

## **Pioneer Valley Summer Soccer League**

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### **RULES AND REGULATIONS**

#### **ADULT and HIGH SCHOOL DIVISIONS**

##### **2025 Season**

*(Includes all revisions for the current season)*

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#### **GENERAL LEAGUE PLAY:**

Games for all divisions will be held on weekdays (Monday through Friday). Adult games will primarily take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays, while high school games will be scheduled for Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Saturdays and Sundays will be reserved for makeup games, only if necessary.

All weekday games will start at 6:30 PM. If a doubleheader is scheduled, the second game will begin at 8:00 PM, or no later than 10 minutes following the completion of the first game. Doubleheader games will be scheduled by the League under artificial lights. Additional doubleheader games may be scheduled as early as 5:30 PM on fields without artificial lighting, but only if agreed upon by all 4 teams involved and with approval from the League commissioner.

#### **I. GAME LENGTHS - Regular and Playoff Games**

##### **A. ADULTS:**

- (2) 40-minute halves following the NCAA College Rule Book.

##### **B. HIGH SCHOOLS:**

- (2) 35-minute halves following the High School Federation Rule Book.

##### **C. Regular-season games for all Divisions will have no overtime.**

## **D. PLAYOFF GAMES OVERTIME PROCEDURE:**

### **1. Overtime Periods:**

- Two (2) "sudden-death" periods of 10 minutes each, with teams changing ends at the completion of the first period.
- The Championship Game will also consist of two (2) sudden death, 10-minute overtime periods, with teams changing ends between each period.
- A coin toss, called by the visiting team, will determine the choice of ends of the field or the kickoff before the start of the first overtime period. Teams will change ends of the field to start the second overtime period.

### **2. Penalty Kicks (if still tied after overtime):**

- Each team will take five (5) penalty kicks, alternating between teams. Only players legally eligible to play in the game can participate. The goalkeeper is an optional player and does not have to take a penalty kick.

### **3. Sudden Death Penalty Kicks (if still tied after initial five penalty kicks):**

- "Sudden death" penalty kicks will be taken alternately in pairs, by players who have not kicked in the first five penalty kicks. Once 10 kicks have occurred, kickers from the initial five penalty kicks may kick again. This will continue until one team misses their kick, following the procedure in Rule I (2).

### **4. Points of Emphasis:**

**a.** Only players legally eligible to play in the game can participate in penalty kicks.

**b.** Only players listed on the official game roster and who have not been ejected during the game are eligible for the tiebreaker.

**c.** Each team shall designate 10 different legally eligible kickers, one of whom may be the goalkeeper.

**d.** The goalkeeper is an optional player and is not required to take a penalty kick.

e. Each kick must be taken by a different player until all 10 designated kickers have kicked once. If kicks continue beyond that number, the order of the initially designated kickers may change.

## **II. ROSTERS**

### **A. ADULT Teams:**

- All teams are limited to 27 players. All players must be out of high school, no current high school players permitted in the adult league.

### **B. HIGH SCHOOL Teams ONLY:**

- High school teams are limited to 27 players, unless all players are from the same school.
- Additional players beyond 27 may be added if all players are enrolled at the same school. This league is not intended for All-Star teams.
- Players must be entering high school or be rising seniors to be eligible to play. Players who have/are graduating in the current year must play in the adult league. Players may play for a different high school team if their enrolled high school does not have a team. If a player attends a prep school, they may play for the high school team that they would attend if they were not attending a prep school.

### **C. Roster Finalization:**

- All rosters will be finalized after the first complete week of regular-season play and will remain unchanged until the end of the season, including the playoffs.
- A player is considered a permanent member of a PVSSL team after the first week of play.
- Players may only change teams during the first week of play. To change teams within that week, both the player and the team manager must contact the league commissioners.
- Players must be on the official team roster (with a picture) to play a game, even if transferring teams during the first week.

### **D. Participation Limitations:**

- Players may only participate on a single PVSSL team per season, regardless of division.

