

NERRC YOUTH INDOOR SOCCER

Rules of Play and League Administration Guidelines

PART ONE – RULES OF PLAY

Northeast Regional Recreation Center (NERRC) Indoor Soccer League (NISL) matches shall be played in accord with the United States Indoor Soccer Association Rules of Play, conformed as necessary for use at NERRC. An abridged version of the Rules of Play appears below.

Rule 1 - The Field Of Play

Northeast Regional Recreation Center has two fields with the following dimensions:

Field #1 (large field) – 180 feet x 70 feet

Field #2 (small field) – 145 feet x 75 feet

U8 divisions play exclusively on Field #2. U10 divisions play on both Field #1 and Field #2. Divisions U12 and up play exclusively on Field #1.

Rule 2 - The Ball

For U12 and below – Size 4. For U13 and above – Size 5.

Rule 3 - The Players

Number. Including the goalkeeper, teams U15 and below shall have no fewer than 5 players and no more than 7 players on the field at any time. Including the goalkeeper, teams U16 and above shall have no fewer than 4 players and no more than 6 players on the field at any time.

Substitutions. Each team may substitute players freely, provided that players must substitute off the field of play or within the immediate area of their team bench. Controlled substitutions during stoppages of play are permitted at the discretion of the referee.

Rule 4 - The Players' Equipment

Players shall wear their team's uniform, consisting of jerseys of the same colors, shin guards, and indoor footwear. Neither spikes nor cleats are allowed. Jewelry and other accessories are prohibited. The goalkeeper must wear jersey colors distinguishable from all other field players and from the referees.

If two teams have similar colors, the home team will be asked to wear an alternate color. If the home team does not have an alternate color, the visiting team will be asked to wear an alternate color. If neither team has an alternate jersey, NISL will supply contrasting pinnies available upon request from NERRC staff and to be worn by the home team.

Rule 5 - The Referee

The decisions of the referee concerning facts connected with play and interpretations of the rules are final.

Rule 6 - The Duration of the Game

A regulation game consists of two halves each lasting twenty-two (22) minutes. Except in the case of an unusual delay, as determined by the referee, the game clock counts down continuously through each half. Each team will be allowed one time out per game. A team may request time out only when its goalkeeper is in possession of the ball or when there is a stoppage in play and the team will possess the ball after the stoppage. Ties are a permissible end result for a match, and no overtime shall be played. For each match, forfeit time is five minutes after the scheduled start time.

Rule 7 - The Start and Restart of Play

A **Kickoff** from the Center Mark starts play at the beginning of each Half and after every goal. A player who starts play may not again play the ball until it touches another player. The Home Team takes the Kickoff for the First Half Kickoff, and the Visiting Team takes the Kickoff for the Second Half. The referee shall designate the teams' defensive ends. Teams shall switch defensive ends at the half.

Restarts take place by a Kickoff, Free Kick, Goalkeeper Distribution, or Dropped Ball. Other than for Kickoffs or as provided below, Restarts occur within three feet from the spot of the ball at the moment of stoppage.

A team receives a **Free Kick** after stoppages other than when a Dropped Ball or Goalkeeper Distribution is required. Before the team takes the Free Kick, the ball must be stationary. All opposing players must be at least 15 feet from the spot of the Free Kick (or, if the spot of the kick is within 15 feet of their Goal, along the Goal Line). The spot of the Free Kick is that provided above, except:

- (a) *Within Own Penalty Arch*: from any spot therein.
- (b) *Within Opponent's Penalty Arch*: at the Free Kick Mark ("Top of the Arch").
- (c) *Delayed Penalty*: (i) according to the ensuing stoppage, as normally administered, or (ii) in case the defending team obtains possession of the ball during play, at the spot of the original offense.
- (d) *Kick-In*: from the point on the Touch Line nearest where the ball crossed over the Perimeter Wall.
- (e) *Three-Line Violation*: from the offending team's Restart Mark.
- (f) *Superstructure Violation*: from the Restart Mark nearer to where the ball was last played.

