

**Spindletop Youth Soccer Association  
League Rules, Policies, and Procedures  
as of 2/8/2016**

**Part 1: Seasons**

The Spindletop Youth Soccer Association (“SYSA”) will sanction and organize two seasons each year. The Fall Season shall begin the weekend after Labor Day (in early September) and run for 10 consecutive weeks thereafter (ending in mid November). The Spring Season shall begin on the last weekend in March and continue for 6 additional weeks, excluding Easter Weekend.

**Part 2: Entry and Eligibility**

To participate in SYSA's leagues, a team must be registered with SYSA via a SYSA Member Club at the Recreational (D4 and D3) or Select/Competitive (D2) level no later than the deadline that has been established by the SYSA Board of Directors and published in advance on the SYSA website. Teams may be added to the SYSA league schedule after this deadline at the discretion of the SYSA Board of Directors or its designee.

Eligible teams that have registered with SYSA may opt out of the fall league and/or the spring league with written notice to the SYSA Scheduler (made prior to the deadline that has been established by the SYSA Board of Directors and published in advance on the SYSA website).

**Part 3: Divisions**

SYSA will generally provide brackets in age-pure groupings at the younger ages, and in multiple-year age groups at the older ages, as follows...

- U9 (if possible; otherwise, merge with the U10 division)
- U10
- U11 (if possible; otherwise, merge with the U12 division)
- U12
- U13/U14
- U15/U16
- U17/U18/U19

A division must have a minimum of four teams to form. Divisions may be established within each of these age brackets to...

- separate boys and girls teams,
- provide a small-sided coed option, or
- separate teams of different playing levels (e.g., D2 teams separated from D3 teams).

It is the expectation of SYSA that teams will participate at the highest level of play for which that team is able to be competitive. The SYSA Board will require a team to play in an older age group or at a higher competitive level if the team finished first or second in the state at the South Texas Youth Soccer Association (“STYSA”) Fall Championships during the prior registration year, unless there are no other SYSA teams registered at that age and gender level. In addition, a team may play up if the team's Head Coach and the SYSA Board of Directors both consent.

#### **Part 4: Preseason Timelines**

The SYSA Board of Directors shall establish certain deadlines prior to the start of each season, and shall post these deadlines on the SYSA website before registration begins for each league season. In general, these deadlines will adhere to the following guidelines:

- Deadline for teams to register for the league, to confirm participation in the league, or to opt out of participation in the league (28 days before the first play date)
- Deadline for the SYSA Scheduler to post preliminary brackets (24 days before the first play date)
- Deadline for clubs and teams to submit feedback on preliminary brackets (21 days before the first play date)
- Deadline for the SYSA Scheduler to post preliminary, full-year schedules for all league brackets (14 days before the first play date)
- Deadline for clubs and teams to submit final schedule changes, including changes to game times and field assignments, without penalty (4 days before the first play date)

#### **Part 5: Scheduling**

In general, it will be SYSA's goal to craft schedules in all divisions that:

- Minimize non-competitive matches (games with a goal difference of 6 or higher)
- Maximize variety of opposition
- Balance home and away travel
- Provide common opposition for all teams in a bracket (such that each team plays all other teams in the bracket an equal number of times)
- Offer every team a "full" schedule of games (with one game on each planned play date)

In practice, it will not always be possible to achieve all of these goals in every bracket. When these interests come into opposition (due to limited numbers of teams, or a wide range in playing levels in a given bracket), SYSA will employ scheduling philosophies that differ somewhat between the Recreational (D4 and D3) and Select/Competitive (D2) levels.

For D4 teams, schedules will be crafted to fill all available dates (to the extent possible) with as many different opponents as possible. If numbers permit, the schedule will also seek to minimize travel time for all participating teams. In these cases, it will not be necessary to provide common opposition to all teams.

For U11-U14 D3 teams and all D2 teams, schedules will be crafted to provide common opposition while minimizing the total number of non-competitive matches. At these levels, the quality of games shall take priority over the quantity of games. Teams will not be guaranteed a full slate of games, and some "make-up" dates may be reserved by the league to facilitate make-up games caused by inclement weather or other issues. Additional "bye" dates will be returned to the teams so they can arrange for non-league games that will match each team's developmental requirements.

