



UNITED CLUBS LEAGUE GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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A. General

- i. The United Clubs League is managed by the Maryland State Youth Soccer Association (MSYSA).
- ii. Clubs participating in the United Clubs League will be represented by an Advisory Council who will provide feedback and direction to the league.
 - i. The Advisory Council will have 10 seats representing the various sizes of clubs and will be divided by the number of teams they have participating in the league as follows:
 1. 1-5 teams (1 seat)
 2. 6-10 teams (1 seat)
 3. 11-20 teams (2 seats)
 4. 21-40 teams (3 seats)
 5. 41+ teams (3 seats)
- iii. [IFAB Laws of the Game](#) shall apply except as amended herein. Lack of knowledge of the United Clubs League Rules will not relieve any Coach, Team Official, Parent or Player of a team participating in United Clubs League or seeking entry in United Clubs League from the responsibilities and possible penalties herein.
- iv. ALL CLUBS, TEAM OFFICIALS, PARENTS AND PLAYERS BY PARTICIPATING IN UNITED CLUBS LEAGUE, AGREE THAT THEY ARE BOUND BY THESE RULES.
- v. The Seasonal Year runs from August 1 through July 31 of the following calendar year and shall be comprised of at least two (2) United Clubs League seasons of play, Fall and Spring.
- vi. The Fall United Clubs League season begins with the first scheduled league game and concludes upon completion of the final league game, with all games to be played between September and December. The Spring United Clubs League season begins with the first scheduled league game and concludes upon completion of the final league or playoff game, with all games to be played between March and June.
- vii. Player rosters and passes are for the seasonal year - August 1 to July 31.

B. Affiliation

- i. United Clubs League is affiliated with the Maryland State Youth Soccer Association (MSYSA).

C. Club Entry and Obligations

- i. Entry of a new Club into United Clubs League must be approved by the United Clubs League leadership.
- ii. New clubs must provide the following information: Club name, geographic location, and the number of teams to be entered. In addition, the Club should have fields available for use by their home team (fields must be of appropriate size and in sufficient number to support the number of teams entered in the league).
- iii. A club must have fields and goals within the tolerances established by the United Clubs League.

- iv. The United Clubs League has allowed for some flexibility in goal size, but full-size goals are not permitted for U8-U12 age groups.
- v. ALL teams are expressly prohibited from recruiting players from other United Clubs League teams. Clubs with participating teams in the league are expressly prohibited from recruiting teams. Contact the league office if such a situation arises.

D. Registration

i. Administration

- a. United Clubs League will utilize MSYSA Competitions as the Management Group.
- b. Participating clubs and teams will be required to register all individuals intending to compete in the event.
 - i. UCL will honor the registrations from other Organization Members of US Soccer.
 - ii. Participant registration information will be ported into the UCL team's registration solution at no additional cost and must be completed before the team's first weekend kickoff.
- c. Each team representative shall be responsible for registering participating teams in MSYSA Competitions. Teams should contact their club administrator for details.
- d. Team accounts must include accurate and complete information at the time of application. Submission of inaccurate or misleading information may result in a team being deemed ineligible to participate.

ii. Team Rosters

- a. Official Team Rosters shall be used for United Clubs League play. Once the roster is approved by the MSYSA State registrar, it will be automatically sourced over to the United Clubs League event. These rosters will appear on your game card for each match.
- b. Every team must designate at least one (1) participating adult to assume responsibility for the team as a team official, and that individual must meet all mandatory compliance requirements set forth by U.S. Soccer and applicable federal and state laws.
- c. Teams will register for league play using the designated on-line GotSport registration solution and pay online. Teams must register and pay associated fees on or before league fall and spring deadlines. No applications will be considered outside of the GotSport event registration. Any questions regarding registration should be directed to ucl@msysa.org.
 - i. If your team withdraws before acceptance into a division, you will be assessed for a \$25 administrative fee.
 - ii. Once the team is assigned to a bracket, you will be assessed a \$100 administrative fee to withdraw your team.
 - iii. Once schedules are released, **no refunds will be issued under any circumstances.**