All Free Kicks shall be direct kicks.

If neither team has clear possession of the ball at a stoppage, the referee restarts play with a **Dropped Ball**. A Dropped Ball caused while the ball is inside a Penalty Arch takes place at the Free Kick Mark.

If a ball which crosses an end perimeter wall was last touched by an attacking player, play restarts with a **Goalkeeper Distribution** (or punt in U12 divisions and younger) initiated from anywhere within the Penalty Arch.

Rule 8 - The Ball In And Out Of Play

A **Three-Line Violation** occurs when the goalkeeper propels the ball in the air across the two Red Lines and the Halfway Line toward the opponent's Goal without touching the Perimeter Wall, another player or a referee on the field of play. A **Superstructure Violation** occurs when the ball contacts any part of the building above the field of play.

Rule 9 - The Method of Scoring

A team scores a goal when the whole of the ball legally passes over the Goal Line. A goal may be scored directly from a Kickoff or Restart.

Rule 10 - Fouls and Other Violations

A **Foul** occurs if a player:

- (a) Holds an opponent;
- (b) Intentionally handles the ball (except by the Goalkeeper within his Penalty Arch);
- (c) Plays in a dangerous manner;
- (d) Slide tackles an opponent;
- (e) Impedes the progress of an opponent ("Obstruction"), or
- (f) Prevents the Goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands;

and when a player commits the following in a manner that the referee considers careless, serious, reckless, or involving excessive force:

- (a) Kicks an opponent;
- (b) Trips an opponent;
- (c) Jumps at an opponent;
- (d) Charges an opponent;
- (e) Strikes or elbows an opponent; or
- (f) Pushes an opponent.

Unsporting Behavior: A Free Kick results for the following offenses:

- (a) Leverage: Using the body of a teammate or any part of the field to gain an advantage;

- (b) Encroachment: Entering the protected area of an opposing player taking a Free Kick (after initial Warning);
- (c) Dissent: (i) Protesting verbally or nonverbally against a referee's decision; or (ii) Breach of Penalty Area Decorum; and
- (d) Other: Behavior which, in the referee's discretion, does not warrant another category of penalty (*e.g.*, taunting, foul language).

Goalkeeper Violations: The opposing team receives a Free Kick for the following violations by the Goalkeeper:

- (a) *Illegal Handling:* Bringing the ball from outside of the Penalty Arch to his hand within it, or receiving the ball again after a Goalkeeper Distribution without the ball's having first touched another player;
- (b) *Pass Back:* Handling the ball, having been passed deliberately and directly to him by a teammate; except that he may handle a ball which a teammate passes to him by the head, chest, or knee and without "trickery" (the use of a wall or foot to flick the ball to a head, chest, or knee before making the pass);
- (c) *Five Seconds:* Controlling the ball with either his hand or foot inside of his Penalty Arch for over five (5) seconds.

Team Violations: The referee issues a Team Penalty for the following violations by a team or unidentified person:

- (a) *Leaving Team Bench:* Players leave a Team Bench to join a fracas or confrontation with the opposition or a Game Official;
- (b) *Bench Dissent:* After an initial warning, one or more unidentifiable players verbally abuse the referee.
- (c) *Other:* Unsporting Behavior, which, in the referee's discretion, does not warrant another category of penalty (*e.g.*, too many players on the field).

Advantage Rule: The referee allows play to continue, notwithstanding the commission of an offense, when the team against which it has been committed will benefit from an existing offensive advantage.

Flagrant Fouls: A Penalty Kick is awarded for the following Fouls committed by a defender in his or her defensive half of the field:

- (a) A Foul within the Penalty Arch or Goal for which he receives a Time Penalty;
- (b) A Foul from behind against an attacking player, having control of the ball and one or no defensive players between himself and the Goal; and
- (c) Any Foul where he or she is the last player on the team between the attacking player with the ball and the Goal.

Blue Card Offenses: Unless otherwise provided below, the referee issues a Blue Card for serious Fouls and for:

- (a) Goalkeeper Endangerment;
- (b) Boarding; and
- (c) Team Violations.

