

**PA WEST SOCCER ASSOCIATION**  
**2021-22 Youth Division Rules**  
*(Effective February 1, 2022)*

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***Article 1 – Introduction***

**1.1**

Soccer in western Pennsylvania will be known as a sporting activity where courtesy, common sense, and good sportsmanship prevail. The Youth Board issues these Rules and Regulations to supplement the current FIFA Laws of the Game and US Youth Soccer rules and are to be followed uniformly. The purpose of these Rules and Regulations is to encourage the playing of youth soccer by providing a uniform and organized standard. Sportsmanship and fair play is the standard in all instances whether enumerated in a written rule or not.

Harassment, abuse, or assault of referees is not to be tolerated; the right of each player, coach, team/club official, parent and spectator to attend games is a privilege that can be lost by inappropriate conduct.

**1.2**

These rules govern all play and are supported by Youth Division Regulations which carry the same obligation of compliance. Clubs have the right to retain house rules for their In- House providing such rules are consistent and in accord with PA West Soccer and US Youth Soccer rules. All Districts and Divisions have the right to augment the Rules with the approval of the PA West Soccer Youth Board. Rule violations are subject to a hearing. TOPSoccer players will be granted exceptions to the rules and regulations.

**1.3**

A claim of ignorance of these rules and regulations shall not be satisfactory grounds for the waiving of such rules and regulations.

**1.4**

Proposed rule changes are to be submitted to the State Office to be forwarded to the Youth Board Chair by March 1 for the Fall Session and October 1 for the Spring Session.

The Youth Board has the authority and obligation to review, change and adjust the rules each year. The Youth Board has the authority to change or adjust each and any rule that is in conflict with another rule or any policy handed down from US Youth Soccer national or regional authorities at the January meeting.

**1.5**

All illegal drugs, alcoholic beverages, and weapons are prohibited at all PA West Soccer sanctioned or sponsored activities, where youth are present. Clubs/individuals who do not comply with this rule will be required to appear before the Disciplinary Committee. Those found guilty of violations of this rule will be subject to suspension for up to one playing season (one year). The Divisional/District Director, or Tournament Chair, will immediately suspend those involved until the Disciplinary Committee has met and decided the case.

**1.6**

Only the Youth Board has the authority to grant exceptions to these rules. All requests for exceptions must be submitted by the Club President in writing to the Youth Board President or his designee (e.g. the Rules Committee) who will include the request on the agenda for discussion at the next regularly scheduled youth board meeting. A ¾ vote of the members present will be required to grant an exception. All exception hearings will be held in executive session. These rules will remain in effect until revised or amended as provided by the PA West Soccer Constitution and By-Laws. These rules supersede all presently effective rules. Each District/Division shall have the right to impose fines upon its member clubs/teams for non-attendance at division presidents meetings, or to require clubs/teams to post performance bonds for various age group participation. Such fines must be approved by a majority of club voting members present (as defined by that District/Division) from the specific District or Division imposing the fine; all such levies must be approved prior to the start of any season and confirmed by the Youth Board.

**1.7**

For all disciplinary matters overnight, regular and express, or certified letter (signature required) shall be the official means of communication, supplemented but not replaced by phone calls or email.

**1.8**

PA West Soccer's Youth Division may adjust the Youth Division Playing Rules as necessitated by amendments to the PA West Soccer Constitution and/or Bylaws.

**Article 2 - Definitions**

**ABANDONED GAME:**

(See TERMINATED GAME)

**CLASSIC DIVISION:**

A Saturday playing League for players U12 through and including U20

**COMPETITIVE DIVISIONS:**

PA West Soccer will offer the following competitive leagues of play:  
State Leagues Division 1 - 4

**COMPETITIVE PLAYER:**

A player registered in a competitive program. Competitive programs are as follows: Teams in State Leagues Division 1 – 3 and any other national affiliate.

**DISTRICT:**

A geographically defined area in which the elected Director organizes travel for Divisions 5 and 6 Travel Teams and coordinates any In-House (Recreational League) program matters.

**DIVISION:**

Inter-District Competitive Leagues in which the elected Director organizes travel for that specific league/division

**FRIENDLY GAME:**

These games can be arranged by the coach and does not affect the outcome of any league.

**IMPARTIAL HEARING COMMITTEE:**

An impartial hearing committee is composed of individuals who are not directly involved in the event that required a hearing.

**IN-HOUSE:**

A league administered at the local Club in which:

1. The use of tryouts, invitations, recruiting or any like process to roster players selectively to any team or player pool on the basis of talent or ability is prohibited;
2. The Club accepts as participants any and all eligible youths (subject to reasonable terms or registration);
3. A system of rostering players is employed for the purpose of creating a fair or balanced distribution of playing talent among all teams or playing pools participating; and,
4. Each player plays at least one-half (1/2) of each game except for reasons of injury, illness or discipline.

**INVOLUNTARY RELEASE:**

The removal of a player from a team's roster at the request of team authorities. (See National Championship Rule 101 and PA West Soccer State Cup Rules for restrictions and specific conditions for teams entering such competitions.)

**LEAGUE:**

A structured group of four (4) or more teams joined for the purpose of inter-team play under a common set of administrative and competition rules.

**LEAGUE GAME:**

A game scheduled by the Playing Division/District/League Director. These are required games.

**MAKE-UP GAME:**

A scheduled league game that is rescheduled because the original game was canceled due to inclement weather, or other emergencies affecting playing conditions through no fault of the participants or spectators.

