

# NORTHERN REGION SOCCER LEAGUE

## RULES 2025



### I. LEAGUE AND ELIGIBILITY

- A. The NRSL is administered by the Chair people or their designated representative of the participating Recreation Councils.
- B. The leagues of the Northern Region Soccer League for the season will be:  
**Recreation Leagues:** U9 and U10 (7vs7).  
**U11 will operate as 9V9 on a smaller field.**  
**All others age groups as follows:** U13 & U16 (11vs11)
- C. Age Determination for the season is July 31st of the current year.
- D. High school players (freshman/sophomore team, JV and Varsity) and club/travel players are ineligible to play on any U16 or below Northern Region Soccer League team. Exceptions can be brought to the board and approved on a case by case basis.
- E. If a U16 player or below plays on JV or Varsity, they must play up on U18, unless an exception has been granted due to roster size. Exceptions can be brought to the board and approved on a case by case basis.
- F. If an area cannot fill a roster in a specific age group with rec players alone (11 for 7vs7 and 14 for 11vs11), then the chairperson can come to the board for exceptions to meet the minimal number of players to include up to two travel/club players. Travel/club players that are being requested due to team shortages must be from a younger age group OR not be the oldest age of a multiple age group (i.e. U13/U16). Roster size needs to be balanced within your program before exceptions will be made.
- G. Teams will be put in the age group of the oldest reported player on the team. Example: your team has ten eight year olds and one nine year old, the team would play in the Under 10 age group.
- H. A team or player may play in a bracket higher than their age, but not lower. Teams playing up will be reviewed on a case by case basis by the league each year.
- I. A player who "**Plays Up**" this season will not jeopardize eligibility in his/her regular age group in the future.

- J. Each player must be listed on one (1) valid roster. A valid roster is the roster that has been submitted, by age group, and is on file with their program chairman.

## II. ROSTERS

- A. All rosters must include name, date of birth, age, travel/club/high school affiliation.
- B. Any additions or changes to the roster are to be made in writing with an updated copy on file with the program chair person.
- C. Each council will determine roster size for their teams.
- D. Recreation council Programs with more than one team in an age group are expected to “Balance their teams.”
- E. A team may make individual player changes until **SEPTEMBER 30th** of the current year, when rosters will be frozen. **NO ADDITIONS AFTER THIS DATE.**
- F. During the season, not the tournament, a team that is short players can either:
  - 1. Ask players from the age group below to play up for that game (ideally choosing players that can play at the older level) and the number of players should reflect the same number that are missing (short).
  - 2. Or...That team can ask players from another team in the same age group to play in that game, again the number of replacement players should reflect the number of players short. This is to be done in the spirit of preventing the game from being cancelled and not to increase the talent level of the team in need.

## III. PLAYING RULES

- A. FIFA Laws of the game, except as modified herein, shall apply to all Northern Region Soccer League and Tournament play.
- B. U9 through U11 cannot head the ball in practice or in a game. If the Ball is headed outside of the penalty box, there will be an indirect kick where the penalty occurred. If the ball is headed **inside** of the penalty box (whether offensive or defensive), the ball will be placed at the top center of the arc for an indirect kick.”
- C. Slide tackling is not allowed in games or in practice for all age groups. If a slide tackle occurs outside of the penalty box the ball will be placed at sight of the foul and will be a direct kick. If the slide tackle occurs inside of the penalty box, the foul results in a penalty kick. 1st offense will be a yellow card, and 2nd offense will be a red card. Slide tackle from behind is an immediate red card.”
- D. Under 9 and under 10 goal kicks may be taken from anywhere within the penalty area.

