



Marin Coed Soccer League (MCSL) – Official Rule Book

League Mission & Values

The Marin Coed Soccer League (MCSL) is an adult recreational league built on the principles of inclusivity, sportsmanship, and fun. We do not keep official scores or standings; instead, the only award presented each season is the Sportsmanship Trophy, honoring the team that best embodies our values.

Spirit of the League:

1. **Always Show Respect** – Help opponents up, acknowledge good plays on either side, and resolve any disputes through your Team Representatives.
2. **Play Clean, Play Mindful** – Avoid unnecessary contact, and be especially aware of size or skill mismatches to ensure everyone's safety.
3. **Respect Referees and All Participants** – Treat referees, teammates, opponents, and Team Representatives with courtesy at all times; disagreements must be handled calmly and constructively.

Team Formation Requirements

- **Standard Lineup:** 6 men + 5 women = 11 players total.
- **Required to Start:** At kickoff, teams must meet one of the following:
 - **Required Formation:** 5 women and 6 men.
 - **Female Player Exception:** If both teams combined can't provide 5 women, Team Representatives may agree to play with 4 women and 7 men. At no time may a team field more than 7 men.
- **Player Sharing:** If either team is short, Team Representatives are encouraged to share players to maintain the required formation.

Late Arrivals

- **15-Minute Forfeit Grace Period:** Teams have up to 15 minutes after the scheduled kickoff to assemble the standard or adjusted lineup. If the game begins late, referees may shorten the halves and/or halftime break to ensure the match ends on time.

Forfeits



- **Forfeiture Condition:** If a team cannot field a complete lineup after the grace period and any player-sharing attempts, the match will be declared a forfeit. The referee will leave the field.
- **Avoiding Forfeits:** Forfeits should be avoided whenever possible, as they damage the league's reputation and spirit of play.
 - Team Representatives are expected to maintain proactive communication during the week leading up to a game to coordinate player availability.
 - If a short turnout is anticipated, Team Representatives should reach out to the pool of players who have volunteered to play extra games and arrange support in advance.
- **Unofficial Pick-Up Games:** If players choose to continue with an informal scrimmage after a forfeited match, it is not considered an official league game and is not covered under league liability. To protect our partnership with the field providers, only registered players may participate. Guest players who have not registered with the league or signed a liability waiver may not participate.

Team Colors and Equipment

- **Team Colors:** If both teams are wearing the same or similar jersey colors, the home team must change to avoid confusion.
- **Uniforms:** All players must wear matching colored shirts to represent their team.
- **Protective Gear:** All players are required to wear shin guards and soccer socks that fully cover and secure the shin guards.
- **Jewelry & Accessories:** For safety reasons, watches, jewelry, and any other potentially dangerous accessories are not permitted. Any braces or other hard material worn by a player must be covered with a soft material to prevent injury to themselves and other players.

Rainouts

- **Turf Fields:** Games scheduled on turf will be played rain or shine.
- **Safety Exception:** Matches will only be canceled if weather or field conditions present a safety risk to players or referees.
- **Reschedule Deadlines:**
 - **Game time or location changes:** Must be finalized by end of day Tuesday.
 - **Location-only changes:** Must be finalized by end of day Thursday.
- **Notification:** Any cancellations or reschedules will be communicated to all players prior to the game, and updates will be posted on SportsEngine.



Team Leadership During Games

- **Team Representation:** Each team must have at least one Team Representative (Team Rep) or Team Captain present at every game to represent the interests of the players, the team, and the league.
- **Game Management:** Team Reps/Captains manage their team during the match and coordinate with the opposing Team Rep and referees to help maintain control of the game.
- **Authority to Pause Play:** In coordination with referees, Team Reps/Captains may stop the game at any time if the atmosphere is becoming unsafe or unsportsmanlike.
- **Conflict Prevention:** Team Reps/Captains are expected to take proactive steps to de-escalate conflicts, including removing a player from the field if they are persistently arguing with referees or opponents. If behavior continues, Team Reps/Captains will ask the player to leave the field entirely.
- **Incident Reporting:** Team Reps/Captains must report any issues or serious incidents to the league within 24 hours of the event.
- **Communication Channel:** All player concerns must go through their Team Rep, not directly to referees or opposing teams.
- **Disciplinary Matters:** Serious issues, such as disciplinary violations, will be reviewed by the Disciplinary Committee (DC).

