



Greater Central Florida Youth Soccer League

RULES OF PLAY

2026-27

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	LEAGUE OVERVIEW	1
1.2	DECLARATIONS.....	1
1.3	GAME DAY PROCEDURES	2
2	ELIGIBILITY	3
2.1	PLAYER ELIGIBILITY	3
2.2	COACH ELIGIBILITY.....	3
2.3	MINIMUM RECOMMENDED COACH LICENSING	3
3	ROSTERING	4
3.1	ROSTERS	4
3.2	DIGITAL CHECK-IN	4
3.3	MATCH CARDS.....	4
3.4	MAXIMUM PLAYERS PER GAME	4
3.5	PRIMARY 1 & SECONDARY DUAL ROSTERED PLAYERS.....	5
3.6	INELIGIBLE PLAYERS	5
4	SCHEDULING	6
4.1	SELF-SCHEDULING HOME MATCHES	6
4.2	GAME SCHEDULES	6
4.3	RESCHEDULE POLICY	6
5	FIELD, EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORMS	7
5.1	FIELDS	7
5.2	TECHNICAL AREA	8
5.3	BUILD OUT LINE (9U & 10U)	8
5.4	UNPLAYABLE FIELDS.....	8
5.5	UNIFORMS	9
5.6	CAST AND/OR BRACES.....	9
6	REFEREES	10
6.1	REFEREE FEES	10
6.2	HOME/AWAY SWAP	10
6.3	CHECK-IN.....	10
6.4	SUPPLEMENTAL GAME REPORT.....	11
6.5	UNRULY PARENTS AND SPECTATORS.....	11
6.6	REFEREE ABUSE POLICY (RAP)	11
6.7	“ONLY THE CAPTAIN” GUIDELINES	11
6.8	REFEREE NO-SHOWS.....	12

7	<u>RULES OF PLAY</u>	14
7.1	MATCH LENGTH	14
7.2	GRACE PERIOD.....	14
7.3	MINIMUM NUMBER OF PLAYERS	14
7.4	SUBSTITUTION.....	14
7.5	MERCY RULE	15
7.6	9U AND 10U DIFFERENTIAL	15
7.7	HEADING.....	15
7.8	HYDRATION BREAKS.....	15
7.9	SCORE ENTRY.....	15
7.10	STANDINGS TIE BREAKERS.....	15
8	<u>WEATHER POLICY</u>	16
8.1	WEATHER DELAY OR CANCELLATION.....	16
8.2	RAINOUT POLICY	16
8.3	CLOSED FIELDS.....	16
8.4	GCF CHAMPIONSHIP.....	16
9	<u>DISCIPLINE, PROTEST, AND APPEALS</u>	17
9.1	COACH SENDOFFS.....	17
9.2	SPECTATORS	17
9.3	RED CARDS.....	17
9.4	SERVING SUSPENSIONS.....	18
9.5	REPORTING SEND-OFFS.....	18
9.6	VIDEO USAGE	19
9.7	PROTESTS.....	19
10	<u>FORFEITED AND TERMINATED MATCHES</u>	20
10.1	STANDARD FORFEIT	20
10.2	SHORT NOTICE FORFEIT.....	20
10.3	ILLEGAL OR INELIGIBLE PLAYER FORFEIT	20
10.4	ABANDONED MATCH	20
10.5	NO CONTEST	20
11	<u>21</u>	
12	<u>FINES</u>	22
12.1	GAME RESCHEDULE AND FORFEIT FINES.....	22
12.2	RED CARDS.....	22
12.3	LATE FEE FOR INVOICES	22

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 League Overview

- General guidelines for league play are provided by FIFA Laws of the Game with adjustments based for youth soccer, FYSA Rules, and the league approved modifications herein.
- Two separate seasons are run in the Fall and the Spring. Teams register in one or both.
- Levels of play consist of Divisions 1, 2, and 3, with these available:
 - 8U-9U: choice of Local or Regional divisions to help control team travel
 - 10U-12U: Division 1, Division 2, Division 3
 - 13U-19U: Division 1, Division 2
- Game dates are scheduled on Saturdays or Sundays by GCFYSL, Club schedulers are responsible for filling the time, venue, and field number in GotSport.
- Sunday games should not be scheduled before 1 pm without both teams in agreement.
- Typically, teams will be scheduled one game each week. If deemed necessary, a second game may be scheduled on a Sunday. Teams will only be scheduled two games on the same day with agreement between the league and club.
- Game cancelation or request for reschedule must be initiated at least 10 days prior to the scheduled match (non-weather-related).
- Games may be scheduled at a neutral site to ease team travel.
- GCFYSL is an official FSPL Qualifier League, therefore the winner of Spring season Division 1 for age groups 12U-18U will receive an automatic bid to FSPL the following year
- Playoffs—At the end of the seasonal year (Spring) the top two teams from all 11U thru 19U divisions participate in the GCFYSL Championship Tournament. For divisions with East/West groupings, the top team from each group will play in the championship.
- **Spectators are required to follow the FYSA Code of Conduct.** Spectators are not allowed to enter the field pre, post or during the match. Violations of this policy can result in all spectators from the violating team being suspended for the next two GCF league matches

1.2 Declarations

- All clubs MUST provide a Point Of Contact (POC) who will be the communication liaison to the league. The POC contact information is published on the GCF website (gcfsoccer.com).
- Clubs shall be responsible for declaring teams in the appropriate age, gender, and division. Once a team is declared in a playing division they will stay in that level for the season.
- The GCFYSL reserves the right to promote or relegate teams in their age competition bracket to help ensure competitive balance.
- Clubs must have all outstanding debt settled prior to each season's start. Failure to comply will result in denial of a club's declarations for that season.
- Clubs who withdraw teams after schedules have been posted will be fined \$500 per team.

