

\*We adhere to the principles and guidelines of IFAB (FIFA) rules, with modifications tailored to meet the specific needs of our league\*



# Fredericksburg Field House **Soccer Rules**

# Table of Contents

## General Information

- Waivers/Registration Fees
- Coaches, Players, and Spectator Policy
- Cancellation Policy
- Roster policy
- Roster Substitution Policy
- ID and Age Verification
- Guest Players
- Captains
- The Ball
- Player Equipment
- In and Out of Bounds
- Three Line Violation
- In-game Substitution
- Fouls and Other Violations
- The Referee
- Standings
- Rule Interpretation and Final Authority

## Soccer (Adult Men & Women, Youth Girls & Coed Soccer)

- General Information
  - Blood on Uniforms
- Youth Soccer
  - Age/Gender Group Restrictions
  - Number of Players
  - Goalkeeper
  - Headers
- Adult Soccer
  - Age/Gender Group Restrictions
  - Number of Players
  - Goalkeeper
  - Headers

## Futsal (Adult Men & Women, Youth Girls & Coed Soccer)

- General Information
  - Blood on Uniforms
- Youth Soccer
  - Duration of the Game
  - Timeouts
  - Number of Players
  - Goalkeeper Handling
  - Foul Accumulation & Penalty Kicks
  - Free Kicks
  - Restarts

Tackling & Contact  
Kick-ins & Ball in Play  
Penalty Area

Adult Soccer

Duration of the Game  
Timeouts  
Number of Players  
Goalkeeper Handling  
Foul Accumulation & Penalty Kicks  
Free Kicks  
Restarts  
Tackling & Contact  
Kick-ins & Ball in Play  
Penalty Area

**Tournaments (Adult Men & Women, Youth Girls & Coed Soccer)**

# General Information

This rulebook provides the official guidelines for soccer and futsal games, ensuring consistency and fairness across all levels of play. It aims to promote safety, inclusivity, and sportsmanship in every match.

## Waivers/Registration Fees

- **Signed Waivers and Registration:**
  - All individuals on the roster must have a signed waiver on file with the Field House and be paid in full or on a payment plan, and must have the required minimum number of players to field a team, before the team is eligible for season scheduling.
  - Failure to comply with this requirement will result in the team being removed from the league. **No exceptions will be made for incomplete rosters or unpaid fees.**
- **Guest Player Restrictions:**
  - Guest players are not allowed to join a team at or after halftime of a game.
  - Guest players are prohibited from joining a roster halfway through the regular season and during playoffs.
  - Guest players are not permitted to participate in any game if their age does not fall within the limits of the division's age group.
  - **All guest players must be approved by the referee or field marshal prior to the start of the game.**
- **Roster Additions:**
  - Players cannot be added to team rosters after the midway point of the season unless:
    - It is to replace a player with a documented season-ending injury.
    - It is to replace a player with documented relocation of over 30 miles from The Field House.
    - An unforeseen circumstance arises, which will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
  - **All roster changes must be submitted in writing and approved by the Soccer Coordinator prior to the affected game. Teams playing with unapproved players will forfeit those games.**
  - Procedures for injured player substitutions are detailed in the Roster Substitution Due to Injury Policy.
- **Refund Policy:**
  - Refunds will only be issued in the event of a game or season cancellation caused by the Field House or other faults attributable to the facility.

- **No refunds will be issued for voluntary withdrawal, disciplinary removal, or player injuries after the season begins. Account credits may be offered at the discretion of the Soccer Coordinator.**

## **Coaches, Players, and Spectator Policy**

### **Spectator Policy**

All spectators, including family members and friends, are required to remain off the field at all times. Spectators must conduct themselves in a respectful manner, refraining from the use of offensive language, threatening gestures, comments, or any actions directed toward referees, employees, players, or other spectators.

Any spectator who engages in inappropriate conduct, including but not limited to verbal abuse, physical intimidation, or disruptive behavior, will be immediately removed from the facility for the remainder of the game. In cases of severe misconduct, the game may be stopped, and the spectator may be banned from attending future games.

Repeat violations by a spectator will result in a permanent ban from attending games for the remainder of the season, with no refund of any fees. At the discretion of the Director, the spectator may also be prohibited from attending future seasons. The Director has the authority to take further disciplinary actions as deemed necessary to maintain a safe and respectful environment for all participants.

