

# League Regulations

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*Pursuant to Section 3.3 of the Franchise Agreement, USISL, Inc. has the right and authority to create and amend its rules for the operation of its system of soccer leagues. The official USL Rules control the day-to-day governance of the soccer leagues operated by USL. Any conflicts between these rules and the Franchise Agreement shall be settled by reference to the Franchise Agreement. For the purposes of these regulations, USISL, Inc. shall be referred to as USL.*

## General League Regulations

### Membership

#### **Rule 101 Leagues**

USL is made up of a number of soccer leagues, each containing a number of approved franchises. Each franchise shall conduct a soccer team within its territory.

#### **Rule 102 Conference and Divisions**

Each League may be comprised of single table or divided into a number of conferences and / or divisions, based upon geographic proximity and other factors. USL reserves the right to change any conference, division, or subdivision for purposes of scheduling and standings. This also includes the right of USL to move a team into a different division / conference or add / remove divisions / conferences as needed.

#### **Rule 103 Right of Membership**

Each franchise, subject to these League Regulations, the rules of the US Soccer Federation (USSF), the respective Federation in which it is domiciled, and FIFA shall have control over its employees and assets with the right to conduct and manage its own affairs.

#### **Rule 104 Territories**

Each franchisee shall have the exclusive right, as is defined more specifically in the Franchise Agreement, to play and market soccer games and conduct camps and other soccer activities within its geographic territory. A member's territory is defined in its Franchise Agreement. Agreements or modifications regarding territories shall be approved in writing as an Addendum to the Franchise Agreement by USL. No franchise, with the exception of a USL W-League franchise in the same territory, shall play games, host games / practices, or conduct soccer camps, clinics or marketing activities outside of the Territory without the written consent of the owner of the franchise market in question. Any dispute between owners of franchises regarding exclusive geographic territory shall be decided by Franchisor.

#### **Rule 105 Reference to Membership Agreement**

Information concerning specific membership conditions for clubs shall be found in the Franchise Agreement, which is signed by the team and an officer of USL at the time the team is admitted into the league.

#### **Rule 106 Conditions for Termination of Franchise**

Club affiliation and membership may be terminated because of violation of performance bond conditions set forth in the Franchise Agreement. Franchises may also be terminated due to violation of League Regulations through the fixing of game results, bribery or attempts to bribe game officials, as are set forth in Rules 901, 902, and 903 herein or if franchisee has failed to adhere to league minimum standards on three (3) or more occasions. Franchise may also be terminated for failure to do the following: 1) participate in the USL scheduling process, 2) submit a signed Commitment Letter before the required date per Rule 223, 3) submit an LOC in the requisite amount before the required date and / or 4) pay all outstanding league debts greater than

# League Regulations

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ninety (90) days.

## **Rule 107 Compliance Assessment**

Following each season, an Executive Committee made up of members from each League may review the compliance record of each team in their specific League. The Committee may find that compliance with standards is insufficient and recommend remedial actions to the USL Office, which may include the placement of the franchise in a different League within USL. In extreme cases of repeated non-compliance the respective Executive Committee may recommend termination of the franchise to the USL Office, which has final authority on all franchise terminations.

## **League Structure**

### **Rule 201 Governance**

All competition in leagues affiliated with USL is governed by regulations approved by the USL Board of Directors and the League Management.

### **Rule 202 Restrictions on Ownership**

Franchise owners or ownership groups may not hold interest or ownership of more than fifty (50) percent of any other club in the same league unless it is with the specific consent of USL and as set forth in section 5.2 of the Franchise Agreement. The League shall hold the right to regulate player transactions and other competition related issues between clubs with any percentage of common ownership.

### **Rule 203 Restrictions on Agents**

No franchise owner, executive, officer, consultant, and / or employee shall act as a player agent in any matter involving a player in the same league in which the franchise competes. For example, an owner of a USL Second Division franchise may represent a player in business with a USL First Division franchise, but may not represent a player in any USL Second Division transaction.

### **Rule 204 League Alignment**

Should a USL League be divided into divisions / conferences, they will structure according to geography, except under special conditions approved by the USL Office, which has final authority on all alignment issues. Should the USL Office find that there are an insufficient number of teams to constitute a geographic division / conference of a certain League; the team(s) may be required to temporarily compete in a different League until a sufficient number of teams exist for a division/conference of the original League. This rule shall not require that a team be placed in a higher level of competition, nor is the USL Office responsible for accommodating a team in a higher level of competition.

### **Rule 205 Playing Rules**

All games under League jurisdiction shall be played according to the rules and regulations recognized by USL, which shall be the same rules set by FIFA and the US Soccer Federation, except for those exceptions authorized by FIFA and the US Soccer Federation herein.

### **Rule 206 The Playing Season**

The season, which shall be designated by the USL Office, is organized around the following dates, which may vary slightly from year to year:

USL First Division: Start no earlier than second week in April; finish no later than in the end of October.

# League Regulations

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USL Second Division: Start no earlier than second week in April; finish no later than second week in September.

USL PDL: Start no earlier than third week in April; finish no later than second week in August.

USL W-League: Start no earlier than third week in April; finish no later than second week in August.

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

- Back-to-back games
- Three-game road trips (i.e. Wed, Fri, Sat)
- Mandatory participation in the Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup and Open Cup qualifying process (US men's teams only).
- Start times of double-headers must be a minimum of 2 ½ hours apart. If a doubleheader is to occur during the week, all four teams must be in agreement on start times.
- Any team-requested changes to the official league schedule will incur a game change fee assessed by the applicable National Federation.

## **Rule 207 Point System**

USL will operate under a league standings Point System, which shall be the same for all Leagues, and which may be altered from season to season. The Point System for the current season shall be distributed to the teams prior to the start of the season. The USL Office reserves the right to deviate from the regular season Point System to deal with Lamar Hunt US Open Cup or League playoff situations.

## **Rule 208 Playoffs**

All playoff games shall be under the control and supervision of USL Management, which shall make all final decisions on dates and times for such games.

## **Rule 209 League Championships**

The Championship event of each USL League will take place at the completion of the regular season and playoffs, with USL Management making the final choice on location, dates and format of each Championship event. These are USL-owned events.

## **Rule 210 League Schedule**

The League Schedule is the ultimate responsibility of USL Management. Once issued to the public by the League Office, no changes shall be made to the League Schedule without the written consent of USL Management.

## **Rule 211 League Standings**

Official standings of teams, the keeping of which is the responsibility of USL Management, are tabulated on a regular basis and distributed to all clubs. Official League Standings include keeping track of at least wins, losses, ties; goals scored for, goals scored against and total points.

The following two guidelines will be followed during the implementation of USL tiebreakers for all ties involving three or more teams:

- 1) The tiebreaker will determine the winner first.
- 2) The tiebreaker will continue to be followed in order to determine the ranking of the remaining teams without restarting from the beginning.

