

GSSA Adult League

Rules of the Game

Approved: October 13, 2025

1. Scope & Authority

1.1 These Modified Rules govern all GSSA Adult League matches, officials, team staff, and players.

1.2 **Hierarchy.** If a topic is not covered here, refer to the IFAB Laws of the Game (LOTG). League rules prevail only where they are more specific or expressly modify IFAB.

1.3 **Referee Authority.** The center referee has full authority to enforce the LOTG and these Modified Rules, including to prevent unnecessary delays. If play has begun with no timely challenges, field and match conditions are deemed accepted; later challenges may be dismissed at the referee's discretion.

2. Player Eligibility & Match Documentation

2.1 Rosters & Player IDs.

1. Team rosters and Player ID cards must be available at all games.
2. Match card: Have one (best practice: each team brings one) and provide it to the center referee before kickoff (assistants may also hold match cards as needed).
3. Roster checks: Referees should check rosters. The only handwritten information permitted on a roster is jersey numbers (which should be entered in the system as soon as possible).
4. No-roster = no play. If a player is not on the official roster, they may not play (insurance/fairness).
5. Presenting IDs: Upon request by any GSSA official, the referee, or the opposing coach, teams must present the roster and Player IDs. Electronic loading/showing must be timely; failure to produce in the required time may result in forfeit for the non-compliant team.
6. ID quality: Player ID cards should contain a valid photo and clearly match the player; where a league photo ID is unavailable, a government/legal photo ID may be used if the match is easily verified.

7. Who may present: Any team member or designated responsible adult may present the team roster and Player ID cards.

2.2 Numbers on Roster. Jersey numbers should be entered into the league system promptly (email the league contacts if you need assistance).

3. Uniforms

3.1 Team Colors & Numbers.

1. All field players must wear matching team color kits; the goalkeeper must wear a distinct/unique color.
2. Except for the goalkeeper, each field player must have a unique, permanently affixed, readable number.
3. No tape or thin/temporary markings (e.g., Sharpie) to create numbers.
4. In limited cases (opening weekend, new teams, guest players, other isolated circumstances), referees may allow reasonable leniency. The center referee's decision is final for that match.
5. Standard IFAB equipment requirements (e.g., shin guards covered by socks; dangerous equipment prohibited, toe cleats prohibited) remain in effect.

3.2 Number conflicts / no-number shirts.

1. Duplicate numbers are discouraged. If duplicates occur, the referee/crew must be able to identify both players and each player's assigned number on the match card.
2. A player may not take the field with no visible number unless the referee records the player's name and assigned number in a manner that maintains identification for the match.

3.3 Color conflicts. If team colors are too similar, the home team is responsible for changing (e.g., alternate tops or pinnies) so that teams are distinguishable. The referee decides adequacy and may require a change.

4. Jewelry & Wearables

4.1 General Rule. At all levels of soccer, jewelry is not allowed if it is dangerous to the player or an opponent.

4.2 GSSA Adult League Exceptions (all subject to referee safety approval):

1. Plain wedding bands: Allowed if they have no stones/raised elements and sit flush to the skin.
2. Medical alert/ID: Allowed only if taped to the body or completely covered by a close-fitting wristband (e.g., sweatband).
3. Fitness trackers/wearables: Permitted only if generally smooth-surfaced and completely covered by a close-fitting wristband, closed-cell foam, or similar. A simple wrap or tape is not sufficient. If the specific device cannot be safely concealed (e.g., bulky models), the player may be required to remove it.

4.3 Referee Final Say. Regardless of these exceptions, the referee may disallow any item deemed unsafe. Do not debate the referee on safety judgments.

5. Language / Profanity Policy

5.1 Public setting standard. Matches occur in public parks, often within earshot of families/children. Profanity and abusive language are not allowed. Teams are responsible for reminding players of this standard.

5.2 Sanctions (examples; referee discretion applies):

1. Directed at another player: First offense may result in a warning or caution (yellow), at the referee's discretion.
 2. Directed at a referee: First offense should be a caution (yellow) and may be an immediate send-off (red) depending on severity. A player sent off must leave the area and will miss the next match (automatic one-game suspension). Play does not restart until the player has left the vicinity.
 3. Self-directed profanity (e.g., frustration at oneself): Still subject to sanction depending on volume, audience proximity, word choice, and impact. Referees may warn, caution, or send off based on circumstances.
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6. Slide Tackling

6.1 Prohibition. Slide tackling is not permitted in the GSSA Adult League.

6.2 Definition. A "slide tackle" is when a player slides with legs extended in an attempt to win the ball from an opponent.

6.3 Penalty & Discipline.

1. If the slide involves contact or is careless/reckless, penalize with a direct free kick (or penalty kick if inside the offender's penalty area) and caution (yellow) at minimum; send off if excessive force or other LOTG send-off criteria are met.
2. If the slide involves no contact but involves careless or reckless behavior, restart with an indirect free kick and consider a caution for unsporting behavior.

6.4 Permitted Slides. Non-opponent slides (e.g., a keeper's slide within their own area to collect the ball, or a field player's slide save to keep the ball from going out) are allowed so long as they do not put an opponent at risk.

7. Match Format & Additional Local Modifications

7.1 Match Duration & Timing. Matches consist of two (2) 45-minute halves with a 5–10 minute halftime. The clock runs; the referee may add time for significant stoppages.

