



Markham Soccer Club House League Playing Rules

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Markham Soccer Club House League Playing Rules

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Markham Soccer Club House League Playing Rules

1. OVERVIEW

1.1 *Philosophy*

The Markham Soccer Club recreational programs are intended to provide an opportunity for players and coaches to enjoy developing, playing and coaching in a well-balanced, fun environment which promotes sportsmanship and development over competition and winning. The club attempts to balance all recreational youth teams to provide fair and equal competition to the greatest degree possible. It must be recognized that this cannot provide a guarantee of totally balanced teams as many factors come into play. In the end some teams will win and others will lose. The mix of players, the skill of the coach, the commitment and effort on the part of coach and players all influence the results. Something as simple as losing a strong player after the start of the season can have a significant impact. It isn't possible to plan for, or adjust for, all of the variables that can affect a team's results.

Coaches are expected to do the best they can with the situation as it unfolds. Players are not affected as much by winning or losing as by the attitude shown towards it by coaches and parents. There are many examples of very happy and well-motivated teams who did not win many games. There are also many examples of teams who started out losing and, through hard work and a positive attitude progressed dramatically. In fact, those are the teams and the seasons you often remember the best.

The Club uses an approach to balancing teams which has been employed quite successfully over many seasons. Once teams are established and start their season, our approach is to leave them alone and to avoid re-balancing to fix perceived problems, especially after the third week. In our experience, making changes after the start of the season can cause as many problems as it solves. Players start to bond quite quickly and take on a team identity. They often do not react well to being switched to another team. It is generally pretty difficult to do more than very minor adjustments in any case. Otherwise the solution for one team becomes a new problem for another.

These rules are intended to cover all of the situations and questions which can arise with respect to the conduct of games within the Markham Soccer Club's internal House League system. As we make changes or come across situations not anticipated or completely explained in the rules, this document is updated. If you find that any part of this document is incomplete, poorly explained or misleading, please let us know.

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1.2 General Rules for Club House League

The general rules that follow apply to all MSC house leagues (i.e. those run entirely within the Club). The Markham Soccer Club uses the FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) playing rules with the modifications and additions noted in this document. **These rules apply to indoor and outdoor leagues with any specific rules for either of these noted.** See **Appendix A** for a link to the FIFA Laws and when any changes come into effect for the MSC.

1.2.1 AGE GROUPS

Age groups for House League play shall be at the discretion of the Club with the objective of accommodating the maximum number of players and aligning with interlocking or district leagues outside the Club in which our teams may be participating.

1.2.2 REGISTRATION, ATTENDANCE, AND SPECIAL REQUESTS

Club rules around registration, attendance, withdrawals, and special requests are detailed on the website FAQs and within the registration process itself.

1.2.3 MOVING PLAYERS TO AN OLDER AGE GROUP

Players will normally be assigned to a house league division based on their age being within the age range for a specific division.

Under the following circumstances, a house league player may be asked or allowed to move to a higher age division:

- a) No more room in the normal age division but room available in the higher age group.
- b) Players eligible for the higher-level division have had adequate opportunity to register and it appears quite certain that there will not be sufficient registrants in the proper age group to complete those teams.
- c) The House League Director, based on evaluation by the coaches, is satisfied that this player is capable of playing effectively at the higher level.
- d) The player (if 18 or over) or his/her parents or legal guardians are agreeable.
- e) If the player has already been assigned to a team in the proper age group, the house league director and convenor agree that appropriate adjustments can be made.

Playing up is totally at the discretion of the Club and is intended to address the Club's requirement to have an adequate number of players in each division.

A player is not normally allowed to play in a lower age group. This would only be allowed if the Board deemed this to be a special case and if the Ontario Soccer Association policies permitted it.

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1.2.4 PLAYERS' EQUIPMENT

- b) All players must wear regulation soccer boots or running shoes. For indoor play, only smooth-soled soccer shoes or running shoes are allowed (no cleats or spikes).
- c) Shin guards completely covered by socks are MANDATORY for all players in games and practices. There will be no exceptions. Players not wearing shin guards will be sent off the field of play until they are properly equipped.
- d) Goalkeepers must wear a shirt which is distinctly different in colour from the other players of both teams.
- e) Referees are instructed to follow FIFA Law 4 (The Players' Equipment) and interpretations of it by the Ontario Soccer Association (OSA) and Canadian Soccer Association (CSA). These cover such items as jewellery, headgear, and other equipment. For details, see the Referee page of the Club's website.
- f) Players will be allowed to play with casts, knee braces and similar aids and protective equipment as long as there is no apparent danger to the wearer or other players, in the opinion of the referee. Wrist casts should be wrapped in foam rubber or cloth. Coaches should obviously use good judgment in determining if a player is ready to play, and if such protective aids are safe. If in doubt, it is best to err on the side of caution.

1.2.5 BALL SIZE

- a) A size #3 ball shall be used for U3 to U7 Divisions.
- b) A size #4 ball shall be used for U8 to U12 Divisions.
- c) A size #5 ball shall be used for all other divisions.