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:

# League Regulations

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- 1) Head-to-head record based on total points in League games.<sup>1 2</sup>
- 2) Total wins in League games.
- 3) Goal difference in League games.
- 4) Goals scored in League games.
- 5) Total points within smallest grouping<sup>3</sup>. If number of games is unequal, then point percentage<sup>4</sup> will be used.
- 6) Ranking based on points earned against top four group finishers. This tiebreaker will not be used if four (4) or fewer teams comprise the group<sup>3</sup>. If number of games is unequal, then point percentage<sup>4</sup> applies.
- 7) Point percentage<sup>4</sup> outside / smallest division or conference in League games.
- 8) Total points in all regular season and Open Cup qualifying games combined. If number of games is unequal, then point percentage<sup>4</sup> applies.
- 9) 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.)
- 10) Lottery conducted by USL at League Office.

<sup>1</sup> League games refers solely to games that count towards the regular season standings. Open Cup qualifying specific games are not “League games” when it comes to determining placement in the League standings. (When utilizing these criteria to determine tiebreakers for Open Cup groups, “League games” should be interpreted as all games that count toward the Open Cup group standings.)

<sup>2</sup> Should more than two (2) teams involved have played each other an unequal number of times, this tiebreaker will be skipped.

<sup>3</sup> Group = term used to describe the primary unit in which a team competes (i.e. USL PDL – Southwest Division).

<sup>4</sup> Point Percentage = number of total points earned / maximum possible points (3 per game)

## **Rule 212 Overtime**

Regular Season – There will be no overtime during the regular season.

Playoffs – USL Management will have the discretion to adjust the playoff overtime format annually. Please refer to the season specific section for more details on playoff overtime procedures for each league.

## **Rule 213 Substitution Rules**

Professional League (USL-1 and USL-2) teams are allowed a maximum of five (5) substitutions. A player who has been replaced by a substitute may not return to the field in the same game. Substitutes shall report to the 4<sup>th</sup> Official or Assistant Referee at midfield, and may not enter the field without the permission of the referee. PDL and W-League allow a maximum of six (6) substitutes.

### **Substitution for Exhibition Games**

There is no limit to the number of substitutions in friendly matches as long as both teams agree on the number and the officials are informed of the special arrangement upon arrival at the venue.

## **Rule 214 Incomplete Games**

In the event a game cannot be completed, the game counts if the entire First Half of the game was completed.

If any match is suspended prior to the completion of the First 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 Management starting with the minute that the match was suspended. Every

# League Regulations

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effort must be made to resume the match within the next twenty-four (24) hours.

## **Rule 215 Game Delays and Postponements**

In the case of a game delay, the Home Team shall immediately communicate the delay to their League Director. The League Director shall maintain and distribute Emergency Game Day Contact Numbers to all teams prior to the start of the League 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.

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

A game may be canceled / postponed no earlier than two (2) hours prior to kickoff because of inclement weather or situations considered Acts of God, unless agreed to by both teams and the League Office. Exception: In a case where a third party (stadium owner) closes a stadium, a game may be canceled more than two (2) 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 progress, a USL match may only be delayed or postponed due to:

- 1) A lack of preparedness of one or both teams to begin or continue playing a game.  
OR
- 2) Unfavorable weather and / 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 League Management have the authority to delay or postpone a scheduled USL match. The Referee, upon arrival at the stadium, has the final word on delays due to weather.

### **Grace Period Before Abandoning a Game**

Unless both teams, the Referee, and League Management 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. The Home Team, in the presence of the Referee, must immediately notify the League Director 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 Director has the final say on the length of the extended grace period due to weather. If the League Director is unavailable, the Referee shall be the final authority. No match will be continued after any continuous 3-hour waiting period without the approval of the League Director. 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.

### **Game Cancellation / Postponement Criteria**

Unless otherwise approved by USL, game cancellations / postponements should occur only in the most serious circumstances; however the personal safety of participants, personnel, and spectators shall always be highest priority. Factors that the Referee and USL shall consider include: whether or not the teams have requested the cancellation, difficulty in rescheduling the game, current and forecasted weather conditions, travel conditions, and the current whereabouts of teams and officials.

### **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 Director. If

# League Regulations

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the appropriate League Director does not immediately respond, the home team should attempt to contact the USL Referee Coordinator, or an alternate League Director (in that order). 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 Director 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 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 / Standings**

If a game is delayed due to inclement weather or some other extenuating circumstance, one half of a game has been completed, and it is not able to be continued within the established grace period, then the game will be considered official and the result final (*See Rule 214 for more detail*).

## **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.

## **Rescheduling Considerations**

USL Management 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 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 rules or regulations, USL Management 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 stadium / playing facility.

## **Stadium 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 stadium 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 216 Forfeit**

A forfeit occurs when a club willfully does not show up at a game and there has been no League approved written agreement for a change of the scheduled game. Forfeit penalties are as follows:

- A 1-0 victory for the opposing team and the loss of three (3) points in the league standings for the forfeiting team.

# League Regulations

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- League fine of \$1000 (USL First Division or USL Second Division) or \$500 (USL PDL or USL W-League).
- Compensation to opponent of \$7,500 (USL First Division), \$5,000 (USL Second Division and USL PDL), and \$2,500 (USL W-League) paid out in accordance with the League affiliation of the Home Team. Opponent may not seek additional compensation, nor is it paid out in the event a team permanently withdraws from the League.
- If fines and compensation are not paid within seven (7) days, USL will cash the offending team's Letter of Credit to satisfy the financial compensation to the opponent.
- A single forfeit may result in a team's franchise territory rights being terminated at the discretion of the League.
- The accumulation of two (2) forfeits in a season shall result in termination of a franchisee's rights.

A team unable to attend a scheduled game because of an accident, weather or Act of God should immediately notify the opponent and their respective League Director. Each situation will be reviewed by League Management, which shall render a decision that may be appealed through USL RAD procedures (*refer to Review, Appeals & Discipline section of the Operations Manual*).

## **Rule 217 Non-Performance by the Home Team**

In the event the Away Team is present at the venue and willing / able to perform, but the Home Team is unable or unwilling to provide a venue or fails to show at the scheduled venue and time, all sanctions listed in Rule 216 apply, except for compensation to opponent as set forth below:

- Compensation to opponent of \$2500 (USL First Division), \$1000 (USL Second Division & USL PDL), or \$750 (USL W-League) paid out in accordance with the League affiliation of the Away Team.

## **Rule 218 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 may reschedule the game, or declare the game to have been forfeited by both teams with any or all applicable penalties enforced and may impose further penalties on the teams.

## **Rule 219 Withdrawal of a Franchise**

In the event a franchise withdraws from the League without finishing its scheduled games, it shall forfeit its territorial rights and the following regulations will take effect:

- The League may, at its discretion, 1) reschedule any or all remaining games, 2) designate / assign a replacement team to fulfill the remaining obligations of the franchise, or 3) entirely delete the games from the standings.
- In the event of the deletion of games from standings, USL shall not be responsible for compensating all affected teams per Rule 216.
- Any League games that fail to be rescheduled or replaced shall be recorded as a 1-0 forfeit victory for the opponents.