- For example, a player cannot play on both a high school and adult division team during the same season, nor can they play on both a high school A team and a B team, you are not able to move players from the A team to the B team or vice versa.
- Adult players must be over 18 and out of high school to play in the adult open division. Players must be out of high school, no current high school players permitted in the adult league. *If a player is graduating and not 18 years of age, please contact the league commissioner.*
- **Penalty:** Both teams involved will forfeit all games played up until the infraction is detected. Both teams will also lose their forfeit fees deposited with the League Commissioners.
- All players on the roster must be eligible to play each regular season game, except for high school players participating in spring MIAA high school sports teams.

#### **E. Official Roster/Game Sheet:**

- An official roster/game sheet is required for each team. It must list the team's coaches and players, along with a recent color photo of each participant, uploaded onto the league platform and presented to the official before the game starts.
- **Important:** No player is allowed to compete in a PVSSL game if they are not listed on their team's roster with a picture. The roster/game sheet must be handed to the referee prior to the start of each game.
- Failure to present a completed roster/game sheet will result in a forfeiture of the game to the opposing team.
- The team is responsible for providing copies of the roster/game sheet. The game sheet becomes official after one complete week into the regular season.
- If a player is not on the team's roster/game sheet with a picture, they cannot participate in the game. If a player is found playing without being listed, the team will forfeit the game and lose its forfeit fee.

#### **F. League Waivers:**

- League waivers are mandatory for all players and must be submitted with the team's roster/game sheet prior to the start of the regular season. This can be done electronically by

contacting the League Commissioner.

- Players will not be allowed to play until their waiver is on file with the League Commissioners. No team's roster is considered official until all waivers are completed and submitted to the League Commissioners. Absolutely NO ONE PLAYS without a signed waiver.

#### **G. GAME ROSTERS – All Teams:**

- All teams must have a roster with pictures and player names listed starting from the first game of the season.
- After the second week of play, rosters will be "frozen" and available for viewing on the league platform for registered team managers.
- Prior to each game, one roster/game sheet must be filled out with the colored headshots and shirt numbers of eligible players in attendance. This sheet must be handed to the referee in charge of the game.
- If the roster/game sheet is not handed to the referee, the game will not begin and will be forfeited. See Rule II-E for further details on roster/game sheet requirements.

#### **III. GAME STARTS:**

- The official start of the game is 6:30 PM.
- A minimum of seven (7) rostered players must be present for each team to begin the game.
  - If a team cannot field seven players, the game will be forfeited to the other team.
  - If both teams fail to field seven players, both teams will be awarded a forfeit loss. There will be no exceptions to this rule.
- A **15-minute** extension will be allowed for the 7th player to arrive, and play will begin immediately upon their arrival.
- For the second game of a doubleheader, a **10-minute** grace period following the completion of the first game applies. No extension will be granted for the arrival of a 7th player in the second game.

#### **IV. PLAYOFF QUALIFICATIONS and SEEDINGS**

*Applies to all Divisions*

- The top eight (8) teams will qualify for the playoffs.
  
  - **For Adult Divisions:**
    - If there are 12 or more teams in the division, the top 8 teams will qualify.
  
    - If there are fewer than 12 teams but more than 8, the top 6 teams will qualify, with the top two receiving first-round byes.
  
    - If there are 8 or fewer teams in the division, only the top 4 teams will qualify.
  
  - **For High School Divisions:**
    - The top 8 teams will qualify for the playoffs.
  
  - **Home Field Advantage:**
    - The highest-seeded teams will have home field advantage until the championship game.
  
    - The league commissioners have the authority to change the venue of a playoff game based on field conditions or site restrictions.
  
    - Every attempt will be made to play the championship game at a neutral site, but crowd control concerns will be the league's priority when selecting a venue.
  
    - The final decision on the location of any game will rest with the League Commissioners.
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#### **A. ADULT DIVISIONS (if two Leagues):**

- The first and second-place finishers in each league automatically qualify for the playoffs.