1.2.6 COACHES

- a) Teams (players and coaches) will take up position on the opposite side of the field from the spectators wherever possible. Both teams should be on the same side of the field. No coach, player, or spectator should be behind the goal lines.
- b) During a game, all coaches and assistants are to restrict their movements to an area along each touchline and on their respective side of the centre line (i.e. team bench side) and are not permitted to cross over the centre line into the opponent's half of the field. There will be no coaching from behind either goal line or the opposite touchline.
- c) All players, coaches and spectators must stay back 2 metres (2 yards) from the touchline (subject to space restrictions indoors).

NOTE: These rules apply to indoor and outdoor leagues and for divisions U8 and above.

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1.2.7 GAME SHEETS

- a) An approved game sheet shall be provided by the designated home team (normally the first team listed). This single game sheet shall be completed by both coaches and include all of the requested information. The information must be printed and provided in full. Coaches may not fill out separate sheets and submit them both.
- b) In the event that a game sheet is not submitted for a game, or the one submitted is not legible, the game will be recorded as null with no points awarded for those divisions that do publish results.
- c) Where multi-part game sheets are used, the top (best) copy must be submitted to the Club (no matter what it says on the game sheet itself).
- d) The referee is responsible for delivery of the game sheet to the Club Office within 24 hours. If the game is officiated by someone other than an assigned referee (e.g. coach, parent, etc.), the winning team, or the home team in the event of a tie game, is responsible for delivery of the game sheet to the Club Office.
- e) For all divisions, the referee is responsible for obtaining from the coaches the jersey number of absent players and noting them on the game sheet. He/she must also identify called-up players on the game sheet by writing "call-up" beside their name or marking their name in the call-up section of the game sheet.

1.2.8 EQUAL PLAY RULES

- a) *Rule #1: Equal Play in a Game:* Each player must play an equal amount of the game, to the greatest degree possible, except in a case where the Club has accepted a written parental request to play for a lesser period or in situations where a player becomes injured or ill during a game. This is the basis of the "equal play" rule. Simply stated, the "equal play" rule means that:
 - Every player must be given an equal amount of playing time in individual games, to the greatest degree possible.
 - No player in a given game may be taken off and replaced with a substitute for a second (or third or fourth ...) time unless all other players on that team have already been off at least as many times as that player.
- b) *Rule #2: Equal Play Across the Season:* Every player must be given an equal amount of playing time across an entire season, to the greatest degree possible.
- c) It is the coach's responsibility to monitor playing time carefully and ensure that both rules are rigorously followed. As well as monitoring playing time during a game, the coach must ensure that playing time is balanced across games throughout the season (taking into account vacations and other absences) and that no player is sitting out more or less often than any others.

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- d) The Club will monitor equal play and take action if a coach appears to be violating the equal play rules.
- e) These equal play rules apply to all MSC House League games, including regular season games, playoff games, final games and overtime.
- f) The goalkeeper is subject to the same equal play requirement as all other players.
- g) The coach may change the keeper at every substitution. Any substitutions made during a half (i.e., while the clock is still running) are allowed at the referee's discretion, with the proviso that this is done quickly and does not extend the time needed to make substitutions.
- h) The goalkeeper need not be changed during the game if this is not necessary to meet equal-play requirements (e.g., a team is playing with less than a full complement of players and some players must play the entire game). It is advisable however, to use a variety of players in goal rather than play the same few players in goal all of the time.
- i) The referees must record, before the start of each period, the shirt numbers of the respective team players who are on the sidelines for each period. It is the referee's responsibility to verify that Equal Play Rule #1 is being properly observed during a game. The substitution information must be included on the game sheet by the referee before it is submitted to the club.
- j) If players arrive late, leave early, or sit off extra periods due to injury or illness, these players should be recorded as being on the sidelines for any periods when they are not on the field (even if they are not physically on the sidelines), and details must be recorded on the game sheet. For such players, the coach should attempt to provide these players with the same playing time as the other players on the team, to the extent possible, but any shortage of playing time caused by these documented reasons will not be considered to be a violation of Equal Play Rule #1.
- k) If the referee or the opposing coach detects that Equal Play Rule #1 is being violated during a game, the offending coach will be notified immediately and play will not recommence until the situation is rectified. Once a game sheet is signed by both coaches, unless a substitution concern is noted directly on the game sheet, protests regarding Equal Play Rule #1 will not be considered. For this reason, game sheets should be signed after the game is completed. (Note: this does not prevent the Club from following up on an issue directly with the offending coach – as discussed below).
- l) Potential violations of Equal Play Rule #2 cannot be dealt with during a game, as the referee is not in a position to determine if a violation has occurred during the course of the season. Complaints about violation of Equal Play Rule #2 should be referred to the appropriate League Director for investigation.
- m) In the event that it comes to the attention of the appropriate League Director that either or both of the equal play rules have not been adhered to (whether through protest, as noted on the signed game sheet, or through review of the game sheets),

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the coach and the team will be subject to automatic penalties (see **Section 3.2 Coach Violation of Equal Play**), and the coach may be referred to the Discipline Committee.

- n) If, in the opinion of a coach, a player is getting too physically or verbally aggressive on the field and in danger of getting carded or starting a confrontation, the coach has the authority to pull that player off the field immediately and at any time to cool off. This will affect equal play for that individual and his replacement but will be of benefit to the team and the referee. The referee must write on the game sheet the specific reason the player was pulled. This is important so that the benching is not considered an equal play violation. The player must be quickly replaced with someone who would normally be next to play (i.e., has already sat off at least as many times as others). If the affected team has no subs and is already playing with one player less than the opponent, then the one-up rule would still apply until the pulled player is deemed fit to go back on. A pulled player will be allowed to return only at a scheduled substitution time.

