



ADULT SOCCER RULES
(Edited March 31, 2023)

I. **Player Eligibility**

- A. Each team shall be allowed Thirty-Five (32) players on their roster.
- B. The Team Manager is required to have all players sign up to their team roster. Rosters will be done Online and instructions will be given once the team has been registered.
 - Rosters are due April 1 prior to the first week of the season. No additions or subtractions will occur after the roster deadline.
- C. ****A player may only be listed on one team roster within any men's or women's league per age group. Any league that has multiple divisions are considered separate leagues.**
- D. **(NEW) Men's 65+ teams:**
 - There is no roster freeze during the regular season, but all players are required to complete enrollment prior to participating.
 - Playoff teams may use rostered players only. (Spring only)

II. **Protests**

- E. Any team using a player not on their roster after the freeze date or a player under the age limit shall automatically forfeit that game.
 - Players under 18 years of age or still in High School are not eligible to participate in any of the leagues.
 - If a team uses a player under an assumed name or a currently suspended player, that team shall be dropped from the league and all team players will be suspended from league play for one (1) year.
 - Any coach/team manager who permits an ineligible player to participate in a league game shall be suspended for a minimum of one (1) game.
- F. ***Protests as to the use of an ineligible player are the only acceptable form of protest.**
 - An ineligibility protest must be brought to the field marshal's attention at any point during the game.
 - The field marshal will then verify that the player has shown identification and is on the roster. In this case, if the player has only stepped on the field, but not participated in a play, the player can be asked to leave the field and play may resume without repercussion. If the player has played in the match, it will be deemed a forfeit.
 - Protests may only be accepted before or during the match. Protests will not be accepted after the conclusion of the game or during the following week.

- G. Any team dropped from the league after the schedule has been completed, or due to league violations, shall forfeit their entire registration fee.
- H. Active professionals may not participate in the league.
- I. Players in age limit leagues must turn that age during the calendar year in which the matches will be played to meet the minimum age requirement. Thus, a player must turn that age by December 31st of that year to be eligible.
- J. Players in all adult soccer leagues must be able to submit a valid government-issued photo ID that provides the date of birth (i.e., driver's license, passport, MVA ID, MCRD ID) at each match.
 - If a photo ID cannot be provided upon request, that player will not be permitted to play. Any player that has been on the field of play and is protested and is unable to submit a photo ID will be asked to leave. The game will be played under protest and could result in a forfeit.
 - **(NEW)** Photo ID's from non-MCR Leagues do not apply.

III. **Playing Rules**

- A. Unless modified by this set of rules, all games shall be played in accordance with the most current F.I.F.A. rules.
- B. **Playoff Matches that end in a tie will go directly to penalty shootouts. (spring only)**
- C. A game must start with a minimum of eight (8) players.
- D. Men's 65+ League: 11v11.
 - 1. Teams may use a plus one minus one if both managers agree.
 - a. Two referees assigned per match.
- E. Substitutions shall be unlimited and can occur during these times:
 - 1. Prior to a throw-in, by the team in possession for Men's Open, Women's 25+, Men's 40 +. If the team in possession substitutes, then the opposing team can also substitute.
 - 2. Both teams can substitute Prior to a throw-in by either team regardless of possession for Men's 50 +, Men's 55+, Men's 65+, Women's 40+ (player must be standing at the center line ready to go prior to the ball going out of bounds)
 - 3. After a goal or before a goal kick by either team-no possession needed (All Leagues) player's must be standing at the center line ready to go
 - 4. After an injury stoppage, one for one (All Leagues)
 - 5. At half time (All Leagues)
 - 6. For playoffs, 50, 55, and 65 + leagues will follow standard substitution rules where players can only substitute on throw-ins when team is in possession.
- F. Game Playing Time:
 - 1. Five (5) minute half time for all leagues.
 - a. Two (2) 45-minute halves for all leagues
- G. Grace Period - For all league games the clock will start at the scheduled starting time. If you're game is scheduled to start at 11:00 the refs will start the clock at 11:00. Please keep in mind if you are taking your time to get ready the other team is

losing out on game time. If you have the minimum to start the game, you need to be on the field ready to go.