- The remainder of the 8-team playoff field will be filled from the top league (A-League).
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## **B. HIGH SCHOOL DIVISIONS:**

- The playoffs will consist of an A-League and a B-League, each qualifying 8 teams.
  - If a C-League is formed, it will combine with the B-League for the playoffs, with only the top 2 C-League teams qualifying.
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## **C. Playoff Selections:**

- Selections will be based on the highest number of points in the standings:
  1. 3 points for each win,
  2. 1 point for each tie,
  3. 0 points for each loss.
- Teams will be seeded based on:
  1. Highest points,
  2. Higher number of wins,
  3. Fewer losses.
  4. **In case of a tie in points:** The team with the higher number of wins will be considered the qualifier.
  5. **If a tie still exists:** Head-to-head competition between the tied teams will be considered.
  6. **If a tie still exists:** A coin flip will determine the qualifier.

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#### **D. Playoff Seeding's:**

- Playoff seeding will be determined following the procedure in Section C.
- The Commissioner has the authority to select a different home field for the playoffs, but the league will make every effort to ensure home games for the higher-seeded teams.

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#### **E. Playoff Brackets:**

- Playoff brackets will be determined as outlined in Rule IV. Teams will remain within their respective brackets throughout the entire playoffs.
- **Exception:** If there are six teams, the highest-seeded team will play the second seed, and the lowest-seeded team will play the top seed in the semifinals.

#### **V. TEAM FEES**

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##### **A. Registration Fees:**

1. **ADULT Divisions:** \$230 per team
2. **HIGH SCHOOL Divisions:** \$230 per team
3. These fees are payable to the League at the time of registration. **These fees are NON-REFUNDABLE.** By registering, teams commit to playing in the League.

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##### **B. Forfeit Fees:**

1. **ADULT Divisions:**
  - Women's teams: \$160 per team

- Men's teams: \$200 per team

## 2. HIGH SCHOOL Divisions:

- \$160 per team

3. Forfeit fees are due at the time of registration and are placed on deposit with the League.

## 4. Forfeit Payment:

- Forfeit fees for games and fines incurred by teams or players during the season must be paid before the next scheduled game in which the player and/or team is eligible to participate.
- If the forfeit fee is not paid, the fee will be deducted from the deposit.
- Any remaining balance of the forfeit fee will be refunded to the team at the end of the season.

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## C. Game Forfeitures:

- Teams are allowed **only one forfeit** to remain eligible for the league.
- **Second Forfeit:** A team that forfeits a second game during the season will be disqualified for the remainder of the season.
- The forfeit will incur a fee equal to **half of the forfeit fee** on deposit with the League.
- If a team forfeits, the corresponding fee will be deducted from the team's forfeit fee deposit.
- Teams must **notify the League Commissioner** as soon as they know they must forfeit.

## VI. TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

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### A. Home Teams:

## 1. Field Preparation

- The field must be properly prepared with visible lines, nets on goalposts, corner flags and/or cones, and all playing field impediments repaired.
- The **referees** have the final decision on the playability of the field. If they declare the field unplayable, the home team will forfeit the game.
- If the field is declared playable, the opposing team cannot later declare the field unplayable.
- **Warnings & Fines:** If a field is improperly prepared, the team will be placed on a warning list. A second offense will result in a \$50 fine. Repeated offenses may jeopardize the team's eligibility for a home field in the playoffs (Rule IV).
- **Responsibility:** The home team is responsible for securing and maintaining the playing field. The PVSSL does not provide field acquisition, maintenance, or associated expenses.

## 2. Game Balls

- The home team must provide the game ball(s). If needed, the visiting team may provide the ball by mutual agreement.
- During the playoffs, the higher-seeded team is responsible for providing the game ball for all playoff games, including the final.
- A **first aid kit** must be available at each game.

