



FULL SIDED RULES

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Summary of Edits and Revisions

This document outlines the edits and revisions made to the 'NSYSA Full Side Rules revision 14July25' document on 01 AUGUST 2025. The changes are organized by article or section and include new rules, terminology updates, formatting changes, and procedural clarifications.

Administrative and Formatting Changes

- Updated links to NSYSA website and IFAB Laws of the Game 2025–2026.
- Corrected formatting for clarity (bold, bullet points, tables).

Article 2 - Season

- Cleaned up run-on sentences.
- Added when fall season starts and how long.

Article 3 - Distribution

- No changes

Article 4 - Registration

- Terminology updated: 'Clubs' changed to 'Member Clubs'.
- Added tryout references and restrictions on returning to recreational status.
- Detailed waiver request process and disciplinary actions.

Article 5 - Player Movement

- Clarified player transfer deadlines and procedures.
- Defined Association Player Pass usage and player deletion process.

Article 6 - Team Registration

- Updated roster sizes and minimum player requirements.
- Defined player poaching and listed player fees by age and competition level.

Article 7 - Participation in Adult Leagues

- No changes other than replacing “senior” with “adult”

Article 8 - Scheduling

- Expanded rescheduling rules and added fines for late/excessive changes.
- Detailed point system for standings and clarified abandoned match procedures.

Table 1 – Field Size & Match Lengths

- Added build-out line note for U09–U12: halfway between penalty area and half field line.

Article 9 - Tom Higby Sportsmanship Award

- No changes

Article 10 - Referee and Fields

- Reformatted and replaced titles

Article 11 - Rules of Play / Game Conduct

- Updated to reflect 2025/2026 IFAB Law Changes.
- Clarified referee decision rules, dropped ball procedures, handball definitions, and penalty kick protocols.
- Added build-out line rules and 8-second goalkeeper release rule.

Article 12 - Game Conduct

- New WYS rule added
- Clarified coaching zones, substitution rules, uniform requirements, and spectator conduct.

Table of Contents

Summary of Edits and Revisions.....2

QUICK REFERENCE FOR FIELD SIZE & MATCH LENGTHS.....1

QUICK REFERENCE FOR HEADING, PUNTING & BUILD-OUT LINE (RECREATIONAL ONLY).....1

I. GENERAL RULES.....2

ARTICLE 1. GOVERNING LEAGUES.....2

ARTICLE 2. SEASON.....2

Section A. Seasonal Year.....2

Section B. Playing Season.....2

ARTICLE 3. DISTRIBUTION / CHANGES TO OPERATING PROCEDURES.....2

Section A. Approving Changes.....2

Section B. Changes Effective.....2

Section C. Publishing & Distribution of Changes.....2

II. PLAYERS / TEAMS/ LEAGUES.....3

ARTICLE 4. REGISTRATION.....3

Section A. Definitions.....3

Section B. Player Age Classification for Team Formation.....3

Section C. Club Registrars.....3

Section D. Player Registration.....3

Section E. Registration Procedures.....4

Section F. Ineligible Players/Waivers.....4

Section G. Falsification of Records.....4

Section H. NSYSA Waiver Requests.....4

Section I. Recreation or Competitive Team Formation.....4

ARTICLE 5. PLAYER MOVEMENT.....5

Section A. Player Assigned to a Team Roster.....5

Section B. Player Release / Transfer and Association Player Pass Procedures.....5

Section C. Deleting Players from a Roster.....5

ARTICLE 6. TEAM REGISTRATION.....6

Section A. Team Affiliations.....	6
Section B. Number of Players.....	6
Section C. Player Poaching.....	6
Section D. Player Fees.....	6
ARTICLE 7. PARTICIPATION IN ADULT LEAGUES.....	6
Section A. Youth Eligibility- Recreational.....	6
Section B. Revocation of Eligibility Recreational and Competitive.....	7
III. RULES OF COMPETITION.....	7
ARTICLE 8. SCHEDULING.....	7
Section A. Governing / Pertaining To.....	7
Section B. Playing of Scheduled Matches / Tournaments.....	7
Section C. League Format / Formation.....	8
Section D. Game Scheduling Fees.....	8
Section E. Point System to Track Season Results.....	8
Section F. Providing Season Schedule to KPRSA and NSYSA Clubs.....	8
Section G. Responsibility of Marking / Setting up Fields.....	8
Section H. Reporting of Recreational Match Results.....	9
Section I. Recreational Team Standings / NSYSA Sportsmanship Standings.....	9
Section J. Abandoned Matches.....	9
Section K. Miscellaneous.....	9
Section L. Pre – Game and Post – Game Procedures.....	9
ARTICLE 9. Tom Higby Sportsmanship Award (U11 & ABOVE ONLY).....	10
IV. MATCH PROCEEDINGS.....	10
ARTICLE 10. REFEREE AND FIELDS.....	10
Section A. Abandoning a Match.....	10
Section B. No Assigned Referee Present.....	10
Section C. Problem with an Official / Referee.....	10
Section D. Suitability of Field.....	10
ARTICLE 11. RULES OF PLAY / GAME CONDUCT.....	11
Section A. Exceptions to FIFA Law for U9-U10 Comp and U11 above.....	11

