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# 2022 Academy Cup Operations Manual

The 2022 USL Cup Operations Manual denotes all rules and procedures that must be followed by clubs participating in the USL Academy Cup during 2022.

Compliance with these rules and procedures is paramount to the successful operation of the USL Academy Cup events and its clubs. Failure to comply with the rules and procedures set forth in the Competition Manual will result in the application of discipline from the league. Please note that all fines and suspensions listed henceforth are minimums. The League has absolute discretion to render any disciplinary actions if deemed necessary, beyond those minimums upon review of the case-by-case circumstances.

The Competition Manual is a confidential document and is intended solely for the internal use of the USL Academy and its clubs. Under no circumstances should the Competition Manual 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 Cup.

**"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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## **Section 1 - USL Academy Regulations & Standards**

### **100 - Membership & Minimum Standards**

#### **Rule 101 - Telephone/Email Requirements**

So that Clubs may exhibit a level of professionalism, the following telephone/communications requirements are in place for all CLUBs associated with the USL Academy:

- A. All CLUBs must have a telephone number which is connected to a 24-hour answering system.
- B. All primary CLUB contact/operations coordinators must have an email address that is checked on a regular basis.
- C. All league information such as schedules, standings, general correspondence, press releases and announcements will be done through email.
- D. CLUBs must respond to USL Academy communication efforts within 72 hours.

#### **Rule 102 - Compliance with Minimum Standards**

The minimum standards for competition in the USL Academy Cup are applied to all CLUBs. Minimum standards define the minimum level which the CLUB must attain in the various management aspects of running a CLUB. CLUBs that do not meet minimum standards run the risk of jeopardizing their status as members of the USL Academy League. It is important for all CLUBs to adhere to these minimum standards to uphold the high standards of professionalism the USL Academy League has.

CLUBs are required to comply with the defined minimum standards. The LEAGUE Director shall have the power to penalize CLUBs, individual CLUB members or officers for non-compliance with minimum standards. Penalties will consist of warnings, loss of points, fines and temporary or permanent suspension from soccer activities.

#### **Rule 103 – Fines & Penalties**

Fines will be assessed for violations of LEAGUE rules and any minimum standard requirements. Penalties may be assessed to the CLUB or individuals for non-compliance with minimum standards or rule violations. A list of fines will be provided to each club prior to the USL Academy League regional and national events.

#### **Club Drop Out Policy:**

Considering the level of investment by the League Office to cover the costs to put on Academy Cup, clubs will have to pay a fine if they do not honor the commitment to the events, they were accepted in. In the instance that any event would have to be cancelled because of circumstances

outside the clubs' control or concerns over player health & safety, any incurred fines would be waived. These fines will escalate relative to the timeframe with which that notice is provided to the League Office, as laid out below:

- **6+ month notice:** \$1,500 fine
- **4-6 month notice:** \$3,000 fine
- **2-4 month notice:** \$4,500 fine
- **0-2 month notice:** \$6,000 fine

#### **Rule 104 – Club Names & Logos**

All club names or name changes must be given to the LEAGUE office prior to the beginning of the USL Academy Cup.

#### **Rule 105 – Bench Dress Code (Coaches/Trainers)**

Coaches and trainers must present a professional appearance. Professional appearance is defined as a collared shirt and dress pants/shorts or CLUB warm-up (jacket and pants). Other t-shirts, shorts, jeans and sandals are not permitted. Coaches and trainers must visibly wear provided credentials at all times on the bench.

#### **Rule 106 – Termination of Membership**

The LEAGUE may terminate CLUB membership if the CLUB violates any of the described in the LEAGUE operation manual or if the LEAGUE determines that having the CLUB continue to participate in the LEAGUE will be detrimental to the LEAGUE. This will include, but is not limited to, the LEAGUE receiving convincing evidence that the CLUB attempted to fix game results, bribe game officials, was involved in violent conduct or if the CLUB has continually failed to adhere to the Minimum Standards. The LEAGUE does not guarantee participation on an annual basis.

## **200 - League Structure**

The 2022 Cup will consist of a National Event in Tampa, Florida at the Tournament SportsPlex of Tampa Bay (9330 E Columbus Dr., Tampa, FL 33619). The teams will be separated into an Elite, Premier, and Select groups and will play one game against the teams within their group. The 2022 USL Academy Cup will consist of over sixty (60) teams competing at the U19, U15, and U13 age groups.

### **Rule 201 – Governance**

All events associated with the USL Academy Cup is governed by regulations approved by the LEAGUE office. USL Academy staff may modify the Competition Manual from time to time, provided that any changes to the Manual shall be effective only after all CLUBs are notified of any changes.

LEAGUE shall, from time to time create and amend competition rules including those governing game conduct, players, player eligibility, referees, game cancellations, rescheduling games, regional/national events, facilities, and other factors relevant to the operation of a soccer LEAGUE. The LEAGUE shall consider the Advisory Committees in amending the competition rules.

### **Rule 202 – Governing Bodies and Subcommittees**

The LEAGUE shall have the discretion to create, appoint members to, prescribe duties for and disband all League Subcommittees.

### **Rule 203 – 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 204 – Playing Season**

The USL Academy Cup Events will take place on the following dates in 2022:

- Academy Cup: March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022 - April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022, Tampa, FL

### Rule 205 – Point System

The USL Academy Cup 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 206 – Standings and Tiebreakers

USL ACADEMY is responsible for keeping the official CUP standings. These are tabulated on a regular basis, displayed on the USL ACADEMY website, and/or distributed to all clubs. CUP standings include wins, losses, ties; goals scored for, goals scored against, and total points.

The following guidelines will be used to implement USL ACADEMY tiebreakers for all ties in Total Points involving two 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.
  1. Total points in Head-to-Head record
  2. Goal Difference in CUP Matches
  3. Goals Scored in CUP Matches
  4. Goals Against in CUP Matches
  5. Total Points against Group (If cross-group matches are required)
  6. FIFA Fair Play (accumulated disciplinary points) Team with fewest disciplinary points in CUP games. (If number of games is unequal, points will be divided by games played to arrive at a common basis for comparison.)
  7. Penalty Shootout
  8. Lottery

### Rule 207 – Substitutions

Substitutions are allowed at any stoppage, but Clubs will have three “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.

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.)

Substitutes shall report to the Fourth Official or Field Marshal at midfield and may not enter the field without permission of the referee. The maximum limits for substitutions are:

- U13/U15: Unlimited number of substitutions across (3) moments with re-entry
- U19: Maximum of (7) substitutions across (3) moments with no re-entry
  - The use of any substitutions over the allotment above, or after the use of three moments, will not be permitted.
  - Any players entering the match after (7) substitutes and/or (3) moments are considered ineligible (unless outlined in the Head Injury Substitution exception below).

#### 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.
- 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.
  - 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 Cup games. Seven (7) substitution passes should be provided to the home team and visiting team coaches. All substitution passes shall be verified by the referee prior to the player entering the match. Additional Head Injury substitution passes shall be available for each club. 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).