## 3. Postponed Games

- The home team must notify the opposing team and the League Commissioners at least **1½ hours** before the game if it must be postponed due to inclement weather or field unavailability.
- The final decision for game legality rests with the League Commissioners. A game is considered **legal** if at least **half** the game has been played, unless extenuating circumstances arise. If the game is incomplete, it must be replayed, with each team

responsible for the referee fees.

- **Rescheduled Games:** The League Commissioners and Executive Board will handle rescheduling. While the league will attempt to accommodate requests, the final decision depends on available schedules and field access.
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## **B. All Teams in the PVSSL:**

### **1. Matching Jerseys**

- Teams must wear matching jerseys with numbers on the back. If both teams have the same color jerseys, the visiting team must change colors, or the game will be forfeited.
- **Fine for non-compliance:** Failure to wear matching jerseys by the second week of the season will result in a \$25 fine per week until compliance is met.

### **2. Professional Players**

- Professional players under contract with a pro team are not allowed to play in the PVSSL.
- **Forfeits due to infraction:** A team that violates this rule will forfeit all games played until the infraction is detected, losing their forfeit fee. Players must provide proof of their contract upon request.

### **3. Proper Conduct**

- The **team manager** is responsible for the conduct of players, coaches, and fans, both during and after the game.
- If a game is terminated due to misconduct, the team at fault will be penalized with a **loss, a half-game forfeit fee**, and a **\$50 fine**, payable before the next scheduled game.
- **Game cannot start or is terminated due to misconduct:** The team at fault will be penalized accordingly.

- **Bench Area:** Only players, coaching staff, and team managers listed on the team roster are allowed in the bench area. Fans must remain outside this area, unless separated by a fence. Managers and coaches are responsible for enforcing this rule.

#### 4. **Coaching Certification & Background Check**

- All coaches must complete **concussion training** as per the CDC's **Heads Up Program**. Proof of training must be submitted to the League.
- All coaches must pass a background check.

#### 5. **Alcohol and Smoking/Vaping**

- Alcoholic beverages, smoking, and vaping are not permitted near the playing field during the game.
- Failure to comply with this rule will result in the forfeit of the game by the team committing the infraction.

#### 6. **Shin Pads and Mouth Guards**

- **Mouth guards** are optional for all divisions.
- **Shin pads** are mandatory for all divisions.
- Any other protective gear must comply with NCAA rules for adults and the High School Federation Rule Book for high school divisions.

#### 7. **Reporting Game Scores**

- **Adult Divisions:** Winning teams must report the score via the Google form by **9:30 pm** the night of the game. For doubleheaders, report the score immediately after the second game.
- **High School Divisions:** Report scores by **9:30 pm** the night of the game. For doubleheaders, report the score immediately after the second game.

- **Penalty for late reporting:** A \$10 fine will be deducted from the team's forfeit fee at the end of the season for failure to report scores on time.

## 8. Team Insurance

- Each team is responsible for securing **liability insurance**. The League cannot provide this coverage. Most cities and towns offer liability coverage for teams using their facilities. Teams needing additional coverage must provide it.

## VII. REFEREES

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### A. Referee Scheduling

- Every attempt will be made to schedule **two referees** per game by the assigner.
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### B. Referee Game Fees

1. **Adult Women:** \$80.00 per referee
  2. **Adult Men:** \$100.00 per referee
  3. **High Schools:** \$80.00 per referee
  4. **Payment:** Fees are payable in **cash** at **game time** by each team.
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### C. Fee Payment Requirement

- The referee fees **must be paid** before the game starts.
- If fees are not paid, the **game will not be played**, and a **forfeit** will be awarded to the opposing team.
- There will be **no exceptions** to this rule.

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#### **D. Single Referee Scenario**

- If only **one referee** reports to the game, he/she may still officiate alone if **both teams agree**.
- If only one referee was assigned by the league assigner, that referee will work alone without question.
- In this scenario, the **fee** will be **one and a half times the normal fee, evenly divided** between the two teams.
- If the teams do not agree to play with one referee, the game will be rescheduled at the discretion of the League Commissioners, and both teams **must** play at the new date and time.

