



**Markham Soccer Club**

# House League Playing Rules

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Version 2.6

## Table Of Contents

<b>1. GENERAL.....</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 PHILOSOPHY .....	3
1.2 GENERAL RULES .....	4
1.2.1 <i>PLAYER’S EQUIPMENT</i> .....	4
1.2.2 <i>BALL SIZE</i> .....	4
1.2.3 <i>REFEREE</i> .....	4
1.2.4 <i>COACHES</i> .....	5
1.2.5 <i>GAME SHEETS</i> .....	5
1.2.6 <i>EQUAL PLAY</i> .....	5
1.2.7 <i>INJURIES</i> .....	7
1.2.8 <i>SHORT-HANDED TEAMS (the “One-up Rule”)</i> .....	7
1.2.9 <i>FORFEITURE</i> .....	7
1.2.10 <i>GAME DURATIONS</i> .....	8
1.2.11 <i>GAME CANCELLATIONS</i> .....	8
1.2.12 <i>REFEREE - NO-SHOW</i> .....	9
1.2.13 <i>PENALTIES, DISCIPLINE AND APPEALS</i> .....	9
1.2.14 <i>POINTS AND STANDINGS</i> .....	10
1.2.15 <i>TIE GAMES IN CUP FINAL, QUARTER-FINALS, AND SEMI-FINALS</i> .....	11
<b>2. MICRO SOCCER .....</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1 MICRO SOCCER RULES (3-A-SIDE) .....	13
2.2 MICRO SOCCER RULES (5-A-SIDE) .....	14
<b>3. MINI SOCCER (7-A-SIDE) .....</b>	<b>15</b>
3.1 MINI SOCCER RULES .....	15
<b>4. FULL FIELD SOCCER (11-A-SIDE) .....</b>	<b>16</b>
4.1 FULL FIELD RULES .....	16
<b>5. INDOOR (7-A-SIDE) .....</b>	<b>18</b>
5.1 INDOOR RULES .....	18
i) U9 Division .....	18
ii) U11 - U16 Division .....	18
iii) U18 Division .....	19
<b>APPENDIX A: FIFA LAWS OF THE GAME.....</b>	<b>20</b>

# 1. General

## 1.1 PHILOSOPHY

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

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

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

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

## 1.2 **GENERAL RULES**

The general rules that follow apply to all MSC house leagues (i.e. those run entirely within the Club). The Markham Soccer Club uses the FIFA (Federation of International Football Association) playing rules with the modifications and additions noted in this document. **These rules apply to indoor and outdoor leagues with any specific rules for either of these noted. In general, indoor rules are the same as outdoor mini soccer rules with a few specific changes for the indoor environment.**

### 1.2.1 **PLAYER'S EQUIPMENT**

- a) All players must wear regulation soccer boots or running shoes. Hard soled shoes are not allowed. For indoor play, only smooth soled soccer shoes or running shoes are allowed (no spikes).
- b) Shin guards completely covered by socks are MANDATORY for all players in games and practices. There will be no exceptions. Players not wearing shin guards will be sent off the field of play until they are properly equipped.
- c) Goal keepers must wear a shirt which is distinctly different in colour from the other players of both teams.
- d) Players may be required to remove watches, rings, earrings and any other non-standard equipment as requested by the referee.
- e) Players will be allowed to play with casts, knee braces and similar aids and protective equipment as long as there is no apparent danger to the wearer or other players, in the opinion of the referee. Wrist casts should be wrapped in foam rubber or cloth. Coaches should obviously use good judgment in determining if a player is ready to play, and if such protective aids are safe. If in doubt, it is best to err on the side of caution.

### 1.2.2 **BALL SIZE**

- a) A size #3 ball shall be used for U5, U6 and U7 Divisions.
- b) A size #4 ball shall be used for all MINI Divisions and FULL FIELD teams up to and including U12 boys and girls Divisions.
- c) A size #5 ball shall be used for all other divisions.

### 1.2.3 **REFEREE**

- a) The referee is in control of the field of play. No one may enter or leave the field of play without the referee's permission.