U13 and U15 teams will be provided modified Substitution Passes that track the number of moments that occur, as the number of individual substitutions is unlimited.

#### **Rule 208 – Competition Format**

The USL Academy Cup will consist of one weekend in 2022. All teams will play 4 games across the 4-day weekend. Teams are placed in groups for preliminary group play. Winners of each group will advance to their respective Championship or Final. The remaining teams will compete in Placement matches. Below are the competition formats for each age group and division for the regional and national events:

The Academy Staff will provide a preliminary scheduling matrix prior to the beginning of the USL Academy Cup. Outlines for game schedules and placement determination are listed below:

- 8 Team Division:
  - (2) groups of (4) teams
  - Each team plays the other three teams in their group once
  - On the final day, the teams in 1<sup>st</sup> place in each group will play against each other to determine the Champion

- All other teams will play the team that holds their place in the opposing group to determine the final placement of teams in the Division
- 6 Team Division:
  - (2) groups of (3) teams
  - Each team plays the other two teams in their group once, as well as one team from the opposing group
  - On the final day, the teams in 1<sup>st</sup> place in each group will play against each other to determine the Champion
    - All other teams will play the team that holds their place in the opposing group to determine the final placement of teams in the Division
- 5 Team Division:
  - (1) group of (5) teams
  - Each team plays the other four teams in their group once
  - The total number of points accumulated will determine the final placement of the Division and the resulting Champion. No “placement matches” will be played.
- 4 Team Division:
  - (1) group of (4) teams
  - Each team plays the other three teams in their group once
  - On the final day, the team in 1<sup>st</sup> place plays the team in 2<sup>nd</sup> place to determine the Champion
    - The team in 3<sup>rd</sup> place plays the team in 4<sup>th</sup> place to determine the final placement of teams in the Division
- 10 Team Division:
  - (1) group of (10) teams
  - Each team plays three opponents within their group once, emphasizing unique contests between teams that clubs would not normally compete within regional league play.
  - On the final day, teams will compete in Placement matches based on point accumulation during group stage matches
    - These matches include a 1<sup>st</sup> place, 3<sup>rd</sup> place, 5<sup>th</sup> place, 7<sup>th</sup> place, and 9<sup>th</sup> place match

### Rule 209 – Game Lengths

Each USL Academy League Match will consist of the following:

- U13/U15: two thirty (30) minute halves (60 min. total). Each half will be separated by a ten (10) minute halftime.
- U19: two thirty-five (35) minute halves (70 min. total). Each half will be separated by a ten (10) minute halftime.

If a Championship or Final game is tied at the end of regulation, there will be one fifteen (15) minute period of extra time played. If the game is still tied, the game will be decided by Kicks from the Penalty Mark.

If a Placement game is tied at the end of regulation, the game will be decided by Kicks from the Penalty Mark.

#### 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.

#### **Rule 210 – Eligibility**

All coaches must upload their Game Day Roster to MOD11 no later than one hour prior to kick-off. **If the individual's picture is not on the Digital Roster Sheet, the individual will not be eligible for the game.** Passes from any other league are not accepted for USL Academy Cup games, NO EXCEPTIONS.

#### **Rule 211 – Incomplete Games**

In the event a game cannot continue through full regulation time, the game will only count if one-half of the game was completed. If a game is suspended prior to the expiration of the first half due to inclement weather or extenuating circumstances, it will resume within 24 hours (or some other date/time agreed upon by the competing teams and the LEAGUE office) starting at the same minute that the game was originally suspended and with the same score.

#### **Rule 212 – Team Arrivals and Departures**

All clubs requiring flights as part of their travel acknowledge that their team will arrive in the host city by the evening before their first match, or sooner. (Ex: if a team plays on Thursday and has to fly in, they are expected to arrive by Wednesday night).

Following the conclusion of the event, USL will make best efforts to schedule each team's last game with enough time for them to travel back to their home city that same day. However, this is subject to change due to game delays and postponements. Teams with greater travel demands are welcome to make special requests to the League Office ahead of time.

#### **Rule 213 – Team Hotel Accommodations**

The 2022 USL Academy Cup mandates that all teams book within the AC Partner Hotel Planner portal located on [usl-academy.com](http://usl-academy.com). The USL has worked out room blocks for teams at discounted rates. Questions regarding your bookings and reservations should work through [housingteam@hotelplanner.com](mailto:housingteam@hotelplanner.com). **Teams who book outside of Hotel Planner are subject to a \$750 fine per team.**

### **Rule 214 – Game Delays and Postponements**

A team unable to attend a scheduled game for any reason should immediately notify the opponent, the LEAGUE office and the referee assignor via telephone or e-mail. Each situation will be reviewed by the LEAGUE office, which shall render a decision that may be appealed through LEAGUE RAD procedures

#### Restart

Once a delay has ended, the match shall resume from the moment the referee stopped the match. Teams shall be given a chance to warm-up prior to restarting the match. The following are recommended warm-up times based on the length of the delay (coaches may agree to a different time, to be approved by the LEAGUE)

- A. 10 minute delay, 5 minute warm-up
- B. 10 to 30 minute delay, 10 minute warm-up
- C. 30 to 60 minute delay, 15 minute warm-up
- D. Over 60 minute delay, 20 minute warm-up

#### Canceling/Postponing a Game Prior to Start

A game may be postponed no earlier than two hours prior to kickoff due to inclement weather, or situations considered Acts of God, unless agreed to by both teams and the LEAGUE. Exception: In a case where a third party (stadium/facility owner) closes a stadium, a game may be canceled more than two hours prior to kickoff, provided the LEAGUE and both teams are notified in writing by the stadium owner/managing authority.

#### Authority to Delay or Postpone a Game

Once in process, a USL Academy game may only be delayed or postponed due to:

- A. A lack of preparedness of one or both teams to begin playing a game OR
- B. Unfavorable weather or other adverse conditions beyond the control of the participating teams, which would make the playing of the game impractical or dangerous. Only the referee and USL Academy staff have the authority to delay or postpone a scheduled USL Academy match. The referee, upon arrival at the facility/field, has the final word on delays due to weather.

#### Grace Period before Abandoning a Game

Unless both teams, the Referee, and USL ACADEMY agree to an alternate plan, teams must wait a minimum of one (1) hour before abandoning a game that has been delayed regardless of circumstances. This is not an aggregate time for multiple delays but rather one (1) hour from the time of the most recent delay. The Home Team, in the presence of the Referee, must immediately notify the LEAGUE Manager via phone, of any postponement issues. The one-hour grace period may be extended, up to a maximum of three (3) hours from the time the match is delayed if there

is a likelihood of resuming the match that day. Given the difficulty and cost of rescheduling, every attempt should be made to continue the game. The LEAGUE Manager has the final say on the length of the extended grace period due to weather. **A match may not be abandoned before the LEAGUE Manager is contacted.** If the LEAGUE Manager or another USL ACADEMY official is unavailable, the Referee shall be the final authority. If the first game of a doubleheader has been delayed, the feasibility of completing the second game will be taken into account when determining an extended grace period. In the event a delay lasts longer than three continuous hours or would resume play after 12:00 AM local time, the LEAGUE has final say on the length of the extended grace period due to weather.

