

**LEAGUE RULES**

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# HARFORD COUNTY SOCCER LEAGUE RULES

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## **A. DEFINITIONS**

1. Board means the HCSL Board of Directors.
2. Club means the club as it appears on the Roster.
3. Coach of Record means the first Team Official listed on the Roster or if absent from a game, the Team Official that is their designated substitute.
4. Field Coordinator means the individual named on the HCSL Home Field Application as being the Club representative to HCSL, as respects matters pertaining to the field(s) designated on the Home Field Application.
5. FIFA means Fédération Internationale de Football Association.
6. HCSL means Harford County Soccer League.
7. HCSL Season means a single season comprised of not more than 8 games scheduled for a Fall or Spring Season.
8. Ineligible Player means Player participating in a game in violation of HCSL Rules.
9. Player means an individual listed on the Roster as a Player.
10. R&D Committee means the Rules and Discipline Committee.
11. R&D Director means the Rules and Discipline Committee Director.
12. Roster means an HCSL team roster .
13. Team means the team as it appears on the Roster.
14. Team Official means the coaches and managers listed on the Roster.

## **B. GENERAL RULES**

1. FIFA Laws of the Game shall apply except as follows or as specified elsewhere in these rules:

- a) **Law 1 - The Field of Play**

The following exceptions apply to U12 Divisions and younger:

- (1) Field dimensions are smaller.
- (2) Field Markings are per FIFA with the exception of the smaller center circle.
- (3) The goal is 6 x 18 feet.

- b) **Law 2 - The Ball**

The ball must be a size four (4) for U12 and younger.

- c) **Law 3 - The Number of Players**

The following exception applies to U12 Divisions and younger:

For U12 and younger Divisions, a match is played by two (2) Teams, each consisting of not more than eight (8) Players including the goalkeeper.

The following exception applies to all Divisions:

Substitutions shall be unlimited with the prior consent of the Referee at the following times:

- (1) Prior to a throw-in, but only for the Team in possession. If the Team in possession substitutes, the opposing Team may also substitute one Player for each Player the Team in possession substitutes;
- (2) Prior to a goal kick by either Team;

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- (3) After a goal has been scored and prior to the succeeding kick-off;
- (4) During the half-time interval;
- (5) Following an injury. If an injured Player is substituted, the opposing Team may substitute one-for-one; and
- (6) For a cautioned (Yellow Card) Player at the time the caution is issued.

d) **Law 4 – The Players’ Equipment**

Per FIFA except:

- (1) Player uniform shirts (except that of the goalkeeper) must clearly display a unique Player number that corresponds to the Player number for that Player on the Roster. The Player number on the uniform shirt must be displayed on the shirt back and sized between six (6) inches and eight (8) inches high;
- (2) Metal tipped cleats or “soft ground” footwear is not permitted.

b) **Law 6 - The Assistant Referees**

Per FIFA except for U10 Divisions and younger, where the two (2) Assistant Referees can be Club or Team volunteers (one (1) from each Team).

c) **Law 7 - The Duration of the Match**

Per FIFA with the following exceptions:

- (1) U12 and younger matches lasts two (2) equal periods of 30 minutes;
- (2) U13 - U14 matches lasts two (2) equal periods of 35 minutes;
- (3) U16 & up matches lasts two (2) equal periods of 40 minutes; and
- (4) The Half-Time Interval for all matches will be 5 minutes.

d) **Law 8 - The Start and Restart of Play**

Per FIFA except the distance the defending Players must be away from the ball until it is kicked is the same as the radius of the center circle.

e) **Law 10 – The Method of Scoring**

Per FIFA except:

- (1) Competition Rules do not apply; and
- (2) For U11 Divisions and younger, the score differential cannot exceed five (5) goals.

f) **Law 13 - Free Kicks**

Per FIFA except the distance the defending Players must be away from the ball until it is kicked is the same as the radius of the center circle.

g) **Law 14 - The Penalty Kick**

Per FIFA with the exceptions for U12 Divisions and younger that the penalty mark is ten (10) yards from the center of the goal line and that Players other than the kicker and defending goalkeeper are at least eight (8) yards from the penalty mark. The distance of eight (8) yards conforms to the radius of the center circle. The distance of ten (10) yards from the center of the goalmouth for the penalty mark fits within the reduced dimensions of the penalty area and is a reasonable distance for the kick.

