals on the field must be the same size

5th and 6th grade - 7’ x 21’ recommended, 6’ x 18’, 6.5’ x 18.5’ allowed, waiver required if not 7’ x 21’. Both goals on the field must be the same size

7th and 8th grade 11v11 divisions - 8’ x 24’

7th and 8th grade divisions and High School divisions playing 7 v 7 - 7’ x 21’ recommended, 8’ x 24’ allowed. Both goals on the field must be the same size

Referee:
All 7 v 7 and 8 v 8 games
Center referee only, club linesmen at the referee's discretion

3rd and 4th grade and 5th and 6th grade divisions
Center referee only, club linesmen at the referee's discretion

7th and 8th grade 11v11 divisions
Center referee and two (2) Assistant Referees

Goal construction
All goals must be of metal construction, minimum 1 1/2" round pipe or 2" x 2" square. Goal nets tightly secured to posts and crossbar. Goal must be anchored or weighted to the ground during game play for safety.

Throw-ins:
3rd and 4th grade only! - In the event of a foul throw-in, a second attempt shall be given to **the same player**. A second foul throw-in and possession is awarded to the opposing team.

Substitutions:
Unlimited with regard to the number of players and re-entry
At any stoppage of play, with the referee's permission, regardless of possession (this is actually NOT a FIFA modification)
In the event of a substitution at a penalty kick stoppage, no player entering at this stoppage may take the spot kick

UNITED RECREATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

Unbalanced Score:
This rule applies to ALL levels of play. 7v7 is used as an example and should not be construed as limiting this rule to only divisions playing 7v7. When a team is leading by 5 goals the opposing team may add a player to the field and can add an additional player for each succeeding goal up to three additional players. The additional players shall remain on the field until the goal differential is 3. At that point all additional players are removed and play resumes at 7 v 7

Unbalanced score rule clarification/example
5 goal lead - game becomes 8 v 7
6 goal lead - game becomes 9 v 7
7 goal lead - game becomes 10 v 7
Additional players remain on the field until the score is a 3 goal differential. At that point all added players are removed and the process starts over, if necessary.

No Heading, 3rd and 4th grade and 5th and 6th grade divisions:
Whenever the ball strikes a player in the head, play is stopped. The proper restart depends upon whether the player deliberately played the ball with their head. If deliberate, then the proper restart is an indirect free kick to the opposing team. If this 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 the play by the head is deemed inadvertent, then the proper restart is a dropped ball. A dropped ball in the penalty area is always dropped to the goalie

Build-out line and punting, 3rd and 4th grade division only:
A line half the distance between the penalty area and the halfway line shall be established. It may be painted or marked by cones placed just outside the sideline. This line establishes where offside is called; is the line behind which the defending team must retreat when a team is awarded a goal kick or the goalie comes into possession of the ball. The defending team may advance when the ball is put back into play by the goalie.

The goalie may not punt the ball nor use a “drop-kick”. All other methods of putting the ball into play are accepted.

Club Pass players:
Players from the same club may play on other teams within their club with the following conditions -
They must be of the proper age group or younger than the team they are “Club Passing” to
They may only play in two games per day

They should not miss the game of the team for which they are originally rostered
Club Pass players should be announced to the opposing team at a pre-game meeting of the head coaches. Teams should announce the fact they are using Club Pass Players to their opponent. Present rosters if asked. Further, if a team asks to see a roster and is refused that should be reported to the league (dshannonsoccer@gmail.com). As always, include the game number; the team asking and the team refusing. Any other information that the reporting team deems pertinent.

Failure to show a roster is grounds for a forfeit review.

It should be noted that the intention of the Club Pass Player rule is player centered. It is to give clubs the flexibility to have players otherwise rostered to younger or lower tier teams the chance to occasionally test their growing skills at a higher level; to ensure that teams have enough players to compete in a game rather than forfeit (i.e., let's not make any players feel they need to show up for a game when they are sick !). It is not intended to be used to "stack" a team with the intention of getting a certain result. Teams and clubs found to be using this rule contrary to the spirit of the rule as outlined above can be reviewed and may be sanctioned, including limiting the number of Club Pass Players allowed or having the ability to use Club Pass Players suspended.

While roster sizes are unlimited in the league, any team with a base roster with fewer than the proscribed United States Youth Soccer (USYS) roster limit may not have a number of Club Pass players that would cause the number of players playing in a game to exceed the USYS game day roster limit. Further, if a team has a roster that exceeds the USYS roster limits they may not bring Club Pass players if doing so would exceed the gameday roster limits.

7v7 - Gameday roster limit 12
8v8 - Gameday roster limit 14 (URSL)
11v11 - Gameday roster limit 18

Penalties for using ineligible players can include; game forfeit, coach suspension, player suspension or more stringent sanctions based on the circumstances as determined by committee.

Player safety:
Wearing of casts, braces or other medically necessary accessories.
Wearing of the above items is permitted as long as they are
-securely attached/worn
-adequately padded and the padding is tightly secured so as not to come loose during play.
-not used during the course of the game to gain an unfair advantage

The acceptability of the padding will be determined by the coaches before the match. The team with the player in this situation should approach their opponent early in the warmup stage before the match for approval so if there are any necessary adjustments they can be made before the starting time of the match. The player should bring additional padding and tape or whatever is necessary to secure the padding in case the initial padding is not deemed adequate. The player/team should also be prepared to make adjustments during the match in case the padding or securing material becomes loose and/or unacceptably unsafe for further play.