**PLAYING SEASON:**

September 1 of one calendar year thru August 31 of the following calendar year.

**PLAYING SESSION:**

The period of play for either fall or spring. Starting and ending dates of actual play (fall or spring sessions) are established by the Youth Board.

**PICK-UP GAME:**

Game played where one or more of the following conditions occur:

1. One (1) or more players may not be registered;
2. Officials are not used;
3. Registered adult supervision is lacking. No player, spectator, coach, or Club is covered by PA West Soccer insurance in such games.

**RECRUITING:**

Any effort made directly or indirectly on behalf of a team or club to attract a player to said team or club.

**REGISTRATION:**

The execution of an intent to play the sport of soccer and the paying of fees to become a member of a specific team/club, PA West Soccer, and US Youth Soccer.

**ROSTERING:**

The assignment of a registered player to a team.

**SCRIMMAGE GAME:**

Practice game played between two PA West Soccer registered teams with no referees.

**TEAM CARD ACCUMULATION:**

The number of cards (red and yellow) accumulated by players and coaches on a team as on record at the State Office.

**TEAM INTEGRITY:**

A team shall be considered the same team from season to season (different playing years) if N (half) rounded down plus one (1) of the previous year's officially rostered players are rostered on the new year's official roster.

**TERMINATED GAME:**

A game ended by the referee. The status of the game shall be determined by the proper Authority in charge of that game.

**TRANSFER:**

The removal of a player from a team's roster on the request of the player, and the contemporaneous addition of the player to the roster of another team.

**TRAVEL LEAGUE**

Travel Leagues administered by the District for Divisions 5 and 6

**TRAVEL DIVISIONS:**

A travel league administered by the District for Travel League play in which:

1. Each club determines the process to roster players
2. The league does not otherwise meet the definition of an in-house or competitive League;

**VIOLENT CONDUCT:**

The commission of a violent act against an opponent, official, spectator, or teammate at a match or on the way to or from. This also includes, but is not limited to, the definition under FIFA Law 5

**VOLUNTARY RELEASE:**

The removal of a player from a team's roster at the request of the player.

**PLAYING RULES**

**Article 3 - Game Specifications**

**3.1**

All regularly scheduled games are to be played. Teams in all Districts/Divisions will be provided with a minimum six (6) game schedule two (2) weeks prior to start of playing session. Teams failing to complete their full schedule will be subject to review by the District Director and required to justify their failure to complete their schedule. The coach/team can be subject to suspension for one (1) year and the club can be subject to a fine. This team may also be prevented from participation in the PA West Soccer State Cup or PA West Soccer Open tournaments.

**3.2**

The following specifications are applicable to in-house and travel competition administered by the PA West Soccer Association.

### 1. Game duration and ball sizes:

<i>Age Group</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Ball Size</i>	<i>Goal Size (max)</i>
Under 19	Two 45 min halves	# 5	8 x 24
Under 18	Two 45 min halves	# 5	8 x 24
Under 17	Two 45 min halves	# 5	8 x 24
Under 16	Two 40 min halves	# 5	8 x 24
Under 15	Two 40 min halves	# 5	8 x 24
Under 14	Two 35 min halves	# 5	8 x 24
Under 13	Two 35 min halves	# 5	8 x 24
Under 12	Two 30 min halves	# 4	7 x 21
Under 11	Two 30 min halves	# 4	7 x 21
Under 10	Two 25 min halves	# 4	6.5 x 18.5
Under 9	Two 25 min halves	# 4	6.5 x 18.5
Under 8	Four 10 min quarters	# 3	4 x 6
Under 7	Four 10 min quarters	# 3	4 x 6
Under 6	Four 10 min quarters	# 3	4 x 6
Under 5	Four 10 min quarters	# 3	4 x 6

Halftime for U8 and lower 5 minutes between quarters. Halftime for U9 and older 10 minutes.

### 2. Game Dimensions

<i>Age Group</i>	<i>Format</i>	<i>Roster Size</i>	<i>Field Size (max/min)</i>
U13-U19*	11 v 11	18*	90 x 120/50 x 100
U11-U12	9 v 9	16	70-80/ 45-55
U10**	7 v 7	12	55-65/ 35-45
U8***	4 v 4	-	25-35/ 15-25
U6***	4 v 4	-	25-35/ 15-25

\*U13 and older may have a maximum of 22 on the roster and 18 on the game day roster

\*\*Build-out lines are required

\*\*\*No keepers, no offsides

All League games require a minimum of seven (7) players for regular and five (5) players for small-sided games.

### 3. Player Equipment

- All players on the field must be attired in matching color uniforms consisting of shorts, jersey (with non-conflicting number) socks, shin guards, and legal soccer shoes. In case of a color clash, the home team will change.
  - For a player or team official to participate in a game or associated activity of the competitions may only have on the team uniform, or outer wear of the player or team official a name, logo, or other identifying mark of a youth soccer organization that is US Youth Soccer, a State Association or other member of US Youth Soccer, a member of a State Association, or an organization that is a member of an organization that is a member of a State Association. A name, logo, or other identifying mark of any other youth soccer organization must be removed, replaced, or covered before the player or team official may continue to remain at the game site for the game or associated activity.
- All or any member (s) of any team are permitted to wear extra protective clothing including gloves or garment protruding beyond the uniform without dangerous, protruding or hard objects, provided that:
  - The proper team uniform is worn outermost;
  - Referee discretion may be used to determine if any item of protective clothing is considered to go beyond the purpose of providing protection.