The referee may also suggest to a coach that a player be pulled off in such situations, but ultimately it is the coach's decision.

NOTE: For recreational teams which participate in leagues outside the club, the spirit of the equal play rules will still apply unless specifically waived by the club. Coaches will make their best good-faith attempt to play players equally

1.2.9 INJURIES

- a) Any player who is openly bleeding from an injury must leave the field of play and not return until the bleeding is stopped or the injury is dressed.
- b) Any injury which requires hospitalization must be reported to the League Director within 24 hours of occurrence, and appropriate insurance forms **must** be completed.
- c) Substitution may be made at any time, with the permission of the referee, for injury or illness. If a player must leave the field because of injury or illness, the referee must be notified so that the player may be replaced. The player must return to the field of play as soon as he/she is able to do so.
- d) An injury is not an excuse for violating the equal play rules. Coaches must attempt to meet both the letter and the spirit of equal play rules if injuries occur. For example, if a player has started a shift on the bench and is called upon to replace an injured player early in the period, the coach should consider if this player should sit off another complete shift to ensure equal play.

1.2.10 SHORT-HANDED TEAMS (the "One-up Rule")

In the event that a team does not have its full field strength due to absenteeism, illness or injury, the following points apply to regular season games, playoff games, final games, and overtime. The rules of substitution shall remain unchanged, in that all players must be removed from the game for one period before any player(s) are removed for two periods

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- a) For 5-a-side soccer, if a team cannot field five (5) players due to absenteeism, illness or injury, the opposing team may only play one (1) more player than the short-handed team to a maximum of five (5) players. Thus, a team with only four (4) players may play against five (5).
- b) For 7-a-side soccer, if a team cannot field seven (7) players, the opposing team may only play one (1) more player than the short-handed team to a maximum of seven (7) players. Thus, a team with only five (5) players may play against six (6) and six (6) against seven (7).
- c) For 9-a-side soccer, if a team cannot field nine (9) players, the opposing team may only play one (1) more player than the short-handed team to a maximum of nine (9) players. Thus, six (6) may play against seven (7) and so forth.
- d) For 11-a-side soccer, if a team cannot field eleven (11) players, the opposing team may only play one (1) more player than the short-handed team to a maximum of eleven (11) players. Thus, seven (7) may play against eight (8) and so forth.
- e) If a coach knows in advance that the team will be short-handed, he/she may wish to call up players from the division below. See **Sections 3.3** and **3.4** for call-up rules and the penalties for violating these rules.

1.2.11 FORFEITURE

- a) Teams shall be allowed a 10-minute grace period after the scheduled kick-off time before they are considered to have failed to show. If a previous game on the same field is not yet complete by the scheduled kick-off time, then that extension of the previous game is deemed to be part of the grace period.
- b) If a 5-a-side team fails to field at least four (4) players, a 7-a-side team at least five (5), a 9-a-side team at least six (6), or an 11-a-side team at least seven (7) for a game within the grace period, then that team shall forfeit the game to the opposition. The game shall be started immediately when each team has at least the minimum number of players. The period of grace shall only be allowed if a team has less than the minimum number of players present.
- c) A forfeited game will be recorded as a 1-0 win for the team that had sufficient players. If neither team had sufficient players, the game will show as a loss by both teams and points will not be awarded. A proper game sheet is to be filled in, stating the reason for the forfeiture. If a referee does not appear, it is the responsibility of the coaches to ensure that this game sheet is delivered to the Club Office within 24 hours.
- d) In the event of forfeiture, any referee or linesman provided by the Club must cease to officiate. A proper game sheet is to be filled in, stating the reason for the forfeit. If a referee is not present, it is the responsibility of the coaches to ensure that this game sheet is delivered to the Club Office within 24 hours. The two teams assigned to the field may use the time for a practice or scrimmage.

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1.2.12 GAME DURATIONS

- a) The referee shall be the sole timekeeper.
- b) Subject to the rules in **Chapter 3 Outdoor House League (U8-U18)** and **Chapter 4 Indoor House League**, it shall be the referee's responsibility to ensure that games start and end on time.
- c) In the event of darkness, bad weather or any unforeseen circumstances, a game may be shortened or abandoned by the referee. Both coaches shall be advised of any such change/decision, however, the decision of the referee shall be final. For an outdoor game, if ten minutes or more of the second half has not been completed before play ceases the game shall be rescheduled, otherwise, the result at close of play shall stand. For an Indoor game there will be no re-scheduling.

1.2.13 GAME CANCELLATIONS

- a) The City of Markham Recreation Services, in co-operation with the Board of Directors of the Markham Soccer Club, has the authority to take fields out of service if conditions would cause damage to the fields. The Director of House League can authorize a Convenor to cancel games due to unsuitable field or weather conditions.
- b) Unless the Club has formally cancelled a game due to bad weather, field closure or other reasons, **coaches and their teams must show up at the field**. As long as a game is still scheduled, **the referee shall have the sole authority to cancel the game**, immediately prior to game kick-off, due to unsuitable field or weather conditions. Outdoor games will normally proceed even if it is raining but may be halted by the referee in the event of lightning and/or thunder.
- c) As per OSA guidelines, the referee shall use the Flash-to-Bang method to monitor lightning for evacuation of the playing field to a safer environment. With this method, the seconds are counted from the time a flash of lightning is seen until a clap of thunder is heard. When this number is 30 seconds or less, evacuation of the field should get under way.
- d) The Flash-to-Bang method can only be used if you see lightning AND hear thunder. If you only see lightning OR only hear thunder, then the referee must cancel the game to be on the safe side.
- e) OSA guidelines state that the game should not be restarted until 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder was heard or the last flash of lightning was seen. Under the house league scheduling format, it is very unlikely that a full game could be completed after a full 30-minute delay. Therefore it is not feasible to wait for 30 minutes to try to resume a house league game, so the game is cancelled as soon as it is stopped.

