

# **Florida Club League (FCL)**

## **Handbook**

### **2020/2021 Season**



*A US Club Soccer Sanctioned League*



The goal of this handbook is to provide assistance to clubs, coaches and managers to ensure the Florida Club League (FCL) operates smoothly and is a positive experience for all involved – players, coaches, managers, club officials, referees, and parents.

When competing in FCL, the club is responsible for overseeing their coaches, players, parents and club personnel – administratively, on and around the field. Each club is responsible for ensuring all club members understand and meet the following requirements and follow FCL Rules and Code of Ethics.

**Quality** – Clubs and their teams must be committed to striving for excellence with respect to play, sportsmanship, fields, referees and the total soccer experience.

**Director of Coaching** – Clubs must have a named Director of Coaching listed on the FCL website with a working email address. The Director must be familiar with each team in their club and the team's involvement in the FCL Programs.

**Fields** – Clubs should have at least one high-quality field (5-time slots) per eight teams. Teams traveling long distances deserve to play on decent fields! Teams may ask that they play all away games.

**Referees** – Clubs must have a current USSF certified Referee Assignor and enough current year USSF licensed referees available to cover all their teams entered in a competition.

**Administrator** – Clubs must have an administrator responsible for helping teams maintain their club and team information on the FCL website. This person should have a working email address and be available to assist team managers with all administrative tasks.

**Good Standing** – Clubs must be in good standing with US Club Soccer and FCL.

### **FCL Premier Mission**

**MISSION:** The Florida Club League's mission is to provide an opportunity for youth to develop and grow in our community through participation in athletic competition. Our goal is to provide a welcoming, enjoyable, safe, and competitive environment which will assist in the development for children of all skill levels. Our goal is to create the most competitive league structure with tiers that will provide the most success for our members and community.

### **FCL Premier Vision**

**VISION:** To be Florida's premier youth soccer league where all teams can play and develop regardless of race, creed, sex, ability, or economic status. We strive to develop and prepare our clubs for the future. We pledge to give back to our members in the form of player development, business development, coach, and referee education, and provide financial aid platforms for the membership community.

### **FCL Premier Core Values**

**Safety** - FCL will always make the players health and safety a priority in all decisions that are made.

**Accountability** - Every FCL member club will be measured meeting league standards as well as contributions toward improved player development for growth of the game.

**Collaboration** – FCL will encourage collaboration and cooperation between clubs in developing programs and promoting the best interests of players and the game.

**Commitment** – FCL will work with clubs to develop programs which appeal to all players of all skill levels and will encourage lifelong connections between the clubs, players and the game.

**Competition** – FCL will facilitate the highest competitive leagues throughout the state of Florida while focusing on the best interest of each member club.

**Education** – FCL promotes a holistic approach to the player and parent education, with best in class resources available to promote club, coach, referee, player education and development, as well as player health and welfare. The key to player development is coaching development – better coaches develop better players, and better clubs develop better coaches.

**Integrity** - FCL will act in a fiscally responsible and businesslike manner in everything it does.

## **Florida Club League (FCL) Minimum Standards Compliance**

The minimum standards for competition in the FCL are applied to all clubs. Minimum standards define the “minimum” level which clubs must attain in the various management aspects of running a club. Clubs that do not meet the minimum standard requirements run the risk of jeopardizing their status as members of FCL.

### **Compliance with minimum standards**

Clubs are required to comply with the defined minimum standards. The FCL director shall have the power to penalize clubs, individual clubs’ members or RACs for non-compliance with minimum standards with penalties consisting of warning, loss of points, fines or permanent suspension from sanctioned league activities.

The FCL RAC will regularly monitor for compliance. In addition, clubs are encouraged to report situations where clubs appear to be non-compliant with the league minimum standards. Reporting non-compliance on the part of other clubs should not be viewed negatively, but rather a positive attempt to maintain consistency within the league that will ensure professionalism and fairness, both on and off the field.

### **Minimum requirements that EVERY club must meet:**

1. Have a Director of Coaching charged with technical oversight of all teams and coaches within the club.
2. Be a registered corporate entity, either for-profit or not-for-profit, in good standing according to federal and state law, and have a club logo.
3. Have a mission statement identifying the primary purpose for the club’s existence and its goals in player and personal development of its players. The mission statement should be realistic based on the club and community resources.
4. Have either a formal governance board or an advisory board to provide guidance and assistance in financial, legal, real estate, and other general business matters.
5. Have a conflict of interest policy that addresses the recusal of board members that have children in the club in situations that directly involve their children.
6. Have a clear, hierarchical organizational chart with all staff and their responsibilities, with job descriptions for all full-time staff.
7. Background checks must be conducted on all coaches and on any adults that will interact with players on a regular basis.
8. Have a minimum of three teams in the same gender to be considered a “club” for that gender of players.
9. Have a player and parent code of conduct.
10. Have a coach’s code of conduct emphasizing that high degrees of professionalism, personal integrity, and maturity are required from all staff.
11. Have an annual player registration process managed by a club registrar / administrator.

## **Minimum FCL Standards**

### **ECNLR (must enter teams both boys and girls U11-U18/19)**

- 1) Technical: Staffing, Curriculum, Training, Additional Resources
- 2) Structural / Administrative: Organization, Structure, Finance and Member Management
- 3) Facilities:
  - a. Have a dedicated training facility that is owned or leased by the club with at least 2 training fields with multiple goals of varying sizes on each field.
  - b. Provide benches, tents, and water on game days for all fields.
  - c. Clean working restrooms
- 4) Game Day standards:
  - a. Clubs will be expected to have the following on game date:
    - i. Dedicated away team check in area
    - ii. League signage/feathers
    - iii. Sports trainer(s)
    - iv. *Team benches, tents, provide water and/or sport drink (due to co-vid please follow CDC guidelines when providing drinks)*
    - v. All fields should have corner flags and secured goals

### **Florida Club League 1 (FCL1) (must enter teams U13-U18/19 boy or girls)**

- 1) Technical: Staffing, Curriculum, Training, Additional Resources
- 2) Structural / Administrative: Organization, Structure, Finance and Member Management
  - a. Have a strategy or program to identify, hire, and retain new coaches and staff, as well as lateral hires of experienced coaches and staff.
  - b. Have an annual strategic planning and goal-setting meeting to determine direction and focus for the future of the club, short-term and long-term.
  - c. Have a 5-year strategic plan outlining the goals and objectives of the club in player development, facility development, and coach development. This plan should be reviewed and assessed annually.
  - d. Have a full-time Executive Director or Business Manager to manage finances, logistics, and other business tasks of the club. This position may report to the Director of Coaching or directly to the Board of Directors depending upon the club and the skills of the individuals involved.
  - e. Have an Executive Director / Business Manager with a college degree in business administration, sports administration, or something similar.
  - f. Have full-time administrative staff to operate the club.

- 3) Facilities:
  - a. Have a dedicated training facility that is owned or leased by the club with at least 2 training fields with multiple goals of varying sizes on each field.
  - b. Clean working restrooms
- 4) Game Day standards:
  - a. Clubs will be expected to have the following on game date:
    - i. Dedicated away team check in area
    - ii. League signage/feathers
    - iii. Sports trainer(s)
    - vi. Team benches, tents, provide water and/or sport drink (due to co-vid please follow CDC guidelines when providing drinks)*
    - iv. All fields should have corner flags and secured goals

**Florida Club League (FCL2) (must enter a minimum of 4 teams)**

- 1) Technical: Staffing, Curriculum, Training, Additional Resources
- 2) Structural / Administrative: Organization, Structure, Finance and Member Management:
  - a. Have at least one part-time administrative staff member to serve as a registrar and operate the club. Administrative staff should be keeping a minimum of four working hours per day, five days per week.
- 3) Facilities:
  - a. Have access to at least one high quality competition field that allows the ball to run smoothly which is appropriately lined per FIFA rules with benches for players and restrooms or port-a-potties. Turf or natural grass is acceptable.
  - b. Provide benches for teams on game day for all fields.
  - c. Clean working restrooms
- 4) Game Day Standards:
  - a. Clubs will be expected to have the following on game date:
    - i. League signage/feathers
    - ii. Team benches, provide water and/or sport drink (due to co-vid please follow CDC guidelines when providing drinks)*
    - iii. All fields should have corner flags and secured goals

**Florida Club Development League (FCDL) (no minimum team requirement)**

- 1) Technical: Staffing, Curriculum, Training, Additional Resources
- 2) Structural / Administrative: Organization, Structure, Finance and Member Management:
  - a. Have at least one part-time administrative staff member to serve as a registrar and operate the club. Administrative staff should be keeping a minimum of four working hours per day, five days per week.
- 3) Facilities:
  - a. Have access to at least one high quality competition field that allows the ball to run smoothly which is appropriately lined per FIFA rules with benches for players and restrooms or port-a-potties. Turf or natural grass is acceptable.
  - b. Provide benches for teams on game day for all fields.