### 1.2.4 COACHES

- a) During a game, all coaches and assistants are to remain within their own half of the field (i.e. team bench side) and are not permitted to cross over the centre line into the opponent's half of the field.
- b) Coaching of players by the team's coach and assistant(s) during a game is permitted only from one side of the field and, as noted in a) above only from within their respective team's bench half of the field, from the centre line to the goal line.

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

### 1.2.5 GAME SHEETS

- a) An approved game sheet shall be provided by the designated home team (normally the first team listed). This single game sheet shall be completed by both coaches and include all of the requested information. The information must be printed and provided in full. Coaches may not fill out separate sheets and submit them both.
- b) In the event that a game sheet is not submitted for a game, or the one submitted is not legible, the game will be recorded as null with no points awarded.
- c) Where multi-part game sheets are used, the top (best) copy must be submitted to the Club (no matter what it says on the game sheet itself).
- d) The referee is responsible for delivery of the game sheet to the Club Office within twenty-four (24) hours. If the game is officiated by someone other than an assigned referee (e.g. coach, parent, etc.), the winning team, or the home team in the event of a tie game, is responsible for delivery of the game sheet to the Club Office.

### 1.2.6 EQUAL PLAY

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

- c) The Club will monitor equal play and take action if a coach appears to be violating the equal play rules.
- d) This “equal play” rule applies to all MSC House League games, including regular season games, playoff games, Final games and overtime.
- e) The goalkeeper is subject to the same equal play requirement as all other players.
- f) The goalkeeper in Outdoor Divisions above U14 may only be changed (except for cases of injury) at: 1) the half-time break in the game, 2) no more than once each half during regular time, and 3) at the start of each overtime period, if appropriate. In all other divisions (i.e., U8 to U14 Outdoor Divisions and U8 to U18 Indoor Divisions), the coach may change the keeper at every substitution. Any substitutions made during a half (i.e., while the clock is still running) are allowed at the referee’s discretion, with the proviso that this is done quickly and does not extend the time needed to make substitutions.
- g) The goalkeeper need not be changed during the game if this is not necessary to meet equal-play requirements (e.g., a team is playing with less than a full complement of players and some players must play the entire game). It is advisable however, to use a variety of players in goal rather than play the same few players in goal all of the time.
- h) In all divisions that have defined substitution periods (i.e., all divisions except Outdoor Divisions above U14), the referees must record, before the start of each period, the shirt numbers of the respective team players who are on the sidelines for each period. It is the referee’s responsibility to verify that the equal play rule is being properly observed. The substitution information must be included on the game sheet by the referee before it is submitted to the club. Equal play still applies in the Outdoor Divisions above U14, however, the onus is on the coaches, as the referee is not expected to monitor substitutions, which may occur at any time during a game, subject to the restrictions described in Section 4.1(d).
- i) If the referee or the opposing coach detects that the equal playing rule is being violated, the offending coach will be notified immediately and play will not recommence until the situation is rectified. Once a game sheet is signed by both coaches, unless a substitution concern is noted directly on the game sheet, protests regarding the equal play rule will not be considered. For this reason, game sheets should be signed after the game is completed. (Note: this does not prevent the Club from following up on an issue directly with the offending coach – as per the next point).
- j) In the event that it comes to the attention of the appropriate League Director that the equal play rule has not been adhered to (whether through protest, as noted on the signed game sheet, or through review of the game sheets), the coach may be subject to discipline procedures. (See section 2.2.1(h) of the Markham Soccer Club Policies & Procedures document.)

**1.2.7 INJURIES**

- a) Any player who is openly bleeding from an injury must leave the field of play and not return until the bleeding is stopped or the injury is dressed.
- b) Any injury which requires hospitalization must be reported to the League Director within 24 hours of occurrence, and appropriate insurance forms must be completed.
- c) Substitution may be made at any time, with the permission of the referee, for injury or illness. If a player must leave the field because of injury or illness, the referee must be notified so that the player may be replaced. The player must return to the field of play as soon as he/she is able to do so.
- d) An injury is not an excuse for violating the equal play rules. Coaches must attempt to meet both the letter and the spirit of equal play rules if injuries occur.