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## h) **Law 17 The Corner Kick**

Per FIFA except the distance the defending Players must be away from the ball until it is kicked is the same as the radius of the center circle. A Team/Club should make a genuine effort to see that the fields and goals are in accordance with FIFA Laws of the Game. Any field and corresponding goals accepted and scheduled by HCSL are, by definition, acceptable.

2. Lack of knowledge of FIFA Laws of the Game or HCSL Rules will not relieve any Team Official, parent or Player of a Team participating in HCSL, or seeking entry into HCSL, from the responsibilities and possible penalties herein. All Clubs, Teams, Team Officials, parents, and Players, by participating in HCSL play, agree that they are bound by these Rules.
3. HCSL does not regulate recruiting.

## **C. REGISTRATION**

### 1. Rosters

The Roster shall be used for HCSL play. It is each Team's responsibility to forward the completed Roster including a photograph of each Player's face with sufficient clarity to easily identify that Player and a birth certificate to verify the Date of Birth on the Roster, to HCSL before the first week of play. Failure to do so can subject the Team to fine or forfeiture.

### 2. Player Eligibility and Team Composition

- a) A minimum of seven (7) Players must be listed on a Roster in order for a Team to be duly constituted. Not more than fourteen (14) Players (U12 Divisions and younger) or eighteen (18) Players (U13 Divisions and older) may be listed on the Roster.
- b) A Player must be listed on a Roster on file with HCSL to be eligible for HCSL play.
- c) A Player may be listed on only one (1) Roster for HCSL play in any one HCSL Season.

### 3. Player Additions

- a) Subject to Roster size limitations in C.2. Above, HCSL must be provided a an updated Roster including required photograph and birth certificate for each added Player prior to the first game day in which the added Player will participate, in order for the Player to be eligible for HCSL play. Otherwise the Player will be an Ineligible Player.
- b) Any Player listed on a Roster on the First Sunday of HCSL play and any time during that HCSL Season, may not transfer to any other Team for HCSL play during that HCSL Season, except as permitted under Disbanded Teams.
- c) After the third game of an HCSL Season, no additions are permitted.

### 4. Disbanded Teams

If a Team disbands during the course of an HCSL Season, a Team Official must:

- a) Notify the HCSL President as soon as practicable; and
- b) Turn in the Team's Roster.

Players of a disbanded Team are registered Players and those who wish to play with another Team are considered to be Player Additions.

## **D. AGE DIVISIONS**

Teams must register for HCSL play based on the age of the oldest Player on their Roster. Player age is determined as follows:

U9 – Players born on or after August 1, 2000

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U10 – Players born on or after August 1, 1999

U11 – Players born on or after August 1, 1998

U12 – Players born on or after August 1, 1997

U13 – Players born on or after August 1, 1996

U14 – Players born on or after August 1, 1995

U15 – Players born on or after August 1, 1994

U16 – Players born on or after August 1, 1993

U18 – Players born on or after August 1, 1991

"Playing up" is discouraged by the Board, but will be considered only upon written request submitted with the Team application.

### ***E. DIVISION SIZE AND STRUCTURE***

The maximum number of Teams per division is twelve (12) Teams. After eight (8) Teams have applied, additional Teams that would result in an odd number of Teams in a division will be wait listed pending additional Team applications that upon approval will result in an even number of Teams. The purpose is to avoid odd number divisions that result in byes and having to play two games in one day (double header). The following criteria will be employed in approving and assigning Teams to divisions:

- Date of application and payment of HCSL fees by each Team;
- Participation in the prior HCSL Season;
- Number of HCSL Seasons of participation;
- Whether more than one Team from the same Club has applied for the same division

The Board shall determine Division structure prior to each HCSL Season with the goal of providing balanced competition in each division.

