

NEW HAMPSHIRE SOCCER LEAGUE



POLICIES & PROCEDURES

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

1.01 Name of the League

The league shall be named The “New Hampshire Soccer League” or “NHSL” if abbreviated.

1.02 Mission

To provide a pathway for all clubs, at any level, who are looking for a fun, safe, and competitive atmosphere for their players of all ages and genders – with the purpose of putting our youth into situations where they can develop both as people and players; growing their passion for the game in the state of New Hampshire beyond local, recreational play.

1.03 Management of the League

The League shall be managed by the League Director with guidance from the League Operating Committee (L.O.C). All actions of the league are overseen by the New Hampshire Soccer Association Executive Board.

1.04 Affiliation

The New Hampshire Soccer League is affiliated with the New Hampshire Soccer Association and US Youth Soccer, so any US Soccer affiliated club in good standing with NHSA and US Soccer may participate in the league.

1.05 Contact Information and Communication

All members of the New Hampshire Soccer League shall have contact information on file with the New Hampshire Soccer Association. Contact information must include team administration and coach information. The information must include valid e-mail addresses and phone numbers for each party.

1.06 League office

The league office is located at 1600 Candia Road, Suite 3, Manchester, NH 03109
Phone: 603.317.5509

1.07 League Website

The league website can be found at soccernh.com/nh-soccer-league/

1.08 League Operating Committee (L.O.C.) –

It is the belief that the New Hampshire Soccer League be a league focused on the needs of its member clubs. The New Hampshire Soccer League feels that clubs should have a voice when major decisions need to be made. The New Hampshire Soccer League will utilize a League Operating Committee (L.O.C.) to ensure that the voices of the member clubs are heard. All L.O.C. members must provide CURRENT contact information to be posted on the New Hampshire Soccer League Website.

The L.O.C. will consist of the league director, referee assignor, and a minimum of five (5) members from different member clubs, who will be available to listen to member club concerns, ideas, and criticisms. Members are volunteers from the clubs within the league.

L.O.C. Members meet at a minimum of two (2) times per season or four (4) times annually. Meetings will typically take place at the beginning and at the conclusion of fall and spring seasons, respectively. The L.O.C. also maintain a year round form of contact, both virtually (email, etc.), and in-person meetings.

Any clubs interested in attending an L.O.C. meeting are welcome. Times and locations may change due to the geographic locations of its members. However, any individual looking to meet with, sit in, or participate in an L.O.C. meeting can reach out to the League Director to find out when the next meeting will take place.

Meetings will be run in a professional and orderly manner with any business brought before the L.O.C. submitted prior to the meeting in which is to be heard.

1.09 Background Check – Risk Management and SafeSport

All coaches, team officials and board members must have an up to date Risk Management and SafeSport registration on file with New Hampshire Soccer Association and the New Hampshire Soccer League prior to the start of each season. All Risk Management / SafeSport checks expire every year on August 1st and will need to renew annually at this time prior to being added to a roster. All adults working with children must also go through both Risk Management AND SafeSport training. Both Risk Management and SafeSport need to be completed prior to any interactions with minors, including data sharing of player info.

Risk Management: You may log into system.gotsport.com, click on User Login, enter in your email account associated with your coach's account and password (ask your club admin if you have issues). Here, you will be able to initiate a new background check clicking on background checks, then complete the required information. Clubs will be billed \$11 per coach/manager/team parent/board member. Coaches who have not completed the background check will not be added to a roster until completed and will not be permitted on the sidelines during a game.

SafeSport: All adult members will need to complete a year training of SafeSport. Every three (3) years you will need to take the full course over; off years will be a refresher course. Once this is completed, go into system.gotsport.com, under documents tab, upload your most up to date SafeSport certificate. Coaches who have not completed the annual SafeSport course or refresher will not be added to a roster until completed and will not be permitted on the sidelines during a game.

It is mandatory that all players, coaches, volunteers, or anyone in contact with our youth players – aged 18 or older (or turning 18 midseason) - to be SafeSport Certified. All persons 18 years or older who interact or play with those who are under the age of 18 will need to be SafeSport certified starting the fall of 2020. Anyone who turns 18 in season will also need to complete the certification. This comes from the legal counsel.

Example: Player X is turning 18 on May 15th. Player Y is his teammate and he will be 17 years old for the entire spring. Player X will need to be SafeSport certified by the time he/she turns 18.

If you are a USSF referee working games in New Hampshire, and have completed a background check, you may email the NHSA Administrator to have your background check verified.

1.10 Referees

All referees used in the New Hampshire Soccer League shall hold a current United States Soccer Federation certification and be in good standing with NHSA. It is the referee's responsibility to maintain a current certification in order to remain officiating within the New Hampshire Soccer League.

Anyone interested in refereeing in the New Hampshire Soccer League shall contact the League Assignor at: ryanfaria45@gmail.com.

1.11 Matters Not provided for

The NHSA Executive Board shall have the final authority in all matters not specifically provided for by these rules and policies.

SECTION II: TEAM APPLICATION & ADMISSION

2.01 Team and Coach Eligibility

All teams affiliated with US Youth Soccer are eligible to apply for registration into the New Hampshire Soccer League. All player and team registration shall be in accordance with the current US Soccer and NHSA regulations unless otherwise specified.

NHSL reserves the right to refuse admittance or acceptance into any NHSL event, including the New Hampshire Soccer League, tournament and/or any other event upon notice of bad standing and/or suspension from all US Soccer sanctioning bodies: FIFA, US Soccer, USYS, US Club Soccer, AYSO, USASA and NHSA soccer

It is STRONGLY recommended that all premier and recreational coaches have at a minimum any coaching modules/licensures as recommended by US Soccer, NH Director of Coaching, or the NHSA Technical Director. **Starting in the fall of 2022, all Head Coaches will be REQUIRED to hold a coaching certification/licensure. Failure to present licensure will deny admittance into the league. All first year coaches will have a one season grace period to obtain proper certification (spring or fall).** All coaches must pass a background check prior to being eligible to coach in the New Hampshire Soccer League.