- c. Clean working restrooms
- 5) Game Day Standards:
  - a. Clubs will be expected to have the following on game date:
    - i. League signage/feathers
    - ii. Team benches, provide water and/or sport drink (due to co-vid please follow CDC guidelines when providing drinks)*
    - iii. All fields should have corner flags and secured goals

**Florida Club League (FCL) - General Rules and Regulations**  
**Applies to all State and Regional Leagues and Cups**



## **Section 1: Administration/ Management**

### **1.1 – Florida Club League**

The Florida Club League (FCL) is a US Club Soccer sanctioned league and member of the United States Soccer Federation.

### **1.2 – Governance**

All FCL competitions are governed by regulations approved by the Regional Advisory Committee (RAC). The RAC shall rule on all disputes and issues pertaining to FCL competitions that are not covered in the Code of Ethics. The RAC may overrule rules in this handbook if it is determined to be for the good of the game.

### **1.3 – Club Definition**

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

1. All teams participating in FCL 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 FCL events must have a common club name, logo, uniform (which should be unique to their club) and must practice/play games out of one designated club facility.
3. All teams participating in FCL events must operate under a single technical structure/plan and report to a single Technical Director, Director of Coaching or Executive Director.
4. All players participating in FCL events must be registered under a single US Club ID.

### **1.4 - Club Pass Rule**

Each US Club Soccer player pass can be used for any age-appropriate team in the issuing club. Thus, players have the ability to move up and down within their club, giving individual teams the ability to make changes game to game due to illness, injury, vacation, or other conflicts. It is considered unethical for teams to move players down within a club for the purpose of creating a competitive advantage.

### **1.5 - Team Management**

Overall, clubs are responsible for the management of their teams. In order to compete in FCL events, each team must have a team manager who oversees the following responsibilities: scheduling games, referee payments, travel cooperation, reporting of scores and communication with appropriate league officials. All team managers must have access to email that is checked on a daily basis and a telephone number connected to a 24-hour answering system during the season.

### **1.6 - Division Formations**

Competitive divisions will be structured according to the playing level of teams as determined by the FCL RAC, which has final authority on all placement issues. Should FCL determine there is an insufficient number of teams to constitute an age group division, the teams affected may be allowed to temporarily or partially compete in a different division of play.

### **1.7 - League Standings**

Official standings of teams, the keeping of which is the responsibility of the FCL, are tabulated on a regular basis and displayed on the FCL website.

### **1.8 – Play Up Request Guidelines**

For teams who wish to request to play up an age group, the FCL will use the following criteria to determine if a team needs to play up for their development:

1. Team is current Florida Cup Champion or Finalist within their own age group,  
AND
2. Team has proven in previous seasons to be a very dominant team within their own age group, OR
3. Team does not have appropriate competition locally and needs to travel significantly in order to find competition within their own age group

Play up requests must be submitted to the FCL League Director for consideration. The FCL RAC has the final say on all play up decisions.

### **1.9 – Teams Requesting to Play Outside their Region**

For teams who wish to request to play outside of their region, the FCL RAC will use the following criteria to determine if a team needs to play in a different region:

1. Availability of competitive divisions within the Region

## **Section 2: Scheduling and Communication**

### **2.1 – Required Club Contacts**

Each club's TGS account needs to be kept up to date with the proper contact information. Please keep in mind that this is the primary method by which FCL 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:

- DOC
- President
- Administrator (Primary FCL contact)
- Referee Assignor

### **2.2 - Communication Policy**

Communication between teams is vitally important for all FCL events. Each team must have at least two different contacts listed in TGS and ensure that both contacts have an email and phone number listed. All team scheduling communication should be done through TGS system so that there is a proper record of the communication. Team contacts must respond to communication within 48 hours. Listing the wrong email or phone number will not be a valid excuse for not responding to communication.

### **2.3 - Policy for Scheduling Matches**

The FCL will provide play dates for all matches along with scheduling deadlines. *Teams are expected to be available to play any time on the game dates provided.* For club-hosted games, home teams should take travel time into consideration. Please do not schedule games before 10 AM if a team is required to travel more than one hour. Please do not schedule games for older ages (U15 and up) before 3 pm on SAT/ACT test dates. In consideration of Co-Vid19, the club will need to consider their local county health and safety guideline as these will vary from county to county. All games must be scheduled (time and location) by the deadline provided by the FCL. After the deadline passes, the

schedules are locked, and games can only be rescheduled if both teams agree. Teams unwilling or unable to attend games will be fined and may be removed from FCL. Any unplayed games will be documented by league officials and may result in a club being removed from FCL.

*Please Note* - If the FCL feels that a club is responsible for the game not being scheduled or communication from the away team is not responded to in a timely manner, teams will lose home-field advantage but still pay for referees and field costs.

The grace period for kick-off for late arrival of a team to the game is 15 minutes. FCL encourages games to be completed but following game(s) should not be impacted by a late-game start. If it is necessary for a game to be shortened due to a late start, both teams and the referee shall agree on having two equal shortened halves.

In consideration of Co-Vid19, the club will need to take into account the local county health and safety guideline as these will vary from county to county.

## **2.4 – Rescheduling Games**

Once playdates have been determined, both teams must agree on any scheduling change prior to the schedules going live. After the scheduling deadline passes (schedules have gone live), a game can only be changed if there is a rain out or field closure. Any other reason will require RAC approval, via email to the League Director and will result in a fine/fee that will need to be paid in full prior to the schedule being changed.

## **2.5 - Weather/Lightning Policy (Adapted from the NCAA Guideline 1d for Lightning Safety)**

When inclement weather approaches, the following steps should be taken for the safety of all student-athletes, coaches, support staff and spectators.

- A. In a preventive fashion, the Program Director will obtain an official weather report from the National Weather Service before each practice and/or contest. In the event of potential thunderstorms, the weather conditions will be monitored via the internet or phone app such as Weather Bug Spark. All personnel should be prepared to monitor incoming severe weather using the Flash Bang method. To use the Flash Bang method, count the seconds from the time lightning/flash is sighted to when the clap/bang of thunder is heard. Divide this number by 5 and this equals how far away (in miles) the lightning is occurring. (For example, 20 second count = 4 miles). As a minimum, the NCAA and the National Severe Storms laboratory (NSSL), strongly recommend that all individuals leave the athletic sites and reach a safe location by the flash-to-bang count of 30 seconds (6 miles). However, lightning can strike as far as 10 miles and it does not have to rain for lightning to strike. Activities will be terminated at 40 seconds or 8 miles.
- B. Chain of command for evacuating athletic teams/spectators during competition: Program Director → Officials → Coaching Staff → Teams ↓ Spectators
- C. Chain of command for evacuating athletic teams/spectators during practice: Program Director → Coaching Staff → Athletic Teams ↓ Spectators
- D. All sports programs will follow the guidelines established in this handbook. In the event that the Weather Bug Spark Lightning Detector reacts to nearby lightning strikes twice in the 0-8 mile range, all venues will be evacuated. The

following will occur by all sporting programs during storm activity: Indication Reaction by Department Severe Thunderstorm Monitor Weather Bug Spark for distance Storm Distance 0-8 miles Evacuation to Safe Facility Storm Distance 9 – above miles Monitor for distance The existence of blue sky and the absence of rain are not protection from lightning. Lightning can, and does, strike as far as 10 miles away from the rain shaft. It does not have to be raining for lightning to strike.