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1.2.14 REFEREE - NO-SHOW

- a) The referee is in control of the field of play. No one may enter or leave the field of play without the referee's permission.
- b) In the event of the official referee being late, or failing to appear for a game, it is the responsibility of the two coaches to proceed with the game. (This is still considered an official game.) The coaches must agree on a substitute referee or agree to a designate from each team to each referee one-half of a game. Their decision must be written on the game sheet and signed by both coaches before the game starts. Any coach who refuses to play will forfeit the game points.
- c) When a coach, or his designate, is acting as the referee, he/she must demonstrate the highest standard of fairness and impartiality. If at all possible, an assistant coach should take control of his/her team while the coach is acting as the referee.
- d) If the official referee arrives late, he/she must take charge of the balance of the game.
- e) If a referee does not appear, it is the responsibility of the coaches to ensure a proper game sheet is filled in and delivered to the Club Office within 24 hours.

1.2.15 PENALTIES, DISCIPLINE AND APPEALS

- a) The referee shall give individual cautions (yellow cards) for cautionable offences by players, as defined by the FIFA Laws of the Game.
- b) Two such cautions (yellow cards) to a player in any one game shall mean automatic eviction from the game, plus an automatic suspension from the next scheduled game. No substitution may be made for a player who is sent off for the remainder of that period¹. (This is an intentional deviation from FIFA rules so as to avoid conflict with equal play rules.)
- c) Three yellow cards in separate games will also result in an automatic one-game suspension for the next scheduled game following the game in which the third yellow card was given.
- d) The referee has the power to issue a red card and send a player off the field for the rest of the game if he/she commits a sending-off offence as defined by the FIFA Laws of the Game. The offending player will be automatically suspended from the next scheduled game and may be subject to further discipline. No substitution may be made for a player who is sent off for the remainder of that period (an intentional deviation from FIFA rules as above).

¹ The definition of "period" can be found in sections 3.6 (for 5 and 7-a-side divisions), 3.7 (for 9-a-side divisions), and 3.8 (for 11-a-side divisions)

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- e) The Club discipline committee shall have the power to review any incidents or situations, initiate a discipline hearing, and assign penalties as appropriate. Such penalties may be in addition to automatic penalties as specified above. The committee has the power to expel a player from the Club for the current season for a serious offence (or offences).
- f) In the case of discipline problems on the part of coaches, parents or other spectators, the referee will file a report with the club within 24 hours, providing specifics of the incident (a yellow or red card is not appropriate for this type of situation). A referee may direct coaches or spectators to leave the immediate area of the field (i.e. to an area well away from the game) if their actions are seriously detrimental to the proper conduct of the game. He/she may abandon a game if his/her directions/requests to coaches, parents and/or spectators are not being respected and adhered to. This power of the referee is to be used very sparingly and only in those cases which truly warrant it. The referee must expect that coaches and spectators will be vocal in support of their team and that the referee will often take the brunt of this in a call which goes against their team. In a situation where a coach or spectator threatens a referee, a coach or a player or uses abusive language (unacceptable comments of a racial, sexual or similar nature) towards a referee, coach or player, the referee should take decisive action.
- g) Any discipline problems must be reported on the game sheet by the referee and a report sheet completed on proper disciplinary report sheets, and submitted, along with the game sheet, to the Club Office within 24 hours.
- h) Game protests must be in writing. These must be delivered to the Club Office at Mount Joy Arena, within two (2) business days of the completion of the game in question. This must be clearly labeled on the outside as "GAME PROTEST". The Convenor and/or League Director must also be advised that a protest has been filed, within the same period of time. No protest dealing with a decision of the referee will be accepted. A fee of \$25.00 must accompany any protest. This shall be refunded if the protest is upheld. Where a game has been played under protest, such fact shall be clearly indicated by the referee on the game sheet. The procedures in this section do not apply to protests pertaining to alleged equal play rule infractions. For these procedures please refer to **Paragraphs 1.2.8 k) to 1.2.8 m).**
- i) Appeals may be lodged against disciplinary decisions made by the Club. The appeal must be sent, in duplicate, by registered mail to the Secretary of the York Region Soccer Association and must specify the exact nature of the appeal.
- j) The appeal must be lodged within two business days of the original decision having been communicated. The date of the postmark shall be taken as the limiting date in all cases. A copy of the appeal must be sent by registered mail to the Markham Soccer Club at P.O. Box 476, Markham, Ontario, L3P 3R1.

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- k) The club will not be liable to provide any refunds to players who lose playing time due to suspensions.