Using the padded device to gain an advantage - If, during the course of the game, the referee determines that the player is using the well padded device to gain an unfair advantage in the game, the referee should give a warning and if the behavior does not change the player may be removed from the game. It will be up to the referee if the player will have the opportunity to return. An example of gaining an unfair advantage would be swinging or flailing the device around in a menacing way to ward off players. While not making contact with any other player, and the possibility of injury diminished due to the padding, the player is still gaining an unfair advantage by keeping other players away in fear of injury

UNITED RECREATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

URSL General Procedures

Game Day

Home team to ensure the field is prepared properly, goals secure and corner flags in place.
Both teams should check in with the referee to review the League Rules provided on the game day cards posted on the website. This should avoid confusion about the length of the game, players on the field, unbalanced score rule, and any other rule unique to this league.

For team jersey color conflicts the Home team will change to de-conflict the jerseys. We are recommending that each team figure out an alternate color t-shirt that all their players have. It doesn't matter if there are pictures, slogans or whatever on them as long as the basic color is similar (for instance, there could be many shades of green and that would be ok). They do not have to be numbered. With the easy availability of each team's contact information on the website it is recommended that the Home team contact the Away team a few days ahead of the game to see if there is a color conflict and work out the fix before the game. Any other helpful information should passed along such as unique directions to the field, which of the five fields at the complex the game is actually being played on, etc.

Both teams should leave the field quickly at the end of the game to allow the oncoming teams adequate time for warmup.

Score reporting is provided on a separate sheet but the procedure is the winning team reports. If the game is a draw the home team reports.

Any cards should be reported to the administrator at dshannonsoccer@gmail.com. Please include the game number, team of the carded player, player name and number or coach's name if the card was shown to a coach. If it is a red card, or two yellow cards in the same game, it must be reported on the Red Card Report form linked on the League website

There is no question that a red card (or two yellow in the same game) requires a sitout in the next game. The document to record the sitout is linked on the League website. The opponent of the game a player or coach is sitting out must be notified there is a sitout occurring for the game. The team with the sitout player or coach will forward the link to the Red Card Sitout form they filled out to record the red card sitout. The opponent will acknowledge by completing the form that they observed the player/coach was not in attendance for the game. The document (Google Form) is linked on the League website.

Team and Spectator positions at the field

Wherever field layouts allow, both teams will take a position on one side of the field, spectators will take a position on the opposite side of the field. Spectators should be a minimum of 3 yards back from the sideline to allow players room to play. If there is no "restraining line" then taking 5 steps off the line to set up is a good guideline. There should be no one, team personnel or spectators, beyond the goal line within the outer boundary of the penalty area, especially behind the goal. If space allows and spectators can be approximately 15 yards beyond the depth of the goal there may be spectator seating in that area and beyond. However, if either coach deems those spectators a distraction the area will be cleared back to the outer edge of the penalty area with no seating behind the goal and penalty area

Noisemakers

Use of horns, wooden clappers, sirens, power megaphones and other noisemakers is banned at URSL games. Violation of this rule may result in forfeiture.

UNITED RECREATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

Rainouts

If your field is going to be closed, notifying the League sooner is better than later. However, at a minimum, you should let the administrator know two and one half hours (2 ½ hours) before the first game on the field or 10 am, whichever is earlier. Club Reps/field coordinators will use the Club Rep Field Closure Notice link on the League website (password protected). The administrator will put the closure up on the website. Home field clubs MUST notify their affected teams and they in turn MUST notify their opponent that the field is closed. Clubs will have their own procedures, not one dictated by the league, but individual teams should not be allowed to determine they do not want to play and contact their opponent as such. The field closure should only be made at the club level.

The rain out game reschedule will be automatic

Canceled games will automatically be rescheduled to the next available date for both teams, usually a Sunday. If the home team does not have an available field the game will be switched to the other team's home field.

Anyone can get their team schedule on their calendar app. Click on the Calendar link on your League team website

Then choose an option below

URSL General Procedures

UNITED RECREATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

Club Pass Players

Players from the same club may play on other teams within their club with the following conditions -
They must be of the proper age group or younger than the team they are “Club Passing” to
They may only play in two games per day
They should not miss the game of the team for which they are originally rostered
Club Pass players should be announced to the opposing team at a pre-game meeting of the head coaches. Coaches will have either a hard copy or electronic copy of the Club Pass player’s originating roster. This step is to ensure the player is registered to the club and therefore eligible to play as Club Pass player at the game the player is attending

It should be noted that the intention of this rule is player centered. It is to give clubs the flexibility to have players otherwise rostered to younger or lower tier teams the chance to occasionally test their growing skills at a higher level; to ensure that teams have enough players to compete in a game rather than forfeit (i.e., let’s not make any players feel they need to show up for a game when they are sick !). It is not intended to be used to “stack” a team with the intention of getting a certain result. Teams and clubs found to be using this rule contrary to the spirit of the rule outlined above can be reviewed and may be sanctioned, including limiting the number of Club Pass Players allowed or having the ability to use Club Pass Players suspended.

Penalties for using ineligible players can include; game forfeit, coach suspension, player suspension or more stringent sanctions based on the circumstances as determined by committee.

Rosters

Recognizing that each club may have a different registration system, any club generated roster is acceptable as long as it contains this minimum of information -
Player’s last name
Player’s first name
Player’s middle initial/name (optional)
Player’s birth date
Current grade (if home schooled, must indicate so)
Parent(s) or guardian(s) full name
**An acknowledgment on the roster from the club, as such -
“This roster has been provided by and the information has been verified by the club for this team. If challenged, the club must provide further proof of a player(s) being properly rostered. This can include, but is not limited to, any official school document from the current school year indicating the school grade of the player.”

