

Mercer County Amateur Masters Soccer League (MCAMSL)
Rules & Regulations for the League
2010 Season

1. Player eligibility

- a. Divisions are organized by age. For purposes of eligibility, a player's age is the age he has attained on December 31st of the current calendar year. Therefore players must reach the minimum age requirement by the end of this year to be eligible to play.
 - 1. The **OVER-19 Division** will be open to any individual born on or before December 31, 1991.
 - 2. The **OVER-30 Division** will be open to any individual born on or before December 31, 1980. An exception on age is allowed for goalkeepers only; however, even keepers must be at least 21 years old by year end.
 - 3. The **OVER-40 Division** will be open to any individual born on or before December 31, 1970. An exception on age is allowed for goalkeepers only; however, even keepers must be at least 30 years old by year end.
- b. Players who have not filled out a Player Registration Form and signed the Hold Harmless Agreement will not be granted permission to play under any conditions.
- c. To be eligible for playoff participation on any given team in a division, a player must be currently on that team's roster, and have played in at least two regular season games for that team.
- d. The League reserves the right to inspect, at any time, any player's photo id to confirm a player's identity, age, and other information in order to validate his or her eligibility to play. The League President has final authority to determine a player's eligibility at any time.
- e. Teams that recruit players, especially at the last minute, who have not fully met these fundamental eligibility requirements, will be penalized and possibly banned from the League.

2. Code of Conduct

- a. All participants will abide by the rules of the league and act with honor, respect, and safety with regard to the game, the players, the officiating team, league officers, and the field and facilities. Respect is the collective responsibility of everyone involved to create a fair, safe and enjoyable environment in which the game can take place.
- b. Participants and their guests will NOT smoke or consume alcohol or engage in any behavior that reflects poorly on the League at any time while on property where matches and practices are scheduled.
- c. All participants are expected to leave the fields and facilities used by the League as clean as or cleaner than when they arrived.
- d. The Board reserves the right to educate and penalize both individuals and teams as they see fit for both individual and collective breaches of the code of conduct, including the right to ban participants (players, managers, coaches, officials, and teams) from the league temporarily or permanently based on their conduct or the conduct of their guests.

3. Player and Team Registration

- a. The League requires every player to fill out a Player Registration Form and sign the Hold Harmless Agreement. The combined forms are available on the League web site. Returning players must submit a new Player Registration Form and Hold Harmless Agreement each year. The information must be submitted to the League office, typically through the Team Manager, before the individual is eligible to play.
 1. The player registration form must clearly indicate name, birth date and place, contact information (mailing address, email, phone), and emergency contact information.
 2. The Hold Harmless Agreement must be understood and signed by each player in the presence of a witness, who must countersign the form.
- b. Players may only be on the roster of one team at a time. The rosters submitted to the League by each team manager will be used to resolve any disputes. Rosters will be locked before playoff games begin. If a team wishes to "borrow" an eligible player from another team for a given regular season game, they must request the approval of the opposing team manager, who is under no obligation to grant the request. However, the sharing of keepers is encouraged, as is sharing a few reasonably skilled players in order to field a full side of 11 players.
- c. Team managers must bring to every game a current roster of players and assist the referee in reporting any red card violations. The league will no longer require team managers to maintain and bring to every game an individual, signed pass for each player.
- d. During the course of the season, teams are allowed to add additional players, but may not exceed a maximum roster of 22 players. Managers are encouraged to forward prospective player names to other teams to keep the league competitive.
- e. A team will be registered in the League once they have fulfilled the following requirements:
 1. Provided the League President with a roster of at least 16 players and no more than 22 players who fulfill the eligibility requirements above.
 2. Provided the League President with completed Player Registration Forms and Hold Harmless Agreements for each player involved with their team, as well as the contact information for a team manager and one alternate team manager.
 3. Paid in full a Team Registration Fee. The fee covers expenses related to soccer field rentals, officiating fees, liability insurance, web site maintenance, and other items approved by the officers of the League.
- f. Teams must provide an initial deposit of at least 20%, or the minimum set by the League President, before the first week of play, and must be completely registered (all forms and fees in full) by the 2nd week of the season. Teams unable to meet the deadline will be assessed an additional late fee of \$50 for each week beyond the deadline.

4. Rules of the Game

All games shall be played under the "Laws of the Game" approved by the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) and recognized by the United States Soccer Federation (USSF) and this Association with the following modifications and specifications:

- a. On game day, the team managers will bring a hard copy of their team's roster, which will indicate which players are present and eligible to play that day. We recommend team managers keep several copies of their roster and simply check-off exactly who is present on game day. A sample roster is available on the League web site.
- b. The referee, opposing team manager, or a League officer may request a roster from a team manager at any time. Additionally, he may request proof of identity and age of any player.

- c. Opposing team managers, referees or League officers may challenge a player's eligibility before, during, or after a game. If the player and his team manager cannot confirm his identity, age, and eligibility, then he may not play unless the opposing team manager agrees to allow his participation or a League officer decides he is eligible. For games that have already been played, the team fielding the ineligible player may be charged with a forfeit (see rules of the game for more on forfeits) at the discretion of the League President.
- d. Games are played on regulation size soccer fields and will consist of 2 halves of 40 minutes each separated by a 5 minute halftime. Only significant injury time or delay of game will be taken into account at the end of regulation play at the discretion of the referee. Teams are allowed unlimited substitutions during any stoppage in play when recognized by the referee.
- e. The games must be started within 15 minutes from the scheduled start time. If one of the teams causes further delay, it will be considered a forfeit. If both teams are at fault, both of them will be charged with a forfeit. If both captains, the referees, and the league president agree, the start time may be further postponed for unusual circumstances.
- f. Every team shall identify to the referee a team captain who may be identified during the game by means of an armband. Only the teams' captains are authorized to approach the referee, in a respectful manner, without questioning the integrity of his decision. The referee has no obligation to engage the captain or any player in a conversation. The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play are final and may not be changed once play has stopped and restarted.
- g. **Slide tackles in OVER-19 and OVER-30 Division are allowed.** Properly executed slide tackles are characterized by contact that is "laces on the ball" using minimal sweeping force from an angle visible to the other player with the legs down and only one leg extended. Poorly executed slide tackles may be treated as playing in a dangerous manner or as a direct kick foul and possibly misconduct at the referee's discretion.