1.2.16 POINTS AND STANDINGS

For divisions that publish standings, they shall be based on total points. Three points shall be awarded for a win, one point for a tie and zero points for a loss. In the event of a tie in the standings, to determine the winner, the tie breaking criteria shown below will be applied. These are applied once each, in the sequence shown, until a winner is determined. At every step, in a multi-way tie, the teams which fail to meet the criteria will be eliminated. Once a winner in a multi-way tie is determined, the tie-breaking criteria will be applied once again to the remaining teams, starting at the beginning, to determine the winner out of that group.

- a) Most wins.
- b) Most wins against each other. In the event of a multi-way tie, this criterion will determine the winner (or those teams which should remain in contention in the case that all teams are not tied on this criterion) if one of the teams has more wins against all of the other tied teams (combined) than any of the others.
- c) Team with least goals scored against.
- d) Largest positive goal differential. That is, the team with the largest positive difference between goals scored for and against.
- e) If this tie situation has occurred in a playoff round robin prior to any elimination matches and teams are still tied after applying a) to d), then the same sequence of tie-breakers will be applied to the results of the regular season round.
- f) If none of the above steps establishes a clear winner, a “sudden death” format may be arranged. The Club reserves the right to establish the format and duration of any tie-breaker.

1.2.17 TIE GAMES IN CUP FINAL, QUARTER-FINALS, AND SEMI-FINALS

Ties shall be broken as follows:

- a) Two ten-minute overtime periods will be played immediately after the end of regular playing time. During these overtime periods, the team which scores the first goal is declared the winner (“The Golden Goal”). Equal play rules continue to apply as an extension of the regulation time. If still tied at the end of this time then,
- b) A series of five penalty kicks will be taken alternately by any five separate players from each team [NOTE: this is not limited to the players on the field, to make it easier for coaches to apply the equal play rules and maintain some sanity. This is an intentional deviation from normal FIFA rules]. The full teams may sit in two groups near centre field while the penalty kicks are being taken. The referee records the shirt numbers in the order in which the kicks are to be taken. If still tied then,

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- c) Continue to alternate penalty kicks, one by one, with the other players from each team until the tie is broken. If still tied then,
- d) Continue through the teams in the same order as before for as long as it takes until the tie is broken.

NOTES:

- ***This tie-breaking process does not apply to regular round-robin play-off games.***
- ***It will always apply to Cup Finals.***
- ***Quarter-finals and/or semi-finals will follow the tie-breaking approach shown above, provided there is sufficient time to accommodate the overtime periods. If there is not sufficient time, quarter-final and semi-final games will proceed directly to penalty kicks. The House League Director will advise whether or not overtime is applicable for quarter-final and/or semi-final games before the play-offs begin.***

2. OUTDOOR MICRO SOCCER (U4 – U7)

2.1 *Micro Soccer Rules*

This format is used for players in the U4 to U7 age groups.² It is a non-competitive format and thus there are no formal playing rules. The following are the guidelines used in scrimmages:

- a) The maximum number of players on the field is: three per team for U4 to U6 (with no keeper) and four per team for U7 (with a keeper. See point d)).
- b) A number 3 ball is used.
- c) Offside rule does not apply.
- d) For U7, one player is designated as the keeper at any given time. This player may handle the ball in the goal box.
- e) Players will be substituted in and out together as a complete unit if there are sufficient substitutes. The players will rotate through the keeper position with each round of substitutions.
- f) Substitutions should be done regularly (every 3 - 4 minutes) so that players are not sitting out for too long.
- g) Up to, but not including U7, one coach from each team will be allowed on the field with the players during the scrimmage. The coaches will act as referees in addition to coaching their players. Coaches may not interfere in the play in any way nor stand within the goal area.
- h) All players are to be encouraged to play equally. That is: coaches should discourage strong players from hogging the ball or being on the field more than others.
- i) As this is a development-oriented format, winning the scrimmage is not the prime objective. Coaches should de-emphasize winning and losing and focus on good play and applying what has been taught. Positive feedback when a skill has been applied should be the prime focus.
- j) No standings (formal or informal) for games won or lost or goals scored shall be kept. Coaches may wish however, to (confidentially) keep ratings of individual players and track progress against these.

² The U3 age group participates in a developmental program with no defined rules or guidelines for scrimmages.

3. OUTDOOR HOUSE LEAGUE (U8 – U18)

These rules will apply to outdoor leagues run entirely by the MSC for the U8 to U18 age groups. Other leagues in which MSC teams may participate will establish their own rules. The MSC has adopted rules from the York Regional Soccer League.

The normal laws of soccer (FIFA Laws of the Game) shall apply, subject to the described modifications for each division. The games will be divided into periods; the game length and number of periods are as defined below.

The referee has the discretion to allow a game to run its full course and extend slightly past the designated end time or to shorten the periods in order to complete the game at the designated time. Key factors in the decision should be:

- a) Whether a following game on the same field could complete before deteriorating lighting conditions would interfere with visibility. This includes sunset on an unlit field and any automatic “lights out” time for lit fields.
- b) If there is no following game and conditions permit, then the referee can allow the game to extend past the scheduled end time.
- c) If the referee is scheduled to attend a second game on another field.

If the referee decides to shorten the periods, the coaches should be told of the decision as much in advance as possible, and the reasons for the shortening must be written on the game sheet.