2.02 Registering Players and teams with US Soccer

Each club or team is responsible for registering their teams with US Soccer and for obtaining the US Soccer Registration Forms from their designated Registrar or from the New Hampshire Soccer League or NHSA websites.

2.02.01 League Structure

The New Hampshire Soccer League will offer competition for Boys and Girls teams from U8s through U20s. Divisions may be combined at the discretion of the League Director in order to provide a suitable level of competition for teams. Teams in the Under-15 divisions and below are eligible to play in both Spring & Fall season. Teams in the Under-16 division and above will play only in the spring season.

Divisions consist of **Division I thru Division V**. Multiple sub-divisions within the same age group could occur if demand for this requires it. Teams are asked to request acceptable division placement upon registering teams, which will be taken into consideration by the seeding committee. Teams could be promoted or relegated from past season performance or where division forming makes it necessary (see rule 2.07). Use the following guide for best placement of your team(s).

This guide is not the of all and be all, but allows for a guide to best place your team. If your team checks some or all of the boxes on any of these categories, the recommended division placement is below:

Division I

- Coaches are professionals either through being paid or by licensures
- Coaches have licenses consistent with the requirements for the age group
- Teams tend to travel in and out of state for tournaments, and play year round
- Have shown from past performance that the championship division is not the right competitive place due to past results or promotion
- Team that compete/would like to compete in the State Cup
- Teams that participate in NEP or other leagues higher than NHSL play in this division

Division II

- Coaches are either paid or volunteer but still need to possess proper licenses applicable to the age group coaching
- Teams also attend tournaments, in or out of state
- Have shown past performance in the select or premier division that shows competitive placement is the right fit in this division, from promotion or relegation
- Team that compete/would like to compete in the President's Cup

Division III thru V

- Mostly volunteer coaches, but can be paid
- Coaches who do not have the proper licensures but show a willingness to gain proper certification **by the start of the next season (spring or fall)**
- Travel club teams that are looking for something more competitive than local recreational programs
- Have shown from past performance/results that this is the competitive division that best fits, by being outplayed in Championship division, through relegation

2.03 Good Standing

Each participating team must be in “good standing” with the league, the state association and with US Soccer.

2.04 Application deadlines

All applications to participate in the New Hampshire Soccer League must be received along with full payment on or before the registration deadlines established by the New Hampshire Soccer League.

2.05 Application Process

Teams must register with the league registrar by the deadline established each season (date published on league website). If you are practicing, you should be registered for insurance purposes with NHSA. The New Hampshire Soccer League will follow the NHSA player registration requirements.

Once the season starts you may register additional players up to the maximum based upon your age/division until the roster freeze date which is set prior to the season by the NHSL / L.O.C.

2.06 Acceptance & Placement of teams

Decisions concerning a team’s admittance into the New Hampshire Soccer League will be as objective as possible. The decision will be based on facts such as previous league records, state cup records and tournament records. If all else is equal, then a subjective point of view will be considered. All submissions for division placement will be considered, but are not guaranteed. The League reserves the right to place all teams in the most competitive division possible. PLEASE NOTE: On occasion, divisions and age groups may be combined.

2.07 Promotion/Relegation

All promotions and relegations are done at the discretion of the seeding committee. There will be promotion/relegation in the age groups where there are multiple divisions. Teams may request to stay within their said division however the decision of the seeding committee is final once schedule is published.

Past season performance will weight greatly in promotion and relegation. Playoff performance may be considered, but will not have as much influence as regular season play. All teams who finished top two in their division are subject to be promoted. All teams in the bottom two of their division will be subject to relegation, unless requested by the club to “petition” up.

Example: The lowest ranked teams in Division 1 will get relegated to Division 2 and the highest ranked Division 2 teams will be promoted into Division 1.

2.08 Seeding Procedure

The New Hampshire Soccer League Seeding Committee will pre-seed all teams. **Once initial seeding is posted, no more than 72 hours will be allowed for club challenges to the seeding presented. All division requests to be moved (up or down) must be submitted in a Division Change Form provided on the league website by a club administrator. Coach requests will not be heard.** Once the final seeding is posted, there will be no changes made by team/club request.

The League Director may make an executive decision to reseed teams on a case-by-case basis. This is solely at his/her discretion.

2.08.01 Seeding Committee

The New Hampshire Soccer League Seeding Committee will consist of the League Director, two (2) members of the L.O.C., and NHSA VP of Youth Competitive.

2.09 Acceptance of the New Hampshire Soccer League Rules

All teams applying to participate in the New Hampshire Soccer League agree to accept and abide to the New Hampshire Soccer League rules and policies and any decisions made by the league administrators. Lack of knowledge of these New Hampshire Soccer League rules will not relieve any coach, team official, parent or player of a team participating in the league or seeking entry into the league, from the responsibilities and possible penalties herein. All clubs, team officials, parents and players by participating in the New Hampshire Soccer League agree that they are bound by these rules.

2.10 League fees

All league fees will be due by the announced due date for all divisions. If fees are not paid by the announced due date, the offending team/club may not be eligible to play in the league and may forfeit all games until all fees are paid in full, unless arrangements have been made and approved by the New Hampshire Soccer League. Teams who incur forfeits will also be assessed the Forfeit Fine (See section 4.06).

If league fees are outstanding, teams will be ineligible to compete in league playoffs. It is the team's responsibility to ensure all fees are paid in full and by the appropriate due date.

Once accepted the application fee is non-refundable.

Any team dropping out of the league after the league drop date will be responsible for all league fees and/or fines.

2.11 Returned Checks

The New Hampshire Soccer League shall charge a \$100 service fee for all returned checks.

SECTION III: TEAM ROSTER & FORMAT

3.01 Team roster

All teams playing in the New Hampshire Soccer League MUST use the official US Youth Soccer Roster provided to them by the NHSA State Registrar.