Section B. U9-U10 Comp and U11-U12..... 11

Section C. All Levels..... 11

ARTICLE 12. GAME CONDUCT.....12

Section A. Coaching / Coaches.....12

Section B. Substitutions / Playing Time..... 13

Section C. Uniforms / Player Equipment.....14

Section D. Spectators..... 14

NSYSA SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD.....16

Section B. Rating System:..... 16

Section C. Evaluation.....16

NSYSA ASSOCIATION PLAYER PASS PROCEDURE.....16

GUIDANCE FOR “HEADING THE BALL”.....17

QUICK REFERENCE FOR FIELD SIZE & MATCH LENGTHS

AGE	FIELD SIZE YARDS	GOAL SIZE	GOAL BOX YARDS	PENALTY AREA YARDS	CENTER CIRCLE RADIUS (YARDS)	CORNER ARC (YARDS)	PENALTY MARK (YARDS)	BALL SIZE	BUILD-OUT LINE	GAME LENGTH
U19	112X75	8' X 24'	6 X 20	18 X 44	10	1	12	5	NO	2 X 45 min halves
U18	112X75	8' X 24'	6 X 20	18 X 44	10	1	12	5	NO	2 X 45 min halves
U17	112X75	8' X 24'	6 X 20	18 X 44	10	1	12	5	NO	2 X 45 min halves
U16	112X75	8' X 24'	6 X 20	18 X 44	10	1	12	5	NO	2 X 40 min halves
U15	112X75	8' X 24'	6 X 20	18 X 44	10	1	12	5	NO	2 X 40 min halves
U14	112X75	8' X 24'	6 X 20	18 X 44	10	1	12	5	NO	2 X 35 min halves
U13	112X75	8' X 24'	6 X 20	18 X 44	10	1	12	5	NO	2 X 35 min halves
U12	45-55 x 70-80	6' x 18'	5x16	14 x 36	8	1	10	4	YES	2 X 30 min halves
U11	45-50 x 70-80	6' x 18'	5x16	14 x 36	8	1	10	4	YES	2 x 30 min halves
U9-10 Comp	35-45 x 55-65	6' x 12'	4x8	12 x 24	8	1	10	4	YES	2 x 25 min halves

***Note: Build-out line for U09 – U12 is to be halfway between penalty area and half field line.**

TABLE 1

QUICK REFERENCE FOR HEADING, PUNTING & BUILD-OUT LINE (RECREATIONAL ONLY)

HEADING, PUNTING, & BUILD-OUT LINE | RULE MODIFICATIONS



2025-2026 Northwest Sound Youth Soccer Association

Age Group	Format	Heading	Punting	Build-Out Line	Offside Line
U8*	7v7	No	No	Yes	Midfield Line
U9	7v7	No	No	Yes	Midfield Line
U10	7v7	No	No	Yes	Midfield Line
U11	9v9	No	No	Yes	Midfield Line
U12	9v9	Yes	No	Yes	Midfield Line
U13+	11v11	Yes	Yes	No	Midfield Line

*For U8 game formats other than 7v7, e.g., 4v4, please consult league rules for build-out and offside lines.

TABLE 2

I. GENERAL RULES

ARTICLE 1. GOVERNING LEAGUES

The organization of leagues and competition for Northwest Sound Youth Soccer Association (NSYSA) sponsored Leagues shall be governed by the Operating Procedures set forth herein, unless rules of a specific competition determine otherwise.

ARTICLE 2. SEASON

Section A. Seasonal Year

1. The seasonal year of NSYSA shall be defined by Washington Youth Soccer (WYS). Seasonal Year shall be defined as 01 August through 31 July.
2. Seasonal year will define the period of time a team is part of a single roster and eligible to enter competitive play.

Section B. Playing Season

1. Fall League season will begin the first Saturday after Labor Day and continue for ten weeks ending in November.
2. Other League seasons will be determined and defined as needed.

ARTICLE 3. DISTRIBUTION / CHANGES TO OPERATING PROCEDURES

Section A. Approving Changes

1. The NSYSA Operating Procedures shall be reviewed as needed for required changes or updates in accordance with USSF and WYS mandates.

Section B. Changes Effective

1. No changes to these Operating Procedures shall be made retroactive.
2. Changes are effective immediately, unless otherwise noted on the revision.

Section C. Publishing & Distribution of Changes

1. The Operating Procedures Committee shall prepare the corrected/updated version of the Operating Procedures and submit them to the NSYSA Website Administrator who will publish the corrected/updated version on the NSYSA Website. (www.nsysasoccer.org) within seven days of Board approval.
2. Copies of Operating Procedures shall be made available via the NSYSA Website (www.nsysasoccer.org) to each Club participating in NSYSA play and the applicable Referee Association.
Each Club shall be responsible for distributing current NSYSA Operating Procedures to each coach and Club Officers

II.

PLAYERS / TEAMS/ LEAGUES

ARTICLE 4. REGISTRATION

Section A. Definitions

1. Youth Players
 - a. The term “Youth” as applied to the NSYSA shall be defined as an amateur player who has not attained their 19th birthday before the first day of January of the seasonal year in which they apply for registration.
2. Youth Teams
 - a. Recreation. The practice of using tryouts, invitations, recruiting, or any like process to roster players selectively to any team on the basis of talent or ability **is strictly prohibited** as defined by WYS.
 - b. Competitive (Select). The practice of using tryouts, invitations, recruiting, or any like process to roster players selectively to a team on the basis of talent or ability **is permitted** as defined by WYS.

Section B. Player Age Classification for Team Formation

1. All member Clubs shall form teams of equal age grouping as follows for all competitions unless otherwise approved by the Board of Directors. Age groupings on teams shall be comprised of players who, on the first day of January of the current seasonal year are:

Age	Roster Size # (Max)	# Field Players	# Field Players minimum
U16-U19	22	11	7
U14-U15	18	11	7
U13	18	11	7
U11-U12	14	9	7
U09-U10 Comp	12	7	5

TABLE 3

2. Prior to the beginning of the playing season (Fall, Spring, etc.), at the scheduling meeting, Member Clubs shall determine the age groups for competition during that playing season.

Section C. Club Registrars

1. All member Clubs shall have a Club Registrar, who shall be responsible for the proper registration of players for their Club. Registration will include obtaining proof of age and assignment to teams. All Club Registrars will follow WYS and NSYSA regulations and guidelines in the registration process.

Section D. Player Registration

1. All players must register annually through member Clubs in accordance with WYS. NSYSA and applicable Association Rules and Guidelines are required to be followed in order to participate in all activities of NSYSA.
2. No team may allow unregistered players to practice or play with a team.
3. Players rostered on any Recreational team cannot also be rostered on any other team, either a competitive team or a different recreational team.
4. Member Clubs shall provide rosters and any other supporting documents to NSYSA as requested.