#### Game Cancellation/Postponement Criteria

Unless otherwise approved by the USL Academy, game cancellations/postponements should occur only in the most serious circumstances; however, the personal safety of participants, personnel, and the spectators must always be highest priority. Factors that the referee and USL Academy shall consider include but are not limited to: difficulty in rescheduling the game, current and forecasted weather conditions, travel conditions and the current whereabouts and availability of teams and officials.

#### Incomplete Game

In the event a game cannot be completed, the game counts if the entire 1st half was completed. If any match is suspended prior to the completion of the 1st half due to inclement weather or extenuating circumstances, it will resume at a date/time agreed to by the competing teams in consultation with USL ACADEMY and will start in the same minute in which the match was suspended. Every effort must be made to resume the match within the next twenty-four (24) hours. If the game is resumed after the 24-hour period has passed, either team may have a maximum of three (3) changes to their Digital Match Roster. Any changes to the lineup on the field, after any of the three (3) changes to the Digital Match Roster are made, count towards the substitution allotment. USL ACADEMY reserves the right to declare a full replay at its discretion in order to protect the integrity of the competition.

\*USL, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to continue any playoff match starting immediately with Overtime and FIFA Kicks from the Mark, taking into account travel and field circumstances as well as any other pertinent information. Every attempt will be made to decide the result on the field of play.

#### **Rule 215 – Forfeits**

Should any team associated with the CLUB fail to appear at a scheduled USL Academy game, the CLUB shall incur a forfeit fee of \$600 per incident. Other penalties for forfeits are as follows:

- A. A loss of three (3) points in the CUP or competition standings and a 3-0 win to the opposing team.

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- B. The team that forfeits may be precluded from participating in any future USL Academy Cup events, per LEAGUE review and at the LEAGUE's discretion.
  - C. The LEAGUE will have the discretion to remove any teams for not complying with the CUP schedule.

A team unable to attend a scheduled game because of an accident or weather should immediately notify the opponent, the LEAGUE office, and the referees via telephone or E-Mail. Each situation will be reviewed by the LEAGUE office, which shall render a decision that may be appealed through LEAGUE RAD procedures (refer to Review, Appeals & Discipline section of the manual).

#### **Rule 216 – Liability**

CLUBs within the LEAGUE assume all risks, responsibilities, and liabilities for loss, damage, injury or death while using property and facilities during games in the LEAGUE, whether such loss, damage, injury or death be occasioned by the team or by the LEAGUE, its officers, agents or otherwise.

#### **Rule 217 – Referees**

##### 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 Cup Games shall have a Referee, AR1, and AR2, with an additional 4<sup>th</sup> Official assigned to specific, League-approved matches.

##### Payment

Referees will be paid by the tournament Assignor following the conclusion of their final day of refereeing during the event. Payment will be via check delivered at the venue prior to or immediately following the educational session. The pay scale for referees is listed below:

AGE	U13/U15	U19
Referee	\$75	\$90
AR1	\$50	\$60
AR2	\$50	\$60
4 <sup>th</sup>	(\$40)	(\$40)

The fees for officiating games are set by LEAGUE, and subject to regular review. Referees, Assistant Referees, and 4<sup>th</sup> 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 and sign game report.
- 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.

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- 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.

### 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. The LEAGUE will discuss the use of technology with the referee crew prior to team check-in, should the LEAGUE decide to allow the use of technology during that specific match.

### Post-Game Question Form

Coaches may inquire to the referee about “important” decisions during the game by completing the Referee Post-Game Question Form and giving it to the Field Marshal no later than the end of the game. The form addresses plays that may impact the outcome of a game, similar to how Video Assistant Referee examines important decisions. The referee may write their response on the form, or they may choose to discuss their answer verbally with the coach. Field Marshals will keep the completed form once the coach has reviewed it. Referees are under no obligation to answer questions relating to other types of decisions.

## **300 – Discipline and Conduct**

### **Rule 301 – Disciplinary Authority**

The USL Academy shall have the authority to suspend, fine, or disqualify players, team officials or competing clubs for violating LEAGUE rules or for any action or conduct not in the best interest of soccer or the USL Academy. CLUB and its players must abide by all decisions of game officials during games. Once the USL Academy Disciplinary Committee has conducted its review of disciplinary matter, all announcements of the Committee's decisions shall be coordinated through the USL Academy.

A sending off will result in a minimum of a one (1) game suspension. The Disciplinary Committee at the LEAGUE office will determine if further punishment is required. CLUBs cannot appeal a single game suspension for a red card. CLUB can appeal any additional suspension levied by the LEAGUE.

### **Rule 302 – USL Academy Disciplinary Committee**

A panel of individuals from the LEAGUE office shall conduct the review of disciplinary issues. Such a panel will consist of at least three (3) people on the USL staff, one of which includes the senior LEAGUE Director.

The USL ACADEMY Disciplinary Committee is charged with the responsibility to enforce the playing rules and allow for a competitive, but fair, environment for all teams to compete against each other. To ensure that this element is provided to our participants, USL ACADEMY examines Player and Coach behavior and monitors referee performance to make certain that the on-field product of USL ACADEMY competition is of the most entertaining and attractive possible. A panel of at least three USL ACADEMY staff members, consisting of the pertinent senior LEAGUE Manager, Technical Director, and Referee Services Coordinator, shall conduct the review of critical disciplinary issues. An alternate LEAGUE Manager may be utilized in the event any of the three members above are unable to participate.

### **USL Academy Technical Committee**

In the event that the decision of the USL ACADEMY Disciplinary Panel's ruling is challenge, by way of formal appeal the USL ACADEMY Technical Committee will review the appeal. The USL ACADEMY Technical Committee is comprised of four LEAGUE appointed members, consisting of a representative from each of the Four (4) Conferences. This panel is charged with the responsibility of reviewing any disciplinary matters deemed worthy of increased disciplinary measures (i.e., escalating a yellow card to a red card). The committee also has the ability to review disciplinary matters deemed worthy of mitigation (i.e., reducing an established minimum suspension length). When an appeal has been submitted in a particular conference, the three (3) members of the panel will review the appeal, excluding any bias from the members of the conference in which the appeal was submitted (Ex. Appeal submitted from a team in the Eastern conference, the Western, Central

and Southern Panel members will review the appeal) Any disciplinary decisions rendered by the USL ACADEMY Technical Committee will be final and cannot be appealed. A unanimous decision must be reached in order for any discipline to be altered by the Panel.

#### Disciplinary Process

USL ACADEMY disciplinary issues (including all send-offs) reported by the Referee shall be reviewed by the three-person USL ACADEMY Disciplinary Panel (a panel of at least three members of USL ACADEMY LEAGUE Management) via match videos, official reports, individual accounts, and other pertinent information. Depending on the timeliness of the reports and match videos, the Panel will make every effort to rule on all cases from the preceding week and issue these rulings by Wednesday of each week.