Fees and Liability Forms

- **Full and Part-Time Player Registration:** All players must be registered in SportsEngine prior to participating in any league match. Registration includes paying team fees and completing the seasonal liability release form.
- **Guest Player Registration:** Guest players must also register on SportsEngine.
 - In emergency situations, a printed liability form may be used if the guest player has not yet registered in SportsEngine.
 - However, the guest player must complete full registration in SportsEngine immediately after the game in order to continue participating in future matches.

Disciplinary Issues and Reporting Process

- **Reporting Requirements:** Team Representatives and referees must report any serious incidents within 24 hours of the match. Reportable incidents include (but are not limited to):
 - Serious foul play
 - Violent conduct
 - Spitting
 - Offensive or abusive language or gestures
 - Any yellow or red card issued
 - Physical or verbal threats



- **Automatic Suspension:** Any player who receives a red card is automatically suspended from play until the Disciplinary Committee (DC) has made a ruling. Players involved in other disciplinary matters (with or without a card) may face a suspension or other action as warranted.
- **Decision Process:** The DC will review all reports, hear all sides, and determine appropriate consequences. Possible outcomes include:
 - Caution or written reprimand
 - Suspension from one or more matches / season
 - Probation
 - Permanent removal from the League
 - Other actions as deemed necessary

Player Safety and Fair Play

The Marin Coed Soccer League (MCSL) believes that safety and fun are the most important components of our recreational program. Emotional and physical safety must always be prioritized over competitiveness.

- **General Safety:** Players must avoid any foul or challenge that endangers an opponent. Reckless tackles, excessive force, or dangerous play will be strictly penalized. Attacking players must, whenever possible, yield to avoid any potential collision with the goalkeeper.
- **Physical Advantage Rule:** At no time should a player who has a clear physical advantage (e.g., size, speed, strength, or skill) use their body to overpower another player in a way that creates unsafe contact.
 - This includes, but is not limited to: shoulder charging, pushing, pulling, holding clothing, or using physicality to gain or deny position.
 - Note: While some of these actions may be considered “legal” under FIFA rules, they are discouraged in MCSL in order to protect players and maintain the recreational spirit of the league.
- **Player Responsibility:** Each player is responsible for assessing their opponent and adjusting their level of physicality accordingly. If an opponent feels physically threatened, the aggressor is not playing within the spirit of the league.
- **Equal Participation:** Every player should be given an opportunity to participate in team play. With 11v11 full-field games, all 11 players should be actively included throughout the match.
- **Sportsmanship Feedback:** Team Representatives and players are expected to monitor sportsmanship. If other teams or players raise concerns about aggressive behavior, those concerns should be taken seriously and adjustments made immediately.
- **Referee Guidance:** Referees are instructed to prioritize safety over strict FIFA interpretations. While physical contact is part of soccer, referees should stop or caution play if contact crosses into unsafe or unsportsmanlike behavior, even if the action might otherwise be allowed under FIFA rules.



League Rules

All matches in the Marin Coed Soccer League (MCSL) follow the official FIFA Laws of the Game, except where modified by the following league-specific rules.

General Info

- **Format:** 11 v 11
- **Field Slot:** Each game has a two-hour field window and must finish within that window.
- **Duration / Clock:** Target 45-minute halves with a running clock.
- **Adjustments for Delays:** If kickoff is delayed or there are extended stoppages (injuries, etc.), the referee may shorten halves and/or halftime to ensure the match ends on time.
- **Time-Wasting:** Deliberate time-wasting may be cautioned (yellow card) under unsporting behavior.
- **Final Authority:** All timekeeping and match-length adjustments are at the referee's discretion to comply within the two-hour limit.