iii. Player Eligibility and Team Composition

- a. U8 – U10 will play 7v7
 - i. A maximum of fourteen (14) eligible players may be listed on a game day roster at any time. Each player listed must be rostered with the MSYSA. A minimum of four (4) players must be listed on a roster in order for a team to be duly constituted.
 - ii. Where requested by the participating teams within a given district and division, U8 may play 5v5 (4 field players plus a goalie).
- b. U11 – U12 will play 9v9
 - i. A maximum of sixteen (16) eligible players may be listed on a game day roster at any time. Each player listed must be rostered with the MSYSA. A minimum of six (6) players must be listed on a roster in order for a team to be duly constituted.
- c. U13 + will play 11v11
 - i. A maximum of twenty-two (22) eligible players may be listed on a game day roster at any time with a maximum of 18 in uniform active participants. Each player listed must be rostered with the MSYSA. A minimum of seven (7) players must be listed on a roster in order for a team to be duly constituted.
- d. A team official is any non-playing individual whose name appears on the Approved Official UCL Roster.
- e. Any player in United Clubs League must have a valid current Player Pass.

iv. Age Divisions

- a. The league will have male and female divisions for U8-U19 and 20U+ teams. Age cutoff dates will be between August 1st and July 31st each year. United Clubs League will share the current seasonal year age groupings ahead of registration.

v. Player Passes

- a. UCL Teams must obtain MSYSA approved player passes for each player prior to their first game of the season. Player passes will be available for inspection by the opposing team official and referee prior to each game. Any irregularities or questions will be reviewed by the referee at the game, who will have the final say over the eligibility of the player in question. Both paper and electronic valid player passes will be honored.

vi. Club Pass System

- a. Players may only compete with ONE Club in the United Clubs League.
- b. Registered carded players affiliated with a participating club may play on any United Clubs League team within their club for which they meet the age requirements. The Club Pass System is designed to give coaches flexibility to move players within their club to address team needs while supporting overall player development.
 - i. 8U-10U- Unlimited Club Pass Players
 - ii. 11U+- Maximum of 5 Club Pass Players at any one time

- c. Club pass players may be added at any time prior to kickoff of a specific game and must appear on the Match Card. Hand-written players are not permitted.

vii. Scheduling

- a. All age groups will be scheduled for eight (8) league games in each of the Fall and Spring seasons based on the number of teams entered and the alignment of the divisions within their respective age groups. Upon publication of the schedule, teams are expected to promptly coordinate all game arrangements. All communication must take place through the GotSport Chat within the schedule for each match. All game dates must be confirmed prior to the scheduling lock deadlines. Teams should promptly contact their opponents regarding any requested changes to the game day or week. If both teams agree to a change before the schedule is locked, the home team is responsible for updating the match details in GotSport. The home team must confirm the game date, time, location, and provide any necessary travel information as soon as possible, and no later than ten (10) days prior to the scheduled match. Both teams share responsibility for being proactive in the scheduling process. If the home team fails to provide timely details, or if either team is unresponsive, the UCL Coordinator must be notified promptly. All matches are to be played as scheduled unless both teams mutually agree to a change. If an alternate date cannot be agreed upon, the match will be played on the original league-scheduled date.
- b. After the Schedule Lock Date, any change to a match date, time, or venue requires submission of a Game Change Request form. Both teams must agree to the change before UCL will process the request. Requests must be finalized at least seven (7) days prior to kickoff to be considered, though UCL may grant exceptions on a case-by-case basis for extenuating circumstances. Teams must reply with either an Acceptance or Refusal within 72-hours of a submitted request. [HOW TO REQUEST & ACCEPT A GAME CHANGE in GOTSPORT](#)

E. Referees

- i. Referee assignments for United Clubs League home games will be coordinated by the league office through MSYSA Referee Assigning. The MSYSA Referee Assigning team can be reached at referee@msysa.org.
- ii. For all United Clubs League games, referee fees are included in the Registration Application Entry Fee. Referees will be paid according to the amount published prior to each seasonal year.
- iii. Abuse of referees by coaches, managers, players, or spectators will not be tolerated. Any such behavior will be referred to the league coordinator who will address the situations with the Rules and Disciplinary Committee for investigation and possible sanctions.
- iv. All game results will be final, and no game result will be subject to protest.