Every disciplinary incident (send-offs) shall be reviewed individually to ensure that players are not over-penalized, either by the number of matches served or fines. USL ACADEMY has the authority and reserves the right to levy additional suspensions or fines (above the minimum for that type of infraction) if a review of the incident warrants such action.

The USL ACADEMY Disciplinary Panel shall only act in contravention of a referee's ruling on the field when a play, or the consequences of a play, are of an egregious or exceptional nature OR in circumstances where the referee did not see the play in question and USL ACADEMY has sufficient and convincing evidence that a serious infraction occurred.

#### **Rule 303 – Serving Suspensions During Regional/National USL Academy Events**

Any player and/or coach sent off/dismissed during a USL Academy Cup game will be suspended from the next USL Academy Cup 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 an Academy Cup 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.

#### Guidelines for sending off (current game)

Players and coaches sent off from the field are typically not permitted to watch the game, however players may remain on the bench provided there is not a team-specific locker room and the player is not disruptive. 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 304 – 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 305 – Extending a Suspension**

In any case the USL Academy reserves the right to impose suspensions beyond any of these parameters for offenses deemed to be particularly violent and against the spirit of the game. This can be imposed regardless of whether a dismissal occurred.

### **Rule 306 – League Disciplinary Point System**

USL ACADEMY has the authority to discipline players, coaches, and/or team personnel based upon the USL ACADEMY disciplinary regulations in accordance with FIFA and the respective National Federation.

#### Penalty Points

All cautions/yellow cards will account for one (1) point and send-offs/red cards will account for two (2) points. Any player receiving two cautions in one match, which results in a send-off, will receive one (1) point for the first caution and one (1) point for the resulting send-off for a total of two (2) points. Any player receiving one caution and one red card in a match, which results in a send-off, will receive one (1) point for the caution and two (2) points for the send-off for a total of three (3) points. Send-offs/red card suspensions must be served the following game in which the team participates.

#### Team Penalty Point Accumulation

The accumulation of player and coach penalty points above the league specified number in any one season will result in a fine. (50) points will result in a \$750 fine.

### **Rule 307 – 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 308 – 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 309 – 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 310 – The USL Academy's Discretionary Power on Suspensions**

The USL Academy may, at its discretion, rule a specific game shall not count toward the completion of a suspension, if satisfied the game has been purposely arranged by the club with a view toward enabling the player in question to complete his suspension at a specific time in order to qualify him to play in another specific game.

#### **Rule 311 – USSF Fine for Serious Incidents**

The U.S. Soccer Federation has the power to impose discipline for any incident bringing the game into disrepute within the LEAGUE.

#### **Rule 312 – 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

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- Political Views
  - Disability
  - Age

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

**Rule 313 – 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.

## **400 – Conduct of Teams**

### **Rule 401 – Intentional Throwing of Games**

Agreeing or promising to lose a game is in strict violation of LEAGUE rules. Any CLUB or personnel associated with a CLUB who agrees to lose, attempts to lose, or otherwise adversely affects the outcome of any game with which he/she is or may be in any way associated, or who shall solicit or attempt to induce any player or other person associated with a member CLUB to lose, attempt to lose, or otherwise adversely affect the outcome of any soccer game, will be immediately declared ineligible and may be subject to expulsion from the LEAGUE.

Likewise, any person from a member CLUB that is solicited to commit or has knowledge of any of the foregoing acts and fails to inform the LEAGUE office immediately of all facts and circumstances connected with the solicitation shall be declared by the LEAGUE to be permanently ineligible and may be subject to suspension and expulsion from the LEAGUE.

Additionally, any player who, in the opinion of the referee and/or the LEAGUE office, attempts to purposefully lose a game by intentionally scoring an own goal as a field player, or intentionally allowing an own goal to occur while playing as a goalkeeper, will be subject to disciplinary action.

### **Rule 402 – 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.

#### Club Members

Any person connected with a member club who shall offer or give any gift or reward to a player or other person connected with another member club for services rendered, supposed to be rendered, or to have rendered in defeating or attempting to defeat a competing team or otherwise adversely affect the outcome of any game, shall be declared by USL ACADEMY to be banned for a period of not less than three (3) years.

Likewise, any person with knowledge of such an incident, who shall fail to inform USL ACADEMY immediately of such offer and of all facts and circumstances connected therewith, shall be declared by USL ACADEMY to be ineligible for a period of not less than three (3) years.

#### **Rule 403 – 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 404 – 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 405 – 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 406 – 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 407 – 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 408 – 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

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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. Coaches may choose to complete the Referee Post-Game Question Form as outlined in Rule 217 if they wish to learn the reason why the referee did or did not make certain "important" decisions during the game.

#### **Rule 409 – 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.

## **500 – Game Day Procedures**

### **Rule 501 – Game Day Preparation**

Game day presentation for all USL ACADEMY matches should be professional and consistent. This shall be accomplished by adhering to all USL ACADEMY LEAGUE Regulations and Standards. The following guidelines shall apply to all USL ACADEMY games, including, but not limited to, all regular season, exhibition, playoff, Championship, All-Star, and/or international games in which any USL ACADEMY team participates other than unadvertised scrimmages or practice games at which no admission is charged, or monies collected.

At each USL Academy League event, USL Academy staff will be present and on site. Each field will have a dedicated field Marshall who will assist each team with the player check-in process, track stats and will provide the official game day match report. Prior to each event, all CLUBs must provide the LEAGUE a roster of players who will be participating at the event; LEAGUE staff will create the official match reports based off of the information given on the rosters. The official rosters that are given to the LEAGUE must include the following information:

- Full Name
- Full Date of Birth
- Jersey Number
- Position
- Headshot photo
- Hometown
- Full-time club (If participating on an all-star team set up)

### **Rule 502 – Kit and Colors**

All USL Academy teams must have league-approved uniforms for all matches of the USL Academy Cup, unless specified otherwise in these regulations. USL may also designate the specific kit each team will wear in each match of the competition.

Each team shall inform USL Academy of **two different and contrasting colors** (one predominantly light and one predominantly dark) **for its home and away kits** (shirt, shorts, and socks). In addition, each team shall select **two contrasting colors for the goalkeeper kits**. These two goalkeeper kits must be different and contrasting from each other as well as from the home and away team kits. This information shall be submitted to the League Office by the stipulated deadline. Only these colors may be worn during matches, unless authorized by USL.

**Teams Designated as the Home Team for the match will wear their predominately light-colored kits, while those designated as the Visiting team will wear their predominately dark-colored kit. In the case of a conflict in the opinion of the Referees, who have the final say, the Visiting Team is required to change colors.**

### **Rule 503 – Game Ball**

USL ACADEMY will provide official LEAGUE game balls to be used for all Cup matches. No other ball is to be used by members clubs.