#### **VIII. LEAGUE COMMISSIONERS AND ASSISTANTS RESPONSIBILITIES**

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##### **A. Game Scheduling**

- Schedule all league games.

##### **B. Meeting Scheduling**

- Schedule all league meetings.

##### **C. Referee Assignments**

- Assign qualified referees to each game, unless an assigner has been hired.

##### **D. League Treasurer**

- Act as the Treasurer of the League.

##### **E. League Records and Standings**

- Maintain and update all league records and standings as necessary.

## **F. Discipline Management**

- Handle daily discipline for any reported violations.
- Serious violations will be discussed with the **Disciplinary Board** before a decision is made.

## **IX. DISCIPLINARY ACTION:**

- **A.** All disciplinary decisions will be made by the commissioner according to the League's By-Laws and past practices.
  - **B.** Penalties for serious violations will be decided by the Executive Board.
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## **X. YELLOW CARD VIOLATIONS:**

- **A.** Yellow cards will be reported to the Commissioners as per the game rules.
  - **B.** 3rd yellow card in the same season = 1-game suspension + \$10 fine.
  - **C.** 4th yellow card = 1-game suspension + \$10 fine.
  - **D.** 5th yellow card = 1-game suspension + \$10 fine.
  - **E.** 6th yellow card = suspension for the rest of the season + \$15 fine.
  - **F.** Fines must be paid before the next game or deducted from the team's forfeit fee.
  - **G.** Card penalties are enforced separately for each player.
  - **H.** No exceptions to card penalties.
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## **XI. RED CARD VIOLATIONS:**

- **A.** 1st red card (2 yellows or direct) = 1-game suspension + \$15 fine.

- **Intentional Handball or Tactical Foul (DOGSO):** Any player committing an intentional handball or deliberate take down will be **immediately terminated from the game** and issued a **\$10 fine**. The player will remain **eligible to participate in the next scheduled game**.
  - **B.** Serious foul play or violent behavior = 3-game suspension + \$20 fine.
  - **C.** 2nd red card = suspension for the rest of the season + \$25 fine.
  - **D.** Red card for fighting = suspension for the season + \$25 fine.
  - **E.** Red card for striking a referee = suspension for the season + 1 year + \$50 fine.
  - **F.** Fines must be paid before the next game or deducted from the team's forfeit fee.
  - **G. Note Regarding Playoffs:**  
Season-ending suspensions will carry over into the playoffs. Red card suspensions carry over into playoffs; players must serve suspensions before playoff eligibility.
  - Card accumulation from the regular season will not carry over into the playoffs; all players will begin postseason play with a clean slate—**with the exception of red card violations**. Standard rules regarding suspensions and fines will apply starting with the first playoff game and will remain in effect throughout the duration of the playoffs.
  - Red card suspensions carry over into playoffs; players must serve suspensions before playoff eligibility.
  - **H. Commissioner's Discretion:** The Commissioner reserves the right to assess each offense on a case-by-case basis and may impose a more severe or reduced penalty than the standard. All disciplinary decisions are made with consideration of the specific circumstances involved.
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## **XII. TEAM-CARD ACCUMULATIONS:**

- **A.** 15th card in a season = \$15 team fine.
- **B.** Each card beyond the 15th = \$10 team fine.
- **C.** Teams with 15+ cards will not be eligible for playoffs.

- **D. Team Card Accumulation:** If a team accumulates fewer than 15 cards during the regular season, that total will not carry over into the playoffs. all Teams will begin postseason play with a clean slate—**with the exception of red card violations.**
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### **XIII. AUTHORITY OF LEAGUE COMMISSIONERS:**

- The Commissioner has the authority to rule on situations not explicitly covered by these rules. Each case will be handled individually.
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### **XIV. LEAGUE PHILOSOPHY AND REMINDER:**

- The PVSSL is an amateur summer league where teams organize, acquire their own fields, and play a schedule managed by the Board. The League's goal is to provide quality competition at a recreational level with fair play and structured guidelines.