Michigan Christian Soccer League
League Specific Rules, rev.14

In an attempt to make the game easier to comprehend and play for children under the age of 12 we have made revisions to the FIFA Laws (rules). These changes will promote learning soccer at a more elementary level. As the children progress from U8 to U10 and U12 the rules move closer to the standard. The game of soccer is all about continuous movement and creating opportunities. The children will learn fundamentals of the game without "herding" around the ball and will be given "2nd chances" on minor technical errors. To this end, please see the detailed deviations below. The original rule described in short and the MCSL specific described after.

- Field size: Length (touchline): 100-130 yds, Width (goal line): 50-100 yds
  - U8 = Length (touchline): ~35 yds, Width (goal line): ~20 yds
  - U10 ~~& 12~~ = Length (touchline): ~60 yds, Width (goal line): ~40 yds
  - U12 (Fall 2025 experiment): ~75 yds, Width (goal line): ~50 yds
  - U8 = Goalie area and Penalty area are one in the same so that goal kicks are pushed out to either side of the field.
  - U10 = "Build out lines" will be in place to enable small sided US Soccer mandates.

- Players on the field shall be 11 in total.
  - U8 = 5 players (2 Offense, 2 Defense, 1 Goalie).
  - U10 = 7 players (2 Offense, 2 Defense, 2 Midfielders, 1 Goalie).
  - U12 = **9** players (This will follow a more normal approach with Offense, Defense and Midfield but no set number at any position.
  - Player numbers are subject to mercy rules for changes during a given game.

- Player minimums: Must have greater than seven players or team will forfeit.
  - U8 = Must have greater than or equal to three players or match will be considered a forfeit.
  - U10 ~~& 12~~ = Must have greater than or equal to five players or the match will be considered a forfeit.
  - U12 = Must have greater than or equal to seven players or the match will be considered a forfeit.
  - In the event of a forfeit, both team's players will be pooled together and divided equally to play an "unofficial scrimmage" with the referee(s) covering as they would a normal game.

- Maximum of 3 substitutions.
  - At all age levels substitutions are unlimited and can occur at any stoppage of play. The referee must be notified to allow the substitution to occur and give the okay.
  - In case of injury with stoppage of play the player must come off the field.

- A substituted player may not re-enter the game.
  - At all age levels substitutions are unlimited.
  - In addition, U8 and U10 are allowed to make "on field" at any stoppage of play. An example would be for an Offensive and Defensive player to change places.

- Referees' qualifications and roles. In accordance to mandates in the US Soccer small sided game player initiatives, the League will operate the games as follows. Where used, referees will be minimum certified US Soccer grade level 9.
    - U8 = The League will provide a representative to help facilitate the game.
    - U10 & U12 = The League will provide one referee and one club referee assistant to aid in the referee's duties as the referee determines is needed.
    - On an emergency basis, non-certified referees and/or those who have let their certification lapse will be used a stop gap should the certified referees not be available that games day.

- Referee stoppage of the game due to injury. Under FIFA play may carry on at the discretion of the referee.
    - We wish to error on the side of caution and expect the game to be stopped if a player goes to the ground, or stops participation in the game due to a perceived injury.
    - If a player goes down, all other players are to take a knee while the issue is resolved.
    - At the discretion of the Referee, play may be stopped even if the "injured" player "freezes" in the standing position versus taking a knee.
    - An injured player must leave the field but can return at next available legal substitution.
    - At the discretion of the Referee, play may be stopped without the player going down. That player does not have to leave the field of play if no injury is deemed to have occurred to them.

- Referee ensures that no un-authorized persons enter the field after an injury.
    - The coaches will make first contact with the player who is injured.
    - Coaches will beckon parents if needed either on field or bench after injury.

- Match play lasts for 2 equal periods of 45 minutes.
    - U8 = Four 10 minute quarters.
    - U10 = Two 25 minutes halves.
    - U12 = Two 30 minute halves.

- The half-time must not exceed 15 minutes.
    - U8 = 5 minutes between quarters.
    - U10 & U12 = 10 minute half-time.
    - All = Time may be shortened upon agreement between coaches.

- The allowance of time lost is at the discretion of the referee (added minutes).
    - There will be no added time for stoppages of any nature with the exception of weather delays (aka lightning) that temporarily will suspend all activities for that specific game and possibly impact the remaining games depending upon when the 20 min period between strikes is over. The game(s) will not be made up.

- In the second half the teams change ends and attack the opposite goals.
    - U8 = The first two quarters are considered to be one half. Same team kicks off first 2 quarters and stays on same side of the field.

- Kick-offs, Free Kicks, Goal Kicks and Corner Kicks, if the player touches the ball a second time before it is touched by another player an indirect kick is awarded to the opposing team.
    - U8 = Re-try the kick to a maximum of 2 attempts.
    - U10 = Re-try the kick to a maximum of 1 attempts.