## **Article 4 - The Game**

### **4.1 Prior to the Start of the Game**

Coaches/Managers will provide the following items to the referee:

1. Original validated roster.
2. Player passes for all players who are present and for up to three (3) coaches/managers. Players/coaches arriving late must give their passes to the referee/assistant referee before they can enter the game/technical area.
3. Two (2) properly completed game day rosters.
4. No official league game shall be played without presentation of the above items.
5. Player passes can be provided using Affinity Digital Player Cards.

### **4.2 Officiating**

1. Three (3) currently certified referee shall be assigned to officiate each game with the authority granted to them as specified in the "Laws of the Game" (FIFA). Officiating of all games will be governed by the Laws of the Game and the Rules of Competition subject to any modifications in these playing rules. In the event of an emergency club linesmen may be used. It is required that PA West Soccer USSF referees use a DSC system (diagonal system of control – three-man system).
2. The center referee must be two (2) years older than the age group he/she is refereeing up to the age of 17
3. The referee will keep the player passes, and the game day rosters. He will give each team the game day roster for its opponent. The referee shall not allow any player or coach/manager to participate in the game who does not have a valid player pass or coach's pass.
4. The decision of the Referee on points of fact connected with play shall be final, and the results of the game cannot be appealed.
5. No one may enter or exit the field without the permission of the referee.

### **4.3 Coaching**

1. Coaches 18 and younger must be at least two years older than the age group they are coaching.
2. Coaches under the age of 18 must be in the company of at least one coach of legal age at all times
3. Coaching from the technical area, i.e. giving directions to one's own team on points of strategy and position, is permitted without-mechanical or electronic devices
4. Each coach or substitute player is to remain within technical area. The technical area shall be defined as 10 yards each side of the half line. Spectators shall view the game from the opposite side of the field from the technical area.
5. No coach, player or spectator is to use profanity.
6. No coach, player or spectator is to incite, in any manner, disruptive behavior of any kind.
7. It shall be the responsibility of each coach and/or manager to maintain proper spectator conduct. They shall be held primarily accountable for the conduct of the spectators for or from their respective teams.
8. A team may have as many coaches with passes as it wishes. However, at the start of the game, a team may declare only three (3) coaches/managers that may be a part of the bench for the game. Removal of the coach/manager by the referee does not permit another coach/manager to join the bench.
9. If the above rules are violated, the referee shall ask the offending party for compliance with the rules. A caution may be issued at this time if the referee deems it necessary. If the offending party refuses to comply the referee shall dismiss the party from the game. A referee has the right to ask the coach to leave the game and he will serve the same suspension as an ejected player. If he refuses, the game will be abandoned. The referee shall report such violation to the State Office in writing.
10. 10.0 In order to be rostered, all coaches need to be certified or licensed through PA West Soccer certification and licensing programs as established by the PA West Youth Board.
  - a. Clubs fielding more than two teams per age group and gender into Div 1-3 shall have a licensed coach on the roster and on the bench during games. Accepted licenses are USSF D-License, USC National Diploma, or US Youth National Youth Certificate. Coaches that do

not qualify have a one-year grace period in which they must obtain the required license/certificate.

#### **4.4 Substitutions**

1. Substitutions may be made on any stoppage of play with the consent of the referee. Players must be at the half line ready to enter the game.
2. Clubs with travel Division 5 and 6 teams U12 and lower, will ensure that each player plays at least half of every game.

#### **4.5 FRIENDLY Game**

Friendly games can be arranged between coaches or Clubs. All required procedures must be followed before these games can be played, with single exception of requiring team rosters. Teams can be composed of players possessing currently valid player pass from same club. Any red cards issued in these games will carry over to the next scheduled league game. These games cannot be used to wipe out a red card so the player/coach can play in the next scheduled game.

#### **4.6 Guest Player/ Club Pass**

1. Up to four (4) players for U12 and younger, and up to seven (7) players for U13 and older, of an equal or lower age group and Division from within the same Club, not exceeding maximum roster size, are allowed to participate in regular league games.
  - a. Classic club pass up to four (4) players for U12 and older. Classic teams U12 and older may club pass a maximum of four (4) players from D3 to D2, D2 to D1, D3 to D1 or D2 to D3. D1 teams including GLC (regional league teams) may not club pass players down to D2 or D3. If a classic team is playing up an age group for their league play, those players can only drop down to their own age to play in D1 as club pass. For this rule D1, D2 and D3 are not considered one and the same Division.  
For this rule D5 and D6 are considered one and the same Division.
2. Jersey numbers and Club guest players may be handwritten on the GDR
3. Player passes of guest players are required (see 4.1.2)
4. Any Coach rostered on a team can coach any team within his Club
5. Player and coach suspensions/ejections/dismissals must be served with the team on which the red card or dismissal was received unless the affected player was playing on a club pass at the time in which case the suspension must be served at the next game for that player's primary club team.
6. Coaches will be issued one single pass

#### **4.7 Game Protest**

The protesting party needs to contact their playing Division Director in writing no earlier than 24 hours after the game, but no later than 48 hours after the conclusion for review and recommendation.

