



2022 Academy League Referee Handbook

The 2022 USL Academy Referee Handbook denotes the rules and procedures specific to referees in order to perform their game-day duties. The Rules listed in the Referee Handbook are not all-encompassing and should be used as a reference for the basic rules and procedures for officiating a USL Academy League match. For full Rules, please refer to the USL Academy League Operations Manual, which may be found on www.usl-academy.com.

The Referee Handbook is a confidential document and is intended solely for the internal use of the USL Academy and its clubs. Under no circumstances should the Referee Handbook be shared externally.

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Definitions

"FIFA" shall mean Federation Internationale de Football Association, the entity governing professional soccer internationally, or its successors.

"LEAGUE" shall mean the USL Academy.

"CLUB" shall mean the organization that has been granted membership in the LEAGUE.

"Minimum Standards" shall mean the minimum standards that must be met by all member CLUBS.

"Season" shall mean the time period in any year during which official games are played in the LEAGUE.

"Sponsors" shall mean official LEAGUE sponsors as named by USL .

"Facility" shall mean the LEAGUE approved playing facility utilized by the CLUB during the season.

"LEAGUE Marks" shall mean the trade names of the LEAGUE and its program trademarks that may be amended or supplemented by LEAGUE from time to time.

"LEAGUE Rules" shall mean the playing and operational rules and policies of the LEAGUE.

"USSF" shall mean United States Soccer Federation (also known as U.S. Soccer), the governing entity for soccer in the United States.

"CSA" shall mean Canadian Soccer Association, the governing entity for soccer in Canada.

"ITC" shall mean International Clearance, the request and paperwork required for a player born outside of the United States to register with the LEAGUE.

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100 – League Information

Rule 101 – LEAGUE Contacts

Game Day Contact #1: Game Day Issues, Weather, Field Conditions, Player Eligibility, Rules of Play, Standards, Emergencies

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Rule 102 – Technology Contacts

MOD11 Contact: Technical Issues, Rosters Unavailable, Player Eligibility, Game Reporting

Ryan Miller

MOD11 Digital Match Form Management

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Rule 103 – Referee Contacts

For scheduling, Game Officials, and other issues related to the assigning of refereeing, please contact your local Assignor.

Rule 104 – LEAGUE Mission

USL Academy is designed to create an optimal player pathway from youth to professional soccer. The USL Academy establishes a high level pre-professional training environment for the top players in each region, with a direct connection to their USL senior team (USL Championship, USL League 1, USL League 2).

Rule 105 – Referee Assignments

Assignment

Match Officials will be assigned in cooperation and coordination with the United States Soccer Federation’s Referee Department, or any other respective national and local assignors as applicable. Academy League Games shall have a Referee, AR1, AR2, and 4th official.

Rule 106 – Referee Pay

NOTE: Referees should fill out and bring printed copies of their W-9 form to each game. CLUBS may request a copy for payment purposes.

Referee fees will be split between the Home and Away teams and paid via cash or check at the field. Teams should bring the exact bills detailed below (or smaller denominations) so that change will not have to be made. Home teams will be responsible for paying additional referee expenses (see below). The pay scale for referees is listed below:

AGE	U19
Referee	\$90
AR1	\$60
AR2	\$60
4 th	\$40
Team Split	Home: \$125 / Away: \$125

Cash denominations: Each team should bring cash in the following denominations, or smaller: (6) \$20 and (1) \$5. Referees are not required to make change.

Check amounts: Each team should prepare checks for each referee in the amount of half of the total value. The Center Referee should receive (1) \$45 check from each team. Teams should also have blank checks available for Referee Expenses.

The fees for officiating games are set by LEAGUE, and subject to regular review. Referees, Assistant Referees, and 4th Officials are eligible to be compensated for services if they:

- Arrive at the proper time and perform assigned services.
- Review game report for completion and accuracy followed by submitting a digital match report through MOD11 as outlined in the referee handbook
- Arrive at the proper time, unless for some reason the game has been already postponed without the referees being properly notified in advance due to an error by the league or teams.
- Arrive at the proper time and either of the competing clubs fails to appear for the game.
- Perform assigned services, but for some reason, the game is not completed.