### **Coaches & Player Policy**

Any coach or player who engages in inappropriate behavior, including verbal abuse, physical aggression, or unsportsmanlike actions (such as intentionally harming an opponent or arguing excessively with the referee), will be subject to disciplinary action. This may include:

- Immediate ejection from the game or event.
- Suspension from the remainder of the game and the next game.
- Additional disciplinary action as determined by the Soccer Coordinator, which may include further suspensions or removal from the league for the remainder of the season, with no refund of fees.

Repeat violations or severe misconduct may result in:

- A permanent ban from participating in the league for the remainder of the current season and potentially future seasons, at the discretion of the Soccer Coordinator.

- Further penalties or sanctions deemed necessary to maintain the integrity and safety of the league.

The league maintains a zero-tolerance policy for abusive or disruptive behavior, and all coaches and players are expected to be good stewards of the sport.

## **Cancellation Policy**

### **Team or Player-Requested Cancellations:**

- **Notice Requirement:**
  - Teams or players must provide a written cancellation notice at least **7 days** prior to the start of the season, camp, or clinic to be eligible for any refunds or credits.
  - Teams or players looking to forfeit must provide written documentation **24 hours** prior to the game. Once this notification is received, there will be no retracting this decision.
- **Refund Eligibility:**
  - Refunds will be issued only under the following circumstances:
    - Serious, prolonged injury (documentation required).
    - Relocation out of a reasonable commuting distance (proof required).
- **Refund Processing:**
  - Approved refunds will be processed within **14 business days** of the request being verified.
- **Credit Option:**
  - In cases where refunds are not eligible, account credits may be issued on a case-by-case basis. Credits can be used for future leagues, camps, or clinics.

### **League/Facility-Requested Cancellations:**

- **Cancellation by League or Facility:**
  - In the event of a league, camp, or clinic cancellation initiated by the league or facility, full refunds or credits will be provided to all affected participants.
- **Weather-Related Cancellations:**
  - Games, practices, or events canceled due to inclement weather may be rescheduled. Refunds or credits will be issued for weather-related cancellations.
- **No-Shows or Late Withdrawals:**
  - No refunds or credits will be issued for players or teams that fail to attend or withdraw without proper notice as outlined above.

### **Seasonal Policies:**

- Cancellations occurring after the halfway point of the season are ineligible for refunds or credits unless due to league/facility cancellation or exceptional circumstances.

### **Forfeitures and Disqualifications:**

- No refunds or credits will be issued to teams or players disqualified or removed from the league due to violations of rules, policies, or conduct guidelines.

## **Roster Policy**

- **Submission and Finalization:**
  - Teams must submit their rosters before the start of the season.
  - Rosters are considered final upon submission and cannot be changed unless allowed under specific conditions outlined below.
- **Eligibility Requirements:**
  - All adult players must be properly registered and provide valid ID for age and identity verification.
  - Players must meet the age, skill level, and division requirements of the league.
- **Roster Additions:**
  - Additions to the roster are permitted only up to the halfway point of the regular season.
  - Players added to the roster must meet all eligibility requirements and must be approved by the Soccer Coordinator.
- **Injury and Relocation Exceptions:**
  - Injured players or those relocating out of reasonable commuting distance may be replaced with league approval.
  - Proper documentation, such as a medical note or proof of relocation, must be provided.
- **Playoff Eligibility:**
  - Only players listed on the roster prior to the playoff eligibility cutoff date are allowed to participate in playoff matches.
  - Guest player additions are not permitted during playoffs.
- **Guest Players:**
  - Guest players are permitted under the Guest Player Policy for short-term needs, but may not replace regular roster players during playoffs.

- **Player Transfers:**
  - Players are allowed one transfer to another team per season, with the approval of both team captains and the Soccer Coordinator.
  - Transfers are not allowed after the midpoint of the regular season unless allowed under specific conditions.
- **Soccer Coordinator Authority:**
  - Any disputes or exceptions related to roster policies will be resolved at the discretion of the Soccer Coordinator. The Soccer Coordinator's decision is final.

## Roster Substitution Policy

In the event that a player needs to be replaced due to injury or relocation outside of a reasonable distance from the Fredericksburg Field House, the following policy applies:

- **Documentation Requirement:** To request a refund or substitution due to injury or relocation, documented proof must be provided. This includes:
  - Proof of relocation (e.g., moving to another state).
  - Proof of a serious, prolonged injury that prevents participation in leagues, camps, or clinics for the duration of the season.
- **Refunds:** Refunds will only be issued under the following circumstances:
  - A cancellation of a field house game or season.
  - Any other situation caused by the fault of the Fredericksburg Field House.
- **Credits:** Credits to accounts will be considered on a case-by-case basis and may be issued at the discretion of the Field House management.