Section E. Registration Procedures

1. Before the first scheduled NSYSA league match, all Member Clubs must sync and activate all registered teams.
2. Failure by a Member Club to properly register all its teams by the specified deadlines in the NSYSA Registrar Handbook may result in forfeiture of all games played by unregistered teams and a \$250.00 fine to the club at the discretion of the board.
3. Any Member Club having a team fold after the NSYSA Scheduling Meeting, which causes a rescheduling of play for the applicable group/division, will be subject to a \$150.00 rescheduling fine at the discretion of the NSYSA Board.

Section F. Ineligible Players/Waivers

1. Any team having a player, not rostered, not internally club passed, or otherwise deemed ineligible to play shall forfeit the game(s) in which such player takes part.
2. Player waivers shall be accepted only upon approval of the NSYSA Board as outlined in ARTICLE 4 Section H.
3. Any coach, Club Member, or NSYSA Board Member who knowingly allows an ineligible or over-age player to participate in any League, Cup, or Tournament match without prior approval of the NSYSA Board, shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Section G. Falsification of Records

1. Willful falsification of record, by any person, shall be grounds for suspension from future participation in NSYSA sponsored Leagues.

Section H. NSYSA Waiver Requests

1. Waiver Requests shall be submitted as follows:
 - a. Requests shall be originated by the player's parent/s and submitted to the applicable Member Club for its review.
 - b. The Member Club Board shall rule on the request. If the Member Club approves the request, it shall then forward the original request along with the Member Club Board's written recommendation to the NSYSA Board for review and approval.
 - c. Notification from NSYSA Board will be sent back to the Member Club and requester of final decision.
2. Any coach or Member Club Officer who knowingly allows a player requiring a waiver to be rostered without prior approval of the NSYSA Board, shall be subject to disciplinary action.
3. Any waiver approved by the NSYSA Board will only be in effect for that specific playing season. A new waiver must be submitted and approved for any subsequent season.
4. If a waiver is granted for a team to be allowed to play in a younger age division for league play, the team must play all post season games and tournaments at the oldest player's age division.

Section I. Recreation or Competitive Team Formation

1. Recreational Teams
 - a. All recreational teams are formed per Member Club policy in accordance with NSYSA policy.
 - b. Recreational teams will play in NSYSA Recreational Leagues unless registration in another League/Association is approved by their Member Club.
 - i. Scheduling of home games and fields will be the responsibility of the Member Club.
 - ii. The Member Club will forward the required team schedule to the NSYSA Website Administrator for entry into the schedule matrix for mitigation of field use and scheduling of referees.
 - c. Clubs outside the NSYSA geographical boundaries requesting participation in the

NSYSA Recreational Leagues will abide by the rules set forth within this document. Registrars outside of the NSYSA must provide a WYS team roster to NSYSA Administrator one week prior to their first match

2. Competitive (Select) Teams

- a.** Competitive teams may be formed by a tryout process of one or a combination of clubs within NSYSA.
- b.** Each Club's competitive team policy will dictate tryouts for the formation of competitive / select teams.
- c.** A competitive team will not be allowed to return to recreational league play once it has been formed through a tryout process. Players from competitive teams may return to recreational teams but are to be divided equally between the available age appropriate or older teams (for a play up) with no more than 6 select players from any competitive team being placed on the same club recreational team by the Club Registrar or as approved by NSYSA Board.

ARTICLE 5. PLAYER MOVEMENT

Section A. Player Assigned to a Team Roster Recreational

- 1.** Each Member Club shall have the authority to assign youth players according to its own Bylaws and operating procedures provided they do not violate those of higher authority.
- 2.** Each Member Club will develop its approved player placement policy. The policy shall include the following: registration dates, criteria for player placement on teams, maximum number of requests the Registrar or Registration team must try to honor, request criteria that will be considered (siblings, day care, transportation etc.), how requests are honored (registration date, friend, etc.).

Select

- 1.** Select Member Clubs adhere to their respective League policies.

Section B. Player Release / Transfer and Association Player Pass Procedures

Recreational

- 1.** Release and transfer of a player rostered on a team to any other team shall be in accordance with the NSYSA Registrar Handbook. The releasing Member Club Registrar must verify that the player is in good standing prior to being released.
- 2.** Transfers shall be allowed up to the NSYSA Registrar's deadline of October ^{31st} deadline upon request of the player involved.
- 3.** All transfers for League play must be submitted to the Member Club Registrar a minimum of seventy-two (72) hours before a scheduled match.
- 4.** Any transfers for post-season play shall be in accordance with the tournament rules and WYS procedures.

Select

- 1.** Release and transfer of a player rostered on a select team to any other team shall be in accordance with respective competitive league procedures.
- 2.** Association Player Pass, Appendix B, is a tool that allows player movement from Rec to Select Club and Select Club to Regional Club, and players to Player Pass to RCL.

Section C. Deleting Players from a Roster

Players may be deleted from a team after the registration is submitted to WYS, in accordance with the NSYSA Registrar Handbook.

ARTICLE 6. TEAM REGISTRATION

Section A. Team Affiliations

1. All teams must affiliate with the Member Club in which its players are registered.
2. If a Member Club lacks a team for a player(s), it may release the player(s) to another club. Clubs may combine players for the purpose of putting a team into competition, if they lack sufficient players to register a team.
3. Competitive teams from one Member Club may have players from other Members Clubs who tryout and participate on said teams must adhere to Article 5 Section B

Section B. Number of Players

1. No team shall have more than the following maximum number of players registered to it.
 - a. U9-U10 soccer teams may have a maximum of 12 players
 - b. U11- U12 soccer teams may have a maximum of 14 players
 - c. U13-U14 soccer teams may have a maximum of 18 players
 - d. U15 & Above soccer teams may have a maximum of 22 players on the roster but no more than 18 may suit up and be presented to the referee at the time of the match.
2. No team shall have less than the following minimum number of players registered to it.
 - a. U9-U10 soccer teams shall have a minimum of 7 players
 - b. U11-U12 soccer teams shall have a minimum of 9 players
 - c. U13 & Above soccer teams shall have a minimum of 11 players
3. Any change to the original roster, may be made only by the Member Club Registrar, in accordance with WYS and NSYSA procedures.
4. No team shall allow unregistered players to practice with a team, nor shall any coach or Club official place a player in a reserve status.
5. Any team that has not reached maximum capacity -, playing in Association Recreational level competition, which refuses to accept any additional players offered to it by the Member Club Registrar, shall have its roster frozen for the balance of the seasonal year.
6. A team shall be considered defunct if it fails to maintain the minimum number of players during the season, or if the responsible Member Club or NSYSA Board determine the team has disbanded.