**1.2.8 SHORT-HANDED TEAMS (the “One-up Rule”)**

- a) In the event that a MINI or INDOOR team cannot field seven (7) players due to absenteeism, illness or injury, the opposing team may only play one (1) more player than the short-handed team to a maximum of seven (7) players. Thus, a team with only four (4) players will play against five (5) players, five (5) against six (6) and six (6) against seven (7).
- b) For FULL FIELD (11-a-side) soccer, if a team cannot field eleven (11) players, the opposing team may only play one (1) more player than the short-handed team to a maximum of eleven (11) players. Thus, seven (7) will play against eight (8) and so forth. This applies to regular season games, playoff games, and final games. The rules of substitution shall remain unchanged, in that all players must be removed from the game for one period before any player(s) are removed for two periods.
- c) If a coach knows in advance that the team will be short-handed, he/she may wish to call up players from the division below. See sections 2.2.1(f) and 2.2.1(m) of the Markham Soccer Club Policies & Procedures document for call-up rules and the penalty for violating these rules.

**1.2.9 FORFEITURE**

- a) A grace period of not more than five (5) minutes from the scheduled game start time is permitted for teams to be ready to play with at least the required minimum number of players.
- b) If a MINI or INDOOR team fails to field at least four (4) players, or a FULL FIELD team fails to field at least seven (7) players for a game by kick-off time, then that team shall forfeit the game to the opposition. In this case the game will be recorded as a 1-0 win. If neither team fields at least the minimum players specified above, no points will be given.

- c) A forfeited game will be recorded as a 1-0 win for the team that had sufficient players. If neither team had sufficient players, the game will show as a loss by both teams and points will not be awarded.
- d) In either case, a “fun” game may be organized to ensure maximum playing time for all players. A proper game sheet is to be filled in, stating the reason for the forfeiture. If a referee does not appear, it is the responsibility of the coaches to ensure that this game sheet is delivered to the Club Office within twenty-four (24) hours.

#### 1.2.10 GAME DURATIONS

- a) The referee shall be the sole timekeeper.
- b) **It shall be the referee’s responsibility to ensure that games start and end on time.** Due to time limits with 2 games per night on most outdoor fields (and 1-hour limits on indoor games), the referee is authorized to shorten a game to ensure that it ends on time.
- c) In the event of darkness, bad weather or any unforeseen circumstances, a game may be shortened or abandoned by the referee. Both coaches shall be advised of any such change/decision, however, the decision of the referee shall be final. For an outdoor game, if three-quarters (3/4) of the game has not been completed before play ceases the game shall be rescheduled, otherwise, the result at close of play shall stand. For an Indoor game there will be no re-scheduling.

#### 1.2.11 GAME CANCELLATIONS

- a) The Town of Markham Parks & Recreation Department, in co-operation with the Board of Directors of the Markham Soccer Club, has the authority to take fields out of service if conditions would cause damage to the fields. The Director of House League can authorize a Convenor to cancel games due to unsuitable field or weather conditions.
- b) Unless the Club has formally cancelled a game due to bad weather, field closure or other reasons, **coaches and their teams must show up at the field.** As long as a game is still scheduled, **the referee shall have the sole authority to cancel the game,** immediately prior to game kick-off, due to unsuitable field or weather conditions. Outdoor games will normally proceed even if it is raining but must be halted by the referee in the event of lightning.
- c) In the event that lightning is sighted at a field, the referee must use his best judgment with respect to delaying the kickoff, canceling the game (whether or not it has already begun), or calling for a temporary delay.

**1.2.12 REFEREE - NO-SHOW**

- a) In the event of the official referee being late, or failing to appear for a game, it is the responsibility of the two coaches to proceed with the game. (This is still considered an official game.) The coaches must agree on a substitute referee or agree to a designate from each team to each referee one-half of a game. Their decision must be written on the game sheet and signed by both coaches before the game starts. Any coach who refuses to play will forfeit the game points.
- b) When a coach, or his designate, is acting as the referee, he/she must demonstrate the highest standard of fairness and impartiality. If at all possible, an assistant coach should take control of his/her team while the coach is acting as the referee.
- c) If the official referee arrives late, he/she must take charge of the balance of the game.
- d) If a referee does not appear, it is the responsibility of the coaches to ensure a proper game sheet is filled in and delivered to the Club Office within twenty-four (24) hours.