**Roster Spot Transfers:** Transferring a roster spot from a player who is not injured, has not relocated, or has decided to not complete the season to another player not currently on the roster is strictly prohibited. This is a direct violation of Fredericksburg Field House league policy and will result in penalties, including possible removal from the league.

## ID and Age Verification

All players are required to provide valid identification and proof of age upon request for league participation. This verification ensures that players are competing in the appropriate age group for their division. The following guidelines apply:

- **Required Documentation:** Adult players must show an official government-issued ID to our field marshal and/or other FFH staff at the start of every game, failure to do so will result in the player not being able to participate until ID can be provided and verified.



- **Age Group Compliance:** Players must be within the specified age range for the league or division they are participating in. Age group eligibility is determined based on the player's age as of the start date of the season.
- **Failure to Comply:** Failure to provide adequate proof of age or falsifying age information will result in immediate removal from the league and may lead to a suspension or ban from future participation.

## Guest Players

A Guest Player is permitted to participate as a short-term substitute on a per-game basis. Guest players are not permanently added to a team's roster and may only participate in the specific game they are registered as a guest for. Guest players are strictly prohibited from participating in playoff games or any matches beyond the conclusion of the regular season.

The following guidelines apply to guest players:

- **Eligibility:** A guest player is allowed to play for a team in a division that is within **one division below** or **up to two divisions above** their original division level. For example, a Division 3 player can guest play on a Division 4 team (one division below) or on a Division 1 or 2 team (up to two divisions above).
- **Purpose:** This policy is designed to ensure competitive fairness and maintain the integrity of the league by preventing teams from gaining an unfair advantage. Guest playing should not disrupt the competitive balance or undermine sportsmanship.
- **Limitations:** Guest players are only allowed for a limited time (per game) and cannot be used as a permanent replacement for a regular team member.

## Captains

Team captains play a crucial role in maintaining order and communication between players, referees, and league officials. The following guidelines outline the expectations and responsibilities for captains:

### 1. Responsibilities of the Captain

- **Communication:** The captain serves as the primary point of contact between their team and the referee or league officials. Captains are responsible for voicing concerns, clarifying rules, or requesting clarification from the referee during the game.
- **Leadership:** Captains are expected to lead by example in demonstrating good sportsmanship and fair play both on and off the field.
- **Roster Management:** Captains must ensure their team adheres to league rules regarding rosters, substitutions, and player eligibility.

## 2. Interaction with Referees

- Only captains may approach the referee to discuss calls or seek clarification on decisions. All discussions must be respectful and conducted during appropriate stoppages in play.
- Captains must ensure their team members respect the referee's decisions, as these are final and binding.
- Captains are required to wear an armband for the duration of the game. This armband serves as a visible indicator of their role as the team's point of contact with officials and must be worn throughout the entire match.

### Discipline for Captains

- Captains who fail to uphold their responsibilities or exhibit unsportsmanlike behavior may be subject to disciplinary action, including:
  - **Warning** for minor infractions.
  - **Yellow card** or **red card** for serious violations.
    - If a captain receives multiple yellows or red cards they can be removed from their role as captain and it will be given to someone else.

## The Ball

The ball used in league play must meet the following specifications:

- **Size:**
  - For **adult soccer**, the ball must be **Size 5**.
  - For **youth soccer** (U12 and below), the ball must be **Size 4**.
    - U14 and above, the ball must be **Size 5**
  - For **futsal**, the ball must be a **Size 4 futsal ball**, which is smaller and has reduced bounce compared to a standard soccer ball.
- **Condition:** The ball must be in good condition, with no damage, excessive wear, or deflation. If the ball is deemed unsuitable for play by the referee, a new ball should be provided.
- **Approval:** The ball must meet the standards set by the league and be approved by the referee prior to the start of the match.

## Player Equipment

To ensure player safety and uniformity, the following equipment regulations apply:

1. **Shin Guards:**
  - **Required** for all players, and must be **age- and size-appropriate**.

- If a player is found without shin guards, they will be instructed to leave the field immediately. They may not participate in play until properly equipped.
  - If a player without shin guards touches the ball, the referee will stop play and award possession to the opposing team via an **indirect free kick**.
2. **Footwear:**
    - **Flats, turf shoes, or molded cleats** are allowed.
    - **Metal cleats or screw-in cleats** are strictly prohibited for safety reasons.
  3. **Goalkeepers:**
    - Goalkeepers must be clearly **identified** through appropriate attire (e.g., different colored jersey).
  4. **Jewelry:**
    - **No jewelry** is allowed, except for **medical alert** jewelry or religious items, which must be worn discreetly and securely.
  5. **Team Jerseys:**
    - All players on the same team must wear the **same color** jerseys.
    - If both teams have similar-colored jerseys, the **Away Team** is required to change to a non-similar color jersey before the match begins.

