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# 2022 Academy League Operations Manual

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

Compliance with these rules and procedures is paramount to the successful operation of the USL Academy League 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.

“**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 League 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 - Compliance Assessment**

Following each season, the USL Academy League staff shall review the compliance record of each CLUB. If the LEAGUE finds that compliance with standards is insufficient, it may recommend that the CLUB's status within the USL Academy be revoked for the following season. The LEAGUE Director will render a decision based upon the facts of each case.

#### **Rule 104 – 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 LEAGUE events, 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 105 – Club Names & Logos**

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

**Rule 106 – Bench Dress Code (Coaches/Trainers)**

**(FINE 106 - \$100)**

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 107 – Venue and Playing Field**

The Venue and playing field used by each club in USL ACADEMY is the centerpiece of each club's operation. The goal of each club should be able to provide an enjoyable experience for the fans, players, officials and everyone involved with the staging of a soccer game. To accomplish this, teams must meet the following standards, approved by the individual leagues, which relate to Venues and playing surfaces.

Lighting

Each Venue must have floodlights with minimum 40 foot candles for night play. If CLUBs do not have Lighting at venue, Kick offs must take place no later than 2pm local time.

Dressing Rooms

Each Venue must have dressing rooms for the home team, visiting team and referees with working showers that have hot water and towels.

### Playing Surface

#### **(FINE 107a - \$500)**

Each Venue must have a playing surface that consists of natural grass or FIFA approved synthetic turf and must be in good playing condition. The grass length on game day shall not exceed one and one-half (1-1/2) inches.

### Field Dimensions

#### **(FINE 107b - \$500)**

The minimum playing surface dimensions are 110 yards x 70 yards.

### Field Markings

#### **(FINE 107c - \$100)**

The dimensions and markings of the field shall be measured according to standard FIFA specifications. This includes clear, distinct field markings that are five inches wide on a field that remains a constant size during the season. Goal nets and corner flags should be free of advertising.

### Bench and Technical Area

Per the FIFA Laws of the Game, the technical area relates to matches played in Venues with a designated seated area for technical staff and substitutes. Both the home and visiting team's benches shall be placed on the same side of the field on the side designated by the Venue field plan. The home team shall designate the bench locations at the start of the season, and shall not change these locations during the season. The bench area shall be marked according to FIFA's technical area markings and the bench should accommodate no more than twelve (12) persons per team.

### Penalty Area

At each end of the field, a line perpendicular to the goal line shall be drawn parallel to each side of the goal and eighteen (18) yards from each goalpost. This line shall extend for the eighteen (18) yards into the field of play from the goal line. A line running parallel to the goal line shall be drawn to connect the two perpendicular lines, which shall form the "penalty area." Within each penalty area a penalty mark is made twelve (12) yards from the midpoint between the goalposts and equidistant to them. An arc of a circle with a radius of ten (10) yards from each penalty mark is drawn outside the penalty area.

### Goal Area

At each end of the field, a line perpendicular to the goal line shall be drawn parallel on each side of the goal and six (6) yards from each goalpost. This line shall extend six (6) yards into the field of play from the goal line. A line running parallel to the goal line shall be drawn connected to two perpendicular lines, forming the "goal area." Each goal shall be centered on the goal line and equal distance on each side from the corner flags. Game day goals shall be the size approved by FIFA.

### Halfway Mark & Center Circle

A halfway line shall be marked across the center of the field. The center of the field shall be so marked and have a circle, which has a ten (10) yard radius, drawn around it.

### Corner Area & Flags

At each of the four corners of the field measuring from the corner flags post, a quarter circle of a radius of one (1) yard shall be drawn inside the field of play. Corner flags shall be on posts not less than five (5) feet high with non-pointed tops.

### **Rule 108 – Uniforms**

All players shall wear identical uniforms as provided by the official uniforms supplier. The goalkeeper's uniform shall be different colors than the team uniform and shall conform to FIFA and USL ACADEMY guidelines. Slide pants or compression shorts may be worn under uniform shorts if they match the predominate color of the uniform shorts.

The Referee shall enforce all FIFA equipment rules and any equipment deemed dangerous shall be removed.

### Uniform Sets

#### **(FINE 108a - \$500)**

Each team must have two complete, distinct sets of identical uniforms. One set must serve as the home uniforms and the other set must serve as the away uniforms. Both teams should have both jerseys (light and dark) available for all games.

### USL Academy Logo

#### **(FINE 108b - \$50)**

USL ACADEMY logo patches may be placed on the left sleeve of the jersey. If CLUBs would like to order patches, please contact LEAGUE office. Patches are not required for 2022. NO OUTSIDE Competition Branding shall appear on Uniform Sets.

### Team Logo

#### **(FINE 108c - \$50)**

The team name and / or team logo must be present on the front of the game jerseys.

### Uniform Numbers

#### **(FINE 108d - \$50)**

Each uniform must contain numbers on the front and the back. Number size must be a minimum of eight (8) inches on the back of jersey and three (3) inches on the front of the jersey OR shorts.

### Player Numbers

**(FINE 108e - \$50)**

Each player must keep the same jersey number as long as the player is on the Master Roster. No changes of player numbers are allowed unless a player leaves a club for the remainder of the season.

Player Names

**(FINE 108f - \$50)**

Player names must be printed on the back of the game jerseys for LEAGUE Playoff matches only.

Uniform Selection

**(FINE 108g - \$50)**

The home team has the right to select the color of its home uniform and must inform the visiting team of its choice via the Home Team Travel Information Sheet. Visiting team must wear a contrasting uniform. In case of a conflict the visiting team is required to change. The LEAGUE Manager should be notified. The referee has the authority to resolve the conflict if the LEAGUE Manager is unavailable. Teams must travel with both sets of Uniforms to alleviate any conflicts.

Goalkeeper Jersey

**(FINE 108h - \$50)**

Goalkeeper jersey must be distinct from both the home team and the visiting team. The referee has the authority to require a goalkeeper jersey change. All teams must travel with at least two (2) goalkeeper jerseys of different colors.

Warm-ups

**(FINE 108i - \$25)**

All team warm-ups should be identical for all players and should tie in with the color scheme of the uniforms.

Referee Uniform

All referees are required to supply their own uniform. USL ACADEMY competitions require the use of the USSF, CSA, BFA or ABFA approved uniforms.

**Rule 109 – Game Day Staff**

Game day staffing requirements and recommendations shall depend on the duties of the Venue staff pursuant to the Venue lease. Each home team shall have a written arrangement with their Venue outlining both the team's and the Venue's responsibility, and which entity is ultimately responsible for in-game equipment repair (goals), implementation of emergency medical and evacuation procedures, spectator misconduct, and contraband items including pirated merchandise, knives, firearms, alcohol, etc. In addition to the Venue's staff, each home team shall have the game day personnel listed below. Game day staff may be volunteer or part-time employees. All game day staff shall arrive at the Venue at least one and one-half (1 ½) hours before

the gates open. Game day staff shall wear team attire with home team logo and shall communicate by two-way radio.