Expense Reports

Officials are eligible for coverage of travel expenses via the Referee Expense Report. Officials wishing to recover expenses will be required to submit this form to the Home Team prior to the start of the game. Center and Assistant referees are able to submit expenses for their trips depending on the round-trip mileage they accumulate and the overall time spent between departing their home and returning. Home Teams are responsible for paying additional expenses incurred by the officials. Referees must notify the LEAGUE and the Home Team of their anticipated expenses prior to arriving at the venue, and complete and turn in the form prior to kick-off. The Referee Expense Report can be found on the group home page in GameOfficials. Home Teams should have printed Referee Expense Reports available as well. The Home Team must provide payment of expenses no later than the conclusion of the match via cash or check. Any matters pertaining to the payment (or lack thereof) of fees should be addressed to the appropriate LEAGUE Manager. In the event of a disputed expense item, all remaining match and expense fees are to be paid at the completion of the match and the LEAGUE is to be notified in writing for a ruling and subsequent payment if applicable. Referees who fail to provide completed forms to the Home team prior to kick-off will not be reimbursed.

Nonpayment of Referee Fees & Expenses

All teams, professional and amateur, are under a strict requirement to pay officials within seven days following a match. Officials must notify the appropriate LEAGUE Manager in the event of non-payment and/or any payment(s) that are returned from a bank.

Rule 107 – Referee Technology

The use of technology (Ex. Communication Headsets) is prohibited. However, league-approved referees will be allowed to use technology in certain, league-approved matches, such as league Finals. LEAGUE will discuss the use of technology with the referee crew prior to team check-in, should LEAGUE decide to allow the use of technology during that specific match.

200 – Pre-Game Duties

Rule 201 – Arrival to Venue

Officials must arrive at the venue no later than sixty (60) minutes prior to kick-off. Officials will meet with the Home Team administrator to discuss the location of the Certified Athletic Trainer, Referee Locker Room or Area, and to confirm rosters have been uploaded to MOD11.

Rule 202 – Captains' Meeting

The captains meeting will take place forty-five (45) min prior to the kickoff of the match. The match officials, captains of both teams and an administrative or technical staff member of the home and away team will meet. During this meeting teams will conduct the following items:

- Show Colors; (Home and Away Field and Goalkeeper jersey, shorts and socks) by showing Jersey Colors
 - In the event of a conflict, the Home Team is required to change colors.
- Referees have a moment to speak to the leaders of each club before the match takes place regarding any relevant topics that they feel are pertinent to the match

Rule 203 – Game Day Roster

The Game Day Roster must be completed in MOD11 no later than one hour prior to kick-off. Clubs must follow the guidelines as specified in Rule 603 of the USL Academy League Operations Manual regarding the number and statuses of players included in the Game Day Roster. Officials will check in players according to the MOD11 Digital Match Roster (DMR). Once the Official Game Day Lineup sheets of both teams have been submitted to the referees via MOD11, they may only be changed in the event that a player is subsequently deemed “unable to compete.” Should this occur, the unfit player must be completely removed from the DMR and may not be listed as a substitute. The player may be replaced either with one of the seven listed substitutes or by another Eligible Player from the Master Roster that is not already on the DMR without this counting as one of the team’s seven player substitutions. If the unfit player is replaced by one of the seven listed substitutes, a new Eligible Player from the Master Roster may not be added to the DMR to bring the Game Day Roster back to 18 players. Any adjustments to the Official Game Day Lineup made after the time they were originally submitted to the referees must be communicated to and approved by the center referee and must be immediately communicated to the opponent’s head coach.

Rule 204 – Player Check-In

Each team will be required to upload their game day roster to MOD11 no later than one hour prior to kick-off. The Digital Match Roster (DMR) will list the game details and include the roster for each team, including the Starting XI and Substitutes. Referees will check the rosters listed on the DMR. All jersey numbers must match what is submitted to the league and listed on the Game Reports. If a player is listed on the DMR, but does not have a photo, they will not be permitted to play in the game. No player passes or rosters from other leagues will be accepted.

Rule 205 – Team Uniforms

The home team has the right to select the color of its home uniform and must inform the visiting team of its choice via the Home Team Travel Information Sheet. Visiting team must wear a contrasting uniform. In case of a conflict the visiting team is required to change. The LEAGUE Manager should be notified. The referee has the authority to resolve the conflict if the LEAGUE Manager is unavailable. Teams must travel with both sets of Uniforms to alleviate any conflicts. The goalkeeper jersey must be distinct from both the home team and the visiting team. The referee has the authority to require a goalkeeper jersey change. All teams must travel with at least two (2) goalkeeper jerseys of different colors.