## In and Out of Bounds

### In Play:

- The ball is considered in play at all times unless explicitly stated otherwise in the exceptions below.

### Out of Play:

- The ball is considered out of play in the following scenarios:
  - **Netting or Wall Contact:**  
If the ball hits the netting, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team. The restart occurs at the point where the ball made contact with the netting, 1 yard away from the wall structure.
  - **Leaves the Field of Play:**  
If the ball leaves the field of play for any reason, play is stopped, and the appropriate restart is awarded based on how the ball exited.
  - **Ceiling Contact:**  
If the ball hits any part of the ceiling, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team. The restart occurs at the closest line to the out of bounds play.

## Three Line Violation

### Definition of a Three Line Violation:

- A three-line violation occurs when a ball is played from behind the defensive red line and crosses the midfield line and the offensive red line without touching the field, another player, or the wall in between.

### Judging a Three Line Violation:

- The ball must originate **completely behind the defensive red line** and land **completely beyond the offensive red line** for it to be considered a violation.
- If any part of the ball's circumference touches the defensive red line at the kicking point or the offensive red line at the landing point, it is **not** considered a three-line violation.

### Penalty for Violations:

- A three-line violation results in an **indirect free kick** awarded to the opposing team, taken from their offensive red line.

## In-game Substitution

### Unlimited Substitutions:

- During dynamic play, teams may make unlimited substitutions at any time.
- The oncoming player cannot touch the ball or interfere with play until the off-going player has completely exited the field.
- Substitutions must take place **within 1 yard of the team bench** (this distance is loosely enforced). Any violation of this rule will result in an **Indirect Free Kick** awarded to the opposing team from the location of the illegal substitution.

### Player and Coach Requirements:

- Only players and coaches listed on the **Field House roster** in the DaySmart system are permitted to be in the player's box on the sidelines.
- Players and coaches are subject to the authority of the Soccer Coordinator, referees, and FFH employees.
- All non-listed players, family members, or friends must remain on the spectator side of the field at all times.
- **Failure to comply** will result in an automatic forfeit of the game.
- **Disrespectful behavior** by coaches, players, or spectators towards referees or FFH employees, before, during, or after the game, will result in a **forfeit** for the violating team.

- In cases of severe violations, a **season ban** may be imposed by the Soccer Coordinator.

### **Lopsided Scores:**

- When the score becomes significantly unbalanced, the **Field Marshal** must stop adding points to the scoreboard once the leading team reaches **8 point differential**.
- This is to promote good sportsmanship among coaches and players.

### **League Registration Fees and Guest Players:**

- A team playing with a player who has not paid their **league registration fees** by Week 1 of the season, is not on a payment plan, or a **guest player** who has not paid their fee, will forfeit the game if discovered at any point during the match.
- **Exceptions** may be made if prior arrangements are made with the Fredericksburg Field House Soccer Coordinator.

## **Penalty Kicks and Shootouts**

### **Penalty Kicks (During Regular Play)**

Penalty kicks are awarded when a foul punishable by a direct free kick occurs inside the offending team's penalty area. The following rules apply:

- 1. Placement of the Ball:**
  - The ball is placed on the penalty mark.
- 2. Positioning of Players:**
  - The goalkeeper must remain on the goal line, facing the kicker, and cannot move off the line until the ball is kicked.
  - All other players must remain outside the penalty area, standing on or behind the red line.
- 3. Execution of the Kick:**
  - The player taking the penalty kick must clearly identify themselves to the referee.
  - The ball must be kicked forward and cannot be touched again by the kicker until another player makes contact.
  - The kick is completed once the identified kicker has made contact with the ball.
- 4. Infractions and Consequences:**
  - If the goalkeeper moves off the goal line before the ball is kicked and no goal is scored, the kick is retaken.
  - If a teammate of the kicker encroaches into the penalty area, the kick is retaken if a goal is scored; otherwise, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team.
  - If a teammate of the goalkeeper encroaches into the penalty area and the kick results in a goal, it stands; if no goal is scored, the kick is retaken.

- If the kicker misses the penalty kick and makes contact with the ball before another player does and scores, the defending team will gain possession of the ball with a goal kick.

If the game ends in a tie **during playoffs** then overtime and a shootout is required to determine the winner, the following rules apply:

### **Overtime Rules**

The game will enter a **golden goal overtime period**:

- The first goal scored during the 5-minute overtime period wins the match.
- If no goal is scored after 5 minutes, the game proceeds to a shootout.