#### REQUIRED

Team Administrator

Visiting Team Liaison

Referee Liaison

Certified Athletic Trainer (on site) \*Head Injury Spotter\*

Scorekeeper/Statistician/Spotter

#### Team Administrator

**(FINE 109a - \$25)**

The home team's Team Administrator shall assist Senior Management with the overall responsibility of game operations. The Team Administrator must be available by cellular phone to the visiting team and USL ACADEMY on game days. The Team Administrator shall assist with all the organization and supervision of the field and bench, and activities occurring thereon. Their responsibilities shall include:

Providing the required lining and proper placement of equipment for the playing field including benches, goals, corner flags, game balls, sideline product, beverages, and additional team needs  
Supervising set-up and take down of sponsor field signage and signage positions

Providing game officials with any assistance needed before, during, or after the game

Assuring compliance with the game timing sheet and game day information

Provide a copy of the Game Day/Competition Timeline to the opposing team's coach

Give notice to the home team and visiting team to ensure they take their positions on time for pre-game ceremonies/introductions and for the second half.

#### Visiting Team Liaison (Can be Team Administrator)

**(FINE 109b - \$25)**

The home team must appoint a Visiting Team Liaison who shall be responsible for the needs of the visiting team during their stay. On game day, the Visiting Team Liaison shall meet with the head coach or designee upon their arrival at the venue and provide a copy of the Game Day Timeline, shall review the visiting team schedule and discuss any additional game day instructions (i.e., introductions, halftime, post-game), and shall facilitate Venue needs including the locker room and ensuring on time positions for pre-game ceremonies and for the second half. The Visiting Team Liaison shall be near, but separate from, the visiting team bench throughout the game. If necessary, they shall deliver the visiting team's complimentary tickets Will Call one hour prior to the game.

#### Referee Liaison (Can be Team Administrator)

**(FINE 109c - \$25)**

The home team must appoint a Referee Liaison solely dedicated to meeting the needs of the officials on game day. The Referee Liaison shall assist the officials with pre-game, halftime, and post-game requests and needs. The Liaison should provide hospitality and help to ensure that all routine and administrative duties of the referees are completed with as little difficulty as possible. Ideally, the Referee Liaison will have some knowledge of refereeing and the challenges facing soccer referees and can help in the following areas: referee transportation, properly equipped dressing rooms (water, towels, soap, etc.), answering questions, and facilitating the filing of game report forms following the game. The Referee Liaison should remain neutral and impartial when interacting with referees, coaches, players, and spectators.

#### Certified Athletic Trainer (Visiting Team and Home Team

**(FINE 109d - \$200)**

The home team must provide a certified athletic trainer that is available to both the home team before, during, and directly after the game to treat injuries and tape players. Visiting team will be required to travel with their own trainer.

Each CLUBs ATC shall act as a Head Injury Spotter for the game and shall interact with the 4th Official if stoppage is necessary.

#### Ball Retrievers

**(FINE 109e - \$25)**

There should be at least four (4) ball retrievers, 11 years of age or older, wearing identical colors that do not conflict with the uniforms of either team.

The Team Administrator shall be responsible for training the ball retrievers on their overall responsibilities as well as providing them with ball distribution instructions. The supervisor shall coordinate their uniforms and arrival and departure times. The supervisor must also make sure retrievers follow fair-game procedures and remain for the entirety of the match.

#### **Rule 110 – 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 USL Academy League will be structured to include a full regular season comprised of three (3) seasons: Spring Season (March-May), Summer Season (June-August), and Fall Season (September-November). Teams participating in each regional division will be expected to play a minimum of six (6) games, and a maximum of twelve (12) within each three-month timeframe. Participating teams will be expected to host a month-long preseason prior to league play.

Following the conclusion of regular season play, teams that have competed in at least two (2) league seasons (Spring, Summer, and Fall) may be eligible to qualify for the USL Academy League Postseason Tournament which takes place following the Fall season (tentatively scheduled for November 17<sup>th</sup>-November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022). It is the expectation that teams that are eligible to qualify participate in the postseason event, and fines may be imposed for those unable to do so. Standings from the regular season will dictate placement into the Playoffs or Showcase divisions.

### **Rule 201 – Governance**

All events associated with the USL Academy League 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.

#### **President**

The President is the highest-ranking officer of the United Soccer League, regardless of the individual's job title, and has the power to:

- Prepare the schedule for all USL Academy League events.
- Propose and interpret the rules.
- Exercise disciplinary powers conferred upon him/her by the LEAGUE regulations.
- Conduct the day-to-day affairs of the LEAGUE and shall employ administrative and clerical staff necessary to carry on the business of the LEAGUE.

- Have full authority to take any action that in his/her judgement is necessary or desirable to prevent or discourage any conduct by a member(s) or any other person(s) which is not, in the Director's opinion, in the best interest of the LEAGUE or which is not, in the Director's judgement, necessary or desirable to preserve or protect the integrity or reputation of the LEAGUE, its members or the sport of Soccer.
- Make known and enforce the provisions of the LEAGUE regulations and the rules of the LEAGUE.

#### Authority of the League Directors

League Directors shall have the same power as the President, subject to the direction, control, and supervision of the President.

#### Executive Committee

The Executive Committee may be established to aid in the development and direction of the USL Academy. Each division/conference may be represented by an official that serves on the Executive Committee. These committee members will be appointed by LEAGUE staff.

#### **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 League will take place on the following dates for the 2022 season:

- Spring Season: March 2022 – May 2022
- Summer Season: June 2022 – August 2022
- Fall Season: September 2022 – November 2022
- Playoffs: Following the conclusion of the Fall Season
- Off Season: December 2022 – January 2023

When a club joins USL Academy, it commits to the possibility of the following:

- Back-to-back games (Sat/Sun)
- Mid-week games
- Play Weekend (Tournament Style – LEAGUE Matches)
- Any team-requested changes to the official league schedule may incur a game change fee assessed by the LEAGUE and/or applicable National Federation.



### Rule 205 – Point System

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

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

### Rule 206 – Standings and Tiebreakers

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

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

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

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

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

- A. LEAGUE games refer solely to games that count towards the regular season standings. Open Cup specific games are not “LEAGUE games” when it comes to determining placement in the LEAGUE standings. (When using these criteria as tiebreakers for Open Cup groups, “LEAGUE games” should be interpreted as only games that count toward Open Cup group standings.)
- B. Should more than two (2) teams involved have played each other an unequal number of times, this tiebreaker will be skipped.

- C. Game Average = Tie Breaker / number of games played (i.e., goals scored / number of games played).

#### Wild Card Tie Breaker

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

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

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

#### Playoffs

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

#### **Rule 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. Teams may make a maximum of (7) substitutions per game with no re-entry across (3) moments.

#### Goalkeeper Substitution

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

#### Head Injury Substitution

Following extensive consultation related to finding ways to improve the in-game management of possible neurological head injuries in football matches, the BoD has taken careful note of the recommendations from meetings of both The IFAB Football and Technical Advisory Panels and the Concussion Expert Group (which consists of medical concussion experts, team doctors, players/coaches, and refereeing and legal/Laws of the Game experts).