Rule 206 – Team Warm-Up Period

Each team shall be entitled to a concurrent warm-up period of twenty (20) minutes which shall end pursuant to the Game Day Timeline. Following the pre-game warm-up period, the Operations Manager shall order the players and coaching staff to the locker rooms/benches.

Rule 207 – Coaches and Reserve Players Entry

Prior to the team and referee introductions, the coaches and reserve players shall enter the field and walk along the sidelines to their team benches. Reserve players should wear identical equipment that distinguishes them from starting players.

Rule 208 – Benches

A maximum of five (5) non-playing personnel are allowed on each CLUB bench. These persons can be coaches, medical staff, or CLUB management. Everyone on the bench must be registered with the LEAGUE, have performed a background check, and have a valid LEAGUE pass. A maximum of 12 individuals are permitted in the bench area, limited to substitutions, coaches, athletic trainers or physicians.

Coaches and trainers must present a professional appearance. Professional appearance is defined as a collared shirt and dress pants/dress (Bermuda-type) shorts or CLUB warm-up (jacket and pants) and/or uniform. Other shorts, T-shirts, jeans, and sandals are not permitted. The LEAGUE reserves the right to introduce a more formal dress code for the USL Academy League events.

Rule 209 – Team and Referee Procession

Home team, visiting team, and referees must proceed into the start of the match in an international style fashion. Each starting player shall be dressed in their designated team jersey, shorts, and socks for procession into the match.

300 - League Structure

Rule 301 – Point System

The USL Academy League will operate under the following competition standings point system:

<u>Result</u>	<u>Points</u>
Win	3
Tie	1
Loss	0
Forfeit	-3 & (0-3 Loss)

Rule 302 – Standings and Tiebreakers

USL ACADEMY is responsible for keeping the official league standings. These are tabulated on a regular basis, displayed on the USL ACADEMY website, and/or distributed to all clubs. Final LEAGUE standings will be displayed using points-per-game to dictate placement, with the following tiebreakers used as needed.

The following guidelines will be used to implement USL ACADEMY tiebreakers for all ties involving three or more teams:

1. The tiebreaker will determine the winner first.
2. The tiebreaker will continue within the same category to determine if other ties can be broken.

Breaking Ties in the LEAGUE Standings – The breaking of ties in the final standings, playoffs and finals is accomplished by applying the following criteria, in order of importance:

1. Total points in Head-to-Head record in LEAGUE games. ^(A, B)
2. Goal difference in LEAGUE games. If number of games is unequal, the Game Average^(C) will be used.
3. Total wins in LEAGUE games.^(C)
4. Goals scored in LEAGUE games.^(C)
5. Goals conceded in LEAGUE games.^(C)
6. FIFA Fair Play – Team with fewest disciplinary points in LEAGUE games. (If number of games is unequal, points will be divided by games played to arrive at a common basis for comparison.)
7. Lottery conducted by USL ACADEMY.

- A. LEAGUE games refer solely to games that count towards the regular season standings. Open Cup specific games are not “LEAGUE games” when it comes to determining placement in the LEAGUE standings. (When using these criteria as tiebreakers for Open Cup groups, “LEAGUE games” should be interpreted as only games that count toward Open Cup group standings.)

- B. Should more than two (2) teams involved have played each other an unequal number of times, this tiebreaker will be skipped.
- C. Game Average = Tie Breaker / number of games played (i.e., goals scored / number of games played).

Wild Card Tie Breaker

Division winners for each Academy LEAGUE division shall automatically qualify for the USL Academy Playoffs, provided they have met the minimum considerations outlined in Rule 208. If there are an odd number of division winners, an additional position will be awarded to the 2nd best Regional Division CLUB based on Points per Game with a minimum of two seasons played and at least 12 Official League games played. Should there be additional tiebreakers needed, the following will take effect:

1. Goal difference in LEAGUE games.^(A)
 2. Total wins in LEAGUE games.^(A)
 3. Goals scored in LEAGUE games.^(A)
 4. Goals conceded in LEAGUE games.^(A)
 5. FIFA Fair Play – Team with fewest disciplinary points in LEAGUE games. (If number of games is unequal, points will be divided by games played to arrive at a common basis for comparison.)
 6. Lottery conducted by USL ACADEMY.
- A. Game Average = Tie Breaker / number of games played (i.e., goals scored / number of games played).