### **Shootouts (Tie-Breaker Format)**

#### **Number of Players:**

- Each team selects **three field players**, can include the goalkeeper, to participate in the initial round of the shootout.
- Only players who were on the field at the end of regulation play are eligible to participate.

#### **Order of Kicks:**

- The **home team** will take the first kick. Teams alternate kicks thereafter.

#### **Execution of Kicks:**

- Each kick is taken from the penalty mark, with the same rules as a penalty kick during regular play.
- The goalkeeper must remain on the goal line until the ball is kicked.

#### **Determining the Winner:**

- The team with the most goals after three kicks is declared the winner.
- If the score remains tied after three kicks, the shootout proceeds to **sudden death**, with each team taking one kick at a time until a winner is determined.

#### **Goalkeeper Substitutions:**

- Goalkeepers may be substituted at any time during the shootout, provided the substitute was on the field at the end of regulation play.

#### **Fouls During the Shootout:**

- If the goalkeeper commits an infraction and no goal is scored, the kick is retaken.
- Any misconduct by players during the shootout may result in disqualification or further penalties, at the discretion of the referee.

## Fouls and Other Violations

The following fouls and violations are outlined to ensure fair play and the safety of all participants. Referees will enforce these rules, and appropriate actions will be taken to maintain the integrity of the game.

### Indirect Free Kick Fouls

For an indirect free kick, the ball must be touched by at least one other player before it can result in a goal.

If a defensive wall is formed, all players in the wall must maintain a distance of at least **3 yards** from the ball until it is kicked. Failure to observe the required distance may result in the kick being retaken or further disciplinary action at the referee's discretion.

An indirect free kick is awarded for the following fouls:

- **Dangerous play** (e.g., high kicking, playing the ball while it is above the head of another player in a dangerous manner)
- **Obstruction** (interfering with an opponent's ability to play the ball without making an attempt to play the ball)
- **Goalkeeper violations** (e.g., taking longer than six seconds to release the ball, or handling the ball outside of the penalty area)
  - Punting the ball (or drop kicking in the adult leagues)
  - Illegal handling outside the penalty area
  - Handling the ball after having distributed the ball to a field player without first touching another opposing player.
  - Pass back deliberately by foot from a teammate and handle the ball illegally.
  - Handling the ball for more than 5 seconds in the penalty area.
- **Unsporting behavior** (e.g., delaying the restart of play, unsporting conduct during a restart)
- **Attempting or committing the following are considered fouls:** Holding, obstructing, slide tackling, kicking, tripping, jumping at, charging, striking, or pushing an opponent.
  - iv. Sliding a defender inside the defensive penalty area which impedes an attack will result in a PK for the attacking team.

- Sliding is defined as a deliberate action in which at least one leg is extended and any other part of the body other than the second foot touches the playing surface at the same time
- **Forcing an opponent into a wall in a dangerous fashion**

### **Blue and Yellow Card Offenses (Cautionable Offenses)**

A player may be shown a yellow card for the following offenses:

- **Aggressive Boarding**
- **Dissent by word or action**
- **Failure to respect the required distance for a free kick**
- **Unsporting behavior** (e.g., reckless challenges, dissent towards the referee)
- **Delaying the restart of play** (e.g., wasting time by holding onto the ball during a free kick or out-of-play kick)
- **Persistent infringement** (committing repeated fouls)
- **Entering or re-entering the field of play without the referee's permission**
- **Failure to maintain proper player equipment** (e.g., not wearing shin guards)
- **Goalkeeper Violations:** Goalkeepers may not hold the ball for more than 6 seconds, handle the ball outside of their penalty area, or intentionally waste time during restarts
- **Denial of an obvious goal-scoring opportunity** (e.g., handling the ball deliberately to prevent a goal, or committing a foul that stops a clear goal-scoring chance)

**Two yellow cards in a single game equal an automatic red card** and the player will be sent off.

### **Red Card Offenses (Sending-Off Offenses)**

A player may be shown a red card and sent off for the following offenses:

- **Serious foul play** (e.g., violent conduct, dangerous tackles)
- **Spitting at another player, official, or on the field**
- **Multiple denials of an obvious goal-scoring opportunity**
- **Offensive, insulting, or abusive language or gestures**
- **Violent conduct** (e.g., hitting, kicking, or attempting to hit or kick an opponent)
- **Receiving second caution in the same match**

### **Consequences of Violations**

- **Indirect Free Kick:** The ball must touch another player before a goal can be scored.