### **Rule 504 – Arrival to Venue**

The home team and visiting team must arrive at the Venue at least 60 minutes prior to the scheduled kickoff. CLUBs will be subject to additional fines if Players/Staff arrive less than sixty (60) minutes prior to the scheduled. Each member of the referee crew must arrive at the Venue at least 60 minutes prior to the scheduled kickoff.

### **Rule 505 – 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 appear on the Digital Match Roster. 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 506 – 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 regarding the number and statuses of players included in the Game Day Roster. 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 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.

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All clubs must have at least one (1) registered coach in the technical area during the entirety of the match. Coaches who are also registered as players must be determined on the Game Day Roster as either a coach or a player – they may not be listed as both.

**Rule 507 – Game Check-in Process**

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 will list the game details and include the roster for each team. Referees will check the rosters listed on the Digital Match Roster. All jersey numbers must match what is submitted to the league and listed on the Game Reports. If a player is listed on the Game Report, but does not have a photo, they will not be permitted to play in the game.

**Rule 508 – 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.

**Rule 509 – Post Game Reporting**

Teams should verify with the referees at the conclusion of the match the final details of the match, including score, goal-scorers, and misconduct.

## **Section 2 – Registration Procedures and Roster Regulations**

### **600 – General Registration**

#### **Rule 601 – Registration Dates/Deadlines**

The USL Academy will require all member CLUBS to register its players, coaches and staff through the LEAGUE registration platform, SportsEngine. Each club will be required to complete the necessary paperwork and upload the necessary documents into SportsEngine for each player and coach, in order to participate in the USL Academy Cup. All documents and background checks must be completed and uploaded properly and by the deadlines below in order to be approved for participation in any USL Academy events.

Registration is open on a rolling basis. Following the opening of registration, CLUBS may submit registration documents at any time during the week, outside of the Urgent Registration Closure period, listed below. The LEAGUE will check registrations for compliance within the hours listed below. Teams may submit registration documents outside of these hours, however they will not be responded to immediately. Registrations are checked by the LEAGUE in the order that they are sent. A minimum of two (2) business days must be allotted for any registration approvals.

An Urgent Registration window will open every Friday to allow teams to register last-minute for their weekend games. The Urgent Registration cost will be inflated to cover administrative costs of expediting the approval.

Regular Registration: Monday through Thursday: 9:00am – 5:00pm EST

Urgent Registration: Friday: 9:00am – 2:00pm EST

Urgent Registration Closure: Friday: 2:01pm – 5:00pm EST

Below are the registration deadlines for each event taking place during the 2022 USL Academy League:

#### **2022 Academy Cup**

Registration opens: February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022 at 9:00am EST

Registration closes: March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 5:00pm EST

### Rule 602 – Registration Documents

The following documents and information will be required for each player and must be uploaded into Sport Engine before a player can be approved and eligible to participate in any USL Academy League events:

- First & Last Name
- Date of Birth
- Email Address
- Citizenship/Nationality Fields
- Player Headshot Photo
- USL Academy Player Registration Form:
  - Insurance Information (completed in the player registration form)
  - Liability and Release Waiver (completed in the player registration form)
  - Communicable Disease Release Waiver (complete in the player registration form)
  - COPPA Agreement (completed in the player registration form)
- ITC Compliance (Players born outside of US and/or last registered outside of US)
- SafeSport Certification (Players born in 2004 or earlier)
- Valid Form of ID (Birth Certificate, Passport, Permanent Resident Card)
- Parent/Guardian Contact Information (Phone Number, Home Address, Email)

Until these requirements are met and the information is uploaded into Sport Engine, an individual will not be able to participate. Additionally, an individual is not considered registered until they are added to a roster and their photo appears on the roster (the LEAGUE office will roster the players once they are registered). Other organization passes may not be used as a form of identification.

### Rule 603 – Master Roster & Roster Management

The LEAGUE Master Roster, located on the official LEAGUE website, is the official player roster of the CLUB. The following limitations must be followed:

- Maximum (23) players on the Master Roster
- Minimum (16) players on the Master Roster
- Unlimited International Players (ITC clearance required)
- Age Group Requirements\*:
  - No Overage Players in any Age Group
  - U19\*\*: Minimum (6) U17 players or younger
  - U15\*\*\*: Minimum (3) U14 players or younger
  - U13 (Encouraged): Include U12 players when developmentally-appropriate
- Coaches who are also registered as players must only be entered on the Game Day Roster as one role – a coach or a player.

**\*: Rationale:** It's our firm belief that we as USL clubs need to change the lens within youth player identification & evaluation in the US. Our focus should be less on forming the best youth team for this event (Centered around the thought of "who are the best players *today*?"), and instead observe our players with an eye more towards potential ("Which player has the most potential to reach the next level, if in the right environment?")

**\*: Benefit to Younger Players:** Providing younger players the opportunity to play up with their older peers can be an invaluable experience for that individual, even helping to accelerate their development. With a focus on long-term player development, it's incredibly important our event provides these sorts of opportunities to our highest-potential young players.

**\*\*:** All U19 teams at USL-AC are required to have a minimum of at least (6) U17 players (birth year 2005 or younger) "playing up." With rosters limited to (23) total players, please plan accordingly when identifying players & finalizing your roster for this event. **No Over-Age players are allowed at this event.**

**\*\*\*:** All U15 teams at USL-AC are required to have a minimum of at least (3) U14 players (birth year 2008 or younger) "playing up". With rosters limited to (23) total players, please plan accordingly when identifying players & finalizing your roster.

#### **Rule 604 – Professional Player**

A professional player is a player who signs a professional registration form with the team's appropriate Federation, a professional player contract with USL CH/L1 and receives or has received payment beyond actual and reasonable expenses for playing soccer. A professional player may only be registered with an academy team and may play for the team under the following instances.

- The player has been signed to their Academy's Senior Team
- The Player is not being paid to play on the Academy Team
- The team understands that this player could jeopardize current Collegiate players' eligibility if on the same team.

#### **Rule 605 – Amateur Player**

An amateur player is a player who signs an amateur registration form with the team's applicable Federation, an amateur registration form with USL, and does not receive payment for playing soccer. Amateur players may be reimbursed for actual and reasonable expenses as allowed by the applicable Federation, USL, NCAA or NAIA rules. An amateur player may only be registered with one USL ACADEMY team and may not be loaned to another team. Because amateur players are not held to contracts, they are free to leave a team at any time, provided he returns the team's equipment. An amateur player may be registered simultaneously with both a USL ACADEMY professional and a USL ACADEMY amateur team.

An amateur player that has been registered with one team, amateur or professional, for at least one-half (50%) of its regular season games may not play for another team in the same League without written authorization from the original team. USL ACADEMY will reserve the right to review a player's appeal if he is denied permission to play for another team.

A player who wishes to sign with a professional team as an amateur must have completed their Collegiate Eligibility or be advised that upon signing as an amateur player on a Professional team, they lose all Collegiate eligibility. An amateur player may only be registered for the playing year, which begins the first of the year (Jan. 1) or not more than sixty (60) days prior to the first league game and extends through the last league competition.

