



SOCAL SOCCER LEAGUE

HANDBOOK

2025-26



A US CLUB SOCCER SANCTIONED LEAGUE

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Introduction

Welcome to the SOCAL Soccer League! We are excited to have you as part of our community, dedicated to promoting the growth, development, and enjoyment of youth soccer throughout Southern California. As a member of our league, you are joining a vibrant and passionate community that prioritizes sportsmanship, respect, and the pursuit of excellence both on and off the field.

This handbook has been carefully crafted to provide you with the essential information you need to navigate your membership with the SOCAL Soccer League. Whether you are a new member or have been with us for several seasons, we encourage you to review this guide thoroughly. It outlines the policies, procedures, and expectations that help us maintain a safe, competitive, and enjoyable environment for all participants.

Inside, you will find detailed information on membership conduct, participation requirements, and the resources available to support your journey within our league. We are committed to fostering a positive atmosphere where players, coaches, referees, and families can thrive. To achieve this, we ask that all members adhere to the guidelines set forth in this handbook, ensuring that the values of respect, integrity, and teamwork are upheld at all times.

Your involvement in the SOCAL Soccer League is crucial to our continued success and the development of youth soccer in our region. We value your participation and look forward to your active engagement in league activities. Should you have any questions or need further assistance, our team is always ready to support you.

Thank you for being a part of the SOCAL Soccer League. Together, let's make this season our best yet!

Mission

To allow all participating Clubs to have the freedom to make decisions that are in the best interest of all their players and to place the league's priority first and foremost on true player development.

Vision

Our purpose is to set the highest standards for soccer Clubs to develop players to their fullest potential – physically, mentally and ethically.

Core Values

Service

Opportunity

Commitment

Adaptability

Leadership

#WEARESOCAL

SOCAL Staff Contacts

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Melika Pirodan	Social Media, Marketing and League Support	melika@socalsoccerleague.org
Christine Van Slyke	Customer Experience Manager and League Support (Los Angeles, Ventura and Inland Empire)	christine@socalsoccerleague.org
Shawna Ziemer	Customer Experience Manager & Assistant Scheduler (San Diego & Orange Counties)	shawna@socalsoccerleague.org

Connections

Instagram

- [@socalsoccerleague](#) - Main SOCAL channel for general league information, programming and updates
- [@socalnpl](#) - SOCAL NPL specific events, updates and content
- [@socalcoachescorner](#) - Coaching Education courses, events and coach specific content
- [@socalupl](#) - The Unified Players League - recreation program for athletes with physical and mental disabilities

Websites

- www.socalsoccerleague.org - Main SOCAL website
- www.socalstatecup.com - State Cup website
- www.spring.socalsoccerleague.org - Spring League website
- www.socalsoccerleague.org/socalnpl - SOCAL NPL page
- www.socalsoccerleague.org/unified-players-league - SOCAL Unified Players League page

SOCAL Club Membership

Membership in SOCAL is considered and reviewed by application. Applications for new member Clubs begin January 15th of each year and close February 28th of each year. All member Clubs must meet our criteria of membership as outlined in the application and be accepting of our rules, policies, and procedures. Our competitions are governed by regulations approved by the Technical Committee and our membership and are written in this handbook. The Technical Committee shall rule on all disputes and issues pertaining to SOCAL competitions. The Technical Committee may overrule stated rules, policies, or procedures in this handbook if it is determined to be for the good of the game. Additionally, all participants in SOCAL events are members of US Club Soccer and therefore must adhere fully and faithfully, both to the letter and the spirit, to its stated bylaws, rules, and policies.

When SOCAL's rules and policies are in direct conflict with the rules of another League or governing body, SOCAL may be restricted from implementing certain rules. However, our Code of Ethics must be adhered to at all times.

New one-time Membership Club League Fee \$3,500.00

Criteria for Consideration into SOCAL Includes:

1. Clubs must identify a minimum of 5 teams to participate in the SOCAL.
2. Clubs must have an established and identifiable Director of Coaching.
3. Clubs must have a Board of Directors and a specified Club Administrator.
4. Clubs must have sufficient home fields to accommodate all teams within the Club.
5. Clubs must have a player development program in place and be willing to support the platform of development that SOCAL is based on.
6. Geographical location of the Club applying will be considered.

Home Field Requirement

Clubs should have at least one game-quality Field (5-time slots) per eight teams. In the event of a complaint about the quality of a Field, the appropriate League Staff shall determine if a Field is game quality. All new Venues must be added to [GotSport](#) by July 1st.

Field Closures must be reported to fieldclosures@socalsoccerleague.org

Field Requirements

Fields shall conform to FIFA (Law 1) and be adjusted to an age group. The home Club is responsible for marking and setup of the field. All fields must be properly marked, GOALS MUST be properly anchored down, and have corner flags. The suitability of corner flags, properly anchored goals, and the playability of the field are at the sole and final discretion of the Referee, as per the laws of the game. Be sure to discuss any concerns you may have about the field prior to the start of the game. Once the game begins it will be considered a played game.