## **Rule 220 Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup**

All US-based men's teams within the USL system are required to enter the Open Cup and pay the registration fee. Regular season games may be counted as qualifying games for the Open Cup. The League has the option of staging a special Open Cup qualifying round outside of regular League play to determine which teams advance to the Open Cup.

## **Rule 221 Open Cup Qualifying Games That Count in League Play**

Open Cup qualifying games may, at the discretion of the League Office, count as regular season games, or replace regular season League games that might be canceled due to weather or some other reason. These Qualifying games may also be used as tiebreakers in extenuating situations.

# League Regulations

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## **Rule 222 Liability**

USL clubs assume all risks, responsibilities and liabilities for loss, damage, injury or death while using property and facilities during games in Leagues affiliated with USL, whether such loss, damage, injury or death be occasioned by the team or by the League, its officers, agents, or otherwise. Further all franchises are required to obtain General Liability insurance coverage in the minimum mandatory amount set forth by the League (see Rule 506).

## **Rule 223 Commitment Dates**

Franchises intending to compete in the next USL season must irrevocably commit in writing to return for the next season by the following dates of the current year.

- USL First Division & USL Second Division teams must commit for the following season by August 1<sup>st</sup>.
- USL PDL and USL W-League teams must commit for the following season by September 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Franchises that do not commit by the above dates are subject to franchise termination or relegation by USL. Additionally, the League shall be permitted to seek new ownership in those markets where the franchises do not commit to return for the following season.

## **Rule 223.5 Stadium Contract**

All teams must submit their stadium contracts to the League Office by November 1<sup>st</sup> of each year or before the USL AGM, whichever comes first. The contract must indicate that specific dates have been reserved for regular season and playoff games.

## **Rule 224 League Sponsorship Obligations**

All clubs are required to honor League sponsorship agreements. This includes using the designated USL Game Ball in all regular season matches. Sponsorship agreements may require teams to display banners, read public address announcements, put up signboards / banners, display promotional materials, hand out publicity materials or assist with League activities at local games.

Teams must display all items pertinent to fulfilling official League sponsorship agreements. League and team shall jointly resolve any conflicts via reference to the Franchise Agreement. Placement and positioning of League sponsor signage, especially in conjunction with USL National Broadcast Package matches and League Championships, is determined by USL and takes precedent over local sponsors.

## **Rule 225 Team Names & Logos**

- Name Changes – All team name changes must be submitted and approved on or before November 1<sup>st</sup> for the following season.
- Logo Changes – All team logo changes must be submitted and approved on or before November 1<sup>st</sup> for the following season. Logo must include a soccer ball.

## **Financial Requirements For Clubs**

### **Rule 401 Cash Bond**

The League Office has the right to require all USL Second Division, USL PDL and / or USL W-League teams must post an annual cash bond, which will be held by the League in order to guarantee payment of fines during the season. Cash bond checks should be made payable to USISL, Inc. The cash bond must be replenished on an annual basis.

### **Rule 402 Performance Guarantee**

Each team participating in USL must post a performance guarantee in the form of a Letter of Credit, Certificate of Deposit, Cash, Cashier's Check or some other form of financial guarantee approved by



# League Regulations

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USL Bank Letter of Credits with an automatic roll-over provision are preferred. “USISL, Inc.” is the beneficiary of the Letters of Credit, which should expire or automatically renew no earlier than September 30<sup>th</sup> of each year. Once a team has made a commitment to play as set forth in Rule 223, the team thereby commits its Letter of Credit as security to guarantee a place in the next season’s schedule. If a team is carrying an outstanding balance with USL, Letters of Credit not renewed within two (2) weeks prior to their expiration date may be cashed as security. USL may terminate franchise territory rights for failure to post the performance guarantee in the required time frame.

## **Rule 403 League Administrative Fee**

The League Office provides a broad range of services for all teams, which include (but are not limited to) administrative support, scheduling, assisting with assignment of officials, public relations support, operating the League’s website and staging of League meetings. For these ongoing services, each team is charged a single administrative fee, which, depending on the level of competition in which a team competes may be divided into payments.

“Pass-through fees” (such as affiliate registration fees paid to the National Federation and insurance fees) are billed to teams separately.

## **Rule 404 Fines**

Fines will be assessed for violation of League rules and any minimum standard requirements. Fifty percent (50%) of the money collected from operational minimum standards fines is deposited into the League’s Playoff Travel Pool. The remaining fifty percent (50%) will be deposited into the League’s general operations budget, unless otherwise communicated by the USL Management.

## **Regulations Governing Players**

The regulations governing all players competing in USL, along with the status, rights and privileges of these players are set by the National Federations. All are affiliated with FIFA, soccer’s international governing body.

## **Rule 501 Player Registration Terminology**

### **Professional Player**

A player who signs a professional registration form with the club’s applicable Federation, a professional player contract with USL and receives, or has received, payment for playing soccer.

### **Amateur Player**

A player who does not receive payment for playing soccer and who has signed an amateur registration form with their club’s respective League is considered an amateur player. Amateur players may be reimbursed for actual and reasonable expenses as allowed by the applicable Federation, USL, NCAA or NAIA rules.

### **Registered Player**

A registered player is a professional or amateur player who has filed the proper forms as required by their club’s appropriate Federation and USL, with the proper fees, and has secured any necessary clearances (foreign or domestic) from the player’s former club or foreign Federation.

- USL players registered for one team are bound to play exclusively for that team.
- 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 and their club’s applicable Federation.

# League Regulations

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## International Clearance

An international clearance is an official release from a foreign national association where a particular player competed before joining his present team. There are several instances where a professional / amateur player would need to have an International Transfer Certificate from another Federation:

- Any professional or amateur player who was not born in the United States, **IS NOT** a U.S. citizen, and entered the U.S. **AFTER** his twelfth (12<sup>th</sup>) birthday.
- Any professional or amateur player who was not born in the United States, **IS** a U.S. citizen, and entered the U.S. **AFTER** his twelfth (12<sup>th</sup>) birthday.
- Any professional or amateur player who listed that the last club they participated with belonged to a foreign national association.
- Any professional or amateur player who was issued an International Transfer Certificate by the respective Federation and had not had it returned.

## Rule 502 Transfer and Release of Players

- A player shall not sign for another team until properly released from the player's former team. No team shall approach a player who is registered with another team within the USL system without the consent of the player's current team.
- Players may ask for their release by applying directly to their teams. In the event a request by a player for his release is refused, the matter may be brought to the attention of USL Management.
- Before any player can be released or transferred from a club, the player must turn over all held property, which belongs to his club.
- No loan, transfer, or registration of players may be executed after the Roster Freeze date of such League.
- As a general rule, an amateur player that has been registered with one team, amateur or professional, for at least one-half (50%) of its games may not play for another team in the same League without written authorization from the original team. USL Management will reserve the right to review a player's appeal if he is denied permission to play for another team to determine whether extenuating circumstances exist.
- FIFA has established periods during which the international transfer or loan of professional players is restricted. The periods of the calendar year during which professional players under contract with another Federation may be obtained ("transfer windows") are as follows in the USSF & CSA:

Primary Window: January 15 to April 15

Secondary Window: July 15 to August 15

## Rule 503 Termination of Contracts

### By a Player

In conjunction with the conditions set forth by the standard player contract, the League will recognize the following as cause for termination of contract:

"Player may terminate this Contract in the event of a material breach of the duties and obligations by Club if he notifies Club and League in writing, via certified mail, of the breach and Club fails to remedy the breach within seven (7) calendar days. Club shall, within seven (7) calendar days, either: (1) cure breach; or (2) release Player from contract and registration; or (3) submit evidence to the League, with a copy to Player, disputing that Club is in breach of this Contract. Termination of this Contract by Player shall not relieve Club of legal obligation for past compensation due."

### By a Club

In conjunction with the conditions set forth by the standard player contract, the League will recognize the following as cause for termination of contract:

"(a) Club may terminate this contract by reason of Player's material breach of the contract terms. Player shall have the right of appeal to the USL Office as to whether a material breach

# League Regulations

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occurred; additionally,

(b) This contract is not guaranteed by Club and Player may be released at any time. However, Club recognizes that in the event of release not predicated on Player's material breach this Contract is subject to the principles set forth in the FIFA Regulations for the Status and Transfer of Players where applicable and unalterable.

(c) Club is bound by FIFA regulations when / if Player is released from the Master Roster and is required to notify Player (copy USL) in writing. USL will only formally remove Player from the club's Master Roster when it receives the written notification, which includes the respective Federation form with the release portion filled out and a copy of the letter that was sent to Player, or will otherwise recognize Player as under continued contract with Club. Club may terminate Contract subject to the specific terms of Player's contract. Upon termination, all rights and obligations of Club and Player expire, provided Club's actions are in accordance with the USL Standard Professional Player Contract and FIFA regulations."

## **Rule 504 Guidelines for Resolution of Disputes**

In the case of a dispute between player & club or between clubs, the USL Office, upon receiving written evidence from the club or the player, shall evaluate the evidence submitted and allow seven (7) days for a player's response. USL Management shall render its decision on the status of the player's contract and registration within seven (7) days from the last receipt of evidence from either party. USL Management decisions on these matters may only be appealed to binding arbitration as referenced in the USL Standard Professional Player Contract.

## **Rule 505 Player Liability**

Players shall assume all risks, responsibilities, and liabilities for loss, damage, injury or death 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.

## **Rule 506 Insurance Requirements for Teams**

All professional teams must purchase liability coverage from the League's designated insurance provider in the basic amount of \$1 million per occurrence and \$1 million aggregate per game. All professional teams shall maintain Workers Compensation (or equivalent) coverage as required by applicable state or provincial law and provide evidence of such coverage in the form of an official binder to the USL Office prior to each playing season.

The rules for USSF amateur divisions mandate each amateur club have accidental injury insurance policy for each player and club liability. All U.S. based amateur teams are required to carry the League-specified accidental injury policy, the administration of which is handled by League Management.

## **Team Rosters & Player Eligibility**

There are two (2) official rosters for USL teams – the Master Roster and the Game Day Line-Up Sheet.

## **Rule 601 Registration Deadline**

All player registration information must be forwarded to USL and the respective National Federation at least two (2) weeks prior to the beginning of the respective League's season. Failure to comply may result in players being declared ineligible. Once the season begins, all registration paperwork must be submitted to the League Office no later than 12:00 noon on Wednesday (team's local time) and the respective National Federation no later than 12:00 noon (team's local time) on Thursday in order for the player(s) to be eligible for the upcoming weekend games. In the case of a midweek game, the paperwork must be received by USL forty-eight (48) hours in advance and the respective National Federation twenty-four (24) hours in advance.

# League Regulations

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## **Rule 602 Master Roster**

The Master Roster, which may contain up to twenty-six (26) players for a professional or amateur team, is the official player roster of the club set by the USL Registrar.

- A maximum of seven (7) players on the Master Roster may be foreign players. PDL Teams are only permitted (6) foreign players on the Master Roster. No team will be permitted to register any additional foreigners if they are currently at the maximum number of rostered foreigners. In the event a team has over the maximum amount allowed on their Master Roster, USL will automatically release the last foreigner(s) added that put the team over the limit.
- A professional team must fill at least twelve (12) of the twenty-six (26) possible spots on the Master Roster with professional players.
- USL PDL teams must adhere to Rule 608.5 regarding U23 players: In the event a team has greater than eight (8) overage players on their Master Roster, USL will automatically release the last player(s) added that put the team over the limit and the team will incur a \$250 fine. If a team lists more than eight (8) overage players on the Game Day Line-Up Sheet, team is subject to a \$250 fine, forfeiture of points earned in the match, and a one (1)-point deduction.
- Amateur teams are also allowed to carry up to 11 professional players provided they are not being paid per the terms of their contract (\$0 salaries).
- Players serving an indefinite disciplinary suspension, as well as players away from the team serving in the Armed Forces are not required to be listed on the Master Roster of either a professional or amateur team.

## **Rule 603 Game Day Line-Up Sheet**

The Game Day Line-Up Sheet is the official game day roster, which may include up to 18 players from the Master Roster.

- USL First and Second Division: maximum of five (5) foreign players  
PDL: maximum of six (6) foreign players  
W-League: maximum of seven (7) foreign players
- Home teams are required to fax both teams' signed official lineup sheets (half-sheets) to the League Office within two (2) hours of the game's completion.

## **Rule 604 Registration Guidelines for Teams**

A player is not properly registered if the League is missing any of the following: registration form, professional contract or amateur agreement, a photocopy of completed player pass with player's signature, international clearance (if necessary), proof of citizenship (birth certificate, green card, or passport) and appropriate (paid) insurance coverage required by USL. For the purpose of team rosters, players who hold Green Card immigration status are considered US citizens and Landed Immigrants are Canadian citizens. Note: Puerto Rico is a US Territory and as such its teams are held to the same standard as all other U.S.-based teams.

### **Professional Players**

No professional player may be registered to more than one team. A professional player may play only for the club to which he is registered, except in the following two instances: 1) the club has filed a completed loan agreement with the League Office and the respective National Federation and paid the applicable fees; 2) he competes for another team in an exhibition, all-star, benefit or some other non-League game with the consent of the team holding his contract.

### **Amateur Players**

No amateur player may be registered to more than one USL amateur team. No amateur player may be loaned to another team. Because amateur players are not held to contracts, they are free to leave a club at any time, provided he returns the team's equipment. An amateur player registered with one (1) team, amateur or professional, for at least one-half of its games may not play for another team in the same League without written authorization from the original team. League Management will reserve the right to review a player's appeal if he is denied permission to play

# League Regulations

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for another team. An amateur player may be registered simultaneously with both a USL professional and a USL amateur team.

## **Rule 605 Roster Changes**

Whenever a team makes a change to its master roster, a new master roster must be sent to the League Office.

## **Rule 606 League Contracts Required for Professional Players**

Contracts for all professional players must be filed with the League, as well as the respective National Federation prior to a player being allowed to play in any USL-affiliated League match. The contract submitted to the League must contain all addendums, including financial, to the standard player contract. The contract template (excluding any addendums) should not be adjusted in any way and will be rejected by League Management if received in a modified fashion.

All professional player contracts must be submitted to the USL Office within 30 days of execution or they will be denied. The maximum contract length of the “Term” period is five (5) years, with a maximum two (2) year “Option” period.

## **Rule 607 Eligible Player**

A player who is properly registered with the League and their club’s appropriate Federation, and who is not subject to any kind of suspension, is considered an eligible player. You can view the player rosters that specify the eligibility of current and newly registered players of your team when you log in to your USLsoccer.com Team page. Teams using players before they have been properly cleared to compete by USL or their club’s appropriate Federation will be subject to the appropriate disciplinary actions.

## **Rule 608 Ineligible Player**

A player listed on the Master Roster but *not* eligible to play, due to reasons such as missing registration paperwork, awaiting international clearance, serving a League suspension, or not being listed on the official Game Day Line-Up Sheet shall be considered an ineligible player. Knowledge of the eligibility status of a player is ultimately the responsibility of the team, not the referee.

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

1 <sup>st</sup> Violation fine	Player on the Game Day Line-Up Sheet, but did not play	\$250
	Player participates in match deduction fine & one (1) point	\$250
2 <sup>nd</sup> Violation fine	Any player on the Game Day Line-Up Sheet	\$500
	Forfeiture of any points earned in match and two (2) point deduction*	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Violation** fine	Any player on the Game Day Line-Up Sheet	\$1000
	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 victory 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 or the team has committed any violations of Rule 608

# League Regulations

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in that particular season.

## **Rule 608.5 U23 Compliance** (USL PDL only)

Each PDL is permitted a maximum of eight (8) players on their Master Roster which are not compliant with the league's U23 requirement. In the event a team has greater than eight (8) overage players on their Master Roster, USL will automatically release the last player(s) added that put the team over the limit and the team will incur a \$250 fine. If a team lists more than eight (8) overage players on the Game Day Line-Up Sheet, team is subject to a \$250 fine, forfeiture of points earned in the match, and a one (1)-point deduction.

## **Rule 609 Foreign Player Violations**

Each team is required to identify its foreign players on the Game Day Line-Up Sheet. Foreign players are neither United States nor Canadians citizens. Additional, documented Resident Aliens / Green Card holders (in the United States only) & Landed Immigrants (in Canada only) shall not be considered foreign players for teams based in those respective countries. The maximum number of foreigners on the Game Day Line-Up Sheet is five (5). The penalties for using more than five (5) foreign players during the regular season are as follows:

1 <sup>st</sup> Violation	Player on the Game Day Line-Up Sheet, but did not play	\$250 fine
	Fine & one (1) point deduction	
	Player participates in match	\$500 fine
	Fine & forfeiture of any points earned & two (2)-point deduction	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Violation	Player on the Game Day Line-Up Sheet, but did not play	\$500 fine
	Fine & two (2) point deduction	
	Player participates in match	\$1000 fine
	Fine & forfeiture of any points earned & three (3)-point deduction	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Violation**	Any player on the Game Day Line-Up Sheet	\$1500 fine
	Fine & forfeiture of any points earned & three (3)-point deduction	

\*\* 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 (1-0) the match regardless of whether the player enters the match or the team has committed any violations of Rule 609 in that particular season.

## **Rule 610 Illegal Player**

Any player that does not appear on the Master Roster of twenty-six (26) players shall be considered an illegal player. Any club using an illegal player shall be subject to a fine of \$500 per player, the loss of three (3) points in the League standings, and forfeiture of the game in which the illegal player was used to the opposing team.

## **Rule 611 Youth Player**

Players not yet eighteen (18) years of age prior to January 1<sup>st</sup> of the current year may play on a USL club. U18 players must be properly registered with USL and the respective National Federation and have obtained the appropriate eligibility clearance. Youth players must fill out a League registration form.

## **Rule 612 Minimum Number of Players**

Clubs must have a minimum of fourteen (14) players eligible and suited up for each game. Teams will be assessed a fine of \$200 for suiting up less than fourteen (14) eligible players. An additional

# League Regulations

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incremental \$50 fine will be assessed for the number of players that the team is below the minimum requirement.

## **Rule 613 Player Registration Passes**

- All players must present player registration passes to the Referee prior to each game. These registration passes must be the official passes issued by USL.
- In the absence of a USL Player Pass, professional players are allowed to compete in a game by producing some other form of photo identification. However, if a Photo ID is utilized this will be noted on the Referee Report and investigated by the League to confirm the proper eligibility of the player.
- Amateur players competing on amateur or professional teams must produce an official USL player registration card before being allowed to play. Amateur players may not substitute any other form of photo identification in place of a valid registration card / player pass.

## **Rule 614 International Clearance of Foreign Players**

Any USL player – professional or amateur – who prior to signing with a USL club, played with a foreign club or immigrated to the United States (US teams), Canada (Canadian teams), or Bermuda (Bermuda Hogges) after the age of 12, must obtain the proper international clearance from the appropriate foreign national association, according to the rules of FIFA. Teams are prohibited from registering any foreign player without a proper international clearance, recognized and approved by the respective National Federation. FIFA has established periods during which the international transfer or loan of professional players is restricted. The periods of the calendar year during which professional players under contract with another Federation may be obtained (“transfer windows”) are as follows”) are as follows in the USSF and CSA:

Primary Window: January 15 to April 15  
Secondary Window: July 15 to August 15

International Clearances may not be transferred or received if in conflict with FIFA Transfer Window regulations.

## **Rule 615 Roster Freeze**

The date of the Roster Freeze for each League will be determined on an annual basis by USL Management in conjunction with the League’s Executive Committee and can be found in the Minimum Standards section of the Operations Manual. This will be communicated to all teams by the League Director prior to that playing season. No team will be allowed to register players after the Roster Freeze date, subject to the specific rules of the respective Leagues.

## **Rule 616 Player Movement from a USL First Division team to a USL Second Division team (or PDL professional team)**

- A maximum of four (4) players may be sent down to one (1) USL Second Division team (or PDL professional team) from one USL First Division team for any given match.
- None of these players may have started in their team’s last game.
- The player loan form must be filled out and faxed to the League Office by Noon ET on the day prior to the game.
- If a player is sent to the same USL Second Division team (or PDL professional team) for three (3) different loan periods, said player is tied to that USL Second Division team (or PDL professional team) for the remainder of the season.
- Once a player is sent to a USL Second Division team (or PDL professional team) (“Team A”), that particular team will have the first option to obtain the player if they are available for loan to the USL Second Division (or PDL) again. If they refuse, they give up the “rights” to that player for the rest of the season. If the player is sent to another team (“Team B”), they will then have the right of first refusal. Should they refuse, and the player is sent to a third team (“Team C”); Team C will be the only team that player can be sent to for the remainder of the season.

# League Regulations

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- Any player that could be sent down at the end of the season must be listed on the USL Second Division team's (or PDL professional team's) roster by the Roster Freeze Date.

## **Rule 617 Player Movement from a USL Second Division / PDL team to a USL First Division team**

- A maximum of six (6) may be called up to an USL First Division team from a single USL Second Division team (or PDL team – *professional players only*) for any given match.
- The player loan form must be filled out and faxed to the League Office by Noon ET on the day prior to the game.
- A maximum of three (3) players from a single USL Second Division team (or PDL team – *professional players only*) will be available for call-ups after the roster freeze date.

Any player that could be called up at the end of the season must be listed on the USL First Division Master Roster by the USL First Division Roster Freeze Date.

## **Rule 618 Player Movement between USL Professional & USL Amateur Teams**

Player movement in the form of loans between USL Amateur and USL Professional teams is strictly prohibited per NCAA Amateurism Regulations.

- Exception: A professional PDL player can be loaned to a professional USL team as long as the player remains under contract with the PDL team and does not receive compensation or incentives for services rendered from the USL professional team he is being loaned to.

## **Rule 619 Intra-League Loans (USL-1 only)**

A USL First Division team may over the course of any given season loan one player under contract, one time, to another team. Each team will be permitted only that single loan within the USL First Division for the entire season. An individual player may not be loaned more than one time per season. A player that falls under this type of intra-league loan may not play for original team again for the balance of that season unless he is returned from the borrowing team by June 30<sup>th</sup>. Otherwise, the loan will still be governed by the terms of its particular agreement.

### **Intra-League Loans (USL-2 only)**

Each team may be permitted to receive two (2) players under contract from any other USL Second Division team(s) in a given season. Additionally, a USL Second Division team may over the course of any given season loan two (2) players under contract to any other USL Second Division team. Each team will be permitted only those two loans within the USL Second Division for the entire season. An individual player may not be loaned more than one time per season. A player that falls under this type of intra-league loan may not play for original team again for the balance of that season unless he is returned from the borrowing team by June 30<sup>th</sup>. Otherwise, the loan will still be governed by the terms of its particular agreement.

## **Game Officials**

### **Rule 700 Match Officials**

Match Officials must be currently registered through the respective National Federations and shall be assigned by respective National Federations. The match officials shall consist of the Referee, Assistant Referees (AR1, AR2) and a 4<sup>th</sup> Official. (*Please refer to the USL Referee Manual*)

### **Rule 701 Internet Referee Assignments & Team Schedules**

USL Teams have the ability to obtain referee assignments and verify team schedules and schedule information for matches. Contact the USL Office for ID numbers and passwords. Each team's



# League Regulations

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Referee Liaison should verify information and game coverage ten (10) days in advance of any game.

## **Access**

The address is [www.usoccer-data.com](http://www.usoccer-data.com). Each team has a unique team ID and password to access the site. Once on the site's front page, access to your functions is through the "Team Administration and / or Liaison" section. It will then ask for your team ID number (begins with the letter of what League you belong to) and then your password. This will provide access to schedules and any referee assignments. Please verify all information and report to the League any discrepancies in what is posted. The posted information is what the officials are following, so if it is incorrect, your match may or may not be covered.

## **Rule 702 Assignment of Match Officials**

Match Officials will be assigned in cooperation and coordination with the United States Soccer Federation's Professional Division Assignment Department, the CSA, BFA, and the FPF.

## **Disciplinary Regulations**

### **Rule 800 Disciplinary Powers**

USL Management 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 USL. USL Management has the authority to act on behalf of the League regarding any breach of the League Regulations or rules, or it may refer discussion on any breach of the rules to the National Review, Appeals, and Discipline Committee for review. USL Management hands down any final decision on a breach of rules. *Please refer to the USL Referee Manual, which contains misconduct classifications as well as other game misconduct.*

### **Rule 801 League Disciplinary Point System**

USL Management has the authority to discipline players, coaches or team personnel based upon the USL Disciplinary Procedures in accordance with FIFA, as well as the respective National Federation. Please refer to the USL Referee Manual for the current disciplinary procedures.

### **Accumulation of Penalty Points**

USL reserves the right to issue suspensions and fines during the regular season and playoffs based on the accumulation of penalty points. Please refer to the current USL Referee Manual, which details the current year's disciplinary point system.

### **Rule 802 Serving Suspensions during the Regular Season**

Any player receiving a red card in a regular season game will be fined and suspended from the next league regular season game. A person who serves as both player and coach may not return as a player or a coach until the suspension has been served.

The penalties set forth shall apply to all cards awarded to a Player in any USL match. For the purposes of determining accumulations and Game Suspensions, any games that count as part of a team's official League schedule (League games and Open Cup qualifiers) shall be utilized.

### **Exhibition Game Send-off**

Any player sent off in an exhibition game will be suspended only for the team's next exhibition game.

# League Regulations

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## **Final Regular Season Game Send-off**

Any player sent off in a final regular season match must serve the suspension in the first playoff match, unless the season is over, in which case the suspension will be served in the team's first League game the following season.

## **Inter-League suspensions**

Any player who is suspended from a match in any USL League will serve their suspension in accordance with the League in which the suspension occurred. Should the player be loaned or transferred between Leagues within the USL, 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.

### **Example**

- (A) Player X, suspended for one USL First Division match, is loaned to a USL Second Division club to "play out" suspension. Player X will not be permitted to play until the day following the date of the match that he is suspended in the USL First Division.
- (B) Player Y is on loan to USL First Division from the USL Second Division and is sent off. The player's loan expires and they return to their original club without serving an USL First Division suspension. Player Y will not be permitted to play in a USL Second Division match until the day following the date of the match that he is suspended in the USL First Division. Fines will be assessed according to the League in which you were sent off, not League in which the player is registered.

## **Guidelines for send off (current match)**

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. They are not permitted to watch the conclusion of the match and must remain in the locker room for the remainder of the match. Additionally, sent-off coaches are not permitted to communicate with their team staff or players for the remainder of the game, and are not allowed to remain in the locker room during halftime. The type of communication prohibited includes: cellular, two-way radios, electronic / digital, written or verbal. Players or coaches returning to the field of play during or directly following the match are subject to additional sanctions.

## **Coaching Staff Suspension Parameters & Restrictions**

Any manager, coach, assistant coach, trainer or other official bench personnel is prohibited from assuming any official duty at or near the team bench while serving a suspension. Any infringement of this rule may result in the forfeiture of the game and will include a fine for each infraction. Any athletic trainer sent off during a match should remain in the locker room area through the end of the match and may only return to the pitch at the request of the Referee in the event of an emergency.

- Coaches serving suspensions are allowed to communicate with players pre- and post-game 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 enter the locker room, but must not be in or around the field of play. Coaches must sit in the press box or in some location other than in the grandstand. If this is not possible, then the coach is prohibited from attending the game.
- Communication via cellular, two-way radios, electronic, written or verbal is strictly prohibited. Additional fines and / or suspensions will result.

## **Extending a Suspension**

In any case, USL 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.

## **Rule 803 Suspension and Fines during the Playoffs**

### **Cautions**

A player accumulating three (3) cautions during the playoffs will be prohibited from participating in the team's next playoff match. Subsequently, any player accumulating an aggregate total of six (6) cautions during the playoffs will be suspended from the team's next playoff game.