#### Amateur Reinstatement

A professional player who is currently registered with any team can be reinstated as an amateur only with the permission of that team and the Amateur National State Association or Professional League with which the team is affiliated. An application for reinstatement to amateur status must be made on the [\*\*USSF Amateur Reinstatement Form\*\*](#) and both the completed form and the applicable fee (\$50.00) must be filed with the appropriate Federation. The Federation shall issue approval of the reinstatement to amateur status within fourteen (14) days after receipt, appropriate fees, and compliance with Federation rules. However, the player's reinstatement to amateur status is not effective until the day after the thirty (30) daytime period has elapsed from the day that the player competed in his last match with his/her team as a professional player. This is in accordance with FIFA's Regulations Governing the Status and Transfer of Football Players.

A professional player who is not currently registered as a professional player with any professional division team or league, who has not been a party to a professional player contract with a professional division team or league for a period of one year or longer, and who has not applied for reinstatement as an amateur, shall be automatically reinstated to amateur status by the Secretary General unless the player affirmatively states in writing that he/she does not wish to be reinstated to amateur status.

#### **Rule 606 – Registered Player**

A registered player is a professional player or amateur player who has submitted all of the necessary registration documents as required by their team's applicable Federation and USL. Professional and amateur players may participate in any competition under the jurisdiction of the League provided they are duly registered in accordance with the regulations of USL ACADEMY and their team's applicable Federation.

#### **Rule 607 – Eligible Player**

A player who is properly registered with the LEAGUE, is of the proper age for that team, and who is not subject to any kind of suspension by the LEAGUE, USSF, or CSA, is considered an eligible player.

The LEAGUE office will produce updated discipline reports that specify the eligibility of suspended players.

#### **Rule 608 – Ineligible Player**

Players listed on the Master Roster, but not eligible to play due to reasons such as missing a player photo, registration forms, proof of citizenship, awaiting international clearance, illegal substitutions or serving a LEAGUE suspension shall be considered an ineligible player. Teams using players before they have been properly cleared to compete by the LEAGUE office will be subject to a forfeiture of the game in which the ineligible player was used and subject to a loss of THREE (3) points in the competition standings.

#### **Rule 609 – Illegal Player**

Any player who does not appear on the Master Roster, has not registered, or is not age eligible (regardless of them appearing on the Master Roster) and competes in a game shall be considered an illegal player. Any team using an illegal player shall be subject to a loss of THREE (3) points in the LEAGUE standings, forfeiture of the game in which the illegal player was used. Players competing on a team for which they are not on the master roster are considered illegal.

#### **Rule 610 – International Player**

U.S. citizens are not considered International Players. Documented Resident Aliens/Permanent Resident Card holders (in the United States only) shall not be considered International Players for teams. Additionally, documented refugees and asylees (in the United States only) shall not be considered International Players.

#### International Player Visa

USL requires a copy of any visa for international players. The USL ACADEMY Registrar and Legal Department will securely keep a copy of these Visas on file. Teams are responsible for ensuring proper immigration paperwork/visas for all international citizens (in accordance with Federal Law).

#### **Rule 611 - International Clearance**

**\*\*The ITC process is strict and necessary for players meeting the criteria outlined below. USL is not responsible for ITC clearance. US Soccer is the final organization that provides certification. USL recommends that Clubs begin processing ITC requests no later than one month prior to the first game of the season. However, you may begin submitting information as soon as you are able. The process typically takes 20-30 days, however it can take much longer in some instances. USL representatives can offer assistance in determining which ITC Minor Exclusion or ITC Adult forms to submit, but cannot help in speeding up the process once paperwork has been submitted to US Soccer.\*\***

An international clearance is an official release from a foreign national association. U.S. Soccer department of Player Status is responsible for processing all registration requests for international clearances, both professional and amateur. The services provided and processed by Player Status are obligated to be compliant with FIFA regulations as outlined in the [FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players](#).

The registration process and forms outlined on this page apply specifically to players wishing to register for clubs/leagues/teams solely based in the United States, regardless of player's nationality. Players wishing to participate in clubs/teams/leagues outside the United States should contact the local Member Association (MA) / Federation to inquire about the processes and forms required to register locally. The international clearance requirements are the same as these are regulated by FIFA. A list of FIFA Member Associations can be found [here](#).

#### International Clearance Registration Requirements

Per FIFA's Regulations, the international clearance process is required when any foreign-born player over the age of 10 is attempting to register with an affiliated club/team/league in the United States, regardless of that player's soccer ability or citizenship and one or both of the below instances apply:

- Player was born outside of the United States, including U.S. citizens born abroad.
- Player previously registered with a club/team/league outside of the United States.

The home association, U.S. Soccer, is responsible for obtaining the clearance on behalf of these players prior to their registration and participation with any U.S. Soccer affiliated club/team/league. Clearance is required for ALL players who meet one or both of the above instances regardless of past practices, age, nationality, club affiliation, or member organization with which the player is registering/participating. Failure to adhere to the requirements can result in fines and/or sanctioning from both FIFA and U.S. Soccer.

#### **DEFINITIONS**

- Minors - players 17 years of age and younger
- Adult - players 18 years of age and older
- Amateur status - no payment involved regardless of age

#### International Clearance Registration Forms and Requirements

The table below is displayed for the applicant's reference. To submit a complete international clearance form:

- Applicants should review the forms and corresponding requirements.
- Choose only one form that represents their current individual status.

Applicants are expected to meet all application requirements specified on the form to have the application reviewed and processed.

Please follow all instructions exactly and copy  
LEAGUE on all emails: [academyregistration@uslsoccer.com](mailto:academyregistration@uslsoccer.com)

The following Forms relate to adults (18 years or older) at the time of registration:

<b>ADULT</b>	
<b>FORM</b>	<b>APPLICANT REQUIREMENT</b>
<a href="#">First Registration 18+</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Any player born outside of the United States</li> <li>· Never been registered at any level to play soccer in any other country.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">International Transfer Certificate (ITC)</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Any player 18+ who has been previously registered to a club in another country and wishes to play for club/team/league in the United States.</li> </ul>

The following Forms relate to minors (Under the age of 17) at the time of registration:

<b>MINORS</b>	
<b>FORM</b>	<b>APPLICANT REQUIREMENT</b>
<a href="#">P10 Registration</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· International clearances and first registrations for any player nine (9) years of age and younger at the time of registration regardless of citizenship.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">First Registration - U.S. Citizen</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· U.S. citizens born outside the United States who have never been registered at any level to play soccer in any other country.</li> <li>· Holds physical proof of citizenship.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">First Registration - U.S. Citizen – Awaiting Physical Proof</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· U.S. citizens born outside the United States who have never been registered at any level to play soccer in any other country.</li> <li>· Does not currently hold physical proof of citizenship but according to the United States government, is a U.S. citizen.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">5 Year Exception</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Player is registering for the first time and has lived continuously in the United States for the last five years.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">50km/31mi Exception</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Both the player and club are within 50km/31mi of their common national border.</li> <li>· The distance between the two is less than 100km/62mi.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Parents Move Exception</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The parents of the player moved to the United States for reasons not linked to soccer.</li> <li>· Includes United States citizens returning home to their family after studying abroad.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Exchange Student Exception</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The player is an exchange student undertaking an academic program in the United States.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Accompanied Refugee Exception</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The player is moving for humanitarian reasons with their parents.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Unaccompanied Refugee Exception</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The player is moving for humanitarian reasons without their parents.</li> </ul>