- E. In full sided age groups (U-13 and older), there must be a minimum of nine (9) players present to begin a game. If a team has nine (9) players present, the game must begin. A team can finish with less than nine (9) players, (i.e., injuries). Any team that does not have a minimum of nine (9) players present will forfeit. It is recommended that each player receive an equitable amount of playing time. U-9, U-10 and U-11 league teams must have six (6) players present, minimum, to start a game. U-9, U-10 and U-11 teams may finish with less than minimum requirement as above. Reach out to the Opposite team to work out on the field during normal season game only.
- F. Forfeit time will be five (5) minutes after scheduled game time.
- G. **The length of periods will be:**  
Under 9 & 10 Leagues (4)12-minute Quarters with a 5 minute break between each quarter. **NOTE: Kickoff – possession will alternate each quarter. Teams will change direction at the half.** Under 11 thru Under 18 Leagues 30 minute Halves with a 5 minute break between halves.
- H. **Game Balls:**  
Under 9 thru under 11—#4 balls  
Under 13 and older—#5 balls
- I. For the **safety of players**, all players **MUST** wear shin guards, worn under socks, to be eligible to play, (also during practices). Jewelry, (i.e. earrings, rings and watches) may **not** be worn during the game. It is recommended that other safety equipment (i.e., mouthpieces, eye protection, cups, etc.) be worn. No hard casts, are allowed. Finger and hand splints/braces must be covered and padded. Anything that hangs below the collar of your uniform must be tucked in prior to play for the safety of other players and yourself.
- J. Substitutions: U9 and U10 only. Both teams may substitute on all throw-ins and goal kicks. U11 and older may substitute on all goal kicks and their own team's throw-ins. Teams may also have unlimited piggy back when the opposing team is substituting.
- K. The **HOT HEAD RULE** will be in effect for all leagues. If a referee places a **Yellow caution card** on a player, the coach will have the immediate right to make a substitution, for that player, without liability.
- L. Referees shall eject from the game and the playing area, any player, spectator, manager, coach who commits a flagrant offense, such as the use of profanity, obscene gestures, or physical violence. **Coaches shall be responsible for the conduct of their spectators.** Referees shall have the prerogative to end the game for any violation of this rule. The referee's judgment concerning this rule shall be final and non-protest able.
- M. Any player issued a **Red Card** will be suspended for the next league/tournament game. Any coach issued a **Red Card** will be suspended for the next two (2) league/tournament games. A **Red Card** suspension will carry over from one Fall playing season to the next Fall season. Area Representatives and Coaches will be responsible for ensuring league rules are followed with regard to Red Cards. All Red Cards must be reported to the Local Program Chairman (by Head Coach of team receiving Red Card) within 48 hours after the

game. Program Chairmen must in turn report to their league within 48 hours upon receiving their notification of a Red Card violation. The program chairman must immediately notify the participant of their suspension. If, after return from suspension, a player or coach is **Red Carded** again during the season, that player or coach will be suspended from league play for one (1) calendar year from the date of the second incident.

**N. SLOW WHISTLE FINISH**

When time runs out, if the ball is inside the attacking 18 yard line or if there is a corner kick, the Referee will allow the play to run its course until the defender kicks the ball out of the box or the goalie has possession of the ball or the scoring opportunity is over.

**M. BUILD OUT LINE**

Soccer has introduced the following policy and field marking change in 7v 7 play.

The use of a Build Out Line for the U8, U9 and U10 levels is now required.

The installation and use of the build out lines will be used to promote playing the ball out of the back (defensive) area in an unpressured situation. The punting of the ball by the goalie will no longer be allowed.

The guidelines as adopted by US Club, USYSA, AYSO and SAY regarding the use of the line during game play are as follows:

1. Any infraction regarding a head ball, the Goalie “punting” and/or dropkicking the ball will result in an indirect free kick.
2. Goalkeepers cannot punt or drop kick the ball at any time; they must throw, roll or placekick the ball. If the goalkeeper does punt or drop kick the ball, the restart will result in an indirect free kick from where the offense occurred.
3. On goal kicks, the opposing team should be outside of the build out line before the kick can be taken. However, the goalkeeper does not have to wait until the other team is over the line to take the kick. If the goalie puts the ball in play before the opposing team has crossed the line, the ball is immediately in play no matter where the opposing players are at that time. The ball is in play when it moves, and players can immediately cross the build out line. The referees should encourage the opposing team to retreat past this line.
4. On all free kicks inside the penalty area, the opposing team must be making an effort to retreat past the build out line. However, if the kicking team decides to quick kick the restart, then it is fair play for the opposing team to play the ball as long as they have made a clear effort to retreat, and the ball has been played and clearly moves.
5. OFFSIDES: OFFSIDES CAN ONLY BE CALLED IF THE ATTACKING TEAM IS INSIDE THEIR ATTACKING SIDE OF THE BUILD OUT LINE. The midfield line no longer has anything to do with the offsides.

The Build Out line is to be installed halfway between the top of the penalty box line and the middle line, straight across the field from sideline to sideline.

#### IV. REFEREES

- A. The association agrees, manpower permitting, to provide competent soccer officials for the council's League programs according to the following:  
Under 13 and older . . . . . 2 Officials per game  
If the assigned association's referee fails to show up, the coaches can mutually agree on volunteer referees, one (1) from each team. If volunteer referees are used, the event shall be considered an official game.
- B. Local recreation council officials. It is required that local councils provide officials for U-9, U-10 and U-11 age brackets. It is recommended that these referees attend a clinic provided by the officials association within two years.
- C. Weather Delay - Referees are to call game delay for thunder or lightning- If you hear thunder, even a distant rumble, call for a game delay and seek shelter immediately. All non-referees are responsible for making the referees aware of thunder or lightning the official may have missed. Stay inside cars until 30 minutes after the last rumble of thunder or sighting of lightning. Sheds, picnic shelters, tents or covered porches do NOT protect from lightning. Game resumes only after 30 minutes after the last thunder or lightning is experienced. The game clock continues to run during delay. No time is added on to the game due to weather delay. Game start times do not change due to weather delays.