### ***F. STANDINGS AND AWARDS***

1. A Team's standings in its division will be determined by the number of points it receives based on its win/loss record during the season. Points will be awarded as follows:
  - a) Three (3) points for a Win
  - b) One (1) point for a Tie
  - c) Zero (0) points for a Loss
2. In the case of a tie at the end of the regularly scheduled season, final standings will be determined on the basis of the following tie breaker sequence:
  - a) Head to Head
  - b) Most Wins
  - c) Fewest goals allowed
  - d) Highest Goal Differential – maximum of three (3) per game
  - e) Co-champions/Co-runners-up
2. Individual awards shall be awarded to the First and Second place Teams within each division.
3. If a Team withdraws from the HCSL or disbands during the season of play, all scores and point records for or in connection with that Team shall be nullified and all games played or scheduled to be played shall be recorded as a "BYE" for the opposing Team.

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## **G. GAME INFORMATION**

### 1. Roster

Each Team must have a current Roster at every game. Prior to the start of the game, the Referee or Assistant Referees are required to check the Roster. A Referee's or Assistant Referee's refusal to check Rosters shall be immediately reported to HCSL following the game. A Team Official has the right to check the other Team's Roster, before or after the game. The failure to check Rosters prior to, during or immediately after the conclusion of the game is not a valid reason for protesting a game.

Failure to produce the Roster within the HCSL's 15-minute grace period shall result in a forfeit. The score will be recorded as a 0-3 loss for the forfeiting Team, and the game shall not be played as part of the HCSL schedule. However, both Teams may play a non-league "friendly" utilizing the referees provided for the match.

### 2. Referee Incident Reports:

Referees must file an incident report, covering the details of any Red or Yellow Cards that were shown, any sending off or expulsion of a Team Official, the termination of any game, suspension of play or refusal to start a game (in all cases except for weather related conditions). This report is expected by HCSL within 24 hours, by any means of communication.

### 3. Referee No-Shows:

If an assigned Referee fails to appear within fifteen (15) minutes of the scheduled kick-off time, and the opposing Coaches of Record mutually agree to a volunteer Referee, the game shall be played and the results of the game shall be official (please note on the Game Report Card the use of a volunteer Referee).

### 4. Cancellations and Rescheduling

- a) The HCSL President is authorized to cancel an entire day's schedule due to field conditions. Whenever possible, Club Representatives and Referees will be notified of cancellations, at least, two (2) hours prior to kick-off. The Club Representatives are responsible for notifying their Teams involved.
- b) A Club's Field Coordinator may judge fields under their responsibility to be unplayable due to weather or other conditions. If the Field Coordinator designates a field unplayable, it shall be their responsibility to notify the HCSL President (or designee) at least three (3) hours prior to the first game, and the entire day's schedule is canceled. Field Coordinators are responsible for notifying the home Team Officials. The home Team Officials must notify their opponents.
- c) Once Teams have arrived at the field, it is the Referee's responsibility in conjunction with the Field Coordinator, to make judgment as to the field's playability. If they cancel or suspend a game due to poor or unsafe field conditions, the rest of that day's schedule is also canceled and the notification procedures are the same as above; except it is the home Team's responsibility to ensure that both the Field Coordinator and the HCSL President (or designee) are notified.
- d) The HCSL President or such person designated by the HCSL for this purpose, will do all rescheduling of games.

### 5. Sidelines

- a) Competing Teams, with their Team Officials (maximum of four (4) per Team), shall take the same side of the field, each on either side of the halfway line.
- b) Spectators for both Teams shall take the opposite side of the field from the Teams. The Referees will be responsible for enforcing these rules.
- c) All Team Officials, sidelined Players and spectators must stay clear of the touch line by not less than 2 yards. Coaches and Players are to remain between the halfway line and the 18 yard line.

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- d) The Referees may, at any time, restrict the sideline movement of Team Officials, Players and spectators.