7.2 Ball & Field. Standard Size 5 ball; field dimensions and markings per IFAB within local park constraints. Corner flags recommended.

7.3 Minimum Players & Grace Period. A team needs 7 players to start, including at least 1 female player. A 10-minute grace period from scheduled kickoff may be granted at the referee's discretion. If a team cannot field 7 by the end of the grace period, the match is a forfeit (recorded 3–0); a friendly may be played with the referee's permission but the forfeit stands.

7.4 Substitutions. Unlimited substitutions are allowed at any stoppage with the referee's permission. The substituted player must leave before the replacement enters. Goalkeeper changes only at a stoppage with referee approval.

7.5 Temporary Dismissals for Dissent (Sin-Bin). To promote respect:

- A caution for dissent (yellow card for dissent) results in a 10-minute temporary dismissal. The team plays short for the full sin-bin period; the player may re-enter at the next stoppage after time expires.
- A second caution (of any kind) to the same player = send-off (red card).
- If the goalkeeper is sin-binned, another player must serve as GK; the team still plays short.

7.6 Standings & Tiebreakers. Points: Win = 3, Draw = 1, Loss = 0, Forfeit = 3–0 to the opponent. Tiebreakers, in order: (1) Head-to-head points (if exactly two teams tied and equal games played vs each other); (2) Goal against; (3) Fewest disciplinary points (RC=3, YC=1); (4) Coin toss by the league.

7.7 Match Abandonment & Reschedule. If a match is abandoned after the start of the second half, the score stands as final unless the league rules otherwise. If abandoned before the second half starts, it may be replayed or resumed at the league's discretion.

7.8 Weather & Lightning. Follow local park policy and standard lightning safety: upon lightning/thunder, suspend play for 30 minutes from the last observed event; reset the clock with each new event. The referee/league determines restart or abandonment based on time/field availability.

7.9 Blood / Injury / Concussion. Players with blood on body or equipment must leave until cleaned/replaced. Suspected concussion = no same-day return; when in doubt, sit them out. Referees record serious injuries on the match card.

7.10 Alcohol, Tobacco, Glass Containers. Prohibited on the field and technical areas and subject to municipal park rules. Violations may result in ejection and/or forfeit.

7.11 Technical Areas & Spectators. Where practical, teams and coaches on one touchline; spectators on the opposite. Only rostered players/coaches in the technical area.

7A. Coed Division Rules

7A.1 Maximum Male Players. At any time, no more than six (6) male players may be on the field for a team.

7A.2 Position Flexibility. Male and female players may play in any position, including goalkeeper, to satisfy this requirement.

7A.3 Pre-Match Agreement for 7 Men. By mutual agreement of both teams before kickoff, each team may elect to play with up to seven (7) men on the field. This agreement must be communicated to and acknowledged by the referee crew before the match begins. Teams must still play at least 1 female player.

7A.4 Violations. If a team fields more than the allowed number of male players without prior agreement, play should be stopped at the next natural stoppage, and the team must correct the lineup. Repeated violations may result in a caution to the captain or forfeit if not corrected.

7A.5 All Other LOTG and Local Modifications Apply. All other rules remain the same for coed divisions unless specifically modified here.

7A.6 Scoring — Female Goals Count Double. A goal scored by a female player counts as two (2) goals for match scoring, except for penalty kicks. A goal scored by a male player counts as one (1) goal. A goal scored on a penalty kick counts as one (1) goal.

7A.7 Scoring Cap — Male Players. Each team is limited to five (5) goals (5 points) per match scored by male players. After reaching the cap, additional goals by male players do not count and result in a goal kick restart for the defending team.

7A.8 Recording & Standings. Match reports should reflect the actual coed-adjusted score (i.e., using the 2-point female goal rule). (Forfeits remain 3–0.)

7A.9 Penalty Kicks. Penalty kicks must be taken by a female player and are worth one (1) goal.

7A.10 Own Goals. Any own goal counts as one (1) for the opposing team, regardless of the gender of the attacking or defending player involved.

8. Game Administration & Match Control

8.1 Timely challenges. Questions about field conditions, player equipment, or eligibility should be raised **before kickoff**. Once play begins without challenge, conditions are presumed accepted.

8.2 Communication flow. Players should first use their captain/coach to communicate with the referee crew. If needed, escalate to the GSSA Adult Commissioner after the match.

8.3 Forfeits. Failure to timely produce required roster/ID documentation when requested may result in a forfeit.

9. Disciplinary Consequences

9.1 Cards and Suspensions. Cautions and send-offs are recorded on the match card. Any red card results in immediate dismissal from the area and an automatic one-match suspension (minimum). The league may increase sanctions for serious misconduct.

9.2 Reporting. Referees and captains must cooperate to ensure misconduct and suspensions are accurately noted on the match card and in the league system.

10. Protests & Appeals (Overview)

10.1 Protests must be timely and follow league procedures. As a rule of thumb, raise issues at the field via the captain, then follow any formal submission steps communicated by the league.

10.2 The referee's decisions on facts connected with play are final (LOTG). Administrative eligibility/equipment issues may be reviewed by the league.

11. Effective Date & Updates

11.1 These Modified Rules take effect upon the date the rules are approved by the GSSA Board of Directors and remain in force until amended. Notices may be distributed by email or otherwise posted by GSSA.

11.2 Questions regarding rules and rule enforcement should be directed to team captains/coaches first, then to the GSSA Adult Commissioner if additional resolution is needed.