Should the LEAGUE decide to allow more than one Wild Card winner entry into the Playoff Division of the postseason tournament, there will not be more than one Wild Card per LEAGUE Division entered.

Playoffs

During LEAGUE Finals, games ending in a tie after regulation will play two 15-minute overtime periods. If the match still remains tied after the overtime periods, FIFA kicks from the mark (penalty kicks) will determine the winner.

Rule 303 – Playing Rules

All games under LEAGUE jurisdiction shall be played according to the rules and regulations recognized by the LEAGUE, which shall be the same rules set by FIFA/U.S. Soccer (USSF), except for those exceptions authorized by FIFA and the USSF.

Rule 304 – Game Ball

CLUBs will provide the official LEAGUE game balls to be used for all regular season and playoff matches. No other ball is to be used by members clubs. A minimum of eight (8) official game balls must be available throughout the game.

Rule 305 – Game Lengths

Each USL Academy League Match will consist of (2) two, forty-five (45) minute halves. Each half will be separated by a fifteen (15) minute halftime.

If the game is tied at the end of regulation during the regular season and group play during Academy League Finals, the final score will remain a tie.

Official Time

Official time will be kept on the field by the referee. The amount of extra time in each half will be conveyed by the Referee to the Fourth Official or Assistant Referee. The Fourth Official/Assistant Referee will then display the appropriate time left in the match.

Rule 306 – Substitutions

Teams may make a maximum of (7) substitutions per game with no re-entry across (3) moments. Substitutions are allowed at any stoppage, but Clubs will have three (3) “moments” to use their allotted substitutions. Injury substitutions will count as a moment if the injured player is unfit to return to the game. Substitutes made during the half time break do not count as a moment. Substitutes shall report to the Fourth Official or Field Marshal at midfield and may not enter the field without permission of the referee.

In games where extra-time is needed to decide a winner, substitutions made during the break between the end of regulation time and the beginning of extra-time do not count as a moment. Teams may make substitutions during this stoppage, provided they have not used all (7) of their allowed substitutes. Teams may use any leftover moments during Extra-time that were not used during regulation time (Ex. Team has used [2] moments during the initial 90-minute regulation time. The team may make use of their final moment during the time between the kick-off of extra-time and the conclusion of extra-time.)

Goalkeeper Substitution

The goalkeeper may change places with a field player as long as the referee is informed of the change and the change is made during a stoppage in the match. *Note: Delay or time wasting is not acceptable during the exchange process. The match should not be held up to allow for a complete change of equipment by either player.*

Head Injury Substitution

Following extensive consultation related to finding ways to improve the in-game management of possible neurological head injuries in football matches, the BoD has taken careful note of the

recommendations from meetings of both The IFAB Football and Technical Advisory Panels and the Concussion Expert Group (which consists of medical concussion experts, team doctors, players/coaches, and refereeing and legal/Laws of the Game experts).

Based on these recommendations, the BoD strongly agrees that, where there is any suspicion about a player having been concussed, the player should be protected by being “permanently” removed from the match and to facilitate this, the player's team should not suffer a numerical disadvantage as a result of prioritizing the player's welfare. USL Academy has taken the recommendations of the groups above to set standards for Head Injury Substitutions. This rule is subject to change during the season pending updated recommendations based on the health and safety of the players. Updates will be communicated to CLUBs should they occur.

Principles

- Each team is permitted to use a maximum of two “concussion substitutes” in a match.
- A “concussion substitution” may be made regardless of the number of substitutes or moments already used.
- In competitions in which the number of named substitutes is the same as the maximum number of substitutes that can be used, the “concussion substitute” can be a player who has previously been substituted.
 - A player that has previously been substituted may only re-enter the field if all other substitutes have been used.
 - Exception: If the only remaining substitutes who have not entered the field are Overage players, and using them would violate the maximum of (3) Overage players on the field at one time, then the “concussion substitute” must be a youth player who has previously been substituted. The Head Injury Substitution rule shall not allow for more than (3) Overage Players on the field at once.
- When a “concussion substitute” is used, the opposing team then has the option of using an “additional” substitute.
 - The Additional Substitute may only be used if all other substitutes or moments have been exhausted, unless it is made concurrently with the “concussion substitution.”
 - The Additional Substitute may be a re-entering player only if all other substitutes have been used, or if the only available substitutes would violate the Overage player rule, as mentioned above.
 - The Additional Substitute moment does not allow for “normal” substitutions to occur concurrently.
 - Ex. A team has used all (3) substitution moments and has used (5) out of (7) available substitutes. The team has an Additional Substitute available. When making the Additional Substitute, the team must send on one of the (2) players that have not played yet. The team cannot also send on their final player who has not played yet as a “normal” substitute.