Scheduling Requirements

Games may only be rescheduled due to field permit issues, up until Tuesday (at midnight) prior to the play weekend. A game must be within 5 miles of the original venue and be within 1 hour of the original start time. Referees must also be able to accommodate the change in order for the change to be approved. Any changes after Tuesday at midnight may be considered a forfeit. Forfeit and referee fees will be charged for forfeited games. Games will not be rescheduled for coaching conflicts or matters of convenience.

All fields being used for SOCAL games are required to have Certificates of Insurance, from US Club Soccer, on file with the Club supplying the home fields for the game. [US Club Soccer Certificate of Insurance Application](#)

Club Requirements

In order for a Club to be considered a member of SOCAL, the following conditions must be satisfied:

1. All teams participating in SOCAL events must belong to a single legal entity, with a single leadership structure, a single financial structure, and a single governance structure.
2. All teams participating in SOCAL events must have a common Club name, logo, and uniform (which should be unique to their Club) and should practice/play games in the same geographical area of operation.
3. All teams participating in SOCAL events must operate under a single technical structure/plan and report to a single Director of Coaching.
4. All players participating in SOCAL events must be registered under a single US Club Soccer sanctioned Club.
5. All Clubs participating in SOCAL must meet the minimum of 5-teams.
6. All Clubs participating in SOCAL must have field availability on all Saturday's and Sunday's for home games during each season in which they participate.
7. All teams within the member Club MUST wear the Club uniform. Teams may not wear uniforms from other Clubs.
8. Adhere to all SOCAL Rules and Policies.

Required Club Contacts

Each Club's GotSport account must be kept up to date with the proper contact information. Please keep in mind that this is the primary method by which SOCAL communicates with your Club. Failing to have the proper contact information may result in your Club missing vital League communication. Each Club shall maintain the following Club contacts with a current email address:

1. Club Administrator
2. Coaching/Technical Director/DOC AND/OR Executive Director
3. Registrar
4. President
5. Field Scheduler
6. Treasurer

League-to-Club Communication

Communication will come from League Staff to Club Officials and/or Team Contacts. Please make sure all contact information for the appropriate required officials are updated in the GotSport system.

Emails to SOCAL staff from parents, managers or coaches will not be replied to and Clubs should instruct their members and staff that all communications must come to designated Club Officials for review and, if necessary, the Club Official may reach out to a SOCAL staff member for assistance.

Fall Registration

Teams from new and returning SOCAL Clubs, may begin the application process on March 15th. Team applications will be accepted through June 1st. After that date, no teams may be added without special consideration from the Technical Committee.

A team is only considered for approval if the team fee is received. Each participating SOCAL Club will submit payment in GotSport via credit card or one Club check. Checks must be postmarked by June 7th.

SOCAL Resource Library

- [SOCAL Code of Conduct](#)
- [Official US Soccer Policy 531-9](#) - Misconduct Toward Game Officials in Amateur Matches
- [One and Done - Zero Tolerance Policy](#)
- [Transfer Policy](#)
- [Tryout Policy](#)
- [Referee Fees](#)

Governing Bodies Code of Conduct:

- US Soccer Federation: <https://www.ussoccer.com/ussf-fan-code-of-conduct>
- US Club Soccer: <https://usclubsoccer.org/safeguarding-compliance/prohibitedconduct/>

Safeguarding & Compliance

- US Center for SafeSport: <https://uscenterforsafesport.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/2022-SafeSport-Code.pdf>
- Safe Sport Report a Concern: <https://uscenterforsafesport.org/report-a-concern/>
- US Soccer Report a Concern: <https://www.ussoccer.com/safeguarding/report-a-concern>

Insurance & Accident Claims

- US Club Soccer [Accident Insurance Claims](#) - Youth Programming
 - [Submit a Claim Form](#)

Code of Ethics

As a SOCAL Member, your adherence to the Code of Ethics signals your commitment to the basic laws of the organization, and thus basic moral standards of the soccer community at large.

For All Members

- A. Know, respect, and follow the [Laws of the Game](#).
- B. Treat others with respect and courtesy.
- C. Adhere to the rules and policies of SOCAL, [US Club Soccer](#), and [US Soccer](#).
- D. Recognize the rights, dignity, and worth of all – regardless of gender, ability, cultural background, or religion.

For Clubs

- A. Require sportsmanlike conduct at all times.
- B. Address issues with other Clubs in a professional and timely manner.
- C. Ensure that all Adults and players in your Club are familiar with the rules and expectations of
- D. Respect the Facilities used by other Clubs.
- E. Actively uphold the Player Transfer Policy.

For Coaches

- A. Place your Player's physical, mental, and emotional development and well-being ahead of all else.
- B. Continuously seek education on sound Coaching techniques.
- C. Model and teach good sporting behavior.

For Players

- A. Participate for your own enjoyment and development.
- B. Take responsibility for your sportsmanship and conduct.