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

#### Principles

- Each team is permitted to use a maximum of two “concussion substitutes” in a match.
- A “concussion substitution” may be made regardless of the number of substitutes or moments already used.
- In competitions in which the number of named substitutes is the same as the maximum number of substitutes that can be used, the “concussion substitute” can be a player who has previously been substituted.
  - A player that has previously been substituted may only re-enter the field if all other substitutes have been used.
  - Exception: If the only remaining substitutes who have not entered the field are Overage players, and using them would violate the maximum of (3) Overage players on the field at one time, then the “concussion substitute” must be a youth player

who has previously been substituted. The Head Injury Substitution rule shall not allow for more than (3) Overage Players on the field at once.

- When a “concussion substitute” is used, the opposing team then has the option of using an “additional” substitute.
  - The Additional Substitute may only be used if all other substitutes or moments have been exhausted, unless it is made concurrently with the “concussion substitution.”
  - The Additional Substitute may be a re-entering player only if all other substitutes have been used, or if the only available substitutes would violate the Overage player rule, as mentioned above.
  - The Additional Substitute moment does not allow for “normal” substitutions to occur concurrently.
    - Ex. A team has used all (3) substitution moments and has used (5) out of (7) available substitutes. The team has an Additional Substitute available. When making the Additional Substitute, the team must send on one of the (2) players that have not played yet. The team cannot also send on their final player who has not played yet as a “normal” substitute.

#### Procedure

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

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

- If a team decides to make an “Additional substitution”, the referee/fourth official is informed, ideally by using a substitution card/form of a different color. In the USL Academy, Additional Substitutions will be blue.

#### Substitution opportunities

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

#### Substitution Passes

##### **(FINE 207 - \$25)**

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

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

The USL Academy League will consist of three (3) seasons (Spring, Summer, and Fall) and Playoffs at the conclusion of the Fall Season. Teams will compete within regional divisions to qualify for playoffs. It is the expectation that teams that are eligible to qualify, participate in the postseason event, and fines may be imposed for those unable to do so. Standing from the regular season play will dictate placement into the Playoffs or Showcase division.

#### Postseason Qualification

USL Academy CLUBS may qualify for playoffs provided they have met the following criteria:

- Minimum of (12) games played during LEAGUE
- Minimum of (7) months active as a CLUB (i.e. preseason and two seasons)
- Minimum of (23) available and registered players

The top team from each division based on points-per-game will qualify for the playoffs (only if that specific division was active for two out of the three seasons). If a wildcard team is required due to an odd number of divisions, the wildcard will be the next highest team based on points-per-game for the entire LEAGUE.

#### Schedule

The Academy Staff will provide a preliminary scheduling matrix prior to the beginning of each Season. Teams will self-schedule within each regional division and submit their schedule to the league for approval. A Play-to-Rest ratio is required:

- Minimum Scheduling: a minimum of (6) league games must be played throughout each 3-month season
- Maximum Scheduling: a maximum of (12) league games may be played throughout each 3-month season
- Minimum 18-24 hours rest between games
- No more than two (2) 90-minute games within a four-day period
- No more than four (4) 90-minute games within a seven-day period
  - Exception: When League-approved, Clubs may schedule a tournament-style event similar to USL Academy Cup
- Weather delays/cancellations may be taken into account

#### Venue/Kick-off Times/Turnaround Time

The Academy Staff shall set the dates of all Academy competitions. The venues and specific kick-off times of the Academy games shall be proposed by the home team, subject to the approval of the Academy Staff. The home team shall submit venues and specific kick-off times to the Academy Staff for all Academy games by a recomunicated date before the start of each season so visiting teams can make the appropriate arrangements or offer objections for the Academy Staff's consideration. All clubs must provide a turf or synthetic alternative in the event of inclement weather.

Evening games may only be played at venues with appropriate lighting installations.

#### **Rule 209 – Game Lengths**

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

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

#### Official Time

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

#### **Rule 210 – Eligibility**

All players and coaches must present their digital match roster to the referee prior to each game. If the individual's picture is not on the digital match roster, the individual will not be eligible for the

game. Passes from any other league are not accepted for USL Academy League games, no exceptions.

#### **Rule 211 – Incomplete Games**

In the event a game cannot continue through full regulation tie, 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 Friday and has to fly in, they are expected to arrive by Thursday 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 – Game Rescheduling**

Once final schedules have been submitted to the LEAGUE office by the CLUB, all subsequent schedule changes must be approved by the LEAGUE office and the opposing team. A team cannot change more than 50% of its originally scheduled matches during the regular season. Changes will not be processed unless a new date is provided and no changes will be accepted within **7 days** of a game except under special circumstances to include: weather, State Cup, and health-related issues. CLUB requesting a change within the 7-day window due to exceptional circumstances, as defined in the published league procedures, **must pay referees within 7 days of the originally scheduled date**. If payment is not made to the referees, the club will forfeit the payment from its security bond. Clubs will have 7 days to submit payment to Referees. A violation of this rule will result in a \$50 fine. **Approved game changes with new dates are subject to a fee of \$35. Approval solely by e-mail outside of MOD11 is not acceptable.** A violation of this rule will result in a fine of \$50.00 USD. Clubs must consider the Play-to-Rest Ratio when attempting any reschedules.

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

In the case of a game delay, the Home Team shall immediately communicate the delay, via phone, to their LEAGUE Manager. The LEAGUE Manager shall distribute Emergency Game Day Contact Numbers to all teams prior to the start of the season. It is imperative that the rules and procedures of this section are explicitly followed in determining whether to delay, postpone, or cancel a game. If the kickoff is delayed because the visiting team arrived late, the visiting team shall be fined in

accordance with league standards. The home team, in consultation with the LEAGUE Managers and referees, shall determine the start time for any delays in excess of twenty (20) minutes.

#### 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.

#### Advanced Preparation (Lightning)

Teams must take the following steps prior to season to prepare for severe weather. These guidelines must be developed in coordination with the venue and submitted to the league office no later than February 1st. The Advanced Preparation plan must include the facility's radius in which the field of play is deemed un-safe to play. Also, it will need to include the length of time that is required to wait after the most recent lightning strike.

#### Before Officials Arrive at Venue

In the event a match is to be terminated less than 12 hours prior to kick off due to unforeseen problems, the home team shall immediately contact its LEAGUE Manager to expedite the communication process to assigned referees. The USL ACADEMY Referee Department will then notify the designated official at the National Federation, who will in turn make every effort to notify the referees of the change. It is imperative that all contact numbers for referees be available to the National Federation for such situations. Please contact the National Federation designee before departing for the match if uncertain of the match's status and if there is reason to believe there may be a postponement due to inclement weather.