This roster shall have official state logo, verified age, verified season, registered coaches (only coaches listed will be allowed in the technical area), **uniform numbers, PASSPORT STYLE pictures of each player**, and the State Registrar Stamp. A PDF Version of this complete roster must be on file with the league prior to the first game. **Referees are permitted to refuse the play of anyone who is not clearly identifiable on the roster.**

Failure to provide the roster prior to the first game will result in an automatic forfeit of matches until the roster has been completed, unless the delay was caused or has been excused by the League in writing. Any time a roster is changed during the season a new State Roster must be submitted to the league office. Failure to do so may result in a forfeit.

3.02 Roster Size & Game Day Roster

The roster size is determined by the team's home state. Each team must bring a minimum of three (3) official rosters to each game. A "game-day roster" will be given to the referee, as well as to the opposing coach, prior to each game. The League will adhere to the following maximum "game-day" roster limits*:

- 7v7 – 16 players
- 9v9 – 18 players
- 11v11 – 18 players

The purpose of this rule is to allow teams to have the ability to have the same amount of players on game days.

Teams may not add players to their official State roster to make-up our maximum "game day" roster limits, but they will have the option of adding "club pass" players (see rule 3.04).

*In divisions where State Associations allow more than the "game-day" maximum to be rostered on a team, only the "game-day" limits listed above may be dressed for a New Hampshire Soccer League game.

****NEW**** It is STRONGLY recommended that teams get into the habit of providing official rosters of all players being used for club pass on game day. This is a requirement for playoffs. In other words, if you are using a player via club pass for a game, you should have an official roster showing that player is rostered on another, appropriate team that allows the club pass to be used.

3.03 Player eligibility

Eligibility of players shall be in accordance with US Soccer and NHSA regulations, unless otherwise specified and approved in writing by the League & VP of Youth Competitive (or NHSA President).

3.04 Club Passes

Players properly registered with NHSA on a roster with the same club name will be allowed to be added to the individual game roster of another team within the same club.

We ask that “club pass” be used to increase playing opportunities and to allow a player to “play up” to experience better competition. Clubs are not able to use the “club pass rule” to bring players “down” from their primary roster. In other words, a player playing on a “premier” team cannot club pass to play on a “select” team, or in any other situation along that vein, regardless of gender. Players cannot play on two teams in same sub-division, club pass or otherwise. EXCEPTION: Non-competitive divisions (u10 and below) is permitted.

Club passes cannot be used within the same age group, unless a team is pulling “up” players due to a lack of numbers or to provide players with more competitive playing opportunities, regardless of gender. The maximum number of club pass players allowed on a per game basis can be shown below.

Playing Format	Max Number on Game Day Roster	Max Number of Club Passes
7 v 7	16	3
9 v 9	18	4
11 v 11	18	5

3.05 Player & Coaches passes -

Each player and coach must have a valid (laminated and signed by an official of their home state ***WITH PHOTO***) US Youth Soccer player pass in order to participate in the League. The player & coaches’ passes must be brought to every game along with the three (3) game day rosters.

The match officials will check the teams in prior to kick off. **Teams do not need to check in with player cards. However, they be ready to present player cards as well as rosters/player cards for all club passed players and coaches, in the event a player or coach’s eligibility comes into question.** A team has until the end of the “grace period” to produce **said passes and rosters**. Teams not able to produce the passes at that time will forfeit the match. (See 5.07 Delay of kick off)

3.06 Age Divisions

Age limitations shall be in accordance with US Soccer regulations except as modified by the New Hampshire Soccer League. Proof-of-birth shall be provided upon request.

3.07 Playing on Multiple teams

Players may not be rostered on more than one team (as a registered player) in the same club in the same age group. If a club has multiple teams in the same age group, “club pass” can be used. See rule 3.04 for more details on playing on multiple teams with club passes. Players are allowed to play on two teams for two different clubs, as long as they are not in the same sub-division.

3.08 Player Transfers

Players registered to a team are bound to that team for the entire seasonal year unless he/she requests and is granted a transfer/release. All additions and deletions of registered players to the official State roster at any time during the year will be deemed as transfers. A team may add an unregistered player to their roster at any time (until the roster freeze date). A transferred player will not be eligible to play on a team in their original division or a division lower for that season.

3.09 Formats

U8-U10 teams will play 7v7 (with Offside) utilizing 1 referee.

U11-12 teams will play 9v9 (with Offside) utilizing a 3-person referee crew.

U13 and above teams will play 11v11 (with Offside) utilizing a 3-person referee crew.

SECTION IV: OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

4.01 Reporting of scores

It is the HOME team's responsibility to call the scores in each week.

All scores must be entered within 48 hours of the completion of the match. Scores that are not entered, may be subject to additional fees. SCORES MUST BE ENTERED FOR ALL AGE GROUPS.

There are two options to report scores - Online or by calling the score in. You will need your GAME NUMBER prior to reporting scores. All games must be submitted within 48 hours.

On line:

[Click Here To Report Score](#) – [link needs to be updated](#)

Call in:

1. After the game has finished – please call 904-758-0875
2. Press 1 to enter NHSL scores when prompted
3. Enter your Event I.D.: (**LISTED ON [NHSL](#)**) then press #
4. Then enter your EVENT PIN number (**LISTED ON [NHSL](#)**) then press #
5. Enter the game number and press #
6. You will be prompted to enter either:
 - a. Number 1 to update score
 - b. Number 2 to update yellow cards
 - c. Number 3 to update red cards
7. Press number 1
8. You will be prompted to enter the HOME SCORE then press #
9. You will be prompted to enter the AWAY SCORE then press #
10. To save you press number 1 or to cancel press number 2
11. You can enter another NHSL score for another game by pressing number 2.

