

Section II

**PLAYING RULES  
AND  
REGULATIONS**

**MANSFIELD SOCCER  
ASSOCIATION, INC.**

**(Revised - June 2016)**

# MANSFIELD SOCCER ASSOCIATION, INC.

## Playing Rules and Regulations

### **Rule I Registered Players**

- 1.1 Only registered properly rostered players shall be permitted to play in competition under the auspices of this association. A coach must sign and turn in a copy of their roster at the beginning of the season. By doing so they are acknowledging and accepting the responsibility of coaching that team for that season, and they are also certifying that their players are properly registered to their team. If there are any questions concerning a player's placement on a team that coach must bring it up to the age appropriate commissioner prior to signing and turning in the roster. However, if a coach does not bring the matter to the age appropriate commissioner prior to playing the first game, then the coach by his actions has acknowledge that all of the players listed are properly rostered. A team, which uses unregistered player or improperly rostered player (s), shall automatically forfeit all games in which said player(s) participated. A Coach, Assistant Coach, or Administrator found to have knowingly allowed the use of an unregistered player(s) or a player (s) not properly rostered to their team shall be suspended from all soccer activities for a minimum of one (1) year.

### **Rule II Suspensions**

- 2.1 The MSA shall honor any and all orders of suspension of players, coaches, and referees issued by NTSSA or its affiliates. A team, which uses individuals under suspension, shall automatically forfeit all games in which the individuals participated.

### **Rule III Referees and the Referee System**

- 3.1 In compliance with USSF Rules, all referees serving MSA shall be registered with the USSF and NTSSA in accordance with current rules and regulations of the USSF National Referee Committee and the State Referee Committee.
  - 3.1.1 The use of unregistered referees is approved only in emergency situations: then, the captains or coaches of the two competing teams may decide on someone agreeable to both of them to officiate. In these circumstances, the decisions of that person, serving as an emergency referee are just as binding as if he were a registered referee.
- 3.2 The only approved referee system for all MSA and NTSSA competitions shall be the international Three-Referee system (a referee and two assistant referees) employing the FIFA Laws of the Game (as modified herein), officiating techniques and mechanics.

3.2.1 In the event of a shortage of referees the highest-level games in progress shall have priority of available officials. This could result in a lower level game (U6, U8, etc.) not having a registered official requiring coaches to officiate/control the game(s).

#### **Rule IV      Playing Age**

4.1 Except where prohibited by USSF rules, youth players may participate in older divisions, but may not play in younger divisions than their age dictates, except by approval of the NTSSA State Executive Committee.

#### **Rule V                  Recruiting**

5.1 No coach, assistant coach, trainer, team representative, registered players, parents, or advertisement may offer any kind of inducement to recruit a player to play on their respective team. Forms of inducement include, but are not limited to: free t-shirts, free uniforms, etc. This rule applies to verbal discussions, letters, brochures, as well as other forms of advertisements. Failure to comply with this rule may result in the offending party being suspended from all soccer activities for a period of not less than one year. Complainant will file his/her complaint with the MSA Executive Committee, which shall render a decision. Either party may file an appeal of the Executive Committee's decision with the NTSSA Youth Commissioner, with further appeals being directed to the NTSSA State Executive Committee.

#### **Rule VI      Discipline**

6.1 The MSA shall distribute copies of this rule to every coach. The coach then has the responsibility to make this rule known to his/her team, with the further expectation that each player will share this information with his/her parents and spectators. If there are any differences between these rules and North Texas Soccer rules, North Texas Soccer rules apply.

##### **6.2 Authority**

6.2.1 All soccer members and participants within the jurisdiction of the MSA have requested to participate in our program. Therefore, these participants have agreed to abide by the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and Rules and Regulations of MSA, as well as those of the NTSSA and its respective youth divisions.

6.2.2 MSA has made provisions to form an Appeals and Disciplinary Committee and to hold hearings – WITH THE PARTIES HAVING THE RIGHT TO BE PRESENT – on every player/coach/assistant coach cautioned or ejected and on referee's reports of serious misconduct by spectators and/or parents as required by subsequent sections of this rule.