F. Standings and Awards

- i. For U8-U10 age groups, no standings are kept in United Clubs League for dissemination to the public.
- ii. A team's standings within its division will be determined by the number of points it receives based on its win/loss record during the season. Points will be awarded as follows: 3 points for a win, 1 point for a tie, 0 points for a loss.
- iii. No championship or runner up trophies are awarded.
- iv. If a team withdraws from the United Clubs League during the season of play, all scores and point records for, or in connection with, that team shall be nullified and all games played or scheduled to be played shall be recorded as a "BYE" for the opposing team.
- v. If a team forfeits more than one game during the United Clubs League season of play, then that team may be removed from the league.

G. Game Information

- i. **Ball Size**
 - a. U12 will utilize a Size 4
 - b. U13 + will utilize a Size 5
- ii. **Game length**
 - a. U8 - U10 will be 25-minute halves
 - b. U11 - U12 will be 30-minute halves
 - c. U13 - U14 will be 35-minute halves
 - d. U15 - U16 will be 40-minute halves
 - e. U17+ will be 45-minute halves
 - f. There will be a ten (10) minute half-time interval in all games
- iii. **Player Counts**
 - a. U8 - U10 will play 7v7
 - i. Some U8 districts, divisions may play 5v5 (4 field players and a goalie). See D, iii, A, ii.
 - b. U11- U12 will play 9v9
 - c. U13+ will play 11v11
- iv. **Field Size**
 - a. U8 – U10: 30–40 yards (width) x 45–55 yards (length)
 - b. U11- U12: 45–55 yards (width) x 70–80 yards (length)
 - c. U13 +: 70–80 yards (width) x 110–120 yards (length)
 - d. Games will start at 9:00am or later on their scheduled game date (with few exceptions, when absolutely necessary).
- v. **Field Set Up/Take Down**
 - a. For United Clubs League home fields, field set up and take down is the responsibility of the home club. The field is to be properly cut and lined, the goals and flags in good condition and properly positioned, and the field safe for play. The home team is to provide the game ball. The recommended field and goal sizes are detailed on the website.

- b. There will be a build out line for all 7v7 (and 5v5) age groups.
 - i. The opponent must retreat behind the build out line on all goal kicks or when the goalkeeper has possession in their hands.
 - ii. The ball is considered to be in play for all players once it has moved either from the Goalkeepers' hands or a goal kick.
 - iii. Teams may decide to play quickly before the opponent has retreated behind the build out line.
 - iv. The build out line will be used in place of the midfield line when considering the offside position.
 - 1. Players cannot be penalized for an offside offense between the midfield line and build out line.
 - 2. Players can be penalized for an offside offense between the build out line and goal line in the opponent's half (all other offside elements remain the same)

vi. Substitutions

- a. Except as noted, substitution shall be unlimited with the prior consent of the referee at the following times: Substitutions are unlimited with regard to the number of players and reentry. Substitutions may be made from MIDFIELD with the consent of the referee at any stoppage of play. Players leaving the game should come off the field prior to new players entering the field. If a sub is made before a penalty kick, then only the players on the field at the time of the infraction may take the kick.
- b. A substitution may be made for a player who receives a caution (yellow card) at the time the caution is issued.

vii. Throw-ins

- a. Referees will only allow one opportunity to throw a ball into play correctly.

viii. Kick-offs

- a. No goal may be scored directly from a kick-off.

ix. Touchlines

- a. Both teams are to take position on the same touchline, separated by the mid-field line. Coaches and players may not cross the midfield line. Spectators are to take position on the opposite touchline. Teams and spectators are to remain between the top of the two penalty areas and behind the spectator lines three (3) to five (5) yards from the touchline

x. Heading

- a. No heading will be allowed for U8 – U11. If a player heads the ball, it will result in an indirect free kick.

xi. Goalkeepers

- a. Goalkeepers may not punt or drop-kick the ball for U8 – U10.