### **Article 5 (Players/Coaches/Spectators)**

#### **5.1 Misconduct on the Field of Play**

##### A. Players

1. Red Card: One (1) game suspension for the next played league game. (except as in 5.1 A. 6 below);
2. Two Red Cards (in a season, September 1 through August 31): Three (3) game suspension for the next three (3) played league game;
3. Three Red Cards (accumulated all leagues/tournaments combined in a season, except US Youth Soccer National Championship Series games): Indefinite suspension. The player must appear before the Disciplinary Board before he/she may be reinstated;
4. A red card and its suspensions will be carried over from season to season;
5. Any player receiving four (4) cards (red and/or yellow) in one playing season (September 1 through August 31) shall be subject to a hearing to determine if additional time will be required besides the minimum one (1) game in conjunction with any additional game suspension;
6. A player who receives a red card/ejection for violent conduct shall be automatically suspended for two (2) games, a hearing may be held to determine if a more serious punishment is needed. If a

hearing is not held before the third game following the suspension, the player's pass shall be reinstated and he/she shall be eligible to play unless or until it is determined otherwise by a hearing that season;

- If a player receives a red card/ejection and then proceeds to commit verbal abuse or any other offense which, on its own, meets the criteria for a red card offense, the referee shall submit a report and a hearing shall be held to determine if additional penalties shall be imposed.
- All suspensions must be served with the player's primary team and the player will not be eligible to play with any team as a rostered or club pass player until the completion of the suspension.

#### B. Coach

- Any coach or manager found guilty, after a hearing, of using ineligible players shall be suspended for a period of one year.
- A coach participating in a game without a valid pass shall be subject to a hearing. Any coach found guilty of coaching without a valid pass will be suspended for a minimum of four (4) games.
- Red Card: Two (2) game suspension for the next played league game;
- Any coach receiving two (2) red card/ejections in a season is, pending a hearing, automatically suspended for one (1) year, starting with the date the second dismissal has been received.
- A red card and its suspensions will be carried over from season to season;
- If a coach receives a red card/ejection and then proceeds to commit verbal abuse or any other offense which, on its own, meets the criteria for a red card offense, the referee shall submit a report and a hearing shall be held to determine if additional penalties shall be imposed.
- Accumulation of three (3) yellow cards during a playing season will result in a two (2) game suspension.
- Any coach receiving four (4) cards (red and/or yellow) in one playing season (September 1 through August 31) shall be subject to a hearing to determine if additional time will be required in addition to the minimum two (2) game suspension;
- All suspensions must be served with the team with which the coach received the suspension and will not be eligible to coach with any team until the completion of the suspension.

#### C. Spectators

- Spectator shall never address players, referees, coaches or other spectators in a negative, abusive, or threatening manner;
  - Spectator shall not coach from the sideline during any match;
  - Spectator found to be in violation shall be subject to removal from the match;
  - Repeat offenders shall be subject to a hearing to determine additional disciplinary measures;
  - It shall be the responsibility of each coach and/or manager to maintain proper spectator conduct. They shall be held primarily accountable for the conduct of the spectators for or from their respective teams. Failure to do so shall result in a hearing to determine additional disciplinary measures.
  - All incidents and disciplinary measures will be communicated to the individual's club; the club shall be responsible to insure measures are met.
- Failure to effectively enforce positive spectator behavior of courtesy and good sportsmanship could result in the club being placed in bad standing.

#### **5.2 Suspension Because of Litigation**

- Any person participating in a PA West Soccer program who becomes a defendant in litigation detrimental to the welfare of youth players or litigation based on activities detrimental to the welfare of youth players, shall be suspended from all soccer-related activities. Suspensions under this rule shall be determined by the Youth Board. Matters detrimental to the welfare of youth players shall include crimes of moral turpitude and felonies. The person has a right to appeal the suspension only over whether the matter which is the substance of the accusation, if true, is detrimental to the welfare of youth player.
- On completion of the litigation, the suspended person may inform the body suspending the person under Section 1 of this playing rule that the litigation has been completed and request that the suspension be terminated and the person reinstated. The suspending body may grant the request of the person or, if the decision of the litigation was averse to the person, may continue the suspension for a period specified by the suspending body, fine the person, terminate all membership of that

person with the suspending body and its members, or any combination of those authorized penalties.

## **Article 6 Recruiting**

Any direct contact from a coach, player, administrator, club/team representative, or parent of a player to another player, parent, or potential player/parent for the purpose of soliciting the registration, try-out, or play of the second player for the first player's team or club.

1. General newspaper ads, public notices, or posters advertising try-out dates are not to be considered recruitment. Phone calls, messages, e-mails, letters (whether bulk mail general type or individual personal), interviews, conversations are considered direct contact recruiting.
2. Once a player has submitted his/her fees and forms to a club, he/she is registered to that team/club and may not be recruited to play on another team within the same division/league.
3. Currently rostered players may not be recruited until the end of the Open tournament (for Divisions 4, 5 and 6 boys and girls) or the Regional Championship competition (or National competition if the teams are advancing to those levels) for Division 1, 2, and 3 teams.
4. There is no restriction or limitation upon the times at which a player not rostered or no longer rostered may be recruited.
5. Recruitment, solicitation, or invitation of U11 or younger players to play for a coach, team, or club outside the player's normally recognized geographic area in any venue during any session shall be considered a violation of recruitment.
6. Recruiting violations can lead to disciplinary action against the offending team coach and/or soccer club representatives. If a hearing is requested and the hearing committee finds that a violation has occurred, it may suspend the team coach and or soccer club representative for a period of up to one year per violation. If more than one player is involved, each player recruited will be considered a separate infraction.