#### Referee "No Show"

In the event the assigned referee crew does not arrive at least one (1) hour before the scheduled kickoff time, the Home Team should immediately contact their LEAGUE Manager. Should none of the assigned referees be present at the official kickoff time, the teams must wait a minimum of one (1) hour before the possibility of postponement is considered. Again, no game may be abandoned or postponed due to lack of referees until at least one (1) hour has passed since kickoff. After one (1) hour from the original kickoff time has elapsed, the LEAGUE Manager will make a decision as to whether the match should be postponed and rescheduled, or further time should be allowed (only in the event of referees on their way to the venue). Active and certified Federation referees must be used as replacements in order for the match to be deemed official. Prior to sending

replacements, USL ACADEMY and the respective Federation will determine on a case-by-case basis whether the substitute referees are of sufficient experience and ability to handle the match. Under no circumstances will the replacement referees have less than State or Provincial certification.

#### 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 Official Game Day Lineup sheet. Any changes to the lineup on the field, after any of the three (3) changes to the Official Game Day Lineup sheet 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.

#### Termination Procedures for Single-Match Playoff Series

If the match is tied, the first half is completed, the one hour waiting period is fulfilled and there must be a winner to advance, then the following will occur:

- Regulation: If terminated during regulation, the match will be resumed at the next possible opportunity and played to completion beginning from when the play was stopped in the second half and will conclude at either ninety (90) minutes or within overtime, followed by FIFA Kicks from the Mark if necessary.
- Overtime: If terminated during Overtime, the match will resume at the minute that the match was terminated, followed by FIFA Kicks from the Mark if necessary.
- Back-to-back: If the teams are scheduled to play the following day, then the match will resume the next morning, starting with the overtime period, followed by Kicks from the Mark, if necessary.

\*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.

#### Rescheduling a Postponed Game

Any postponed game must be rescheduled within seventy-two (72) hours of the original date of the game and must be replayed no later than the second to last weekend of the regular season (Spring, Summer, Fall).

#### Rescheduling Considerations

USL ACADEMY shall have the authority to review all the facts, (including fault on the part of either team, unavoidable conditions, expense for both teams, and requests by a team to take a particular action in the best interests of USL ACADEMY and its teams) in determining whether and when a game shall be rescheduled, who should bear the financial burden as a result of cancellation or rescheduling, whether the game should be forfeited or cancelled permanently, and whether other fines should be levied. The integrity of the LEAGUE and the Home Team schedule shall be given considerable weight in the resolution of these matters. Unless the sanction or remedy is set forth specifically in any USL ACADEMY rules or regulations, USL ACADEMY shall decide what action to take, and its decision shall be final.

#### Written Explanation of Postponement

Whenever a game is postponed or canceled, the LEAGUE must receive within 48 hours of postponement or cancellation, a written notice of why the game was not completed or played, including, if necessary, and a statement from the owner of the Venue / playing facility.

#### Venues Clearances are Final

Once a team has approved its individual schedule and the LEAGUE Schedules are officially released, the LEAGUE will not automatically accept a postponement or cancellation of a game because a Venue is no longer available. It is the Home Team's responsibility to find a league-acceptable alternate venue, if necessary, on the originally scheduled date.

#### **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 LEAGUE or competition standings and a 3-0 win to the opposing team.
- B. The team that forfeits may be precluded from participating in any future USL Academy League events, per LEAGUE review and at the LEAGUE's discretion.
- C. The CLUB must send full fees to the referee assignor and each referee assigned to the game within five (5) business days.
- D. The LEAGUE will have the discretion to remove any teams for not complying with the LEAGUE 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).

#### Non-Performance by the Home Team

In the event the visiting team is present at the venue and willing and/or able to perform, but the home team is unwilling and/or unable to provide a venue or fails to show at the scheduled venue and time, all Forfeit penalties as previously listed apply, in addition to compensation to opponent as set forth below:

- Compensation will be outlined by limited to expenses submitted by the LEAGUE. Visiting team may not seek additional compensation.

#### Non-Performance by the Visiting Team

In the event the home team is present at the venue and willing and/or able to perform, but the visiting team is unwilling and/or unable to provide a venue or fails to show at the scheduled venue and time, all Forfeit penalties as previously listed apply, in addition to compensation to opponent as set forth below:

- Compensation will be outlined by limited to expenses submitted by the LEAGUE. Visiting team may not seek additional compensation.

#### Non-Performance by Both Teams

In the event neither team is prepared to commence the playing of a game at the scheduled kickoff time or does not complete such game, and the game is not played to a conclusion that day, USL ACADEMY may reschedule the game, or declare the game a Forfeit by both teams with applicable Forfeit penalties enforced as previously listed.

#### **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 League Games shall have a Referee, AR1, AR2, and 4<sup>th</sup> official.

##### Payment

**(FINE 217 - \$100)**

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

Referee fees will be split between the Home and Away teams and paid via cash or check at the field. Teams should bring the exact bills detailed below (or smaller denominations) so that change

will not have to be made. Home teams will be responsible for paying additional referee expenses (see below). The pay scale for referees is listed below:

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

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

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

The fees for officiating games are set by LEAGUE, and subject to regular review. Referees, Assistant Referees, and 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 followed by submitting a digital match report through MOD11 as outlined in the referee handbook
- Arrive at the proper time, unless for some reason the game has been already postponed without the referees being properly notified in advance due to an error by the league or teams.
- Arrive at the proper time and either of the competing clubs fails to appear for the game.
- Perform assigned services, but for some reason, the game is not completed.

### Expense Reports

Officials are eligible for coverage of travel expenses via the Referee Expense Report. Officials wishing to recover expenses will be required to submit this form to the Home Team prior to the start of the game. Center and Assistant referees are able to submit expenses for their trips depending on the round-trip mileage they accumulate and the overall time spent between departing their home and returning. Home Teams are responsible for paying additional expenses incurred by the officials. Referees must notify the LEAGUE and the Home Team of their anticipated expenses prior to arriving at the venue, and complete and turn in the form prior to kick-off. The Referee Expense Report can be found on the group home page in GameOfficials. Home Teams should have printed Referee Expense Reports available as well. The Home Team must provide payment of expenses no later than the conclusion of the match via cash or check. Any matters pertaining to the payment (or lack thereof) of fees should be addressed to the appropriate LEAGUE

Manager. In the event of a disputed expense item, all remaining match and expense fees are to be paid at the completion of the match and the LEAGUE is to be notified in writing for a ruling and subsequent payment if applicable. Referees who fail to provide completed forms to the Home team prior to kick-off will not be reimbursed.

#### Nonpayment of Referee Fees & Expenses

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

#### Technology

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

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

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

Any player who is suspended from a match in any USL ACADEMY event will serve their suspension in accordance with the LEAGUE in which the suspension occurred. USL Academy competitions are treated under the same LEAGUE. Should the player be loaned or transferred between LEAGUES



within the USL ACADEMY, the suspension will become the amount of time that must elapse until the player is once again eligible to play in the LEAGUE in which the suspension was received.