Teams should have a copy of their roster available at all games. Electronic copies are acceptable for both the team roster scheduled for the game as well as for any Club Pass players. Opponents may ask to check rosters before or after a game. There is a League Roster template posted on the league webpage.

Failure to show a roster is grounds for a forfeit review.

UNITED RECREATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

URSL General Procedures

Roster size
No maximum, however, clubs should take fairness into consideration when fielding teams and the amount of playing time that can be afforded to players on teams with very large rosters. It is the aim of the League that all players play at least half the game.

Lightning Safety

When you see lightning the field should be cleared. If you hear thunder but do not see lightning it may be appropriate to refer to a weather app to see how close and in what direction the storm is moving. This must be determined within 5 minutes of the first thunder otherwise the field must be cleared. If lightning is within 10 miles the field should be cleared and no one should return until 30 minutes after the last lightning sighting. Any game stopped in this manner will not be restarted. It is possible that other, later games at the field may be played after observing the "30 minute" rule

The determination of games stopped during play for any reason are as follows

Game is stopped prior to reaching half time
The game is rescheduled and played in full. Any sitout owed that was to be served during this game is null and the sit out is still owed in the next game the team plays in, not the replay of this game. The stoppage of this game MUST be reported to the home team club and forwarded to the league for rescheduling.

Game reaches halftime or any time thereafter and is stopped
The game is considered complete and the score is recorded from the time of stoppage. Any sitout that was being served during this game counts and is satisfied.

Flex rescheduling, game rescheduling protocols
Rescheduling of games after publication of the league schedule is highly discouraged. The interlocking parts of the schedule mean that many times rescheduling games is highly disruptive to many teams not just the two involved in a particular game. Referee coverage is also negatively impacted. However, the league recognizes that the schedule could cause an unforseen burden in some cases so this protocol is meant to provide an avenue of relief in such cases.

After publication of the league schedule for a season teams will have until the Tuesday prior to the first weekend of games to work out rescheduling games through the first full calendar month of the season (April for the Spring season; September for the Fall season). Teams will have until 10 days prior to the first day of the succeeding month of the season to reschedule the remainder of the league games (April 20th for Spring seasons; September 20th for Fall seasons. The request must be into the league administrator by 9pm on the deadline day. For any games automatically rescheduled* due to weather, unforseen field closures or other broad cancellation events, teams will have the ability to work out a reschedule with their opponent no later than the Tuesday after the game is rescheduled by 5 pm. DO NOT respond to the email rescheduling a game. That is an informational email only and is not meant for two-way communication.

**Cancelled games will automatically be rescheduled to the next available Sunday for both teams. If the home team does not have an available field the game will be switched to the other team's home field*

UNITED RECREATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

URSL General Procedures

Requests to reschedule games are not automatically approved and a team is under no obligation to agree to a request to reschedule any game and does not have to provide a reason to refuse

The procedure to reschedule a game will go through the club first. A team that wants to reschedule a game should first ensure that there is a field available on the day(s) desired. If the team is the home team this should be simple. If the team is the away team they will first have to contact their opponent to determine if they are willing to consider a game change. If they are, then that team must contact their club field coordinator (or similar position) to determine the availability of a field. Once field availability is ensured the teams should communicate to come to an agreed upon date and time. The teams will then forward the agreement by email to the club rep that holds the field permit for final approval to use their fields. **The club rep will then send a request to reschedule the game to the league.** The request must include -
*Game number (preferably in the subject line)
*Current date/time/field of game
*Requested date/time/field for new game
***Both coaches must be copied on the email**

After review the league may ask for other clarifications or possible adjustments to the time to connect games that are also at the field/venue to create consecutive games and increase the desirability for referee coverage. Otherwise the league will reschedule the game as proposed with a note that the change could negatively impact referee coverage and the teams acknowledge that possibility.

What to do when there is no referee

If no referee arrives for a game it is highly encouraged that the teams work out a solution to get the game played. Rescheduling games is very difficult in a busy season so it is in everyone's interest to play the game as scheduled.

Options for playing the game include getting a parent/spectator to referee the game, having one or both of the coaches referee the game, playing the game with the coaches acting as referees from the team sideline. Asking for club linesmen is also suggested. Please make sure that it is understood that a club linesman is authorized ONLY to call the ball in and out of bounds. No other calls or comments should come from a club linesman regardless of their belief they have seen any other infractions (offside or in game fouls come to mind). In fact, club linesmen may be asked to take up a stationary position on either sideline to simply call the ball in or out of bounds.

Once an agreement on playing the game is made the result of the game will not be questioned and the calls made during the game are not the basis for any complaint to the league. Further, additional deference and respect should be given to the party that has been called into the referee position as clearly this person did not show up to the game expecting to referee, is most likely not a trained referee and is volunteering to do the game out of a desire to allow the game to be played as scheduled. All reports of referee abuse will be dealt with harshly as current policy states but any negative report from a game with a volunteer referee may be the subject of additional sanctions. Volunteer referees can and should report any abuse they suffer, whether verbal or physical, to their club rep as soon as possible after the game.

UNITED RECREATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

URSL General Procedures

Enforcement of the Codes of Conduct

Any action deemed contrary to the Codes of Conduct provided in the League Procedures can be cause for sanction by the league up to and including the banishment from attending a game or games. The league will give clubs the first opportunity to act when informed of a potential violation, however, the league reserves the right to review and add to sanctions levied by a club if they are deemed insufficient.