1.3 Game Day Procedures

Pre-Game

- **OPTION 1 – Digital Check-In**
 - Use the GotSport Live App to choose the game, use the + to go to the Team roster, select your team, Add Players, Add Coaches, Save and Done.
 - Find detailed instructions through GotSport support.
- **OPTION 2 – Photo Match Card**
 - Print your Photo Match Card (no passes are required). You are responsible for your own card.
 - No players may be handwritten onto the Match Card. Written names are an automatic Forfeit.
- **Home teams** prepare the Referee fees in the correct denominations (if paying by cash).

Game Day Check-In

- Check-in takes place 30 minutes prior to game kickoff.
- Teams choose their own method of check-in, Digital or Photo Match Card.
- **Digital Check-In**
 - Access the game, go to the + menu and choose **Referee check-in QR code**. Present to the referee to scan.
- **Photo Match Card**
 - Present your Photo Match Card to the referee. No passe are needed.
 - If a **Standard Match Card was printed**, passes are required (laminated or virtual). Virtual passes are allowed ONLY when shown directly from system.GotSport.com.
- Referee payment may be presented at check-in or at completion of the game.

Post-Game

- **Digital Check-in**
 - The Referee ***should*** enter the score along with any red cards issued during the match.
 - If you do not see a score within 24 hours, either team may enter it and red cards.
- **Photo Match Card**
 - BOTH teams verify the score entered and the coaches/managers initial both cards.
 - Teams exchange their photo match cards so that each has a record of players.
 - Within 24 hours, the Home team is required to use GotSport to enter the score and all red cards issued during the match. After 24 hours, the Away team may enter the score/red cards.
 - The Home team uploads the Match Card(s). Please take one photo of both cards side-by-side if possible.

2 ELIGIBILITY

2.1 Player Eligibility

- All players are required to be properly registered into FYSA through GotSport before they can participate in league activities. Players must be age verified.
- All players must have a properly laminated FYSA pass with photo and registration number or a GotSport Virtual Pass to be allowed to participate in league games. The Verification label must show. NO PASS – NO PLAY.
- **Virtual passes** MUST be displayed from the GotSport site, system.gotsport.com. No screenshots, PDFs, or photos of a pass allowed.
- **Primary1 Players:** Teams may add Primary1 players (formerly Club Pass) to their Event roster, there is no limit. Primary1 players must appear on the game day Match Card. Primary1 participation must follow FYSA rule 205.3.
- **Secondary Rostering:** A player may be rostered to multiple teams across two different affiliates at one time during a seasonal year pursuant to FYSA regulations. Secondary players must appear on the Match Card.
- **Improper Registration:** If a player participates in a game without proper registration, his/her team will automatically forfeit the game. In addition, the club and/or player may be subject to additional disciplinary action per FYSA rules or as the league may deem appropriate. The referee crew may also be subject to disciplinary action by FSR.

2.2 Coach Eligibility

- All coaches are required to be properly registered into FYSA through GotSport before they can participate in league activities.
- All coaches must have a properly laminated FYSA pass with photo and registration number or a GotSport Virtual Pass to be allowed to participate in league games.
- **Improper Registration:** If a coach participates in a game without proper registration, his/her team will automatically forfeit the game. In addition, the club or coach may be subject to additional disciplinary action per FYSA rules or as the league may deem appropriate. The referee crew may also be subject to disciplinary action by FSR.

2.3 Minimum Recommended Coach Licensing

- GCFYSL recommends all coaches hold at a minimum a US Soccer D License per the FYSA Grassroots Pathway. See fysa.com for coaching courses.

3 ROSTERING

3.1 Rosters

- Team rosters are sourced from the current FYSA registration event. All Primary players must be added there.
- Players on the FYSA roster will fill your match card.
- Primary 1 players may be added to the GCF event or the match day roster.

3.2 Digital Check-in

Digital Check-in through the GotSport Live App is now the preferred method.

- Eligible players are added to the roster prior to the match through the App.
- Players must show jersey numbers. A Lineup is optional.
- A QR code is generated and presented to the Referee for check-in.

3.3 Match Cards

- When not using Digital Check-in, the GotSport generated Match Card shall be the official game day roster of eligible players. **NO PLAYERS MAY BE HANDWRITTEN ONTO THE MATCH CARD.**
- Coaches may be added in writing by the referee upon presentation of a valid, laminated or virtual FYSA pass.
- Match Cards must contain player identification numbers. The roster player identification number must match the player identification number on the pass.
- Match Cards must display jersey numbers. See GotSport Support on how best to enter these. If no jersey numbers appear, they must be handwritten in.
- Players serving a Red Card will appear with a red strikethrough (**example**).
- Match Card Responsibility:
 - Match cards should be uploaded by the Home club after each game.
 - The home club is responsible for retaining all game reports for two calendar years. These reports must be available at the request of the GCFYSL or FYSA.

3.4 Maximum Players per Game

- Players beyond the eligible maximum per game must be deactivated in GotSport or struck through on the printed Match Card.
- The maximum number of players listed on a Match Card must follow FYSA rule 205.3.
13U-19U: Total roster size, including Primary1 players, is capped at thirty (30). Teams shall name eighteen (18) eligible players for each game. A minimum of 7 players must be listed to start the game.
11U-12U: Total roster size, including Primary1 players, is capped at twenty-five (25). Teams shall name sixteen (16) eligible players for each game. A minimum of 6 players must be listed to start the game.
8U – 10U: Total roster size, including Primary1 players, is capped at forty-five (45). Teams shall name twelve (12) eligible players for each. A minimum of 5 players must be listed to start the game.