4.01.01 Referee Game Reports

The referees assigned to each match shall submit their game reports via the assignment system (NHReferees.Gameofficials.net) within 48 hours of the conclusion of the match. Any cards with result in misconduct, red cards, unusual circumstances, or anything egregious that needs to be brought to league attention must be submitted by 10pm the day in which the game was played.

Match reports should be complete with proper score, any misconduct, any coach/team personnel dismissals, and any other unusual incidences.

4.01.02 Game Feedback Forms

At the conclusion of each game, a Game Feedback Form is required to be filled out by both coaches, regardless of whether you are home or away. Only coaches and administrators may provide feedback. No spectator responses will be accepted.

Any assessments of a three (3) or less must have supplemental information typed in, or the form will be discarded.

4.02 Game day roster

Both teams must complete a game day roster and provide it to the referee, as well as to the opposing coach prior to each game. Game day roster **MUST** include the coach(s), team manager, players, substitutes, and non-dress players (when applicable). It is recommended to bring a minimum of three (3) “game-day” rosters to each game. Please remember each rostered player must have a valid USYS player pass, to be provided at referee check-in (reference rule 3.04).

4.03 Weather Alerts

Every reasonable effort will be made to play all games. However, in cases of inclement weather updates will be available on the New Hampshire Soccer League blog. These forms may only be used for field closures, change of fields, or postponements due to weather, and are used within 48 hours of kickoff. If it falls outside of the 48 hour window, the club needs to request an administrative form to be approved by the league.

4.04 Schedule requests

All “black out date” scheduling requests must be sent to the League Director by the date posted on the league website. We will attempt to schedule around all requests provided via Black-Out Dates. Requests made after final schedule is posted will fall under our re-scheduling policies. Please email the league director with any blackout dates.

4.05 Game Change Policy

- It is the understanding of all teams that once the final schedule has been released, all league games (regular season/tournament/playoffs) including EDP–non weather related changes fall under the game-change policy.
- Once the schedule is posted, all game changes are subject to fees, and are not guaranteed. Game changes will be considered for the following circumstances, but not limited to:
 - Field closing due to sudden unavailability (State, city/town mandated events)
 - Conflict with USYS Regional or National Tournament
 - School Event (at the discretion of the league director)
 - Religious occasions
 - NHSA Sanctioned events
- Requests must be submitted using the form at the top of the New Hampshire Soccer League Website Home Page. Forms include:
 - Game Change Request 72 Hours – 7 days (\$100 fee)
 - Game Change Request More Than 7 days (\$35 fee)
- Game change requests made less than 72 hours to kickoff will not be approved and are subject to forfeit, unless they fall under weather related postponements.
- All requests are subject to approval by the NHSL Director.
 - Any denied requests will be refunded to the team.
 - Making a request does not mean the request will be approved. Please check GotSport for updated changes reflected from the request.

- Due to the excessive nature of game changes in the past, the league will not be making changes for individual requests due to “inconveniences”, or things not communicated to the coaches by their parents/teams. Club schedulers will be responsible for communicating dates/times that will not work prior to the season starting. The League Director will work with teams, but cannot continue to approve requests for date changes that could have been avoided. Some examples include, but not limited to – not being able to play due to:
 - Non-major holidays (mother’s day, father’s day, etc.)
 - Graduations
 - Proms
 - NHIAA events
 - Other sport commitments
 - Coaches working with multiple teams
 - School vacation weeks
 - And more...
- In the event a team does not play a game as scheduled, for other than weather or field reasons, cancellation by the Field Coordinator or an authorized change to the schedule has been made, any team that fails to appear for or play a game shall forfeit. The opposing team (11v11 or 9v9) will be credited with a 4—0 win for standings purposes. Any game that is not played, the team that did not show will pay an additional fee equal to the referee fees for that game (see rule 4.06).
- No games will be rescheduled without approval of the NHSL Director

In the event the team and/or costs are not paid forthwith, NHSL shall be authorized to place the offending Club in bad standing and will not be allowed to participate in any playoffs or tournament for the NHSL or in the following season until the fines are paid in full.

4.05.01 Re-schedule Policy

- A valid reason must be provided for a re-schedule. Re-scheduling games causes issues/concerns for both teams, managers, referees, assignors and families. Abusing this system will create an adjustment to our flexible re-scheduling policy.
- Missing key player(s) would NOT be considered a valid reason.
- Requests may only be submitted by the **club location manager(s)**. **Requests from coaches will not be heard.**
- Coaches talking to opposing coaches and postponing games without **location manager/league** approval, or lack of communication with the league could be deemed as a forfeit. Referees should not show up at fields where teams are not there.
- Re-schedule requests should not be submitted to the league PRIOR to getting approval from the opposing club.

4.05.02 Rescheduling Games that are postponed (weather, fields, etc.)

Any game that is not played for any reason (game was not played at time and date as scheduled), and is pending a reschedule date, and was not deemed a forfeit, **MUST BE RESCHEDULED WITHIN 72 HOURS OF THE SCHEDULED GAME**. It is the home team's responsibility to set up a reschedule proposal to the opposing team, and it is both parties responsibility to be proactive in finding a new date to play.

If both parties do not come up with a rescheduled game time after 72 hours, both clubs could be subject to a game change fee, according to rule 4.05 (**\$100 if new game will be played from 72 hours – 7 days; \$35 if the game will be played outside of one week**).

If games are not rescheduled by the end of the season, games could be subject to forfeitures for either team, both teams, or game will not be played, and will be assessed on a case by case basis, with potential forfeiture fines addressed to either or both clubs, regardless of who is the home team.

4.06 Forfeits

Forfeits shall be recorded with a score of 4-0. In the case of a double forfeit, both teams will record a 0-4 loss to their records.

The minimum number of players that must be on the field to avoid forfeit are:

- 11 v 11 Minimum of 7 players
- 9 v 9 Minimum of 5 players
- 7 v 7 Minimum of 4 players.