### 6.3 Misconduct of Players/Coaches/Assistant Coaches

6.3.1 MSA operates and keeps records on a "CUMULATIVE CARD SYSTEM" for all players/coaches/assistant coaches. Accumulated cautions may result in disciplinary actions including suspensions. Appeals of cards are not allowed except when the referee admits he made an error in the issuance of the card.

6.3.2 A "CUMULATIVE CARD SYSTEM" in league play will be operated as follows:

1. Yellow Cards. One game automatic suspension for the game following an individual's third league play yellow card. A two game automatic suspension for the game following such individual's fifth league play yellow card. A one game automatic suspension for the game following such individual's sixth league play yellow card.

Note: A player/coach/assistant coach receiving a second yellow card in a single game is suspended for the balance of that game, and those two yellow cards are then added to such individual's previous total of league play yellow cards to determine whether additional game suspensions, if any, are required. Red cards issued solely as a result of a second yellow in a single game will not be added to such individual's league play red card total.

2. Red Cards. A one game automatic suspension for the game following an individual's first league play red card. Automatic suspension, pending a hearing, from all NTSSA-sanctioned activities following such individual's second league play red card. Red cards issued solely as a result of a second yellow card in a single game will not be added to such individual's league play red card total.

Note: In cases where, during a single game, an individual receives a yellow card followed by a "straight red card" (as opposed to a red card issued solely as a result of a second yellow) both cards will be added to such individual's respective total of league play red and yellow cards and punished accordingly. If an A & D Committee determines that a red card was issued for an infraction that was not an "expulsion" offense in accordance with the FIFA Laws of the Game, such A & D Committee may reduce the red card to a yellow card and assess sanctions accordingly. The Member Association or Playing League may not, however, do away with the card altogether. A full report of this action must be sent to NTSSA.

3. Seventh Card. Any individual obtaining a seventh card in league play shall be immediately suspended pending a hearing with NTSSA A & D Committee (meaning any combination of yellow and red cards totaling seven).

6.3.3 For tournaments refer to the NTSSA rules located on their website.

6.3.4 The CUMULATIVE CARD SYSTEM prescribed by these rules defines the **minimum** disciplinary punishment to be taken. Nothing herein prevents MSA or NTSSA from enacting more severe sanctions.

6.3.5 A player receiving a yellow card in any game must immediately leave the field of play and may only re-enter the field at the next opportunity for substitution.

6.3.6 Any misconduct by a Coach justifying a report by a referee or any other person shall be directed to the State Appeals and Disciplinary Committee as well as to the Member Association and/or Playing League with which the coach is affiliated. The Member Association and/or Playing League shall promptly (within seven (7) days after the receipt of the report) rule on the report and send its decision to the State A & D Committee. The State A & D committee will determine the extent of the punishment, if any, in addition to that taken by the Member Association.

6.3.7 The State A & D Committee will make its decision based entirely upon the written reports before it, including that of the affected coach, should he or she submit a report. The Committee will not hold hearings unless it, of its own volition, chooses to call one.

6.3.8 A coach whose conduct is less than exemplary to his or her players, parents, and spectators will be firmly dealt with by the Member Association or Playing League involved and the State A & D Committee.

6.3.9 Game suspensions for Yellow and Red cards (as set forth above) are to be served by the player/coach/assistant coach at the next scheduled game (including league, playoff, championship, cup, and local or state tournament games) that such individual's team is involved in. A suspension imposed by these rules shall be recognized by all affiliated organizations after proper notification. The lack of a hearing or referee report on the offense shall not affect such individual's suspension.

6.3.10 All game suspensions must be reported immediately to the State A & D Committee. The Member Association, Playing League or Tournament Officials making the report will forward a copy of any referee's Misconduct Report(s) which underlie the suspension. The State A & D Committee will determine the extent of punishment, if any, in addition to that prescribed by the Member Association, Playing League or Tournament Officials, taking into consideration the severity of the misconduct.

6.3.11 The State A & D Committee will issue its decision based entirely upon the officials' reports and any other written reports before it, including that of the affected individual, should he or she submit a report. The State A & D Committee will not hold a hearing unless it, of its own volition, chooses to call one because of the nature of the case.