E. It is the responsibility of the head coach for each practice to remove and direct all athletes, coaches, and parents to their automobile. (If the head coach is not present, the assistant coach will assume responsibility.)

F. No team shall be allowed to return to practice and/or competition for 30 minutes after the Lightning Detector has returned to the safe range of “Storm Distance 8 and above Miles” or no indication of lightning strikes on the detector for 30 minutes.

G. The Program Director (Game day) and/or On-Site Coach (Practices) will inform all parties that it is safe to return to the field of play.

## **2.6 – Rain Outs**

In the event of a forced reschedule (i.e. rainout), it is the home team’s responsibility to reschedule the match. All rainouts must be rescheduled within 1 week of the original match date.

## **2.7 - Cancellation/Forfeit Policy**

Teams must give their opponent a 96-hour warning if not able to attend a scheduled match, or they will be required to pay field and referee costs. Please remember that this is a club competition and not an individual team competition. The following is a list of common excuses teams cite for wanting to reschedule or cancel a game. We recommend the following solutions to frequently posed problems:

- **Too many players missing (sick, testing, etc.)** - Remember that any player from your club is available to participate with your team as long as they are of the correct age. In league matches please use lower team players or players from younger teams within your club to fill out your roster.
- **Missing Coach** - Any coach with a valid pass for your club is able to coach any team in that club. If your coach has several commitments, then it is recommended that teams have an assistant coach or another coach from the club available to cover games.
- **No Fields Available** - It is expected that if your team is playing in FCL, you have access to quality fields. This excuse will not be accepted for cancellation of a match.
- **Tournaments/other games** - FCL understands that teams will possibly play in a tournament during the league. This will be an acceptable excuse to ask to reschedule a game, but it must be rescheduled by FCL scheduling deadlines. Please plan your schedule well in advance so your schedule does not become so full that you are unable to fulfill your league commitment. Club officials will have the ability to input blackout dates within TGS when registering teams.

## **Section 3: Game Officials**

### **3.1 - Match Officials**

Match officials must be current year USSF licensed referees. The match officials shall consist of the referee and two assistant referees except for 7v7/ 9v9 formats of play may be played with one referee. Clubs may elect to use club linesmen for 7v7/ 9v9 formats of play. 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.

### **3.2 - Assignment of Match Officials**

Match officials shall be assigned and paid by the home club for each match. Each club is required to have a current year certified USSF Referee Assignor active in the assignment of referees for all FCL games in their club & listed in their GotSoccer account. Failure to do so will result in club sanctions from FCL, including a review of a club's membership.

## **Section 4: League Discipline**

### **4.1 - Violating League Rules**

The FCL Protest, Discipline & Ethics Committee (PDE) and the FCL RAC shall have the authority to suspend, fine, disqualify or otherwise impose sanctions on, players, team officials or competing clubs for violating league rules, the FCL Code of Ethics or for any action or conduct not in the best interest of soccer or the FCL.

## **4.2 - Disciplinary Issues**

Any breach of FCL Rules outlined in this Handbook should be reported to the FCL Administrator, who will then refer it to the RAC. Any incidents or breach of the FCL Code of Ethics should be reported to the FCL Administrator. All reports of rule violations or breaches of the FCL Code of Ethics may only be reported by a club's DOC or President.

## **4.3 - Red Cards**

If a Red Card is shown, it will result in a minimum of a one (1) game suspension. This includes a Red Card as a result of two cautions. If a player is sent off during the weekend, they may not play the remainder of the weekend, regardless of which event the Red Card is issued in. Games sat out that weekend will count against the suspension, as long as noted on the roster and/or Referee Game Report as such. Any player used during a suspension will be considered an illegal player and the team, coach and club will be punished accordingly.

## **4.4 - Red Card Procedure**

In any game where a Red Card is issued, the referee must notify the FCL Administrator within 24 hours and the home team must fill out a Send-Off Report.

Each team manager or coach must report any red cards given in their game by stating the league, game number, date and the player/players/coach who received the red card from each team. This should be reported to the FCL Administrator with in 24 hours of the game by emailing [lori@flcleague.com](mailto:lori@flcleague.com).

The player card can be returned to the team as long as the Referee Send-Off Report shows the infraction, the player's name, and ID number. In addition to the send-off report, teams must scan and send the game report to [lori@flcleague.com](mailto:lori@flcleague.com) confirming that suspensions have been served. This should be completed no later than 8:00pm on Thursday for the player to be cleared to play for the upcoming weekend.

## **4.5 - Suspensions**

It is the team's and/or club's responsibility to ensure their Red Carded player/coach serves the minimum 1 game suspension. It is also their responsibility to ensure that their player/coach serves any additional suspension determined by the FCL PDE committee. There shall be two types of suspensions:

1. Minor Offenses – See table below:

AL	Offensive, insulting or abusive language	1 Game
2CT	Second caution in same match	1 Game
SFP	Serious Foul Play	1 Game
DGH	Denies opportunity by hand ball	1 Game
DGF	Denies opportunity by FK/PK offense	1 Game

2. Major Offenses – See table below: These include send-offs for violent actions.  
Major offenses will be reported directly to US Club Soccer

S	Spits at opponent or other person	2-3 Game
VC	Violent Conduct	2-6 Games

3. Referee abuse will NOT be tolerated and will be sent directly to US Club Soccer to be handled.

Suspensions for both minor and major offenses, for both players and coaches, shall be served immediately in upcoming FCL games, regardless of the FCL competition. The player/coach shall serve the suspension with the team the violation occurred with. Players may not compete for another team in their club in FCL competitions until their suspension is served in full. However, coaches may coach another team in their club during their suspension but must serve their suspension in full with the team the violation occurred, only if the suspension is a fixed amount of games (as opposed to a period of time).

The FCL RAC can postpone or re-allocate suspensions in the best interests of the game and the integrity of the competition. For the avoidance of doubt, Play Date games do count towards suspensions for both players and coaches.

## **Section 5: Equipment**

### **5.1 - Safety**

A player must not use equipment or wear anything which is dangerous to themselves or another player (including all jewelry).

### **5.2 - 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.

### **5.3 - Jewelry**

Absolutely no jewelry, including rings, chains, watches, jewelry, hair clips, bobby pins, earrings, bracelets, rubber bracelets, or abnormally long fingernails may be worn while participating in any FCL games. Only Medical Alert Warning Bracelets may be worn and shall be taped to secure them to the player's body. Earrings and other piercings cannot be taped and must be removed.

### **5.4 - Shinguards**

All players are always required to use shin guards. They must be worn properly and be professionally manufactured and unaltered. Socks must completely cover shin guards.

### **5.5 - Braces**

It is strongly recommended for the safety of the player, that a player does not wear a brace during FCL games. Braces are allowed as long as the referee decides that the brace will not or cannot hurt the player wearing the brace or any other player. All metal, metal-like, or plastic brace supports are to be properly covered for the duration of the match. 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.

### **5.6 - 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.

#### **5.7 – Player Uniforms**

The two teams must wear colors that distinguish them from each other and also the referee and the assistant referees. The HOME team has the right to choose what uniform color they will wear for each match. ***This must be communicated by the Thursday leading into the match weekend by 5p.m. to the visiting club.***

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.***

#### **5.8 - Player Numbers**

Player numbers must be affixed to the back of the uniform shirt. Each player on a team shall wear a unique number.

#### **5.9 – Undergarments**

If undershirts or shorts are worn, they must match the main color of the jersey or short. If tape or other material is applied externally to the socks it must be the same color as the part of the sock to which it is applied.

#### **5.10 - Home Team**

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

#### **5.13 - Technical Area**

FCL encourages both team benches to be on the same side of the field.

**Florida Club League (FCL) - Playing Rules and Regulations**  
Applies to all Youth State & Regional Leagues



## **Section 1: Competition Rules**

### **1.1 - Playing Rules**

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

### **1.2 - Point System**

All FCL Premier Leagues shall operate under a point system. The point system shall award three points for a win, one point for a tie and no points for a loss.