xii. Player Equipment

- a. Player safety is the responsibility of the referee and shall remain so. Necklaces, earrings, and other jewelry must be removed before a player will be allowed to play. Players wearing “soft” arm casts will be allowed to play. It is highly recommended that players wearing eyeglasses wear sports glasses for protective measures. Mouthpieces are not required for players having braces on their teeth.

xiii. Official Roster and Coach/Team Official Player Passes

- a. Each coach or manager must have a current Official Roster, Official Player Passes, and appropriate Coach/Team Official Passes at every game. These may be provided in either paper or electronic format. Before the match begins, the referee or assistant referee must verify team officials and player passes, confirming each coach, manager, and player against the Match (Game) Card submitted by the teams. The Match (Game) card with the latest timestamp will be recognized as the official Match (Game) for the match. This requirement is not optional, and a referee’s refusal to check passes must be immediately reported to the League following the game. A coach has the right to check the opposing team’s player passes against the roster, before or after the game.

xiv. Referee No-Show

- a. If an assigned referee fails to appear within fifteen (15) minutes of the scheduled kick-off time, the game may be played with a mutually agreed upon qualified substitute referee. If both teams choose to play with said substitute referee, then the results of the game will be official and may not be appealed on these grounds. If no suitable substitute is available, then the game may be rescheduled, with the original home team traveling to the opponent's field.

xv. Cancellations and Rescheduling

- a. It is the responsibility of the home team / club to notify the league, referee assignor, and your opponents of any field closures due to inclement weather. Whenever possible, the league, teams and referees will be notified of weather cancellations, at a minimum of two (2) hours prior to kick off. The home team is responsible for notifying the league by emailing ucl@msysa.org, the referee assignor by emailing referee@msysa.org, and their opponent of the weather cancellation. If a team has not been notified of a cancellation, then the coach should assume that the game will be played as scheduled. The Referee on-call emergency phone number is 443-766-0610.
- b. Rescheduling of games is permitted with agreement by both teams in the GotSport chat communication. The game reschedule information should be submitted to the league office via the Game Change Form for approval, and the league office will update the schedule to reflect the agreed upon rescheduled venue, date, and time.
- c. Once the schedules are locked by the league, all changes must be agreed to in the GotSport chat communication and submitted to the league via a Game Change

Form for approval. All changes must be submitted to the league office at least 7-days prior to the match.

- d. Cancellations within 7-days of kick-off will result in full referee fees being paid by the offending team. You are required to promptly contact the league at ucl@msysa.org and the referee assignor by emailing referee@msysa.org, if there is an extenuating circumstance needing review to be considered.
- e. Once a match reaches half-time, the result will be final if the game has to be terminated for any reason.

H. Team Obligations

- i. The home team is to contact the opposing coach no later than Wednesday of each week to verify or reconfirm game time, location, and team colors in the [GotSport chat feature for their scheduled match](#).
- ii. Both teams should [print the Official Match \(Game\) Card](#) for the match and present it to the match official at Team (coaches, managers, and player) check in. The referee will review the Official passes and match the names with that on the Official Match (Game) Card. NO WRITTEN in names will be permitted.
- iii. If there is a color conflict in the uniform, the home team, PRIOR TO THE GAME, shall be responsible for resolving the conflict.
- iv. Player uniform shirts (except that of the goalkeeper) must clearly display a unique player number which corresponds to the player number for that player on the Official Roster and Game Card. The player number on the uniform jersey must be displayed on the back and sized between six (6) and eight (8) inches in height. A team's failure to comply with this rule may result in forfeiture to the opposition by a score of 1-0.
- v. In accordance with [IFAB Laws of the Game](#), appropriately sized shin guards will be MANDATORY equipment for all players in all United Clubs League games.
- vi. The home team is to provide the game ball; a properly sized field, lined and cut complete with a spectator line; goals/portable goals, nets and corner flags.
- vii. Fields must be deemed safe for play at the discretion of the assigned referee.
- viii. Violations due to a lapse in responsibility may result in game forfeiture or loss of the opportunity to host future home games.
- ix. If on game day, a game is moved from the scheduled field to another field – with the agreement of both team officials and the referee – then the home team for that game remains responsible for the preparation of the replacement field. The home team official is also responsible for notifying their other Club teams who are scheduled for later games on the original field of the change.
- x. Sidelines
 - a. Both competing teams, together with their coaches and team officials (rostered only), are to take position on the same touchline, separated by the mid-field line; coaches and teams may not cross the mid-field line; spectators shall take the opposite side of the pitch.