In no case will two teams be scheduled by SYSA to play each other more than three times during a fall season nor more than two times during a spring season.

Teams that participate in a SYSA league shall be prohibited from entering or participating in any tournament (other than an official STYSA State Cup competition) that conflicts with the league's designated play dates. Teams are permitted (and encouraged) to schedule "friendlies" at any time of the year, with the requirement that SYSA league games will take priority in the event of a scheduling conflict. Teams also are encouraged to participate in all STYSA State Cup competitions for which they are eligible.

#### **Part 6: Postponements and Rescheduling**

Once the final schedule has been posted by the SYSA Scheduler, all matches must be played as scheduled. However, to facilitate better field and referee utilization, host clubs may change field assignments or kickoff times at any time during the season without penalty, provided:

- the game remains scheduled for the same date,
- the head coaches of both teams and the appropriate Referee Assignor agree to the change, in writing (defined as "via email"), in advance, and
- the SYSA Scheduler confirms the change, in writing, in advance.

Scheduled matches may only be postponed (to a different date) without penalty due to:

- inclement weather,
- a documented conflict with an official UIL (school) competition that would leave a team unable to field a full starting line-up, or
- widespread team illness/injury that would leave a team unable to field a full starting line-up.

Teams may request discretionary schedule changes to the final schedule (for any reason), provided all of the following conditions have been met by no later than 7 days in advance of the original scheduled date:

- the initiating team pays a \$25 change fee to SYSA,
- the host club confirms the availability of a suitable playing field, in writing,
- the head coaches of both teams and the appropriate Referee Assignor agree to the change, in writing, and
- the SYSA Scheduler posts the change on the official schedule, in advance.

In the case that a game must be rescheduled, a mutually agreed-upon date and time can be determined by both teams for the rescheduled match. Postponed games may not be rescheduled beyond the last regular play date of the season without the approval of the SYSA Board of Directors. If three days have passed since a game was canceled and a mutually agreed-upon date/time/location has not been determined by the teams involved, the SYSA Scheduler shall act as an arbiter and reschedule the affected game.

#### **Part 7: Rosters and Club Pass**

To participate in the league, teams must have at least 7 players (for U9-U10), 9 players (for U11-U12) or 11 players (for U13 and older) on their primary roster as of the registration deadline that has been established by the SYSA Board of Directors and published in advance on the SYSA website.

The official team roster shall include the number of each player's jersey.

D2 teams may use the "club pass" mechanism for SYSA league games, with the following restrictions:

- A D2 player may play for a D2 team in an older age group (compared with the registration year for the player's primary team).
- A D3 player may play for a D2 team at the same or older age group.
- A "true U10" D4 player may play for a D2 team at the U11 or U12 age groups only, provided the D2 team has not already rostered the maximum number of three (3) U10 "play up" players (as established by STYSA).
- No club pass player may play for a different team in the same league bracket as his or her primary team (i.e., players are "cup tied" in a league bracket after they play for any team in that bracket).
- No player may play with more than one (1) team on the same day (as established by STYSA).
- No more than two (2) club pass players may be on a single game roster.
- The total number of players (including club pass players) listed on the game card and dressed out to play cannot exceed the age group's maximum roster size (as established by STYSA).
- No player may play for a secondary team if doing so will deprive that player's primary team from having at least 7 players (for U9-U10), 9 players (for U11-U12) or 11 players (for U13 and older) at any league game scheduled for that same date.
- Players may only play for another team that is registered via their SYSA Member Club (i.e., "guest players" from different clubs are not permitted).
- All club pass players must be noted by the Referee on the official Game Report, and both coaches must write their initials next to the names of these players on the Game Report. Any coach who fails to document club pass players on the Game Report may be prohibited by SYSA from using any club pass players for the remainder of the current registration year, and may incur a coaching suspension from SYSA for an equivalent number of games.