## **Article 7 – Registration/ Rostering**

### **7.1 Registration General**

All players in PA West Soccer club associations must be registered with the State Association for training and or play in PA West sanctioned leagues.

### **7.2 Rostering**

1. All players will be rostered except for properly registered training players.
2. Not exceeding roster limitations, registered training players are eligible guest players for play in PA West league games on any team within the Club the player is registered with and eligible for.
3. Tampering or altering a player or coaching pass, validated team or game day roster, or birth certificate will result in a minimum of one (1) year suspension for the person or persons responsible. Should a club be involved, the club will also face disciplinary action.
4. Boys may not play on Girls Division teams.
5. No team may play in both Classic and Travel Leagues. A team is considered the same team if there are N (half) plus one (1) players in common on both teams. Teams violating this rule will be suspended immediately from the lower-level league of play and will remain suspended until the team meets the requirement of this rule.
6. The Division 4 Director may grant exceptions to Rule 7.2.4 in their respective playing divisions provided the players in question have played for their Community Club requesting the exception for the last two (2) consecutive playing years.
7. Players rostered on more than one team within his/her Club must indicate a primary team. If no primary team is indicated, the higher ranked team (by Division or Standings) shall be the primary team of that player.
8. Application to Sponsor non-affiliated teams; PA West affiliated Clubs do need to file an application to field a team from a non-affiliated Club. Applications need to be received no later than two (2) weeks prior to the declaration deadline. The PA West Classic Committee will approve or decline applications based on compliances set forth in PA West Procedures and Regulations Part IV

Section 9 Fielding a team without approval will result in a \$3000 fine and the immediate removal of the team. Approved teams will not be recognized toward a Club's Membership requirement under Classic Division Article 12.

### **7.3 PA West Leagues**

All teams will have properly validated rosters listing registered players/coaches/ managers. Teams registered and rostered with PA West Soccer must participate in a league organized, operated, or sanctioned by PA West Soccer.

### **7.4 Team Movement**

District and Division Directors have the responsibility to ensure that there is no unfair competitive balance. District and Division Directors reserve the right to move teams between Divisions at any time. The guidelines for these moves include but are not limited to a team's record and the percent of change of the roster from the previous season.

### **7.5 Play Up**

Players are permitted to play up unless restricted by their Club.

### **7.6 Qualifying League**

1. Any team entering the State Cup Competition/Tournament must play in a sanctioned, or regional league, whose rules specifically meet the following requirements: U12 maximum roster of 16 players, U13 and older may roster up to 22 players, but only 18 may dress for each game.
2. A player playing on more than one team must notify the coach of each team he/she is playing on that he/she is playing on more than one team;
3. Rostering of coaches can be at any time during the playing season and are not bound to any tournament roster freezes including State Cup or Open Tournament

### **7.7 Minimum Age**

The lowest age group for soccer players in PA West shall be U5

### **7.8 Transfers**

Player transfers between teams during a playing season are based on the level of competition:

1. In-House (Recreational) - no restrictions limiting transfers between teams or clubs;
2. Travel (Competitive or Recreational) - no restrictions limiting transfers between teams or clubs in Divisions 4, 5, and 6 (See exception below 7.8.3);
3. All teams entering the State Cups must comply with all national and State Cup rules;

## **Article 8 - The State Office**

1. The State Office will record all referee reports, injuries, yellow and red cards. Ejected player passes or coach's passes will be retained for the suspension period and will then be returned to the team head coach after the District/Division Director or predetermined designee in case of emergency requests such return.
2. The State Office will provide the state registrar, the playing Division Directors, the District Discipline Board chairperson, and the Hearings and Appeals chairperson with lists of injuries, yellow and red cards. The District/Division Director or Discipline Board chairperson may institute actions against coaches/players/clubs/teams/associations if the record merits such action.

## **Article 9 - Other Protest Procedures, Hearings and Appeals**

Make-up and procedures for District/Division Disciplinary/Hearing Board Committees and Youth Division Hearings and Appeals Committee. In order to best comply with the requirements of the PA West Soccer Constitution, the following rules of competition shall reflect the procedures to be followed for Hearings and Appeals;