- Corner Kicks can be taken by any player on the field
    - U8 & U10 = May be done by any player in the field without resulting in off sides as long as player re-enters field of play on their designated position side of the field after the kick is executed without going thru the zone they would normally not be allowed to be in.

- Free Kicks can be taken by any player on the field.
    - U8 & U10 only taken by players allowed on that side of the field.
    - U8 exception occurs when a foul occurs within 3 ft of the center line (such as illegal touch by opposing team's players reaching across the center line with their foot). The team awarded the kick can choose to move the ball to rest directly on the center line thereby allowing the kick to be taken by one of their defense players.
    - U8 – no penalty kicks. All free kicks are indirect.

- Winning Team. The team scoring the greater number of goals during a match is the winner. If both teams score an equal number of goals, or if no goals are scored, the match is drawn.
    - There will be no overtime in any divisions.

- Offsides. We will not go into the detail of FIFA offside rules here due to the complexities.
    - U8 & U10 = Will use the mid-field line as on offside barrier. Once play has started and the Offense and Defense have moved to their side of the field they must remain there until restarting occurs after a goal is scored.
    - U10 = The 2 mid-fielders are permitted to move anywhere on the field without possibility of offsides. They will wear a wristband to indicate their position. They must be in contrast to team colors and visible at all times during the game.
    - U12 = All FIFA off sides rules apply.

- Build Out Line Rules. Applies to U10 games only per US Soccer small sided standards.
    - The build out line promotes playing the ball out of the back in a less pressured setting
    - When the goalkeeper has the ball in his/her hands during play from the opponent, the opposing team must move behind the build out line until the ball is put into play.
    - Opposing players will cease any attempts to kick the ball when the goalkeeper has his/her hands on the ball regardless of full possession of the goalkeeper.
    - Once the opposing team is behind the build out line, the goalkeeper can pass, throw or roll kick the ball into play (punts and drop kicks are not allowed)
    - After the ball is put into play by the goalkeeper, the opposing team can cross the build out line and play resumes as normal
    - The opposing team must also move behind the build out line during a goal kick until the ball is put into play
    - Ideally, the goalkeeper will wait to put the ball into play once all opponents are past the build out line. However, the goalkeeper can put the ball into play sooner but he/she accepts the positioning of the opponents and the consequences of how play resumes
    - To support the intent of the development rule, coaches and referees should be mindful of any intentional delays being caused by opponents not retreating in a timely manner or encroaching over the build out line prior to the ball being put into play
    - Coaches are responsible for addressing these types of issues with their players
    - Referees can manage the situation with misconduct if deemed appropriate
    - Referees should be flexible when enforcing the 6 second rule and counting the time of possession should only begin when all opponents have moved behind the build out line

- Indirect kick offenses (goal keeper possession). • controls the ball with his hands for more than six (6) seconds before releasing it from his possession • touches the ball again with his hands after he has released it from his possession and before it has touched another player • touches the ball with his hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him by a team-mate • touches the ball with his hands after he has received it directly from a throw-in taken by a team-mate
    - U8 & U10 = these fouls shall not be called at those levels with the assumption being the players do not know any better at this age.
    - U12 as per FIFA. Note per FIFA, it is referee's discretion as to whether intent was deliberate or not.

- All opponents during a Free Kick and Corner Kick must be at least 10 yards from the ball until it is in play.
    - U8 = 3 yards.
    - U10 & U12 = 7 yards.

- Throw-ins are a way of starting the game after the ball has left the field. If the player making the throw-in does not use both hands, does not lift the ball completely over the head, lifts 1 or both feet during the throw, or steps completely over the line the throw-in is awarded to their opponent.
    - U8 & U10 = Re-try up to two (U8)/one (U10) added attempts if the player fails to properly throw the ball into the field of play. May be done by any player in the field without resulting in off sides as long as player re-enters field of play on their designated position side of the field after the throw in is executed without going thru the zone they would normally not be allowed to be in. Must be taken by the same player.

- Team official must not enter the field of play.
    - U8 & U10 = in some cases it is beneficial for a coach to enter the field to help position the players after a goal, for a corner kick etc. They should not enter the field during active play. If deemed to be excessively time wasting, League officials will address with the Club heads to retrain their coaches.
    - Parents must also stay within their designated zones (none by the goal area or opposite sidelines.

- Accidental goal scoring by a goalie or other player of the same team.
    - U8 = Goal is disallowed. If the ball crosses over the goal line the opposing team is awarded a corner kick. In addition, goals scored from a "kick-off" will be disallowed. Restart the game as if nothing happened.
    - U10 & U12 = Goal counts as per normal FIFA rules.