- H.
 - 1. Both team managers and the head referee must sync the current time based on mobile network time to avoid conflicting game start times.
 - 2. After fifteen (15) minutes on the game clock has expired, the game officially will be declared a forfeiture if the team(s) does not have the minimum number of players required or the team is not prepared to play. If the 15 minutes is up and you are still putting your cleats on even if all your players are there, it is still a forfeit. You must be on the field ready to play.
- I. The game will be considered official if one full half has been played.
- J. Away team is responsible for having alternate uniforms if both teams wear the same color.
- K. Every player must wear a unique numbered jersey of the same color for the entire game. The number must be six (6) inches or larger.
 - 1. A team is allowed only one player without a number, that player will be designated zero (0), if no other player is wearing the number zero (0) or double zero (00).
- L. Appropriate soccer shoes or sneakers must be worn. Metal spikes are not allowed. Shin guards are required.
- M. **(REMINDER)** If a team forfeits two games in a season, the team may be dropped from the league, and no refund will be issued.
 - 1. To be reinstated, the removed team must pay a \$100.00 re-entry fee.
- N. Female players may protect themselves above the waist by “gluing”, i.e. using hands to cover an area susceptible to injury by the ball.
- O. Males in divisions 40 +, 50 +, 55+, and 65+ are allowed to protect their heads using a closed fist when standing in a wall. The fist must remain closed and in the middle of your forehead. If the referee feels you move your fist to gain an unfair advantage a hand ball will be called.
- P. **Slide tackling is only permitted in Men’s 18 + Div 1-3 Open Leagues. (not permitted in all other Men’s or Women’s leagues)**
 - 1. A slide tackle is defined as a player leaving their feet to play the ball within the proximity of an opposing player. (This includes goalies)
 - 2. Award for infraction: indirect free kick from the spot of the foul.
 - 3. The referee may issue either a yellow or red card if the act is deemed to injure or is from behind.

IV. **Disciplinary Action**

- A. Any player receiving a red card is suspended for a ***minimum*** of one (1) game (the next game played by that team). If a player receives a second suspension in a season, that player is suspended for one year.
- B. Any player receiving a yellow card will leave the playing field for ten (10) minutes, a substitute player is permitted. Two yellow cards in the same game equals one red card and results in ejection. Any player accumulating three (3) yellow cards in

- different games will be suspended for a minimum of one (1) game. The second suspension will be for one year.
- C. **(UPDATE)** Any player with a record of multiple suspensions in separate seasons will be subject to progressively stronger suspensions for infractions occurring in the current season.
 - 1. This will be based on the severity of previous or current infractions.
 - B. **(REMINDER)** Suspensions roll over from season to season and include playoff games.
 - 1. Example: If a player receives a suspension for 3 games as a result of cards given in the final game of the season, that suspension is applied to the next scheduled game for that team.
 - 2. Yellow Cards do not carry over from one season to the next. Each player starts with a fresh sheet week 1.
 - D. **(UPDATED)** All team managers are responsible for the behavior of their players and spectators. If any player or spectator runs onto the field of play during a game (except when substituting), the game will be declared over by the referees and declared a forfeiture by the Recreation Department. That spectator will be subject to suspension from the league.
 - E. **(NEW)** Any spectator, Player, Team Manager or Coach that engages in inappropriate behavior toward the players of the opposing team, referees or staff shall be banned from attending MCR adult soccer league games.
 - F. Any player, manager, coach, or spectator who approaches a referee or opposing player in a negative manner after the conclusion of a league game shall be suspended for at least one (1) game.
 - G. Any player who makes contact, physically strikes, or verbally threatens any official, staff person or player will be suspended from all Montgomery County Recreation sponsored activities for one year from the date of the incident. If the physical altercation involves more than two players from a team, that team shall be suspended from the league for at least one (1) year from the date of the incident.
 - H. ******Any Player that receives a red card for violent behavior must pay a minimum fee of \$50.00 per red card given. This fee must be paid before that player can return from his/ her suspension.
 - I. **(NEW)** Ejected/ Red Carded/ 2 Yellow Cards in same game, team managers, coaches, player, and spectators must leave the park upon ejection.
 - 1. Refusal to do so by any ejected player in a timely manner will result in forfeiture of that game.
 - 2. In addition, refusal to leave will lead to additional suspension time governed by the league director.
 - J. Any player wishing to appeal a red card must submit an appeal in writing within 48 hours of the red card being issued to the League Office.
 - K. Any team who violates the M-NCPPC regulations regarding the possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages or use of illegal substances on park/school property shall be suspended for the remainder of the season and dropped from the league.

- **Red Card Violations**

(a) Any player who receives a red card for ***violent behavior*** will receive a minimum \$50.00 fine and will be suspended for a minimum of 1 year.

(b) Any player who receives a second red card for ***violent behavior*** will receive a minimum \$100 fine and will be suspended for a minimum of 1 year.