### **1.3 - Tie Breakers**

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

1. “Head to head” points (win/lose/draw) between teams
2. Overall Goal Differential (up to 4)
3. Goals for (up to 4)
4. Goals against (up to 4)
5. Most points against the highest non-tied team in the group
6. Best goal differential against the highest non-tied team in the group
7. Most shutouts
8. Fewest red cards
9. Coin toss

In a situation where a season cannot be completed due to exceptional circumstances, and teams have played an unequal number of games, FCL may use Points Per Game (PPG) to decide league standings.

#### 1.4 - Game Details

	<b>U8</b>	<b>U9-U10</b>	<b>U11</b>	<b>U12</b>	<b>U13</b>	<b>U14-U16</b>	<b>U17-U19</b>
<b>* Field Size (yds)</b>	<b>25/35 L 15/25 W</b>	<b>55/65 L 35/45 W</b>	<b>70/80 L 45/55 W</b>	<b>70/80 L 45/55 W</b>	<b>100/120 L 50/80 W</b>	<b>100/120 L 50/80 W</b>	<b>100/120 L 55/80 W</b>
<b>**Number of Referees</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Number of Players</b>	<b>4v4</b>	<b>7v7</b>	<b>9v9</b>	<b>9v9</b>	<b>11v11</b>	<b>11v11</b>	<b>11v11</b>
<b>Minimum # of Players</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Goalkeeper</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Playing Time</b>	<b>4x10</b>	<b>2x25</b>	<b>2x30</b>	<b>2x30</b>	<b>2x35</b>	<b>2x40</b>	<b>2x45</b>
<b>Ball Size</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Goal Mouth Size (feet)</b>	<b>4x6</b>	<b>6.5x18. 5 - 7x21</b>	<b>6.5x18.5 - 7x21</b>	<b>6.5x18.5 - 7x21</b>	<b>8x24</b>	<b>8x24</b>	<b>8x24</b>
<b>Offside</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Substitutions</b>	<b>Any Stoppage</b>	<b>Any Stoppage</b>	<b>Any Stoppage</b>	<b>Any Stoppage</b>	<b>ENCLR, NPL ,FCL1 and FCL 2 (limited see NPL specific rules) FCDL Any Stoppage</b>	<b>ENCLR, NPL ,FCL1 and FCL 2 (limited see NPL specific rules) FCDL Any Stoppage</b>	<b>ENCLR, NPL ,FCL1 and FCL 2 (limited see NPL specific rules) FCDL Any Stoppage</b>

Fouls (type of kick)	Indirect Free Kicks Only	Indirect & Direct Free Kicks	Indirect / Direct Free Kicks				
Free Kick clearance	10 ft	8 yd	8 yd	8 yd	10 yd	10 yd	10 yd
Throw-in	1 Re-throw	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal
Penalty Kicks	None	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)	None	12x24	14x36	14x36	18 x 44	18 x 44	18 x 44
Goal Area (yards)	3x8	4x8	5x16	5x16	6 x 20	6 x 20	6 x 20
Heading	None	None	None	per Laws/Rules	per Laws/Rules	per Laws/Rules	per Laws/Rule s
Build-Out Line	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Half-Time Break	n/a	5 mins	10 mins	10 mins	10 mins	10 mins	10 mins

\*\*Recommended minimum number of referees

\*Use of cones for lines allowed

### 1.5 - Fields

The playing field used by each team must be lined according to USSF standards with goals (games can be played if both goals are the same size), nets and flags. The goal of each club shall be to provide an enjoyable experience for the fans, players, officials, and everyone involved with the staging of a soccer game.

In all small sided formats (4v4, 7v7 and 9v9), the use of cones is permitted for the formation of the field lines.

## **1.6 – 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.*

## **1.7 – No Re-Entry Protocol (for Head Injury)**

In accordance with the US Soccer return to play guidelines, any player suspected of suffering a head injury must be evaluated by a licensed medical professional prior to returning to play. If a player is being evaluated onsite by a licensed medical professional for possible return to play, the player may be temporarily substituted while the evaluation occurs, provided that the team has a substitution remaining in that half, without the substitution counting against the team's total number of substitutions and without prohibiting re-entry by the player being evaluated if she is ultimately cleared. For purposes of clarification, only an eligible player may be used for a "temporary substitution," and if the team has used all eligible substitutions (7) for the half, the team must play down during the evaluation period.

## **1.8 – Healthcare Professional**

A healthcare professional is defined as "a licensed healthcare professional such as an athletic trainer certified (ATC), or a physician (MD/DO), with a skill set in emergency care and sports medicine injuries and with knowledge and experience related to concussion evaluation and management." It will be up to each club to decide whether they will provide a healthcare professional at their matches and to ensure that this individual has the correct certification to be evaluating players for head trauma. If a club plans to use a healthcare professional to evaluate suspected head injuries during a FCL match, the healthcare professional must be presented to the referee prior to the start of the match. Referees will not allow the re-entry of players removed from the field of play for suspected head injuries unless they are informed of the presence of, and meet with, a healthcare professional prior to the start of the match.

## **1.9 - Substitutions**

### **1.9.1 - ECNLR- See ECNLR guidelines**

### **1.9.2 - League 1 -See NPL Guidelines**

### **1.9.3 - League 2 - will use the NPL guidelines stated below:**

A substitution can take place at any stoppage with the referee's permission.

Substitutions are permitted as follows:

- First Half - No Re-Entry
- Second Half – One (1) Re-Entry

There will be 1 re-entry per half for an injured GK (no field player re-entry).

In accordance with the new USSF Head Injury guidelines, a substitution for a suspected head injury will not count against re-entry rules.

#### **1.9.4 - Development League:**

As per FIFA guidelines, unlimited substitutions are allowed in all age groups (except for ECNLR and FCL1-NPL, FCL2, see rules of competition).

*However, teams may substitute only with the referee's permission. Substitutes must wait on the sideline (off 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 by either team are allowed at any stoppage of play with the permission of the referee. Referees will be instructed not to allow substitutions that are deemed "excessive" or of a "time wasting" nature. Please be respectful of the integrity of the game and do not use the free substitution rules to disrupt the match.*

#### **1.10 – Ties in League Play**

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

#### **1.11 - Playoffs for League**

For matches that need a winner, the team with the most goals after regulation time will be the winner. If the match is tied after regulation for U9-U19 teams, two 5-minute periods will be played. Teams will have a 5-minute break before the first overtime. After 5 minutes, teams will change sides, with no break, and play the remaining 5 minutes. If the game is still tied after the two overtime periods, then kicks from the mark per FIFA rules will determine the winner.

*Please make sure you arrive for your game knowing if the game can end in a draw or if a winning team is required.*

#### **1.12 - Incomplete games**

In the event that a game cannot be completed, the game will stand if half or more 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 the FCL RAC or FCL PAD Committee. If there is no result, and the match is suspended prior to the expiration of one half, the game shall be replayed at a time agreed upon by the competing teams in consultation with the FCL RAC. *Referees are required to submit an incident report for all matches that are ended early.*

#### **1.13 - No-Shows**

A no-show occurs when a team willfully does not show up to a game agreed to by the teams. The penalty for a no-show shall be a \$500 fine imposed on the club. One no-show may result in the offending team being removed from the league. Two no-shows in a single season shall result in the offending team's removal from the competition.

#### **1.14 - Forfeits**

A forfeit occurs when a team is unable to attend a scheduled game. A team unable to attend a scheduled game because of an accident, or "Act of God" should immediately notify the opponent and the FCL Administrator. In these circumstances, the FCL RAC will review and rule on the situation. The forfeiting club will be responsible to cover all

referee and field costs if they inform the opponent less than 96 hours before the scheduled game time. It is the expectation of FCL that all games be played and therefore expect any game that is missed be rescheduled. No score will be entered until the fixture is fulfilled.

## **1.15 - 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 game card. Protests regarding the use of illegal players may be made prior to or following the match and be clearly written on the game card. Specific referee decisions cannot be protested. No match condition protests will be allowed at FCL hosted events. All protested games should be sent to the appropriate event coordinator, who will forward to the RAC for a ruling.