**1.2.13 PENALTIES, DISCIPLINE AND APPEALS**

- a) The referee shall give individual warnings (yellow cards) for pertinent rule infractions by players.
- b) Two such warnings (yellow cards) to a player, in any one game, shall mean automatic eviction from the game, plus an automatic suspension from the next scheduled game. No substitution may be made for a player who is sent off for the remainder of that period [this is an intentional deviation from FIFA rules so as to avoid conflict with equal play rules].
- c) Three yellow cards in separate games will also result in an automatic one-game suspension for the next scheduled game following the game in which the third yellow card was given.
- d) The referee has the power to issue a red card and send a player off the field for the rest of the game if he/she commits a serious offense (e.g. acts of violence or serious foul play; foul or abusive language; or continues to break the laws of the game). The offending player will be automatically suspended from the next scheduled game and may be subject to further discipline. No substitution may be made for a player who is sent off for the remainder of that period [an intended deviation from FIFA rules as above]. Note: The definition of “period” can be found in sections 3.1 (for mini-field divisions) and 4.1 (for full-field divisions up to U14). For age groups above U14, a “period” is defined as a half.
- e) The Club discipline committee shall have the power to review any incidents or situations, initiate a discipline hearing, and assign penalties as appropriate. Such penalties may be in addition to automatic penalties as specified above. The committee has the power to expel a player from the Club for the current season for a serious offense (or offenses).

- f) In the case of discipline problems on the part of coaches, parents or other spectators, the referee will file a report with the club within 24 hours, providing specifics of the incident (a yellow or red card is not appropriate for this type of situation). A referee may direct coaches or spectators to leave the immediate area of the field (i.e. to an area well away from the game) if their actions are seriously detrimental to the proper conduct of the game. He/she may abandon a game if his/her directions/requests to coaches, parents and/or spectators are not being respected and adhered to. This power of the referee is to be used very sparingly and only in those cases which truly warrant it. The referee must expect that coaches and spectators will be vocal in support of their team and that the referee will often take the brunt of this in a call which goes against their team. In a situation where a coach or spectator threatens a referee, a coach or a player or uses abusive language (unacceptable comments of a racial, sexual or similar nature) towards a referee, coach or player, the referee should take decisive action.
- g) Any discipline problems must be reported on the game sheet by the referee and a report sheet completed on proper disciplinary report sheets, and submitted, along with the game sheet, to the Club Office within twenty-four (24) hours.
- h) Game protests must be in writing. These must be delivered to the Club Office at Mount Joy Arena, within two (2) business days of the completion of the game in question. This must be clearly labeled on the outside as "GAME PROTEST". The Convenor and/or League Director must also be advised that a protest has been filed, within the same period of time. No protest dealing with a decision of the referee will be accepted. A fee of \$25.00 must accompany any protest. This shall be refunded if the protest is upheld. Where a game has been played under protest, such fact shall be clearly indicated by the referee on the game sheet. The procedures in this section do not apply to protests pertaining to alleged equal play rule infractions. For these procedures please refer to sections 1.2.6 i) and 1.2.6 j).
- i) Appeals may be lodged against disciplinary decisions made by the Club. The appeal must be sent, in duplicate, by registered mail to the Secretary of the York Region Soccer Association and must specify the exact nature of the appeal.
- j) The appeal must be lodged within two business days of the original decision having been communicated. The date of the postmark shall be taken as the limiting date in all cases. A copy of the appeal must be sent by registered mail to the Markham Soccer Club at P.O. Box 476, Markham, Ontario, L3P 3R1.
- k) The club will not be liable to provide any refunds to players who lose playing time due to suspensions.

#### **1.2.14 POINTS AND STANDINGS**

*Standings shall be based on total points. Three points shall be awarded for a win, one point for a tie and zero points for a loss. In the event of a tie in the standings, to determine the*

*winner, the tie breaking criteria shown below will be applied. These are applied once each, in the sequence shown, until a winner is determined. At every step, in a multi-way tie, the teams which fail to meet the criteria will be eliminated.*

