

Adult League Outdoor Soccer Rules and Regulations

Maryland SoccerPlex

Modified Jan 2026

The Maryland SoccerPlex rules for the outdoor adult soccer leagues are governed by FIFA Laws, modified for outdoor play. The following rules shall precede FIFA Laws if conflict with said rules should arise.

PRIOR TO THE START OF THE SEASON

TEAMS: All participating teams must submit FULL payment by the kickoff of their first game. All special requests for game schedules must be submitted no later than two weeks before the start of the season. In addition, deposits are due by the registration deadline to be considered part of the league and be added to the schedule.

DIVISIONS AND BRACKETS: Teams may submit a request for the division or bracket they believe is most appropriate for their level of play. Final placement, however, will be determined by the league administrator and will be based on roster composition, past performance records (including conduct), and recent standings.

ROSTERS: A new roster is required for each session in all adult leagues. Rosters must be submitted before the start of the season; teams without a submitted roster will not be permitted to play. The roster generated through **LeagueApps** will serve as the official game roster.

- All rosters are limited to a maximum of 14 players.
- All teams must have at least 7 players rostered by the first game.
 - **Failure to do this will result in a forfeited match.**
- Only individuals properly registered on the roster will be permitted to participate in the league.
- A registered player may compete in more than one Adult League (Men's Open, 30+, 40+, 50+, Coed); however, no player may participate on multiple teams within the same division.
- Player check-in is required prior to every game for every team and every player. Failure to check in will result in an automatic forfeit for the team that fails to comply.
- **Rosters will be frozen at the kickoff of each team's second match – NO EXCEPTIONS.**
- Any team using an un-rostered player will forfeit, at a minimum, the game in which the violation occurred, and the captain will receive a one-game suspension.
 - If an un-rostered player is identified during a game, the player will be removed immediately, and the team will be required to play down a player for the remainder of the match.
- Protests regarding illegal players must be submitted prior to the start of the game to the referee or the field manager on duty. Illegal or ineligible players include:
 1. Players not listed on the official roster.
 2. Players who do not meet the age requirement of the league.
 3. Players serving a RED CARD suspension.

PLAYER CARDS: All players are required to have an official Maryland SoccerPlex Player Card.

- To receive a Player Card, players must:
 - Accept the LeagueApps email invite, and
 - Upload a clear headshot photo for identification purposes.
- Player Cards will be distributed at the player's first scheduled game.
- All players must turn in their Player Card to the League Supervisor or MSF Staff at the check-in table prior to every game.
- The Player Card fee is included in league registration.
 - Replacement fee for a lost card: \$6
 - Second replacement: \$25
- Players who do not present a valid Player Card at check-in may be deemed ineligible to participate until proper identification is confirmed by MSF Staff.

COACHES: In addition to the team's players, a maximum of one additional adult (coach or otherwise) is permitted on the team's bench.

- No spectators are allowed on the player/bench side of the field. Only rostered players and the designated coach/manager may be in this area.
- Coaching from the opposite touchline is not allowed.
- Anyone who is not a player or coach will be asked to leave the team bench and return to the spectator side of the field.

EQUIPMENT:

BALL: A regulation size 5 soccer ball is required and must be provided by **Home Team** for each game.

FOOTWEAR: Only standard molded cleats, turf shoes or flats are permitted.

SHIN GUARDS: Players **MAY NOT participate WITHOUT shin guards.**

JERSEYS: All teams are required to wear official Maryland SoccerPlex issued jerseys during all games.

- All field players must wear jerseys of the same color and style
- Each player must have a PERMANENT number displayed on his/her jersey

JEWELRY: Except for wedding bands, no jewelry (including necklaces, piercings, earrings, bracelets, soft wristbands, hair bands, etc.) is allowed on the field. Disciplinary action will be taken against all offenders.

OTHER: Braces, splints, soft casts, and similar items must be approved by the referee prior to the start of the game. The referee has final authority over all safety equipment worn during play, provided it does not pose a danger to the wearer or other players.