#### 6.4 Misconduct of Spectators

6.4.1 Each team in MSA is responsible for the conduct of its spectators. The referee shall have the authority to caution and/or send off the coach or acting coach from the field for the misconduct of the spectators associated with the team. Therefore, the coach/assistant coach is expected to control his or her spectators, especially on non-enclosed fields. If he/she is unable to do so, then MSA shall take appropriate actions toward the identifiable, unruly spectator, or, if unidentifiable, toward the

team itself. MSA shall report spectator misconduct to the State A & D Committee for review and further action if warranted.

6.4.2 Possible actions for misconduct of spectators may include, but shall not be limited to:

1. Report spectator to the Mansfield Police Department.
2. Require the team to forfeit any games at which the spectator is present on the touchline.
3. Require the offending team to pay for the presence of police at the game.
4. Revoke and/or refuse registration to the offending team.
5. Cause the spectator to be placed under a municipal peace bond.
6. Suspend the spectator from attending future matches.

## 6.5 Misconduct and Punishment of Teams

6.5.1 When the players/coaches/spectators of the given team have accumulated a sufficient number of cards, the MSA will notify the NTSSA State A & D committee, who will then require the coach and players of said team to appear before it to explain his/her teams continued misconduct.

6.5.2 The MSA and the NTSSA will not hesitate to deny teams within their respective jurisdictions, the privilege of further participation in all or selected soccer activities within their respective jurisdictions for repeated and/or serious offenses considered to bring the game into disrepute.

6.5.3 The MSA and the NTSSA hold the team and coach jointly responsible for the conduct of his/her players, parents, and spectators.

6.5.4 A coach whose conduct is not considered to be exemplary to his/her players, parents and spectators will be firmly dealt with by the A & D Committees of both the MSA and the NTSSA. The MSA Board of Directors can remove a coach from their position if the Board feels they are not representing MSA in a respectable manner.

## 6.6 Misconduct Toward a Referee

6.6.1 NTSSA has exclusive jurisdiction over assault or abuse of officials, both referees and assistant referees, in any competition by NTSSA or MSA. This jurisdiction includes:

1. All USSF registered referees.
2. Any non-licensed person serving in any emergency capacity as a game official.
3. Any coach, parent, or assistant referee serving as a game official.

6.6.2 If there is an assault/abuse of any game official by any person, including players, coaches, or spectators, a report of the alleged assault and/or abuse will be submitted immediately to the NTSSA.

1. Referee assault is an intentional act of physical violence at or upon a referee (an act intended to bring about a result that will invade the interest of another in a way that is socially unacceptable. Unintended consequences of the act are irrelevant.) Assault includes but is not limited to the following acts committed upon

a referee: hitting, kicking, punching, choking, spitting on, grabbing or bodily running into a referee; head butting; the act of kicking or throwing any object at a referee that could inflict injury; damaging the referee's uniform or personal property, i.e. car, equipment, etc.

2. The player, coach, manager, or official committing the referee assault is automatically suspended as follows:

- a. For a minor or slight touching of the referee or the referee's uniform or personal property, at least 3 months from the time of the assault;
- b. Except as provided in clause (c) or (d), for any other assault, at least 6 months from the time of the assault;
- c. For an assault committed by an adult and the referee is 17 years of age or younger, at least 3 years; or
- d. For an assault when serious injuries are inflicted, at least 5 years.

6.6.3 Referee abuse shall include, but not be limited to verbally threatening a referee.

1. Referee abuse is a verbal statement or physical act not resulting in bodily contact, which implies or threatens physical harm to a referee or a referee's property or equipment. Abuse includes, but is not limited to the following acts committed upon a referee: using foul or abusive language toward a referee; spewing any beverage on a referee's personal property; spitting at (but not on) the referee; or verbally threatening a referee. Verbal threats are remarks that carry the implied or direct threat of physical harm. Such remarks as, "I'll get you after the game" or "You won't get out of here in one piece", shall be deemed referee abuse.
2. Should the A & D committee determine the action referee abuse as explained in (1) above, it shall impose not less than a three (3) game suspension. A formal hearing will not be held unless it is requested.

6.7 The Appeals and Disciplinary Chairman may offer a one game suspension to a coach, assistant coach, parent, or spectator when the infraction of a by-law, rule, regulation, policy, or procedure is deemed to be minor in nature. This suspension is a waiver of the right to have a formal appeals and disciplinary hearing and the decision to accept the suspension or to have a appeals and disciplinary hearing lies solely with the coach, assistant coach, parent, or spectator.