#### Examples

- Player X, suspended for one USL Academy League match, is loaned to a USL Professional club to “play out” the suspension. Player X is not permitted to play until the day following the date of the match that he is suspended for in USL Academy League.
- Player Y is suspended in the final match of the USL Academy Cup. Player Y is to serve the suspension at the next available USL Academy competition in which they are registered and rostered for. If they are playing in USL Academy League, it will be the first League match they are approved for. If they do not play in USL Academy competitions until the following USL Academy Cup, they will be suspended for the first match of that Cup.
- Player Z is on loan to USL from the USL Professional club and is sent off. The player’s loan expires, and they return to their original club without serving a USL suspension. Player Y will not be permitted to play in a USL Professional match until the day following the date of the match that he is suspended in the USL. Fines will be assessed according to the LEAGUE in which you were sent off, not LEAGUE in which the player is registered.

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

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

#### **Rule 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 – Caution and Send-Off Accumulation**

#### Player Caution Accumulation

For logistical and administrative purposes, players exceeding the caution accumulation penalty point plateau(s) will serve their suspension immediately. USL ACADEMY also reserves the right to re-evaluate player accumulation plateaus for player eligibility rulings, including playoffs, with the reserved power to postpone suspensions to the following season.

Players receiving two cautions in the same match will only have one caution count toward their season accumulation.

Players accumulating the following number of caution/yellow cards throughout the LEAGUE will be sanctioned as follows:

#### USL ACADEMY

- 7 cautions - one (1) game suspension
- 10 total cautions - two (2) game suspension
- 2<sup>nd</sup> suspension by one player - \$50 fine

### Coach/Staff Send-Off Accumulation

Any coach accumulating the following number of ejections, will be suspended and fined as the following:

- 1st Sendoff, coach will serve a one (1) game suspension and will be fined a minimum of \$100
- 2nd Sendoff, coach will serve a one (1) game suspension and will be fined a minimum of \$200
- 3rd Sendoff, coach will serve a two (2) game suspension and will be fined a minimum of \$300. Fine can increase by LEAGUE Office.

### Accumulation during Playoffs

Cautions: A player accumulating (3) cautions during the playoffs will be prohibited from participating in the team's next playoff match. A player may not miss a playoff final due to caution accumulation.

Send-Offs: A player and/or coach that is sent off during the playoffs will be suspended from the team's next playoff game, unless the season is over, in which case the suspension will be served in the team's first LEAGUE game the following season. A player and/or coach may miss a playoff final due to sending off.

### **Rule 308 – 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 309 – 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 310 – 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 311 – 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 312 – 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 313 – Zero-Tolerance Policy**

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

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

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

**Rule 314 – 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.

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#### **Rule 408 – Approaching Game Officials**

##### **(FINE 408 – \$100)**

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

#### **Rule 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
- Hometown
- Headshot photo
- Full-time club (If participating on an all-star team set up)

### **Rule 502 – USL Academy Hotel Policy**

To help all teams save on the cost of team travel, home (host) teams are required to provide visiting teams a preferred hotel partner option near the location of the Match Facility (within 20 Miles).

All Travel Bookings must utilize [usl-academy.hotelplanner.com](http://usl-academy.hotelplanner.com).

### **Rule 503 – Practice Facilities**

Visiting teams may request the use of the Home teams practice facilities. The Home Team may provide reasonable access to and use of its practice field if the visiting team is in the home city more than one day. The visiting team shall practice outside the home team's regular usage schedule, shall request the use of the practice field at least fourteen (14) days in advance, and shall pay any user fee, which shall not include any share of a rental or lease fee obligated by the home team. Home team training sites shall be made available for use by the visiting team if requested fourteen (14) days in advance.

### **Rule 504 – Kit and Colors**

All USL Academy teams must have league-approved uniforms for all matches of the USL Academy League, 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.

### **Rule 505 – Game Ball**

#### **(FINE 505 - \$250)**

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

### **Rule 506 – Game Day Signage**

#### **(FINE 506 - \$250)**

USL ACADEMY requires that signage representing LEAGUE sponsors be displayed at field level facing the main grandstand. To facilitate the correct placement of LEAGUE sponsor signage, the LEAGUE will provide layouts or diagrams. Placement of LEAGUE sponsor advertising signage is mandated by USL ACADEMY and takes precedent over CLUB sponsors.

Minimum Requirements:

- (1) USL-A/Puma Cobranded Field Board (Midfield)
- (2) USL-A/Puma cobranded Tents above Benches
- (2) USL-A/Puma cobranded Feather Banners next to Benches

### **Rule 507 – Game Day Video**

#### **(FINE 507 - Below)**

All home teams are required to film each game from a high-angled camera with audio positioned at midfield on the opposite side of the technical area so that team benches, field boards, and the 4<sup>th</sup> Official can be seen visibly. The League recommends a Veo camera, although other equipment can be utilized given it meets the standards outlined below. The home team must upload the game video to their MOD11 game report within forty-eight (48) hours after the completion of the game. If the home team does not produce the video to the USL ACADEMY within this time frame the below sanctions are applicable:

- 1<sup>st</sup> offense - **Warning (Email to Team Staff)**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> offense - **\$150 (FINE 507a)**
- 3<sup>rd</sup> offense and every additional offence- **\$250 (FINE 507b)**

1. Expectations

- Standard Definition (SD): 720 x 480
- High Definition (HD): 1920 x 1080 or 1440 x 1080 or 1240 x 720
- Full Game (Kick Off to Final Whistle, including extra time and penalty kicks), Games that are not uploaded in their entirety will be counted as NOT UPLOADED and will constitute a fine.
- Must be uploaded to the league digital platform (MOD11). Acceptable file formats: .mp4, .mov, .webm, .ogg, .mxf, Veo Video Share Link

After each half, a wide-angle shot should be used to follow the game officials (and all players if also possible) off the playing field until they are no longer visible to the camera. Only at this point, and not before, should the camera go to the scoreboard for the final score. In the event of any altercation, the camera should follow the incident until its conclusion with a wide-angle shot. Filming should occur from the midfield position. After all goals, the post-goal celebration should be followed using a wide-angle shot. There is no need to show the scoreboard at any time other than the conclusion of each half after the players/officials have left the field. A running clock counter should be displayable at the bottom of the screen indicating the amount of time elapsed since the first half kick-off. This aids us all in quickly identifying any goals, altercations, or other significant incident that may take place during a match.

2. Duration

Begin recording three (3) minutes before the game until game officials and both teams have completely departed the field. At no time should the camera be stopped and restarted.

3. Recording – Testing / Confirmation

Teams are responsible for testing their video recording system in advance. Poor video quality, bad camera angles, excessive camera movement, and DVDs with unnecessary voice commentary as well as DVDs sent blank will be considered a failure to meet the minimum standard.

4. Video Sharing – Post Game

Club shall upload/share their game footage for visiting club analysis via MOD11 platform. This must be submitted with 48 hours of completion of the match.

**Rule 508 – Athletic Trainer Supplies**  
**(FINE 508 - \$100)**

The visiting team is required to bring all its own medical supplies (tape, pre-wrap, ice packs or ice, etc.).

**Rule 509 – Game Day Contact with Visiting Team and Officials**

**(FINE 509 - \$25)**

Home team must establish contact with visitors at least two hours before game time. Home team must report to the Venue at least one hour before game time.