NUMBER OF PLAYERS REQUIRED ON THE FIELD:

Men's Open, Men's 30+ (7v7)

Maximum: 6 field players + 1 goalkeeper

Minimum: 5 players must begin, continue, and conclude each match

Men's 40+, Men's 50+ (8v8)

Maximum: 7 field players + 1 goalkeeper

Minimum: 6 players must begin, continue, and conclude each match

COED Open (7v7)

Maximum: 6 field players + 1 goalkeeper

Minimum: 5 players must begin, continue, and conclude the match

*To start a COED game, a team must have a minimum of 5 players, **including at least one female**. The team may consist of **4 males and 1 female**; however, the female **cannot play as the goalkeeper** unless there is a **second female** on the field as a field player. If a team does not have a second female available to play in the field, they must play **a player down** (i.e., with only 4 total players, including the goalkeeper).*

*A team may begin, continue, and finish a match with only **1 male or 1 female**, but must still field **4 outfield players and 1 goalkeeper**, unless affected by the gender rule, in which case they play short.*

DURATION OF PLAY: Games consist of two 25-minute halves with a 2-minute halftime. No stoppage or added time will be applied to regulation games. The official will start the game clock as scheduled; however, if either team has fewer than the minimum required number of players, a five-minute grace period will be allowed to meet the minimum. The clock will continue to run during the grace period, and no time will be added at the end of the game. If a team does not field the minimum number of players by the end of the grace period, the game will be forfeited, and a 3-0 score will be recorded in favor of the opposing team.

TERMINATED GAMES: If an official must terminate a game due to weather or other necessary circumstances, the following rules shall apply:

- 1. If the game is terminated after the first half has been completed, it will be considered a complete game and the score at the time of termination will stand.**
- 2. If the game is terminated before the first half is completed, it will be rescheduled by the Maryland SoccerPlex staff for a later date and the score will revert to 0-0.**

FORFEITED GAMES: Forfeited games will be recorded as 3-0 scores, and the non-forfeiting team will be awarded 3 points in the standings. A team that fails to show up for a game or does not field the minimum number of players after the five-minute grace period will forfeit the game. Additionally, any team that walks off the field before the end of either half to protest a referee's decision or Maryland SoccerPlex policies will forfeit the game, lose 3 points in the standings, and **may be banned from the league.**

NO-SHOW POLICY: Any team that fails to notify the Maryland SoccerPlex at least 24 hours prior to kickoff that they will not attend a scheduled match will be considered a no-show. A no-show will result in:

- An automatic forfeit (3–0 result)
- Loss of 3 points in the standings
- A \$50 fine, charged to the team account

Failure to submit payment may result in suspension from future league participation.

RESCHEDULE REQUEST: If a team cannot attend a scheduled game, they may request a reschedule. Reschedule requests must be submitted to the administration **by email at least 72 hours prior** to the scheduled game. Requests submitted with less than 72 hours' notice will be denied.

- **Team Notification:** A team representative must call at least 24 hours in advance to notify Maryland SoccerPlex staff if the team will not be able to attend a scheduled match. Teams that fail to provide at least 24-hours' notice and do not appear for the match will be classified as a no-show and assessed a \$50 fine in addition to a forfeit.

DURING THE GAME

KICKOFF:

The ball may be played in any direction on the first touch, and a goal may be scored directly from the kickoff.

SUBSTITUTIONS:

Unlimited “on-the-fly” substitutions are allowed. Substitutions must occur at the halfway line and must not interfere with the flow of play. An indirect free kick will be awarded for any improper substitution. Repeated or improper substitutions may result in a **yellow card**.

OFFSIDES: There is **NO offside** in this outdoor league.

SLIDE TACKLING:

Slide tackling an opponent is strictly prohibited. (See goalkeeper rules for exceptions.) The minimum penalty is a **direct free kick** awarded to the opposing team. Additional disciplinary action, including a **red card** and game suspension, may be imposed for intentional, repeated, or violent slide tackles.

RESTART RULES:

6-Second Rule: A restart must occur within six seconds of placing the ball for a free kick, corner kick, throw-in, or goal kick. Failure to comply will result in a **caution** and an **indirect free kick** for the opposing team at the spot of the restart, or, if inside the penalty area, immediately outside the penalty area.

5-Yard Rule: Opposing players must give a minimum of five yards on all direct kicks, indirect kicks, and corner kicks. Failure to comply may result in a **re-kick**. A **yellow card** may be issued at the referee's discretion.

SPECIFIC RULES FOR GOALKEEPERS:

- **Punts and Drop Kicks:** Punts and drop kicks are not permitted. The ball must be distributed by a throw, a standard place kick, or a kick from a dribble.
- **Goalkeeper Possession:** Goalkeepers must release the ball within six seconds after gaining possession and returning to their feet.
- **Intentional Pass Restriction:** Goalkeepers may **not** use their hands if the ball is intentionally passed to them by a teammate using their feet.
- **Penalty for Violations:** Failure to comply with the above rules will result in an **indirect free kick** immediately outside the penalty area.
- **Movement Within Penalty Area:** Goalkeepers may take an unlimited number of steps to bring the ball to the boundary of the penalty area.
- **Sliding Saves:** Goalkeepers are permitted to make sliding saves or slide tackles **within the penalty area**.