### **H. TEAM OBLIGATIONS**

1. The HCSL fee, in an amount to be established for each HCSL Season by the Board, is required for each Team participating in HCSL and must be submitted with that Team's application. If a Team admitted to play in HCSL fails provide its Roster or withdraws from HCSL after submitting its application, that Team will forfeit its fee to HCSL. In the event there are insufficient Teams applying for a division, the HCSL fee will be returned.
2. A Forfeit Bond, in an amount to be established for each HCSL Season by the Board, is required for each Club with one or more Teams participating in HCSL and must be submitted two (2) weeks prior to the first weekend of play. Each time a Team forfeits a game without compensating the referees who appear for that game, the total referee fees due for that game will be deducted from the amount of the Forfeit Bond on deposit. If Team forfeits deplete the Forfeit Bond, it is the Club's responsibility to submit additional money to restore the amount of the original Forfeit Bond, when requested by HCSL. At the end of each HCSL season, the remaining balance of the Forfeit Bond amount will be returned. If all Teams for a Club admitted to play in HCSL fail provide its Roster or withdraws from HCSL after submitting applications, the Club will forfeit its Forfeit Bond to HCSL. In the event there are insufficient Teams applying for a division, the Forfeit Bond will be returned.
3. The home Team Coach of Record is responsible for contacting the opposing Coach of Record at least 72 hours prior to the game to verify location, time, and uniform color.
4. If there is a color conflict in the uniform, the home Team, prior to the game, shall be responsible for resolving this conflict.
5. The home Team is to provide the game ball, a properly lined and cut field, nets and corner flags.
  - a) For purposes of these rules, prepared shall include: lined, cut, nets and corner flags in place; available and safe for game play in the judgment of the Referee.
  - b) Violations due to a lapse in responsibility may result in game forfeiture or loss of the opportunity to host future home games.
  - c) If, on game day, a game is moved from the scheduled field to another field, with the agreement of both Coaches of Record and the Referee, the home Team for that game remains responsible for the preparation of the scheduled field or notification of the change to the coaches of the following games.
  - d) For extenuating circumstances not involving a lapse in responsibility on the part of the home Team or Club, the R&D Director or HCSL President may waive penalties.

### **I. FORFEITS**

1. If a Team knows in advance that it will have to forfeit a game, the Coach of Record must notify the HCSL immediately.
2. If a Team cannot field a minimum of:
  - a) seven (7) Players (U-13 and older); or
  - b) five (5) Players (U12 and younger),within (15) minutes after the scheduled kick-off time, that Team will forfeit the game.
3. In the event that neither Team is able to field the minimum number of Players, then both Teams will forfeit the game.
4. Any Team found to be responsible for the Referee terminating a match will forfeit that game.
5. Failure to abide by HCSL Rules will result in a forfeit by the offending Team.

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6. Failure of a Team Official to remain out of sight, out of sound after being dismissed, sent off or expelled from the field may result in an automatic forfeit.
7. If the Team Official has been dismissed, sent off or expelled from the field and there is no other responsible adult able to supervise the Team, the game will result in an automatic forfeit.
8. If a suspended Team Official is within sight and sound or a Player participates in a game for which they were suspended, their Team shall forfeit the game in question.
9. For each game a Team forfeits, the record will show a 0-3 loss for that Team for such game.
10. For extenuating circumstances, the R&D Director, in consultation with the HCSL President and/or R & D Committee may waive forfeiture.
11. If a Team forfeits more than two (2) HSCL games during the season of play, that Team will be considered to have withdrawn from HCSL. All subsequent HCSL games will be entered in the standings as a 0-3 loss for the withdrawn Team

### **J. SCORE REPORTING**

1. Each Team is responsible for submitting Match Reports to the HCSL Web Site as soon as practicable, but not later than twenty four (24) hours after the Match.
2. Failure to submit Match Reports to the HCSL Web Site as required in 1. above may result in the loss of home games and/or forfeiture.