3.1 *Team Roster Size*

At the discretion of the House League Director, the age divisions can have the following maximum number of players registered to each team:

- a) U8 (5-a-side): Eight (8) to ten (10)
- b) U9-U10 (7-a-side): Ten (10) to twelve (12)
- c) U11-U12 (9-a-side): Twelve (12) or thirteen (13)
- d) U13-U18 (11-a-side): Fifteen (15) to eighteen (18).

In the event of full registration not being achieved, a lesser number may be allowed.

3.2 *Coach Violation of Equal Play*

Regular Season

1st Offence - A discussion with the League Convenor and/or the League Director. If there is a violation of equal play across the season, the coach may be asked to rectify the imbalance in upcoming games as much as possible.

2nd Offence – For divisions older than U11, a reversal of the game result for the game in question if the team in question won or tied and if this has not already been done as a

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result of the protest. The result will be shown as a 1-0 win for the other team. For all divisions, the offending coach will be asked to present him/herself at a review with the League Director.

3rd Offence - Replacement of the coach.

Play-offs

1st Offence - Same as second offence above.

2nd Offence - Replacement of the Coach. The team of the offending coach will default the game.

3.3 Call-ups Within House League for U9-U18

House League teams may call up players from the next younger house league division to allow them to field enough players during vacation periods. This will be subject to the following rules:

- a) No call-ups are permitted from the Micro divisions (U7 and below) to the U8 division.
- b) No call-ups are permitted for a play-off game.
- c) There will be a maximum of three call-ups per team per game.
- d) No player may be called up to any one team more than twice.
- e) The player in question and his/her parents must agree.
- f) The coach of the younger player and the convenor of that age group must be informed.
- g) Such a call-up will not be allowed if it interferes with a scheduled game for the younger player.
- h) The "normal field strength" of a house league team cannot be exceeded by more than two players as a result of players being called up (i.e., number of players dressed for the game in question cannot exceed nine (9) for U9 – U10, eleven (11) for U11 – U12, and thirteen (13) for U13 – U18). If they do, call-ups in excess of these numbers cannot play.
- i) Such players will be treated as a normal part of the team. Equal play rules apply to them as they would for any other player on the older team.
- j) Called-up players must be indicated on the game sheet with the word "call-up" next to their names or having their names listed in the Call-up section.
- k) To prevent one team from "cherry-picking" the top players from several teams in the younger division, the Convenor of each division (U9 and up) will allocate the players from the division below to the teams in the older division, and a team in the older division may only call up players from the younger division who have been allocated to that team. (For example, if both divisions have the same number of teams, the Convenor may declare that Team 1 may only call up players from Team 1 of the division below, or the red team may only call up players from the red team in the division below.)

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3.4 Use of Ineligible Players

- a) For the U9 - U11 divisions, the use of an ineligible player during a game will result in the coach(es) of the offending team(s) having a discussion with the League Director.
- b) For divisions older than U11, the use of an ineligible player during a game will result in the offending team defaulting the game. The results will be recorded as a 1-0 win for the other team. If both teams are at fault, the game will be recorded as a loss for both teams and neither team shall earn a point in the standings.
- c) An ineligible player is any player not assigned to the team by the Convenor, with the exception of valid called-up players, as defined in **Section 3.3**.
- d) An ineligible player includes any called-up players that violate the call-up rules, as defined in **Section 3.3**, any player not officially registered with the Club, and any players assigned to other teams in the same division.

3.5 House League Players Also on Select or Competitive Teams

The Club allows a player **all of the available options under OSA rules** in terms of playing on multiple teams. The only restriction is that the player must meet all of the normal requirements and expectations for each of the MSC teams with which he/she is registered. A player may be called up to a higher level team, subject to the following:

- a) All House League players are available to the Competitive Division provided that the Competitive team Coach notifies the House League coach to whom the player is assigned.
- b) Participation in House League games takes precedence over Competitive League games. The player is subject to the League and/or OSA rules which apply to this situation.
- c) A player is not obligated to accept a request to “play up” on a select or competitive team.
- d) Parental permission must be provided.
- e) The rules given above apply equally to a player playing in a “select” league division being called up to a rep team and a house league player being called up to a “select” division team.
- f) Should there be a conflict between two or more teams wishing to call up the same player (for the same day/night), the higher level team will take precedence.
- g) A player will not be penalized for missing a practice with his/her House League/Select team if this was because of being called up to play with a higher level team.
- h) A player is not permitted to miss a house league practice in order to attend a higher level team practice, unless this has the explicit approval of the Director of House League.
- i) NOTE: Under current competitive league rules, a recreational player may be called up a maximum of 6 times to any competitive team.

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3.6 5-a-side Pre-Mini and 7-a-side Mini Soccer Rules

These forms of the game are currently used outdoors for the U8 to U10 age groups. For the “Pre-Mini” U8 divisions, the maximum number of players on the field at any time is five per team. For “Mini Soccer” U9 and U10 divisions, seven are allowed. We put the three ages together here for simplicity since their rules are very similar.