UNITED RECREATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

United Recreational Soccer League Leader’s Code of Conduct

The purpose of the United Recreational Soccer League (URSL) is to provide youth soccer players the opportunity to develop soccer skills in a safe and mediated structure of play. Competition is not a bad word, however, the unbridled pursuit of wins over the development and enjoyment of the players is contrary to the purpose of the League. As a leader in the URSL, whether as coach, assistant coach, manager, or trainer, I understand the importance of the role I play in the lives of my players, and I accept the great responsibility this role places on me. In carrying out these responsibilities, I accept the following code of conduct

- I will promote player growth and development in a positive and supportive manner. I will nurture good sportsmanship and fair play by teaching and personally demonstrating my commitment to these virtues.
- I will teach and demonstrate respect for the Laws of the Game. I will insist on the highest respect for soccer officials by players, parents, and fans. I understand that dissent is contrary to the Laws of the Game and that criticism of officials could destroy the game. I will abide by URSL's rules and procedures.
- As a head coach, I understand I am responsible for the behavior of my team’s assistants, parents and fans at League games.
- I will respect the players on my team and on other teams. I understand that soccer is merely a game, and that players and coaches on other teams are my opponents, not my enemies. I will teach my team to appreciate how the variety and diversity of players in our league makes the League richer and more rewarding.

UNITED RECREATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

United Recreational Soccer League Player Code of Conduct

It is a privilege to be a player in the United Recreational Soccer League (URSL). I understand I must follow the URSL Rules and Procedures as well as the rules below to remain a player in good standing in the League

- I will respect the game of soccer and its laws. I will learn these laws and try to follow them. I will play the game fairly.
- I will show respect for the authority of the referees, even though I will sometimes disagree with their calls.
- I will show good sportsmanship before, during, and after games.
- I will show respect for the opponent. I understand that soccer is a game, and that the players on the other team are my opponents, not my enemies, and without whom there would be no game
- I will help parents and fans understand the Laws of the Game so they can watch and enjoy the game better. I will be sure they understand that dissent is not permitted in the URSL.

UNITED RECREATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

United Recreational Soccer League Parent/Spectator Code of Conduct

Soccer is a wonderful sport and a passionate game. Parents should always remember their attitude is contagious. The other team is an opponent not an enemy and thus should be treated with respect. While winning is important, playing well and fairly is the essence of the game. I will always set a good example to my child in their soccer development by adhering to the following

- I will not criticize the referee openly or directly during or after games. Any criticism shall be done in writing to my club or the URSL, not verbally.
- I will only give positive feedback to players.
- I will abide by URSL's rules and procedures.
- I will cheer at all games within the spirit of fair play and shall do my best to cheer the effort regardless of the outcome. I will be mindful in unbalanced score games where cheering my own "winning" team might be misunderstood.
- I shall find the little successes that the players have during each match.
- I shall show the quality of my sportsmanship during and after each and every match and help my player remember to thank the referee after the match without regard to the result.
- I shall support the learning effort of the players, coaches, and the referees by demonstrating my patience.
- I understand that improper behavior at a match may result in a parent being asked to leave the field by the referee or a club official so the coach does not receive a yellow card (caution) or even a red card (immediate ejection) due to the actions of the parent spectator.
- I shall leave the coaching to the coach during match. I shall do my best not to give my child instructions during the match.
- I understand that the URSL can, and will if necessary, suspend my individual privilege to watch my child play should I behave in a manner that is rude or otherwise offensive and contrary to good sportsmanship and/or the URSL Rules and Procedures
- I agree to do my best to have as much fun watching the game as the players should have playing the game.

UNITED RECREATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

Maryland State Youth Soccer Association – Behavior Expectation Policy

URSL has adopted this MSYSA policy as an addendum to the Rules and Procedures

To help prevent verbal abuse and physical assault in the leagues and clubs within the Maryland State Youth Soccer Association (MSYSA, or Association); the Association has adopted a ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY for our ZERO ABUSE initiative. This Behavior Expectation Policy builds upon the Zero Tolerance Policy and applies to all coaches, players, managers, club team officials, parents, volunteers, spectators and other supporters and referees.

Abusive and obscene language, violent conduct, fighting and other behavior (including, but not limited to sarcasm, taunting, etc.) deemed detrimental to the game between the above-mentioned groups will not be tolerated.

The ultimate responsibility for the actions of coaches, players, and spectators resides with the member clubs.

MSYSA is and will always be, a place where all races, genders, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and other protected categories can come together and feel welcome to enjoy the game of soccer, compete, and grow together. Our organization maintains the highest standards and all our players, parents, and coaches are expected to demonstrate the utmost level of respect and sportsmanship.

The use of racial epithets and offensive language has no place in MSYSA. Use of racial epithets and other offensive language is especially harmful for members of underrepresented groups.

Permitting such language is incongruous to the culture of respect, dignity, and belonging we strive to create for all athletes, staff, and volunteers who support our youth.

It is the responsibility of the coaches to provide referee support and spectator control, and it is the responsibility of the member clubs to provide instructions to their coaches on how they are expected to carry this out. This policy applies before, during, and after the game at the soccer field and its immediate surrounding areas.