Section C. Player Poaching

1. Any team, during the season of play, whether through its team staff, Member Club officer, parents, or players, attempting to induce a registered player under the jurisdiction of this Association to transfer from their rostered team shall be deemed to have committed a poaching offense per WYS guidelines; this action shall be subject to action by the NSYSA Board.
2. Scouting of players during the season for the purpose of offering invitations to future tryouts for subsequent seasons is not a poaching offense.

Section D. Player Fees

1. Player Fees per individual player
 - a. Recreational Player Under 10 and younger \$12.00
 - b. Recreational Player Under 11 and older \$22.50
 - c. Competitive Players (all ages) \$26.00

ARTICLE 7. PARTICIPATION IN ADULT LEAGUES

Section A. Youth Eligibility- Recreational

1. A youth player will be permitted to play an unlimited number of adult amateur games without losing his or her eligibility, provided permission is sought and granted, in accordance with WYS

- procedures.
- 2. Any youth player playing in an adult league without permission shall lose their youth eligibility for the remainder of the seasonal year.
- 3. Youth games shall take precedence over senior games.

**Section B. Revocation of Eligibility
Recreational and Competitive**

- 1. Any player signing a professional contract or playing with a professional team shall lose all privileges of youth amateur status.
- 2. Permission may be granted to play in tryouts, benefit, or exhibition matches with professionals. WYS procedures must be followed.

III. RULES OF COMPETITION

ARTICLE 8. SCHEDULING

Section A. Governing / Pertaining To

- 1. All teams participating in leagues governed by NSYSA shall be subject to these rules.
- 2. The NSYSA Scheduler will perform all league scheduling functions under the direction of the Director of Recreational Soccer in accordance with the NSYSA rules and regulations.

Section B. Playing of Scheduled Matches / Tournaments

- 1. All league matches must be played on the day at the time scheduled by the NSYSA Scheduler under the direction of the NSYSA Director of Recreational Soccer.
 - a. Request for rescheduling of any home match must be in writing and submitted by the Member Club Scheduler to the NSYSA Scheduler, a minimum of fourteen (14) days before the regularly scheduled match time. All schedule changes must be approved in advance of the request for schedule change by both the home and away team.
 - b. Failure of a team to appear for or have a sufficient number of players to legally start a regularly scheduled match and / or fail to have an RMA certified rostered coaching staff member available will result in the following:
 - i. Forfeiture of the match, as a result of team failing to appear or having an insufficient number of players (see Table #1 for numbers for each age group).
 - ii. During league play any team having a forfeited game, as determined by the NSYSA Board will be assessed a \$100.00 fine.
- 2. The NSYSA Scheduler may notify a team, the team's Member Club Scheduler, and the NSYSA Director of Recreational Soccer that their match will not be played as scheduled and therefore, they will not need to show up for that match. This is the only acceptable reason for a team to be granted prior permission not to show for a scheduled match.
- 3. Rescheduling Games
 - a. The home and away teams must agree upon a date and time for a rescheduled game.
 - b. The home team then notifies their Member Club Scheduler who then notifies the NSYSA Scheduler. It shall be the NSYSA Scheduler's responsibility for contacting the applicable Referee Assignor. Marking of the field and any other business necessary for the completion of the rescheduled match shall be the responsibility of the home team club.
 - c. Rescheduling of matches should be limited and be used only when no other choices can be found. It is strongly preferred that all rescheduled matches are submitted within a fourteen (14) day window of match day.
 - d. If no reschedule can be agreed upon or insufficient time remains in the season, the game is considered to have not been played within the league standings and the team initiating the reschedule will be fined according to ARTICLE 8 Section B.b.ii above.
 - e. Reschedules for the purpose of accommodating coaches with multiple teams shall be mitigated by the Member Club. Alternate resources should be used by the Member Club to eliminate the need of rescheduling. Repetitive rescheduling of a team shall result in the

assessment of a \$25.00 fine should one or more of the conditions below are met:

- i. Reschedules for other than “Acts of Nature”, “Field Closure”, or circumstances beyond the control of a team.
 - ii. Request for schedule change within seventy-two (72) hours of game day.
 - iii. The third such request by a team for schedule change.
4. Any Member Club teams wishing to participate in tournaments during the NSYSA scheduled season need to ensure that the tournament games are scheduled around league matches.
 - a. League matches have priority over tournament matches.
 - b. If a league game must be rescheduled, follow the procedures as outlines in Article 8 section 3.
 - c. Teams may participate in any tournament as long as they are sanctioned by WYS, or US Club Soccer.

Section C. League Format / Formation

1. The following format for scheduled games shall be used by the NSYSA Scheduler under the direction of the NSYSA Director of Recreational Soccer. The minimum number of scheduled league games for any team in the season shall be ten (10) for Recreational and Small- Sided games. Any deviations are at NSYSA Board’s discretion
2. Recreational League team divisions will be formed based off and at a minimum of, the number of registered teams at the time of the scheduling meeting.
3. Complete game schedules shall be compiled and distributed by the NSYSA Scheduler via the NSYSA website.
4. The NSYSA Scheduler will schedule games on Saturdays and Sundays with the League play concluding prior to commencement of the WYS Recreational Cup Quarter and Semi Final games.