Slide tackles in OVER-40 Division are NOT allowed, except by goalkeepers inside their own penalty area. Properly executed slide tackles, other than by the goalkeeper, are to be treated as "playing in a dangerous manner" resulting in an indirect free kick to the opponent. Sliding by field players is OK when no one else is near, for instance to keep a ball in-play, or to block a ball moving toward a goal.

- h. **Players receiving a yellow card, except goalkeeper, must leave the field for 10 minutes or until end of period, whichever is shorter.** If the team at fault does not have an eligible substitute, it will play with a man down during that time. A player sanctioned with a yellow card cannot be replaced by another player who is himself purging a 10 minute caution. Yellow cards will not be cumulative for the players throughout the season, but will be reported by the referee on the game report card and will be cumulative for the team. The number of yellow and red cards per team will be used as an additional tie-breaker.
- i. **Red cards:** Any shoving, punching in the face, kicking outside of the action, insults or profanities towards a player or the referee will be reprimanded with a red card. For the first offense, a red card to a player will result in his immediate ejection from the game without substitution and an automatic suspension for the next game. At the end of the game, the referee will report this player's identity to the League. A second offense within 12 months, will result in an automatic ejection again plus a two game suspension and possibly additional sanctions at the discretion of the Board. If a player receives a third red card within 12 months, he will be ejected for the remainder of the season and his name will be kept on file to make sure he does not rejoin the League in subsequent seasons without Board approval.
- j. **Forfeits:** A team failing to show for a scheduled game with at least 7 players will lose the game by forfeit and its opponent will be awarded a win by a score of 5-0 with the points granted for

a win. If a team forfeits 3 times during the same season, it will be ejected for the remainder of the season and might not be granted permission to play in subsequent seasons.

- k. **Canceled and Terminated Matches:** There is no guarantee that matches canceled in advance or terminated after kickoff will be rescheduled. If a game must be terminated (e.g. for dangerous weather or field conditions), the score will stand if the first half has been completed. If a game is abandoned for misconduct, the League president will decide how the match will be recorded or whether it will be replayed. There are no refunds for canceled, terminated, or abandoned matches.
- l. **Awarding of points:** the League will be played according to a championship format with each team playing each of the other teams at least once. A win will be granted 4 points, a tie will be granted 2 points, a loss on the field will be granted 1 point whereas a loss by forfeit will be granted no points.
- m. **Tie-breaking rules:** in case two teams or more have the same number of points, they will be separated by the criteria below ranked by order of priority:
 - 1. Overall goal differential (goals scored minus goals given up). Larger differential ranks higher.
 - 2. Fair-play (number of yellow and red cards issued): A yellow card gives the team 1 bad point; a red card gives 3 bad points. Fewer points rank higher.
 - 3. Best attack (number of goals scored): Larger number of goals ranks higher.
 - 4. Head-to-head points (for win/draw/loss): Greater number of points accumulated from head-to-head contests.
 - 5. FIFA Kicks from the penalty mark.
- n. **Game report card:** At the end of the game, the referee will write down the following information on the game report card:
 - 1. Final score and score at half-time.
 - 2. Number of yellow cards and red cards issued during the game for each team.
 - 3. Identity of the players who received a red card.

The report cards will be submitted to the League President. In turn the President will publish the results and standings on the League web site.

5. Matters Not Covered

In the event of matters not covered in the rules and regulations of the league, the Constitution or the Bylaws, the League President shall have power to provide for it and such rulings shall be standing and binding until approved, rescinded or varied by a vote at the next Board of Directors meeting.

6. League format

The envisioned format will be a championship followed by some kind of play-off format in the Spring. The definite schedule and format will be defined and shared with the team managers once the exact number of teams is known.

7. Notice to Team Managers

We have a gentleman's league with a history of fair-play and very few serious incidents. The League has noticed that most incidents are triggered by players who are unaware of League rules and consequently think they have been unfairly treated by either the referee or their opponent.

The League expects team captains and managers to brief their teammates on the rules AND provide them with a copy of these rules AND direct them to the League website where these rules are posted.

Every year, the slide tackle rule is put under scrutiny. In recent years, the slide tackle has been used sparingly and in general appropriately in our over-30 division. Our referees will continue to apply their seasoned judgment in applying FIFA rules for safe and proper tackling. Careless slide tackling will be whistled, reckless slide tackling will be cautioned, and if considered violent, the player will be ejected.

8. Referees

Referees are assigned and paid by the league administration. Referees must hold a current USSF, NFHS, or NISOA certification. While the League follows FIFA/USSF rules with a few alterations, we recognize that our referees officiate in leagues governed by other rules, such as NFHS and NCAA and may occasionally apply a rule from another association. Such mistakes are to be expected and accepted, but will be brought to the attention of the referees subsequent to the game as appropriate. For reference, see a comparison of the rules document at our web site.

9. For more information

visit www.mercermensoccer.net
email [info @ mercermensoccer.net](mailto:info@mercermensoccer.net)

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