3.5 Primary 1 & Secondary Dual Rostered Players

- An eligible Primary 1 player is one who is properly rostered to a team within the same club. There is not a limit on Primary 1 players.
- Secondary Dual Rostered Players are players that are primary with one FYSA-affiliated club and secondary within another FYSA-affiliated club in FGL. Secondary Dual Rostered Players must appear as "S" on the match card. Secondary Dual Rostered Players must be added to the team's roster in FGL by March 1, 2027, in order to participate in the FGL Playoffs.

3.6 Ineligible Players

- Players listed on the Master Roster within GotSport, but not eligible to play due to reasons such as not appearing on the official match card, not having a valid FYSA player pass, illegal substitutions, or serving a league suspension, shall be considered an ineligible player.
- Teams using players before they have been properly cleared to compete by FYSA will be subject to a forfeiture of the game(s) in which the ineligible player was used and a fine up to \$500.

4 SCHEDULING

4.1 Self-Scheduling Home Matches

The home team will be responsible for setting the kickoff times and locations for their home games only. Clubs will have two weeks from schedule release to assign all home games.

Teams must follow the Scheduling Parameters & Minimum Standards in Rule 4.3 below.

See GotSport: [As an Admin Club Self Scheduling here](#).

See GotSport: [As a Coach/Manager – How to Self Schedule here](#).

4.2 Game Schedules

All schedules will be published through GotSport and linked to gcfsoccer.com. Games must be played in accordance with the official schedule which is final when published.

4.3 Reschedule Policy

- Starting from the day of schedule release, there shall be an at least 14 day grace period for clubs to make reschedule requests to the opposing club. Every effort to oblige these requests should be made by all clubs. After the grace period, a \$25 fee may be charged for each non-weather-related game reschedule (excluding those related to an FYSA Cup).
- The initial request to reschedule must be sent to your opponent at least 10 days prior to the original scheduled date. This is in accordance with the 10-Day Rule.

10 Day Rule: All reasonable requests made 10 days or more prior to the original game date should be considered and granted if a sufficient open date for both teams is available before the conclusion of league play. If a request is made less than 10 days prior to a match, clubs are still allowed to agree to a reschedule, but the club receiving the request IS NOT obligated to grant the request (excluding weather or state cups).

- Home team coaches and managers MAY NOT reschedule any game without notifying their club's Point of Contact to guarantee proper field and referee scheduling.
- All reschedule requests must be submitted through the GotSport Game Change Request process. Submit the request after reaching agreement on the new date and time. See the GCF Handbook or gcfsoccer.com for instructions.
- All reschedule requests must be replied to within 4 days of the initial contact.
- All rescheduling requests required by a weather cancelation or advancement in State Cup, Commissioner's Cup and President's Cup must be obliged. Teams that advance in FYSA Cup events should notify their opponent's Point of Contact of upcoming scheduling conflicts immediately upon advancement.
- Requests based on convenience, lack of player or coach availability, or other preventable circumstances will only be accepted upon opponent agreement.
- If a game has been rescheduled on, or after, the Wednesday prior to game day the referee crew are to be paid for that game unless their assignor is able to place them on another game. Where referee fees are paid by the Home team and the Away team caused the reschedule, the Away team must reimburse the Home team for the fees.
- Improper handling of a request to reschedule (ex. late notice) may result in a fine or forfeit or both. An opponent may request a forfeit instead of rescheduling for an improper request. See *Section 11 Fines*.

5 FIELD, EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORMS

5.1 Fields

9U and 10U

Field size	shall be 55 to 65 yards long x 35 to 45 yards wide
Build Out Lines	Build Out Lines shall mark 1/3 the length of the overall field size and be physically painted in either an alternate color or dashed lines so that it is unique from other field markings, specifically the halfway line
Goal Size	shall be maximum 6.5 feet high x 18.5 feet wide
Goal Area	shall be 8 yards x 4 yards
Penalty Area	shall be 24 yards x 12 yards, with the penalty spot 10 yards from the goal line
Center Circle	shall be 8 yards radius
Halfway Line	Not applicable

11U and 12U

Field size	shall be 70-80 yards long x 45 to 55 yards wide
Goal Size	shall be maximum 7 feet high x 21 feet wide
Goal Area	shall be 12 yards x 5 yards
Penalty Area	shall be 36 yards x 14 yards, with the penalty spot 10 yards from the goal line
Center Circle	shall be 8 yards radius
Halfway Line	shall be marked across the field equidistant from each goal line

13U through 19U

Field size	shall be 100 to 130 yards long x 50 to 100 yards wide
Goal Size	maximum 8 feet high x 24 feet wide
Goal Area	shall be 20 yards wide x 6 yards deep
Penalty Area	shall be 44 yards x 18 yards with the penalty spot 12 yards from the goal line
Center Circle	shall be 10 yards radius
Halfway Line	shall be marked across the field equidistant from each goal line

- **Line Markings:** all ages are not to be more than 5 inches wide.
- **Corner Arcs:** 9U thru 12U are to be 2-foot radius. All other ages are 3 feet.
- The designated home team will be responsible for the condition of the grounds and proper field markings in accordance with the published schedule.
- The home team is responsible for providing the game balls, but it is the responsibility of both teams to have an appropriate game ball. The referee is responsible for the selection of the game ball. Ball Sizes are: 9U thru 12U = size 4; 13U thru 19U = size 5. Per the new US Soccer recommendation, 13U may use a size 4 ball if both coaches agree.
- **Goal nets are mandatory.** Lack of goal nets will be cause to award forfeiture to the visiting team. It will be the discretion of the referee if the nets are sufficiently ready for the game to be played.
- **Goals must be properly anchored.** The game will not start until the referees have determined that both goals are safe to be used. Any club and/or referee that is caught playing a game with unsecured goals will be subject to disciplinary action by the league and possibly FYSA. Any allegations should be filed with the GCFYSL Vice President.