Section D. Game Scheduling Fees

1. Game scheduling fees shall be applied for the following.

a. Recreational team Under 10 and younger	\$10 per home game
b. Recreational teams Under 11 and older	\$17 per home game
c. Competitive	\$19 per home game

Section E. Point System to Track Season Results

1. A ten (10) point value will be assigned for wins, ties, and losses in the NSYSA Recreational Season only.
 - a. The winning team will be awarded six (6) points.
 - b. Both teams will be awarded points for goals scored to a maximum of three (3) points.
 - c. One (1) point will be awarded to the winning team for a shutout.
 - d. One (1) point will be awarded to each team for ties.
2. The division champion will be decided by the number of points accrued during the season as outlined in Section E. 1 above.
3. Ties will be resolved as follows:
 - a. First, head to head competition results will be used as a tiebreaker.
 - b. Second, fewest goals against.
 - c. Third, best goal differential: All League games.
 - d. Should a tie still exist, teams will share the placement and the next level of award will not be awarded (example: Tied for first – both are co-champions and a second place is not awarded).

Section F. Providing Season Schedule to KPRSA and NSYSA Clubs

1. The NSYSA Scheduler will be responsible for providing the League schedule to the KPRSA Assignor and each Member Club

Section G. Responsibility of Marking / Setting up Fields

1. It is the responsibility of each home Member Club to provide for the proper marking of the fields.

2. It is the responsibility of the home Member Club to ensure field safety (i.e. goals, nets, weights, etc.) in accordance with FIFA criteria.
3. Where possible, a “Spectator Line” shall be included. This line is to be two (2) yards from the touch line and run the length of the touchline. Spectators may not watch the game from behind the endline.
4. U9-U12 will have a buildout line, and it will be half the distance between Penalty Box and Half-Field Line.

Section H. Reporting of Recreational Match Results

1. Match results are to be entered by a member of each team’s staff (coach, assistant coach, manager) no later than 10:00pm on Sunday evening via the NSYSA Website, www.nsysasoccer.org as specified under **Coach: FAQ – How to Submit Match Reports**

Section I. Recreational Team Standings / NSYSA Sportsmanship Standings

1. Current Team standing will be made available after the first week’s matches are reported on the NSYSA Website www.nsysasoccer.org
2. Tom Higby Sportsmanship standings will be made available after the first week’s matches are reported on the NSYSA Website www.nsysasoccer.org
3. No standing will be kept for the Spring League.

Section J. Abandoned Matches

1. All ABANDONED matches as determined by the NSYSA Board unless specified otherwise in these rules and regulations will be:
 - Rescheduled by Member Clubs to be played in entirety **OR**
 - Forfeited and the score at match abandonment will stand.
2. If a match is abandoned due to the misconduct of one of the teams (example: A team walks off the field prior to the completion of a scheduled match) or a member of one of the teams (example: a player or admin from a team disrupts play that prevents the completion of a scheduled match), that team shall not profit by the abandonment.
 - The game will be forfeit by the team performing the misconduct with a score of 1-0
 - Fines may be assigned as specified in ARTICLE 8 Section B.1.b.ii
 - Special penalties for misconduct may be assigned by the NSYSA Board
3. If both teams have been notified of a scheduled match and one team fails to show, following a fifteen (15) minute grace period, the game will be forfeited to the showing team, with a score of 1-0, subject to review by the NSYSA Board. The game referee shall count the number of players present and abandon the game. Penalties / Fines shall be assigned as specified in ARTICLE 8 Section B.1.b.ii.
4. If both teams have been notified of a scheduled match and both fail to show within fifteen (15) minutes of the scheduled match time, the referee shall abandon the match and notify the Director of Recreational Soccer. Penalties / fines may be assigned as specified in ARTICLE 8 Section B.1.b.ii

Section K. Miscellaneous

1. Players wearing prosthetic or orthopedic devices must have written WYS permission to play in such devices before being allowed to compete.
2. No alcoholic beverages shall be permitted at any scheduled match or team practice.
3. Dogs/Pets of any kind shall not be permitted at NSYSA matches.
4. Service animals will be allowed.
5. Saturday games will not begin before 9:00am
6. Sunday games will not begin before 10:00am unless requested by both club teams involved. All games will end no later than 10:00pm. Exceptions may be granted by the NSYSA Board.

Section L. Pre – Game and Post – Game Procedures

1. NSYSA Game Roster Sheets will be available on the NSYSA Website www.nsysasoccer.org Coaches or managers may print the PDF document by accessing the website and select the icon adjacent to the game schedule of the team for that day. The ability to print pre – completed rosters is available for each week the team is scheduled to play.
2. Pre – Game Procedures:

- a. Prior to the start of each game, the coach is to present to the referee three (3) copies of the NSYSA Game Roster Sheet. The Game Sheet is to include the Coach / Staff name, players' names and jersey numbers as well as the basic game information.
3. Post – Game Procedures:
 - a. At the conclusion of the game, the coach is to acquire from the referee a copy of their team and the opponent's Game Roster Sheet. These sheets will be used to report the game results on the NSYSA Website. www.nsysasoccer.org before 10:00pm on Sunday evening.

ARTICLE 9. Tom Higby Sportsmanship Award (U11 & ABOVE ONLY)

The Tom Higby Sportsmanship Award was instituted to encourage the highest level of sportsmanship within the Leagues operated by NSYSA at the Recreational level. Additional information may be viewed on the NSYSA Website, www.nsysasoccer.org FAQ page: Tom Higby Sportsmanship Award.

IV. MATCH PROCEEDINGS

ARTICLE 10. REFEREE AND FIELDS

Section A. Abandoning a Match

1. To declare a field unplayable due to adverse weather/field conditions at the time of the scheduled match, will be the prerogative of the Referee or the agreed upon official. The home Member Club will then notify the Director of Recreational Soccer and NSYSA Scheduler via phone/email within twenty- four (24) hours of the scheduled match.
2. If the Referee or the agreed upon official abandons a match due to disciplinary actions and/or the number of eligible players on a team drops below the minimums allowed, the home Member Club will notify the Director of Recreational Soccer and the NSYSA Scheduler via phone/email within twenty- four (24) hours of the scheduled match.