Teams who forfeit for any reason will be assessed a \$300.00 forfeiture fine. If there is a double forfeit, both teams will be assessed a \$300.00 forfeiture fine and split the referee fees due.

4.06.01 Assessing a Forfeit

There are many situations that could lead to a forfeit, and forfeitures are looked at game by game. Teams who forfeit for any reason will be assessed a \$300.00 forfeiture fine. Many times, the timing of the communication comes into play. In the event that a team cannot play a scheduled league match, it is recommended to reach out to the opposing team immediately to set up a re-schedule. PLEASE NOTE: The opposing team is not obligated to reschedule a game, but both parties should be open to play the game if it can be done, for the sake of giving the players games to play.

Any communication initiated less than **72** hours from kickoff to an opposing club is subject to forfeit. If it is outside of **72** hours it is encouraged to work out a reschedule, and the initiating team will be responsible for reschedule fees. **Coaches of multiple teams cannot make last minute changes due to scheduling oversights.**

If league is not notified of any game changes, both teams could be subject to fines, or a possible double forfeit, as referees need to be notified as well.

Any game assessed as a forfeiture can be appealed.

4.06.02 Appeals Committee

- A. Any player, team official or club found in violation of the New Hampshire Soccer League Policies and Procedures for which a fine has been issued may file an appeal.
- B. All matters of concern to the New Hampshire Soccer League Appeals Committee must originate from a formal appeals request submitted in writing, with any documented evidence, by the party found in violation of New Hampshire Soccer League Policies and Procedures, within **five (5)** calendar days of official notification of violations from the New Hampshire Soccer League.
 - a. *Appeals shall be **emailed to the League Director, NHSA State Administrator, and the NHSA VP of Youth Competitive.***
- C. The New Hampshire Soccer League Appeals Committee shall consist of one (1) NHSL League Operating Committee member (from a different region than that of the player/coach/club filing the appeal), the NHSA VP of Youth Competitive (or his/her designee), and the NHSA President (or his/her designee).
- D. The petitioning party has the right to appear before the committee to state their case before a decision is made by the New Hampshire Soccer League Appeals Committee.
- E. The New Hampshire Appeals Committee shall notify the offended party 72 hours prior to the date and time in which their appeal will be heard.
- F. The decision of the New Hampshire Soccer League Appeals Committee shall be promptly sent via email within **five (5) business** days of the hearing to all concerned parties. Verbal notification may supplement but shall not supplant this responsibility. Mailed out (US Mail) forms can be provided upon request.

4.07 Cancelled Games

Only the “home team” Field Coordinator may cancel games for unplayable conditions or unexpected field emergencies, always excepting the determination by Referees on the field of play that field conditions are unsafe and the scheduled game therefore cancelled. See Re-Schedule Policy (Section 4.05.01). All cancelled/postponed games that fall within 48 hours of kickoff must be posted to the blog provided by the league.

SECTION V: RULES OF PLAY

5.01 The Ball

The home team (listed first in the schedule) shall provide the match balls. A minimum of 2 match balls must be presented to the referee prior to the start of each match.

- U8 will use a size 3 ball.
- U9 through U12 divisions will use a size 4 ball.
- U13 and older divisions will use a size 5 ball.

5.02 Player Equipment

The jersey of all players, except for the goalkeeper must contain a visible number, unique from the other members of the same team. No jewelry may be worn. Hard casts must be covered and be deemed safe for opposing players by the match officials. Match officials have the final say on safety determination.

Shin guards are **mandatory** for all players.

In case of a color conflict, the home team (listed first in the schedule) shall change colors.

5.03 Duration of the Game

- Under-8 thru Under-10 – 2 x 25 minute halves
- Under-11 and Under-12 – 2 x 30 minutes halve
- Under-13 and Under-14 – 2 x 35 minute halves
- Under-15 and Under-16 – 2 x 40 minute halves
- Under-17 thru Under-20 – 2 x 45 minute halves

All games are considered final if at least half the game is completed. If the game is stopped prior to half time due to weather conditions, the complete game will be replayed

5.04 Substitution

Except as noted, substitutions shall be “unlimited” and any time after any dead ball situation (corner kicks, free-kicks, throw-ins etc.).

The substitutes must be at the center line ready to enter before the referee will allow the substitution to take place. **Please see new laws of the game rules on substitutions on players leaving the field**

The referee has the authority not to allow the substitution if he/she believes that the procedure will stop the flow of the game or is being used as tactical time wasting play. It is suggested (but not mandatory) that all substitutes in the U13 and above age groups wear a different color shirt or pinnie when not on the field of play.

5.05 Point system

Each team will be awarded

- 3 points for a win
- 1 point for a tie
- 0 points for a loss

5.06 Tie-breakers

If at the conclusion of the league season a tie breaker is needed the following criteria will be utilized:

- A. Head to head (not used if more than two teams are involved in the tie)
- B. Goal difference (i.e. goals scored minus goals allowed - maximum of 4 per game)
- C. Fewest goals allowed
- D. Most goals scored (maximum of 4 per game)
- E. Most Wins
- F. Most shut-outs
- G. Coin Flip to be held at the league office, with both clubs represented

5.07 Delay of kick off

If a game is delayed due to the tardiness of a team, players, coach or manager, or missing player/coaches passes; a maximum of fifteen (15) minutes of “grace” time shall be awarded. After fifteen (15) minutes if the team is still not able to start the game, it shall be declared a forfeit.

The grace period might be extended if the team that is late has a valid reason and the league director grants the extension (needs to be done verbally and via email to both coaches and the referees). The referee will note the extension in his/her game report. See rule 4.06 for minimum number of players necessary to start a game.

PLEASE NOTE: This does not apply if games are being played on the field prior to your game kicking off. On occasion, fields fall behind – and in these situations, please be aware it cannot always be controlled.

5.08 Players and Spectators

Players and coaches will set up on the opposite side of the field from all spectators. This will be mandatory at all New Hampshire Soccer League locations.