**Blue Card:**

A blue card is issued for dissent, tactical fouls, or cynical fouls. The player will be sent **off for 2 minutes and must remain off the field during this period**. During a blue card penalty, you **can substitute with a different player**, but the blue-carded player must remain off the field during this time.

**Yellow Card:**

A yellow card serves as a **warning**. The player will be sent **off for 5 minutes and must remain off the field during this period**. Two yellow cards in a single game result in an automatic red card, and the player will be sent off, leading to suspension from the league.

- **Powerplay:**

You cannot substitute for a player with a yellow card unless the opposing team scores a goal. This negates the penalty, but the yellow-carded player must still serve the entire 5-minute penalty and remain off the field for the full duration.

- **Exception:**

If the goalkeeper commits the yellow card offense, the team may select another player currently on the field to serve as the cautioned player.

**Red Card:**

A red card results in the player being immediately sent off, and the team must play with one fewer player for the remainder of the game. A player receiving a red card will be suspended from future games, as determined by the Soccer Coordinator.

- **One Red Card:**

- Results in a one-game suspension from all league activities unless the suspension is adjusted by the Soccer Coordinator.
- A \$50 fine must be paid before the player can return to play.

- **Two Red Cards (accumulated in the same season):**

- Results in a two-game suspension from all league activities unless the suspension is adjusted by the Soccer Coordinator.
- Results in a \$100 fine, which must be paid before the player can return to play.

- **Three Red Cards (accumulated in the same season):**

- Results in ejection from the league for the remainder of the current season.
- The player will receive no refund and may be barred from participating in future seasons at the discretion of the league director.

## **Field House Policy:**

Any player who receives a RED Card must leave the facility IMMEDIATELY and serve a 1 to 2 game suspension depending on the offense committed. The max penalty of a one year ban will be imposed at the Soccer Coordinators discretion if deemed necessary. The ejected red card player will not be able to return to the facility during the suspension or ban period even if they are registered and play on multiple rosters in different divisions, leagues, rentals, or outside events.

A red carded youth player under (18) eighteen years old must be IMMEDIATELY escorted from the facility by a parent or guardian (*Red Carded players must leave within, Adults 5 minutes, Youth 10 minutes*). All red carded players will be suspended for AT LEAST (1) one game. The red card offense will be reviewed by the Soccer Coordinator to determine if the carded player will serve a longer suspension. Any player who receives multiple Red Cards within the same season will be suspended from the facility for one season to one year depending on the severity of the violation with no refund. NO EXCEPTIONS.

The referee must report all carded players' names to facility management, fill out an ejection report/incident report and notify the Soccer Coordinator and Referee Commissioner at the end of the night. If the player's name cannot be immediately obtained, the Field House management can suspend the entire team until the player's name is obtained.

The referee is **not required to explain** to a player the reason for issuing a card while the game is in progress. The explanation must be provided to the **Field Marshal** and/or **Soccer Coordinator** after the game or at halftime and/or to the teams captain during an appropriate stoppage time.

When a **red card** is issued, the referee **cannot stop or delay the game**. An **FFH employee** will escort the red-carded player off the premises.

At no point should the referee **stop the game to engage with a player**. The game operates on a running clock, and maintaining the flow of the match is crucial. Should a referee need to stop the game to engage with a player(s), the clock will be stopped until the engagement is over.

## **Appeal**

If a team, player, coach, or spectator believes that a decision made during a game was incorrect or unjust, they may submit an appeal. The following guidelines apply to the appeal process:

### **1. Eligibility to Appeal:**

- Only decisions related to **game results, player eligibility, or referee decisions** may be appealed.

- Appeals related to **behavioral suspensions or disciplinary actions** must be submitted within **24 hours** of the incident.
2. **Appeal Submission:**
    - The appeal must be submitted in writing to the **Soccer Coordinator** or designated league official within **24 hours of the start of the game**.
    - The appeal must include a detailed explanation of the reason for the appeal, including any supporting evidence or documentation.
  3. **Appeal Review:**
    - The **Appeals Committee** (composed of the **Soccer Coordinator** and other designated league officials) will review the appeal.
    - The committee may request additional information or clarification from the appellant, referees, or other relevant parties.
  4. **Decision:**
    - The Appeals Committee will make a decision within **72 hours** of receiving the appeal.
    - The committee's decision will be final and binding.
  5. **Possible Outcomes:**
    - The original decision may be upheld, altered, or overturned.
    - In cases where a decision is overturned, the committee may issue a **remedial action** or impose additional penalties, depending on the circumstances.