Cautionable Offenses: The referee issues a Yellow Card for reckless Fouls and offenses described directly above, and for the following:

- (a) Second Blue Card;
- (b) Unsporting Behavior by any non-player personnel;
- (c) Provoking Altercation: Making physical contact with an opponent (e.g., pushing or poking), short of fighting, or using the ball in so doing.

Ejectionable Offenses: A person receives a Red Card for Fouls and offenses described directly above, which the referee considers violent or involving use of excessive force, and for:

- (a) Receipt of a Third Time Penalty;
- (b) Elbowing: Intentionally elbowing an opponent above the shoulder;
- (c) Vicious Slide Tackling: A tackle from the side or from behind directly into one or both legs of an opponent, seriously endangering him;
- (d) Fighting;
- (e) Leaving Team Bench or Penalty Area to engage in a fracas or confrontation with the opposition or a game official;
- (f) Extreme Unsporting Behavior: Committing particularly despicable behavior, including: (i) Spitting at an opponent or any other person; (ii) Persistent use of extremely abusive language or behavior toward a game official; (iii) Bodily contact with a game official in dissent.

Rule 11 - Time Penalties

The following penalties apply to offenses for which a card is issued (subject to further action by the league authorities):

- (a) Blue Card: Two minute Releasable Time Penalty (served in the Penalty Area);
- (b) Administrative Yellow Card (for a player's second Blue Card): Two minute Releasable Time Penalty for a second carded offense;
- (c) Straight Yellow Card: Four minute Releasable Time Penalty;
- (d) Administrative Red Card (for a player's third Blue Card): Two minute Non-releasable Time Penalty and ejection;
- (e) Straight Red Card: Five minute Non-releasable Time Penalty and ejection.

Teams shall designate a player to serve Time Penalties of their team, their Goalkeeper, non-player personnel, and of teammates who receive Red Cards. Players shall serve Time Penalties seated, until the expiration of the penalty, and until released by the referee.

Short-Handed Play: For each Time Penalty being served by a player, his team plays with one fewer field player until expiration of the penalty; provided that a team may not have fewer than

the minimum required, regardless of the number serving Time Penalties. Should a player receive a Time Penalty, while two or more teammates are already in the Penalty Area, his team continues to play with the minimum while he joins his teammates in the Penalty Area.

Exceptions: Under the following circumstances, Time Penalties either expire prior to their completed countdown, or have the beginning of their countdowns delayed:

- (a) *Power Play Goal:* If a team is scored upon having fewer players on the field of play, due to one or more players serving Releasable Time Penalties, a player from the team is released from the Penalty Area into the field of play, unless otherwise prohibited, and the player's Penalty or Penalties are wiped out. If the team has two players in the Penalty Area, only the player whose Time Penalty or Penalties are recorded earlier is affected.
- (b) *Multiple Penalties:* If two teammates are serving Time Penalties when another teammate is penalized, his Time Penalty does not begin to count down until at least one of the teammates' Time Penalties has expired and his Time Penalty is next to begin.
- (c) *Simultaneous Ejections:* When two simultaneous Red Cards carrying the same Time Penalties are assessed to opposing players, their Time Penalties are not served.
- (d) *Maximum Time Penalty:* No player may receive more than 5 minutes for penalties arising at the same time on the game clock, irrespective of the number or nature of accumulated offenses or the fact that one or more teammates may be designated to serve such time.
- (e) *End of Game:* All Time Penalties carry over between periods and expire at the end of the game.

Delayed Penalty: In instances where the referee would issue a Blue Card or a Yellow Card, but for the Advantage Rule, he may acknowledge the offense by holding the Card above his head until the earlier to occur of the following:

- (a) *Opponent's Possession:* The team of the offending player gains control of the ball;
- (b) *Stoppage:* The referee stops play for any reason.

After play is next stopped, the offense is recorded and assessed, as customary. In the event of a power play goal, the Time Penalty is not served and the provisions above regarding early release from the Penalty Area remain applicable.