- Fouls – Playing in a careless manner.
    - All. Slide tackles are considered "playing in a careless manner" and are not legal in these age groups. Indirect kicks are to be awarded consistent with the policy for heading the ball. Consistently leaving your feet in such a manner that the player has lost body control near opposing players is also considered careless and shall be likewise considered a foul with an indirect free kick and cautionable offense awarded.
    - All. It is to be considered "playing in a careless manner" if a player attempts to strike a ball that the goalie has one hand on it while it is on the ground and the other moving to secure the ball. For safety purposes, err on the side of the goalie.
    - All. Heading the ball is now consider a foul per US Club Soccer rolldown of US Soccer mandates. An indirect kick is to be awarded to the opposing team at the spot of the offense. If it occurs within the goal area, the indirect kick shall be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the nearest point to where the infringement occurred.

    - U8/U10 – Punting and/or drop kicking the ball is no longer legal. For U8, the player will be reinstructed and a "do over" will occur. For U10, if a goalkeeper punts or drop kicks the ball, an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the nearest point to where the infringement occurred.

- Yellow/Red Cards (for All):
    - A coach must substitute out a player after a yellow card to discuss the infraction
    - Two yellows in one game = red card
    - A red card is current game ejection (stay on team sideline) and sit out the next game on schedule (stay on team sideline if desired)
    - Coach is allowed to insert replacement player for red card player when card is issued so the team does not have to play a player down

- On subject of equipment infringement: FIFA rules call for an indirect kick to be awarded to the opposing team should equipment need to be corrected and a caution card issued if player leaves the field without permission and re-enters. In the spirit of our League, this rule is null and void for all our levels. Equipment issues need to be dealt with for safety reasons whether by the players voluntarily taking care of it (if necessary, leaving the field) or by play stoppage. However, we will not penalize any team for addressing this. Unlike an injury however, a player will not have to leave the game as a result of any game stoppage should he take a knee and the referee deem it appropriate to stop the game.

- Improper substitution: For general situations where the player leaves the field without a proper substitution, use common sense as to whether to address the situation. For U8 and even to a lesser degree U10s, allowances should and must be made given the skill level and knowledge of the children not to penalize them. U12s should result in addressing the Coach to handle the situation with the issuance of a caution to the player if a repeat occurrence happens.

- Team officials: Each side line is allowed a head coach and two assistant coaches in addition to the players. All other "outside agents" as FIFA refers to them as should be on the opposite field side. Coaches are to stay on their designated sideline (each gets a half) and cannot position themselves by their goalie.

- Team captains: For U10/U12 games each team will provide 1-2 players to act as "captains" for that specific game. It is encouraged that different players be selected each game. The head referee will then conduct a "coin toss" of some sort to determine which team will defend which goal to start the game and which will kick off. For U8 games, the referee shall assign which team gets to kick off which will then alternate for the remaining quarters while assigning the initial goals to be defended as those closest to their benches. The goal defensed will then "swap" at halftime for the remaining two quarters.

- Note: In keeping with the spirit of the league, we encourage "cheering" being conducted by the outside agents. The exceptions to this are if the tone and language is not appropriate to our Christian setting. A special League yellow card policy will be in effect for all divisions. The policy will be covered in expectations of parent code of conduct.

- Mercy rule: When a goal differential of **3** is reached the team with the lesser will be allowed to add 1 player. For U8 and U10 this will be a defensive player. When the goal differential reduces back to **1** the added player will be removed. When a goal differential of **5** is reached the team with

the higher score will remove **1** player. For U8 and U10 this will be an offensive player. When the goal differential reduces back to **3** the removed player can be added back. For **all divisions,** ~~U8s,~~ a player can only score a maximum of 3 goals that count toward the actual score for the entire game. Coaches should make attempt to position the players from violating the rule. No penalty, per se, shall occur if a goal beyond 3 is scored. However, it will just be disallowed from the official score and the opposing team will be awarded a goalie kick. For U12s, the goalie cannot be used to fulfill the removal of a player requirement.

- For each game played, head coaches are required to document the players that scored during that day's game and provide to Scott Chalmers after the game either by paper copy or phone text to 586-907-4496. Format is Division team name, last name of player(s) that scored, player uniform number, number of goals scored. (Ex: U12 Hurricanes, Jones #7 – 3, Davis#22 – 1)

- With combined approval of player, parents and coaches of both the contributing team and receiving teams, players from one division lower may in circumstances of roster need, "play up" one division. This is to be done for the purpose of supplementing a deficient roster. In no case is a player to "play down" one division regardless of age or need once they have established a roster spot on a given division for a season. Additionally, these "replacement(s)" are only to be 1 for 1 such the roster size of record is not exceeded. Opposing coach should be informed of special substitutes at prior to the start of the game impacted.

- Concussion Initiative:
    - Per U.S. Soccer's Concussion Initiative, if a player is suspected to have a head injury the referee is instructed to stop play to allow for treatment/evaluation as needed.
    - If the player leaves the field of play for additional evaluation, a substitution can be made in that moment.
    - The player with the suspected head injury may not return to the game unless a Health Care Professional (HCP) or Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC) has cleared the player.
    - Any coach or parent insisting on returning the player to the game without approved clearance will result in the referee ending the game.

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