- **Corner flags are required.** A flag post 5 feet high with a non-pointed top and a flag must be placed at each corner. No cones, bicycle flags, or other markers are permitted, unless no other option is available. It is the discretion of the referee to start the game using any other items. A Supplemental Game Report must be filed by the referee with the GCFYSL Vice President if any other items are used.
- The center referee is the sole judge as to the playability of the field, except when the field's complex supervisors (city or county, etc.) determine that the fields are unplayable.
- When a lightning detector is active at a field or complex, all parties are to adhere to its warnings and leave the field immediately to a safe place, preferably their cars, until the lightning detector has sounded that it is safe to return to the fields.

5.2 Technical Area

- Coaching from the team's Technical Area is permitted for the purpose of instruction and encouragement of the players. NO DEROGATORY REMARKS TO PLAYERS, OTHER COACHES, REFEREES, PARENTS, OR CLUB OFFICIALS WILL BE TOLERATED. Referees and Field Marshals have the authority to request that the coach remove any person from the area in sight of the playing field or complex.
- The coaching staff, substitutes, and substituted players must remain in their team's Technical Area while the game is in progress. When lined, the Technical Area shall comply with FIFA Laws of the Game #1. When unmarked, it will be deemed one (1) yard from the bench and one (1) yard off of the touchline and within 15 feet of the bench.
- The Technical Areas will be on the opposite side of the field from the spectators' side. **No person is allowed in the Technical Area without a proper FYSA pass** and shall be limited to the coach, no more than two assistant coaches and players. Players serving red cards are allowed to be on the bench, but not in uniform.

5.3 Build Out Line (9u & 10U)

As established in the USSF Player Development initiatives, Build Out lines are mandatory for 7v7 play. The build out line is used to promote playing out of the back in an unpressured setting.

On a goal kick, a defensive free kick inside the penalty area, or when the goalkeeper has possession of the ball with their hands:

- the opposing team must move behind the build-out line until the ball is put back into play.
- the goalkeeper can pass, throw, or roll the ball to put it back into play (punts and drop kicks are not allowed).
- the opposing team may cross the build-out line when:
 - The goalkeeper changes possession from their hand to play the ball with their feet, or
 - a second touch is made by another player on the goalkeeper's team, or
 - the ball comes to a complete stop, or
 - the ball crosses the buildout line

5.4 Unplayable Fields

For self-scheduled (Home/Away) matches, if a field is deemed unplayable or unsafe by the referee due to something other than weather or emergency, the match will be deemed a forfeit for the host team. Examples include: no lines painted, damaged goal equipment, severely damaged field surface not caused by weather.

5.5 Uniforms

- The home team shall wear white or light-colored jerseys and socks matching jerseys. The visiting team shall wear dark colored jerseys and socks that match the jerseys.
- When colors of competing teams are identical or similar, the designated home team must change to colors distinctive from their opponent. Visiting teams MAY NOT intentionally wear their white/light kits to force the home team to change.
- It is the sole discretion of the referee as to the color of the uniforms being appropriate to play the game.
- The uniform, or jersey, of the goalkeepers must be distinctly different in color from the basic colors of both competing teams.
- Players' uniform numbers are to be affixed to the back of the uniform shirt. No two players from the same team may have the same numbered jersey.

5.6 Cast and/or Braces

- Players wearing an orthopedic cast shall not be eligible to participate in any game. Orthopedic braces may be worn only if they are soft and with no hard parts. For players wearing an orthopedic brace, a doctor's written permission is required to play, and this document must be made available to game officials/referees upon request.
- All items of jewelry (necklaces, rings, bracelets, earrings, leather bands, rubber bands, etc.) are forbidden and must be removed. Using tape to cover jewelry is not permitted.
- The referee has the final decision.

6 REFEREES

6.1 Referee Fees

Clubs may not alter the referee fees unless authorized by the GCFYSL. The referees' fees for all sanctioned games shall be:

Group	Total	Center	AR 1	AR 2
9U/10U if no ARs	\$55	\$55	N/A	N/A
9U/10U with ARs	\$95	\$45	\$25	\$25
11U/12U	\$115	\$55	\$30	\$30
13U/14U	\$135	\$65	\$35	\$35
15U/16U	\$155	\$75	\$40	\$40
17U - 19U	\$175	\$85	\$45	\$45

If a game has been rescheduled on, or after, Wednesday prior to game day, the referees are to be paid for that game unless their assignor is able to place them on another game.

6.2 Home/Away Swap

If the home team's fields are unplayable or unavailable for any reason, and the listed visiting team has fields available for the game date and time, teams may switch the fixture with the mutual consent of both teams. The originally designated home team is still responsible for the referee payment. The original away team becomes the host team.