Competition Matrix

	U7-U10 (2019-2016)	U11 (2015)	U12 (2014)	U13-U14 (2013/2012)	U15-U16 (2011/2010)	U17-U19 (2009/08/07)
Field Size (yds)	55/65 L 35/45 W	70/80 L 45/55 W	70/80 L 45/55 W	100/120 L 55/80 W	100/120 L 55/80 W	100/120 L 55/80 W
# of players	7v7	9v9	9v9	11v11	11v11	11v11
Minimum # of players	5	6	6	7	7	7
Primary Player Roster Limits	12	16	16	26	26	26
# of players allowed to play each game	12	16	16	18	18	20
# of Club-Pass players allowed to play each game (league wide)	4 players	4 players	4 players	5 players	5 players	5 players
NPL Club-Passing Limits*	Does not apply	Does not apply	Does not apply	2 outfield + 1 GK maximum*	2 outfield + 1 GK maximum*	2 outfield + 1 GK maximum*
Goalkeeper	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Playing Time	2x30	2x30	2x30	2x35	2x40	2x45
Half-Time	10 mins	10 mins	10 mins	10 mins	10 mins	10 mins
Ball Size	4	4	4	5	5	5
Goal Size (ft)	6.5x18.5- 7x21	6.5x18.5- 7x21	6.5x18.5- 7x21	8x24	8x24	8x24
Offside	Yes - after build out line	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Substitutions	Unlimited - Flights 1 - 4 on any possession, or if other team subs.					
NPL Substitutions	3 moments per half. Re-entry allowed. Half-time does not count as a moment					
Fouls (free kicks)	Indirect & Direct Free Kicks					
Free Kick clearance	8 yd	8 yd	8 yd	10 yd	10 yd	10 yd
Throw-in	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal
Penalty Kicks	Yes (mark at 10 yds)	Yes (mark at 10 yds)	Yes (mark at 10 yds)	Yes (mark at 12 yds)	Yes (mark at 12 yds)	Yes (mark at 12 yds)
Penalty Area (yds)	12x24	14x36	14x36	18 x 44	18 x 44	18 x 44
Goal Area (yards)	4x8	5x16	5x16	6 x 20	6 x 20	6 x 20
Heading	NO As per the Laws of the Game		YES As per the Laws of the Game			
Build-Out Line	Yes	None				

***NPL players may not Club Pass within the same age group. Players may only Club Pass up an age group within the NPL. These limits also apply to NPL players Club Passing to Flight 1. NPL players may not Club Pass to Flights 2-4.**

Player Eligibility

- **For 11v11 games (2009-2008/07):** A maximum of 20 players may be dressed and play in a game. The 20 players must be on the official Match Report given to the match official and opposing team before the start of the game. Any players listed on the roster that will not play must have a line through their names on the Match Report or set as inactive players.
- **For 11v11 games (2013-2010):** A maximum of 18 players may be dressed and play in a game. The 18 players must be on the official Match Report given to the match official and opposing team before the start of the game. Any players listed on the roster that will not play must have a line through their names on the Match Report or set as inactive players.
- **For 9v9 games:** A maximum of 16 players may be in uniform and play in a game.
- **For 7v7 games:** A maximum of 12 players may be in uniform and play in a game.

NPL Player Eligibility

A player may not play for more than one team within an age group in the NPL. Players may Club Pass “up” between NPL teams outside of their age group and may play no more than 2 games per day. No more than 2 players and 1 goalkeeper (who must play in goal) can Club Pass to another NPL team from the same Club OR to Flight 1. NPL players may NOT Club Pass to teams in Flight 2-4.

Club Pass Players

A Player may ONLY be rostered to one team as a Primary Player. Players may only Club Pass within the same Club per Club Pass rules. Club Pass players are only players within the same Club.

Guest Players

Guest Players are players with a player pass from another Club or League. Guest players are NOT allowed to play in SOCAL competitions. Guest players are not the same as Club Passed players.

Player Club Pass Limits

(UPDATED for 2025/26 SEASON to be LEAGUE WIDE)

Limits for the amount of players that can Club Pass are as follows:

- 7v7 and 9v9 games – limit 4 players per game
- 11v11 games – limit 5 players per game (non-NPL games)
- Club pass players must be handwritten in on Match Report or added to the team as Club Pass Player in GotSport.
- NPL Players can ONLY Club Pass to Flight 1 teams and older NPL teams within their Club.
- Limits of Club Passing for NPL players are 2 field players + 1 goalkeeper that MUST play in goal (not on the field).
- NPL players may NOT Club pass to Flight 2, 3 or 4 teams.

****NO players FROM Leagues OUTSIDE OF SOCAL MAY CLUB PASS TO SOCAL TEAMS REGARDLESS OF THE League THEY ARE PLAYING IN.** All players participating in SOCAL games MUST have US Club SOCCER PLAYER CARDS indicating the player participates in the SOCAL League. **ECNL/ECRL player cards are NOT valid in the SOCAL League.**

UPDATED for 2025/26 Season: A SOCAL Player's Primary team must be a SOCAL team.

Clubs with outside leagues must designate 3 players, in each birth year (per gender), to be their club's DESIGNATED PLAYERS (DP's) for their outside league teams. These players may not change week-to-week. Once designated, they will remain as DP's for the full 25/26 season. These players will show up as (DP's) on SOCAL Game Reports and are permitted to play in SOCAL games even if they appear on the roster of an outside league.