### **K. GAME CONDUCT**

TEAM OFFICIALS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONDUCT OF THEIR PLAYERS AND SPECTATORS. IF A SPECTATOR'S CONDUCT WARRANTS CORRECTION OR EJECTION, IT WILL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COACH OF RECORD FOR THE TEAM WITH WHOM THE SPECTATOR IS ASSOCIATED TO TAKE CORRECTIVE ACTION AS REQUESTED BY THE REFEREE. FAILURE TO DO SO SHALL BE CONSIDERED UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT AND MAY RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION AT THE DISCRETION OF THE REFEREE.

1. Physical violence, foul and abusive language, harassment of Team Officials, Players or Referees will not be tolerated. The use of noise making or amplifying devices is prohibited. The Referee will report such conduct to the R&D Director even in situations where cards were not issued. Any incident of a Player or Team Official issued a Red Card, dismissed, sent off or expelled for physical violence, assault, or abuse directed against a Player, Team Official, Referee or Assistant Referees will be subject to an automatic review by the R&D Committee.
2. The Referee(s) are in complete charge of the field and adjacent areas from the time they arrive at the game site until they depart. The Referee(s) is empowered to:
  - a) Dismiss anyone in attendance.
  - b) Terminate a game for spectator misconduct. The determination of the outcome of a terminated game shall be the responsibility of the R&D Director, in consultation with R&D Committee.
  - c) Refuse to allow the game to be played if, in the Referee's judgment, the field is unplayable due to length of grass, inadequate lines, or other impediments. Referees may depart the area certain of receiving their fee.

### **L. DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

The Coach of Record is the only Team representative to HCSL for Rules & Discipline purposes.

1. Sanctions
  - a) A Team Official who is dismissed, sent off or expelled from the field during a game shall immediately leave the game site and its vicinity.

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- b) A Player who receives a red card or is sent off from the field during a game shall immediately leave the game site and its vicinity, as would be age appropriate.
- c) The following disciplinary actions shall apply automatically:
  - (1) If a Player or Team Official is shown a red card, sent off or expelled during a match, they are suspended for the next HCSL game.
  - (2) If a Player or Team Official is shown a red card, sent off or expelled a second time during an HCSL season, they are suspended for the next two HCSL games.

If a Player or Team Official is sent off or expelled on two occasions, they will be subject to automatic review by the R&D Director or his designee and may be barred from future participation in HCSL with the approval of the R&D Committee. A Player suspended for a game is an Ineligible Player for that game.
- d) The R&D Committee may take any additional action deemed necessary as described in paragraph N.
- e) A Team Official must be out of sight and sound before, during and after a game for which the Team Official has been suspended. A suspended Player may attend the game provided that he/she is not in uniform and does not play. If a suspended Player or Team Official participates in the game(s) for which they were suspended; their Team shall forfeit the game(s) in question.
- f) A suspension shall apply to the next HCSL game in which the Team plays in instances where the next previously scheduled game is forfeited or postponed. All suspension actions shall carry forward until the entire suspension is served, irrespective of HCSL Season.
- g) The R&D Director or their designee will assess suspensions. In instances of disciplinary actions, the R&D Director or their designee shall notify the Coach of Record. Also, in the case of suspensions, the Coach of Record of the next opposing Team(s) shall be notified prior to the next game(s).

### **M. PROTEST AND APPEALS**

As respects protest of the issuance of cards or game results or appeals of forfeits or suspensions:

1. Referee judgment is not a basis for protest. Only when it is alleged that:
  - a) There were violations or misapplications of FIFA Laws of the Game as amended herein;
  - b) A card was not issued in accordance with FIFA Laws of the Game as amended herein; or
  - c) A forfeit or suspension was not in accordance with HCSL rules,will a protest have standing.
2. Field size, markings, flags and the goals/nets situated on the field will not be a matter for protest.
3. Protests must be submitted by the Coach of Record in writing (including via e-mail) to the R&D Chairman within twenty four (24) hours of the match protested. Copies of the protest must be sent to the opposing Coach of Record and both Club representatives via e-mail. In order to have standing, Protests must include:
  - a) The date, time and field of the match;
    - a) The age group/division, and both Team names;
    - a) The nature of the protest including the FIFA Law(s) of the Game or HCSL rule(s) that was(were) misapplied or violated;
    - a) The harm suffered by the protesting Team;
    - a) Statements from eyewitnesses (as appropriate);
    - a) The remedy requested; and