6.3 Check-In

- Referees are to receive the required GCF Match Card from the Home team and perform a check-in to see that all players are properly equipped, appear on the Match Card roster and have a legal player pass. If the Away team has a more recently printed Match Card, it may be used for check-in (see the timestamp at the top).
- Players MUST NOT be written onto the Match Card .
- The referee must document on the Match Card any attending coaches who are not listed.
- Late arrivals – a player who arrives late may be added to a game at any time, given they have a pass and are on the match card.
- All passes will be held by the referee and given back at the end of the game, except in the instances of Referee Abuse or Referee Assault. The referee will keep the player or coach pass and contact the GCF Vice President, 2ndvp@gcfsoccer.com.
- In cases of coach's challenges of player credentials, the referee must examine the pass, player photo and roster. Referees must file a supplemental report on the challenge.
- Players greater than the maximum allowed must be crossed off. See *Rule 3.3 Maximum Players per Game*.
- The referee shall not start any game if a team has fewer than:
 - 9U and 10U — Five (5) eligible players including a goalkeeper.
 - 11U and 12U — Six (6) eligible players including a goalkeeper.
 - 13U thru U19 — Seven (7) eligible players including a goalkeeper.

6.4 Supplemental Game Report

- The Supplemental Game Report is located on the GCF website at gcfsoccer.com.
- If a player or coach receives a red card, the referee **MUST** submit a Supplemental Game Report within 48 hours of the game by email to redcard@gcfsoccer.com.
- The referee should also file a Supplemental Game Report for any unusual situations such as serious injuries, game stoppages, "no-shows", etc.
- The only time that you will be asked to mail the report is for referee abuse in which you will send the player/coaches pass along with the report to the GCF VP.

6.5 Unruly Parents and Spectators

- **NO PARENTS ARE ALLOWED ON THE PLAYER SIDE OF THE FIELD AT ANY TIME FOR ANY REASON!** Only players and coaches with proper FYSA passes may be on the player side of the field, along with referees. If a parent needs to get any item to a player they must give it to a person with a proper FYSA pass.
- Referee's **MUST NOT** engage unruly parents. The referee **MUST** go to the coach first, not the spectator. If the referee goes to the spectator, there will be no discipline to the coach, and the referee may be subject to an FSR discipline.
- When a game is stopped by the referee because of an unruly spectator:
 - The referee may ask the coach to issue a warning to the unruly spectator.
 - If the referee asks the coach to remove the unruly spectator:
 - Coach asks the unruly spectator to leave and the unruly spectator complies, then the game continues and no discipline to coach.
 - Coach asks the unruly spectator to leave and the unruly spectator refuses, the game is a forfeit and no discipline to the coach.
 - Coach refuses to ask the unruly spectator to leave, in violation of FYSA Policy, the game is forfeited and the GCFYSL will suspend the coach for 2 games and fine the coach \$200, for the first violation. For each violation thereafter, the suspension and fine are doubled.
- Following the match, the referee **MUST** file a Supplemental Game Report with the details of the unruly spectator's and coach's actions. Upon review, further action may be taken by the Club, GCF, and/or FYSA.

6.6 Referee Abuse Policy (RAP)

U.S. Soccer's updated Referee Abuse Prevention Policy (RAP), Policy 531-9, effective March 2025, establishes stricter consequences for both physical and non-physical abuse of referees in youth and amateur soccer matches, aiming to foster a more respectful and safer environment by providing clearer definitions and a standardized penalty matrix for violations. The policy emphasizes a zero-tolerance approach, encouraging all participants - players, coaches, parents, and spectators—to treat referees with empathy and dignity, as they are essential to the game. For more information and penalties contact your Club or refer to the [Florida Soccer Referees - Referee Abuse Prevention page here](#).

6.7 “Only the Captain” Guidelines

Stronger collaboration between the referee and the team captains can help instill fairness and mutual respect. So that the referee can explain key decisions, only the captains will be allowed to approach the referee, provided that they do so respectfully. It will be the

responsibility of each captain to ensure that their team-mates remain a reasonable distance from the referee and do not interfere in the interaction between the referee and the team captain(s).

- Normal interactions between players and the referee are allowed and remain important (to promote transparency and avoid possible frustration and conflict)
- Any player (including the captain) who shows dissent by word or action will be cautioned (yellow card)
- The referee can initiate the 'only the captain' guidelines by blowing the whistle and using the following signal: 1) raising both arms above their head and crossing them at the wrists and 2) uncrossing their arms and moving them in front of their body with their palms open in a forward pushing motion to indicate that the players must not approach.
- A captain-only zone will then extend for 4 m (4.5 yds) around the referee.
- Where appropriate, the referee may move away from the players to create the captain-only zone.
- No player is permitted to enter the captain-only zone except each team's captain, who should wear an identifying armband.
- The captain has a degree of responsibility for encouraging team-mates to respect the captain-only zone and remain at least 4 m (4.5 yds) away from the referee.
- If one player other than the captain enters the captain-only zone, the offender should be cautioned (YC) for dissent by action.
- If more than one player from a team enters the captain-only zone, at least one player must be cautioned (YC) – this will usually be the first unauthorized player to enter the captain-only zone or the player whose approach is most aggressive.
- Any incident in which more than one unauthorized player from a team enters the captain-only zone must be reported to the appropriate authorities after the match.