- b. Coaches of each team may provide instructions to their players during a game from their respective half of the sideline only within their technical area.
- c. All spectators, coaches and sideline players must stay clear of the touch line between the corner of the 14-yard extension of the penalty box and clear of the goal line.
- d. The referee or assistant referee may, at any time, for any reason restrict the sideline movement of coaches, players, and spectators.
- e. A spectator line must be placed three (3) to five (5) yards behind the touchline to keep coaches, spectators and sideline players back from the field and out of the assistant referee's line of movement. All coaches, spectators, and sideline players are required to stand behind this spectator line.
- f. It is the coach's responsibility to control his/her sideline and parent behavior. If the referee deems there is an issue with the parent's sideline, then the referee will direct his/her concerns to the head coach. The coach must address this situation immediately with his/her spectators. Failure of a coach to control his/her sideline spectator behavior will result in disciplinary action against the coach and possibly the club. The Rules and Disciplinary Committee will address all cases of poor sideline behavior.

xi. Players

- a. Necklaces, earrings, and other jewelry must be removed before a player will be allowed to participate in the game.
- b. Players wearing "soft" arm casts will be allowed to participate in the game.
- c. It is highly recommended that players wearing eyeglasses wear sports glasses for protective measures.
- d. Mouthpieces are not required for players having tooth braces.

I. Forfeits

- i. If a team cannot field a minimum of four (4) players (U8-U10), six (6) players (U11-U12), or seven (7) players (U13+) within fifteen minutes after the scheduled kick-off time, then that team will forfeit the game. The game will be entered in the standings as a 1-0 loss for the forfeiting team.
- ii. In the event that neither team is able to field the minimum number of required players, the record will show a 1-0 loss for both teams.
- iii. Any team found to be responsible for the referee abandoning a match will forfeit that game, and the record will show a 1-0 loss for that team. All games abandoned by the referee will be reviewed by the Disciplinary Committee, and an appropriate course of action will be taken against the team responsible. This action could result in a team being removed from the league.
- iv. Failure to produce the Official Player Passes, Team Officials Passes and/or the Official Roster within the league's fifteen (15) minute grace period, will result in a forfeit. The score shall be recorded as a 1-0 loss for the forfeiting team.

- v. Failure to notify your opponent of a game cancellation due to inclement weather will result in an automatic forfeiture by the offending team. The score shall be recorded as a 1-0 loss for the forfeiting team.
- vi. Failure of the home team to provide the game ball, a properly lined and cut field, nets and corner flags may result in forfeiture of the game.
- vii. Failure of a coach or team official to promptly leave the sight and sound of the field and remain clear of the field of play after receiving a red card, may result in the match being terminated and further disciplinary action may be taken by the league.
- viii. If the coach or team official receives a red card and there is no other carded team official present to supervise the team, then the game will result in an automatic forfeit.
- ix. If a suspended coach/manager is within sight and sound of the field of play; or a suspended player participates in a game that he/she should have been sitting out, their team shall forfeit the match in question. The result will be a 1-0 loss for the offending team.
- x. If a team forfeits more than one league game during the United Clubs League season of play, then that team may be dropped from the league, and all subsequent opponents will be given a 1-0 win.
- xi. Any team that fails to appear for a scheduled match or provides insufficient notice to cancel assigned referees will be responsible for the full cost of referee fees.
With the exception of inclement weather (which requires a minimum of two (2) hours' notice) or other field-related emergencies, the league must be notified of any cancellation at least seven (7) days prior to the scheduled game. Failure to provide such notice will result in the offending team being held responsible for all referee fees.

J. POST-MATCH REPORTING: Reporting the Score, Misconducts, & Injuries

- i. The league operates under an online system. Score reporting instructions are located on the top of the Game Card.
- ii. The Center Referee will be responsible for reporting final scores, misconducts, and injuries no later than 9:00pm on the day of the game or at the latest within 48 hours of match completion.
- iii. League officials will ensure that all game scores are properly logged.