Club Pass Rule - Player Movement Between Teams

(Applies to all ages groups except 2016-2019)

- Players may play no more than 2 games per day.
- Players may play 2 games in the same age group, and in the same flight although they may NOT play in the SAME geographical bracket. (As an example - a 2012 player can play for a 2012 team in Flight 2 South I but can not play for another team in Flight 2 South I. However, the player may play for a team in Flight 2 South II.)
- Non-NPL players can Club Pass either up or down between Flights 1, 2, 3 and 4.
- Players can Club Pass up from any flight to the NPL.
- NPL players can ONLY Club Pass to Flight 1 teams and older NPL teams within their Club.
- Limits of Club Passing for NPL players are 2 field players + 1 goalkeeper that MUST play in goal (not on the field).
- NPL players may NOT Club pass to Flight 2, 3 or 4 teams.
- A player's PRIMARY team MUST be a SOCAL team. Players may only Club Pass within the same Club per Club Pass rules. Club Pass players are only players within the same Club. Players may only play for one Club during any SOCAL event.
- Players that play up in an age group as their Primary team may be Club Passed to a team in their actual age group. Example: Sally, born in 2012 plays on a 2011 team as her primary team may be Club Passed to play on a 2012 team because her age is appropriate for that team as well.
- In the 7v7 age groups, players can play for 2 teams in the same flight/division since there are no standings. The 7v7 birth years are the only age groups where this is allowed.

Substitutions

As per FIFA guidelines, unlimited substitutions are allowed in all age groups, Flights 1, 2, 3 and 4 as follows (not including SOCAL NPL):

- Unlimited substitutions are allowed during any stoppage.
- Teams may substitute only with the Referee's permission. Substitutes must wait at the halfway line (off of the Field of play) until the Field Player has left the field of play and/or the Referee has indicated the substitute may enter the field of play.

Substitutions - SOCAL NPL

- 3 moments, per half, for substitutions. Half-time does not count as a moment. Re-entry is allowed per half at the moments used by the coach. Subbing on the moment of an opposition, still counts towards a team's 3 moments.
- In accordance with the new USSF Head Injury guidelines, a substitution for a suspected head injury will not count against re-entry rules.

Match Officials

Match officials must have a current year USSF Referee License. No match officials, other than Club linesmen, may have family members in the game they are working. Club linesmen may only signal when the ball has left the Field of play. They may not call offsides or fouls.

If a referee is not present within the 15 minute grace period for a scheduled game, the game will be rescheduled. The coach or manager must contact their Club to notify them of the referee not showing up. The Club administrator will contact Blake George to reschedule the game. **7 v 7 games may be played with a coach facilitating the game.**

Playing Rules

All games under League jurisdiction shall be played according to the rules and regulations recognized by the SOCAL Soccer League which shall be the same rules set by FIFA/U.S. Soccer (USSF) except for those exceptions authorized by FIFA or USSF.

Field Rules

1. No animals of any kind are allowed on the sideline at any SOCAL game. Check the venue you are playing at to confirm if pets are allowed at the venue. Regardless, THEY ARE NOT ALLOWED TO BE ON THE SIDELINES or BEHIND THE GOALS or in close proximity to the field of play to protect the players safety as well as the spectators safety.
2. No artificial noise makers such as drums, air horns, drones etc. are allowed.
3. No Alcohol.
4. No Illegal Drugs.
5. No Weapons of any type.

Violation of field rules may result in team or spectator suspensions.

Parking Fee may apply at Silverlakes, SoCal Sports Complex, Galway Downs and Surf Cup Sports Park.

Game Scoring & Reporting

Point System

All SOCAL League games shall operate under the following point system.

- 3 points for a win
- 1 point for a tie
- 0 points for a loss

League Standings

ALL Scores must be entered in GotSport.

- 7v7 **SCORES** will be posted.
 - 7v7 standings will NOT be posted.
 - A Goal Differential of 8-goals is the limit for score posting in all 7v7 birth years. Ex: a score of 14-3 must be posted as 11-3, a score of 10-1 must be posted as 9-1, etc.
 - Any score posted in excess of the 8-goal differential will be adjusted by the league.
- Scores and standings will be posted for all 9v9 and 11v11 divisions.
- SOCAL has promotion and relegation **ONLY** between SOCAL NPL and Flight 1.
- Medals are awarded to 1st place winners in all 9v9 and 11v11 birth years only.

All Game Scoring (Including NPL)

All Game Scores must be entered in GotSport by **BOTH TEAMS** within 48 hours after the game. However, for teams that play back to back games on Saturday and Sunday, scores must be posted on Saturday. [How to Enter a Score in GotSport](#)

Ties

If a League game is tied after regulation, the tie stands and will be posted as a tie.

Tie Breakers for League Standings in age groups where standings apply

In case of a tie on points in the standings, the following will be used as tiebreakers:

1. "Head to Head" points (win/lose/draw) between teams
2. Overall Goal Differential
3. Goals for
4. Goals against
5. Most shutouts
6. Lowest Misconduct points

If more than two teams are tied, the tie-breaking process (1. Head to Head tiebreakers not used if more than two teams are tied) will be used until a winner is determined. The tie-breaking procedure does not revert to previous criteria if one team is eliminated. All standings divisions are based on an average of Points Per Game (PPG) to decide standings.