**Rule 510 – Arrival to Venue**

**(FINE 510a less than 60 minutes - \$25; 510b less than 20 minutes - \$250)**

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 511 – Game Day Timeline**

**(FINE 511 - \$25)**

Home team must give the visiting team and referee crew a copy of the Game Day Timeline immediately upon their arrivals to the Venue. A copy of the Game Day Timeline must also be displayed in the visiting team and referee dressing rooms. The Game Day Timeline provides a detailed minute-by-minute breakdown of game day, specifically including the sixty (60) minutes preceding kick-off, how and where to line up for introductions, pre-game ceremonies and additional instructions that assist all parties in the game day operation. This timeline shall be strictly adhered to unless previous arrangements have been made with the home team.

**Rule 512 – Field Evaluation**

The Team Administrator must meet with the Referee at least forty-five (45) minutes prior to the kickoff to assure the field is properly marked, the goals are in place and secure, the nets are properly fastened, the corner and midfield flags are proper and in place, and the balls are properly inflated. Anything deemed insufficient by the referee must be immediately corrected by the home team.

**Rule 513 – Scorekeeper/Fourth Official's Table**

**(FINE 513 - \$50)**

The home teams must provide a table at midfield with chairs and communication to the press box and clock operator for the scorekeeper and the Fourth Official.

**Rule 514 – Benches**

**(FINE 514 - \$50)**

The home team must provide benches / seating to accommodate no more than twelve (12) persons. Each bench should be covered by a USL Academy Branded Tent (10x10 Required).

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

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

#### **Rule 515 – Ice and Water**

##### **(FINE 515 - \$25)**

The home team must provide ice and water in clean coolers and cups at both benches, in both changing rooms and in the referee changing room. Water should be replenished on request and at half-time.

#### **Rule 516 – Captains’ Meeting**

##### **(FINE 516 - \$25)**

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

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

#### **Rule 517 – Game Day Roster**

##### **(FINE 517 - \$25)**

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 seven player substitutions. If the unfit player is replaced by one of the seven listed substitutes, a new Eligible Player from the Master Roster may not be added to the DMR to bring the Game Day Roster back to 18 players. Any adjustments to the Official Game Day Lineup made after the time they were originally submitted to the referees must be communicated to and approved by the center referee and must be immediately communicated to the opponent's head coach.

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 518 – 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 519 – Team Warm-Up Period**

##### **(FINE 519 - \$25)**

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

#### **Rule 520 – Coaches and Reserve Players Entry**

##### **(FINE 520 - \$25)**

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

#### **Rule 521 – Team and Referee Procession**

##### **(FINE 521 - \$25)**

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 522 – Minimum Number of Players**

##### **(FINE 522 - \$200 + \$50 for each player below 16)**

CLUBS must dress a minimum of sixteen (16) eligible players for each game. The game may continue if a team does not dress the minimum number of players, however fines will be assessed by the League depending on the total number of dressed players missing.

#### **Rule 523 – Halftime Activities**

Halftime shall officially begin as soon as the referee blows the whistle signifying the end of the first half. The duration of halftime for all games shall be fifteen (15) minutes unless otherwise authorized by the USL.

#### **Rule 524 – Second Half Preparation**

Five (5) minutes before the start of the second half, each team shall be notified by the team liaison. No later than three (3) minutes before the start of the second half, each team shall exit the locker rooms for the field. The Team Liaisons shall ensure teams are notified of the three-minute warning.

#### **Rule 525 – Ejected Players & Coaches Removal Policy**

Players and coaches sent off from the field of play shall be met at the sideline at midfield by home team security and escorted to the locker room and are not permitted to watch the game. They must remain in the locker room for the remainder of the match. Additionally, coaches are not permitted to communicate with their team staff or players during the remainder of the game and are not allowed to remain in the locker room during half time. The type of communication prohibited would include cellular, 2-way radios, electronic / digital, written or verbal. Ejected players or coaches returning to the field of play or stands during or directly following the match are subject to additional sanctions.

**\*\*Note:** Security personnel should only enter the field at the Referee's request.

#### **Rule 526 – End of Game**

Two (2) minutes before the end of the game, Team Administrator shall position themselves between the field perimeter and the locker rooms. All spectators shall remain outside of the locker rooms/technical areas at all times. Scorekeepers should confirm match details with the referees.

#### **Rule 527 – Serious Incident Protocol**

The Home Team shall educate key Game Day staff, both Venue and team, regarding emergency procedures, EMS vehicles, Venue evacuation, and emergency plans. In the case of a serious incident on Game Day or at other times, it is vital that the LEAGUE Office is informed at the earliest possible time. Team staff shall use their best judgment on whether an incident is (or potentially is) of such magnitude. When in doubt, staff shall err on the side of informing the LEAGUE.

Examples of serious incidents include a death or life-threatening injury to a player, staff, or spectator; severe weather (lightning storm); a serious altercation on the field (field invasion) or elsewhere at the Venue; a terrorist or unspecified threat to the safety of the event; the arrest of a

player or staff member; an automobile accident or other accident; a calamity at the Venue (earthquake, fire, etc.); or a power failure at the Venue. The protocol shall be as follows:

1. Immediately ensure the appropriate emergency procedures have been implemented. Ensure names and phone numbers of those involved and witnesses as warranted. This information shall be detailed in the Venue Incident Report form.
2. While the situation is emerging, call the LEAGUE Manager or LEAGUE Representative:
3. No statements shall be made to the media or others (other than law enforcement authorities) until the situation is discussed with the LEAGUE. All participants shall be made aware of this policy. USL ACADEMY and Team Media / Public Relations Directors shall be kept informed of the current situation.
4. the LEAGUE Manager and the USL ACADEMY Communications Department are authorized to speak on the LEAGUE's behalf and no other individuals shall be permitted to discuss the situation with the media until USL ACADEMY notification is given. As a general rule, the team General Manager and / or PR representative should be limited to releasing comments to the media. Prior to making any public statements, the situation should be discussed with the LEAGUE Office so that consistent and non-conflicting information is released.

#### **Rule 528 – Post Game Reporting**

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

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

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

Team Administrators should retain their Score Sheets for each game for records purposes. These will contain statistics outside of those listed in the MOD11 DMR.



## **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 League. 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 League 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 League Season**

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

Roster Freeze Date: November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 5:00pm EST

#### **Rule 602 – Registration Documents**

##### **Player 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)

Coach Registration Documents:

- First & Last Name
- Date of Birth
- Phone Number
- Email Address
- Coach/Staff Headshot Photo
- Club
- Coaching Licenses
- SafeSport Certification
- Background Check Completion

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. There are four designations for players on the roster: Part-Time Youth Player, Full-Time Academy Player, Part-Time Senior Youth Player, and Part-Time Senior Overage Player:

PT Youth: designated for players that are dual-registered with their local youth team (i.e. youth affiliate CLUB, high school team, ODP, etc.). To maintain this status, players must train at least once per week in the USL-AL environment and will be limited in the minutes they play USL-AL games.

- High School Participation: contingent on High School State Association guidelines, CLUBs may allow PT Youth players to compete with their high school teams.