## **1.16 – Fines**

The FCL may impose the following fines:

- Team drops out of the league after final fixtures are posted: \$500
- Team drops out of the league after 1<sup>st</sup> game is played: \$100 per game missed
- Reschedule/No-show within 1 week of the original scheduled game: \$300 (only if game rained out or canceled due to field closure)
- General game reschedules with R.A.C. approval \$1500 (club will lose home field advantage if schedule changed)
- Playing illegal players - \$500 per instance
- Failure to schedule matches by league scheduled deadline \$50 per game
- Failure to reschedule a canceled match within 48 hours - \$50 per game
- Home team failed to report score within 24 hours - \$20 per game (each club will receive a warning before being fined for score reporting)
- Failure to provide three current year licensed referees - \$150 per missing referee
  - The FCL RAC reserves the right to class the game as a forfeit, and/or remove a team from FCL Competitions for using unlicensed referees
- \*Failure to provide shade/tents for both teams - \$50 per occurrence
- \*Failure to provide water for both teams - \$50 per occurrence
- Failure to provide benches for both team - \$50 per occurrence
- Any club/team who does not complete payment within 60 days will be subject to a late fee of 15%

*\*Clubs will have the full 2020/2021 season to bring club into compliance\**

Aside from fines for forfeits (which go to the hosting club, if appropriate), all fines will be added to the travel fund for teams qualifying for national events via FCL competitions, after the deduction of admin costs.

## Section 2: Rosters

### 2.1 - Player Registration

Players shall be registered according to [US Club Soccer](#) rules.

### 2.2 - Game Roster

Each team must create an official FCL roster in their TGS account. Only players who are listed/printed on the official Game Card will be eligible to play in FCL Premier League matches. *Player's names may not be handwritten on the FCL Game Card.* If any player is not listed on the FCL Game Card, he/she must be added electronically to the roster before the player is eligible to play. Team rosters may contain up to 26 players, and there is no limit to the number of changes that can be made to the roster, provided the players are active in the team's club and are not on another club's US Club Roster. *Players may not play for 2 teams in the same division of play* (a division of play is a combination of age group and level, ie: two teams from the same club may not share players if they're playing in the same set of division standings). No matter how many players are listed on a team's roster, only 18 players for U13 and up, 16 players for U11-U12 and 14 players for U9-U10 may be used for FCL Premier League matches.

### 2.3 - US Club Soccer approved Player Pass

All players and coaches must present their US Club Soccer approved player pass to the referee prior to the match. If the individual picture is not on the ID card and the card is not laminated, the individual will not be eligible for the match.

### 2.4 - Forgotten US Club Player Credentials

If a team forgets their US Club player passes for a FCL game, the game should be played under protest. Any players that wish to play must have a picture taken prior to the game and submitted to the RAC to verify that the players were eligible to participate. If this is a continuous issue with a team or club, the RAC may remove that team from the league.

### 2.5 - Guest Players

No guest players are allowed in the FCL.

### 2.6 - Illegal Players

Any player who does not appear on the official FCL game card or has a valid US Club Soccer Player Pass issued by the same club at the time of the match shall be considered an illegal player. 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 FCL competitions for one year, and the Club of the illegal player will incur a \$500 fine.

### 2.7 - Trapped Player Exceptions

**Trapped U15 Player (ECNLR and League 1 only).** An ECNLR or FCL League 1 Registered Player that is in 8th grade (not in high school), but who is age appropriate for the U15 age group is classified as a "Trapped U15 Player". A Trapped U15 Player is eligible to participate in U14 ECNLR or FCL League 1 Competition that is played during the player's high school association's sanctioned soccer season. A Trapped U15 Player that competes in an U14 ECNLR or FCL League 1 Competition pursuant to this Rule 2.7 may also compete in the same ECNLR or FCL League 1

Fixture at U15 through U18/U19, provided he/she only plays one (1) ECNLR or FCL League 1 Competition per day. No more than three (3) Trapped U15 Players may participate in any individual U14 ECNLR or FCL League 1 Competition. *ECNLR trapped players may compete in League 1 competition and FCL League 1 trapped players may compete in ECNLR competition. ECNLR and FCL League 1 trapped players **may not** compete in FCL League 2 or FCL D-League.*

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## **Section 3: Game Day Procedures**

### **3.1 - Pre-Game Procedures**

#### **Home Team Responsibilities**

- All fields should have team benches (ECNLR & FCL1 – should also have tents, water/Gatorade-see minimum standards)
- Central Check in area: Tent and/or table close to fields for away team to check in
- Fields should be properly lined
- Schedule time in TGS
- Provide and pay current year licensed USSF referees
- Provide FCL Game Card (with both team rosters) to the center referee
- Provide referee with current year ECNLR or US Club Soccer player passes for each player and team official.

#### **Visiting team responsibilities:**

- Provide referee ECNLR or US Club Soccer player passes for each player and team official
- Have a copy of official FCL Game Card if needed by the center referee

### **3.2 - Game Day Procedures**

#### **Each manager should have the following at every game**

- FCL Game Card
- US Club Soccer roster of the team
- US Club Soccer passes for its players and team officials

### **3.3 - Post-Game Procedure**

#### **Home team Responsibilities:**

- Coach or manager sign the Game Card following the game
- If no red card is given, the home team holds onto the Game Card until the end of the season
- If a red card is given, see red card procedure above – this requires immediate action from the center referee and manager
- Post score within 24 hours (away team may also report score)
- Game Report

#### **Visiting team responsibilities:**

- Coach or manager must sign the Game Card following the game
- Coach or manager to fill in after game accountability form

### **3.4 - Personnel on the bench**

A maximum of 3 team officials are allowed in each team's technical area. Team officials must have a US Club pass in order to sit in the technical area. It is highly recommended that teams have several credentialed coaches or managers with passes for the team just in case something happens to the head coach. A US Club pass makes a person eligible to coach any team in the club for which that coach or manager is credentialed.

### **3.5 - Score reports**

The home team will post the score in TGS within 24 hours of the game. The home team will keep and file the Game Card for possible future reference.

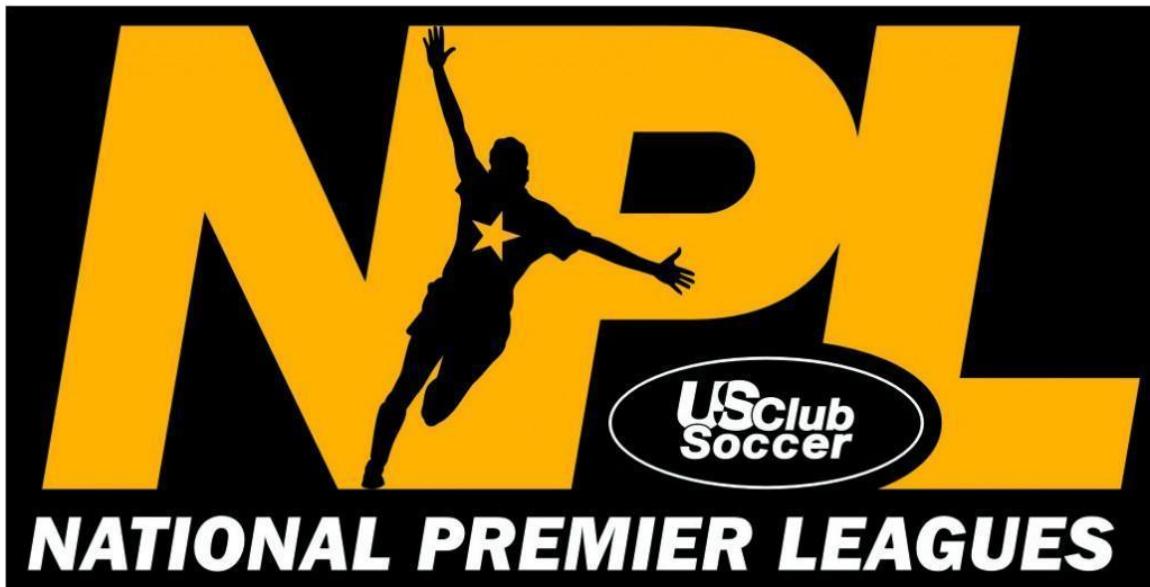
### **3.6 - Game Card**

Both teams must have a copy of the FCL Game Card. The home team will supply the Game Card to the match officials before the match. The away team should have a copy of the Game Card in case it is needed. Following the match, the Officials and each coach need to sign the Game Card. The home team will keep and file the Game Card for future reference.