When the captain is the goalkeeper

- Where the goalkeeper is the captain, the referee must be told, no later than at the coin toss before kick-off, which player is nominated to approach the referee instead of the goalkeeper
- Only the goalkeeper or the nominated player, not both, may approach the referee
- If the nominated player is substituted or sent off, another player must be nominated

6.8 Referee No-Shows

If the home club properly assigned a full certified referee crew through a certified USSF assignor and one or more certified referees fail to appear, the following procedures apply:

15-Minute Grace Period

- Teams shall wait 15 minutes past the scheduled kickoff time for missing referees to arrive. During this period, the home club must attempt to contact the missing referee and the referee assignor.
- If the missing referee provides an estimated time of arrival (ETA), the match may begin, and the late arriving referee will assume their duties at the next natural stoppage pursuant to the procedures below.

If One or Two Referee Fails to Appear (one or two referees present)

- If at least one (1) certified referee is present after the 15-minute grace period, the 7v7 and 9v9 matches must be played. The 11v11 matches can be played with one referee if both teams agree. Failure to agree refer to (d) below.
- If the center referee is missing, the most senior assistant referee will serve as the center referee.
- This referee will remain the center referee for the entirety of the match, regardless of whether the original center arrives.

Neutral Club Linesmen (chosen by the Away team)

- If one or two club linesman are needed:
 - The away team shall select the neutral individual(s) to serve as the club linesman.
 - The neutral individual must be an adult not rostered to either team as a player or coach.
- The neutral individual(s) shall:
 - Only signal when the ball is in or out of play (no offside or foul decisions).
 - The center referee is advised to favor the neutral club linesman's half (to the best of their ability) for offside and foul decisions.

If Referee Crew Fails to Appear (zero referees present) after the 15-minute grace period:

- The match shall be rescheduled.
- The home team will travel for the rescheduled match.
- The home team will pay all referee fees for the rescheduled match.
- If the home team fails to reschedule the match they will forfeit the original game.
- Coaches/team managers should agree to the reschedule before leaving the field.

Fines

If the home club can show proof that all referees were properly assigned, no referee-related fines apply, and the home club only pays the officials who worked the match.

Reporting Requirement

The home club must submit a report via email to the League within 24 hours noting:

- Which referees were assigned
- Which referees appeared
- Any attempted communication with missing referees

7 RULES OF PLAY

7.1 Match Length

- The length of each match will be the approved length for each age bracket as determined by FYSA and US Youth Soccer.
 - 9U and 10U: two 25-minute halves
 - 11U and 12U: two 30-minute halves
 - 13U and 14U: two 35-minute halves
 - 15U and 16U: two 40-minute halves
 - 17U thru 19U: two 45-minute halves
- Halftime intermission will be 10 minutes for all age brackets.
- There will be a 1-minute rehydration break halfway through each half of all age bracketed games. The clock will not stop during the break.

7.2 Grace Period

Teams without the minimum required players (seven) will be allowed a fifteen (15) minute grace period from the scheduled kick-off time before the match will be deemed a forfeit. All credentials must be checked and verified prior to the start time while waiting for the additional players to show. At the league's discretion, extended time may be granted for unforeseen circumstances.

7.3 Minimum Number of Players

Teams may begin play with the minimum number of players for their age group, and at no time may the number of players on the field drop below that minimum. The addition of late-arriving players on the official roster will take place with the permission of the Referee and during regular legal substitution periods. The opposing team may play at full strength.

- 13U-19U: A minimum of 7 players must be listed to start the game.
- 11U-12U: A minimum of 6 players must be listed to start the game.
- 8U – 10U: A minimum of 5 players must be listed to start the game.

7.4 Substitution

- There will be unlimited substitutions at any stoppage of play. All substitutions are at the referee's discretion. All substitutes are to be at the midfield line before the stoppage of play. Substitutions from the bench are prohibited except when substituting for an injured player.
- Players arriving after the match has begun may enter the game at any proper substitution time during the first half only after the referee has checked their equipment, player pass, and FYSA roster.
- When play is stopped for an injured player:
 - The injured player must leave the field when treated by coaching/medical personnel on the field. When medical attention is not needed, the injured player does not have to leave the field.
 - If an injured player leaves the field they can be replaced by a teammate. The opposing team may not substitute at this time. If the injured player's team wishes to substitute other players at this time then the opposing team may substitute as well.
 - Injured players may return to the game at the next regular stoppage in play, AND at the referee's discretion.

- In the case of a goalkeeper injury where coach/medical staff enter the field of play, the keeper does not have to leave the field of play provided the coach/medical staff approve of their continued play.

7.5 Mercy Rule

There is no mercy rule for all GCFYSL matches regardless of goal differential.

7.6 9U and 10U Differential

At any time a 6-goal differential is reached the leading team must reduce the players on the field to 6. The leading team must continue to play short until the goal differential reduces to 4 at which time the match may return to 7v7. If the match goal differential is 8 or greater a Supplemental Game Report must be filed with GCF. This is to assure that the “play down” procedure was executed properly.

7.7 Heading

Players under 11 years old shall not be placed onto a team in a heading division. Even if allowed through GotSport roster builder.

Heading restrictions follow FYSA Rule 211 paraphrased below for game play:

- All Players age 10 years of age and under shall not head the ball directly from the air in any match or competition.
- Players age 11 and age 12 shall be permitted to head the ball in any match or competition.
- Players age 13 and older shall be permitted to head the ball in any match or competition.