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- a) The protest fee.
4. R&D Action on Protests
  - a) The written protest must be delivered to the R&D Director and a \$100.00 fee (cash, money order or certified check) for each card or game protested, not to exceed \$300.00, must be delivered to the HCSL President within seventy two (72) hours of the match protested. Failure to submit the required fee will result in refusal of the protest and/or rejection of the appeal.
  - b) The R&D Director will notify the Referee and the opposing Coach of Record as soon as possible, request written statements from interested parties including Referees and spectators. Written statements shall be the only evidence required to be considered by the R&D Director when rendering a decision, but the R&D Director may accept verbal statements and other evidence at their option.
5. Actions which may be taken by the R&D Director upon approval by the R&D Committee are:
  - Uphold the protest or appeal.
  - Refuse the protest and/or reject the appeal.
  - Cause a game to be replayed in its entirety.
  - Award a game to an opponent by a score set by the Committee.
  - Allow the score of a game, whether or not completed, to stand.
  - For misconduct of both Teams, enter a loss for both Teams in the standings of the affected Division.
5. A ruling by the R&D Director may be appealed to the R&D Committee by delivering a written appeal (including via e-mail) and a request for an open R&D Committee Appeal Hearing, along with the ruling appeal fee of \$100 (cash, money order or certified check) for each card, forfeit and suspension appealed, not to exceed \$300.00 that must be delivered to the President of HCSL within forty eight (48) hours of the R&D Director's ruling. Failure to submit the ruling appeal fee will result in rejection of the appeal.
6. Written statements shall be the only evidence required to be considered by the R&D Committee when rendering a decision, but the R&D Committee may accept verbal statements and other evidence at their option. Written statements may be gathered from other parties to include spectators. Any person shown a red card, dismissed, sent off or expelled may be required to appear at an Appeal Hearing, and if so required, failure to appear will result in the rejection of the appeal.
7. The protest/appeal fees shall be refunded only if the R&D Committee upholds a protest or appeal or reduces the initial award of the R&D Director.
8. Suspensions levied by the R&D Committee may be held in abeyance until action of the HCSL Appeal Process is completed.
9. No Player or Team Official may employ the aid of any lawyer or the courts of any state or of the United States.
10. Other situations not covered in these rules shall be disposed of by the R&D Director using procedures described in paragraphs M and N.
11. All decisions by the R&D Committee are final.

### ***N. RULES AND DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE***

1. The Rules and Discipline (R&D) Committee shall consist of a minimum of three (3) members. The R&D Director shall vote only in case of a tie. A member of the Committee cannot be from the same Club/Age Group as the individual(s) to which the hearing pertains.
2. Disciplinary action may be taken by the R&D Committee against any Player, Team Official, Team or Club which failed to abide by the Laws of the Game, the Articles of Incorporation, by-laws or the HCSL Rules.

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The R&D Director shall keep appropriate records of all such actions and those records may be the basis for future disciplinary action.

3. Actions which may be taken against a Player, Team Official, Team or Club Include:
  - a) The R&D Director may make a verbal warning. A written record of such warning shall be made and may be referenced in any future actions against that party. A copy will be sent to the appropriate Club representative.
  - b) A Player, Team Official, Team, or Club may be suspended for a number of games specifically identified to that party. A suspended Player may not participate in any game for which he/she is suspended. Suspended Team Officials may not appear at the game site or its vicinity for which they are suspended.
  - c) In extreme cases, upon the recommendation of the R&D Committee following a hearing and approval of the R&D Committee, a Player, Team Official, Team, or Club may be banned from HCSL participation for a specified period of time. A banned person may not participate in any HCSL games during that period. A Team that does not comply with this sanction may have all HCSL privileges removed. Creation of a "new" Team for HCSL play shall be limited to a maximum of six (6) Players from the banned Team's Roster, irrespective of seasonal year.