Parents & Spectators

No parent or spectator shall persistently address the referee or assistant referees at any time. This includes, but is not limited to:

a. Parents and spectators shall not dispute calls during or after the game.
b. Parents and spectators shall not make remarks to the referee(s) or advise the referee(s) to watch certain players or attend to rough play.

c. Parents and spectators shall never yell at the referee(s), including criticism, sarcasm, harassment, intimidation, or feedback of any kind before, during or after the game.

Allowable exceptions to the above include, but may not be limited to:

a. Parents and spectators may respond to a referee who has initiated a conversation, until such time as the referee terminates the conversation.
b. Parents and spectators may point out an emergency or safety issue, such as a player apparently injured on the field or observed fighting.Additionally, parents and spectators shall not make derogatory comments to the players nor to the team officials of either team.

Penalties (Parents & Spectators)

In the opinion of the referee, depending on the severity of the offense, the referee may take any of the following actions:

a. The referee may issue a verbal warning to the head coach of the offending party's team.
b. The referee may caution (yellow card) the head coach of the offending party's team.
c. The referee may send off (red card) the head coach of the offending party's team.
d. The referee may stop the game and instruct the head coaches to direct the parent/spectator to leave the field.
e. The referee may abandon the game if the parent/spectator does not leave the field.

The sanction for irresponsible behavior by a spectator will be administered by the referee to the head coach in accordance with Law 12, Disciplinary Action, Team Officials. Examples:

Warning:

1) Ignoring a request from an AR to move away from the touchline.
2) Non-exaggerated disagreement about referee or AR decisions

Caution (Yellow Card):

1) Clear or continual disagreement or complaining about referee or AR decisions
2) Gesturing or verbal demand for yellow or red card
3) Acting in a provocative or inflammatory manner

Send-Off (Red Card):

1) Confronting the other team's spectators
2) Throwing or kicking an object onto the field
3) Offensive, Insulting or Abusive language or actions
4) Violent Conduct
5) Entering the field of play for any reason without being invited by the referee
6) Physical or aggressive behavior including spitting

IF A SEND-OFF (RED CARD) OFFENSE BY A SPECTATOR OCCURS AFTER THE GAME ENDS, THE HEAD COACH MAY STILL BE SANCTIONED BY THE REFEREE.

Players

The conduct of the players is governed by the Laws of the Game as stated by FIBA and USSF. The Laws themselves describe penalties associated with violating the Laws of the Game. Additional penalties for players who engage in misconduct may be established by the club and/or league but may in no case be less severe than penalties established by FIBA, USSF, or MSYSA.

Coaches, Assistant Coaches & Bench Personnel

It is the responsibility of all coaches to maintain the highest standards of conduct for themselves, their players, and supporters in all matches. Failure to do so undermines the referee's authority and the integrity of the game resulting in an unfavorable sporting environment for players, the referee(s), coaches, assistant coaches, bench personnel, and spectators. As role models for all the participants and spectators, coaches participating in a Maryland State Youth Soccer Association sanctioned event are expected to be supportive of, and to acknowledge the effort, good play, and sportsmanship on the part of ALL players from either team in a contest. By example, coaches, assistant coaches, andbench personnel are expected to show that although they are competing in a game, they have respect for their opponent, referees, and spectators at all times. The Maryland State Youth Soccer Association will not tolerate negative behavior exhibited either by demonstrative actions and gestures, or by ill-intentioned remarks, including those addressed toward the referees or members of an opposing team.

Coaches exhibiting hostile, negative, sarcastic, or otherwise ill-intended behavior toward referees, opposing players or coaches will be subject to sanction by the referee. Additional sanctions may be imposed by the club that the coach or assistant coach represents, the league that the match is being played under, or as allowed by the Maryland State Youth Soccer Association policies after a review of the match report.

Coaches should be aware that according to the laws of the game any person in the technical area can be shown cards by the referee.

- Coaches shall not interact directly or indirectly with the coaches or players of the opposing team during the game in any manner that may be construed as negative, hostile, or sarcastic either by way of demonstrative actions and gestures or by ill- intentioned remarks.
- Coaches shall not offer dissent to any call made by the referee(s) at any time.
- Coaches are not to address the Referee(s) during the game except to:
    a. Respond to a referee who has initiated a conversation.
    b. Point out emergency or safety issues.
    c. Make substitutions.

d. Ask the referee, “What is the proper restart (i.e., direction and Indirect Free Kick or
Direct Free Kick)?

e. Ask for the time remaining in the half.

- Coaches are allowed to ask a referee after a game or during the halftime interval (not on the field), in a polite and constructive way, to explain a law or foul, but not judgment calls made in the game.
    a. Polite and friendly concern can be exchanged with the referee. If the polite tone of the conversation changes, the referee may abandon the exchange at any time.
    b. Absolutely no sarcasm, harassment, or intimidation is allowed.

NOTE: It is recommended that coaches or other team members do not engage in any conversation with the referee(s) once the match has concluded.

Penalties (Coaches, Assistant Coaches & Bench Personnel)

In the opinion of the referee, depending on the severity of the offense, the referee may take any of the following actions:

a. The referee may issue a verbal warning to the offending coach, assistant coach, or bench personnel.
b. The referee may caution (yellow card) the head coach of the offending party’s
team.

c. The referee may send off (red card) the offending coach, assistant coach, or bench personnel. Once sent off, the individual will be required to leave the field immediately.

If the offender cannot be positively identified, then, in accordance with the Laws of the Game, the head coach will receive the Penalty.

The referee should abandon the game if the coach, assistant coach, or bench personnel donot leave the field or any immediate adjoining area after having been instructed to do so.