## **Rule VII Game Protests**

7.1 There are only two acceptable causes for the protesting of a game after it has been played. They are:

7.1.1 A team knowingly plays an unregistered, ineligible or suspended player;

7.1.2 There has been an obvious error made in the application of the Laws of the Game that directly affects the outcome of the match, and the referee acknowledges it.

- 7.2 No protests can even be entertained if they are based on judgment decisions made by the referee during play. The Laws of the Game clearly state in Law V (Referees) that ...“A referee shall be appointed to officiate each game...his decision are to be final, so far as the result of the game is concerned”. A game cannot be protested because one coach, or both coaches, for that matter think the referee was incompetent. This is a matter to be handled through the local referees’ group or the State Referee Committee.
- 7.3 Any protest relating to the grounds, any protest committee shall not entertain goal posts, crossbars, or other appurtenances of the match unless an objection had been lodged with the match referee before the commencement of the match. The referee shall require the responsible team to remove the cause of the objection if this is possible, without unduly delaying the process of the match.
- 7.4 Any protests must be filed in writing by the coach within forty-eight (48) hours of the alleged occurrence. Said protest may be filed with the A & D Chairman or the President of the Association within forty-eight (48) hours of the alleged offense. The written protest shall be accompanied by a cashier’s check, certified check, or cash in the amount of fifty dollars (\$50.00). The A & D Chairman shall then be responsible for convening a meeting of the A & D Committee within seven (7) days from the date the written protest was received, to consider the protest. If the protesting team prevails, the fifty dollars (\$50.00) shall be refunded. If the protest is disallowed, the fifty dollars (\$50.00) shall accrue to the treasury of the association.

## **Rule VIII MSA Rules of Competition**

8.1 MSA adheres strictly to the FIFA Laws of the Game. However, in accordance with the recommendations of the USYSA (United States Youth Soccer Association) and the NTSSA (North Texas State Soccer Association), the MSA has adopted the following modifications to the FIFA Laws of the Game for youth competition:

1. Size of the fields For various age groups – Law I
2. Size of the ball For various age groups – Law II
3. Number of Players Varies from Law III  
(and substitutions)
4. Assistant Referee Allowing for Assistant Referee – Law IV
5. Duration of Game For various age groups – Law VII
6. Charging Goalkeeper Law XII

### **8.2 Law I – The Field of Play**

Realizing that we must generally accept and play upon fields furnished by the various municipal parks departments, the following are recommended field and goal sizes:

<u>Age Groups</u>	<u>Field Width</u>	<u>Field Length</u>	<u>Goal Size</u>
U13 - U19	Rec. 70 yds.	Rec. 120 yds.	8 ft x 24 ft.



U11 - U12	Rec. 50 yds.	Rec. 75 yds.	7 ft. X 18 ft.
U9 - U10	Rec. 30 yds.	Rec. 50 yds.	7 ft. x 18 ft.
U7 - U8	Rec. 20 yds.	Rec. 30 yds.	4 ft. x 6 ft.
U5 - U6	Rec. 20 yds.	Rec. 30 yds.	4 ft. x 6 ft.

### 8.3 Law II - The Ball

Ball sizes for various age groups will be as follows:

<u>Age Groups</u>	<u>Ball Size</u>
U13 and above	Size #5
U9 - U12	Size #4
U5 - U8	Size #3

#### 8.4 Law III – Number of Players

1. MSA recognizes the Modified Player Development Program for Under 6, Under 8, Under 10, and Under 12. These age divisions will adhere to the small sided rules as follows:

U5 - U6	Three (3) players – No Goalkeeper
U7 - U8	Four (4) players – No Goalkeeper
U9 - U10	Seven (7) players – one may be a designated Goalkeeper
U11- U12	Nine (9) players – one must be a designated Goalkeeper

#### 2. Substitution Rule

- a. At throw-in – by team in possession only;
- b. On a goal kick – by either team;
- c. After a goal is scored – by either team;
- d. At an injury when the referee stops play – by either team;
- e. When a caution (yellow card) is given – for the player being cautioned;
- f. For Under 6 and Under 8, the “Quarter Substitution System” shall be utilized. The referee will hold up the game for substitutions at a normal stoppage of the game (restarts, goal kicks, etc.) at a time nearest to one half the way through each regular half time period.
- g. All players must play at least 50% of the game. In addition for U5 through U8 no player shall play all four quarters if enough players are present.