Note: The League Manager reserves the right to overturn any yellow or red card issued.

Caution (Yellow Card) - Examples

1. Unsportsmanlike Behavior
2. Dissent
3. Slide Tackle
4. Persistent Infringement
5. Interfering with the goalkeeper
6. Fail to Respect the Required Distance (10-yard rule)
7. Enter/Leave the field of play without the referee's permission
8. Attempt to deceive the referee (faking an injury, taking a dive)

Ejection (Red Card) - Examples

1. Double Yellow
2. Persistent Dissent
3. Foul and Abusive Language
4. Serious Foul Play
5. Violent Conduct
6. Denying a goal scoring opportunity
7. Spitting at, Hitting, Striking
8. Fighting

V. **APPEAL PROCESS**

- i. If a participant is suspended for violations under rule III., Disciplinary Action, or for other reasons the individual, player, coach or manager will be allowed 72 hours following the receipt of the decision, to respond in writing.
- ii. Any Suspensions will be held in abeyance pending the outcome of the appeal.
- iii. An Appeal Board will hear an appeal only if requested. An appeal will be heard within five working days from the date that the appeal is received by the Sports Program Supervisor/ League Coordinator. Appeal Board will meet in person during business hours or over zoom.
- iv. The Appeal Board will be composed of persons knowledgeable of the standard regulations used by the Recreation Department as well as the philosophy and objectives of the sports programs. The Board will designate one individual to act

as the Commissioner of the Board. The Board will be convened and assigned on a case-by-case basis by the Team Leader/ Sponsor supervising the incident. The Board must comprise of at least three members to hear an appeal and to determine the outcome. No more than one (1) member of the Appeal Board may be a current Sports Team member. It is recommended that Countywide or Area Recreation Advisory Board members serve if possible.

- v. The Appeal Board will meet and make recommendations concerning the conduct and rulings associated with team sports as referred. The Board will not rule on appeals concerning officials' calls or rule interpretations.
- vi. The Program Supervisor/ League Director will present a written statement of all findings and/ or action(s) taken.
- vii. Any individual requesting an appeal may present any evidence having a bearing on the case before the Board. Additional testimony may be heard from up to 2 additional individuals unless specifically waived by the Board.
- viii. The Appeals Board will make a decision concerning the action to be followed. The decision to uphold the original decision or to modify or disallow the decision will be communicated to the parties involved, in writing, within a reasonable period (five days working days of the hearing).

VI. **Official Scorer/Field Supervisor (if applicable)**

- A. The Field Supervisor is responsible for setting up the equipment (corner flags and nets).
- B. If weather conditions change during a game, it will be up to the game officials to make the decision regarding the cancellation of the game.
- C. The Field Supervisor has the responsibility to promote safety in the game and can act in preventing continuous unsportsmanlike play by notifying officials and team managers of unsportsmanlike acts.

VII. **Tie Breakers**

Standings will be based on the criteria below in the following order:

- A. League record, three (3) points for a win, one (1) point for a tie, zero (0) points for a loss, negative one (-1) point for a forfeit.
- B. Head-to-Head Competition
- C. Head-to-Head differential (if you play a team twice. You win 5-2 and lose 1-0 your differential is +2 because you scored 5 goals and they only scored 3 total)
- D. Goal Differential
- E. Goals scored against for entire season
- F. Goals scored for during the entire season
- G. Lowest number of forfeits
- H. Coin Toss

VIII. **Awards**

- A. Awards shall be as follows:
Division Champion (regular season) Gift Card
Playoff Winner - Team Award

IX. **Temperature Rule**

- A. Whenever the temperature becomes a concern with the players due to extreme heat, games can be reduced to four (4) 20-minute quarters (with five-minute breaks between quarters).
- B. This decision must be reached before the game begins and **both teams must agree.** If one team fails to agree then the game will be played as normal.
- C. Once this option has been agreed to, the decision cannot be changed at any point during the game.
- D. **League Office reserves the right to institute mandatory temperature rule games for safety reasons.**
- E. Teams must remind the referees that this option does exist.

X. **Rescheduling of Games**

- A. Two rainout dates are available after the last scheduled date for leagues with an even number of teams.
- B. If the situation arises where those rain out dates are exceeded, alternate days of the week will be considered by the League Office. If alternate days are not available, then a modified version of the game or a refund may be considered.
- C. **Forfeited games will not be rescheduled.**
- D. Games will not be rescheduled after schedules have been posted unless there is inclement weather, unexpected field closure, or an MCR mistake was made.