K. Game Conduct

- i. PHYSICAL VIOLENCE, FOUL AND ABUSIVE LANGUAGE, HARASSMENT OF PLAYERS OR REFEREES WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. Any incident of a player or coach being issued a Red Card for physical violence, assault, or abuse directed against a referee or assistant referee will be subject to an automatic review by the United Clubs League Leadership. Referees are encouraged to call the MSYSA Referee on-call number (443-766-0610) for any questions related to match day procedures, protocols, and/or policies.
- ii. The referee is in complete charge of the field and adjacent areas from the time he/she arrives at the game site until he/she departs.

The referee is empowered to:

- a. Rule on what equipment or accessories are considered to be dangerous.

- b. Issue yellow or red cards during that entire period.
- c. Terminate a game for coach, player, or spectator misconduct. The determination of the outcome of a terminated game shall be the responsibility of the Rules and Disciplinary Director, in consultation with the United Clubs League Leadership.
- d. Refuse to allow the game to be played if, in the referee's judgment, the field is unplayable due to length of grass, inadequate lines, or other impediments. Referees may depart from the area certain of receiving their fee.

L. Disciplinary Action

- i. A coach/manager who receives a Red Card during a game shall immediately leave the game site and its vicinity. In the event that the coach/manager is required to leave and there is no other carded adult able to supervise the team, the game shall be declared a forfeit in favor of the opposing team and entered in the standings as a 1-0 loss for the offending team.
- ii. If a player or coach/manager receives two Yellow Cards or a Red Card in a game, then the player or coach is ejected from the game and must sit-out the next league game. A coach must be out of sight and out of sound before, during and after a game for which the coach has been suspended. A suspended player may attend the game provided that he/she is not in uniform, does not play, and causes no further disruptions. If a suspended player or coach/manager participates in the game(s) for which they were suspended, then their team shall forfeit the game in question by a score of 1-0.

M. Protests and Appeals

- i. Referee calls during a game are judgmental and are not subject to appeal. Questions on interpretation of the rules by a referee should be discussed with the United Clubs League Referee Assignors, but again, are not subject to appeal.
- ii. The referee's judgment in issuing a Yellow or Red card is not grounds for protest and may not be appealed. The only basis for protest shall be whether a card was issued in accordance with the [IFAB Laws of the Game](#), as modified by United Clubs League rules and must be submitted to UCL by no later than 24 hrs. of the completion of the match.

N. Rules & Disciplinary Committee

- i. The Rules and Disciplinary (R & D) Committee shall consist of the United Clubs League office and league administrator(s).
- ii. Disciplinary action may be taken by the Committee against any player, team official, team and/or Club which fails to abide by the [Laws of the Game](#) and/or United Clubs League Rules and [Behavioral Expectations Policy](#). The R&D Director shall maintain accurate and complete records of all such actions. These records, together with the Laws of the Game, Policies and Rules of the League, may serve as a basis for future disciplinary action.
- iii. Actions Which May Be Taken Against a Player, Coach, Team Official or Club:
 - a. A verbal warning may be made by the R&D Director. A written record of such warning shall be made and may be referenced in any future actions against that party. A copy will be sent to the appropriate Club Representative.

- b. A written censure may be sent to the offending party by the R & D Director. A copy of the censure shall be sent to the offending party's coach or Club Representative, as appropriate.
- c. A player, team official, team, or club may be suspended for a number of games specifically identified to the party. A suspended player is prohibited from participating in, or being present at, any game during the period of their suspension. Suspended team officials may not appear at the game site or its vicinity for the game(s) for which they are suspended. Failure to comply with a suspension will cause the game(s) for which the suspension should have been served, to be forfeited in favor of the non-offending team by a score of 1-0.
- d. In extreme cases, upon the recommendation of the R & D Committee following a hearing and approval of the League Officer(s), a player, team, or Club may be banned from United Clubs League participation for a specified period of time. A banned person may not participate in any game or practice with their team during that period. A team that does not comply with this sanction may have all United Clubs League privileges revoked.