### **Part 8: Uniforms**

Uniforms for players are mandatory (including matching jersey, shorts, and socks), as prescribed by the Laws of the Game. Goalkeepers must wear colors that distinguish them from the other players and game officials. Each player shall have a number on the back of the jersey that is clearly visible and at least 6" in height, with the exception of the goalkeepers. Each player on a team must wear a different number from every other player on the team, and must keep the same number throughout the game. Players who do not meet this requirement may play at the sole discretion of the referee, who must note the uniform issue(s) on the official Game Report.

For SYSA league games, the home team will wear a jersey that is primarily white or "light-colored", and the away team will wear a jersey that is primarily "dark-colored". If, in the opinion of the referee, the playing teams do not have contrasting colors, the team not in compliance with this provision (for D2) or the home team (for D4 and D3) will be required to change, and the uniform conflict shall be noted on the game card by the referee. At the Recreational (D4 and D3) levels, it will be permissible for the offending team's players to wear scrimmage vests over their primary uniforms if the team does not have an alternate jersey.

All players are required to wear shin guards that provide adequate protection, and shoes that comply with the safety requirements set forth in the Laws of the Game. No player may play with any type of cast, even if padded or protected. Players may wear removable braces (for the knee or other joint), provided that the brace is padded or wrapped in such a way that it does not have any exposed metal and does not pose a safety risk to the player or others, in the opinion of the match referee.

### **Part 9: Facility Requirements and Team Responsibilities**

The home team will have properly maintained and prepared fields, including proper markings, nets, goal size, and corner flags, as specified in the Laws of the Game (as modified for US Youth Soccer play). A club or facility representative should be available to fix any problems associated with the fields, including safety concerns such as holes, debris, or fire ant mounds on the fields.

The controlling club and/or facility manager will be responsible for closing the field/complex in case of inclement weather. If the field/complex closes, it will be the responsibility of the home team's coach to notify the opposing team's coach, the designated Referee Assignor, and the SYSA Scheduler as soon as possible that the game has been postponed. Failure to notify the proper personnel in a timely manner could result in the game being declared a forfeit (as detailed below).

If a game is terminated because of weather, it shall be judged a completed game if the game has reached halftime before the game was terminated. If the match was of lesser duration, then it shall be considered an unplayed, postponed game.

Only properly rostered players, coaches, and team officials will be allowed on the teams' side of the field or in the team area. Limited coaching is permitted only on the team side of the field from the halfway line to the top of the penalty area on that half of the field. Coaches may not enter the field without permission from the referee.

As prescribed by the Laws of the Game, referees may terminate matches for lack of crowd control, poor team behavior, or other unsporting circumstances. Each coach is responsible for the behavior of his or her players and bench personnel. Each coach is responsible to assist the referee, when asked, in the control of parents, fans, and spectators. If a referee terminates a match because of conduct, the game score shall be reported as it was at the time the game was terminated. Additionally, the SYSA Scheduler reserves the right to ascertain the facts regarding the match and determine appropriate action, disciplinary or otherwise.

### **Part 10: Playing Rules**

Unless otherwise modified specifically in these Rules, Policies, and Procedures, all SYSA league games will follow the Modified Laws of the Game that have been published on the SYSA website (and, by reference, the US Youth Soccer website) as of the first day of games for each season.

### **Part 11: Minimum Play**

SYSA requires “significant participation” in each game by all eligible players, which is defined as “at least 50% of eligible playing time”. A player who arrives later than 10 minutes before the kick-off will be deemed “eligible” only after completing a warm-up period not to exceed 10 minutes in length. At the coaches' discretion, a player may be disciplined for prior misconduct via a reduction (or elimination) of playing time, provided the coach first advises the player and notifies the parent, the referee, and the head coach for the opposing team. Any player penalized this way must be noted by the referee on the game card.

In the event that a coach wishes to penalize a player in this manner beyond a single game in a season, that coach must do so via a formal Discipline process at the club level that affords the player proper due process to contest the sanction.

### **Part 12: Non-Competitive Matches**

In the event that a SYSA league game becomes “non-competitive” (defined as having a goal differential of 6 or more for either team) and at least one full half of the game has been completed, that game shall be paused to determine whether the coach of the losing team wants to have the game's final score recorded as of that moment. If the coach of the losing team invokes this provision, the Referee will record that final score on the official Game Report. Otherwise, the game will continue as normal until full time has been reached.