Additional penalties associated with the ejection of a coach, assistant coach or bench personnel may be assessed by the local club or league which sanctioned the match in accordance with their documented policy. These penalties may be no less stringent than sanctions as may be imposed by the MSYSA Adjudication Committee following their review, if conducted, of the incident.

Referees

Referees are expected to maintain a professional and respectful demeanor. Team officials are encouraged to report any disrespectful or unprofessional behavior to the applicable competition authorities. Competition authorities are to then share the report with the applicable referee assignor(s) and the MSYSA State Youth Referee Administrator.

Referee Abuse

All cases of alleged abuse or assault of a referee shall be reported by the Referee to that game's respective Assignor within 48 hours of said behavior. The Assignor will manage and forward to SYRA, Club, and League/Event Organizer for review and disciplinary action in accordance with U.S. Soccer Policy 701. The MSYSA Adjudication Committee will handle any applicable appeals. Although MSYSA is continually bound by USSF Policy and its various revisions, definition of referee abuse and referee assault found in USSF Policy 531-9 as of the creation date of this Policy is offered by way of information as follows:

a. 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.
b. Abuse includes but is not limited to the following acts committed upon a referee: using foul or abusive language toward a referee that implies or threatens physical harm; spewing any beverage on a referee's physical property; or spitting at (but not on) the referee.
c. The minimum suspension is 3 games.

Referee Assault

a. Referee Assault is an intentional act of physical violence at or upon a referee.
   i. For purposes of this Policy, "intentional act" shall mean an act intended to bring about a result which will invade the interests of another in a way that is socially unacceptable. Unintended consequences of the act are irrelevant.

b. 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.
c. The minimum suspension is 6 months.

UNITED RECREATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

URSL Rules and Procedures modification history

URSL Rules

Original document 04 April 2021

Amended:
14 April 2021 – Player Safety added

02 August 2021 – Age group changes, removed all COVID references; Unbalanced Score Rule clarification; Added Fall High School divisions

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26 February 2024 – Clarified rainout procedures, clarified rescheduling procedures, various grammar and punctuation

28 February 2025 – goal construction, dropped ball in penalty area

01 August 2026 – Change 5th/6th grade division to 8 v 8 play; codified noisemaker ban

Effective March 2025

REFEREE ABUSE PREVENTION

PENALTY SUMMARY

POLICY 531-9 / YOUTH & AMATEUR SOCCER

RESPECT THE CALL

RESPECT THE CALL

PROTECTING OUR REFEREES

With referee abuse on the rise for youth and amateur matches, it's time to take a stand.

Referees are essential to soccer, but far too often risk their emotional and physical well-being in service to the game.

Win, lose, or draw, we're in this together.

When you take your anger out on the referee, everybody loses, and the call on the field still stands.

Referee abuse is damaging for everyone involved – and for the future of soccer.

Thank you for doing your part.

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PENALTY OVERVIEW

The Penalties Matrix defines consequences associated with physical and non-physical offenses against Referees.

NON-PHYSICAL OFFENSES of gross misconduct, abuse, and / or assault

NON-PHYSICAL*	MIN. GAMES	TIME
Insulting, Belittling, Insinuating or Taunting Behavior Undermining Referee Authority	2	
Harassment, Intimidation, Retaliation, Abusive, or Threatening (Non Physical) Language	4	
Aggression, Attacking, Derogatory, Cyberbullying, Doxing or Threatening (Physical / Violence) Language	6	6 - 24 Months
Offensive or Discriminatory Act	10	12 - 24 Months

PHYSICAL OFFENSES of gross misconduct, abuse, and / or assault

PHYSICAL*	MIN. GAMES	TIME
Minor or Slight Deliberate Touching	3	1 - 6 Months
Pushing, Grabbing, Pulling, Squeezing, Pinching, Lightly Slapping, Use of Object in Non Striking Manner, or Physical Property Damage	10	6 - 24 Months
Hitting, Punching, Elbowing, Kicking, Biting, Spiting, Choking, Tackling, Throwing or Use of Object or Any Part of Body (Forearm, Knee, Head) in a Striking Manner		12 Months - Lifetime

(*) Disclaimer: *These are only a few examples of abuse – other actions or statements may also fall into this category.*

KEY PENALTY FACTORS

- Single offenses are at **minimum the prescribed game penalty or time penalty** for non red zone offenses
- Penalties can be **both game and time depending on severity** / circumstances
- Second time offenders receive **double punishment**
- Third time offenders receive a **lifetime ban**
- More than one offense at the same time is **at least the punishment for the most serious offense**
- Offenses against minors are automatically subject to **a "minor multiplier" resulting in triple punishment**
- **One offense warning per league** to be managed by states and leagues collaboratively
- Game consequences are **inclusive of 1 game penalty for any red cards given**
- Optionality for **50% penalty for first offense from a minor**

Please follow your current reporting structure – updated reporting procedure will be a part of Phase 3.

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HOW TO PREPARE FOR MARCH 2025

Here are steps you can take to make sure you're ready and know what to expect when the updated policy takes effect in March 2025:

1. CAREFULLY READ THIS PENALTY OVERVIEW

By the end of this guide, you will fully understand the updated policy and the consequences for abuse.

2. VISIT USSOCCER.COM/RAP FOR MORE POLICY DETAILS AND UPDATES

Additional information about the policy is available on our website – and we'll be continuing to share more information.

3. SHARE POLICY INFORMATION WITH YOUR U.S. SOCCER COMMUNITY

Support our referees by sharing policy information with your players, coaches, teams, and leagues. We need your help to raise awareness!