Section B. No Assigned Referee Present

1. Failure of a scheduled Referee to show up will not be the cause for canceling the match, after a fifteen (15) minute grace period.
2. A substitute official should be chosen upon the agreement by both coaches, and their decision shall be final. In any case, both teams should check the "no referee" box when they report the score on the NSYSA home page. It is recommended that each team have a least one licensed referee affiliated with it.
3. In the event a Referee cannot be chosen to the agreement of both coaches, the coaches themselves shall referee, each coach will referee one half of the match, the toss of a coin will decide who referees which half.

Section C. Problem with an Official / Referee

1. In the case of a non-licensed official, in addition to reporting the problem in your match report, a detailed report shall be written and submitted through your Club and association to the NSYSA Director of Recreational Soccer. The Board shall have the right to suspend or bar from officiating in matches under its jurisdiction, any individual who, by word or action, displays an attitude detrimental to the Association's purposes and principles, or who willfully violates the Constitution, Bylaws, or Operating Procedures of this Association.
2. In the case of a licensed official, in addition to reporting the problem in your match report, a detailed report shall be written and submitted through your Club and association to the President of the appropriate Referee Association via the NSYSA Director of Recreational Soccer.

Section D. Suitability of Field

1. Upon his/her arrival at the field, the Referee shall inspect the marking to determine suitability for play.
2. If the Referee finds that the field is not adequately marked for play, or does not have goals with secured nets or is hazardous, they may abandon the match, and report the circumstances to the NSYSA Director of Recreational Soccer within twenty-four (24) hours of the scheduled match.
3. The assigned Referee will receive compensation for the abandoned match, and the responsible Club

- shall be assessed an additional fee for the rescheduled match, if played.
4. Referees may, at any time, be called upon by the proper authority to explain the circumstances applicable to abandoning a match due to field conditions.

ARTICLE 11. RULES OF PLAY / GAME CONDUCT

Section A. Exceptions to FIFA Law for U9-U10 Comp and U11 above

1. All matches under the jurisdiction of this Association shall be conducted under the rules of FIFA authorized by the International Football Association Board, and modified by USYSA, WYS, NSYSA as specified.
[IFAB Laws of the Game 2025-2026](#)
2. For U11 and Above, all matches shall not continue with fewer than seven (7) per team participating in the match.
3. The duration of matches, ball size, ball dimensions, and for each age group shall be as depicted in **Table #1**.
4. In all matches with a goalkeeper, no player shall make intentional physical contact with the goalkeeper **WITHIN THE GOAL AREA**, harass the goalkeeper, or attempt to play the ball once the goalkeeper has control of the ball in any manner and to any degree whatsoever. **NOTE: Also included in “having control of the ball” is, if any part of the goalkeeper is in contact with the ball while on the ground it is considered control.**

Section B. U9-U10 Comp and U11-U12

1. If the goalkeeper punts/or drop kicks, ball will be given to goalkeeper and instructed to perform a goal kick.
2. Use of the head for playing the ball or attempting to head the ball, “headers” will NOT be allowed for U12 in either practice or during games. The referee will stop play and inform the player that using the head to strike the ball is dangerous and therefore not be performed. An indirect kick restart will be awarded to the opposing team.
3. Defensive players have to retreat to the buildout line upon possession of the ball by the goalie or for a goal kick.
4. Opposition can enter build-out line area as soon as the ball is put in play (clearly moves).

Section C. All Levels

1. Referee cannot change a restart decision after play has restarted but, in certain circumstances, may issue a card for a previous incident.
2. Team officials guilty of misconduct can be shown a card if an offender cannot be identified, the head coach in the technical area receives the card. If a penalty kick is awarded, the team’s penalty taker can receive assessment or treatment and then stay on the field and take the kick.
3. The team that wins the coin toss will choose either to take the kick-off or which goal to defend.
4. Dropped ball
 - a. Ball dropped for goalkeeper (if play stopped in penalty area) or for one player of team that last touched the ball at the location of the last touch; all other players (of both teams) must be at least 12 ft (4 yds) away.
 - b. If the ball touches the referee (or other match official) and goes into the goal, possession changes, or an attacking move starts, then play is stopped and a dropped ball is awarded to the team that last had possession unless play is stopped inside of the penalty area and is not the result of a foul, then the ball will be awarded to the keeper.
5. Goalkeeper cannot score by throwing the ball into the opponents’ goal.

6. Handball is defined as the fingertips to the bottom of the armpit and is considered an offense which will result in a direct free kick when a player:
 - a. Deliberately touches the ball with their hand/arm, including moving the hand/arm towards the ball
 - b. gains possession/control of the ball after it has touched their hand/arm and then scores in the opponent's area, creates a goal-scoring opportunity, scores in the opponent's goal directly from their hand/arm even if accidental including by the goalkeeper.
7. Indirect Free Kick (IDFK)
 - a. Once an IDFK has been taken, the referee can stop showing the IDFK signal if it is clear that goal cannot be scored directly (e.g. from most offside IDFKs).
 - b. For defending team free kicks in their penalty area, the ball is in play once it is kicked and clearly moves; it does not have to leave the penalty area.
 - c. When there is a defensive 'wall' of at least 3 players, all attacking team players must be at least 3ft m from the 'wall'; IDFK is given to the defending team if there is encroachment All defensive players must be 10 yards from the IDFK spot.
8. Penalty Kicks
 - a. Goalposts, crossbar, and nets must not be moving when a penalty is taken and the goalkeeper must not be touching them.
 - b. Goalkeeper must have at least part of one foot on, or in line with, the goal line when a penalty kick is taken; they cannot stand behind the line.
 - c. If an offense occurs after the referee signals for a penalty kick, and the kick has not been taken, any card must be issued prior to the penalty kick.
9. Opponents must be at least 2 yds from the point on the touchline where a throw-in is to be taken, even if the thrower is back from the line.
10. At goal kicks, the ball is in play once it is kicked and clearly moves; it does not have to leave the penalty area. The buildout line is still in use and the team not in possession of the ball must be behind the line until the ball is considered in play.
11. At all levels, the keeper has 8 seconds to release the ball or it can result in the opposing team could be awarded a corner kick.
12. Players which demonstrate the signs of concussion, Appendix E, shall be removed from the game and may not reenter prior to assessment and cleared by a qualified Health Care Professional (HCP).
 - a. Neither coaches nor referees may allow a player demonstrating signs of concussion to continue to play.
13. Attempts to allow a player demonstrating signs of concussion to continue to play will result in the game being suspended until such time as the player is removed.
14. During the match, any player that has any exposed bleeding shall immediately be removed from the playing field (substitution is allowed) and cannot reenter the game until the bleeding is stopped and the blood cleaned off of the player.
15. Zero Tolerance regarding verbal/physical abuse and/or assault. Refer to WYS Judicial Process. Violation of this rule will result with an indirect free kick from the original location.