Rule 12 - Penalty Kicks

Penalty Kick Procedure:

- (a) Any player may take the Penalty Kick;
- (b) All players serving Time Penalties are seated in their appropriate Penalty Areas. Except for the kick taker and the Goalkeeper, all players of both the attacking team and the defending team stand on or behind the restraining line nearest the attacking goal;
- (c) The ball is placed at the Free-Kick Mark nearer the attacking goal;

- (d) The Goalkeeper has both feet on his goal line, facing the kicker, until the ball is in play; and
- (e) After the initial kick, the player taking the Penalty Kick may not touch the ball again until after it touches another player.

If a penalty kick is awarded and time runs out in either half, the penalty kick is taken between only the kicker and the goalkeeper. All players except for the kicker and goalkeeper are precluded from active involvement and there can be no opportunity for the kicker to score from any rebound.

Rule 13 – Headed Balls and Concussion Protocol

Headed Balls. Consistent with U.S. Youth Soccer mandates, heading is prohibited for players participating in age groups U12 and under. For ages U15 and above, there is no restriction on heading.

If a player in a U12 or younger match deliberately touches the ball with the player’s head during a match, the opposing side will be awarded a direct free kick, with the conduct of the kick in accordance with Rule 7 above, that is, from the spot of the infraction unless the infraction occurs inside the player’s own penalty area, in which event the kick will be taken from the Free Kick Mark (the Top of the Arch).

If a player in a U12 or younger match unintentionally touches the ball with the player’s head during a match, the referee will stop play and restart play with a dropped ball. The dropped ball will be held at the spot of the infraction unless the infraction occurs inside the player’s own penalty area, in which event the dropped ball will be taken from the Free Kick Mark (the Top of the Arch).

Concussion Protocol. Consistent with Maryland law, any player removed from the field for a suspected head injury will not be allowed to return to the field of play unless cleared by a healthcare professional. A healthcare professional is defined to mean a licensed health care professional such as a certified athletic trainer or a physician with a skill set in emergency care and sports medicine injuries and with knowledge and experience related to concussion evaluation and management.

PART TWO – LEAGUE ADMINISTRATION GUIDELINES

I. Administration

NERRC staff shall oversee the day to day administration of the league. Formal questions concerning league administration may be addressed to NERRC’s Community Supervisor, currently, Kevin Parry at kparry@baltimorecountymd.gov.

Representatives from each of participating councils, acting as a group (collectively, the “League Board”), shall provide overall guidance for the league. From time to time, the League Board

may delegate its authority to act to an executive committee consisting of not fewer than three representatives.

2. *Player Eligibility; Roster Size*

Only players registered with one of the participating recreation council soccer programs are eligible to participate.

Players may play up one age group. Players may not play down one or more age groups.

Subject to applicable age group limitations, girls may play on a team in the boys' division. Boys may not play on girls' teams.

No player may be rostered with or play for more than one team.

Team rosters shall be limited to no more than fifteen players per team, provided, however, that participating councils may specify a lower maximum roster number should they so desire.

The primary focus of the NERRC Youth Indoor Soccer League is upon facilitating recreational, as opposed to travel or club, play. Each team roster shall be limited to four travel or club players per team, and each team shall limit the number of travel or club players on the field at any one time to not more than two. Travel or club players are those players carded for play through USYSA, SAY, US Club, or any other like organization.

3. *Game Play – Supplemental Rules of Play*

a. *Mercy Rules.* For divisions U15 and under, if a team trails by five goals or more, the team may add an additional field player until such time as the team trails by four goals or less.

b. *Miscellaneous Rules of Play.* NISL will not use the over and back rule, that is, a goalkeeper may receive at his or her feet a pass back from a teammate at any time. As noted above, slide tackles are prohibited.

c. *Bench Personnel; Coaches on the Field.* No one other than the coaches and uniformed players are permitted in the team box. No more than two (2) coaches will be allowed in the team box at one time during any game. All others must be seated or standing in the spectators' area. For U8 divisions only, a maximum of one coach per team is permitted on the field of play and may offer tactical instruction.