Procedure

The substitution procedure operates in accordance with Law 3 – The Players (except as outlined otherwise below).

- A “concussion substitution” may be made:
 - immediately after a concussion occurs or is suspected;
 - after an initial three-minute on-field assessment, and/or after an off-field assessment; or
 - at any other time when a concussion occurs or is suspected (including when a player has previously been assessed and has returned to the field of play).
- If a team decides to make a “concussion substitution,” the referee/fourth official is informed, ideally by using a substitution card/form of a different color. In the USL Academy, Head Injury Substitutions will be pink.
- The injured player is not permitted to take any further part in the match (including kicks from the penalty mark) and should, where possible, be accompanied to the changing room and/or a medical facility.
- The opposing team is informed by the referee/fourth official that it now has the option of using an “additional” substitute.
- This option may be used concurrently with the “concussion substitution” made by the opposing team or at any time thereafter (except as outlined otherwise by the Laws of the Game). This substitute will not count towards the 3 moments, but it must be a player that has not previously been on the field. If all of the available substitutes have been on the field, the player may re-enter.
- If a team decides to make an “Additional substitution”, the referee/fourth official is informed, ideally by using a substitution card/form of a different color. In the USL Academy, Additional Substitutions will be blue.

Substitution opportunities

- Making a “concussion substitution” is separate from any limit on the number of “normal” substitution opportunities.
- However, if a team makes a “normal” substitution at the same time as a “concussion substitution”, this will count as one of its “normal” substitution opportunities and require a moment.

Substitution Passes

Each team is provided USL ACADEMY substitution passes for use during league games. Seven (7) substitution passes, two (2) Head Injury substitution passes, two (2) Additional substitution passes, and five (5) Overage substitution passes should be provided to the home team and visiting team coaches. White substitution passes shall indicate normal substitution procedures. Pink substitution passes shall indicate a head injury sub. Blue substitution passes shall indicate an additional sub

(opposing team during head injury substitution). Green substitution passes shall indicate an Overage Player is entering the field.

Rule 307 – Post-Game Reporting

The Digital Match Roster and Game Report in MOD11 must be completed immediately following the game and no later than midnight of the day of the match. Officials will input goals, substitutions, and misconduct. Incident Reports/Supplemental Reports may be found in the MOD11 DMR Notes Section and should be filled out for any serious incidents below:

- Ejections (Player and Staff)
- Serious Injuries
- Head Injuries (regardless of whether they return to play)
- Issues with Spectators
- Game Delays and Postponements
- Issues with Field Conditions
- Other events Officials deem noteworthy

Officials do not need to submit a match report in GameOfficials.

400 – Game Day Emergencies

In the event of a game delay, postponement, or cancellation, officials should contact the Game Day Contact at the USL Academy office immediately, followed by their Assignor (Rule 101). In the event of a missing official, officials should contact their Assignor immediately. For an in-depth process for various scenarios, including but not limiting to incomplete games, reschedules, weather delays, and forfeitures, please refer to the USL Academy League Operations Manual, which may be found at www.usl-academy.com.

500 – Game Day Discipline

Rule 501 – Guidelines for Sending Off (current game)

Players and coaches sent off from the field are not permitted to watch the game. They must remain in the locker room or outside of the facility premises for the remainder of the game. Additionally, coaches are not permitted to communicate with their team, staff or players during the remainder of the game. The type of communication prohibited would include cellular phones, 2-way radios, electronic/digital, written, hand signals, or verbal. Players or coaches returning to the field of play during or directly following the game are subject to additional sanctions. These guidelines apply to regional and national events of the USL Academy League.