7.8 Hydration Breaks

- In any FYSA sanctioned match, a break will be given at the midpoint of each half of regulation time and at the end of each overtime period (if played) for player hydration.
- This break will be given at a normal stoppage of play, and it is mandatory for any FYSA sanctioned match during which the air temperature is or is expected to reach eighty-five degrees (85°F). This break will be a maximum of one (1) minute of time.
- For additional USSF environmental guidelines visit [recognizetorecover.org/environmental](https://www.recognizetorecover.org/environmental)

7.9 Score Entry

- The home club is responsible for reporting the result of a GCFYSL game in GotSport. If a score is not reported within 24 hours, the visiting club may report the result.
- At the conclusion of the season, if any game's result has not been posted to GotSport, the game will be considered un-played and both teams are subject to a \$150 fine.
- All games deemed as a forfeit by the GCFYSL shall be entered as a 4-0 result.

7.10 Standings Tie Breakers

1. Head to Head - If two teams are tied on points, the head to head tiebreaker takes the best won-lost-tied percentage in games between the two (2) tied teams
2. Goal Differential (using GD limit +/- 4 per game)
3. Goals For (using GF limit 0 per game)
4. Goals Against (using GA limit 0 per game)
5. Most Shutouts
6. Least Red Cards

8 WEATHER POLICY

8.1 Weather Delay or Cancellation

- Referees and Teams must wait a minimum of one hour before canceling a match due to weather.
- In the event the start of a game is delayed due to weather, the referee shall have the option of shortening the length of each half equally to maintain the field schedule. The coaches shall be notified prior to the start of the game.
- After the game has begun, the referee shall remain the arbiter of any decision regarding inclement weather that arises including unsafe field conditions. When the game has been stopped due to lightning, the game cannot be restarted until 30 minutes has passed from the last detected lightning.

8.2 Rainout Policy

The game had started but had NOT reached the half: The game shall be replayed in full provided that both teams find a mutual agreed upon date. The new date must be agreed within 7 days. The rescheduled game shall commence with a score of 0-0, regardless of the score at the time of cancellation of the original game.

The game started and was played to half-time: Games that have been started and subsequently suspended due to inclement weather will be deemed complete if one-half of the play has been completed. The score at the time of the suspension will be the final score.

Game not started: Any games canceled prior to commencement due to weather conditions shall be rescheduled as soon as possible.

8.3 Closed Fields

The Home Club is responsible for notifying the League when fields are closed due to weather conditions. Notifications must be sent to GCFYSL at admin@gcfsoccer.com.

8.4 GCF Championship

If weather stops a game from beginning, and there is no possibility of a make-up date, then a winner will be determined by a coin toss.

Referee crews assigned to consecutively scheduled playoff games will be paid for the first game canceled when approval has been granted by the League President for cancellation of the remaining games scheduled for a given field on that date.

9 DISCIPLINE, PROTEST, AND APPEALS

9.1 Coach Sendoffs

- Coach Sendoffs — Coaches that have been red carded and sent off must leave the view of the field. Any person who takes over coaching for a sent off coach must have a legal FYSA pass from the same club. They DO NOT have to appear on the GCF Match card but must be written in by the referee.
- Coach Serving — A coach that is serving their suspension CANNOT be at the field where the team that they were coaching when sent off is playing. The coach should be marked as serving on the match card and a copy of the card sent to redcard@gcfsoccer.com.
- Coaches violating Fair Play practices by allowing their teams to “run up” scores in multiple GCFYSL games are subject to a minimum 2 game suspension and \$200 fine.

9.2 Spectators

- The coach is responsible for the behavior of his/her team parents. See Rule 7.4 *Unruly Parents and Spectators*.
- Spectators shall abide by the FYSA Conduct.
- Spectators are to be on the opposite side of the field from the players and at least three yards off of the touchline so to give players and assistant referee's room to operate.
- No spectators are allowed to sit or stand behind the goals or the endlines.
- No tobacco or alcohol shall be consumed or dispersed by spectators on or around the field of play, before, during or after the game.
- No firearms or weapons shall be permitted on or around the field of play, before, during or after the game.
- No noise makers, whistles, horns, cowbells, etc., are allowed.
- Spectators will be told to leave the field if they are yelling derogatory comments to any participants on the field, other parents or coaches.

9.3 Red Cards

- Any player receiving a red card is automatically suspended from their next FYSA sanctioned match regardless of notification of discipline from the GCFYSL or FYSA. Players may be suspended from additional games by the GCFYSL or FYSA. The fine will be \$50 for Double-Yellow (DY) or DGSO, or \$100 for all others paid by the club or player.
- Any coach receiving a red card from a GCFYSL game is automatically suspended from their next two (2) FYSA sanctioned matches regardless of notification of discipline from the GCFYSL or FYSA. Coaches may be suspended from additional games by the GCFYSL or FYSA. The fine will be \$100 for Double Yellow (DY) or \$200 for all others paid by the club or coach.
- The player or coach will be suspended in GotSport (redlined) until the Red Card is served and the fine paid. To be released to play the player or coach must:
 1. Pay the Red Card fee or have their Club do so. The fee is paid online through the GotSport Red Card Fee Form. See the Red Cards page on the GCF website.
 2. Serve the red card by sitting out the required number of games. The Match Card for the game MUST be marked as served by the referee and uploaded with the score.

Players are allowed to be on the bench, but not in uniform. Coaches are NOT allowed at the bench.