#### V. FIELDS

- A. **Under 9, 10 & 11 Leagues** will be scheduled to play on small fields (80x50 yards, where possible, and 6x18 ft. goals, where possible).
- B. If a team's scheduled field is unplayable, as determined mutually by the coaches, and another field is available at that site, the alternate field can be used. **Player safety MUST BE a primary concern.**
- C. Both team areas shall be on the same side of the field. Parents and spectators shall be on the opposite side only. **Coaches are limited to fifteen (15) yards, on their side of the center line.** Home team shall be responsible for determining designated sides.

#### VI. CANCELLATIONS

- A. **Local representatives will notify each other by 7:00am and all teams involved before 7:30am Saturday if the field is unplayable because of weather. The league will then notify the Official's Association no later than 7:30am.**
- B. The Soccer League will not schedule make up games.

- C. Heat cancellations and game alterations for water breaks are determined by coaches- ALWAYS ERR ON THE SIDE OF PLAYER SAFETY. Coaches are responsible in assessing how the temperature and activity effects their players. On warm days, discuss the conditions with the opposing coach. First, decide if it is even safe to hold the game. Second, decide if additional water breaks are needed for the safety of the players. Notify the referees of your decision. The addition of water breaks do not add to the game time. The referee's clock continues to run during water breaks.

## VII. PROTEST PROCEDURE

- A. The only item that can be questioned is the eligibility of a player. If a team wishes to contest the eligibility of a player, the concerned coach must arrange a meeting with program chairmen. The Commissioner from that REC will bring it before the League Board.
- B. **The decision of the League Board will be final.**

## VIII. LEAGUE GOVERNANCE

The Northern Region Soccer League is administered by the Program Chair, or their designated representative, of the participating Recreation Councils.

It will be the responsibility of the Recreation Council Soccer Program Chairmen to review and resolve all league and tournament issues not specifically addressed within the rules.

All volunteers and participants are first and foremost governed by their own Recreation Councils Code of Conduct.

## Additional Rules

**Goal Kicks:** Once the ball is kicked and it moves from the spot the ball is in play. Anyone other than the initial kicker may play the ball. The team not kicking the ball still must be outside the 18, but can enter the 18 upon contact.

**Free kicks:** All free kicks including the kick-off can be played in any direction. The only exception is a PK which must be kicked forward.

**Penalty kick:** The Keeper must have at least one foot in contact with the goal line. He/she may move lateral but cannot move forward until PK is taken.

**Ball hitting the referee:** When a referee is hit by the ball while he/she is in the field of play (the pitch) the following rulings are:

1. Ball goes out of bounds over the touch line: Throw-in to other team.
2. Ball goes out of bounds over goal line: Goal kick or corner kick.
3. Ball enters goal: Drop ball to team that last played the ball.

4. Ball goes to other team: Drop ball to team that last played the ball.
5. Ball goes to kicking team creating an advantage: Drop ball to team that last played the ball.
6. **Ball hits the referee inside the 18: Drop ball to keeper [may use their hands]. Does not matter which team played the ball.**

**Drop ball:** Any occurrence that creates a drop ball situation which includes: an injury, unusual situation (dog runs onto field), simultaneous foul, ball going out-of-bounds on a simultaneous hit by both teams, ball is deflated or ball hits the referee as noted above.

**Drop ball restart:** The drop ball is given to the team that last played the ball before the stoppage. There is only the one player involved it is a **passive restart**. That player may pass the ball or dribble it multiple times. The only restriction is they cannot score a goal directly. The opposing team must be at least 4 yards from the drop ball (Please allow the player to gain control of the ball before the opposing team makes a play on the ball/player).

**Stoppage occurs inside the 18 or the ball is inside the 18 when you stop play:** the restart is a drop ball to keeper [may use their hands]. Does not matter what/who caused the stoppage.

**Note:** The drop-ball restart eliminates the need for a courteous kickback to the keeper of the other team.

**U11 & Heading the Ball:** Ages U11 and under cannot head the ball.

**When intentional:** The re-start is an indirect kick to other team at spot of foul. If foul is within the 18, indirect kick is taken at the top center of the arc whether it is by offensive or defensive team.

**When unintentional:** By state law we must stop play when a ball accidentally hits any player in the head/face to assess if there is an injury. Since it is "an injury" re-start is a drop ball to the team that **last played** the ball before the player got hit in the head as noted above.

If you have any questions on the rules please get in touch with me: