

AUSTINTOWN JUNIOR SOCCER LEAGUE

League Rules

Revised January 2010

1. TEAM PARTICIPATION

- 1.1 All registered players that are dressed to play for their assigned team must play at least 1/2 of any scheduled game unless under disciplinary action by the coach. If a child is under disciplinary action by a coach, the coach must report this action to the AJSL Vice President and/or Field Marshals prior to the game.
- 1.2 Persons not registered with the league may not participate in a practice or scheduled game.
- 1.3 All teams must be ready to play at their scheduled times. A ten (10) minute grace period, beyond the scheduled match time, will be given to each team to allow ample time to field a team that is ready to play a match. If the grace period expires, the team not prepared to play shall forfeit the match. Players must be on the field with proper equipment and be prepared to play in order to count toward the teams' lineups.
- 1.4 No team coach will be allowed to cancel or reschedule any league game under any circumstances. If a team cannot field a legal lineup they will receive a forfeit. If both coaches are unavailable, the head coach must contact the age group coordinator to make arrangements for an alternate, league appointed representative to coach the team. If an unauthorized coach is used or if ample time is not provided to the league to find a replacement, the team without a coach shall forfeit the match.
- 1.5 A game will be suspended immediately if visible lightning or audible thunder occurs during a game or within one half hour prior to its scheduled start time. The second game of the evening may be played at its scheduled start time even if the previous game is cancelled due to bad weather provided that visible lightning or audible thunder has not occurred within one half hour prior to the schedule start time. A game will be cancelled suspended immediately if the field of play is considered unsafe. Any league game canceled due to bad weather may be rescheduled by the referee coordinator and the Vice-President. Final decision on any scheduling matters shall be at the discretion of the league vice-president.
- 1.6 Points will be awarded as follows for determination of seeding for the Falcon Cup Tournament:
 - A. Win = 3 points
 - B. Tie = 1 point
 - C. Loss = 0 points
 - D. Penalty Points = (-3)

*number of seeds will be determined by the number of teams within the age bracket

**Coaches of teams with multiple recorded penalty points will be referred to the Executive Board for disciplinary measures which may include exclusion from the Falcon Cup.
- 1.7 No coach will be allowed to recruit players for his or her team.

1.8 The maximum number of players on the field for each age group will be as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| A. U6 Age Group | Three (3) players (recommended) / No goalkeeper |
| B. U7 – U9 Age Groups | Six (6) players including goalkeeper |
| C. U10 – U11 Age Groups | Eight (8) players including goalkeeper |
| D. U12 – U18 Age Groups | Eleven (11) players including goalkeeper |

1.9 At the discretion of the coach, it may be mandated that a player attend a minimum of one half (1/2) of the scheduled practice sessions in order to qualify for the league mandated minimum playing time of one half (1/2) of each game.

2. CONDUCT

2.1 Unsporting behavior, fighting, obscene language, obscene gestures, or vandalism by any person or persons before, during, or after any game, practice, or league activity, will not be tolerated. The definition of the above mentioned infractions will be the sole decision of the AJSL Executive Board and/or the assigned game referee. Game referees have the responsibility to maintain good sportsmanship on the field of play and have been given permission to utilize all actions within their power to ensure a positive experience for all participants, including but not limited to, yellow card, red card, game suspension and game cancellation. Please refer to the “Consequences” chapter for detailed disciplinary procedures.

3. SUBSTITUTIONS

3.1 Substitutions shall be unlimited and may occur only at the following times with the permission of the referee.

- A. Either team may substitute:
 - i. Following a Goal by either team.
 - ii. Prior to a Goal Kick by either team.
 - iii. At the completion of a half or quarter.
 - iv. Prior to a throw-in but **only when initiated by team in possession of the ball.**
 - v. Prior to a corner kick but **only when initiated by team in possession of the ball.**

- B. A team **must** substitute a player following a Caution (Yellow Card).
 - i. The cautioned player **is** required to be removed from the field.
 - a. The opposing team may also substitute a player.

- C. If play is stopped due to injury, the coach **must** substitute the injured player.
 - i. The injured player **is** required to be removed from the field.
 - a. The opposing team may also substitute a player

- D. A Goalkeeper may change positions with a field player during any recognized substitution opportunity **and only with the permission of the referee.**

3.2 Substitutes must enter the field at the halfway line and may do so only with the permission of the referee. Before entering the field, each substitute must call off the player that he/she is replacing. The referee can refuse the substitution if he feels the coach is using up the clock with continual substitutions.

4. GAME TIMES, BALL SIZES, REGULATIONS

4.1 Length of games:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| A. U6 Age Group | Four (4) 8-10 minute quarters (recommended) |
| B. U7 – U9 Age Groups | Four (4) 10 minute quarters |
| C. U10 – U13 Age Groups | Two (2) 25 minute halves |
| D. U15 – U18 Age Groups | Two (2) 30 minute halves |

4.2 Game balls:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| A. U6 – U9 Age Groups | Size #3 Ball |
| B. U10 – U13 Age Groups | Size #4 Ball |
| C. U15 – U18 Age Groups | Size #5 Ball |

4.3 All players, except goal keepers, must wear the league provided shirt, matching socks and properly fitted black athletic shorts for all games.

4.4 Goalkeepers on both teams must wear shirts differing from either team's colors.

4.5 Any playing rules not covered herein will be governed by FIFA rules.

5. PLAYING SAFETY

5.1 All players must use shoes of the sneaker kind, or rubber molded cleats. Hard-soled shoes, metal cleats and toe cleats cannot be worn in practice or in a scheduled game.

- A. Casts, braces and any similar medically necessary item may be worn provided that, at the discretion of the referee, it does not pose a safety concern. Eyeglasses / sunglasses may be worn only if they are prescription type.

5.2 The league requires that shin guards be worn and be completely covered by socks

5.3 No jewelry is to be worn during play.

- A. This includes but is not limited to earrings, bracelets, necklaces, watches, etc. Earrings shall not be permitted to be worn under any circumstances, even if covered by tape. Bracelets of any material are prohibited. This includes rubber, string, or any other type of material. Hair accessories may be worn only as necessary provided they are deemed to be safe by the referee.

5.4 Only players and league assigned referees are allowed on the field during play unless there is an injury, and then, with the referee's permission, coaches may tend to the injured player.

6. GAMES AND PRACTICE

6.1 A minimum of one (1) and a maximum of three (3) combined practices AND scheduled games may be held during each week (Monday through Friday), except for any AJSL scheduled special event including the Falcon Cup. Under no circumstances may coaches schedule practices on weekends at any location.

7. TEAM SPORTSMANSHIP

- 7.1** It is of primary importance to the AJSL Board to ensure that we encourage and promote good sportsmanship, fair play and proper conduct in all that we do. In the interest of good sportsmanship and fair play, the AJSL expects its coaches to refrain from allowing lopsided scores (e.g. 8-0, 11-1) to develop during the course of our league games. We believe that coaches can manage scores against weaker teams by various techniques such as substitution and player rotation. Board members are always available to provide advice and assistance in this matter.
- 7.2** Games will be played providing a team has a minimum of seven (7) players in the U12 age group and up, a minimum of five (5) players in the U10 – U11 age groups and a minimum of four (4) players in the U7 – U9 age groups. Coaches are encouraged, but not required, to play games with the same number of players on the field as the opposing team. A maximum of one additional player is permitted at the start of the game.
- 7.3** Once the goal difference in a game reaches 5 points, the winning team **MUST** remove one player from the field. If the point difference increases, additional players from the winning team must be removed from the field at a rate of one (1) player per goal. At no time may a team remove players to the point that it results in an illegal lineup per Rule 24 above. Players may be returned to the field as the goal difference decreases.
- A. Example: 5 goal difference - 1 player must be removed.
6 goal difference - 2 players must be removed.
7 goal difference - 3 players must be removed.
- 7.4** At the end of the game, if any team has surpassed a 10 goal win, the winning team will be penalized and receive negative 3 (-3) points for their efforts in calculation for Falcon Cup seeding. Furthermore, if at any time a team scores a goal against itself when they are within the player removal situation; the goal will be disqualified and a goal kick will be awarded for the opposing team.

8. REGISTRATION

- 8.1** Registration fees are not refundable without Executive Board approval.
- 8.2** All players will be assigned to play within their age group according to their birth date.
- A. At the discretion of the Registrar, players may move up one (1) year in age in order to be rostered with a sibling provided a parent or guardian is the coach or assistant coach. No other exceptions will be made. No player is permitted to move down in age.
- 8.3** Any participant expelled from the league for disciplinary reasons will receive no refund of registration fees. This will pertain to the child or children and sponsorship of the disciplined spectator or coach.
- 8.4** Registering to coach does not guarantee a coaching position. It is the sole decision of the AJSL Board whether an individual may coach. The Board will review any applicant in which there has been past misconduct or filed complaints. The decision of the Executive Board is final.

- 8.5** The Executive Board has the right to deny any registration based on past misconduct. The decision of the Executive Board is final.

9. SPONSORS AND FUNDRAISING

- 9.1** Coaches shall not solicit gratuities from sponsors. Any violations will result in loss of total season points and the indefinite suspension of the coach.
- 9.2** Any requested AJSL affiliation must be approved by the Executive Board.
- 9.3** Rules pertaining to fund raisers must be strictly adhered to. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action by the Executive Board.

10. AGE OF COACHES

- 10.1** All coaches must be a minimum of eighteen (18) years of age prior to January

11. REFEREES

- 11.1** Assignment of referees is at the sole discretion of the Referee Coordinator.
- 11.2** All referees must be USSF licensed and are only permitted to officiate after obtaining permission from the referee coordinator.
- 11.3** Center referees have the responsibility to maintain good sportsmanship on the field of play and have been given permission to utilize all actions within their power to ensure a positive experience for all participants, including but not limited to, yellow card, red card, game suspension and game cancellation. Please refer to the "Consequences" chapter for detailed disciplinary procedures.
- 11.4** All referees will refrain from confrontational exchanges with coaches and game spectators.
- 11.5** Referees will be paid an amount determined by a majority vote of the Board prior to the beginning of each season.
- 11.6** If a scheduled referee does not show up at a game, the Referee Coordinator or Field Marshall must find another licensed official to serve as a replacement. If none are available, the game may proceed with the help of club linesmen as required.

12. SPECTATORS

- 12.1** The Austintown Junior Soccer League has initiated a "Zero Tolerance" policy regarding spectator conduct. Violators will be dealt with according to the "Consequences" chapter of this document.
- 12.2** Spectators are not permitted to speak directly or indirectly to any person (referee or player) during the time of play. Any confrontational or disrespectful actions directed toward any person on the field of play at any time will be handled according to the "Consequences" chapter of this document.

- 12.3** Spectators must be in assigned areas at least five (5) feet from the touch line on the side of the field opposite the players and are at no time permitted to enter the field of play unless granted permission in the case of injury.
- 12.4** No persons are allowed behind the goal line.
- 12.5** All spectators are expected to conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner. Failure to do so will result in ejection from league property by the Austintown Police Department. Continued disruptive behavior, as determined by the Executive Board, will result in permanent expulsion from league property via a restraining order to be filed with the Austintown Police Department.
- 12.6** Consumption of alcoholic beverages is not permitted on AJSL property during scheduled league games or practices.
- 12.7** Smoking shall be confined to designated areas away from the playing area.
- 12.8** Pets of any kind are not permitted on AJSL property.

13. BOARD MEMBERS

- 13.1** Coaching and officiating shall take precedence over Board Member duties during game time.

14. COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

- 14.1** All complaints shall be handled in compliance with the provisions provided within the AJSL Bylaws.

15. COACHES CONDUCT / CODE OF ETHICS

- 15.1** Soccer is the players' game. The paramount concern of coaches is the holistic development, welfare, enjoyment and safety of their players.
- 15.2** Coaches bear responsibility for teaching their players to strive for success while playing fairly, observing the Laws of the Game and the highest levels of sportsmanship.
- 15.3** Coaches shall treat officials with respect and dignity, and shall teach their players to do the same.
- 15.4** Our opponents are worthy of being treated with respect. Coaches will model such respect for opponents and expect their players to do likewise.
- 15.5** In both victory and defeat, the behavior of a coach shall model grace, dignity and composure.
- 15.6** Coaches shall adhere to the highest standards and the regulations of the institutions they represent: clubs, schools, sponsoring organizations and sports governing bodies.
- 15.7** Coaches have a responsibility to promote the interests of soccer, including treating media with courtesy, honesty and respect.

- 15.8** Coaches shall model inclusive behavior, actively supporting cultural diversity while opposing all types of discrimination, including, but not limited to, racism and sexism, at all levels of soccer.
- 15.9** Coaches are responsible for taking an active role in education about, and prevention and treatment of, drug, alcohol and tobacco abuse, both in their own lives and in the lives of their players.
- 15.10** Coaches shall refrain from all manner of personal abuse and harassment of others, whether verbal, physical, emotional or sexual, and shall oppose such abuse and harassment at all levels of soccer.
- 15.11** Coaches shall respect the declared affiliations of all players, and shall adhere to all guidelines and regulations on recruiting established by the governing bodies having oversight of their teams and leagues.
- 15.12** Coaches shall seek to honor those who uphold the highest standards and principles of soccer and shall use appropriate protocol to oppose and eliminate all behavior that brings disrepute to the sport - violence, abuse, dishonesty, disrespect and violations of the Laws of the Game and rules governing competition.
- 15.13** Consequences
- A.** 1st offense: One (1) game suspension
 - B.** 2nd offense: Two (2) game suspension and a meeting with Executive Board
 - C.** 3rd offense: Removal from coaching indefinitely

16. COACHING RESPONSIBILITY

- 16.1** The coaches are an example to their players. It is the responsibility of the individual coach to practice and display good sportsmanship and leadership to his or her players. Coaches must remember that the primary goal is to teach, practice and excel in the fundamentals of soccer. Promoting community interest in soccer and providing physical fitness and wholesome activity form all participants is the aim of the AJSL.
- 16.2** It is the ultimate responsibility of the coach to inform parents and players of the league rules as well assisting in controlling confrontational or volatile situations. The main emphasis should be placed on sportsmanship and respect towards referees, opposing teams, and spectators.
- 16.3** The coaches are responsible to have five (5) adults in the concession stand at their scheduled day(s) and time(s). Any team not having five (5) adults in the concession stand at their scheduled day(s) and time(s) will forfeit their next scheduled game resulting in zero points awarded as well as a three point penalty (-3) points toward their Falcon Cup seeding. Only adults over the age of 18 will count towards the five (5) adult minimum. Children are not permitted in the concession stand. It is recommended that the coaches ask parents on their team to perform this service to promote volunteer activity within the league.

17. COACHES CONDUCT WITH REFEREES

- 17.1** Coaches must communicate with the referee in a professional, non-confrontational manner. Calls made by the referee are not reversible and are not challengeable. If a coach conducts himself/herself in an unsporting manner the referee may warn the coach and request that he/she correct the situation. If the coach in question continues his/her unsporting behavior, referees have been given permission to issue a yellow or red card or suspend or cancel the game. Please refer to the “Consequences” chapter for detailed disciplinary procedures. A report will be made to the league vice-president for possible additional disciplinary action. The league vice-president is in charge of all coaches and rules violations.

18. COACHING DISCIPLINE

- 18.1** If any rules violations occur, said coach will be penalized as outlined in the “Consequences” chapter of this document. The infraction will be discussed at the next scheduled Executive Board meeting in closed session and the coach will be informed if any other sanctions will be imposed. The coach and/or his representative will be given an opportunity to represent himself/herself at this meeting. Any Executive Board action will be final.

19. COACHES TOBACCO USE POLICY

- 19.1** Coaches shall not use tobacco products during practices and/or games.