Substitutions

- Unlimited substitutions are allowed.
- Substitutions may occur only during stoppages in play (goal kicks, set pieces, corners, or throw-ins), regardless of which team has possession.
- All substitutions must:
 - Be made at midfield (the halfway line).
 - Be confirmed with the referee's acknowledgment before the new player enters.
- Failure to follow procedure:
 - **First offense** = warning
 - **Repeat offense** = yellow card

Penalty Kicks

- All penalty kicks must be taken by a female player.

Enforcement of Player Safety and Fair Play

- If a player uses excessive physicality, intimidation, or unsafe play that violates league standards, the referee will:
 - **First offense:** Issue a verbal warning and stop play if necessary.
 - **Repeated offense:** Issue a yellow card. The player must leave the field for 15 minutes, and may be replaced by a substitute.
 - **Serious or dangerous offense:** The referee may issue a red card immediately, resulting in ejection from the match.



- Referees are encouraged to apply this standard consistently, prioritizing player safety and sportsmanship over strict FIFA allowances for physical contact.

Respecting Referees and Communication

- Players are not authorized to challenge referee decisions whether speaking directly to the referee or not. Seeking clarification is permitted, but it must be done respectfully.
- All ongoing communication with referees must go through Team Representatives, not directly from individual players.
- **Enforcement:**
 - **First offense** = verbal warning.
 - **Repeat offenses** (continued challenges to referee decisions or persistent arguing with referees/players) = yellow card.
 - **Serious dissent or disrespect** = red card at the referee's discretion.
- **Authority of Referees:** Referees may issue warnings and cards to players on the field or on the sidelines if behavior violates this rule.

Slide Tackles

- Slide tackling is not permitted in the MCSL.
- Goalkeepers may go to the ground to make a legal play on the ball within their own penalty area.

Penalties for Slide Tackles:

- **No players nearby:** Players should not go to the ground under any circumstance. The referee may issue a warning or indirect free kick awarded to the opposing team.
- **Near an opponent (no contact):** Yellow card + direct free kick awarded to the opposing team.
- **Contact or dangerous play:** Red card + direct free kick awarded to the opposing team.

Game Cards

- The home team is responsible for providing a game card to the referee before the match.
- Team Representatives are encouraged to carry multiple copies to ensure availability.
- Referees must complete the game card and submit the information to the Referee Coordinator within 24 hours of the match.



Yellow and Red Cards

Yellow Cards

- A player who receives a yellow card must be substituted and remain off the field for 15 minutes. The player may be replaced by a substitute during this time.
- After 15 minutes the carded player is allowed to return back to the game only with Referee approval.
- If no substitutes are available, the team must play with one fewer player for the duration of the 15-minute penalty.

Red Cards

- A player who receives a red card is subject to an automatic one-game suspension.
- The player must leave the premises of the soccer complex entirely, not just the playing field, and may not return for the remainder of the match.
- An incident investigation will be opened by the Disciplinary Committee (DC).
- Based on the findings, the DC may extend the suspension to multiple games or, in severe cases, to the remainder of the season.

Game Management Blow Outs

If a team leads by 4 or more goals, the Team Representative of the winning team is expected to adjust their team structure to protect the values of sportsmanship and fun for all participants.

Examples of acceptable adjustments include:

- Providing more playing time to teammates who typically play fewer minutes.
- Switching player positions (e.g., moving a striker to goalkeeper or defender, moving defenders to offense).
- Adjusting tactics in a way that maintains the integrity of play without disrespecting the opposing team.

The goal is to prevent one-sided “blowouts” while still keeping the match enjoyable and competitive. Adjustments should always be implemented respectfully and in collaboration with the opposing Team Rep when possible.