

Spindletop Youth Soccer Association League Rules, Policies, and Procedures

Revised July 7, 2025

Part 1: Seasons

The Spindletop Youth Soccer Association (“SYSA”) will sanction and organize two seasons each year. The Fall Season shall begin the weekend after Labor Day (in early September) and run for 10 weeks. The Spring Season shall run for 6 weeks during February through May, excluding Easter Weekend.

Part 2: Entry and Eligibility

To participate in SYSA's leagues, a team must be registered with SYSA via a SYSA Member Club at the Recreational (D4 and D3) or Select/Competitive (D2) level no later than the deadline stated in Part 4 (“Preseason Timelines”).

The SYSA Board of Directors may include teams from non-SYSA Member Clubs (but who are registered with US Youth Soccer) in the SYSA league if the inclusion of these teams is deemed to improve the quality of the league competition. These non-SYSA member clubs shall pay \$10 per child per seasonal year, register team in SYSA league, and follow SYSA league policies and procedures.

Part 3: Divisions

SYSA will generally seek to provide age pure brackets, if possible and if not possible for age pure, multiple-year age groupings will be as follows...

- 9U/10U
- 11U/12U
- 13U/14U
- 15U/16U
- 17U/18U/19U

A division must have a minimum of four teams to form. Divisions may be established within each of these age brackets depending on registrations.

It is the expectation of SYSA that teams will participate at the highest level of play for which that team is able to be competitive.

The SYSA Board...

For Rec, may require a returning team that wins first or second place in Eastern District to play at a higher competitive level, ei D2, if they maintain 50% plus 1 of the players from the prior registrations year on the roster.

Part 4: Preseason Timelines

The SYSA Board of Directors shall establish certain deadlines prior to the start of each season, and shall post these deadlines on the SYSA website before registration begins for each league season. In general, these deadlines will adhere to the following guidelines:

- Deadline for teams to register for the league and to confirm participation in the league. Also, the date the SYSA Scheduler is to conduct an in person schedulers meeting and form preliminary brackets and receive feedback on preliminary brackets (28 days before the first play date)
- Deadline for the SYSA Scheduler to post preliminary, full-season matches (pairings without field assignments or game times) for all league brackets (21 days before the first play date)
- Deadline for clubs to assign fields & game times for all home games (14 days before the first play date)
- Deadline for clubs and teams to submit final schedule changes, including changes to game times and field assignments (7 days before the first play date)
- Deadline for scheduler to post schedule (5 days before the first play date)

It is mandatory for each participating club to have a representative in attendance at an in-person scheduling meeting to be held approximately 28 days-before the first play date.

Part 5: Scheduling

In general, it will be SYSA's goal to craft schedules in all divisions that:

- Minimize non-competitive matches (games with a goal difference of 6 or higher)
- Maximize variety of opposition
- Balance home and away travel
- Provide common opposition for all teams in a bracket (such that each team plays all other teams in the bracket an equal number of times)
- Offer every team a "full" schedule of games (with one game on each planned play date)

In practice, it will not always be possible to achieve all of these goals in every bracket. When these interests come into opposition (due to limited numbers of teams, or a wide range in playing levels in a given bracket), SYSA will employ scheduling philosophies that differ somewhat between the Recreational (D4 and D3) and Select/Competitive (D2) levels.

For D4 teams, schedules will be crafted to fill all available dates (to the extent possible) with as many different opponents as possible. If numbers permit, the schedule will also seek to minimize travel time for all participating teams. In these cases, it will not be necessary to provide common opposition to all teams.

For U11-U14 D3 teams and all D2 teams, schedules will be crafted to provide common opposition while minimizing the total number of non-competitive matches. At these levels, the quality of games shall take

priority over the quantity of games. Teams will not be guaranteed a full slate of games, and some “make-up” dates may be reserved by the league to facilitate make-up games caused by inclement weather or other issues. Additional “bye” dates may be returned to the teams so they can arrange for non-league games that will match each team's developmental requirements.

Every effort will be made so that two teams will not be scheduled by SYSA to play each other more than three times during a fall season nor more than two times during a spring season.

Teams wishing to participate in tournaments during designated play dates shall notify scheduler of tournament dates prior to SYSA schedule release. Teams are permitted (and encouraged) to schedule “friendlies” at any time of the year, with the requirement that SYSA league games will take priority in the event of a scheduling conflict. Teams also are encouraged to participate in all STYSA State Cup competitions for which they are eligible.

Part 6: Postponements and Rescheduling

Once the final schedule has been posted by the SYSA Scheduler, all matches should be played as scheduled. Host clubs may change field assignments or kickoff times at any time during the season.

Reschedules should be worked out between clubs (schedulers, coaches, referee assignors, and/or presidents). Scheduled matches not able to be resolved amongst the clubs will then go to SYSA Board of Directors for resolution.

Teams may request discretionary schedule changes to the final schedule (for any reason), provided the following conditions have been met.

- the host club confirms the availability of a suitable playing field
- the head coaches of both teams and the appropriate Referee Assignor agree to the change, in writing, and
- the SYSA Scheduler posts the change on the official schedule, if needed.

In the case that a game must be rescheduled, a mutually agreed-upon date and time can be determined by both teams for the rescheduled match. Postponed games should be rescheduled and played before wk 8 of the Fall season and wk 5 of the Spring season. If a date is not agreed upon in said timeframe, a resolution will be determined by the SYSA Rules committee.

Part 7: Rosters and Club Pass

To participate in the league, teams must have at least 7 players (for 9U-10U), 9 players (for 11U-12U) or 11 players (for 13U and older) on their primary roster as of the participation confirmation deadline that is stated in Part 4 above. The official team roster shall include the number of each player's jersey. Referees must conduct a player check-in prior to each game, matching laminated player ID cards (with each player's photo) with the team's roster. In the event that a team does not have its player ID cards at the game site, they may use the virtual (online) GotSport roster on a digital device for this purpose as long as each player's photo has already been uploaded and is displayed on the roster. It is the duty of both team's coaches to present their player ID cards and roster to the referees prior to each match.

Teams may use the “club pass” mechanism for SYSA league games, according to the STYSA Club Pass Player System (Rule 3.8)

Part 8: Uniforms

Uniforms for players are mandatory (including matching jersey, shorts, and socks), as prescribed by the Laws of the Game. Goalkeepers must wear colors that distinguish them from the other players and game officials. Each player shall have a number on the back of the jersey that is clearly visible and at least 6” in height, with the exception of the goalkeepers. Each player on a team must wear a different number from every other player on the team, and must keep the same number throughout the game. Players who do not meet this requirement may play at the sole discretion of the referee, who must note the uniform issue(s) on the official Game Report.

If, in the opinion of the referee, the playing teams do not have contrasting colors, the home team (for D4 and D3) will be required to change. At the Recreational (D4 and D3) levels, it will be permissible for the home team's players to wear scrimmage vests over their primary uniforms if the team does not have an alternate jersey. All players are required to wear shin guards that provide adequate protection, and shoes that comply with the safety requirements set forth in the Laws of the Game. No player may play with any type of cast, even if padded or protected. Players may wear removable braces (for the knee or other joint), provided that the brace is padded or wrapped in such a way that it does not have any exposed metal and does not pose a safety risk to the player or others, in the opinion of the match referee. All items of jewelry are forbidden and must be removed. Using tape to cover jewelry is not permitted.

Part 9: Facility Requirements and Team Responsibilities

The home team will have properly maintained and prepared fields, including proper markings, nets, goal size, and corner flags, as specified in the Laws of the Game (as modified for US Youth Soccer play). A club or facility representative should be available to fix any problems associated with the fields, including safety concerns such as holes, debris, or fire ant mounds on the fields.

Each individual club will make a determination for their field status in event of inclement weather.

If a game is terminated because of weather, it shall be judged a completed game if the game has reached halftime before the game was terminated. If the match was of lesser duration, then it shall be considered an unplayed, postponed game.

Only properly rostered players, coaches, and team officials will be allowed on the teams’ side of the field or in the team area. Limited coaching is permitted only on the team side of the field from the halfway line to the top of the penalty area on that half of the field. Coaches may not enter the field without permission from the referee.

As prescribed by the Laws of the Game, referees may terminate matches for lack of crowd control, poor team behavior, or other unsporting circumstances. Each coach is responsible for the behavior of his or her players and bench personnel, parents, fans, and spectators. Each coach is responsible to assist the referee, when asked, in the control of parents, fans, and spectators. If a referee terminates a match because of conduct, the game will be suspended and the game score shall be reported after investigation or D & P is complete.

Part 10: Playing Rules

Unless otherwise modified specifically in these Rules, Policies, and Procedures, all SYSA league games will follow the Modified Laws of the Game that have been published on the STYSA website (and, by reference, the US Youth Soccer website) as of the first day of games for each season.

For U13 and above, In the event that two teams from different age groups play against each other (such as a U15 team against a U14 team, or a U17 team against a U16 team), the Laws of the Game for the older age group shall apply, with the exception that the standard game length for the younger age group shall be used in these games.

For U12 and under The Laws of the game for the younger team applies. For rules on “heading”, STYSA 10.0 policy on heading applies.

All SYSA member clubs will use the WeatherBug app to determine the proximity of lightning strikes and clear the fields for 30 min if lightning is 10 miles away or closer.

Part 11: Minimum Play

For D3 and D4, SYSA requires that each coach make a conscious effort to give eligible players 50% playing time per game. At the coaches' discretion, a player may be disciplined for misconduct via a reduction (or elimination) of playing time, provided the coach advises the player, the referee, and the head coach for the opposing team. Any player penalized this way must be noted by the referee on the game card.

In the event that a coach wishes to penalize a player in this manner beyond a single game in a season, that coach must do so via a formal Discipline process at the club level that affords the player proper due process to contest the sanction.

Part 12: Coaches Requirements

All coaches/managers on the sidelines must have a current kid safe badge on their person. If coach does not have one present he must go to the spectator side of the field and someone with a current kid safe can step in. If no one is available to step in (kid safe approved) the match will result in a forfeit for the team that does not have an approved coach.

Part 13: Standings

Once scheduled, all games will be expected to be played before the end of the season. The league may extend the season by a week to accommodate make-up games caused by inclement weather or other issues.

Game reports must be submitted to the SYSA Scorekeeper (or another designee) by the Home Team's President (or designee) within 72 hours of completion of each match.

For D3 brackets all scheduled games will count toward the final bracket standings (including games against teams that are registered in a different age group or different level of play) with the exception where teams play a common opponent 4 times during the season, the first match up will not count toward final standings. The team that places first in the overall standings shall be declared the SYSA league bracket winner at the end of the season.

For those age groups that advance to post-season play, advancement will be determined by each team's standings in the final bracket table, relative to the other teams competing at that same age group and level of play. Any team that plays up in an older age group during the Fall season will only be permitted to advance to the Fall Championships in that older age group, if no other teams are available to advance to the Fall Championships in that team's natural age group, advancement will be at SYSA'S discretion.

For SYSA D4 brackets, standings will be kept for informational purposes only (so that SYSA can track game completions and monitor for non-competitive pairings). No teams advance to post-season play, however awards may or may not be given.

A team's standing in its division will be determined by the number of points it receives based on its win/loss record during the league season. Points will be awarded as follows:

- Three (3) points for a win
- One (1) point for a tie
- Zero (0) points for a loss

In the event of a tie within a division, the following criteria shall be used to break the tie:

1. Winner of head to head competition (point totals only; this criterion is not used if more than two teams are tied)
2. Most wins
3. Team with greatest net goal difference (NGD), which is computed as "goals for" minus "goals against" with a maximum of three NGD in each game.
4. Team with the most goals (maximum of three goals in each game)
5. Team with least goals against (there is NO limit on the number of goals that will be counted to determine this tiebreaker)
6. Fewest player red cards
7. Fewest player yellow cards

In the event more than two teams are tied on the basis of points, the following shall be used to break the tie:

- The sequence of tiebreakers will begin with #1 above and be followed until a team is eliminated.
- Once a team has been eliminated, the sequence of tiebreakers will begin again with #1 and be repeated starting over after each team is eliminated until one team remains.

In the event that (after having applied the tiebreaker rules above) teams remain tied, SYSA will determine whether a game will be played or PK's done to determine 1st place.

Part 14: Ejections and Discipline

SYSA league games will adhere to the current STYSA provisions regarding "penalty points", with the provision that SYSA may adopt policies that are more restrictive than the policies currently detailed in

the STYSA Administrative Handbook.

Among other key provisions, three (3) penalty points per recorded caution, and nine (9) penalty points per recorded ejection, shall be awarded to all individual players and coaches. The maximum accumulation of penalty points in one game by a coach or player shall be nine (9) points.

An accumulation of nine (9) points during the course of the season shall result in automatic suspension of that individual from the next SYSA league game for that team. An accumulation of eighteen (18) points during the course of the season shall result in automatic suspension of that individual from the next two SYSA league games for that team. In the event penalty points were accrued from participation with multiple teams, the suspension shall apply toward the team that was playing when the 9th or 18th point was incurred.

In addition, if a coach, assistant coach, or trainer is ejected from a match by the referee, that individual shall be suspended automatically per STYSA 4.9.2.2 procedure.