5.09 Heading Restrictions at U11

Per US soccer recommendations there will be no deliberate heading at U11 and below. When a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick (IFK) 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.

SECTION VI: DISCIPLINE & CODE OF CONDUCT

6.01 Responsible Parties

All coaches and other team officials shall be subject to all rules pertaining to misconduct.

Any other individuals who may be reasonably construed as being associated with a team shall be subject to the jurisdiction and authority of The League. Any coach or team official can be held responsible for any individual associated to their team at any match.

6.02 Profanity

The New Hampshire Soccer League has a Zero Tolerance Policy for Foul & Abusive Language. Profanity and unsporting conduct by any individual will not be tolerated either on or off the field.

6.03 Compensation

No player shall receive any compensation for services rendered to a team or receive any promises of compensation.

6.04 Smoking & Alcohol

There will be no drinking of alcoholic beverages or smoking in the soccer parks. This includes vaping.

6.05 Referee Authority

The referee(s) are in complete charge of the field and adjacent areas from the time they arrive at the game site until they depart. The referee(s) is empowered to:

- i. Rule on what equipment is considered playable and enforce the Laws of the Game
- ii. Issue Yellow or Red cards to players and dismiss coaches during that entire period

The referee may **abandon** a game for coach, player, or spectator misconduct. Teams causing the **abandonment** may forfeit the game. **A League Discipline Committee will be formed for all games abandoned as noted in the referee report. The committee will make the decision on the outcome of each abandoned game.**

Starting in spring of 2020, referees are able to show cards to coaches during any league (jamborees, regular season, or playoff) games.

6.06 Park Rules

All Park rules where games are played shall be respected and obeyed. It is strongly recommended - for clubs who don't have proper bathroom facilities at their field – it to be posted on their club sites, or for that to be communicated to the opposing teams before the start of a match (ex: closest restrooms are at Dunkins up the road...)

6.07 Red Cards & Suspensions

Players or coaches are subject to match suspensions according to the following:

- A. Any coach, team official, and/or player whom is sent-off/dismissed shall be reported by the referee no later than 48 hours past the conclusion of the match in question (see rule 4.01.01).
- B. Any player, coach, team personnel, etc. whom is serving a suspension shall be listed in the “NHSL Suspension Log” on the NHSL Website. Anyone listed on the NHSL Suspension Log shall not participate in any match until the return date listed.
- C. Any player or coach that is ejected from any league match due to striking, punching, hitting, kicking, spitting, or any action that reflects harmful intent shall automatically be suspended for a minimum of two (2) sanctioned games.
- D. Any player, coach or fan verbally abusing a referee during any league match as documented on the Referee's Report of the match shall automatically be suspended for a minimum of two (2) league matches.
- E. Any player receiving a red card or coach being ejected, in any league match other than the circumstances listed above shall automatically be suspended for a minimum of one (1) league match.
- F. The New Hampshire Soccer League Disciplinary Committee shall have the right to add additional or reduce the number of matches in a suspension without a hearing. This could include but not be limited to any derogatory comments of a racial nature.

- G. Players or coaches that are ejected from a game, for whatever reason, shall serve their suspension at the next sanctioned event(s) for that particular team.
- H. Failure of a coach/player/team official to remain out of sight and out of sound after being ejected may result in a forfeit.
- I. Any coach that is ejected from a game is liable to sanctioning at the league and state level. Their Club will be assessed a \$250 fine by New Hampshire Soccer League. This must be paid before the coach is eligible to coach that team again. This is in addition to any game suspensions.
 - Any coach ejected from a league game will not be allowed to coach any other NHSL team (same club or otherwise) until the suspension for the dismissal is completed.
- J. Any coach receiving **two (2)** dismissals in one calendar year (regardless of what team they may be coaching) will not be eligible to coach within the New Hampshire Soccer League for **an indefinite amount of time and must appear in front of a NHSA disciplinary committee for potential re-instatement.**
- K. Any player, coach, or manager, who participates in a match while under suspension, shall cause his or her team to forfeit that match and will be subject to additional penalty.
- L. During a coach's suspension he/she must not be within sight nor sound of the game that they are suspended for.
- M. A referee may request the coaching staff of either team to deal with any parent whom, in the Referee's opinion, is bringing the game into disrepute. Should that parent continue to behave in a way that, in the referee's opinion, continues to bring the game into disrepute, it could lead to the referee terminating the game and resulting in a forfeit win for the opponent. In the case where it is not readily determined whose parent it is, both teams will forfeit and be fined a forfeit fee.

6.07.01 Coaches Receiving Yellow Cards

Starting in the spring 2020 season, coaches can be shown both yellow and red cards. For coaches receiving yellow cards, the following procedures will take place:

- A. Any coach, assistant coach, or personnel receiving two (2) yellow cards in the same game, resulting in a dismissal, will face a MINIMUM one (1) game suspension.
- B. Any coach, assistant coach, or personnel receiving a yellow card in two (2) consecutive games will be handed a one (1) game suspension.
- C. Any coach, assistant coach, or personnel receiving an accumulation of three (3) cards at any point in a season (spring or fall) will be handed a one (1) game suspension **and a \$125 fine.**
- D. All yellow cards received in a season reflect on the head coach of the team. If a coaching staff accumulates more than three (3) yellow cards in a single season, each subsequent yellow card will accrue a **\$250** fine assessed to the team. The **head** coach will be ineligible for the league playoffs, and will be on probation until the following occurs:
 - 1. All fines are paid in full by the club

2. Documentation of attending a LOTG re-certification classroom session is provided (after date of suspension)
3. A letter of intent has been sent to the LOC asking for reinstatement

Please see league policies for red cards received. This is on top of any potential suspensions delivered for dismissal, dissent, or misbehavior, and will be looked at on a case by case basis. Any coach receiving two (2) yellows in the same game – resulting in a dismissal – could face more than a one (1) game dismissal depending on the nature of the cards. Please refer to league rules for coach dismissal policies. (see rule 6.07).