FT Academy: designated for players that train and compete full-time within the USL-AL environment

PT Senior Youth: designated for players that are dual-registered with their local USL Senior Team (in USL Championship, League One, or League Two), and may primarily train and/or compete within that environment

- Professional Players: age-eligible players with contracts at the professional level with the USL senior team can be rostered as a PT Pro player for USL-AL participation

**\*\*Note:** Players wishing to maintain collegiate eligibility must not play *with* Professional Players, but may play *against* them.

PT Senior Overage: designated for players that are dual-registered with their local USL Senior Team (in USL Championship, League One, or League Two), and may primarily train and/or compete within that environment

- Players born in 2002 or prior.

**\*\*Note:** Players wishing to maintain collegiate eligibility must not play *with* Professional Players, but may play *against* them.

### Master Roster

There is no limit to the number of players CLUBs can register to their team, provided the following conditions are met:

- Minimum of 23 players
- Minimum of six (6) players that are U17 or younger (birth year 2005 or younger)

### Game Day Roster

The Game Day Roster is an 18-man roster submitted to MOD11 prior to each game with the following conditions:

- Minimum of 16 players
- No youth (U19 or younger) age restrictions
- Overage Player restrictions:
  - Maximum of five (5) Overage Players on the Game Day Roster
  - Maximum of three (3) Overage Players on the field per team at one time
- International Player restrictions:

- Maximum of seven (7) International Players for CLUBs with a USL Senior Team playing in the Championship or League One
- Maximum of ten (10) International Players for CLUBs with a USL Senior Team playing in League Two
- Coaches who are also registered as players must only be entered on the Game Day Roster as one role – a coach or a player.

#### Roster Eligibility

The CLUB shall have a minimum of 16 and a maximum of 18 players dressed in uniforms, present and eligible to participate in each game. Club must comply with all LEAGUE and USSF/CSA rules regarding use of foreign players. CLUB must register all players prior to participation in the LEAGUE. The only official roster of eligible players will be located on the LEAGUE website and is the responsibility of the CLUB to manage. LEAGUE may require proof of citizenship or legal residency of each player.

#### **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.

#### Amateurism

Collegiate student-athletes represent a large portion of many amateur teams. Teams playing in USL ACADEMY Amateur Leagues are required to follow strict guidelines set forth by the NCAA and USL ACADEMY so as not to endanger the eligibility of players. The following guidelines are specific items taken from the NCAA Rules and Regulations Manual and apply not only to USL ACADEMY amateur teams but also USL ACADEMY professional teams. Teams will be notified should there be any changes in the rules.

"Collegiate Players" for purposes of the USL Academy shall mean any student-athlete, as described by the NCAA.

The NCAA classifies "student-athletes" as individuals that have been enrolled in an NCAA member institution, and if enrollment in that institution was based, wholly or in part, on that individual's desire to participate in intercollegiate competition.

Further, if the individual has completed the NCAA Eligibility Center’s initial eligibility certification process for amateur status, that individual is considered a “student-athlete.” It is the CLUBs responsibility to do its due diligence regarding the preservation of a players Collegiate Eligibility based on the players understanding regarding team composition

### Collegiate Player Eligibility for USL ACADEMY Amateur Teams

#### Participation in Outside Competition

A student-athlete may compete outside of the institution’s declared playing and practice season as a member of an outside team in any non-collegiate, amateur competition, provided:

- Such participation occurs no earlier than May 1<sup>st</sup>.
- The competition is approved by the institution’s director of athletics.
- No class time is missed for practice activities or for competition.
- A student-athlete may compete outside of the institution’s declared playing and practice season as a member of an outside team in any non-collegiate, amateur competition during any official vacation period published in the institution’s catalog.

#### Limit on Number of Players from an Institution

- A Division I member institution may permit not more than five student-athletes with eligibility remaining in intercollegiate soccer to practice or compete out of season on an outside, amateur soccer team (competition on an outside team permitted only during the summer). There is no limit on the number of soccer student-athletes from the same Division II or III institution. However, in all three divisions, if more than five student-athletes from the same institution participate on a International tour, the International tour may have to be certified in accordance with the legislation applicable to an institutional International tour. Furthermore, as with Division I players, it would be impermissible for Division II or III student-athletes to participate on an outside team during their institution’s intercollegiate season.
- The legislative services staff determined that high-school, two-year or four-year Collegiate prospects that have been accepted for enrollment in an institution and participate on an outside team with student-athletes from that institution's team is not included in the limitations governing the number of student-athletes with remaining eligibility.

#### Involvement of Coaching Staff

- No member of the coaching staff of a member institution may be involved in any capacity (e.g., coach, official, player or league/team administrator) at any time (during the academic year, vacation periods, and summer) with an outside team that involves any student-athlete with eligibility remaining from the institution’s soccer team.

### Reimbursement of Player Expenses for Outside Competition

USL ACADEMY Amateur teams are permitted to provide actual and necessary expenses or reimbursement to team members for those expenses during the season of league competition only if the expenses:

- Are reasonable for the amount for travel, meals, apparel, and/or equipment used by the individual for team purposes.
- Are for practice or competition and not an incentive or based on performance

### Involvement with Professional Teams

#### Tryout Before Enrollment

In soccer, prior to initial full-time collegiate enrollment, an individual may participate in a tryout with a professional team or league, provided he or she does not receive more than actual and necessary expenses to participate.

#### Tryout After Enrollment

After initial full-time collegiate enrollment, an individual who has eligibility remaining may try out with a professional athletics team (or participate in a combine including that team) at any time, provided the individual does not miss class. The individual may receive actual and necessary expenses in conjunction with one 48-hour tryout per professional team (or a combine including that team). The 48-hour tryout period shall begin at the time the individual arrives at the tryout location. At the completion of the 48-hour period, the individual must depart the location of the tryout immediately in order to receive return transportation expenses. A tryout may extend beyond 48 hours if the individual self-finances additional expenses, including return transportation. A self-financed tryout may be for any length of time, provided the individual does not miss class.

#### Outside Competition Prohibited

During a tryout, an individual may not take part in any outside competition (games or scrimmages) as a representative of a professional team.

#### Practice Without Competition Before Enrollment

In soccer, prior to initial fulltime enrollment in a collegiate institution, an individual may participate in practice sessions conducted by a professional team, provided he or she does not receive more than actual and necessary expenses to participate.

#### Practice Without Competition After Enrollment

In soccer, after initial full-time collegiate enrollment, an individual may participate in practice sessions conducted by a professional team, provided the individual does not:

- Receive any compensation for participation in the practice sessions.

- Enter into any contract or agreement with a professional team or sports organization.
- Take part in any outside competition (games or scrimmages) as a representative of a professional team.

#### Competition against Professionals

An individual may participate singly or as a member of an amateur team against professional athletes or professional teams.

#### Competition with Professionals

An individual shall not be eligible for intercollegiate athletics in a sport if the individual ever competed on a professional team in that sport. However, an individual may participate in competition with a professional on a team provided the professional is not being paid by a professional team or league to play as a member of that team.