ARTICLE 12. GAME CONDUCT

Section A. Coaching / Coaches

1. Both teams shall be located on the same side of the field with teams on opposite sides of the midfield line. Opposing coaches will not enter the opponents' half of the field.
 - a. All coaching must be done from one side of the field. The coach must confine themselves to their own half of the field at all times. No team may have coaches on both touchlines.
 - b. A Coach's failure to comply upon request of the Referee may result in their ejection.
2. Coaching from the sidelines, giving directions to one's own team on points of strategy and positioning, is permitted in all NSYSA play providing the Coaching is
 - a. Done from at least two (2) yards behind the touchlines, between the Penalty Boxes. Coaching may

- not be accomplished from both touchlines.
- b. Coaches, players, and spectators must immediately and respectfully move back further than 2 yds if asked by game officials to ensure the Assistant Referee can perform their duties safely and without obstruction.
 - c. By not more than two (2) persons, one (1) identifying himself / herself as “Coach” and one (1) as an assistant prior to the commencement of the match.
 - d. No mechanical or electronic device may be used for in game communication with players.
3. Negative or vulgar comments directed at players, coaches, spectators, or officials will not be tolerated under any circumstances.
 4. Coaches/assistants are responsible for helping ensure that anyone who is ejected or asked to leave a match immediately and exits the area completely, out of sight and sound of the field. Failure to leave the area may, at the discretion of the Referee, become just cause for the abandonment of the match.
 5. A coach maybe subject to ejection by the Referee without any warning by the Referee.
 - a. A named assistant Coach, with RMA certification and listed on the official roster for that team, may then be permitted to continue coaching the team and assume all duties and responsibilities of the coach should the coach be ejected.
 - b. If a coach has been ejected for any reason, the coach will be ineligible to coach until the ejection has been reviewed by the NSYSA Disciplinary Committee. If suspended, they may not be present on the field or sidelines with the team prior to or during the matches or practices.
 6. Any coach who removes their team from the field prior to the completion of a match, must appear before a NSYSA Hearing Committee appointed by the NSYSA Vice President to explain their actions prior to his / her next scheduled match.
 7. All coaches must complete all required Association and State paperwork
 - a. 18 years and older: Must also complete RMA
 - b. Under 18 years of age
 - i Must have an RMA approved adult present.
 - ii at each match / practice or team event.
 - iii The adult must occupy a place on the sidelines with the players, and shall be responsible for that team before, during, and after the match / practice. No team will be allowed to take the field unless this requirement is met.
 8. Coaches shall be responsible for their assistants, players, substitutes, and spectators.
 9. Upon request, the coach shall be required to give their name, the name of any assistant, player, substitute, or spectator to the Referee.
 10. Prior to the game, each coach will print three copies of the game roster from the NSYSA Website and present the roster to the Referee. The NSYSA Game Roster Sheet should show the following:
 - a. The names of the coaching staff.
 - b. The name of the team.
 - c. The date.
 - d. The game ID number.
 - e. The level / division of the team.
 - f. The name and jersey number of each player.
 11. At the completion of each game, the Referee will give each coach a completed and signed copy of their opponent’s NSYSA Game Roster Sheet.

Section B. Substitutions / Playing Time

1. The number of substitutions within a match shall be unlimited and be made with the consent of the Referee during any stoppage.
2. In any case, a substitute may not enter the field of play until they have been given a signal to do so by the Referee.
3. Substitutes shall enter and exit at the half line.

4. Players not on the field of play must remain in an area along one touchline, at least two yards from the touchline and between the penalty areas.
5. All players of a recreational team participating in NSYSA League competition, which are in attendance, in uniform, physically fit, and eligible will be given the opportunity to play 50% of the game.

Section C. Uniforms / Player Equipment

1. All uniforms must have a six (6) inch minimum size number on the back of the jersey. Numbers shall not be duplicated on the same team and will be legible. Players without numbers will not play. All jerseys will be the same color with the exception of the goalkeeper.
 - a. A proper uniform shall consist of shorts, a jersey, socks, shin guards and legal soccer shoes. All players will have their jerseys tucked in and socks pulled up covering the shin guards entirely (shin guards must be under the socks).
 - b. Legal soccer shoes shall be those without a single toe stud. Legal shoes are defined by FIFA Law IV. Exceptions: **NO** metal studs are allowed in NSYSA play. Gym or tennis shoes may be allowed.
 - c. Gloves, tights, pantyhose, long underwear, warm-up or sweatpants, stocking caps, sweatshirts, or similar long-sleeved shirts may be worn providing such items are form fitting. The jersey and shorts shall be worn as the outermost garments. Undershirts can be multi-colored/patterned if the undershirts are the same pattern/color as the main shirt.
 - d. Headbands and wristbands may be worn by any player.
 - e. Bandannas will not be worn by any player.
 - f. All items of jewelry (necklaces, ear/facial piercings, rings, bracelets, rubber bands, leather bands, etc.) are not permitted even if taped.
 - g. All hair accessories must be fabric or elastic; no metal or hard plastic.
 - h. Goalkeepers may also wear a soft-billed baseball style cap, kneepads, elbow pads, and sweat pants provided such attire is not potentially hazardous to the game.
 - i. No other player other than the goalkeeper may wear kneepads or elbow pads without NSYSA permission.
 - j. A player who is not in proper uniform will not be allowed to play.
 - k. Shin guards are mandatory for all players in NSYSA League play.
 - l. It is recommended that all male goalkeepers wear a protective cup.
 - m. It is recommended that a mouth guard be worn over braces (Orthodontic).
 - n. It will be the coach's responsibility to see that players are properly attired.
2. In the event of two teams appearing in the same colors, the away team shall maintain their colors per the NSYSA Constitution Article 3, Section A. The home team will shift to their alternate color or may wear pinnies at the approval of the Referee that are distinctly different in color than the away team.
3. If the goalkeeper's jersey is similar to the opposing team's colors, the goalkeeper must change his / her color.
4. It will be the responsibility of the home team to have a game ball properly inflated at game time.