### **3.7 – Jersey Conflict**

If there is a conflict in jersey colors, it is the AWAY team's responsibility to change colors. The HOME team will have the right to choose the uniform color they will wear. FCL encourages home teams to communicate their jersey colors for the upcoming match weekend to club representatives by Thursday at 5pm leading into the match weekend.

**FCL1 National Premier League (NPL) Rules and Regulations**  
**Applies to all FCL NPL league games (U13-U19 only)**



*The FCL1- NPL serves as the National Premier Leagues (NPL) Division of the FCL. The FCL1- NPL Division is one of 19+ leagues across the United States that are part of the NPL, which has been created to provide a national developmental platform with the highest level of competition in given geographic areas, and to elevate and change the competitive youth soccer landscape based upon fundamental principles in US Club Soccer's vision.*

## **Section 1: Competition Rules**

### **1.1 - Playing Rules**

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

### **1.2 - Point System**

The FCL NPL shall operate under a point system. The point system shall award three points for a win, one point for a tie and no points for a loss.

### **1.3 - Tie Breakers**

In case of a tie-on points in the standings within a league, 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 points against the highest non-tied team in the group
6. Best goal differential against the highest non-tied team in the group
7. Most shutouts
8. Least red cards
9. Coin toss

In a situation where a season cannot be completed due to exceptional circumstances, and teams have played an unequal number of games, FCL may use Points Per Game (PPG) to decide league standings.

### **1.4 – Ties in NPL**

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

### **1.5 - Game Lengths**

All NPL matches will be played in full. All games will be played 11v11 with a size five ball. The following is the list of game lengths for each age group:

- U13 – play 2x40 minutes; 10-minute halftime
- U14 – play 2x40 minutes; 10-minute halftime
- U15 – play 2x40 minutes; 10-minute halftime
- U16 – play 2x40 minutes; 10-minute halftime
- U17 – play 2x45 minutes; 10-minute halftime
- U19 – play 2x45 minutes; 10-minute halftime

### **1.6 - Fields**

It is expected that all Club Fields be of the highest quality for NPL competition. It is expected that fields are properly lined, mowed, and have nets and corner flags. In case the above conditions are not met, the game will be played under protest (view section on protests). If FCL finds that a field is not to the standards of the FCL NPL, clubs may be asked to move their matches to another field.

Expected field dimensions for FCL NPL matches:

- U14 – Maximum 120 yards x 80 yards; Minimum 100 yards x 55 yards

- U15-U19 – Maximum 120 yards x 80 yards; Minimum 105 yards x 60 yards  
All goals are expected to be regulation size 8' height x 24' width.

### **1.7 – No Re-Entry Protocol (Head Injury)**

In accordance with the US Soccer return to play guidelines, any player removed from the field for a suspected head injury will not be allowed to return to the field of play unless cleared by a Healthcare Professional.

### **1.8 – Healthcare Professional**

A healthcare professional is defined as “a licensed healthcare professional such as an athletic trainer certified (ATC), or a physician (MD/DO), with a skill set in emergency care and sports medicine injuries and with knowledge and experience related to concussion evaluation and management.” It will be up to each club to decide whether they will provide a healthcare professional at their matches and to ensure that this individual has the correct certification to be evaluating players for head trauma. If a club plans to use a healthcare professional to evaluate suspected head injuries during a FCL match, the healthcare professional must be presented to the referee prior to the start of the match. Referees will not allow the re-entry of players removed from the field of play for suspected head injuries unless they are informed of the presence of, and meet with, a healthcare professional prior to the start of the match.

### **1.9 - Substitutions**

A substitution can take place at any stoppage with the referee’s permission.

Substitutions are permitted as follows:

- First Half - No Re-Entry
- Second Half – One (1) Re-Entry

There will be 1 re-entry per half for an injured GK (no field player re-entry).

In accordance with the new USSF Head Injury guidelines, a substitution for a suspected head injury will not count against re-entry rules.

### **1.10 - Incomplete Games**

In the event that a game cannot be completed, the game counts if half or more of the game was played; provided, however, that any team directly responsible for the termination of the game due to poor sportsmanship towards a referee, opposing fans, or opposing players will result in that team forfeiting the match. This could also lead to other possible penalties set by the FCL RAC and the FCL PAD committee. If there is no result, and the match is suspended prior to the expiration of one half, the game shall be repeated at a time agreed upon by the competing teams in consultation with the FCL NPL Committee.

### **1.11 No-Shows/Forfeits**

A no-show occurs when a team willfully does not show up to a game agreed to by the teams. Penalties for no-shows are as follows:

- A forfeit to the opposing team – 0-3 loss
- See fines for additional repercussions

A team unable to attend a scheduled game because of an accident, weather, or act of God should immediately notify the opponent and the RAC. Each situation shall be reviewed by the FCL RAC, which shall make a final decision.

## **1.12 Protests**

Protests will be allowed prior to the start of a match. A protest must be clearly written on the official Game Card prior to the match in regard to field quality and any other issues in regards to match conditions not being of the highest quality. Protests in regards to eligible players or the playing of illegal players may be made prior to or following the match. Protests must be sent to the RAC for review. Specific referee decisions shall not be protested.

No Protests will be allowed at FCL hosted matches except in regard to the possibility of playing illegal players.

## **Section 2: Rosters**

### **2.1 - Personnel on the Bench**

A maximum of 3 non-playing personnel are allowed in each team's technical area.

### **2.2 - Game Roster**

Create your official NPL roster online in TGS (Total Global Sports) team account. Players' names may not be handwritten onto the FCL Game Card. Only players listed on the official Game Card will be eligible to play in NPL matches. Exceptions during the first weekend of the season may apply – players must have a pass issued by the same club as the team(s)he is playing for.

### **2.3 - Eligibility**

All players and coaches must present their US Club Player Pass to the referee prior to the match. If the individual picture is not on the ID card and the card is not laminated, the individual will not be eligible for the match. All players must be named on the Game Card presented to the referee at the beginning of each game. Players may only play for one club, their club, during any NPL match. All players from a club are eligible to participate in NPL matches within the age eligibility limits. No players may play for more than one team within a level of play in the NPL. (a division of play is a combination of age group and level)

Only 18 players may be dressed for a match. The 18 players must be on the official Game Card 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 Game Card.

### **2.4 - Guest Players**

No Guest Players will be allowed.

### **2.5 - Illegal Players**

Any player who does not appear on the FCL Game Card or has a valid US Club Soccer player pass issued by the same club shall be considered an illegal player. Any team using, or attempting to use, an illegal player shall forfeit the game. In addition, the coach of the team using the illegal player will be suspended from all FCL Premier League competitions for one year. It will also result in a \$500 club fine.

### **2.6 - In Season Transfers**

Players may only play for one club during a FCL NPL season unless the FCL RAC grants a transfer. The NPL Season is defined as the start of the fall season through the final NPL weekend in the spring. If a transfer request is granted, a transferred player must sit

out five (5) NPL games before being eligible to play for his/her new club. Any player not sitting out will be considered an illegal player. The FCL RAC has the final say on all transfers.