Rule 502 – Serving Suspensions During Regional/National USL Academy Events

Any player and/or coach sent off/dismissed during a USL Academy League game will be suspended from the next USL Academy League game. Any player or coach serving a suspension must not be listed on the 18-Man Game Day Roster. If a player receives a red card in the final game of a regional or national event, the suspension will carry over to the following season. The USL Academy Disciplinary Committee reserves the right to assess further or limited penalties depending on the severity of the incident. The infractions below will result in the following minimum suspension lengths and fines:

- Spitting – Two (2) Games Minimum, \$150 Fine
- Biting – Three (3) Games Minimum, \$250 Fine
- Referee Abuse – Two (2) Games Minimum, \$150 Fine
- Referee Assault – Five (5) Games Minimum, \$500 Fine
- Zero-Tolerance Policy Violation - Five (5) Games Minimum, \$500 Fine

Any player who is suspended from a match in any USL ACADEMY event will serve their suspension in accordance with the LEAGUE in which the suspension occurred. USL Academy competitions are treated under the same LEAGUE. Should the player be loaned or transferred between LEAGUES within the USL ACADEMY, the suspension will become the amount of time that must elapse until the player is once again eligible to play in the LEAGUE in which the suspension was received.

Examples

- Player X, suspended for one USL Academy League match, is loaned to a USL Professional club to “play out” the suspension. Player X is not permitted to play until the day following the date of the match that he is suspended for in USL Academy League.
- Player Y is suspended in the final match of the USL Academy Cup. Player Y is to serve the suspension at the next available USL Academy competition in which they are registered and rostered for. If they are playing in USL Academy League, it will be the first League match

they are approved for. If they do not play in USL Academy competitions until the following USL Academy Cup, they will be suspended for the first match of that Cup.

- Player Z is on loan to USL from the USL Professional club and is sent off. The player's loan expires, and they return to their original club without serving a USL suspension. Player Y will not be permitted to play in a USL Professional match until the day following the date of the match that he is suspended in the USL. Fines will be assessed according to the LEAGUE in which you were sent off, not LEAGUE in which the player is registered.

Rule 503 – Suspension Parameters & Restrictions

Any coach, medical staff, player or bench personnel is prohibited from assuming any official duty at or near the team bench while serving a suspension. Any athletic trainer sent off during a match may only return to the field at the request of the Referee in the event of an emergency.

Coaches serving suspensions are allowed to communicate with players pre-game and postgame only. Suspended coaches may NOT communicate with the team at half-time. Suspended coaches must NOT be on the field during warm-ups and may NOT stand or in any way be in close proximity to the field of play. Following a game, a coach serving a suspension may communicate with their team, but must NOT be in or around the field of play. Any infringement of this rule may result in the forfeiture of the game and will include discipline for each infraction.

Rule 504 – Major Game Misconduct

In addition to those penalties set forth above, major fines or suspensions, at the sole and absolute discretion of the USL Academy Disciplinary Committee, shall be levied against players (whether or not they were awarded a card by the Referee), coaches or other team staff for conduct including but not limited to: fighting, provoking a fight, criticizing Game Officials with words or gestures, entering the Game Officials changing area or tent, physical contact with Game Officials separate from Referee Assault, using excessive force, deliberate attempts to injure, spitting, provoking crowd disorders, profane language that can be heard by the crowd, obscene gestures, racist, homophobic, or derogatory comments, improper conduct during the national anthem, taunting, abuse of spectators and others, failure to leave the field when instructed by the Referee to do so, improper conduct following the award of a card, excessive delay tactics, excessive and obvious feigning of injuries, or other unsportsmanlike conduct detrimental to the USL Academy and the sport of Soccer in general.

Rule 505 – Game Officials Assault or Abuse

In addition to enforcing the mandatory sanctions from USSF Policy 531-9, the USL Academy may impose additional fines and/or suspensions.

- A. Referee Assault – Referee assault is defined as any player, coach, or team staff member committing an intentional act of physical violence on a member of the referee crew, spitting

on or at a member of the referee crew, kicking or throwing an object at a member of the referee crew, or damaging the referee crew member's personal property.

- B. Referee Abuse – Referee abuse is defined as any player, coach, or team staff member threatening a member of the referee crew through a physical or verbal statement, either explicitly or implicitly. Referee abuse shall include but is not limited to: verbal and nonverbal communications that contains foul or abusive language implying or directly threatening physical harm or spitting a beverage on or at a referee crew member or a referee crew member's personal property.

Rule 506 – Player/Coach Behavior Before or After Caution or Sending-Off

Players and coaches are advised that both encouragement of a caution, send-off and/or dismissal as well as dispute and protest or mass confrontation, including but not limited to charging/surrounding the Referee to complain, causing unnecessary delay in the restart of the game, is deemed to be a serious offense worthy of a fine/suspension on its own. Referees have been advised to report such behavior to the LEAGUE.