#### *Exception – Competition Before Initial Full-Time Collegiate Enrollment*

In soccer, before initial full-time collegiate enrollment, an individual may compete on a professional team provided he or she does not receive more than actual and necessary expenses to participate on the team. (Adopted: 4/29/10 effective 8/1/10; applicable to student-athletes who initially enroll full time in a collegiate institution on or after 8/1/10)

#### Professional Coach

Collegiate players (NCAA Div. I, II, III and NAIA) are permitted to play under a professional coach as long as the professional coach is paid by the amateur team. The NCAA guideline states that a professional coach does not cause the team to be classified.

#### Contracts and Compensation

An individual shall be ineligible for participation in an intercollegiate sport if he or she has entered into any kind of agreement to compete in professional athletics, either orally or in writing, regardless of the legal enforceability of that agreement.

#### *Exception – Competition Before Initial Full-Time Collegiate Enrollment*

Before initial full-time collegiate enrollment, an individual may enter into an agreement to compete on a professional team provided the agreement does not guarantee or promise payment (at any time) in excess of actual and necessary expenses to participate on the team.

#### **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.

The penalties for using an ineligible player during the regular season are as follows:

#### 1st Violation

- Player on the Official Game Day Lineup Sheet, but did not play OR
- Player participates in match

**(FINE 608a - \$250 fine, forfeiture of any points earned in match and one (1) point deduction)**

#### 2nd Violation\*

- Any player on the Official Game Day Lineup Sheet

**(FINE 608b - \$500 fine, forfeiture of any points earned in match and two (2) point deduction\*)**

#### 3rd Violation\*\*

- Any player on the Official Game Day Lineup Sheet

**(FINE 608c - \$1000 fine, forfeiture of any points earned in match and three (3) point deduction\*)**

\* In second or third violations where aggrieved team does not earn full points, a forfeit will be awarded.

\*\*League reserves the right to suspend or terminate franchise in the event of a third violation in a single season.

A team violating these regulations during a Playoff game shall forfeit the match or playoff series regardless of whether the player enters the match.

### **Rule 609 – Illegal Player**

**(FINE 609 - \$500)**

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 – Overage Player**

As an extension to the PT Senior registration status, clubs can utilize a new rule in USL Academy League to enhance the player development environment within those matches.

Game Day Implications: Moving forward, clubs may have the opportunity to name up to (5) overage Senior Team players to their 18-man USL-AL game day roster

- Overage Threshold: 20 years or older in 2022 (birth year 2002 or older)
- Only (3) Overage Players may be on the field at one time. Teams must use the specific Overage Substitution Pass when an overage player is entering the game. The team is solely responsible for abiding by this law.

Player Registration Process: All Overage Players must already be registered as an active player on the club's USL Senior Team and must also be registered to the club's USL Academy League master player roster.

- Senior Team Requirement: In order to register an overage player, he must already be registered to a USL Academy contract (amateur) or standard player contract (professional) with that club's USL Senior Team and must be eligible to compete in that respective competition.
- Master Roster Considerations: there is no cap to the number of Senior Team players that be registered as Overage Players to a club's USL-AL master roster
- SafeSport Compliance: any player born 2004 or before who is registered to the club's USL Academy League roster must complete SafeSport compliance

Team Profiles: through this new role, there are now (4) variations of team/roster make-ups that could take part in a USL Academy League match

- All Youth (Amateur): only includes amateur youth players (U15 – U19)
  - Note: players registered to a USL Academy contract (amateur) with their Senior Team would be eligible to play in this match
- All Youth (Pro/Am): only includes youth players (U15 – U19), incl. teenage players already on a professional contract with a CH/L1 Sr. Team
  - IMPORTANT: clubs utilizing professional youth players can NOT include collegiate players on those game day rosters

- Youth + Overage (Amateur/Collegiate): includes amateur youth players (U15 – U19), and overage collegiate players
  - IMPORTANT: clubs utilizing overage collegiate players can NOT include professional players on those game day rosters
  - Ex: League Two club that shares collegiate players (older than the U19 threshold) between their Senior & Academy teams, through the overage player rule
- Youth + Overage (Pro/Am): includes amateur and/or pro youth players (U15 – U19), and overage professional players
  - IMPORTANT: clubs utilizing overage professional players can NOT include collegiate players on those game day rosters
  - Ex: CH/L1 club that shares pro players (older than the U19 threshold) between their Senior & Academy teams, through the overage player rule

#### **Rule 611 – International Player**

U.S. and Canada citizens are not considered International Players for the purposes of USL Academy roster regulation (Canada citizens will need an ITC). 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 612 - 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

#### ACRONYMS

- TMS – Transfer Matching System
- MA – Member Association (foreign federation)
- ITC – International Transfer Certificate
- FR – First Registration

#### 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:

ADULT	
FORM	APPLICANT REQUIREMENT
<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:

MINORS	
FORM	APPLICANT REQUIREMENT
<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>	· The player is an exchange student undertaking an academic program in the United States.
<a href="#">Accompanied Refugee Exception</a>	· The player is moving for humanitarian reasons with their parents.
<a href="#">Unaccompanied Refugee Exception</a>	· The player is moving for humanitarian reasons without their parents.

**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)

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### **Rule 613 – Registered Players/Release of Players**

Once a CLUB player has played one match of its team’s schedule, a player may not participate with another LEAGUE CLUB in any 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 player’s 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 614 – 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 615 – 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 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 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, 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

### The Monument Sports Group (USL Academy)

#### CLAIMS FILING INSTRUCTIONS FOR The 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.

1. You have been provided with a claim form that is designed specifically for The Monument Sports Group. Please use only this form. Do not delay submitting this form. It must be received by the League within 90 days from the date of the accident or benefits may be denied due to untimely filing. Submit forms to [academyoperations@uslsoccer.com](mailto:academyoperations@uslsoccer.com). With this email, submit itemized insurance billing forms. These forms are available from your health care provider and include the patient's name, condition (diagnosis), type of treatment and date the expenses were incurred. "Balance due" statements are not acceptable.
2. **The form must be approved and verified by your League and State Association/National Affiliate Verification Officer.** Following their approval, the League will send the form to The Monument Sports Group.
3. If you have medical coverage under another policy you must submit the bills to your primary insurer first and submit a copy of your primary insurer's Explanation of Benefits statement (EOB) to the League. **IF YOU HAVE OTHER INSURANCE, YOUR CLAIM CANNOT BE PROCESSED BY The Monument Sports Group WITHOUT YOUR PRIMARY CARRIER'S EOB.**
4. Once the completed form is received by The Monument Sports Group, you and your State/National Affiliate Verification Officer will receive a claims acknowledgement letter.
5. AFTER you receive your Acknowledgement Letter, you may contact The Monument Sports Group.

#### **Insurance Questions**

Jacob Franks

[jacob@monumentsports.com](mailto:jacob@monumentsports.com)

804-767-2001

**\*\*\*All claim communications should also copy in [academyoperations@uslsoccer.com](mailto:academyoperations@uslsoccer.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