## **Section 3: Game Day Procedures**

### **3.1 - Pre-Game Procedures**

Home Team Responsibilities:

- Schedule and post-game time/location on the website
- Provide quality field equipped with goals, nets, flags and proper lines
- Assign qualified current year licensed referees

Visiting Team Responsibilities:

- Respond to any communication requests from the home team in regard to match within 24 hours

### **3.2 - Game Day Procedures**

At each NPL match both teams must have possession of:

- Game card will be provided by the home team to the center referee
- US Club Soccer player passes for each player and nonplayer in the technical area

#### ***Game Day Requirements***

Approximately five minutes prior to each NPL match, it is recommended that teams conduct an International “Walkout.” Following the Walkout, the teams shall shake hands with the referees and the opposing players. It is our hope to foster camaraderie and respect between the teams and referees prior to the start of the match. In case of a highly impacted game schedule, the Walkout can be waived in order to help games start on time. In that case, teams shall still shake hands with the opposing players and the referees. In addition, each game should have the following:

- Benches for both teams, tents, water/Gatorade
- Easy-up or bench cover set up for both Home and Away team
- Water for both teams

### **3.3 - Post-Game Procedures**

Home Team Responsibilities:

- Coach or manager signs the FCL Game Card
- Post score within 24 hours (failure to post scores within 24 hours may result in a fine)
- Report goals and assists for home team scorers
- Coach or DOC fills out the FCL NPL Online Game Report
- Report any red card (home or away) to the FCL RAC within 24 hours

Visiting Team Responsibilities:

- Coach or manager signs the FCL1 Game Card
- If the Home team does not post the score within 24 hours, the Away team should post the score and inform the NPL Coordinator
- Report goals and assists for visiting team scorers
- Fill out FCL NPL Online Game Report

### **3.4 – Jersey Conflict**

If there is a conflict in jersey colors, it is the AWAY team’s responsibility to change colors. The HOME team will have the right to choose the uniform color they will wear. FCL encourages home teams to communicate their jersey colors for the upcoming match weekend to club representatives by Thursday at 5pm leading into the match weekend.

## **Section 4: Club Fines and Penalties**

### **4.1 – Fines**

- Team drops out of the league after final fixtures are posted: \$500
- Team drops out of the league after 1<sup>st</sup> game is played: \$100 per game missed
- Reschedule/No-show within 1 week of the original scheduled game: \$300 (only if game rained out or canceled due to field closure)
- General game reschedules with R.A.C. approval \$1500 (club will lose home field advantage if schedule changed)
- Playing illegal players - \$500 per instance
- Failure to schedule matches by league scheduled deadline \$50 per game
- Failure to reschedule a canceled match within 48 hours - \$50 per game
- Home team failed to report score within 24 hours - \$20 per game (each club will receive a warning before being fined for score reporting)
- Failure to provide three current year licensed referees - \$150 per missing referee
  - The FCL RAC reserves the right to class the game as a forfeit, and/or remove a team from FCL Competitions for using unlicensed referees
- \*Failure to provide shade/tents for both teams - \$50 per occurrence
- \*Failure to provide water for both teams - \$50 per occurrence
- Failure to provide benches for both team - \$50 per occurrence
- Any club/team who does not complete payment within 60 days will be subject to a late fee of 15%

*\*Clubs will have the full 2020/2021 season to bring club into compliance\**

Aside from fines for forfeits (which go to the hosting club, if appropriate), all fines will be added to the travel fund for teams qualifying for national events via FCL competitions, after the deduction of admin costs.

#### **4.2 - Other Penalties**

Accumulation of 2 no-shows for a club in NPL shall result in the Club's removal from NPL.

## **Florida Cup Rules and Regulations**



### **Section 1: Competition Rules**

#### **1.1 – Playing Rules**

All FCL Florida Cup games shall be played according to the rules and regulations recognized by FCL Premier League which shall be the same rules set by FIFA/USSF except for those exceptions authorized by FIFA or USSF.

#### **1.2 – Point System**

The FCL Florida Cup shall operate under a point system. The point system shall award three points for a win, one point for a tie and no points for a loss.

### **1.3 – Tie Breakers**

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

1. “Head to Head” points between teams
2. Overall Goal Differential (up to 4)
3. Goals for (up to 4)
4. Goals against (up to 4)
5. Most points against the highest non-tied team in the group (i.e. if the 2<sup>nd</sup> place and 3<sup>rd</sup> place team are tied best record vs. 1<sup>st</sup> place team would win tiebreaker)
6. Best Goal Differential against the highest non-tied team in the group
7. Most Shutouts
8. Fewest Red Cards
9. Coin Toss

If more than two teams are tied, the tie-breaking process will be used until a winner is determined. The tie-breaking procedure does not revert to previous criteria if one team is eliminated.

In a situation where a group cannot be completed due to exceptional circumstances, and teams have played an unequal number of games, FCL may use Points Per Game (PPG) to decide group standings.

## 1.4 – Game Details

	<b>U8</b>	<b>U9-U10</b>	<b>U11</b>	<b>U12</b>	<b>U13</b>	<b>U14-U16</b>	<b>U17-U19</b>
<b>*Field Size (yds)</b>	<b>25/35 L 15/25 W</b>	<b>55/65 L 35/45 W</b>	<b>70/80 L 45/55 W</b>	<b>70/80 L 45/55 W</b>	<b>100/120 L 50/80 W</b>	<b>100/120 L 50/80 W</b>	<b>100/120 L 55/80 W</b>
<b>**Number of Referees</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Number of Players</b>	<b>4v4</b>	<b>7v7</b>	<b>9v9</b>	<b>9v9</b>	<b>11v11</b>	<b>11v11</b>	<b>11v11</b>
<b>Minimum # of Players</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Goalkeeper</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Playing Time</b>	<b>4x10</b>	<b>2x25</b>	<b>2x30</b>	<b>2x30</b>	<b>2x35</b>	<b>2x40</b>	<b>2x45</b>
<b>Ball Size</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Goal Mouth Size (feet)</b>	<b>4x6</b>	<b>6.5x18.5 - 7x21</b>	<b>6.5x18.5 - 7x21</b>	<b>6.5x18.5 - 7x21</b>	<b>8x24</b>	<b>8x24</b>	<b>8x24</b>
<b>Offside</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Substitutions</b>	<b>Any Stoppage</b>	<b>Any Stoppage</b>	<b>Any Stoppage</b>	<b>Any Stoppage</b>	<b>Any Stoppage</b>	<b>Any Stoppage</b>	<b>Any Stoppage</b>
<b>Fouls (type of kick)</b>	<b>Indirect Free Kicks Only</b>	<b>Indirect &amp; Direct Free Kicks</b>	<b>Indirect / Direct Free Kicks</b>				

<b>Free Kick clearance</b>	<b>10 ft</b>	<b>8 yd</b>	<b>8 yd</b>	<b>8 yd</b>	<b>10 yd</b>	<b>10 yd</b>	<b>10 yd</b>
<b>Throw-in</b>	<b>1 Re-throw</b>	<b>Normal</b>	<b>Normal</b>	<b>Normal</b>	<b>Normal</b>	<b>Normal</b>	<b>Normal</b>
<b>Penalty Kicks</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Yes (mark at 10 yds)</b>	<b>Yes (mark at 10 yds)</b>	<b>Yes (mark at 10 yds)</b>	<b>Yes (mark at 12 yds)</b>	<b>Yes (mark at 12 yds)</b>	<b>Yes (mark at 12 yds)</b>
<b>Penalty Area (yds)</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>12x24</b>	<b>14x36</b>	<b>14x36</b>	<b>18 x 44</b>	<b>18 x 44</b>	<b>18 x 44</b>
<b>Goal Area (yards)</b>	<b>3x8</b>	<b>4x8</b>	<b>5x16</b>	<b>5x16</b>	<b>6 x 20</b>	<b>6 x 20</b>	<b>6 x 20</b>
<b>Heading</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>per Laws/Rules</b>	<b>per Laws/Rules</b>	<b>per Laws/Rules</b>	<b>per Laws/Rules</b>
<b>Build-Out Line</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>

\*\*Recommended minimum number of referees

\*Use of cones for lines allowed

### **1.5 – Fields**

The goal of each club shall be to provide an enjoyable experience for the fans, players, officials, and everyone involved with the staging of a soccer game. With that in mind, it is expected that all club hosted fields be of the highest possible quality for FCL Florida Cup competition. The playing field used by each team must be lined according to FIFA standards with goals, nets, and flags. If you feel a field is not of proper quality, please play the match under protest and submit the protest to the RAC (view section on protests).

## **1.6 – 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.

## **1.7 – No Re-Entry Protocol (Head Injury)**

In accordance with the US Soccer return to play guidelines, any player removed from the field for a suspected head injury will not be allowed to return to the field of play unless cleared by a Healthcare Professional.