SECTION VII: PROTESTS

7.01 Definition

A protest is a formal written objection of any violation of established rules policies or procedure. Protests will only be accepted in regard to illegal players, and misapplication of the laws of the game. There will be no protests in regard to referee decisions.

7.02 Who can file a protest

Only a coach or team-administrator can file protests. Only those teams involved are allowed to file a protest. Third parties, i.e. coaches/administrators from other teams, cannot file a protest on a specific game.

7.03 Filing Procedure

1. Must inform referee that you will be protesting the match prior to leaving the field
2. A protest must be filed in writing with the league director and must include:
 - a. Details of the complaint
 - b. A listing of the players/situations that are deemed to be illegal.
 - c. A statement of the desired resolution
3. All protests must be filed within 48 hours of the incident
 - a. Exception being for playoff matches – see 8.03.01
4. Protest must include a cash/ bank check made payable to “New Hampshire Soccer League” with the memo: “Protest Fee” in the amount of \$250.
 - a. If protest is granted, the money will be refunded to your team.

NOTE: No protests will be heard on referee judgment calls.

7.03.01 Filing Procedure - Playoffs

1. Must inform the referee you will be protesting the match prior to leaving the field. **No protests will be heard if this important first step is not taken by the team potentially filing a complaint.**
2. A protest must be filed in writing with the league director and must include:
 - a. Details of the complaint
 - b. A listing of the players/situations that are deemed to be illegal.

- c. A statement of the desired resolution
3. All protests must be filed within 1 hour from the conclusion of the match in which is being protested
4. Protest must include a cash/ bank check made payable to “New Hampshire Soccer League” with the memo: “Protest Fee” in the amount of \$250.
 - a. If protest is granted, the money will be refunded to your team.

NOTE: No protests will be heard on referee judgment calls.

Section VIII: League Discipline

8.01 Discipline Committee

- A. All matters of concern to the New Hampshire Soccer League Disciplinary Committee must originate from the referee’s game report or from a formal protest submitted in writing by the offended party.
- B. Any player, team official or spectator alleged to have been guilty of any violation of the laws of the game, the bylaws, rules and regulations of the association or any misconduct detrimental to the game, shall be subject to appropriate penalty as determined by the Disciplinary Committee.
- C. The New Hampshire Soccer League Disciplinary Committee shall consist of the association League Director, League Assignor, two (2) L.O.C. members and the NHSA VP of Youth Competitive.
- D. The league director shall notify the player/coach/club of any penalty or suspension determined by the Disciplinary Committee **in a timely fashion**.
- E. The decision of the New Hampshire Soccer League Disciplinary Committee shall be promptly sent via **Email**. Verbal notification may supplement but shall not supplant this responsibility. **A formal letter can be mailed out upon request**.

8.02 Discipline Appeal Process

- F. Any, club, team, or individual not wholly satisfied with any decisions made by New Hampshire Soccer League has the right to appeal to the New Hampshire Soccer Association Executive Board. This appeal must be in writing and must be received by the NHSA State President within **five (5)** days of the decision handed down by the League. The appeal must be accompanied by a fee of \$75.00 made out to “New Hampshire Soccer League” with the memo: “Appeal Fee”.

SECTION IX: Short-Sided Rules

9.01 Short Sided Rules of Play

The New Hampshire Soccer League shall use the most current US Soccer Standards & [US Soccer Player Development Initiatives \(PDI\)](#) in order to provide its players with the player development model in which focuses the individual player's development. All US Soccer Standards & US Soccer PDIs shall be made available on the NHSL Website & NHSA Website.

[CLICK HERE FOR US SOCCER'S PLAYER DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES](#)

The New Hampshire Soccer League reserves the right to make amendments to any US Soccer Standard and/or Player Development Initiative that will be in the best interest of the league. All amendments to any policy shall be signed by the League Director, NHSA Vice President of Youth Competitive and/or NHSA President. The following list shows what the NHSL has adopted and what is recommended:

Rationale

- There is too much emphasis placed on the result of the game
- The priority should be to develop skills and abilities
- There is a need to educate and empower parents and coaches
 - o Grassroots courses should be taken by all coaches
- Birth year registration
- Small sided games for everyone 12 and younger

7v7 NHSL Rules and Recommendations

- Rules
 - o Results and standings are not recorded
 - o Heading is not allowed in 7v7 play (result in indirect kick)
 - o Build out line – when keeper has possession or on goal kicks, can only attack once keeper distributes – if a proper build out line does not exist, halfway line will be used
 - o Punts and drop kicks are not allowed
 - o Build out line is also the offside line
 - o Goals no larger than 6.5 feet by 18.5 feet
- Recommendations
 - o No more than 12 players on a game day roster – currently 16 players allowed
 - o Coaches should have the age appropriate license issued by US Soccer
 - o 2-3 training sessions per game
 - o Build out line – when keeper has possession or on goal kicks, can only attack once keeper distributes – build out line is equidistant between the half line and end line
 - o Players should play minimum of 50% of the time in each game
 - o Goals size should be 6.5 feet x 12 feet

9v9 NHSL Rules and Recommendations

- Rules
 - Results and standings will be recorded – although not recommended
 - Heading is not allowed in 9v9 games in u11 play (result in indirect kick)
 - Goals no larger than 7 feet by 21 feet
- Recommendations
 - 2-3 training sessions per game
 - Coaches should have the age appropriate license issued by US Soccer
 - No more than 16 players on a game day roster – currently 18 players allowed
 - Players should play minimum of 50% of the time in each game
 - Goal size should be 6.5 feet x 18.5 feet

PLEASE NOTE: u8-u10 will play in a 7v7 environment. 4v4 play is not currently being offered.

SECTION X: Playoff Rules

Teams Advancing

Division Size

Divisions with 5 teams: Will have a final only. The top two teams in the division will move into the final.