INJURIES: Any player who is bleeding must leave the field of play immediately.

- Time will **not** be stopped for injuries; however, play will be paused as necessary to allow the injured player to leave the field safely, while the game clock continues to run.

BALL OUT OF PLAY: If the **entire ball** crosses the goal line or touchline, whether in the air or on the ground, the restart will be a **goal kick, corner kick, or throw-in**, as applicable.

PENALTY KICKS: Only players on the field at the time may take penalty kicks.

The kicker is not limited to a one-step approach but must wait for the referee's whistle before taking the kick.

POINTS SYSTEM AND PLAYOFFS

POINT SYSTEM: Three (3) points for a win, 1 point for a tie, and 0 points for a loss.

Overtime: There is no overtime in Maryland SoccerPlex adult soccer games. Games tied at the end of regulation will be recorded as ties.

PLAYOFFS: Only the top 4 teams with the most points at the end of the season will advance to the semi-final and finals rounds. All other teams in the division will play consolation games to finish out the season.

TIEBREAKERS: Ties for Playoff position and for Playoff participation will be resolved using the following criteria, in order:

- Head-to-Head result
- Fewest goals conceded during the season
- Most goals scored during the season
- Fewest forfeits

NOTIES: Playoff games must have a winner. If a playoff game is tied at the end of regulation, there is **no overtime**; teams proceed directly to penalty kicks. Three kickers from each team, selected from the players on the field at the end of regulation, will take the initial kicks. If the score remains tied after the first three kicks, sudden-death penalty kicks will be used.

- If the game remains tied and no additional time is available, both team representatives may agree to resolve the tie with a coin toss, conducted by the referee or Maryland SoccerPlex staff.

CONDUCT POLICY

SPORTSMANSHIP: All individuals are expected to play in control, within the rules of the game, and to avoid causing injury to themselves or others while using the facility.

CARDS: All cards given by referees are final and are not subject to protest.

- **YELLOW CARD:** Any player receiving a **yellow card** must return to their bench and be replaced for two minutes.
- **RED CARD:** A **red card** results in the ejection of the player for the remainder of the match, with no replacement allowed. Red cards apply to both players on the field and individuals on the bench.
 - The player receiving a red card **must leave the playing area** and go to the parking lot, accompanied by a team representative when possible.
 - Failure to leave the playing area may result in a match forfeit for the player's team, suspension of the coach or team representative, or other disciplinary action.
 - Further disciplinary action will be taken against all players receiving a red card in accordance with the rules below.

COACHES/SUBSTITUTES/SUBSTITUTED PLAYERS: Coaches, substitutes, and substituted players may receive both yellow and red cards and are subject to the same rules as field players.

- **If a coach or bench player receives a red card, the team will play a player down for the remainder of the match, and the coach/bench player will be asked to leave the playing area and go to the parking lot.**
- A game will be terminated if a team has four (4) or fewer players in total for COED, Men's Open, and Men's 30+, or five (5) or fewer players for Men's 40+ and 50+ divisions.

GOALKEEPERS: Goalkeepers must serve their own penalties if issued a YELLOW or RED CARD.

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY: THE MARYLAND SOCCERPLEX MAINTAINS A ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY FOR FIGHTING OR ANY OTHER VIOLENT PHYSICAL CONDUCT, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO SPITTING, PUSHING, STRIKING, KICKING, AND WRESTLING ("VIOLENT PHYSICAL CONDUCT"). ADDITIONALLY, WE HAVE A ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY FOR ABUSIVE OR THREATENING LANGUAGE, INCLUDING RACIAL SLURS, DIRECTED AT PLAYERS, COACHES, REFEREES, OR SPECTATORS.

ANY PLAYER FOUND ENGAGING IN VIOLENT PHYSICAL CONDUCT OR USING ABUSIVE OR THREATENING LANGUAGE, AND, IN CERTAIN CASES, THE PLAYER'S TEAM – WILL BE DISCIPLINED ACCORDING TO THE RULES BELOW AND MAY ALSO FACE CIVIL OR CRIMINAL CHARGES.