## **1.8 – Healthcare Professional**

A healthcare professional is defined as “a licensed healthcare professional such as an athletic trainer certified (ATC), or a physician (MD/DO), with a skill set in emergency care and sports medicine injuries and with knowledge and experience related to concussion evaluation and management.” It will be up to each club to decide whether they will provide a healthcare professional at their matches and to ensure that this individual has the correct certification to be evaluating players for head trauma. If a club plans to use a healthcare professional to evaluate suspected head injuries during a FCL match, the healthcare professional must be presented to the referee prior to the start of the match. Referees will not allow the re-entry of players removed from the field of play for suspected head injuries unless they are informed of the presence of, and meet with, a healthcare professional prior to the start of the match.

## **1.9 – Substitutions**

As per FIFA guidelines, unlimited substitutions are allowed in all ages group (except for ECNLR, League 1(NPL and see NPL rules of competition), League 2. However, teams may substitute only with the referee’s permission. Substitutes must wait on the sideline (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 by either team are allowed at any stoppage of play with the permission of the referee. Referees will be instructed not to allow substitutions that are deemed “excessive” or of a “time-wasting” nature. Please be respectful of the integrity of the game and do not use the free substitution rules as a means to disrupt the match.*

## **1.10 - Ties in Group Round**

If a FCL Florida Cup Group Stage (U14-U19) or First/ Second Round (U9-U13) match is tied after regulation, the tie stands and will be posted as a tie.

### **1.11 - Matches Needing a Winner**

For matches that need a winner, the team with the most goals after regulation time will be the winner. If the match is tied after regulation, two full-time 5-minute overtime periods will be played. If the game is still tied after two overtime periods, then kicks from the mark per FIFA will determine the winner.

*Make sure you arrive for your game knowing if the game can end in a draw or if a winning team is required.*

### **1.12 - Incomplete games**

In the event that a game cannot be completed, the game counts if half or more of the game was played; provided, however that any team directly responsible for the termination of the game due to poor sportsmanship towards a referee, opposing fans, or opposing players will result in that team forfeiting the match. This could also lead to other possible penalties set by the FCL RAC and the FCL PAD committee. If there is no result, and the match is suspended prior to the expiration of one half, the game shall be repeated at a time agreed upon by the competing teams in consultation with the RAC.

### **1.13 - No-Shows/forfeits:**

Until the Quarter-finals, all forfeit situations in the Younger Cup (U9-U13) are handled by the RAC to make sure that the gaining or losing of points by forfeit does not elevate or lower teams into divisions that will have a harmful impact on the event.

A no-show occurs when a team willfully does not show up at a game. Penalties for no-shows are as follows:

- \$300 fine
- A “no show” from the home team will result in the rescheduling of the game and the loss of home field.
- A “no show” from the away team will result in the rescheduling of the game and the away team paying for the field and referees for the rescheduled game.
- A report regarding all no-shows will be sent to the RAC for possible further action. A team unable to attend a scheduled game because of an accident, weather or “Act of God” should immediately notify the opponent and the Tournament Coordinator. Each situation will be reviewed by the RAC, which will render a decision.

### **1.14 - Florida Cup Championships**

Only the “FCL Florida Division” Champion will be considered Florida Champion in each age group. All other Championship teams must affix the divisional category in front of their Championship (i.e. 2019 Gold Cup Champions).

## **Section 2: Rosters**

### **2.1 – Player Registration**

All players shall be registered according to US Club Soccer rules.

### **2.2 – FCL Florida Cup Official Team Roster**

Each team must create their official FCL Florida Cup Roster on their team’s GotSoccer online account. Rosters will be capped at 26 players, and once frozen, teams may only

use players off this 26-player roster. Roster freeze dates will be posted on the FCL Florida Cup Calendar. After the first group stage, there will be a short window during which non-cup-tied players will be allowed to be added for the remainder of the competition. These dates will be adjusted due to the scheduling of games so please check the Florida Cup website for exact dates.

### **2.3 – Game Roster**

Only players who are listed on the official Game Card will be eligible to play in FCL Florida Cup matches. Player's names may not be handwritten on the FCL Game Card. If any player is not listed on the FCL Game Card, he/she must be added electronically to the roster before the player is eligible to play. Only 18 players for U13-U19, 16 players for U11-U12 and 14 players for U9-U10 may be used for FCL Premier Florida Cup matches.

### **2.4 – US Club Soccer Player Pass**

All players and coaches must present their US Club Player Identification Card to the referee prior to the match. If the individual picture is not on the ID card and the card is not laminated, the individual will not be eligible for the match.

### **2.5 – Guest Players**

No Guest Players will be allowed.

### **2.6 – Illegal Players**

Any player who does not appear on the official FCL Game Card and has a valid US Club Soccer player pass issued by the same club shall be considered an illegal player. 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 the FCL Premier League and all of its events for one year, and the club of the illegal player will incur a \$500 fine.

### **2.7 – “Cup Tied”**

Players may only compete for one team per age group in the FCL Florida Cup. A club may place players on more than one 26-player team roster but players may not play on two different teams in the same age group. A player may play up in an older age group while competing in their true age group. Once a player plays for a team in a specific age group that player is “Cup Tied” to that team in that age group. The player may not play for any other team in that age group for the remainder of the FCL Florida Cup.

### **2.8 – Emergency Player Rule**

Teams that drop below 12 players for U13 and up, 10 players for U11-U12 and 8 players for U9-U10 may request, from the FCL RAC, the ability to add players that were registered with their club prior to the roster freeze date, but were not on the Florida Cup roster. This rule may also be used to add a goalkeeper.

## **Section 3: Game Day Procedures**

### **3.1 - Pre-Game Procedures**

#### **Home Team Responsibilities**

- Provide a properly lined field, properly sized goals and, corner flags
- Provide and pay current year licensed USSF referees
- Provide [Florida Cup - Game Card](#) (with both teams rosters) to the center referee
- Provide referee with current year US Club Soccer player passes for each player and team official.

#### **Visiting team responsibilities:**

- Provide referee US Club Soccer player passes for each player and team official
- Have a copy of official FCL Game Card if needed by center referee

### **3.2 - Game Day Procedures**

Each manager should have the following at every game

- [Florida Cup Game Card](#)
- US Club Medical Release forms
- US Club Soccer roster of the team
- US Club Soccer passes for its players and team officials

### **3.3 - Post-Game Procedure**

Home team Responsibilities:

- Coach or manager sign the game sheet following the game
- If no red card is given, the home team holds onto the game report until the end of the season
- If a red card is given, see red card procedure above – this requires immediate action from the center referee and manager
- [Post score within 24 hours](#)

Visiting team responsibilities:

- Coach or manager must sign the game sheet following the game

### **3.4 - Personnel on the bench**

A maximum of 3 team officials are allowed in each team's technical area. Team officials must have a US Club pass in order to sit in the technical area. It is recommended that teams have several credentialed coaches or managers with passes for the team just in case something happens to the head coach. A US Club pass makes a person eligible to coach any team in the club for which that coach or manager is credentialed.

### **3.5 - Score reports**

The home team will post the score on the FCL website within 24 hours of the game. The home team will keep and file the game card for possible future reference.

### **3.6 - Game Card**

Both teams must have a copy of the Florida Cup Game Card. The home team will supply the Game Card to the match officials before the match. The away team should have a copy of the Game Card in case it is needed. Following the match, the Officials and each coach need to sign the Game Card. The home team will keep and file the Game Card for future reference.

### **3.7 – Jersey Conflict**

If there is a conflict in jersey colors, it is the AWAY team's responsibility to change colors. The HOME team will have the right to choose the uniform color they will wear. FCL encourages home teams to communicate their jersey colors for the upcoming match weekend to club representatives by Thursday at 5pm leading into the match weekend.

## **Section 4: Fines**

### **5.1- Fines**

- Team dropping from the event after schedules posted - \$250 per team. In addition, could forfeit registration fee as well.
- No-shows or cancellations less than 96 hours' notice - \$300

- The game will still need to be played.
- Failure to Provide three current year licensed referees - \$150 per missing referee
  - The FCL RAC reserves the right to class the game as a forfeit, and/or remove a team from FCL Competitions for using unlicensed referees
- Any team who does not complete payment within 60 days will be subject to a late fee of 15%

Aside from fines for forfeits (which go to the hosting club, if appropriate), all fines will be added to the travel fund for teams qualifying for national events via FCL competitions, after the deduction of admin costs.