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

### **1.2.15 TIE GAMES IN CUP FINAL, QUARTER-FINALS, AND SEMI-FINALS**

*Ties shall be broken as follows:*

- a) Two ten-minute overtime periods (two 5-minute periods for Mini and Indoor divisions) will be played immediately after the end of regular playing time. During these overtime periods, the team which scores the first goal is declared the winner (“The Golden Goal”). Equal play rules continue to apply as an extension of the regulation time. If still tied at the end of this time then,
- b) A series of five penalty kicks will be taken alternately by five separate players from each team [NOTE: this is not limited to the players on the field, to make it easier for coaches to apply the equal play rules and maintain some sanity. This is an intentional deviation from normal FIFA rules]. The full teams may sit in 2 groups near centre field while the penalty kicks are being taken. The referee records the shirt numbers in the order in which the kicks are to be taken. If still tied then,
- c) Continue to alternate penalty kicks, one by one, with the other players from each team until the tie is broken. If still tied then,
- d) Continue through the teams in the same order as before for as long as it takes until the tie is broken.

**NOTES:**

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

## 2. MICRO SOCCER

### 2.1 MICRO SOCCER RULES (3-a-side)

*This format is used for players in the U4 to U6 age groups. It is a non-competitive format and thus there are no formal playing rules. The following are the guidelines used in scrimmages:*

- a) The maximum number of players on the field is 3 per team.
- b) A number 3 ball is used.
- c) Offside rule does not apply.
- d) One player is designated as the defender at any given time. This player may handle the ball in the goal box.
- e) Players will be substituted in and out together as a unit of 3 if there are sufficient substitutes. The players will rotate through the defender position with each round of substitutions.
- f) Substitutions should be done regularly (every 3 - 4 minutes) so that players are not sitting out for too long.
- g) One coach from each team will be allowed on the field with the players during the scrimmage. The coaches will act as referees, in addition to coaching their players. Coaches may not interfere in the play in any way. Coaches must not stand within the goal area.
- h) All players are to be encouraged to play equally. That is: coaches should discourage strong players from hogging the ball.
- i) As this is a development-oriented format, winning the scrimmage is not the prime objective. Coaches should de-emphasize winning and losing and focus on good play and applying what has been taught. Positive feedback when a skill has been applied should be the prime focus.
- j) No standings (formal or informal) for games won or lost or goals scored shall be kept. Coaches may wish however, to (confidentially) keep ratings of individual players and track progress against these.

## 2.2

## **MICRO SOCCER RULES (5-a-side)**

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

- a) The maximum number of players on the field is 5 per team.
- b) A number 3 ball is used.
- c) Offside rule does not apply.
- d) One player is designated as the defender at any given time. This player may handle the ball in the goal box.
- e) Players will be substituted in and out together as a unit of 5 if there are sufficient substitutes. The players will rotate through the defender position with each round of substitutions.
- f) Substitutions should be done regularly (every 3 - 4 minutes) so that players are not sitting out for too long.
- g) One coach from each team will be allowed on the field with the players during the scrimmage. The coaches will act as referees, in addition to coaching their players. Coaches may not interfere in the play in any way. Coaches must not stand within the goal area.
- h) All players are to be encouraged to play equally. That is: coaches should discourage strong players from hogging the ball.
- i) As this is a development-oriented format, winning the scrimmage is not the prime objective. Coaches should de-emphasize winning and losing and focus on good play and applying what has been taught. Positive feedback when a skill has been applied should be the prime focus.
- j) No standings (formal or informal) for games won or lost or goals scored shall be kept. Coaches may wish however, to (confidentially) keep ratings of individual players and track progress against these.

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### 3. MINI SOCCER (7-a-side)

#### 3.1 MINI SOCCER RULES

*This form of the game is currently used outdoors for the U8 to U10 age groups. The normal laws of soccer shall apply, subject to the following modifications:*

- a) The maximum number of players on the field at any time is seven (7) per team.
- b) The game will be divided into periods. The exact format will be one of the following two options. Option 1 is the default and will automatically apply unless the House League Director indicates before the start of the season that Option 2 will be used.