1. All decisions rendered by the Youth Board Hearings and Appeals Committee shall be confirmed by a simple majority vote of the Youth Board, after the expiration of time for appealing the decision of the Youth Board Hearings and Appeals Committee (within ten [10] days of receipt of the decision).
2. Each geographic District and each playing Division shall have a Disciplinary/Hearing Board Committee Chairperson who shall be responsible for receiving the periodic reports of red and yellow card infractions for players in their District/Division, convening a committee to provide a hearing for any discipline invoked under Article 5 or further review the probationary status of any player, coach or team earlier determined. The Disciplinary/Hearing Committee is further authorized to otherwise review the conduct of any player, coach, team, or club in said District/Division to ensure compliance with applicable rules and regulations and acceptable sportsmanship and gentlemanly conduct standards. Said Disciplinary/Hearing Board Committees are empowered to render appropriate penalties or sanctions. While a hearing should occur within 30 days of the triggering reason for the discipline, reasonable efforts shall be undertaken to provide a hearing within 15 days of the invoking of any suspension unless said District/Division wishes to use a scheduled monthly Disciplinary/Hearing Committee meeting for purposes of said hearing. The Disciplinary/Hearing Board shall attempt to hold a hearing and render a ruling before the expiration of a suspension so invoked, but unless as otherwise provided the failure to render a ruling before the expiration of the suspension does not abrogate the suspension. Hearings held at PA West sponsored Tournaments may be held with verbal notice.
3. If a player or coach wishes to appeal a District/Division Disciplinary/Hearing Board disposition or if they are dissatisfied with an action or inaction of PA West Soccer as it affects their playing status or being sanctioned/approved for play or travel and wish to protest this, they may do so by maintaining an Appeal to the Youth Division Hearings and Appeals Committee pursuant to the PA West Soccer Bylaws (see Youth Division Organizational Rules, Chapter 27, and Chapter 7, "Appeals"). The following process is to be followed:
  - 3.1. If an Appeal from a disciplinary action, the Appeal must occur in writing within ten (10) days of receipt of the District/Division Disciplinary/Hearing Board findings. The Appeal must be sent certified mail to the PA West Soccer State Office (with a \$150.00 check from the club) and by certified and regular mail to the Youth Board Hearings and Appeals Chairperson (with copy of check sent to PA West Soccer State Office); the sender shall also obtain a date-stamped "Proof of Mailing" from the U.S. Post Office and maintain the same for review. A detailed statement as to the basis for the Appeal shall be submitted, signed by an appropriate official of the appellant club. The Hearings and Appeals Chairperson shall review the Appeal, be authorized to conduct fact-finding by reviewing the matter with any of the parties, District, Division, or otherwise, and upon confirming a legitimate Appeal exists and has been properly filed, the Hearings and Appeals Committee will be convened to review the Appeal being taken from the action of the District/Division.
  - 3.2. If a protest or Appeal is being made on a matter not involving action of a District/Division Disciplinary/Hearing Board, the appellant is first to contact the Youth Board President to determine if this is a matter properly reviewable by the Youth Division. If so, the President may refer the matter to the Hearings and Appeals Committee Chairperson for appropriate fact-finding (including, if necessary, the convening of the Hearings and Appeals Committee to include the District/Division Director for the team(s) in question) and ruling, or the President may refer the matter to the Youth Board of Directors for review, or the President may take such action as may be appropriate. If the matter is to be reviewed by the Youth Board Hearings and Appeals Committee or the Youth Board of Directors the same procedures must be followed in the taking of the Appeal as set forth above in subparagraph "1" with the addition that the Youth Board President is to be copied on the Appeal (by regular mail) and 12 copies of all statements, facts and arguments for consideration shall be submitted to the State Office with the Appeal for distribution.
  - 3.3. If an Appeal is taken from the Hearings and Appeals Committee to the Youth Board of Directors, this must occur in writing within ten (10) days of receipt of hearing findings. No further appeal fee must

be paid, but the Youth Board may overturn the decision of the Hearings and Appeals Committee only by a three-quarters vote of the total voting members present of the Board of Directors.

- 3.4. The next level of appeal shall be to the USSF by completing a Notice of Appeal in accordance to USSF procedures (currently USSF Bylaw 705) providing for the party to complete a USSF Notice of Appeal with appeal fee to be submitted within ten (10) days of receipt of the decision rendered by the Adult or Youth Divisions or Referee Committee or other PA West Soccer final decision. The Federation's Appeals Committee has the jurisdiction to approve, modify or reverse decisions.
4. The Youth Division procedures for the taking, hearing and disposition of Appeals are implemented to provide the most convenient forum in which to convene a disciplinary hearing and shall serve to satisfy the Youth Division Organizational Rules embodied in the PA West Constitution, particularly Chapter 27, "Hearings and Appeals Committee," especially insofar as they set forth provisions of the Youth Division (allowed under PA West Soccer Bylaws, Chapter 7, "Appeals, Grievances and Disputes") as to how the Hearings and Appeals Committee/Board shall be composed and allowing periodic disciplinary hearings in each District/Division/League.
5. In the event any District/Division/League is believed by a player, coach, team or club not to be providing a proper and timely disciplinary hearing, the aggrieved shall contact the District /Division/League Director and/or the Youth Division Hearings and Appeals Chairman, who shall rectify the situation by expeditiously convening a proper District/Division/League Disciplinary Board hearing or referring the matter directly to the Youth Division Hearings and Appeals Committee (in which event no \$150.00 appeal fee need be paid for this stage of review).
6. The composition of a District/Division Disciplinary/Hearing Board shall be determined by the Disciplinary/Hearing Board Chairperson in each District/Division with the advice of the District/Division Director; the members of the Disciplinary/Hearing Board shall serve either by special appointment for a given case or date of hearing, or may be generally appointed until replaced. The composition of a Youth Division Hearings and Appeals Committee may include any members appointed by the Hearings and Appeals Committee Chairman, who shall seek the advice of the District/Division/League Director involved, but the final selection of Committee members shall be that of the Hearings and Appeals Committee Chairman. The Hearings and Appeals Committee review/hearing need not be chaired by the Hearings and Appeals Committee Chairperson but shall report to the Hearings and Appeals Committee chairperson.
7. The District/Division Disciplinary/Hearing Board Committee Chair person is responsible to make sure that in all hearings conducted in PA West, the parties shall be accorded:
  - Notice of the charges or alleged violations in writing and possible consequences if the charges are found to be true
  - Reasonable time between receipt of the notice of charges and the hearing within which to prepare a defense;
  - The right to have the hearing conducted at a reasonably convenient time and place so as to make it practicable for the person/entity charged to attend; the State Office shall at all times be considered a reasonable location
  - A hearing before an impartial body of fact-finders
  - The right to be assisted in the presentation of one's case at the hearing
  - The right to present witnesses, evidence, and argument
  - The right to be advised of the identity of the evidence the hearing Board/Committee has been given and the right to confront witnesses if called at the hearing
  - The right to have a record made of the hearing if desired; the expense is to be borne by the party requesting the record and arrangements must be to the satisfaction of the hearing Board/Committee
  - A written decision issued in a timely fashion, with reasons for the decision, based upon the evidence.