Forfeits

Any game schedule changed **after Tuesday at midnight the week of a scheduled game** will be subject to a forfeit fine.

- Forfeits will be scored 0-1 against the forfeiting team. (For more details on forfeit fines see pg. 24, [League Fines](#))

Spectator Seating

- ALL SPECTATORS FROM A TEAM will sit on the same side of the field as their team.
- Spectators will NOT sit on opposite sides of the field from their team for League play.
- Coaches are responsible for the spectators for their team.
- Spectators may not sit behind goals or next to the corner flags.
- Spectators must sit on the sideline with their team OPPOSITE the sideline the Asst Ref is running. Spectators may NOT sit behind Asst Referees.
- Spectators are not to commingle with spectators from the opposing team. Spectators should sit on the opposite side of the half to the Assistant Referee.

Personnel on the Bench

- A maximum of 3 team officials are allowed in each team's technical area. Team officials must have a current US Club passcard from the Club in which they are coaching in order to sit in the technical area.
- A coach must have a minimum Grassroots license to coach a game in SOCAL.
- A manager with a current US Club passcard from the Club the team is under, may cover for a coach in an emergency situation.

Protests

Protests regarding the match conditions (i.e. Field condition, etc.) must be made prior to the start of the match and be clearly written on the official match report belonging to the center referee. Protests regarding the use of illegal players may be made prior to, or following, the match and be clearly written on the match report.

- Referee decisions cannot be protested. This includes send-offs for players, coaches or spectators.
- Videos of games will not be reviewed to support protests or objections.

Incomplete/Abandoned/Terminated Games

In the event that a game cannot be completed, the game will stand if at least half of the game was played; provided, however, that if any team is directly responsible for the termination of the game, no matter how much of the match remains, due to poor sportsmanship towards a Referee, opposing fans, or opposing players, the team will be required to forfeit the match. This could also lead to other sanctions set forth by SOCAL and/or US Club Soccer. If there is no result, and the match is suspended prior to the expiration of one half the game, SOCAL will make a determination on the results of the game based on a USSF Supplemental Report submitted by the referee of the game.

The referee may abandon a match if:

1. There are not enough players to meet the requirements of the Law of the competition.
2. A team is a no-show after the 15 minute grace period.
3. The field or any of its equipment does not meet the requirement of the Laws and/or is otherwise deemed unsafe by the referee.

*If an away team causes the match to be abandoned, the referee must notify his/her assignor and the referee association will invoice SOCAL for payment. SOCAL will invoice the Club of the forfeiting team.

The referee may terminate a match for:

1. Reasons of safety such as bad weather or darkness;
2. Any serious infringement of the Laws;
3. Interference by spectators.

Terminated games before the commencement of the second half may be replayed in their entirety. Terminated games terminated during the second half may be considered complete. Only the SOCAL League, not the referee, has the authority to declare a winner, a forfeit, or a replay of the match in its entirety. SOCAL Soccer reserves the right to be flexible in decisions regarding terminated matches. The referee must report fully on the events.

Abandoned or terminated games may be ruled a forfeit when the actions of that team's players, coaches or spectators is the cause for the abandonment or termination of the game. If a coach abandons a match, the game is subject to a forfeit score 0-1 against their team. Issues involving parents from opposite teams, that results in the game being terminated, will result in the game being a double forfeit and the next scheduled game will also be forfeited for each team and both teams will be fined \$500.

Heading

Heading Game Rule

For U11 and below, when a Player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If the deliberate header occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred. If a Player does not deliberately head the ball, then play should continue.

This rule shall apply to the age groups of U11 and below. Players who are playing up will play according to the rules of the age group in which they are playing. It is the Club's responsibility to understand the effects of this rule on players playing up.

No Re-Entry Protocol (for Head Injury and SCA)

In accordance with US Club Soccer's return-to-play guidelines and CA law AB-379, any player removed from the field due to a suspected head injury or sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) may not return to play without clearance from a Licensed Healthcare Provider. This provider must be trained and acting within their scope of practice for evaluating and managing concussions, other head injuries, cardiac conditions, sudden cardiac arrest, fainting, and shortness of breath.

Assembly Bill No. 2007

California's Assembly Bill No. 2007 mandates that all athletic programs offered by school districts, charter schools, private schools, and youth sports organizations must immediately remove any athlete suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury from athletic activity for the remainder of the day.

Athletes are prohibited from returning to athletic activity until they have been evaluated and received written clearance from a licensed healthcare provider who is trained in concussion management and acting within the scope of their practice.

Furthermore, on an annual basis, athletes and their parents or guardians must sign and return a concussion and head injury information sheet before the athlete can begin practice or competition.