## The Referee

- All decisions made by the referee will be based on the interpretation and application of **FIFA IFAB Laws of the Game** and **FFH Site-Specific Rules**.
- All rules and referee decisions are **final**.
- **The referee must be clearly identified – if the referee and team are wearing similar colors the referee must change before the start of the game.**
- It is the referee's responsibility to keep the game on schedule. Shortened halves or reduced intermissions may be used at the referee's, **FFH Field Marshal**, or **Soccer Coordinator's** discretion to maintain the game schedule.
- **Late Arrivals:** Teams that show up late for games, or must wait for players to arrive in order to field a team, will receive a **5-minute grace period once the game has started**. After the first 5-minute grace period expires, there will be a second 5-minute grace period. If the late team arrives within this second 5-minute grace period, the match will commence, and the team that was on time will receive a 4-0 advantage to start the match. Should the late team arrive after the second 5-minute grace period or not show at all, the tardy/absent team will receive a **forfeit** score of 0-8.
- **Out of Play Restarts:** The referee is required to **blow the whistle** to signal the restart of play when the ball goes out of bounds. The whistle is mandatory, and the referee must

use it to indicate restarts, and in situations requiring a ceremonial restart (e.g., penalty kicks, and start of game). The referee may use a **whistle and arm signal** to indicate the direction of the restart if necessary, but the whistle must always be blown to stop play and execute the restart.

- **Cards:** The referee must always display a **blue, yellow or red card** when issuing a caution or a send-off. Failure to display a card when one is issued will result in the action being negated, and the player will not be penalized accordingly.
  - **The referee does not have to explain to the carded player why a card was given. They must explain their reasoning to the Field Marshal, Team Captain, and/or Soccer Coordinator after the game or during an appropriate stoppage time.**
  - The referee can not give a card before the game has started or after the game has ended. They can make a complaint of a player and the Soccer Coordinator will handle it.
  - When a **red card** is issued, the referee **cannot stop or delay the game**. An **FFH employee** will escort the red-carded player off the premises.
  - At no point should the referee **stop the game to engage with a player**. The game operates on a running clock, and maintaining the flow of the match is crucial. Should a referee need to stop the game to engage with a player(s), the clock will be stopped until the engagement is over.

## Standings

### Ranking Criteria:

- Standings are determined by the **head-to-head win/loss record** between teams.

### Tie-Breaker Criteria:

- If multiple teams have the same record, **goal differential** by each team will be used to determine their position in the standings.
- **Forfeited games** will be scored as an **8-0** win for the non-forfeiting team.

### Posting of Scores and Standings:

- Scores and standings will be posted on the league's website within **72 hours** following the completion of each match.

### Tiebreakers for Playoff Scheduling:

- In case of a tie on points for playoff positioning, the following tiebreakers will be applied in order:

- **Goal difference** (goals scored minus goals conceded).
- **Total goals scored.**
- **Head-to-head results** between the tied teams.
- If the tie persists, a **playoff system** may be used to determine the final ranking and playoff seeding, depending on the league's format.

## **Rule Interpretation and Final Authority**

- Any situations, disputes, or scenarios not explicitly covered in this rulebook will be resolved at the discretion of the Soccer Coordinator.
- The Soccer Coordinator's decisions are considered final and binding to ensure fairness, consistency, and the smooth operation of the league.
- The Soccer Coordinator reserves the right to update or clarify rules as needed during the season to address unforeseen circumstances or to maintain the integrity of the league



# Soccer

## General Information

### Blood on Uniforms (Youth and Adult Soccer)

- **General Rule:**
  - If a player has **blood on their uniform**, they **must leave the field of play immediately** for cleaning and/or uniform replacement.
  - The player is not permitted to continue playing until the blood is cleaned off the uniform or a clean uniform is provided.
- **Uniform Replacement:**
  - If a uniform cannot be properly cleaned or if the blood stain cannot be removed, the player must **change into a clean uniform** before returning to play.
  - The **team must have a spare clean uniform** available for such situations. If no spare uniform is available, the player will not be allowed to return to the game. No FFH pennies will be provided as a substitute.
- **Game Impact:**
  - A stoppage in play will occur to ensure the player leaves the field to address the blood situation, a substitute player may take their spot on the field while they attend to the blood. There will be no penalty for this, but the **game will resume** once the player has complied with the rule, or a replacement player joined the field.

## Youth Soccer

### Age/Gender Group Restrictions:

- Players must be within the specified age range and gender for their division. Players who do not meet the age/gender requirement will be removed from the field and substituted.
- **Game Duration:**
  - Matches are played in two **20-minute halves**, with a **2-minute halftime** break.
  - No overtime or shootouts in youth games unless specified by league policy for playoff matches.