4. ONCE THE POLICY TAKES EFFECT, DO YOUR PART BY REPORTING REFEREE ABUSE

The penalty framework in the new policy only takes effect after abuse is reported. Do your part to protect referees by reporting abuse and encouraging your community to do the same. U.S. Soccer will be providing updated reporting procedure – but for now please follow your current reporting structure.

Thank you for your support!

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NON-PHYSICAL ABUSE

Contact doesn't have to be made for damage to occur. Non-physical abuse – hurtful language and aggressive behavior – has no place in our game. It disrupts matches, interferes with the referee's ability to do their job, and it hurts the game for everyone. Left unchecked, non-physical abuse takes an emotional toll and has the potential to escalate into physically dangerous situations. The updated policy is designed to eliminate this behavior.

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NON-PHYSICAL ABUSE

LEVEL 1: VERBAL TAUNTING

Speech or gestures intended to belittle the referee, damage their credibility, and undermine their ability to effectively officiate the game.

DEFINITION

Insulting, Belittling, Insinuating or Taunting Behavior Undermining Referee Authority.

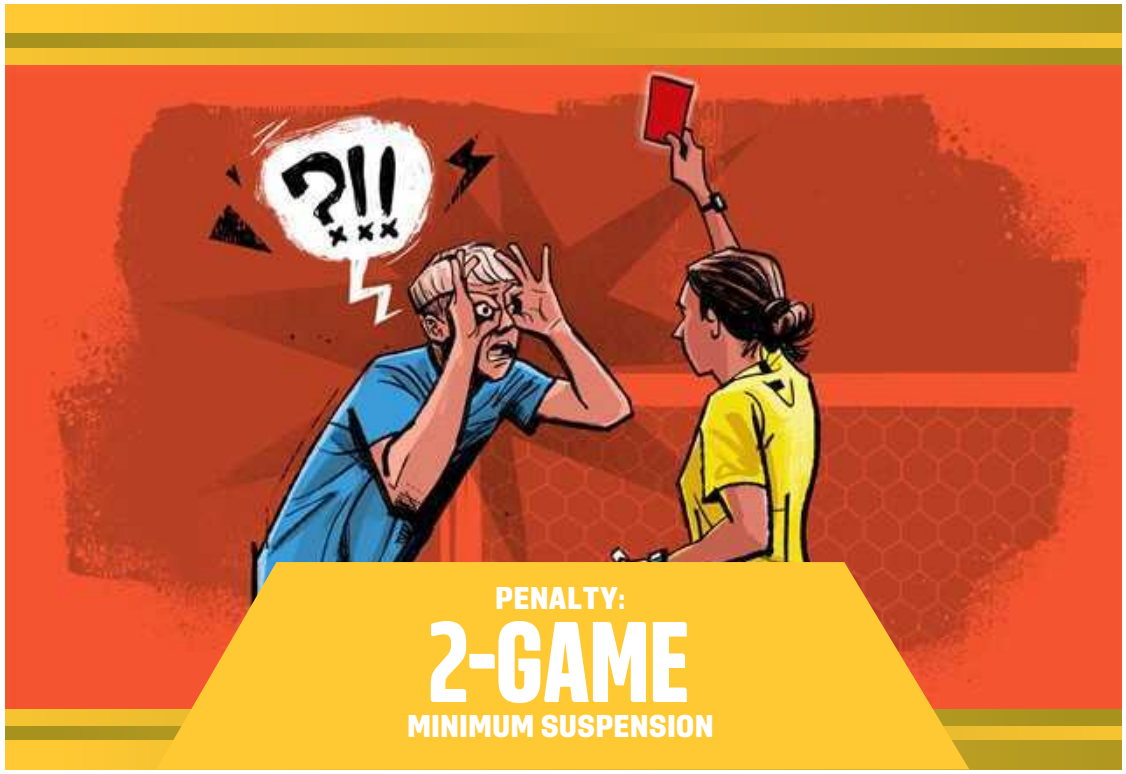
EXAMPLES

- **Questioning Competence:**
  "Do you even know the rules?"
- **Mocking Appearance or Abilities:**
  "Did you forget your glasses?"
- **Accusations of Bias:**
  "What's the other team paying you?"
- **Dismissive Language:**
  "You suck."
- **Aggressive Tone:**
  "You're the worst ref we've ever had."

RECOMMENDED APPROACH

If you have concerns about a call, respectfully ask the referee for clarification. Share your perspective calmly, avoiding yelling, insults, or offensive gestures.

Disclaimer: *These are only a few examples of abuse — other actions or statements may also fall into this category.*



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NON-PHYSICAL ABUSE

LEVEL 2: HARASSMENT/INTIMIDATION

Occurs when language or body language is intended to make a referee feel unsafe but where the threat of violence remains unspoken.

DEFINITION

Harassment, Intimidation, Retaliation, Abusive or Threatening (Non-Physical) Language.

EXAMPLES

- **Using Expletives:**
  *"That call was complete $H*t!"*
- **Personal Attacks:**
  "You're a F-ing joke!"
- **Escalating Intensity:**
  *"You can't make a single good f****** call!"*
- **Getting In The Referee's Face.**

RECOMMENDED APPROACH

Take a moment to gather yourself before you speak to the referee. Ask for clarification calmly, aiming for constructive communication rather than causing conflict.

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NON-PHYSICAL ABUSE

LEVEL 3: THREATS/DEROGATORY LANGUAGE

When aggressive language or threats of violence enter the mix – or when abuse spills online.