Divisions with 6 teams: The #1 seed will get a “bye” to the final. The #2 and #3 seeds will play a semifinal, “play-in” game, with the winner of that match playing in the final versus the #1 seed.

Divisions with 7 or more teams: Will have a semifinal (#1 seed vs. #4 seed; #2 seed vs. #3 seed). Winners of the semi-final matches will move onto the final.

Divisions with multiple sub-divisions

In the event the number of registered teams in a specific division require the seeding committee to “break up” or “split up” the division, sub-divisions will be created (typically occurs with 10 or more registered teams). If this is to occur, the following playoff scenarios will take place.

Two sub-divisions: The top two teams from each sub-division will move onto the semi-finals. The #1 seed from Bracket A will play the #2 seed from Bracket B, and the #1 seed from Bracket B will play the #2 seed of Bracket A. Winners of the semi-final matches will move onto the final. (Example: Division 3 Red and Division 3 Black)

Three sub-divisions: The top seed from each sub-division will move onto semi-finals. A wild card team will be determined and can come from any sub-division. Playoff seeding determined by tiebreakers listed below. (Example: Division 3 Red, Division 3 Black, and Division 3 Yellow)

Four sub-divisions: The top team from each sub-division will move onto the semi-finals. Playoff seeding determined by tiebreakers listed below. (Example: Division 3 Red, Division 3 Black, Division 3 Yellow, and Division 3 Green).

Seeding

Seeding is based off the following point system. Each team will be awarded:

- 3 points for a win
- 1 point for a tie
- 0 points for a loss

Tie-breakers

If at the conclusion of the league season a tie breaker is needed, the following criteria will be utilized:

- A. Head to head (not used if more than two teams are involved in the tie)
- B. Goal difference (i.e. goals scored minus goals allowed - maximum of 4 per game)
- C. Fewest goals allowed
- D. Most goals scored (maximum of 4 per game)
- E. Most Wins
- F. Most shut-outs
- G. Sudden death Penalty Kicks – In the event that both parties are unable to do so, a coin flip will occur

General Procedure

All games will be played at New Hampshire Soccer Complex (NHSC), 326 Buck Street, Pembroke, NH. Go to soccernh.com/nh-soccer-league/ and click on playoffs for schedules and rules, **unless otherwise specified. All teams, players, coaches, and spectators are expected to follow the rules and policies set forth by the facility hosting your playoff game.**

We cannot adjust game schedules for teams that share players or club pass so please respect the times and make sure you are prompt and follow the check in info below. To help alleviate any issues with daylight and overtime that may arise, teams are asked to be ready to play up to 15 minutes early. Also below are the playoff rules. Please make sure you have reviewed these as well as league policies on the website so that you are familiar with the procedures and rules pertaining to the event.

Both 1st and 2nd place teams will receive awards after the final. Please come to the check-in tent area to receive your award.

Playoff Rules

Check in:

Teams will check in on the fields with the referees prior to kickoff for all semi-final and championship games. You will need a copy of your roster, coach's cards and **player cards available if needed.** A team's failure to check in on time may result in a forfeited game. Please make sure you have all the documentation you need for club pass players. We will not make any exception to missing passes, roster issues, or anything to do with changes as everything should have been done by now.

Same club pass rules apply as during regular season. **You must have a copy of your roster and player cards on the sidelines at all times or game will result in a forfeit.**

Again, you will need to provide all the cards of the players who will be playing in that match, including club passed players. Anyone written in on a club pass, those rosters must also be provided. Have your team bring both home and change jerseys to all games.

Game Length:

U11-U12

Semi Finals – Two 30 minute halves

Finals – Two 30 minute halves

U13-U14

Semi Finals Two 35 minute halves

Finals – Two 35 minute halves

U15 and Above

Semi Finals Two 40 minute halves

Finals - Two 40 minute halves

*** Game length may be changed by the League Director due to darkness. OT rules may be changed to go directly to Kicks from the mark by League Director Decision if needed.**

Overtime Rules:

U11-U12 Two 5 minute OT to be played in their entirety > Kicks from the mark

U13-U14 Two 5 minute OT to be played in their entirety > Kicks from the mark

U15 & up Two 10 minute OT to be played in their entirety > Kicks from the mark

1. **Game tied after regulation play – First OT Period:** There will be a coin toss (visiting team to call) to determine possession of ball and side, substitutions will be permitted. First overtime period will be played in its entirety.
2. **Second OT Period:** Players immediately switch sides and commence second overtime period. Period will be played in its entirety.
3. **Game still tied after 2nd overtime:** ALL PLAYERS ARE TO REMAIN ON THE FIELD OF PLAY. NO SUBSTITUTIONS WILL BE ALLOWED. One team official from each team will be permitted onto the field of play to assist their team in determining the order of players for kicks from the mark. There will be a coin toss (home team to call) to determine order of kicks from the mark. Winner is determined based on goals from the mark (FIFA Rules apply).

Uniforms:

In case of a color conflict, the home team (listed first in the schedule) shall change colors.

Ball Size:

U11 & U12 – Size 4

U13+ - Size 5

Game balls must be provided by the home team (higher seed)

Ejections:

Players ejected or coach dismissed from a match will be ejected from the entire playoff tournament and will not be allowed to return

Field Policy:

NO PETS are allowed at any of the tournament facilities. Anyone with pets will be asked to leave the facility

NO SMOKING or ALCOHOL is allowed. This includes the parking lot. Anyone found to be smoking or consuming alcohol will be removed from the tournament facility. Vaping is not allowed.

ZERO-TOLERANCY POLICY against referees, players, coaches and other parents. We want all players, coaches, referees and spectators to have a positive experience. Any actions by any individual or individuals that infringe on the Code of Conduct will be addressed immediately by tournament staff. See league policies and procedures for rules.

TRASH PICKUP - Carry in Carry out Facility. Please make sure you clean your bench area before leaving.

YOU CAN WRITE NOTES/REMINDERS HERE