- a) Two halves of 24 minutes each with a five-minute break between halves.
- b) For U8 and U9 divisions, there will be no recording of or defined stoppages for substitutions. Instead, coaches may change players at any stoppage, with the permission of the referee. Despite not recording the substitutions, coaches are required to follow the spirit of **Section 1.2.8 Equal Play Rules**.
- c) For U10, each half will be divided into three 8-minute periods with no break between them. The first, second, fourth and fifth periods will be over at the first normal stoppage of play (or stopped when neither team has a distinct scoring opportunity) after 8 and 16 minutes have been played in each half. Substitution will then be made and recorded and play will resume where it left off. The third period will be over after 24 minutes in total have been played and the sixth after 48 minutes (or less if the referee is forced to shorten the duration of the game).
- d) Offside rule does not apply.
- e) Kick-ins rather than throw-ins will be used for U8 to U10 teams.
 - When the whole of the ball has crossed the touch-line, either on the ground or in the air, the ball shall be kicked in from the point where it left the field of play by a member of the team opposing that of the player who last played or touched it.
 - The player taking the kick-in shall:
 - i. Face the field of play and
 - ii. Kick the ball from on, or behind, the touch line.
 - The ball will be in play immediately after it enters the field of play directly from the kick.
 - If the player taking the kick-in plays, or touches, the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player, a free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team.
 - At the taking of a kick-in, all opponents must be at least 4.6 metres (5 yards) from the ball.
 - A goal may not be scored directly from a kick-in.
- f) Opposing players must stand at least 5.5 metres (6 yards) away when a free kick, penalty kick, corner kick, or kick off is being taken.
- g) Penalty kicks will be taken from a spot 7.3 metres (8 yards) directly in front of the mid-point of the goal.

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- h) For U8 games:
 - When a team is taking a goal-kick, the opposing team must retreat to their half of the field until the ball has been put into play. The ball is in play when it is:
 - i. kicked directly out of the penalty area and is touched by another player on the team taking the kick, or
 - ii. kicked directly over the half-way line.If the ball is not kicked directly out of the penalty area before being touched by another player of the team taking the kick, the kick is retaken. If a player on the opposing team crosses the half-way line before the ball is in play, the kick is retaken.
 - A goal cannot be scored directly from a kick-off.
- i) No standings (formal or informal) for games won or lost or goals scored shall be published.
- j) This is still a development-oriented format, winning the scrimmage is not the prime objective. Coaches should de-emphasize winning and losing and focus on good play and applying what has been taught. Positive feedback when a skill has been applied should be the prime focus.
- k) If a player receives a red card, that player must leave the game immediately but can be replaced by a substitute. The player will be subject to discipline under OSA discipline procedures.

3.7 9-a-side Junior Field Rules

This format is currently used outdoors for the U11 and U12 age groups. The maximum number of players on the field at any time is nine per team.

U11-U12 (50 minutes, 4 Periods):

Two halves of 25 minutes each, with a five-minute break between halves. Each half will be divided into two 12½-minute periods with no break between them. The first and third periods will be over at the first normal stoppage of play (or stopped when neither team has a distinct scoring opportunity) after a minimum of 12½ minutes has been played. Substitution will then be made and play will resume where it left off. The second period will be over after 25 minutes in total have been played and the fourth after 50 minutes (or less if the referee is forced to shorten the duration of the game).

Throw-ins replace kick-ins at this age.

For the U11s where it is a separate division, no standings (formal or informal) for games won or lost or goals scored shall be published.

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3.8 11-a-side Full Field Rules

For age groups U13 up to and including U18, the maximum number of players on the field at any time is eleven per team. The game duration will be divided depending on the age groups, as defined below:

U13-U14 (72 minutes, 2 halves, 6 periods):

Two halves of 36 minutes each, with a five-minute break between halves. Each half will be divided into three 12-minute periods with no break between periods. There shall be a five-minute half-time between periods 3 and 4. The first, second, fourth and fifth periods will be over at the first normal stoppage of play (or stopped when neither team has a distinct scoring opportunity) after 12 and 24 minutes have been played in each half. Substitution will then be made and play will resume where it left off. The third period will be over after 36 minutes in total have been played and the sixth after 72 minutes (or less if the referee is forced to shorten the duration of the game).

U15-U18 (90 minutes, 2 halves):

Two halves of 45 minutes each, with a five-minute break between halves. The first half will be over after 45 minutes have been played and the second after 90 minutes (or less if the referee is forced to shorten the duration of the game). Each half is considered a period.

Unlimited substitutions are allowed at the following times with the prior approval of the referee:

- a) At a goal kick by either team
- b) After a goal is scored by either team
- c) At the beginning of the second half or any overtime period
- d) At the referee's discretion for an injury.

Substitutions are not allowed at any other time, including throw-ins, corner kicks, free kicks, or drop balls. Substitution will then be made and play will resume where it left off.

Players coming off and going on will have to make the exchange at the half way line on the team bench side of the field so the referee and others can see a one-for-one exchange.