#### 3. Minimum Number of Players Required to Play a Game

- a. Under 5 and Under 6, which normally fields 3 players, must have a minimum of 3 players present to start a game. It is acceptable to borrow a player from the opposing team if necessary to keep from playing short, provided that all parties agree.
- b. Under 7 and Under 8, which normally field 4 players, must have a minimum of 3 players present to start the game.
- c. Under 9 and Under 10, which normally fields 7 players, must have a minimum of 5 players present to start the game.
- d. Under 11 and Under 12 – which usually normally fields 9 players to start, must have a minimum of 7 players present to start the game.
- e. Under 13 – Under 19, which normally fields 11 players to start, must have a minimum of 7 players present to start the game.

#### 8.5 Law IV – Players’ Equipment

1. Each player shall have a number on the back of his/her jersey not less than four (4) inches in height.
2. All players are required to wear shin guards in games. Shin guards must be completely covered by socks.
3. No jewelry is allowed, especially pierced earrings.
4. No metal or hard plastic material is to be worn. This includes barrettes, beads, and clips.

## 8.6 Law V – Referees

1. In Under 6, Under 8, & Under 10, referees will explain all infractions briefly.

## 8.7 Law VI – Assistant Referees

1. Specifically trained and certified Assistant Referees and/or club linesmen may be used by MSA. Their infraction-calling authority is limited to ball in and out of play and direction of throw-ins. Assistant Referees may call goal kick and offside. Certified referees will be used as assistant referees for Under 12 and up.

## 8.8 Law VII – Duration of the Game

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Length of Halves</u>	<u>Length of Overtime</u>
Under 19	Two 45 minute periods	No Overtime
Under 16	Two 40 minute periods	No Overtime
Under 14	Two 35 minute periods	No Overtime
Under 12	Two 30 minute periods	No Overtime
Under 10	Two 25 minute periods	No Overtime
Under 8*	Two 24 minute periods	No Overtime
Under 6**	Two 20 minute periods	No Overtime
Under 5***	Two 16 minute periods	No Overtime

\*Under 8 – Four 12 minute quarters; Two minute breaks after quarters 1 and 3. Five minute break at half time.

\*\*Under 6 – Four 10 minute quarters; Two minute breaks after quarters 1 and 3. Five minute break at half time.

\*\*\*Under 5 – Four 8 minute quarters; Two minute breaks after quarters 1 and 3. Five minute break at half time.

## 8.9 Law VIII – The Start of Play - Conform to FIFA

## 8.10 Law IX – Ball In and Out of Play - Conform to FIFA

## 8.11 Law X – Method of Scoring – Conform to FIFA

## 8.12 Law XI – Offside

1. No offside for Under 6 or Under 8. Conform to FIFA for Under 9 and above play.

## 8.13 Law XII – Fouls and Misconduct

1. Charging the goalkeeper in possession of the ball is **NOT ALLOWED** in any youth play. Possession is defined as "one or two hands on the ball, holding it, bouncing it, tossing it up in the air and then catching it, or patting it along the ground".
2. It is not an intentional "hand-ball" offense for any player to attempt to protect the vital areas of his/her body (chest, groin, face) by placing hands or arms across them to protect them from being struck at close range by the ball. The match referee shall be the sole judge of whether the hands or arms were used deliberately to propel the ball.
3. Coaches and assistant coaches are subject to the same disciplinary procedures by the referee as are the players - i.e. cautions and/or ejections.
4. The following pertain to the Under 6 and Under 8 age groups:
  - a. Indirect free kicks for all fouls.
  - b. No penalty kicks.
  - c. Briefly explain all infractions to offending players.
  - d. No cautions or ejections to players except by independent, neutral referees.
  - e. Due to inexperience and for the safety of all players in the U5/6 and U7/8 age divisions, **NO slide tackling is allowed**. Slide tackling is basically the act of a player sliding on the pitch in an effort to tackle or take the ball away from another player. However, the mere act of sliding to stop the ball, make a pass, take a shot on goal or mere clumsiness, where opponents are not in danger or the immediate vicinity is not a foul. Any foul is at the sole discretion of the assigned referee.
5. The following pertains to U12 and below age groups:

Due to inexperience and for the safety of all players in the U12 and below age divisions, **NO heading of the ball is allowed**. The intentional heading of a ball in a game will result in an indirect free kick by the opposing team at the spot where the header occurred.