### **Send-offs**

Any player who is sent off during the playoffs will be suspended from the 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.

## **Rule 804 Commencement of Suspensions**

In accordance with FIFA Regulations, any player/coach sent-off (as a result of receiving a red card ejection or second caution) in a regular season game will be suspended for the next league regular season game.

For logistical and administrative purposes, players exceeding the penalty point plateau(s) as set forth in the USL Referee Manual will begin serving their suspension commencing on the seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) day after the relevant penalty points were received.

USL Management also reserves the right to re-evaluate accumulated penalty points for player eligibility rulings, including playoffs, with the reserved power to postpone suspensions to the following season.

## **Rule 805 Team Penalty Points**

The accumulation of player penalty points above the league specified number in any one season will result in a fine.

USL First Division:	80 points, \$1000 fine
USL Second Division:	70 points, \$ 750 fine
USL PDL:	60 points, \$ 500 fine
USL W-League:	50 points, \$ 500 fine

The team with the fewest player penalty points in each League will be given the Fair Play Award. For the purpose of accumulating these numbers, cautions / yellow cards will be assigned one (1) point and red cards will be assigned two (2) points. Any player receiving two cautions in one match that results in a send-off will receive one (1) point for the first caution and two (2) points for the resulting send-off for a total of three (3) points.

## **Rule 806 USL Management's Discretionary Power on Suspensions**

USL Management 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 807 USL Disciplinary Committee**

A panel of at least three USL staff members, consisting of the pertinent League Director, Executive Director, and Referee Services Coordinator, shall conduct the review of critical disciplinary issues. An alternate League Director may be utilized in the event any of the three members above are unable to participate.

# **League Regulations**

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## **Rule 809 USSF Fine for Serious Incidents**

The CEO of USSF has the power to impose fines up to \$10,000 for any incident bringing the game into disrepute within USL Leagues.

## **Rule 810 Payment of Fines**

Member clubs are responsible for the payment of all fines assessed during the year. League Management will notify each club when a fine is assessed. All clubs are expected to remit payment for fines within 30 days of the invoice provided by the USL Financial Director or their cash bond may be utilized.

## **Conduct of Teams**

### **Rule 901 Intentional Throwing of Games**

Agreeing or promising to lose a game is in strict violation of the rules of USL. Any club or personnel associated with a club who promises, agrees to lose, attempts to lose or otherwise adversely affects the outcome of any game with which he 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 banned and may be subject to expulsion from the League.

Likewise, any person from a member club who is solicited to commit or has knowledge of any of the foregoing acts and fails to inform USL Management immediately of all facts and circumstances connected with the solicitation, shall be declared by USL Management to be permanently banned and may be subject to suspension and / or expulsion from the League.

Additionally, any player who, in the opinion of the referee and / or USL Management, attempts to purposefully lose a game by intentionally scoring an own goal as a field player, or intentionally allowing an "own goal" to occur, will be subject to disciplinary action which may include forfeiture of the game and the possibility of a permanent suspension from United Soccer Leagues.

### **Rule 902 Illegal Incentives for Winning a Game**

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 Management 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 Management immediately of such offer and of all facts and circumstances connected therewith, shall be declared by USL Management to be ineligible for a period of not less than three (3) years.

### **Rule 903 Gifts To Referees or Assistant Referees**

Any person connected with a member club who shall give or offer to give any gifts or reward, including promotional items distributed by the clubs to fans, 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 USL Management to be permanently banned.

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 banned by USL Management. 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 USL Management

# League Regulations

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immediately of such offer or solicitation, and all facts and circumstances connected therewith. Failure to report such solicitation shall be cause for USL Management to declare the official permanently banned to work USL games and recommend to the respective National Federation suspension from all matches.

## **Rule 904 Betting on Soccer Games**

Any person, including any player, associated in any way with any USL team or with League Management, who bets or gambles, or attempts to bet or gamble, any amount whatsoever upon any soccer game, including upon a USL game, shall be declared "persona non grata" by USL Management and permanently banned from all USL activities.

## **Rule 905 Scandalous Conduct**

USL Management may suspend for a definite 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 USL Management's opinion, prejudicial to the best interests of the sport of soccer or the League.

## **Rule 906 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 USL Management to have conducted themselves in a manner detrimental to the best interests of soccer or the League, may be declared by USL Management to be suspended for such period of time as USL Management shall deem to be appropriate.

## **Rule 907 Tampering**

No owner, officer or representative of a USL club shall directly or indirectly approach a contracted player, coach or staff member of another USL club regarding employment unless that contracted party's employing club gives written permission to the requesting club to make such contact. Communication through a player agent, representative, or other third party is also prohibited. Violations of this rule shall carry a minimum \$2500 fine and may include other forms of disciplinary action from the USL Office.

Exception: USL clubs are permitted to contact any player in the final season (inclusive of any Option Year(s)) of his USL Standard Professional Player Contract as early as the calendar day following the USL Championship match of his current club's respective division subject to fulfillment of the notification requirements set forth in the paragraph below. This shall be the universal release date for players in the final season of their contract and shall supersede the conclusion date listed in Section 1 ("Term") of the player's individual contract provided the player is no longer otherwise required to perform services for that Club in return for compensation as explicitly stated in that particular player's contract.

This exception is subject to the prospective club providing written notification of the intention to make such contact is provided to the player's current club with a copy sent to USL. The current club and / or USL shall have seventy-two (72) hours to demonstrate through the provision of any documentation demonstrating that the player is NOT in the final year of his current contract. In the absence of such, or in the event no response is received from the current club or USL within seventy-two (72) hours of receipt of the notification, the prospective club may commence communications with the player.

For the 2008 USL season, the dates are as follows:

USL First Division (USL-1)	October 11, 2008
USL Second Division (USL-2)	August 23, 2008
Premier Development League (PDL)	August 9, 2008

# League Regulations

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## **Rule 908 Vandalism / Destruction of Property**

No player, owner, officer, or representative of a club shall intentionally damage or destroy the physical property of another club. This prohibition shall extend to the damage and destruction of locker rooms or other area of a leased or owned stadium facility and the host hotel. Those found in violation shall be responsible for the full cost of proven damages, plus a punitive fine from USL commensurate with the nature of the act(s).

## **Rule 909 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 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 USL Management, such as permanent ineligibility, temporary 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, in his opinion, warrant.

## **League Meetings**

### **Rule 1001 League Annual Meeting**

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of USL will take place no later than sixty (60) days following the completion of the USL First Division Championship game, with date, time and location to be designated by the USL Office. The AGM is the general meeting of all League members. USL Management shall set the agenda prior to the meeting, including approval of new members, proposed bylaw and regulations amendments, the review of each member's structure and financial statement, setting the deadlines for the business and marketing plans, member assessment for the upcoming fiscal year, and other matters.

### **Rule 1002 Regional / League Meetings**

Additional League or Regional Meetings may take place on an individual League basis on dates designated by USL Management.