## Number of Players:

- **Standard Game Format:**
  - **U8 - U12:** Each team is allowed **7 players on the field at one time**, including the goalkeeper.
  - **U14 and above:** Each team is allowed **6 players on the field at one time**, including the goalkeeper.
    - **Competitive Adjustment:**
      - If a team is losing by a difference of 6-0, the losing team may add an additional player to the field to help even the competitive playing field.
- **Minimum Number of Players:** A team must have at least **4 players** on the field, including the goalkeeper, to start and continue the game. If a team drops below 4 players due to injury or dismissal, the game will be forfeited.
- **Substitutions:** Substitutions are **unlimited** but must be made within the designated substitution area. Substitutions must take place **within 1 yard of the team bench** (this distance is loosely enforced). Any violation of this rule will result in an **Indirect Free Kick** awarded to the opposing team from the location of the illegal substitution.

## Goalkeeper:

- A **goalkeeper** must be present on the field at all times. If a team loses its goalkeeper (due to injury or other reasons), they are given a reasonable amount of time to substitute or replace the goalkeeper, but the game will continue without delay.
- **Goalkeeper Handling:**
  - Goalkeepers are not allowed to handle the ball outside the penalty area.
  - **U8 - U12:** Goalkeepers may not hold the ball for more than **6 seconds** before releasing it into play.
  - **U14 and above:** The goalkeeper is allowed a longer time, up to **6 seconds**, in line with FIFA rules.

## Headers:

- **Prohibited for players under the age of 12:** To ensure player safety and reduce the risk of head injuries, headers are **not allowed** in any youth division for players under 12 years old.
- If a player under 12 years old performs a header, the referee will stop play and award an indirect free kick to the opposing team from the spot where the header occurred.



- For players **13 years old and older**, headers are allowed but must be executed in a safe and controlled manner. The referee will issue a warning for unsafe headers, and repeated offenses may result in a yellow card for reckless play.

## Adult Soccer

- **Age/Gender Group Restrictions:**
  - Any player **18 years or older** is eligible to play in the adult divisions. Players must meet the minimum age and gender requirement for the division they are entering, but there are no upper age restrictions.
- **Game Duration:**
  - Matches are played in two **25-minute halves**, with a **2-minute halftime**.
  - **Overtime** or **penalty shootouts** may be used to decide the outcome in the event of a tie in playoffs. The **golden goal rule** may apply for overtime.

### Number of Players:

- **Standard Game Format:**
  - Each team is allowed 6 players on the field at one time, including the goalkeeper.
    - **Coed Rules:**
      - **Minimum of 2 girls must be on the field at all times, or 1 girl and 1 player over the age of 50+.** This ensures that the coed format maintains the required gender and age diversity.
    - **Minimum Number of Players:** A team **must have at least 4 players** on the field, including the goalkeeper, to start and continue the game. If a team drops below 4 players due to injury, red card, or other reasons, the game will be forfeited.
    - **Coed: At least 1 girl OR 1 50+ year old man must be present on the field** for the game to continue.
- **Substitutions:**
  - Substitutions are unlimited during the game, but they must occur within the designated substitution area.
  - Substitutions must take place **within 1 yard of the team bench** (this distance is loosely enforced). Any violation of this rule will result in an **Indirect Free Kick** awarded to the opposing team from the location of the illegal substitution.

### Goalkeeper:

- A **goalkeeper** must be present on the field at all times. If a team loses their goalkeeper, the game continues while the team is allowed a reasonable amount of time to substitute or replace the goalkeeper. If no replacement is made in a timely manner, the game will continue without a goalkeeper until one is substituted in.
- **Goalkeeper Handling:**
  - Goalkeepers are allowed to handle the ball inside their penalty area only.
  - Goalkeepers may hold the ball for a maximum of **6 seconds** before releasing it into play.
  - Violations may result in an **indirect free kick** to the opposing team.
  
- **Headers:**
  - **Headers are allowed** in all adult divisions (18+). Players are encouraged to use proper technique when heading the ball to minimize the risk of injury.
  - **Unsafe headers**, such as aggressive or reckless headers or headbutting the ball with no control, may result in a **yellow card** for dangerous play. If the behavior is repeated, it may result in a **red card** for reckless play.
- **Head Injuries:**
  - Any player who suffers a **head injury**, including concussions or trauma, must leave the field immediately.
  - The player may only return to the game **after clearance from the official** or a medical professional, should they wish to continue playing. This is to ensure the safety and well-being of the player.