Reporting Head Injuries

All suspected head injuries must be reported within 24 hours at the time the game scoring is entered in GotSport. SOCAL Soccer League must also be notified within 24 hours of injury by emailing the Match Report to headinjuryreports@socalsoccerleague.org

Clearing Head Injuries

For a player to return to match play, the Club shall provide SOCAL Soccer League the medical clearance from a Licensed Health Care Provider on their letterhead or note stamped with the Licensed Health Care Provider's name, address and phone number. The Medical Clearance MUST state clearly that the player may return to FULL and Unconditional Return to Play. Report must be sent to headinjuryreports@socalsoccerleague.org in order for suspension to be cleared in GotSport.

Equipment

Player Uniforms

Teams **MUST** wear uniforms for the Club they are registered with. Opponents must wear colors that distinguish them from each other, and also the Referee and the Assistant Referees. **The home team wears light uniforms while the away team wears dark uniforms.** Each goalkeeper must wear colors that distinguish them from the other players, the Referee, and the assistant Referees. All players on a team, except the goalkeeper, shall wear identical uniforms (shirts, shorts, and socks).

- If there is a conflict in the uniform color, the away team shall change uniforms.
- Player numbers must be affixed to the back of the uniform jersey. Each Player on a team shall wear a unique number.

Game Ball

The home team will furnish three game balls. The home team is the team listed first on the official schedule.

Safety

A player must not use equipment or wear anything which is dangerous to themselves or another player.

Casts

No orthopedic (hard) casts, air splints, or metal splints may be worn. Players will be allowed to play in a soft cast at the discretion of the referee.

Long Finger Nails

Exceptionally long fingernails may be considered dangerous. Whether or not a player may play with them is at the discretion of the referee.

Jewelry

Absolutely no jewelry, including rings, chains, watches, hair clips, bobby pins, earrings, bracelets, or rubber bracelets, may be worn while participating in any SOCAL games. Only Medical Alert Warning Bracelets may be worn and shall be taped to secure them to the player's body.

Shin Guards

All players are required to wear shin guards at all times. They must be worn properly and be professionally manufactured and unaltered. Socks must completely cover shin guards.

Braces

Elastic-type supports without any metal, carbon fiber, hard plastic, or like devices are permitted provided the Referee does not deem the support to be potentially harmful to other players.

Eyeglasses

Players who must wear eyeglasses are encouraged to wear sports goggles. Lenses must be unbreakable and frames must be unbreakable plastic or sturdy metal at referee discretion.

League Discipline & Reporting

Violation of League Rules

The SOCAL Discipline Committee and League Administration are authorized to impose sanctions on players, team officials, or competing Clubs. This includes suspensions, fines, or disqualifications, for violations of SOCAL Rules, Policies, and Code of Conduct, or for any conduct deemed detrimental to soccer or the SOCAL Soccer League. Any breach of SOCAL Soccer League Rules outlined in this Handbook should be reported to redcardreports@socalsoccerleague.org. All decisions made by SOCAL Discipline Committee and SOCAL League Administration are final.

Illegal Player/Falsification of Documents

A team will forfeit every game in which a violation occurs, and a fine may also be imposed.

1. An unregistered player/coach/manager participated in the game.
2. A player was improperly entered on the team's roster.
3. Any infraction of Club Pass rules.
4. A player or coach currently serving a suspension, including for an injury, participates in a game and has not been released by the League.
5. Any team using, or attempting to use, an illegal player shall forfeit the game. The coach of the team using the illegal Player will be suspended from all SOCAL competitions for a minimum of 3-games.
6. Falsifying records, documents, or player identification passes, or engaging in any other form of misrepresentation, will result in immediate suspension from the SOCAL Soccer League for any team or club. Additionally, such actions may lead to a Trial Board hearing.
7. The penalty for falsifying documents and/or using illegal players is \$500.00 per instance.

Double Yellow & Red Cards

Players, Coaches, Team Administrators, and Spectators may receive Yellow or Red Cards. A double yellow or red card results in removal from the current game and a minimum one-game suspension for players, and a minimum three-game suspension for coaches, team administrators, or spectators, beginning with the team's next game.

Send Offs

Send Offs include any spectator, player, coach or manager told to leave the game by the referee regardless of being shown a card or not.

Emergency Coach

In emergency situations, anyone associated with the Club, and has the required credentials, may coach the game as long as they have a current US Club Soccer Staff passcard.

If there is not a properly licensed coach affiliated with the Club present during the entire game, the manager may step in AS LONG AS the manager has a proper US Club SOCCER staff passcard. If the manager does NOT have a US Club Soccer staff passcard then the game will be considered a forfeit.

Red Card/Double Yellow Reporting Process for Referees

In any game where a Red Card, Double Yellow or Send Off is issued, the Referee must complete a USSF Supplemental Report and the Match Report within 24 hours and submit it via email to redcardreports@socalsoccerleague.org.