Rule 507 – Zero-Tolerance Policy

The United Soccer League has a zero-tolerance policy related to any form of harassment or discrimination on or off the field. Such actions are against the values of the USL, and the league has the absolute authority to institute punitive measures for any language, actions, or demonstrations deemed to be in violation of this policy. This policy includes, but is not limited to, language, actions, or demonstrations based on an individual or group's:

- Race
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation
- National Origin
- Gender
- Political Views
- Disability
- Age

Any violation of this policy should be immediately reported to the USL Compliance Department: compliance@uslsoccer.com

Rule 508 – Disparaging Comments

Players, coaches, and team officials may not disparage referees, referee decisions, league disciplinary decisions or the league in the team press releases in quotes provided to the media. Fines will be levied accordingly based on the nature, severity, and context of the comments made. Suspensions could also be levied for very serious comments.

600 – Conduct of Officials

Rule 601 – Illegal Incentives for Winning a Game

Officials

Any person connected with a member CLUB who shall give or offer to give any gifts or reward to a referee or assistant referee for services rendered or supposed to be rendered in defeating or attempting to defeat a competing CLUB, or otherwise adversely affect the outcome of any part of a game shall be declared by the LEAGUE office to be permanently ineligible.

Likewise, any referee or assistant referee who shall render, or promise or agree to render, any such decision otherwise than on its merits, or who shall solicit or accept such a gift or reward for any such service or decision, shall be declared permanently ineligible by the LEAGUE. Any referee or assistant referee who, having been offered any such gift or reward, or having been solicited to render any such decision otherwise than on its merits, shall be obligated to inform the LEAGUE immediately of such an offer or solicitation and all facts and circumstances connected therewith. Failure to report such solicitation shall be cause for the LEAGUE to declare the official permanently ineligible to work LEAGUE games and will recommend a USSF / CSA suspension from all games.

Rule 602 – Betting on Games

Betting on LEAGUE games by any insider, manager, coach, referee, assistant referee, owner, employee, LEAGUE officer, or LEAGUE official is strictly prohibited. Any person associated with the LEAGUE or individual CLUB who bets any sum on any USL affiliated LEAGUE shall be declared persona non-gratis by the LEAGUE and permanently banned from all LEAGUE activities.

Rule 603 – Scandalous Conduct

The LEAGUE office may suspend for an indefinite period and/or impose a fine on any officer, director, player, or employee of a member CLUB guilty of gross misbehavior in public, including intoxication, drug use, fighting, quarreling, indecency, or other scandalous conduct whether on or off the playing field when such conduct is, in the LEAGUE's opinion, prejudicial to the best interests of the sport of soccer or the LEAGUE.

Rule 604 – Moral Turpitude

Any employee, player, or official of any member CLUB or the LEAGUE who shall be convicted of a felony or who shall have been found by the LEAGUE office to have conducted themselves in a manner detrimental to the best interests of soccer or the LEAGUE may be declared by the LEAGUE office to be suspended for such period of time as the LEAGUE shall deem to be appropriate.

Rule 605 – Tampering

During any USL Academy League event, no manager, officer, or representative of a CLUB shall approach a registered player, coach, or staff member of another CLUB regarding employment, unless that contracted party's employing CLUB gives written permission to the requesting CLUB to

make such contact. Violations of this rule shall subject the offending party to disciplinary action from the LEAGUE office.

Rule 606 – Vandalism/Destruction of Property

No player, manager, officer, or representative of a CLUB shall intentionally damage or destroy the physical property of another CLUB or LEAGUE partner, including partner hotels. This prohibition shall extend to the damage and destruction of locker rooms or other area of a leased or owned stadium or facility.

Rule 607 – Approaching Officials

No player, coach or team staff member shall threaten game officials either verbally or physically nor make contact in any manner either before, during or after the match. Coaches and team staff shall not approach game officials prior to the game, at the end of the half, on the way to or from the locker room to lobby for a certain call, discuss the approach to the game, or to criticize a game official's performance. No one may enter the referees' dressing room without permission. It is strongly recommended that someone stand at the officials' dressing room door as security. The Referee shall report all such incidents in the Referee Game Report, and offending individuals shall be subject to a LEAGUE fine and/or suspension.