### Best Practices for ITC:

Each application has specific submission requirements. Failure to follow these requirements will lead to the withdrawal of the application from the review process. To ensure the timely processing of all applications the following instructions must be adhered to:

- Criteria is provided for each clearance type to assist the applicant in selecting the appropriate form based on the players' CURRENT status, i.e., age, first registration, international clearance, minor applications.
- Applicants are responsible to submit all required information as outlined on each form.
- Information submitted is required to be accurate and complete
- Submit completed forms and all required document(s) in ONE (1) email to – [psd@ussoccer.org](mailto:psd@ussoccer.org) and copy local League/State Association.
  - Subject line should indicate form type and player name.
  - Form and documents must be in PDF format.
  - Each loaded separately and up to 5MB or less.
- Partially completed forms and/or applications missing documents will not be processed.
- Applications must be submitted at least 30 days\* prior to start of club/team/league play.
- For additional questions not listed in the FAQ section please send to [psd@ussoccer.org](mailto:psd@ussoccer.org) and in the subject line indicate – QUESTION.

The Player Status Department will contact applicants to provide updates on applications when available and/or required. Due to the high volume of applications received, kindly refrain from submitting emails requesting status updates as those specific requests will not receive a response.

\*Please note submitting at least 30 days prior to the start of club/team/league play does not guarantee the player will be eligible as some processes require both FIFA and U.S. Soccer approval.

\*\*\* FORMS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO:  
U.S. Soccer Federation  
Attn : Federation Services Department  
1801 South Prairie Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60616  
312-808-9263 fax  
(E-mail) [psd@ussoccer.org](mailto:psd@ussoccer.org)

### **Rule 612 – Registered Players/Release of Players**

Once a CLUB player has played one match of its teams schedule, a player may not participate with another LEAGUE CLUB in any group, regardless of whether the new CLUB competes in that age group. A player may be issued a "Club Pass" that will allow the player to participate in all age

groups and teams for a single CLUB, in which that individual would be eligible (A player is not eligible for another team in the same age group). Until a player has played in one match of their LEAGUE schedule, a player may move to another CLUB. The player, however, may not be registered with two (2) or more CLUBS at any given time. Special circumstances regarding a players release will be reviewed by the LEAGUE. Such circumstances include a player that is moving his/her residence or being dropped from a roster by the team. This request must be put into writing and submitted to the LEAGUE office for review.

#### **Rule 613 – Guidelines for Resolution Disputes**

In the case of a dispute between player and CLUB or between CLUBS, the LEAGUE Office, upon receiving written evidence from the CLUB or the player, shall evaluate the evidence submitted and allow seven (7) business days for player or CLUB to respond (if they choose to do so). The LEAGUE Office shall render a decision on the status of the player's registration within seven (7) business days from the last receipt of evidence from either party. The LEAGUE's decisions on these matters may be appealed to USSF by US based teams or to the CSA for Canadian based teams.

#### **Rule 614 – Liability**

Players shall assume all risks, responsibilities, and liabilities for loss, damage, injury, or death to himself/herself while engaged as a player for a CLUB or as a player on a representative team of the LEAGUE subject to applicable state laws and regulations.

\*\*Player and Staff Insurance coverage is for ALL LEAGUE events. The insurance coverage does not extend to any external events. Please be aware of this when competing in outside competition\*\*

REGISTRATION AND ROSTER HELP  
Academy Registration  
[academyregistration@uslsoccer.com](mailto:academyregistration@uslsoccer.com)

## **Section 3 – USL Academy Review, Appeals & Discipline**

### **700 – USL Academy Review, Appeals & Discipline (RAD)**

#### **Rule 701 – Complaint**

A complaint is a request for assistance including, but not limited to, rules interpretation, a rule that may need to be created because facts require it, or a belief that something wrong has been done that requires correction. No complaint can overturn the result of a game but point forfeiture and other penalties may result from a complaint that has been upheld.

#### **All Complaints must:**

Specifically refer to the LEAGUE regulations or standards or USL Academy policy that is being violated. Please indicate the exact rule number when submitting complaint, if applicable. All complaints must be submitted using the USL-AL Multiuse Complaint Form.

#### **Rule 702 – Types of RAD**

The USL Academy has four (4) types of RAD. There are no additional types of complaints accepted, unless the USL Academy permits it. As a USL Academy, your team management and players agree to utilize this process exclusively for the resolution of all disputes. Each type has its own progressive steps of review and final resolution. Each type and each step have very exciting requirements, both in format and timing. The party that misses or errs in format and/or does not adhere to time schedules loses a complaint, all rights to proceed, and the decision, or in some cases, the non-decision.

#### **RAD Complaint, Type 1 (Competition)**

A complaint about events that occur on the field of play during the game, pre-game or post game, affecting some component or outcome of the game. These complaints have a direct bearing on the game, future game and/or outcome(s). A complaint may involve:

- Players, field, or bench including coaching, statistical, or other person supportive of the game itself
  - Management, coaches, trainers and related personnel
  - Fans, spectators or camera/media persons
- a) The complaint must be completed and reduced to writing including a required proposed outcome within two (2) working days of the event. A Friday game requires a complaint by Tuesday at 5:00 PM, local team entity time. A Saturday or Sunday game would require a complaint (at the latest) also by Tuesday at 5:00 PM. All times are local to the person making the submission. Early submission is requested.

- b) The complaint must be accompanied by a Cashier's Check in the amount of \$100.00 made out to United Soccer Leagues, LLC, to cover administrative cost for the complaint. This must be postmarked within two (2) workdays of the event.
- c) The only extension of time will be for an event or events that are not discovered until later. In such a case, 48 hours from discovery of the event or events that are not discovered until later. This should be a very rare occurrence. An extension can be granted only in writing and only after a detailed written request is sent to the LEAGUE office.
- d) The complaint and other available documentation needs to be faxed prior to the deadline (5:00 PM, as related in item (a) above) to all of the following persons. Use the attached form, which can be supplemented as needed by additional sheets:
  - 1. League Office
  - 2. Party (parties) complained about
- e) A video of the game must accompany or immediately follow the written communication. If the complaint is pre- or post-game related and no video exists there is no need to send a video. A video must accompany all other complaints. No complaint will be considered without the available video.
- f) The Team complained about will have 24 hours after receipt of the complaint to communicate a position, written response, and/or objections to the same parties referenced in Item (d) above. A copy of the written communication needs to go to the complaining party so they know the response, as well as the USL Academy.
- g) The USL Academy will make a decision within seven working days following receipt of the original complaint. Discipline, if warranted, must be immediate and impact the next game, if possible.
- h) Should either party desire a continuance, one may be granted at the sole discretion of the USL Academy. Written communication detailing the requested continuance, agreed-upon timeframe, and clear reasons why adherence to the regular policy is not possible or not advisable is required.
- i) Nothing precludes the parties privately and/or at the direction of the USL Academy from mutual attempts at resolution. Teleconference may be required.