Spectators who are sent away from the field of play by a competition official shall receive an immediate two (2) week suspension or until a hearing is held, whichever comes first, and may not be present at any STYSA or USYSA sanctioned activity, including but not limited to games, practices, practice games, tournaments, or friendly games.

Any player ejected from a SYSA league match must leave the players' side of the field immediately. Any rostered team officials ejected from a SYSA league match must leave the field immediately. The player pass will not be retained by the referee following a match in which a red card was issued.

No suspension may be served during a match that was forfeited, postponed, or canceled. Rostered team officials are not allowed at the field of their scheduled game while serving their suspension. Players serving a suspension do not have to be present at the game in which they are serving the suspension, however they must count towards the maximum number of players permitted on that game roster. Players are allowed to serve their suspensions on the team bench, provided they are not in uniform.

It is the responsibility of the coach and/or manager to make sure the ejected player or coach sits out the appropriate match following the one in which the red card was issued, and that the serving of that suspension is noted on the official Game Report by the referee. Any team that does not sit out a suspended individual for the required match, and that allows this individual to participate, will be deemed to have used an ineligible participant and will incur all the penalties associated with such actions.

Ejections for "Violent Conduct" shall serve a minimum two game suspension and may be subject to expulsion from the league.

On contested cases, the SYSA Discipline and Protest Committee ("D&P") shall have the final ruling on all player and coach suspensions.

Part 15: Non-Performance and Forfeits

Although referees have the authority to suspend a match, they do not have the authority to assess a

forfeit.

A forfeit is a competitive sanction that is applied under the following circumstances:

*Teams must be able to start the match within 15 minutes of the scheduled match time. If a team cannot start within 15 minutes of the scheduled match, the other team shall be awarded a victory by forfeit.

*Use of an ineligible player will result in a forfeit for the offending team, and the coach shall be banned from attending the next league match for that team. If incurred in the last game of the season, such a suspension shall carry over to postseason State Cup play and to the next season. Banned coaches are not permitted to be present at the playing field.

*Forfeits are recorded as a score of 3-0 for the winning team.

*Failure to play a match as scheduled will be considered a "double forfeit" with no score for both teams. Any team that fails to show for two or more officially scheduled games may be considered to have abandoned the league. At SYSA's discretion, its games may not count to determine league standings.

Part 16: Game Protests

A game cannot be protested on the basis of a referee's judgment call. A game may be protested solely for a material violation of the Laws of the Game by the referee or to challenge the eligibility of a player or coach who participated in that game.

The coach protesting the game must notify the referee and the other coach that he/she will be protesting the game at the time he/she signs the game card (immediately upon the end of the game). Any coach refusing to sign the game card will lose the right to protest the game and may incur additional sanctions for Unsporting Behavior.

The protesting coach must file his/her written protest along with a \$100 protest fee (payable to "SYSA") with the respective Member Club's D&P Committee within 24 hours of the kick-off of the game in question. The written protest should clearly state the incident(s) involved and the actions of the protesting coach, his/her players, the other team and coach, and the officiating crew involved. The Member Club D&P Representative will forward the written protest to the Chairman of the SYSA D&P Committee within 24 hours of receiving it from the protesting coach. Upon receipt, the Chairman will call a meeting of the SYSA D&P Committee within five (5) days. A quorum of two-thirds (2/3) of the Committee members is required. The Committee has the right, but not the obligation, to call any or all interested parties to its hearing for testimony, or to rely on written statements submitted in advance. If the protest is sustained, the fee will be returned.

For most game protests, the ruling of the SYSA D&P Committee is final. Only in the most serious cases (i.e., player or coach suspension, or a fine is involved) can there be an appeal to the SYSA Board of Directors. Such an appeal must be handled as a separate protest with a new \$100 fee deposited and the circumstances detailed in writing by the appealing party.

Part 17: Team Formation

At the D3 and D4 levels, clubs will distribute players among their teams evenly each season, using one of the methods approved by STYSA for recreational teams.

Part 18: Team Transfers

Individual players are always permitted to move from one club to another, provided these players and clubs comply with all STYSA regulations regarding player transfers and registrations. However, a player cannot play an entire EDPL season and then transfer to a recreational team and play within the same season.

Part 19: Rules Changes

Rules that obtain a majority approval of the SYSA Rules Committee members shall then be presented to the SYSA Board of Directors for further review and debate, and must obtain a majority vote of the SYSA Board of Directors before they are adopted.