#### 8.14 Law XIII – Free Kick

1. All free kicks are indirect in Under 5 – Under 8. Players must be 3 yards away when free kick is taken.
2. Under 9 and Under 10, opponents must be 5 yards away before kick is taken.
3. Under 11 and above – conform to FIFA.

#### 8.15 Law XIV – Penalty Kick

1. No penalty kicks in Under 6 and Under 8.
2. Under 10 and above, conform to FIFA.

#### 8.16 Law XV – Throw-In

1. In Under 6 (no Throw-In) play will be restarted with a kick-in from where the ball went out of play. For Under 6, an opponent must be 3 yards away when the kick is taken.
2. In Under 7 (no Throw-In) play will be restarted with a kick-in from where the ball went out of play. For Under 7, an opponent must be 5 yards away when the kick is taken.

3. Under 8 and above, conform to FIFA.

8.17 Law XVI – Goal Kick – In Under 5 thru Under 8 all goal kicks will be taken from anywhere on the end line. Under 9 and Under 10 – all opposing team players must retire to behind the Build-Out line. U11 and above - Conform to FIFA

8.18 Law XVII – Corner Kick – Conform to FIFA

8.19 Goalkeeper in Possession of Ball – Under 9 and Under 10 – goalkeeper may not punt the ball to release it. He/She must roll, throw, or pass the ball. Under 11 – Under 19 – conform to FIFA

## **Rule IX Miscellaneous Rules for Association Play**

9.1 If a team does not show up for a match, the referee will allow ten (10) minutes from the scheduled time, before declaring a forfeit against the absent team. The home association of the forfeiting team shall incur the costs for fields and referees. **A coach and his team that fail to show up for a match without written 72 hour notice (email is sufficient) may be subject to a \$50 fine.**

9.2 There shall be no more than a one (1)-player advantage throughout any game. The coach who has the full team may opt to play down to the number of his/her opponent's team. Any team who has less than the minimum players must field all available players. I.E. – The coach may not retain a player for the purpose of substitution.

9.3 If there are uniform color conflicts, the home team has the responsibility of changing.

9.4 Players, coaches, fans, and spectators of opposing teams shall occupy opposite sides of the field. The home team shall occupy the North or West side of the field.

9.5 Standings shall be computed as follows:

1. Total Points per Team: Each game shall be calculated as: Win – Three (3) points, Loss – Zero (0) points, Tie – One (1) points

2. In the event of a tie, apply the following; first, head to head game results. Second, goal differential for the entire season (3 max for a win, -3 max for a loss). Third, fewest goals allowed for the season. Fourth, most number of shutouts. Fifth, flip on a coin.

9.6 No tobacco products of any kind shall be used at or near the practice fields/complex or the game fields/complex. No electronic cigarettes or “e-cigarettes” shall be at or near the practice fields/complex or the game fields/complex. Pets are not allowed at practice fields or game complex.

9.7 For U5 – U8 age groups only: if a team falls behind by 5 goals the team that is behind may add an additional player on the field and play one person up. The player may be added at any normal stoppage of play. They may continue to play one person up (for U5 and U6 - 4v3, for U7 and U8 - 5v4,) until the score comes back within two goals. At that time they must reduce back to the normal number of players on the field.

9.8 Tournament of Champions - For each age division available at TOC, the Association will send one (1) representative team from the boys and one (1) representative team from the girls. If a team registers and then does not compete, that team will be responsible for the performance bond.

1. The first place team in each even numbered age division will automatically receive this honor. If there is an odd numbered age division offered at TOC, the first place team in each odd numbered age division will automatically receive this honor. If there is not an odd numbered age division offered at TOC and an odd numbered age division team wishes to have a chance to play in the Tournament of Champions, they must play up to the next age division and be in first place. For age group teams playing in associations other than MSA the highest finishing Mansfield team as defined by the association they are playing in will be the team selected for the TOC.