- j) If more than one team entity, player, etc. is involved in the complaint or there are similar complaints, once representative shall be selected to represent the others and process on behalf of all of them, final binding and exclusive resolution of any and all complaints, regardless of form.

Failure to proceed at any level shall be treated, as an acceptance of the written previous decision. The League has sole discretion on subsequent disciplinary action, including points being deducted from competition standings.

**RAD Complaint, Type 2 (Team Official)**

A complaint between your team management and opposing team management and/or players that is not about events upon the field or surrounding a game. These complaints are purely business and have no direct impact on a game's outcome.

- a) The complaint must be completed and reduced to writing, including a required proposed outcome, within ten (10) days of the event, faxed not later than 5:00 PM on the 10th day. All times are local to the person required to make the submission. Early submission is requested.
- b) The complaint must be accompanied by a Casher's Check in the amount of \$100.00 to cover administrative cost for the complaint. This must be postmarked within two (2) workdays of the event.
- c) The only extension of time will be for an event or events that are not discovered until later. In this case, that is ten (10) days from discovery of the event all submissions must be made. Such circumstances should be a very rare occurrence. An extension can be granted only in writing and only after a detailed written request is received by the LEAGUE office.
- d) The complaint and other available documentation needs to be faxed prior to the deadline (5:00 PM as indicated in item (a) above) to all of the following persons. Use the attached form, which can be supplemented as needed by additional sheets:
  1. LEAGUE Office
  2. Party (Parties) and/or Team (Teams) complained about. In the case of a complaint about any team personnel, notify the employing team by fax
- e) A video, DVD format, of the game must accompany (follow) the fax, sent overnight to the LEAGUE office. Only if the complaint is pre- or postgame related and no video exists with any game tie-in will there not be a need to send a video. A video must accompany

all complaints unless such an inclusion is not needed based upon the complaint. No complaint will be considered without the best possible video available, if applicable.

- f) The Team complained about will have 72 hours after receiving the complaint to communicate a position, written response, and/or objections to the same parties referenced in Item (d) above. A fax also needs to be sent to the original complaining party, of course, so they know the response.
- g) The LEAGUE office will either make a decision within seven (7) working days following receipt of the original complaint or refer the complaint to a RAD committee who shall render a decision within seven (7) days of consideration of evidence.
- h) If more than one team entity, player, etc. is involved in the complaint or there are similar complaints, one representative shall be selected to represent the others involved and proceed on behalf of all of them. All parties represented will be bound by the final decision.

#### RAD Complaint, Type 3 (League Office/Official)

A complaint about the LEAGUE Office or a USL Academy Official (Note: all complaints regarding actions or inaction on the part of the USL Academy officers, employees, staff members and Executive Committee members acting in their official capacity as league officials are to be brought as complaints against the LEAGUE Office).

- a) The complaint must be completed and reduced to writing including a required proposed outcome within two (2) workdays of the event. A Friday game requires a complaint by Tuesday at 5:00 PM, local team entity time. A Saturday or Sunday game would require a complaint (at the latest) also by Tuesday at 5:00 PM. All times are local to the person making the submission. Early submission is requested.
- b) The complaint must be accompanied by a Cashier's Check in the amount of \$100.00 to cover administrative cost for the complaint. This must be postmarked within two (2) workdays of the event.
- c) The only extension of time will be for an event or events that are not discovered until later. In such a case, 48 hours from discovery of the event all submissions must be made. Such circumstances should be a very rare occurrence. An extension can be granted only in writing and only after a detailed written request is sent to the LEAGUE office.

- d) The complaint and other available documentation needs to be faxed prior to the deadline (5:00 PM, as related in item (a) above) to all of the following persons listed below. Use the attached form, which can be supplemented as needed by additional sheets:
  - 1. League Office
  - 2. Party (Parties) complained about
- e) The person complained about will have seven (7) days from receiving the complaint to communicate a position, written response, and/or objections to the same parties referenced in Item (d) above.
- f) USL Academy will render a decision within seven working days following receipt of the original complaint. Discipline, if warranted, must be immediate and impact the next game, if possible.

RAD Complaint, Type 4 (Referee, linesman, or related person)

- a) The complaint must be completed and reduced to writing, including a required proposed outcome, within ten (10) days of the event, faxed not later than 5:00 PM on the 10th day. All times are local to the person required to make the submission. Early submission is requested.
- b) The complaint must be accompanied by a Cashier's Check in the amount of \$100.00 to cover administrative cost for the complaint. This must be postmarked within two (2) workdays of the event.
- c) The only extension of time will be for an event or events that are not discovered until later, in this case, 48 hours from the time when the event could or should have been discovered. Such cases should be a very rare occurrence. An extension can be granted only in writing and only after a detailed written request is sent to the LEAGUE office.
- d) The complaint and other available documentation needs to be faxed prior to the deadline (5:00 PM as indicated in item (a) above) to all of the following persons listed below. Use the attached form, which can be supplemented as needed by additional sheets:
  - 1. LEAGUE Office

- e) A video, DVD format, of the game must accompany (follow) the fax, sent overnight to the LEAGUE office. No complaint will be considered without the best possible video available.
- f) The LEAGUE office will either make a decision within seven (7) working days following receipt of the original complaint or refer the complaint to a RAD Committee who shall render a decision within seven (7) days of consideration of evidence.

Note: This is a fast process. It needs to be because discipline, if warranted, must be immediate and impact the next game if possible.

**Rule 703 – RAD Panel**

The USL Academy shall have the authority to convene a three-person RAD panel from the pool of CLUB leaders or coaches of disinterested USL Academy teams to hear Type 2 complaints, when it deems referral to be in the best interest of the League.

## **Section 4 – Player Insurance & Insurance Claims**

### **CLAIMS FILING INSTRUCTIONS FOR MONUMENT SPORTS GROUP ACCIDENT POLICIES**

**Note:** This coverage is EXCESS of other insurance. Please be sure to submit other insurance information (if available) when requested.

For all questions Regarding Secondary Insurance and Coverage please contact Jacob Franks at Monument Sports Group:

- **Insurance Questions:**
  - Jacob Franks
  - [Jacob@monumentsports.com](mailto:Jacob@monumentsports.com)

For all questions Regarding Secondary Insurance CLAIMS please contact generic claims at Monument Sports Group:

- **Claim Questions:**
  - [claims@monumentsports.com](mailto:claims@monumentsports.com)

## **Section 5 – 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