Coaches are still required to address the spirit of the law regarding equal play knowing that the referee is not writing it down. **(Section 1.2.8 Equal Play Rules).**

4. INDOOR HOUSE LEAGUE

This form of the game is used indoors for all age groups with either 7-a-side or 6-a-side teams. The normal laws of soccer (FIFA Laws of the Game) shall apply subject to the modifications included below which are in line with either OSA indoor rules or those of the MSC:

4.1 Ages U8 - U18

- a) The maximum number of players on the field at any time is seven (7) per team for divisions up to and including U11. For U12 and above, six (6) players per team are allowed on the field. If the number of registrants for a division warrant, the director may alter these numbers for that division by one (1) either upwards or downwards to a maximum of seven (7) and a minimum of six (6).
- b) If a 7-a-side team fails to field at least five (5) players, (four (4) for a 6-a-side team) for a game within the five (5) minute grace period, then that team shall forfeit the game to the opposition. The game shall be started immediately when each team has at least the minimum number of players. The period of grace shall only be used if a team has less than the minimum number of players present.
- c) There will be a second official on the players' side of the field to monitor substitutions and equal play.
- d) For all divisions, the first half of play shall start as soon as both teams have the minimum number of players or no later than five (5) minutes past the start of the time period. The playing time will be divided as follows:
 - **For up to and including U11 divisions:** Two non-stop halves of twenty (20) minutes each, with a five-minute break between halves. The second half will end at the earlier of either the allocated fifty (50) minute time period according to the facility wall clock time (or the referee's watch if the facility clock is not functioning) or after the completion of forty (40) minutes of playing time.
 - **For U12 and older divisions:** Two non-stop halves of twenty-five (25) minutes each, with a five-minute break between halves. The second half will end at the earlier of either the allocated sixty (60) minute time period according to the facility wall clock time (or the referee's watch if the facility clock is not functioning) or after the completion of fifty (50) minutes of playing time.

The referee has the discretion to shorten the halves in order to accommodate this. **In no case may a game be extended past the scheduled finish time.**
- e) Kick-offs from the centre circle may be a pass forward or backward.

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- f) Offside rule does not apply.
- g) Substitutions of outfield players can be made “on the fly.” The referee will not need to stop the game or give permission for the substitutions. Either team may also initiate a substitution at a stop in play but the referee will not hold up the game while the change is completed.
- h) For age divisions U12 and older only, while in net, equal play does not apply to a goalkeeper. A goalkeeper can be replaced by any teammate at the following times:
 - At half time.
 - Due to injury at the discretion of the referee. The referee shall allow a reasonable time to make such a change.
 - During a normal stoppage of the game that will be restarted with a goal kick, a kick-in (not including corner kicks) or kick-off, provided that the goalkeeper is wearing a jersey that distinguishes him from the other players on the pitch and only with the permission of the referee. Only the team taking the kick may initiate a goalkeeper change under these circumstances.
- i) Those players getting ready to come onto the field must be at the halfway line and behind the touch line.
- j) Players coming off must leave the field on the players’ bench side and be completely off before their replacements can step on the field.
- k) All free kicks, goal kicks, kick-offs, corner kicks, kicks from dropped balls, and kick-ins are indirect, consistent with OSA indoor rules.
- l) Kick-ins rather than throw-ins will be used for all divisions. See **Section 3.6 5-a-side Pre-Mini and 7-a-side Mini Soccer Rules**, paragraph (e) for details.
- m) Opposing players must stand at least 4.6 metres (5 yards) away when a free kick, kick-in, corner kick, or kick-off is being taken.
- n) The ball is dead if it strikes the ceiling or any attached ceiling fixture. In this case the play is restarted with an indirect free kick by the opposing team from the spot directly below where the ball hit the ceiling or fixture. (see also 4.1 o)
- o) Any infringement that would normally result in an indirect free kick being awarded to the attacking team in its opponent’s penalty area will instead result in an indirect free kick being taken from the penalty area line, at least 1 metre (1 yard) from the goal line, at the point nearest to where the offence was committed.
- p) Keepers must play the ball from the ground or throw it. Drop kicks (kicking the ball directly from the hand without allowing it to touch the ground first) are not permitted. The penalty for an illegal drop kick by the keeper is an indirect free kick by

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the opposing team, taken from the penalty area line, at least 1 metre (1 yard) from the goal line, at the point nearest to where the offence was committed.

- q) Slide tackles or attempts to slide tackle shall be penalized by the award of a free kick (or a penalty kick if the offence is committed by a player inside his own penalty area). The offending player will be shown a yellow card (unless the tackle is judged to be serious foul play, in which case a red card is shown).

4.2 Over 35 Adults

- a) O35 teams play 7-a-side.
- b) Throw-ins not kick-ins.
- c) All restarts are by indirect kicks.
- d) If the ball hits the ceiling or a ceiling fixture, the play continues.
- e) If the ball hits the ceiling or fixture and goes directly into the net, no goal is awarded. If the kick was made by an attacker, a goal kick is used as the restart. If the kick was made by a defender, a corner-kick by the attacking team is used as the restart.
- f) No standings or scores are kept.
- g) Regardless of the start time, the first half ends 30 minutes after the hour.
- h) The break at the half is 5 minutes unless the teams decide to start playing earlier
- i) The second half ends on the hour.
- j) Players are allowed to switch teams to even out the number of players including allowing players from the previous game to play on the shorthanded team.
- k) Substitutions are on a voluntary basis.

APPENDICES:

A. *FIFA Laws Of The Game*

To view FIFA Playing Rules, go to the following website:

<http://www.fifa.com/>

and navigate to the **Laws of the Game**. A link to the Laws of the Game is also provided on the Club's website on the Referee page.

Note: FIFA updates its playing rules effective July 1 of a given year. Since this is part way through our Club's outdoor season, we will not apply those rules until the upcoming indoor season of the same year. For example, the [2012/2013 FIFA version](#) updated July 1, 2012, will be followed for our 2012/2013 indoor season and 2013 outdoor season.