Section D. Spectators

1. Spectators and / or parents, who unduly interfere with the progress of the match, can be warned by the Referee or by a responsible officer of the NSYSA present at the field. Responsible "officer" shall mean any elected officer of their member club, NSYSA, or in their absence, the Coach.
2. Spectators will not be allowed behind the goal area, or within two (2) yards of the touchline, or beyond the top of the Penalty Box. Persons desiring to photograph the match from these areas shall obtain permission from the appointed Field Marshall before the start of the match. Said person shall not coach, cheer, or in any way distract the players or the official.
3. Any spectator violating the Rules of Competition or interfering with the progress of a match shall be asked to leave the field.
 - a. The Coach of the team with the spectator in violation is responsible for ensuring their

removal.

- b.** Failure to do so may result in an abandoned game.
- c.** The Club shall take action to see that the problem does not occur again.
- d.** Spectators and / or parents will be located on the touchline opposite the teams for all U11 and above games. For U9-10 competitive this rule also applies.

NSYSA SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD

Section A. Overview.

1. The NSYSA Sportsmanship Award is to honor those teams who are recognized from within the NSYSA soccer community for their outstanding display of sportsmanship.

Section B. Rating System:

1. Teams are rated on their sportsmanship in each week's game when the opposing team reports the game scores and the referee files the game report on the NSYSA website. 2. Points awarded in each category range are: 4, 3, 2, and 1. 3. Point definitions are: 4 = excellent. 1 = poor

Section C. Evaluation

Teams (Players, Coaching Staff and Spectators) will be evaluated on the following:

- a. Players – Players will be rated on their actions both physical and verbal on and off the field towards their teammates, opponents, and officials.
- b. Coaching Staff – They will be rated on their actions both physical and verbal on and off the field towards their players, parents, opponents, and officials.
- c. Spectators / Parents - They will be rated on their actions both physical and verbal on and off the field towards their players, other spectators/parents, opponent team (players, coaches, spectators), and the officials.

NSYSA ASSOCIATION PLAYER PASS PROCEDURE

Ref: WYS Rules of Competition - Internal Procedures, Revision June 7 2014

A. The Association Player Pass is a tool that allows player movement from Rec to Select Club and Select Club to Regional Club and players to Player Pass to RCL. The Association player pass will:

- 1. Provide developmental opportunities for players
- 2. Allow for more participation of players that may otherwise choose another sport
- 3. Educate families on the different levels of play in the Player Pathway
- 4. Enhance the level of play at all levels - enhancing RCL with more talent; players developing via Player Pass at RCL and returning to Rec or Select will enhance that level as well. B. Administration:

1. Players Passes may be used to go UP in level of play (i.e. from Rec, Select or RCL). 2. Players Passes may be used to go UP in age of play (i.e. from U14 to U15, etc.)

3. Within a level to upper division or age within League.

a. Tracking of players utilizing a Player Pass would be identified by their home Rec or Select team and must be tracked and reported on at the Club level. The borrowing Club will report playing time each week to the loaning Club.

b. Receiving team must report to loaning team weekly.

4. Receiving Clubs utilizing the play pass process are responsible to report to the Loaning Club the playing time of each player utilized as a play up. 5. The reporting shall be on a

weekly basis. 6. Failure to provide this information may result in the loaning club rescinding their approval for those players to play up. C. Approval Request Time Frames:

1. All requests will be initiated no later than five (5) days prior to the weekend in which the play up player is desired.
2. All actions of the below Approval Process, Item 4, will be complete and the final request mailing will be forwarded to the NSYSA Registrar no later than three (3) days prior to the weekend in which the play up player is desired.
3. Failure to meet these timelines will result in denial of the request.
4. All emergent requests, which fall inside the specified timelines, will require approval of the NSYSA President or NSYSA Director of Recreational Soccer. No Exceptions!

GUIDANCE FOR “HEADING THE BALL”

US Soccer's heading rules for youth players are part of the [U.S. Soccer Concussion Initiative](#) aimed at reducing head injuries. Here's a summary of the heading rules:

Age Group	Heading in Practices	Heading in Games	Penalty for Deliberate Heading (U11 & Younger)
U11 (or 10 years old) & Younger	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Indirect free kick (IFK)
U12 & U13 (or 11-13 years old)	Limited (30 mins/wk, 15-20 headers max)	Allowed in games, but limited in practice	Not applicable
U14 & Older	Allowed	Allowed	Not applicable

- The restriction on heading applies to players aged 10 and under.
- If a player in the restricted age group deliberately heads the ball during a game, an indirect free kick (IFK) is awarded to the opposing team at the location of the infraction.
- If this occurs within the goal area, the IFK is taken on the goal area line nearest the infraction point.
- No cautions or send-offs are given for heading rule violations.

These rules are part of US Soccer's Concussion Initiative to enhance player safety and minimize head injury risks among youth players.