4. *Early Termination of a Match*

A match is deemed complete if at least one full half has been played.

If a game is terminated early by the referee due to unruly fan, coach, or player behavior, or if a team cannot field the minimum number of players required to continue, the following steps will be used to determine the outcome:

- a. The offending team, whether ahead, tied, or behind, receives a loss, and the opponent (non-offending team) is awarded a win;
- b. If the referee ends the match based on the unruly or offensive behavior of both teams, both teams receive a loss.

5. NERRC Facilities Rules

a. Rules of Behavior. Off of the field, both ball playing and running are prohibited. All children must be supervised. Smoking is prohibited in the facility. Noises makers (e.g., air horns, cowbells, whistles, etc.) are prohibited in the facility. Alcoholic beverages are strictly prohibited inside and on facility grounds outside of the facility.

b. Inclement Weather. Every attempt will be made to provide advance notice for games canceled due to inclement weather. The following protocols will apply.

Weekdays – All activities scheduled for the afternoon and evening will be cancelled if Baltimore County Public Schools are closed for the day or before regular dismissal time.

Weekends and Holidays – In the event of a severe weather event, programs will be cancelled whenever the snow emergency plan is in effect for Baltimore County. Please check the Baltimore County Government Website <http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/> for the "snow emergency plan" notice.

Re-opening – In accordance with Baltimore County Recreation and Parks policy, the use of Recreation and Parks buildings for recreation purposes will proceed according to schedule the day following any closing, unless the snow emergency plan remains in effect or the parking lot at the facility has not been treated. If a closing occurred on a weekend or holiday, recreation programs may re-open provided that (i) the snow emergency plan has been lifted, and (ii) the local full-time recreation and park staff has received approval to re-open the site.

NERRC staff will endeavor to post information concerning the status of the facility on the NERRC indoor soccer league web site. Participants may also contact the NERRC office at 410-887-5374 to determine the status of the facility.

6. Code of Conduct.

By their registration for play in the league or by their attendance at youth sporting events at NERRC, Coaches, Parents, Guardians, and Adults otherwise attending NERRC youth sporting events agree that they will uphold the highest standards of behavior and agree specifically as follows:

- I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and officials at every game, practice, or other youth sports event.

- I will place the emotional and physical well being of the children ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will insist that my child play in a safe and healthy environment.
- I will support coaches and officials working with my child, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
- I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- I will remember that the game is for youth, not for adults.
- I will do my very best to make youth sports fun for my child.
- I will ask my child to treat other players, coaches, fans, and officials, with respect regardless of race, sex, creed, or ability.

Each team's coach will be responsible for the conduct of their players and spectators.

7. *Infringements and Sanctions.* Coaches and players receiving a red card do not have to leave the building but must leave the team box area. In addition to ejection from the game, any person receiving a red card shall serve a one game suspension for the team's next scheduled game. The referee shall report to NERRC staff each red card issued, each ejection mandated and the facts and circumstances involving such action. NERRC staff shall promptly advise the League Board of such action. The League Board, acting as a board or through its designated executive committee, reserves the right to augment the sanction imposed. NERRC staff reserves the right to enforce NERRC's house rules regarding behavior and may assess penalties above and beyond those assessed by the NISL. Both the League Board and NERRC staff reserve the right to review material occurrences involving the league and assess or modify penalties.

Any person involved in an act of violence will be escorted from the building. Any player or coach involved in any pre-game, game time, or post-game altercations or implied act of violence will be suspended from participating in future games. The NISL maintains a zero-tolerance policy with regard to acts of violence. No player or coach will be allowed to return until an investigation is completed and decision rendered by the League Board. All decisions of the League Board are final.

8. *Officials.* Harford Soccer Officials Association (HARSOA) will be providing the referees for the league. Feedback on referees is welcomed and can be submitted via email to harsoa57@comcast.net.