- **COACH/TEAM REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSIBILITY:** Each player and their coach or team representative is responsible for controlling the conduct of their team and for being aware of any infractions committed by their players. Failure to comply may

result in disciplinary action, including suspension of the team or coach/team representative, and forfeiture of games.

- This responsibility includes ensuring that all players are properly registered on the team roster and current with facility registration fees; use of unregistered or ineligible players may result in penalties.
- Coaches and team representatives are also responsible for any player leaving the bench area and entering the field of play during a fight.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE: The Maryland SoccerPlex will review incidents requiring potential disciplinary action within **five business days** of the incident and may impose any of the following measures at its sole and absolute discretion:

- Player suspension for one or more weeks
- Player suspension from other Maryland SoccerPlex activities
- Player suspension for one or more years from Maryland SoccerPlex soccer activities and/or other Maryland SoccerPlex activities
- Forfeiture of one or more games by the player's team
- Exclusion of the player's team from playoffs
- Suspension of the player's team for the remainder of the season and exclusion from additional seasons, without refund
- Permanent exclusion of the player or player's team from Maryland SoccerPlex soccer activities and/or other Maryland SoccerPlex activities, without refund
- The Maryland SoccerPlex may consider a written statement in the form of a letter or email from the manager, coach, or team representative of the offending player's team if submitted within **24 hours** of the incident. Reviews will only be considered for alleged violations of the laws of the game or these rules.

APPEAL PROCESS: The Adventist HealthCare Fieldhouse will review and consider, in its sole absolute discretion, any written statement in the form of a letter or email from the manager, or representative of the offending player's team, if received within 24 hours of the incident rise to the possible disciplinary action and if accompanied with a \$50 non-refundable check out to the Maryland Soccer Foundation. Only Reviews regarding violations of the laws of the or these rules will be permitted.

MINIMUM DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS: The Maryland SoccerPlex has established minimum disciplinary actions for the following offenses. Nothing shall prevent the Maryland SoccerPlex from increasing these minimum penalties at its sole and absolute discretion.

RED CARD: Any player receiving a red card shall be suspended for a minimum of **one week** and suspended from all other Maryland SoccerPlex activities (including games in other leagues) until the suspension has been served.

3 YELLOW CARDS: Three Yellow Cards: Any player receiving three yellow cards in different games within a session will be suspended for a minimum of **one week**. After the suspension is served, the yellow card count for that player resets to zero.

TWO SUSPENSIONS: Any player receiving a second suspension in a session or across multiple sessions during the year (e.g., two red cards, or one red card plus three yellow cards) may be suspended from all Maryland SoccerPlex activities for **one year**.

VIOLENT PHYSICAL CONDUCT: Any deliberate physical action by a player, coach, or spectator that risks causing injury to another individual or oneself.

- **Individual Player:** Any player who engages in violent physical conduct will be suspended **for a minimum of one year** from all Maryland SoccerPlex adult soccer activities, effective from the date of the incident.
- **Multiple Players Involved:** Any incident involving violent physical conduct by more than one player on a team (e.g., a player leaving the bench area to join a fight on the field) will result in the team being suspended from Maryland SoccerPlex adult soccer activities **for a minimum of one year from the date of the incident, without refund.**
- **Multiple Players Involved:** Any incident involving violent physical conduct by more than one player on a team (e.g., a player leaving the bench area to join a fight on the field) will result in the team being suspended from Maryland SoccerPlex adult soccer activities **for a minimum of one year from the date of the incident, without refund.**

THREATENING OTHER PARTICIPANTS: Any player, manager, or coach who verbally threatens another player, coach, official, spectator, or Maryland SoccerPlex staff will be suspended from all Maryland SoccerPlex activities (including soccer) for a minimum of one year from the date of the incident.

VERBAL ABUSE OF OFFICIALS: Any player, manager, or coach who directs abusive language, or speaks in a harsh or threatening tone, toward an official or other Maryland SoccerPlex staff member before, during, or after a league game will be suspended for a minimum of one game.

IMPROPER ENTRY ONTO THE FIELD: If any player, manager, coach, or spectator enters the field of play during a game, except when substituting or expressly permitted by the official, the official may terminate the game and/or declare a forfeit against the offending team.

SPITTING: Any player, manager, coach, or spectator who spits on an opponent, teammate, official, or member of the Maryland SoccerPlex staff will be ejected from the game, asked to leave the playing area and go to the parking lot, and suspended from all Maryland SoccerPlex activities for one year.