**OPTION 1 (6 Periods):**

*Two (2) halves of twenty-four (24) minutes each, with a five (5) minute break between halves. Each half will be divided into three (3) eight (8) minute periods with no break between periods. There shall be a five (5) minute half-time between periods 3 and 4. The first, second, fourth and fifth periods will be over at the first normal stoppage of play (or stopped when neither team has a distinct scoring opportunity) after eight (8) minutes have been played. Substitution will then be made and play will resume where it left off. The third period will be over after twenty-four (24) minutes in total have been played (or less if the referee is forced to shorten the game due to a late start). The sixth period will end after a total of 48 minutes have been played, or at the scheduled time, whichever comes first.*

**OPTION 2 (4 Periods):**

*Two (2) halves of twenty-two (22) minutes each, with a five (5) minute break between halves. Each half will be divided into two (2) eleven (11) minute periods (quarters) with no break between periods. The first and third periods will be over at the first normal stoppage of play (or stopped when neither team has a distinct scoring opportunity) after a minimum of eleven (11) minutes have been played. Substitution will then be made and play will resume where it left off. The second period will be over after twenty-two (22) minutes in total have been played. The fourth period will be over after 44 minutes have been played or at the scheduled completion time, whichever comes first.*

- c) The referee has the discretion to shorten periods in order to complete the game at the designated time. In no case may a game be extended past the normal finish time if another game is scheduled to be played immediately afterward.
- d) Offside rule does not apply.
- e) Opposing players must stand at least six (6) metres away when a free kick, penalty kick or kick off is being taken.

- f) Penalty kicks will be taken from a spot eight (8) metres directly in front of the mid point of the goal.

## 4. FULL FIELD SOCCER (11-a-side)

### 4.1 FULL FIELD RULES

*These rules will apply to Outdoor leagues run entirely by the MSC for age groups over U10. Other leagues in which MSC teams may participate will establish their own rules.*

#### Up To and Including U14

- a) For age groups up to and including U14, the game will be divided into periods. The exact format will be one of the following two options. Option 1 is the default and will automatically apply unless the House League Director indicates before the start of the season that Option 2 will be used.

#### **OPTION 1 (6 Periods):**

*Two (2) halves of twenty-four (24) minutes each, with a five (5) minute break between halves. Each half will be divided into three (3) eight (8) minute periods with no break between periods. There shall be a five (5) minute half-time between periods 3 and 4. The first, second, fourth and fifth periods will be over at the first normal stoppage of play (or stopped when neither team has a distinct scoring opportunity) after eight (8) minutes have been played. Substitution will then be made and play will resume where it left off. The third period will be over after twenty-four (24) minutes in total have been played (or less if the referee is forced to shorten the game due to a late start). The sixth period will end after a total of 48 minutes have been played, or at the scheduled time, whichever comes first.*

#### **OPTION 2 (4 Periods):**

*Two (2) halves of twenty-five (25) minutes each, with a five (5) minute break between halves. Each half will be divided into two (2) twelve and one-half (12½) minute periods (quarters) with no break between periods. The first and third periods will be over at the first normal stoppage of play (or stopped when neither team has a distinct scoring opportunity) after a minimum of twelve and one-half (12½) minutes has been played. Substitution will then be made and play will resume where it left off. The second period will be over after twenty-five (25) minutes in total have been played. The fourth period will be over after 50 minutes have been played or at the scheduled completion time, whichever comes first.*

- b) The referee has the discretion to shorten periods in order to complete the game at the designated time. In no case may a game be extended past the normal finish time if another game is scheduled to be played immediately afterward.

**Above U14**

- a) For full-field soccer in age groups above U14, a 90-minute game will normally be played.
- b) Unlimited substitutions are allowed at the following times with the prior approval of the referee:
  - i) at a goal kick by either team
  - ii) after a goal is scored by either team
  - iii) at the beginning of the second half or any overtime period
  - iv) on a team's own throw-in
  - v) on an opposing team's throw-in, provided the opposing team has requested substitutions first
  - vi) at the referee's discretion for an injury.
- c) Equal play still applies, however, the onus is on the coaches, as the referee is not expected to monitor substitutions.