9.4 Serving Suspensions

- Players and coaches cannot participate in any League or Tournament games until all suspensions are served
- Players can serve League Games Suspensions in any FYSA-sanctioned tournament
- Player must serve with their primary team, even if the suspension was received while playing as a “club pass player” or “guest player”. Players cannot “guest play” or “club pass play” until all games are served.
- Coach must serve with team suspension was earned, cannot coach any other team game until all games are served. Suspended coaches may have NO contact with the team on the field, before, during, or after the match at the game site. (out of sight and sound of the game)
- Coaches may not be in the vicinity of the field for the match when serving a red card suspension.
- If no more competition remains with that team, the coach can serve a game with another team they were already rostered to, but no more than one game per day.
- Players serving a red card suspension do not need to be included in the 18-player Game Day Roster.
- Players do not need to be present at the match to serve a red card suspension.
- Players/coaches must show proof of serving a red card suspension on the Game Report by documenting it using at least one of the following methods:
- The player/coach is crossed off with a red line or by hand on the official Game Report and initiated by the referee, who is clearly readable on the Match Card.
 - The referee makes a note on the official Game Report stating the name of the player/coach serving a red card suspension.
 - It is clearly noted by the referee that the player/coach was not checked in and is not part of the game day roster on the official Game Report.
 - A separate Sit-Out form is filled out, signed, and sent in.
- For purposes of this documentation, use of the word scheduled is not intended to mean “scheduled to work off the suspension.”
- The player or coach is suspended until the Red Card is served and, if applicable, the fine paid.
- FORFEITS - You can serve a red card suspension in a game that was forfeited in your favor. You cannot serve a suspension in a game your team forfeited.

9.5 Reporting Send-Offs

All red cards must be reported on the Match Report by the referee and recorded on GotSport by the Home Team.

The player card of the “sent off” player will be collected by the Referee, used in completing the Match Report, and returned to the team coach or team official after the conclusion of the match. If a player is sent off for Violent Conduct, Spitting, or Abusive Language, referees must fill out and submit a US Soccer Supplemental Report.

9.6 Video Usage

- Video sent to the GCFYSL for the purpose of alerting us to a certain situation, or certain plays, is permitted as long as it is understood that the board's decision will be final. Video can only be used to determine the length of suspension in the case of a red card. Video can only be sent by a club's official representative. Not by a parent.
- Videos will not be used during a game by referee's, coaches, or club representatives to determine the outcome of a play.

9.7 Protests

For games played under protest, a written report must be forwarded to vp@gcfsoccer.com within 48 hours of the game. The report must contain the essential facts of the case and the basis on which the protest is submitted. In addition, the referee must be notified of the protest not later than the end of the game. No protest may be filed after the games' final whistle by the referee. Protests will be resolved by the League's Board of Representatives. The respective clubs shall be notified of the time of the protest hearing, and have the option to attend. The protest must be heard within 30 days of the filed protest.

10 FORFEITED AND TERMINATED MATCHES

10.1 Standard Forfeit

A game is considered a Forfeit when a team notifies the opposing team and the Florida Girls League at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled start of the match that they will be failing to show. For games that are classified in this manner, the opponent of the violating team will be awarded a 4-0 win.

10.2 Short Notice Forfeit

A Short Notice Forfeit is a game in which a team fails to show for a scheduled match without at least 72 hours' notice. A team that fails to appear for a duly scheduled match without a minimum 72-hour notice to both the opponent and Florida Girls League Manager shall be fined up to \$500 per match plus referee fees and field cost. The opponent of the violating team will be awarded a 4-0 win.

10.3 Illegal or Ineligible Player Forfeit

Any team that is found using an "Illegal" or "Ineligible" player per Rules 2.2 and 3.3 will be fined up to \$500 per match, and the final score shall be 4-0 in favor of the opposing team.

10.4 Abandoned Match

When a game is abandoned due to inappropriate actions by players, team personnel/coaches, or spectators, the team found to be at fault will be assessed a 0-4 loss and may be fined up to \$500. Any persons who are identified as contributing to the termination of a match may be subject to FYSA Code of Ethics violations. When the situation causing the abandonment is such that league officials cannot assign responsibility, no points will be awarded, and the match will be marked as a "No Contest."

10.5 No Contest

No Contest is a match that is not played or terminated where both teams or neither team is at fault. A match that is labeled a "No Contest" may be rescheduled at the discretion of the League.

NOTE: All Forfeit fines are donated to the GCFYSL Scholarship Fund.

11

12 FINES

12.1 Game Reschedule and Forfeit Fines

All fines will be administered by the Treasurer. Each club's GCFYSL account will be invoiced and processed. Requests due to weather or FYSA state tournaments are not included.

OPPONENT AGREES TO RESCHEDULE	
Timing of Request	Fine
10 days or more from the original schedule	\$25 Reschedule Fee paid by the requesting team
Less than 10 days from original schedule	\$50 fine
After noon on Wednesday prior to a weekend match	\$50 fine and must cover the referee fees if not canceled in time

OPPONENT DOES NOT AGREE TO RESCHEDULE	
Timing of Request	Fine
At any point	Team must play the game or submit a forfeit. Referee fees must be paid if not canceled in time. Forfeit Fee applies (may be waived if circumstances warrant).

CANCELLATIONS	
Timing of Request	Fine
Cancellation within 48 hours of game	\$250 fine
No call, No show	\$500 fine

UNPLAYED GAMES	
Forfeit Fee	\$200
Make-up games not played	\$150

12.2 Red Cards

All red card fines will be paid by the carded coach/player or their club through the GotSport Red Card online payment form. It is the club's responsibility to be reimbursed from the offending player or coach.

RED CARD FEES	
Player Double Yellow (DY) or Deny Goal Scoring Opportunity (DGSO)	\$50
Player all other offences	\$100
Coach Double Yellow (DY)	\$100
Coach all other offences	\$200

12.3 Late Fee for Invoices

- 30 days late — 10% of the invoice amount
- 60 days late — 20% of the invoice amount