Rule 608 – Other Misconduct

Nothing contained in this rule shall be construed as exclusively defining or otherwise limiting conduct, acts, transactions, or practices that are not in the best interests of the sport of soccer or of the LEAGUE. Any and all other conducts, acts, transactions, or practices which are not in the best interests of soccer or the LEAGUE are prohibited and shall be subject to such penalties imposed by the LEAGUE office such as permanent ineligibility, ineligibility for a period of time, suspension of voting rights, suspension from playing, or suspension of an individual from sitting on committee or advisory board, as the facts in the particular case may warrant.

700 – Code of Conduct

FIFA Code of Conduct

The LEAGUE will follow FIFA's Code of Conduct. It is just as important for parents and fans to know the Code of Conduct as it is the players and coaches. It is important that every player on the field understands this Code of Conduct before competing in their first match.

FIFA's Code of Conduct encapsulates all the sporting, moral and ethical principles for which FIFA has always stood for and which it will continue to fight for in the future regardless of the influences and pressures that may be brought to bear. The ten rules below not only serve as a credo for FIFA as the world football governing body, but they also reinforce the sense of fraternity and cooperation among the members of the worldwide football family.

1. Play to Win

Winning is the object of playing any game. Never set out to lose. If you do not play to win, you are cheating your opponents, deceiving those who are watching, and also fooling yourself. Never give up against stronger opponents but never relent against weaker ones. It is an insult to any opponent to play at less than full strength. Play to win, until the final whistle.

2. Play Fair

Winning is without value if victory has been achieved unfairly or dishonestly. Cheating is easy, but brings no pleasure. Playing fair requires courage and character. It is also more satisfying. Fair Play always has its reward, even when the game is lost. Playing fair earns you respect, while cheaters are detested. Remember: It's only a game. Games are pointless unless played fairly.

3. Observe the Laws of the Game

All games need rules to guide them. Without rules, there would be chaos. The rules of football are simple and easy to learn. Make an effort to learn them so that you understand the game better. This makes you a better player or coach. It is just as important to understand the spirit of the rules. They are designed to make the game fun to play and fun to watch. By sticking to the rules, you will enjoy the game more.

4. Respect Opponents, Teammates, Referees, Officials and Spectators

Fair Play means respect. Without opponents there can be no game. They have the same rights as you have, including the right to be respected. Your teammates are your colleagues. You form a team in which all members are equal. Referees are there to maintain discipline and Fair Play. Always accept their decisions without arguing and help them to help you enjoy the game more. Officials are also part of the game and must be respected accordingly. Spectators give the game atmosphere. They want to see the game played fairly, but must also behave fairly themselves.

5. Accept Defeat with Dignity

Nobody wins all the time. You win some, you lose some. Learn to lose graciously. Don't seek excuses for defeat. Genuine reasons will always be self-evident. Congratulate the winners with good grace. Don't blame the referee or anyone else. Determine to do better next time. Good losers earn more respect than bad winners.

6. Promote the Interests of Football

Football is the world's greatest game. But, it always needs your help to keep it as Number One. Think of football's interests before your own. Think how your actions may affect the image of the game. Talk about the positive things in the game. Encourage other people to watch it or play it fairly. Help others to get as much fun from football as you do. Be an ambassador for the game.

7. Reject Corruption, Drugs, Racism, Violence and other dangers to our sport. Football's huge popularity sometimes makes it vulnerable to negative outside interests. Watch out for attempts to tempt you into cheating or using drugs. Drugs have no place in football or in our society. Say no to drugs. Help kick racism out of football. Treat all players and everyone else equally, regardless of their skin color or origin. Show that football does not want violence, even from your own fans. Football is sport, and sport is peace.

8. Help Others to Resist Corruptive Pressures

You may hear that teammates or other people you know are being tempted to cheat in some way. They need your help. Don't hesitate to stand by them. Give them the strength to resist. Remind them of their commitment to their teammates and to the game itself. Form a block of solidarity like a solid defense on the field of play.

9. Denounce those who Attempt to Discredit our Sport

Don't be ashamed to show up anybody who you are sure is trying to make others cheat. It's better to expose them and have them removed before they can do any damage. It often takes more courage to denounce what is wrong than to go along with a dishonest plan. Your honesty will be admired but your complicity will not. Don't just say no. Denounce the culprits who are trying to spoil our sport before they can persuade somebody else to say yes.

10. Honor those who Defend Football's Good Reputation

The good name of football has survived because the vast majority of people who love the game are honest and fair. Sometimes somebody does something exceptional that deserves our special recognition. They should be honored and their fine example made public. This encourages others to act in the same way.

Help promote football's image by publicizing its good deed