### **Rule 1003 Failure to Attend**

A member of each team is required to attend all Regional / League Meetings and the Annual General Meeting, unless excused by USL Management. If permission has not been obtained, members shall be fined according to the following:

<u>League</u>	<u>AGM</u>	<u>Regional</u>
USL First Division	\$2,000	Not Mandatory
USL Second Division	\$1,750	\$750
USL PDL	\$1,500	\$750
USL W-League	\$1,500	\$750

### **Rule 1004 Rules of Order**

Robert's Rules of Order, except as otherwise provided by the League Regulations, shall govern the parliamentary procedures at all meetings.

## **Governing Bodies and Committees**

### **Rule 1101 Executive Director**

The Executive Director is the highest-ranking day-to-day officer of USL regardless of this individual's job title. The Executive Director will also have the power to:

- Prepare the schedule for League play and playoffs / championships\*.

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# **USL Operations Manual**

## **Section 1.22**

# League Regulations

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- Propose and interpret the rules.
- Serve as the final appeal in protested games.
- Exercise disciplinary powers conferred upon him by the League Regulations.
- Maintain a headquarters office for the League in a city served by appropriate domestic and international air services, and in physical location commensurate with the professional status of the league in this competitive division.
- 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 at salaries and terms the Executive Director shall determine.
- Have full authority to take any action that, in his judgment, is necessary or desirable to prevent or discourage any conduct by a member(s) or any other person(s) which is not in the USL opinion, in the best interest of the League, or which is not in the USL judgment 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 these League Regulations and the rules of the League.
- Be responsible for all funds and securities of the League: shall receive all duties, fines, assessments and other revenues paid to the League. He shall deposit all such revenues in the name of the League in such depositories as may be elected by the Executive Director. He shall keep an accurate account of all moneys of the League for payment of accounts, fees and dues and shall make such payments as shall be due by the League.
- Serve as an ex-officio member of the Owner's Committee and all other League and / or division committees.
- Delegate such authority to League employees as may be necessary to carry out these rules, league operations, and any other business germane to USL

\*League Championships are property of USL. Bid requirements will be communicated to teams in advance of Championships. USL Office has the sole right to select the host site based upon factors such as stadium and field considerations, television arrangements, fan attendance, media coverage, hotel, transportation, etc. USL holds all broadcast rights (all forms of media) to the Championships.

## **Rule 1102 League Directors**

Each USL League will have a full-time Director of Operations. League Directors shall have the same power as the Executive Director subject to the direction, control, and supervision of the Executive Director.

## **Rule 1103 Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors is made up of members who are elected by the shareholders of USL. The Board of Directors of USL manages, oversees and implements policy for all Leagues of the USL system.

## **Rule 1104 Owner's Advisory Counsel**

The Owner's Advisory Counsel shall be made up of an ad hoc panel from each League as appointed by the USL President. This ad hoc panel, which may be convened or disbanded at the discretion of the Executive Director, shall have no authority to make policy.

## **Rule 1105 Executive Committees**

The League Committees are made up of elected representatives and at-large appointees.

- USL First Division Executive Committee
- USL Second Division Executive Committee
- USL PDL Executive Committee
- USL W-League Executive Committee

## **Rule 1106 Standing Committees**

The Executive Director shall have the discretion to appoint and disband a National RAD Committee, Competition Committee, Minimum Standards Committee, Labor Committee, Marketing Committee,

# **League Regulations**

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Public Relations and Media Committee, Referee Committee, Insurance Committee, MLS Committee, and any other special committee deemed necessary for the welfare of the League. The Executive Director shall also prescribe the duties of each committee, which shall report directly to the Executive Director, who shall be an ex-officio member of all standing committees.

## **National Review, Appeals, and Discipline Committee (RAD)**

The National RAD Committee will consist of three-person hearing panels, which shall be appointed by the Executive Director on an ad hoc basis. The Committee shall assist the Executive Director in the resolution of disputes in all areas, including competition, discipline and general administrative matters.

## **Competition Committee**

The Competition Committee will assist the USL Management and League Executive Committees in identifying rules and competition plans and policies for the Leagues. This committee deals with, but shall not be limited to dealing with the following: playing rules, point system, non-League games, player rosters and U.S. Open Cup issues.

## **Facilities and Minimum Standards Committee**

The Facilities and Minimum Standards Committee will assist the USL Management and League Executive Committees in identifying standards and policies for the Leagues. This committee deals with, but shall not be limited to dealing with the following: facility requirements, game operations, press box, in-stadium phones, reporting of scores and results via phone/fax/e-mail, internet, uniforms, club media guides, programs, registration deadlines and penalties.

## **Labor Committee**

The Labor Committee will assist the USL Management and League Executive Committees in identifying labor plans and policies for the Leagues. This committee deals with, but shall not be limited to dealing with the following: salary issues, contracts, enforcement of guidelines and penalties. The Executive Director will be ex-officio member of the Labor Committee.

## **New Business Development**

The New Business Development Committee will assist the USL Management and League Executive Committees in identifying marketing plans and policies for the Leagues. This committee deals with, but shall not be limited to dealing with the following: protected categories, professional development, sponsor servicing, team marketing needs, and new business development.

## **Insurance Committee**

The Insurance Committee will assist the USL Management and League Executive Committees in identifying insurance plans and policies for the Leagues. This Committee deals with, but shall not be limited to dealing with the following: player insurance, stadium general liability insurance and workers' compensation. Both the USL Office and Executive Director will be ex-officio members of the Insurance Committee.

## **Referee Committee**

The Referee Committee will assist the USL Management and League Executive Committees in identifying referee plans and policies for the Leagues. This committee deals with, but shall not be limited to dealing with the following: new rule implementation, player decorum, referee fees and U.S. Soccer referee standards.



## **Public Relations and Media Committee**

The Public Relations and Media Committee will assist USL Management and League Executive Committees in identifying public relations and media plans and policies for the Leagues. This committee deals with, but shall not be limited to dealing with the following: national and local media relations, communicating to the general public, advertising, and media-oriented post-game reporting procedures.

## **MLS Committee**

The MLS Committee will assist the USL Management and League Executive Committees in maintaining a mutually beneficial relationship with Major League Soccer. This Committee deals with, but shall not be limited to dealing with the following: player movement between the Leagues, benefits for USL teams from the relationship with MLS and working relationships between MLS and USL teams.

## **Expansion Committee**

Each League may have an Expansion Committee to assist the USL Management and League Executive Committees in identifying and reviewing application for new franchises on a rolling basis. This Committee deals with, but shall not be limited to dealing with the following: reviewing new team applications, business plans, and budgets as well as helping to identify new markets and groups for expansion of each League. The Executive Director will be an ex-officio member of the Expansion Committee. It is not the mandate of this committee to set policy, but rather to serve in an advisory capacity to USL Management.

## **TV / Broadcast Committee**

The TV / Broadcast Committee will assist USL Management in identifying short term and long term national broadcast strategies for USL. This committee deals with, but shall not be limited to dealing with production, rights, and other initiatives. The Executive Director will be an ex-officio member of the TV / Broadcast Committee. It is not the mandate of this committee to set policy, but rather to serve in an advisory capacity to USL Management.