Spectator Send Off Reporting Instructions

Spectator Send Offs must be reported in GotSport under Red Cards, at the bottom of the players/coaches list for each team is "OTHER". Select "OTHER", in the field that appears, type in the name of the spectator and their relation to the player at the game and click save. Email the match report to redcardreports@socalsoccerleague.org

Red Card/Double Yellow/Send Off Reporting Instructions

- Both Teams collect Match Report at the end of the game from the referee.
- Both Teams enter the Score and Red Card/Double Yellow/Send Offs/Head Injury immediately into GotSport.
- If a Red Card/Double Yellow is issued, both teams must send a copy of the Match Report to redcardreports@socalsoccerleague.org with the MATCH # in the subject line.
- A Player that receives a Red Card/Double Yellow on Saturday will automatically be suspended for the next match regardless of receiving a suspension notification.
- Failure to Report by Team Issued the Red Card/Double Yellow or Send Off Fine: **\$200 per instance**
- All Red Cards/Double Yellow/Send Offs must be entered in [GotSport](#) by BOTH TEAMS within 48 hours after the game.
 - However, for teams that play back to back games on Saturday and Sunday, Red Cards/Double Yellow/Send Offs must be posted on Saturday.

How to Ensure a player is cleared after receiving a Red Card/Double Yellow/Send Off

1. Send a copy of the Match Report to redcardreports@socalsoccerleague.org for every game the suspension is served.
2. Enter the score in GotSport immediately after each game. The system will not clear the player unless the score is entered.

End of Year Red Card Carryovers

Players, coaches, or spectators that receive a red card at the end of the season, and they have NOT served their suspension, the suspension will be carried over to the following year. If the player, spectator, or coach switches Clubs, the suspensions will follow them to the next Club. Suspensions MUST be served in the SOCAL Fall Season. State Cup or tournaments do NOT COUNT as serving the suspension. End of Year Carryovers will not prohibit a player, coach, or spectator from participating in other tournaments including State Cup unless suspended by US Club as well.

Card Codes for Reporting Purposes

Cautionable Offenses or Yellow Cards	Send Off or Red Cards Offenses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• UB – Unsporting Behavior• DT – Dissent• PI – Persistent Infringement of Laws• DR – Delay Restart• FRD – Fails to Respect Distance• E – Enter Field Improperly• L – Leave Field Improperly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SFP – Serious Foul Play• VC – Violent Conduct• S – Spitting• DGH – Denies Goal Opportunity Handling• DGF – Denies Goal Opportunity Foul• AL – Abusive/Offensive Language• 2CT – Second Caution• IRB – Irresponsible Behavior -Coaches/Managers/Spectators

Suspensions

- The game in which a player, coach or parent is sent-off does not count towards the number of games assigned in the suspension.
- Any suspended player used during a game will be considered an illegal player. The team, coach and Club will be penalized accordingly, fines may apply.
- Players can not play for any SOCAL team while serving a suspension.
- Red cards do not carry over between League games and State Cup unless the suspension involves Referee Abuse.
- If a player is issued a suspension and the match is forfeited, rained out, game schedule changed or postponed for any reason, the suspension will carry over to the next scheduled match. If there are no matches remaining on the schedule for the player, the End of Season Carry Over Policy will apply.
- The suspensions will apply to the league game(s) immediately after the game in which the card is received.
- Coaches may not coach any team until his/her suspension is served.
- It is the team's and/or Club's responsibility to ensure their red carded player/coach/spectator serves the applied game suspension(s). It is also their responsibility to ensure that their player/coach/spectator serves any additional suspension determined by the Discipline Committee.

Coaches: Any coach send-off is a minimum of 3-games, Club wide. There shall be no coaching of any team for 3 games, including any other team they coach until the 3rd game has been served.

Spectators: Any spectator send-off is a minimum 3 Game suspension.

Reintegration Requirement: Behavior Accountability Modules

Effective beginning with the 2025/26 season, any coach or spectator sent off from a match will be required to complete an on-line educational module prior to reinstatement.

In partnership with the Referee Institute of Soccer Excellence (RISE), SOCAL has introduced a mandatory behavior accountability module housed within our Learning Management System (LMS). These courses are designed to educate individuals on:

- Acceptable sideline behavior
- The impact of misconduct on referees and players
- Expectations for respectful conduct at all SOCAL events

Please Note: A **\$50.00 fee** is associated with taking the course. This cost is the responsibility of the individual (coach or spectator) and is required to complete the module.

Key Requirements:

- Coaches and spectators must complete the assigned LMS module in addition to serving their minimum 3-game suspension.
- Completion of the module and payment of the course fee is a prerequisite to returning to any team sideline.
- Clubs are responsible for ensuring that sent-off individuals complete all required steps prior to reinstatement.
- Additional sanctions may apply for non-compliance or repeat offenses.

This education-first approach supports referee retention and safety, reduces repeat incidents, and reinforces SOCAL's commitment to a positive and respectful matchday environment.

SOCAL Soccer League Disciplinary Committee may increase the suspension penalty for any offense as deemed necessary.

Referee Abuse

Referee abuse by a player, coach or spectator will be reviewed for appropriate length of suspension aligned with the US Soccer Policy 531-9 Penalties Matrix.



REFEREE ABUSE PREVENTION

POLICY 531-9 PENALTY OVERVIEW / YOUTH & AMATEUR

The Penalties Matrix defines consequences associated with physical and non-physical offenses against Referees.