DEFINITION

Aggression, Attacking, Derogatory, Cyberbullying, Doxing, or Threatening (Physical / Violence) Language.

EXAMPLES

- **Threatening To Inflict Harm On A Referee:**
  - *"You're gonna pay for that!"*
  - *"I'll see you in the parking lot"*
  - *"I'm going to shove that card down your throat!"*
  - *"You better watch your back!"*
- **Public Attacks Online** such as uploading a post to social media attacking the referee.

RECOMMENDED APPROACH

When you feel frustrated by a referee's call, take a moment to pause and breathe. Reflect on how your reaction impacts your experience and the overall atmosphere of the game for everyone involved.

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NON-PHYSICAL ABUSE

LEVEL 4: OFFENSIVE OR DISCRIMINATORY ACT

U.S. Soccer is inclusive of everyone. Discrimination – attacking referees for who they are, or offending their dignity – will not be tolerated.

DEFINITION

Discriminatory or derogatory words or actions on account of race, skin color, ethnicity, nationality, social origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation, language, or religion.

EXAMPLES

- **Racial or ethnic slurs.**
- **Offensive gestures.**
- **Homophobic language.**
- **Using harmful or sexist stereotypes.**

RECOMMENDED APPROACH

Remember that soccer is for everyone. We're all human, and everybody deserves the opportunity to enjoy the game without being made to feel bad about who they are.

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PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse makes the game unsafe for everyone. It's also easy to avoid. Outside of friendly handshakes, there's never a reason to touch the referee. Any unwanted physical contact is considered physical abuse. Physical violence can also result in criminal charges, lawsuits, or medical liability.

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PHYSICAL ABUSE

LEVEL 1: MINOR OR SLIGHT TOUCHING

Even minor deliberate touches can be unwanted and make referees feel unsafe and are considered physical abuse.

DEFINITION

Minor or Slight Deliberate Touching.

EXAMPLES

- **Tapping the referee's shoulder to get their attention.**
- **Touching the referee's chest with your finger.**
- **Grabbing the referee's jersey to get their attention.**
- **Intentionally bumping lightly into the referee.**

RECOMMENDED APPROACH

Respectfully get the referee's attention without touching them – and, even in the heat of the moment, make a conscious effort to keep your hands to yourself.

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PHYSICAL ABUSE

LEVEL 2: INTENTIONAL CONFRONTATION

Escalation of using contact to intimidate or provoke a physical confrontation – or causing damage to property – without the intent to cause bodily harm.

DEFINITION

Pushing, Grabbing, Pulling, Squeezing, Pinching, Lightly Slapping, Use of Object in Non-Striking Manner, or Physical Property Damage

EXAMPLES

- **Shoving the referee.**
- **Forcefully grabbing the referee's arm.**
- **Throwing a water bottle at the ground in front of the referee.**
- **Dumping the referee's bag into a trashcan.**
- **Aggressively grabbing the referee's jersey.**
- **Following the referee to the parking lot or to their car.**

RECOMMENDED APPROACH

Understand that this behavior not only won't change the outcome on the field, it will keep you out of the game for a long time. Channel that energy to drive better on-field performance. Remove yourself from the situation if you need to calm down.

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PHYSICAL ABUSE

LEVEL 3: VIOLENT CONTACT

Malicious, violent contact intended to cause bodily harm — this is considered assault and can result in criminal punishment, legal suits, and medical liability.

DEFINITION

Hitting, Punching, Elbowing, Kicking, Biting, Spitting, Choking, Tackling, Throwing or Use of Object or Any Part of Body (Forearm, Knee, Head) in a Striking Manner

EXAMPLES

- **Kicking the referee's shin.**
- **Throwing a punch at the referee.**
- **Placing hands on the neck to choke the referee.**
- **Throwing a water bottle with intent to hit the referee.**
- **Intentionally kicking the ball at the referee.**

RECOMMENDED APPROACH

Before physical abuse ever escalates to this level, there are plenty of opportunities to choose another course of action. Remove yourself from the situation and give yourself time for your anger to defuse before doing something with serious long-term consequences.

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REPORTING ABUSE

We understand the vast majority of players, coaches, and spectators already do the right thing. A small minority hurts the game for the rest of us – but it's up to all of us to uphold the integrity of the game. **With the updated policy, players, coaches, and spectators are encouraged to report abuse. The penalty framework only take effect if abuse is reported. We're asking you to do your part to support referees by reporting any instance of referee abuse.**

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GUIDELINES

- **Understand what does and doesn't constitute abuse – as well as the definitions for the different categories of abuse.**
- **Submit written reports of the abuse within 48 hours of the incident if possible. Include the following:**
  - Match details, including team information, age group, score, and date.
  - Detailed description of the incident and the behavior that constitutes abuse.
  - Unedited audio or video clips if available.
- **We will be providing details on the appropriate designee to submit reports to, as well as more in-depth procedure for reporting abuse as part of Phase 3 of the policy update. For now follow your current reporting structure.**
- **The Competition Authority will review all documents and submit the following to the Member Organization:**
  - All documents, exhibits, and other evidence in the case.
  - Copies of all rules, procedures, and bylaws used to support the charges and conduct the hearing.
  - The notice of charges and/or hearing provided the defendant/appellant.
  - The decision of the hearing body and any appeals decisions.
- **Athletes reported for abuse will have an opportunity to appeal.**

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For more information, visit:

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RESPECT THE CALL

Effective March 2025

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