However, to ensure that players all receive their expected amount of playing time when a match is truncated, the team coaches shall reorganize their teams to play a new scrimmage using whatever time remains from the original match. The two teams will mix players (“50/50”) to form two new, balanced teams, with scrimmage vests distributed to facilitate the implementation of this rule. The game officials will continue in their roles for this scrimmage, and the referee shall determine when time has expired for the scrimmage (using a “running clock”, and no added time).

### **Part 13: Standings**

Once scheduled, all games will be expected to be played before the end of the season. The league may extend the season by a week to accommodate make-up games caused by inclement weather or other issues.

Game reports must be submitted to the SYSA Scorekeeper (or another designee) by the Home Team's President (or designee) within 48 hours of completion of each match. Although individual teams will not incur a competitive penalty for late score reports, SYSA may assess an administrative penalty (including a fine not to exceed \$10 per game) to the offending Member Club.

For D2 and D3 brackets, all scheduled games will count toward the final bracket standings (including games against teams that are registered in a different age group or different level of play). The team that places first in the overall standings shall be declared the SYSA league bracket winner at the end of the season. For those age groups that advance to post-season play, advancement will be determined by each team's standings in the final bracket table, relative to the other teams competing at that same age group and level of play. Any team that plays up in an older age group during the Fall season will only be permitted to advance to the Fall Championships in that older age group, unless no other teams are available to advance to the Fall Championships in that team's natural age group.

For D4 brackets, standings will be kept for informational purposes only (so that SYSA can track game completions and monitor for non-competitive pairings). No awards will be given, nor will any teams advance to post-season play.

A team's standing in its division will be determined by the number of points it receives based on its win/loss record during the league season. Points will be awarded as follows:

- Three (3) points for a win
- One (1) point for a tie
- Zero (0) points for a loss

In the event of a tie within a division, the following criteria shall be used to break the tie:

1. Winner of head to head competition (this criterion is not used if more than two teams are tied)
2. Most wins
3. Team with greatest net goal difference (NGD), which is computed as "goals for" minus "goals against" with a maximum of three NGD in each game
4. Team with the most goals (maximum of three goals in each game)
5. Team with least goals against (there is NO limit on the number of goals that will be counted to determine this tiebreaker)
6. Fewest red cards
7. Fewest yellow cards

In the event more than two teams are tied on the basis of points, the following shall be used to break the tie:

- The sequence of tiebreakers will begin with #1 above and be followed until a team is eliminated.
- Once a team has been eliminated, the sequence of tiebreakers will begin again with #1 and be repeated starting over after each team is eliminated until one team remains.

In the event that (after having applied the tiebreaker rules above) teams remain tied, the winner of a coin toss will be adjudged to have placed higher in the standings than the loser of the coin toss.

#### **Part 14: Ejections and Discipline**

SYSA league games will adhere to the current STYSA provisions regarding "penalty points", with the provision that SYSA may adopt policies that are more restrictive than the policies currently detailed in the STYSA Administrative Handbook.

Among other key provisions, three (3) penalty points per recorded caution, and nine (9) penalty points per recorded ejection, shall be awarded to all individual players and coaches. The maximum accumulation of penalty points in one game by a coach or player shall be nine (9) points.

An accumulation of nine (9) points during the course of the season shall result in automatic suspension of that individual from the next SYSA league game for that team. An accumulation of

eighteen (18) points during the course of the season shall result in automatic suspension of that individual from the next two SYSA league games for that team. In the event penalty points were accrued from participation with multiple teams, the suspension shall apply toward the team that was playing when the 9th or 18th point was incurred.

In addition, if a coach, assistant coach, or trainer is ejected from a match by the referee, that individual shall be suspended automatically for the remainder of that day and for the next regularly scheduled match day.

Spectators who are sent away from the field of play by a competition official shall receive an immediate two (2) week suspension or until a hearing is held, whichever comes first, and may not be present at any STYSA or USYSA sanctioned activity, including but not limited to games, practices, practice games, tournaments, or friendly games.

Any player ejected from a SYSA league match must leave the players' side of the field immediately. Any rostered team officials ejected from a SYSA league match must leave the field immediately. The player pass will not be retained by the referee following a match in which a red card was issued.

No suspension may be served during a match that was forfeited, postponed, or canceled. Rostered team officials are not allowed at the field while serving their suspension. Players serving a suspension do not have to be present at the game in which they are serving the suspension, however they must count towards the maximum number of players permitted on that game roster. Players are allowed to serve their suspensions on the team bench, provided they are not in uniform.

It is the responsibility of the coach and/or manager to make sure the ejected player or coach sits out the appropriate match following the one in which the red card was issued, and that the serving of that suspension is noted on the official Game Report by the referee. Any team that does not sit out a suspended individual for the required match, and that allows this individual to participate, will be deemed to have used an ineligible participant and will incur all the penalties associated with such actions.

Ejections for "Violent Conduct" shall serve a minimum two game suspension and may be subject to expulsion from the league.

The SYSA Discipline and Protest Committee ("D&P") shall have the final ruling on all player and coach suspensions.

#### **Part 15: Non-Performance and Forfeits**

A forfeit is a competitive sanction that is determined by the SYSA Scheduler or SYSA D&P Committee. Although referees have the authority to suspend a match, they do not have the authority to assess a forfeit.

Teams must be able to start the match within 15 minutes of the scheduled match time. If a team cannot start within 15 minutes of the scheduled match, the other team shall be awarded a victory by forfeit.

If a team is required by the referee to change uniforms to resolve a color conflict and fails to do so, that game may be deemed a forfeit by the offending team at the sole discretion of the SYSA D&P Committee.

If an eligible player is present at the game and ready to play prior to half-time, yet does not participate in the game as stated above, the game may be deemed a forfeit by the offending team at the sole discretion of the SYSA D&P Committee.

Use of an ineligible player will result in a forfeit for the offending team, and the coach shall be banned from attending the next league match for that team. If incurred in the last game of the season, such a suspension shall carry over to postseason State Cup play and to the next season. Banned coaches are not permitted to be present at the field or within the game field complex.

Forfeits are recorded as a score of 3-0 for the winning team.

Failure to play a match as scheduled will be considered a "double forfeit" with no score (a non-played match by each team). If the SYSA Scheduler determines that the reason for the game not being played can be placed solely on one of the teams, then the game will be recorded as a "forfeit" to the opposing team.

Any team that fails to play two or more officially scheduled games shall be considered to have abandoned the league. Its games will not count to determine league standings nor shall they be considered in the standings as forfeits.

#### **Part 16: Game Protests**

A game cannot be protested on the basis of a referee's judgment call. A game may be protested solely for a material violation of the Laws of the Game by the referee or to challenge the eligibility of a player or coach who participated in that game.

The coach protesting the game must notify the referee and the other coach that he/she will be protesting the game at the time he/she signs the game card (immediately upon the end of the game). Any coach refusing to sign the game card will lose the right to protest the game and may incur additional sanctions for Unsporting Behavior.

The protesting coach must file his/her written protest along with a \$75 protest fee (payable to "SYSA") with the respective Member Club's D&P Committee within 48 hours of the kick-off of the game in question. The written protest should clearly state the incident(s) involved and the actions of the protesting coach, his/her players, the other team and coach, and the officiating crew involved.

The Member Club D&P Representative will forward the written protest to the Chairman of the SYSA D&P Committee within 48 hours of receiving it from the protesting coach. Upon receipt, the Chairman will call a meeting of the SYSA D&P Committee within seven (7) days. A quorum of two-thirds (2/3) of the Committee members is required. The Committee has the right, but not the obligation, to call any or all interested parties to its hearing for testimony, or to rely on written statements submitted in advance. If the protest is sustained, the fee will be returned.

For most game protests, the ruling of the SYSA D&P Committee is final. Only in the most serious cases (i.e., player or coach suspension, or a fine is involved) can there be an appeal to the SYSA Board of Directors. Such an appeal must be handled as a separate protest with a new \$75 fee deposited and the circumstances detailed in writing by the appealing party.