20. CONSEQUENCES

- 20.1** The Austintown Junior Soccer League has adopted the following “Zero Tolerance” policies and procedures. Furthermore, referees have been given permission to utilize all actions within their power to ensure a positive experience for all participants, including but not limited to issuing yellow or red cards, game suspension and game cancellation. Referees may issue cards to players AND coaches as required to maintain control during a match.
- 20.2** Coaches shall be held responsible for their actions as well as the conduct of their players and spectators. Any persons who engage in unbecoming conduct before, during or after any match will warrant disciplinary action by the Executive Committee. NOTE: The referee may suspend match play if in the opinion of the referee the conduct of coaches, players or spectators warrants such suspension. Coaches may be issued a card if they are unable to properly control their spectators.
- 20.3** The following consequences are in effect for the misconduct of players and coaches:
- A. **YELLOW CARDS – PLAYERS:** If a player receives a YELLOW CARD from a referee, it serves as nothing more than a caution and warrants no further sanctions unless determined otherwise by the Executive Board.
 - B. **YELLOW CARDS – COACHES:** AJSL rules permit referees to issue cards to coaches as well as players. As role models to the players, coaches shall be held to a higher behavioral standard. If a coach receives a YELLOW CARD from a referee, the coach will be contacted by the Board to discuss their actions. Disciplinary measures may be imposed as determined by the Executive Board.

- C. **RED CARDS – PLAYERS AND COACHES:** If a player or coach receives a RED CARD from a referee and is consequently sent off (disqualified) from a match, he or she will be suspended from further play as follows:
- i. First RED CARD – Suspension from the team’s next scheduled match.
 - ii. Second RED CARD – Suspension from the team’s next two (2) matches.
 - iii. Third RED CARD – Suspension for the remainder of that season.
 - iv. Note: Such suspensions are the league recommended minimums. Additional length of suspension or additional sanctions may be imposed by the Executive Board based on the particular incident.
- D. **SPECTATORS:** It is the responsibility of the coaches to control the spectators for their respective teams. If, in the opinion of the referee, a spectator or spectators are interfering with the game through word or action, the referee may suspend play and request that the coach address the issue. If the coach does not assist, a yellow or red card may be issued to the coach. In extreme situations where neither the referee nor the coach can satisfactorily handle the situation, play shall be suspended while the matter is brought to the attention of a Field Marshall or Board Member.

21. FALCON CUP TOURNAMENT RULES

- 21.1** Points will be awarded as follows for determination of seeding for the Falcon Cup Tournament:
- A. Win = 3 points
 - B. Tie = 1 point
 - C. Loss = 0 points
 - D. Penalty Points = (-3)
- 21.2** Number of seeds will be determined by the number of teams within the age bracket.
- 21.3** The maximum goal differential awarded shall be (3) per game. (Goals scored - goals allowed).
- 21.4** Coaches of teams with multiple recorded penalty points will be referred to the Executive Board for disciplinary measures which may include exclusion from the Falcon Cup.
- 21.5** In the event teams are tied on the basis of points earned during league play, the team's standings shall be determined in accordance with the following sequential criteria:
- A. Penalty points from rule violations. Any team with penalty points automatically loses the tie.
 - B. Winner of head to head competition. However, this criterion shall not be used when more than two teams are tied in points.
 - C. Winner of most games played.
 - D. Goal differential (Goals scored - Goals allowed)
 - E. Fewest goals allowed.
 - F. Kicks from the penalty mark.

- 21.6** If more than two teams are tied, the sequence shall be followed until one or more teams are eliminated. Once one or more teams have been eliminated, the remaining teams still tied shall then restart the sequence above until the tie is broken.
- 21.7** All teams, except for those in the U7, U8 and U9 age brackets, will play twenty-five (25) minute halves. The U7, U8 and U9 age brackets will continue to play ten (10) minute quarters.
- 21.8** Games for ages U8 & up that end in a tie during non-championship matches will go IMMEDIATELY to a penalty kick shoot-out to determine a winner. All U6 and U7 teams will play a predetermined number of games and will receive a participation medal.
- 21.9** Games for ages U8 & up that end in a tie during the championship matches will play two (2) additional five (5) minute time periods before going to the penalty kick shoot-out, if needed, to determine a winner.
- 21.10** The rules for the penalty kick shoot-out are as follows:
- A. Five (5) players from each team will be chosen by their coaches to take part in the shoot-out. Only players who were on the field of play at the conclusion of the match can participate. The goalie that finished the match **MUST** be used at that position during the shoot-out! Goalies can be used to take a penalty kick.
 - B. Teams will alternate taking kicks during the shoot-out.
 - C. If there is still no winner, a sudden death shoot-out will commence to determine the winner. Each team will select one person each round to take the kick until there is a winner. You must use different players during this round. No player can take a second kick until all players on the team have taken a kick.
- 21.11** All other Austintown Junior Soccer League Playing Rules still apply during this tournament including Team Participation, Sportsmanship and Consequences.