## **8. Grievances**

1. The person filing the grievance should put together a complaint setting forth who their grievance is against, the complete factual circumstances that form the basis of the grievance, and the relief they are seeking. The grievance must be in writing, notarized, and filed within 60 days of the occurrence, and must state the full names and addresses of the person, persons, or groups against whom the grievance is made. The complaint should contain enough information so that it is clear that the person making the grievance is prepared to offer testimony by at least one witness with personal knowledge of the facts of their case. The complaint including supporting documents or evidence should be sent to the State Office by certified mail, with a copy served on the other parties by certified mail.
2. Once the complaint is received a letter will be sent to both parties indicating that the grievance was received and giving the accused organization thirty days to file an answer to the complaint. The accused organization must file an answer – even if only to say that it does not have sufficient information to admit or deny certain allegations. A failure to answer, unless there is good cause, is grounds for a default.
3. With the grievance and answer present, the Youth Board will then consider both parties and the appropriate steps to be taken.

## **CLASSIC DIVISION RULES OF COMPETITION**

The Classic Division shall consist of Divisions 1, 2, and 3 and represent the highest level of inter-district club play offered by PA West Soccer Association. Divisions 1, 2, and 3 are subject to the terms and conditions set forth in the following rules:

1. Defines the use of tryouts, invitations, recruiting or any like process to roster players selectively to any team on the basis of talent or ability *as permitted*;
2. Limits the participation of players (per transfer rule) previously rostered to another team.
3. Games or practices on Sunday will be only as authorized in these Rules and other applicable rules of PA West Soccer and its Youth Board of Directors.
4. All tournament travel will be governed by applicable PA West Soccer Travel/Division Policies
5. Publish and enforce a body of rules and regulations under which the Division will operate. The US Youth Soccer National Championship Series Rules shall be the basis for the Division. The right to add additional playing rules shall be reserved for the Division provided such rules shall be approved by the Youth Board of Directors (in accordance with PA West Soccer Constitution and By-Laws).
6. The club having teams in Division 1, 2, or 3 team shall assume all responsibility which will include financial obligations to PA West Soccer, disciplinary actions, and such other questions that may arise concerning the team's obligations in operating procedures. The team shall be responsible for activities that are related to forming and operating a team,(i.e. fields, referees, players' registration).
7. All USYS Regional League rules supersede PA West Soccer rules regarding acceptance and participation in USYS Regional leagues.

### **Division 1, 2 and 3 Rules:**

#### **1. Age Groups and Structure**

1. Divisions 1, 2 and 3 shall offer Leagues in accordance with US Youth Soccer playing rules. (single birth years: U12, U13, U14, U15, U16, U17, U18, U19/20) with four (4) teams being required to form a League.
2. The Classic Division may establish Academy programs for ages U9-U11 that will follow PA West Academy guidelines.
3. Participation in Divisions 1, 2, and 3 is open to all member Clubs. There shall be no restriction on the number of teams.

## **2. Classic League Team Placement**

1. All entry level U12 teams shall be placed in flights of no more than nine (9) teams. Each team shall have to play each other at least once a session in their respective flight not to exceed 8 games. The U12 season results will be used to place teams for the U13 season in Division 1, 2 or 3
2. Declarations into Divisions 1-3 are due on or before July 15 for the Fall Session, February 1st for 12U - 14U and February 15 for U15 and older for the Spring Session.
3. The League Committee will after review assign the teams to the appropriate Divisions.
4. Division 1,2, and 3 Relegation and Promotion will take place after every playing session. For age groups playing in the spring session only, team standings from the previous session played shall be used to determine placement; teams must have continuity.

### Promotion

- a. Promotion will start at 12U Spring Session 13U (Fall to Spring Session)
- b. The top 2 teams in Division 2 and the top 2 teams in Division 3 are automatically Promoted to the next higher level. If two teams tie in points for last first place, they will both be promoted

### Relegation

- c. Relegation will start at 12U Spring Session 13U (Fall to Spring Session)
- d. The last 2 teams in Division 1 and the last 2 teams in Division 2 are automatically relegated to the next lower level. If two teams tie in points for last place, they will both be relegated.

## **3. Points for Season Play**

WIN = Three (3) Points TIE = One (1) Point LOSS = Zero (0) Points

These points will be used to determine standings for the season.

End of Season Tie-breakers: If two or more teams are tied in the number of points the tie will be broken as follows:

1. Winner of head-to-head competition (not be used for multi-team ties);
2. Goal differential (goals scored all season minus goals allowed all season). Team with highest differential wins higher position in the standings;
3. Most goals scored in all League season games;
4. Fewest goals allowed in all League season games;
5. The team with the fewest yellow and/or red cards (A red card shall be considered to correspond to two yellow cards)

In the event that a game(s) has (have) been forfeited, if any other tied teams played the opponent that forfeited to the other tied team(s), then all the games against the opponent will be omitted before applying the above tie-breaker rules.