***NOTE:***

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

## 5. INDOOR (7-a-side)

### 5.1 INDOOR RULES

*This form of the game is used indoors, for all age groups. The normal laws of mini soccer shall apply subject to the modifications included below:*

- a) The maximum number of players on the field at any time is seven (7) per team.
- b) The game will be divided into periods as follows:

- i) **U9 DIVISION**

- 6 periods shall be played. The first period of play will start at 20 minutes after the start of the one-hour period (the first twenty minutes being an opportunity to practice). The 40 minutes of playing time will be divided as follows:
- Each period shall be five (5) minutes in duration (unless the overall time must be shortened by the referee due to a late start);
- Play will stop between periods only long enough to change players and for the referee to record the numbers of the players who are sitting out that period;
- There shall be a five (5) minute half-time between periods 3 and 4;
- Periods will end at the first convenient time after five (5) minutes have been played. This will normally be at a normal stoppage of play or during the play when neither side has an immediate scoring opportunity. After substitutions have been made, play will resume where it left off.
- The sixth period will end exactly on the hour, according to the facility wall clock time (or the referee's watch if the facility clock is not functioning). The referee has the discretion to shorten periods in order to complete the game at the designated time. **In no case may a game be extended past the normal finish time.**

- ii) **U11 - U16 DIVISION**

- 6 periods shall be played. The first period of play will start at 10 minutes after the start of the one-hour period. The first 10 minutes will be allocated to practice. The playing time will be divided as follows:
- Each period shall be seven (7) minutes in duration (subject to being shortened by the referee due to a late start or delays);
- Play will stop between periods only long enough to change players and for the referee to record the numbers of the players who are sitting out that period;
- There shall be a three (3) minute half-time between periods 3 and 4;

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- Periods will end at the first opportunity after seven (7) minutes have been played. This will normally be at a stoppage of play or during the play when neither side has an immediate scoring opportunity. After substitutions have been made, play will resume where it left off.
  - The sixth period will end exactly on the hour, according to the facility wall clock time (or the referee's watch if the facility clock is not functioning). The referee has the discretion to shorten periods in order to complete the game at the designated time. **In no case may a game be extended past the normal finish time.**

iii) **U18 DIVISION**

*This differs from the U11 – U16 Divisions, in that there is no practice time provided at the start of the game. The first period of play should start as soon as both teams have the minimum number of players and will start no later than seven (7) minutes past the start of the time period (maximum grace period for each team to have at least the minimum number of players). The playing time will be divided as follows:*

- 6 periods shall be played. Each period shall be eight (8) minutes in duration (subject to being shortened by the referee due to a late start or delays);
  - Play will stop between periods only long enough to change players and for the referee to record the numbers of the players who are sitting out that period;
  - There shall be a three (3) minute half-time between periods 3 and 4;
  - Periods will end at the first opportunity after eight (8) minutes have been played. This will normally be at a stoppage of play or during the play when neither side has an immediate scoring opportunity. After substitutions have been made, play will resume where it left off.
  - The sixth period will end exactly on the hour, according to the facility wall clock time (or the referee's watch if the facility clock is not functioning). The referee has the discretion to shorten periods in order to complete the game at the designated time. **In no case may a game be extended past the normal finish time.**
- c) Play shall be started from the centre circle with a pass which may be forward or backward.
  - d) Offside rule does not apply.
  - e) Free kicks are direct or indirect, depending on the nature of the infraction, consistent with FIFA rules. Penalty kicks, goal kicks, kick-offs, corner kicks, and kicks from dropped balls are direct, consistent with FIFA rules.
  - f) Opposing players must stand at least 6 metres away when a free kick, penalty kick, corner kick, or kick-off is being taken.

- g) The ball is dead if it strikes the ceiling or any attached ceiling fixture. In this case the play is restarted with an indirect free kick by the opposing team from the spot directly below where the ball hit the ceiling or fixture. (see also 5.1 h)
- h) Any infringement that would normally result in an indirect free kick being awarded to the attacking team in its opponents' penalty area will instead result in a corner kick from the side on which the infringement occurred.
- i) Penalty kicks will be taken from a spot marked directly in front of the mid point of the goal.
- j) Keepers must play the ball from the ground or throw it. Drop kicks (kicking the ball directly from the hand without allowing it to touch the ground first) are not permitted. The penalty for an illegal drop kick by the keeper is a corner kick by the opposing team from the side on which the infraction occurred.

## APPENDIX A: FIFA LAWS OF THE GAME

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

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

and navigate to the *Laws of the Game*.

Note: The [2007/2008 version](#), updated July 2007, comes into effect with the 2008 outdoor season and will continue to apply for the entire 2008 season. Any updates that occur during an outdoor season will not apply until the following outdoor season.