22. U6 GUIDELINES

- 22.1** OBJECTIVE: The purpose of the U6 age group is to allow our future soccer players the opportunity to begin playing the game at a young age without concern for the pressures of competitive play. Our goal is to offer a relaxed atmosphere in which the young players can focus on having fun while learning the game of soccer. This is strictly an introduction to the game where scores are not tallied, standings are not kept and there are no winners or losers. All coaches are expected to adopt this philosophy to ensure that the players enjoy themselves and look forward to returning year after year.
- 22.2** The playing field shall be approximately 20 Yards wide x 25 yards long. The field shall be divided by a halfway line with a center circle of approximately 5 yards in diameter. A small portable goal will be placed at the center of each goal line.
- 22.3** Each team shall play two (2) simultaneous games of 3v3 soccer on adjacent fields. Substitute players shall remain on the sideline in between the two fields and may be rotated into play as needed on either of the two fields. Coaches may agree to place higher skilled players on one field and lesser skilled players on another with intermediate players moving back and forth from field to field.

- 22.4** Referees will not be assigned to games in this age group. Instead, the coaches shall maintain the flow of the game from on the field. The coaches shall be responsible for starting and stopping play and offering assistance, encouragement and “hands on” assistance to players on both teams.
- 22.5** Each game shall be divided into four (4) quarters of eight (8) to ten (10) minutes in length. Teams shall rest for three (3) minutes at the end of each quarter and for five (5) minutes at the half. The game length may be altered due to weather conditions or player availability. For example, coaches may agree to shorten the games to six (6) minutes in length and increase the length or number of breaks on extremely hot and humid days.
- 22.6** Play will begin with a kickoff from the halfway line at the beginning of each quarter and after each goal scored. Teams shall alternate kickoffs at the beginning of each quarter of play. Following a goal, the team that was scored upon shall begin play with a kickoff. Prior to the kickoff, players shall position themselves on their own half of the field. Players on the kicking team may position themselves anywhere within their own half while players of the defending team must remain outside of the center circle until the ball is put into play. Upon the coach’s signal, the ball must be propelled forward by the attacking team to begin play.
- 22.7** A running clock will be recognized. This means that time will not stop once the quarter begins. Any time lost due to injury or for any other reason will be considered lost time and will not be added to the game clock.
- 22.8** Coaches shall stop play immediately to tend to injured players. However, the clock shall not stop during injury time.
- 22.9** Substitutions may be made by either team at any time during the game. It is preferred that substitutions occur at a stoppage in play whenever possible.
- 22.10** The position of goalkeeper is not recognized at this level of play. Therefore, no player shall be permitted to deliberately handle the ball when it is in the field of play. Players will learn to defend their goal but should be instructed not to stand in front of the goal unless they are defending an opposing player.
- 22.11** When the ball leaves the field of play, the coach shall retrieve the ball and restart by tossing the ball back into the playing field. This is an opportunity for the coach to provide an advantage for a team or for a specific player who may not be as involved in the game as others. It is recommended that the coach always have an extra ball in hand to allow play to resume quickly while the other ball is retrieved. Spectators should be instructed to help maintain the flow of the game by quickly returning the ball to the coach whenever it leaves the field of play.
- 22.12** Only deliberate handballs and fouls of a persistent, deliberate or dangerous nature shall be recognized. Try to deal with offenders through verbal warning without interrupting play whenever possible. If necessary, acknowledge a foul and award an indirect free kick to the opposing team.
- 22.13** It is the responsibility of the coaches to ensure that all players have a great time while playing the game of soccer. Please stress this philosophy to the parents as well so that everyone understands what you are trying to achieve. We want to make this a positive learning experience for all involved.