If three or more teams are tied for a position then the tie-breaking rules will be applied to determine the first position among the teams tied and then the tie-breaking rules will be reapplied amongst the remaining teams to determine the second position, etc.

## **4. Forfeiting Division 1, 2, or 3 Games**

Teams forfeiting a regular season game will be referred to the Classic Discipline Chair for review and recommendation to hold a hearing.

## **5. Sunday Play**

Division 1, 2 and 3 teams, unless having 100% single rostered players, shall not be permitted to play or practice on Sunday unless the game or practice is concluded by no later than 11:00 AM Under no circumstances shall Sunday practice or games interfere with Sunday League travel games. Teams found in violation will lose their next scheduled League home game and travel to the opponent.

## **6. Division 1, 2 and 3 Tryouts:**

Division 1, 2 and 3 tryouts for age groups U11-U20 shall be held starting on or after the Tuesday following the first full weekend in June. Any team/club found holding tryouts before the second weekend in June will be

suspended from all US Youth activities, for three (3) weeks starting the day of the first regular scheduled game day for that age group.

### **7. Recruitment Rules**

1. A team may advertise for players to the public through the media or by poster, flyer, or the like, at any time of the year. The State Office will publish try-out schedules on the PA West Soccer website at the request of all properly registered clubs playing in Divisions 1, 2 and 3.
2. No player nor their family may be offered nor be provided financial inducement as an incentive to tryout for or join a Division 1, 2 or 3 team. This section shall not prevent a team from forgiving fees and expenses in a true financial hardship case if an approval is obtained from the Division Director.
3. There shall be no recruitment of a player that has committed to a club with signed required paper work to a Division 1, 2, or 3 team by another Division 1, 2, or 3 team or its representative from the time the paperwork is signed until the conclusion of the Regional Championships.
4. Violation of this rule can lead to disciplinary action against the offending team coach and/or soccer club representatives. If a hearing is requested and the hearing committee finds that a violation has occurred, it may suspend the team coach and/or soccer club representative for a period of up to one year per violation. If more than one player is involved, each player recruited will be considered a separate infraction.
5. Clubs may only consider a transferred player during the mid-season transfer window when a roster contains an open position. No player may be released from any team in order to accept a transfer player. Clubs may not release a player due to any monetary requirements by the club.
6. These rules are not intended to place a limitation upon the many times at which a player not rostered or no longer rostered to a Classic Division team may be recruited.

### **8. Eligibility and General Rostering Requirements**

1. Each team entering Divisions 1, 2, and 3 will be required to file a team registration form with the State Office by a pre-set deadline to be included in the current league schedule. Any team not filing the online registration by the required date will not be included in the current league schedule.
2. The PA West Soccer validated roster and any other form prescribed by the State Office Registrar shall be a team's official entry into Division 1, 2 and 3.
3. Teams will register through the State Office Registrar. The Registrar shall pre-set a date for each session when registrations are due.
4. All PA West Soccer Club, registration and procedures must be met before a team is eligible to participate in Division 1, 2, or 3
5. For purposes of double rosters and team roster continuity, a team is the same as another team when it has N (half) plus one players or more in common.
6. Players may be rostered only to one team in Divisions 1, 2, and 3

### **9. Classic release and Transfer of players**

1. A Parent or guardian may request a release for a player from Divisions 1, 2, or 3 teams during a transfer window from December 1 through January 31.
2. A team or Club may release involuntarily a player from its roster if the player has violated bylaws, policies, or requirements of the Federation, US Youth Soccer, the State Association, or the member of the State Association through whom the player is registered.

### **10. Obtaining a player release and/ or a transfer:**

1. During the transfer window, the parent/ guardian of a currently rostered player may request a release from a team in writing to the PA West State Office.
2. A transfer must be requested within the transfer window between December 1 and January 31 A separate transfer window will be available to true U19 players ending on April 30. Transfers from one classic club to another is a \$150.00. This fee that must be paid by the club receiving the player to PA West Soccer along with all proper paperwork, before the player may be added to the receiving team's roster.
3. Once the transfer has been processed, the State Registrar will remove the player from the previous roster and add the player to the new roster.

4. No team may accept more than five (5) transfers in a playing season.
5. Teams are prohibited from releasing players to add transferred players during the playing season. Abuse of the transfer rule or improper release of a player can result in hearing.
6. If a hearing is requested and the hearing committee finds that, a violation occurred, it may suspend the team coach for a period of one year per violation.
7. Teams may not transfer from club to club during a playing season (after they have been rostered) until after the Regional or National Championship (if they have advanced to such a level).
8. PA West Soccer Playing Rules shall govern play. Should a violation occur, a disciplinary hearing shall be held in accordance with the Youth Division Playing Rules, PA West Soccer Constitution and By-Laws.

***11. Applying for and maintaining Classic Club status:***

A Club may apply to become a Classic Club, if Classic Division drops below 12 Classic Clubs, or if the general PA West Soccer youth player registration increases by more than 5000 players (U12-U20) in one playing season. Classic Clubs must have a minimum of eight (8) teams (U12-U18) entered in Division 3 or above, between both sessions to maintain their status.