NON-PHYSICAL OFFENSES of gross misconduct, abuse, and / or assault

NON-PHYSICAL*	MIN. GAMES	TIME
Insulting, Belittling, Insinuating or Taunting Behavior Undermining Referee Authority	2	
Harassment, Intimidation, Retaliation, Abusive, or Threatening (Non Physical) Language	4	
Aggression, Attacking, Derogatory, Cyberbullying, Doxing or Threatening (Physical / Violence) Language	6	6 - 24 Months
Offensive or Discriminatory Act	10	12 - 24 Months

PHYSICAL OFFENSES of gross misconduct, abuse, and / or assault

PHYSICAL*	MIN. GAMES	TIME
Minor or Slight Deliberate Touching	3	1 - 6 Months
Pushing, Grabbing, Pulling, Squeezing, Pinching, Lightly Slapping, Use of Object in Non Striking Manner, or Physical Property Damage	10	6 - 24 Months
Hitting, Punching, Elbowing, Kicking, Biting, Spiting, Choking, Tackling, Throwing or Use of Object or Any Part of Body (Forearm, Knee, Head) in a Striking Manner		12 Months - Lifetime

(*) Disclaimer: These are only a few examples of abuse – other actions or statements may also fall into this category.

KEY PENALTY FACTORS

- Single offenses are at **minimum the prescribed game penalty or time penalty** for non red zone offenses
- Penalties can be **both game and time depending on severity** / circumstances
- Second time offenders receive **double punishment**
- Third time offenders receive a **lifetime ban**
- More than one offense at the same time is **at least the punishment for the most serious offense**
- Offenses against minors are automatically subject to a **"minor multiplier" resulting in triple punishment**
- One offense warning per league** to be managed by states and leagues collaboratively
- Game consequences are **inclusive of 1 game penalty for any red cards given**
- Optionality for **50% penalty for first offense from a minor**

League Fines

- All fines are invoiced to the Clubs with team details included.
- All fines and fees due to SOCAL Soccer League will be invoiced in GotSport and the credit card on file will be processed net 30 days. [How to Pay Invoice - GotSport](#)
- Fines collected by SOCAL are allocated to additional programming opportunities developed by, or supported by, the League.

The SOCAL Soccer League office may impose the following fines:

- Fall League Team Drop Fee \$500 plus Registration Fee
- Fall League Team Drop Fee \$1,000 plus Registration Fee
- Fall League Team Drop Fee \$2,000 plus Registration Fee. (Not including Referee/Forfeit fine)
- Fall League Drop Fine After Season starts - \$2,000 plus Referee Fees 2 weeks
- Playing Illegal Players/ Falsifying Documents: \$500 per instance
- Failure of a team to report the issue of a Red Card/Double Yellow or Send Off fine: \$200 per instance

Additional Fines:

- Any game schedule changed after Tuesday at midnight the week of a scheduled game will be subject to a forfeit fine. Forfeit fines below.
- Issues involving parents from opposite teams that results in the game being terminated will result in the game being a double forfeit and the next scheduled game will also be forfeited for each team. A \$500 fine will be issued.
- Any Club that does not complete payment for any balance owing within 30 days, will be subject to a late fee of 15%.

Forfeit Fines & Fees

1st Club Offense: \$250 plus referee fees if notified after the deadline.

2nd Club Offense: \$500 plus referee fees if notified after the deadline.

Any game schedule changed after Tuesday at midnight the week of a scheduled game will be subject to applicable forfeit fines and referee fees.

No Show Fines & Fees

1st Club Offense: \$250 plus full referee fees.

2nd Club Offense: \$500 plus full referees fees.

The Club will pay the referee fees for the no show game. A no show team may be at risk of being removed from the League.

Links to FIFA and US Club Soccer

FIFA AND U.S. SOCCER FEDERATION

- [FIFA Laws of the Game](#)
- [U.S. Soccer Federation Bylaws and Policies](#)
- [Official US Soccer Policy 531-9](#) - Misconduct Toward Game Officials in Amateur Matches

US CLUB SOCCER

- [Accident Insurance Claims](#) - Youth Programming
 - [Submit a Claim Form](#)
- Bylaws (updated and effective Oct 22, 2024)
 - [Clean version](#)
 - [With redlines showing revisions made Oct 22, 2024](#)
- Policy Manual (updated Dec 15, 2021; effective Jan 1, 2022)
 - [Clean version](#)
 - [With redlines showing revisions made Dec 15, 2021](#)
 - [Participant Safety/Risk Management Policies](#) (consolidated document pulled from the overall Policy Manual)

Conclusion

This handbook serves as a comprehensive guide to the policies, procedures, and expectations for all participants within our organization. It is designed to promote a safe, fair, and respectful environment in alignment with our commitment to the highest standards of youth sportsmanship and conduct.

However, SOCAL Soccer League reserves the right to make final determinations on any matter, including those not explicitly covered within this handbook. In cases of conflict, ambiguity, or situations that require discretion, the decision of the SOCAL League Office will supersede all guidelines set forth herein. This authority ensures that the league can adapt to unique circumstances while maintaining the integrity and objectives of the program.

The SOCAL League Office's decisions are final and binding, reflecting our dedication to upholding the core values and principles of youth soccer.

Last Revised: August 19, 2025