

# NorCal Premier Soccer League

Team Handbook – 2019-2020 Season



*A US Club Soccer Sanctioned League*



The goal of this handbook is to provide assistance to clubs, coaches and managers to ensure the NorCal Premier Soccer League (“NorCal”) operates smoothly and is a positive experience for all involved – players, coaches, managers, club officials, referees, and parents.

When competing in NorCal Programs, the club is responsible for overseeing their coaches, players, parents and club personnel – administratively, on and around the field. Each club is responsible for ensuring all club members understand and meet the following requirements and follow NorCal Rules and Code of Ethics.

**Quality** – Clubs and their teams must be committed to striving for excellence with respect to play, sportsmanship, fields, referees and the total soccer experience.

**Director of Coaching** – Clubs must have a named Director of Coaching listed on the NorCal website with a working email address. The Director must be familiar with each team in their club and the team’s involvement in the NorCal Programs.

**Fields** – Clubs should have at least one high-quality field (5-time slots) per eight teams. Teams traveling long distances deserve to play on decent fields! Teams may ask that they play all away games.

**Referees** – Clubs must have a current USSF certified Referee Assignor and enough current year USSF licensed referees available to cover all their teams entered in a competition.

**Administrator** – Clubs must have an administrator responsible for helping teams maintain their club and team information on the NorCal website. This person should have a working email address and be available to assist team managers with all administrative tasks.

**Good Standing** – Clubs must be in good standing with NorCal.

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## **Letter from the President**

Hello NorCal Premier Soccer Members,

I would like to begin the new season by congratulating the United States Women's Soccer team for winning the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup. We are very proud to have Northern California represented on the roster.

I would also like to extend a huge "thank you" to the unsung heroes of club soccer - the parents, the club officials, and the team administrators/managers. Without their oft unseen work in board rooms, at computers, lining fields, and raising scholarship money, club soccer would not be played every weekend. Most are volunteers donating countless hours of time and energy assisting their club to provide a soccer program to players. Please pass on your thanks the next time you see one of these folks around the field.

Over the last few years, we have experienced an unprecedented change in the soccer landscape. From the continual growth of the professional soccer opportunities within the United States to the opportunities being seized by our club-developed male and female players in professional leagues worldwide to the ever-changing club competitive structure, soccer is truly a game on the move. During this time of transition, change, and growth we believe it is vitally important to clarify where we fit into the soccer landscape.

Safe Club Soccer Environment:

Our most important goal is to provide a safe club soccer environment every weekend. From an increased vetting of clubs entering NorCal Premier Soccer to firmer oversight of each club's sideline behavior, we are determined to see all participants honor the "beautiful game". Our affiliation with US Club Soccer ensures each club official has a background check. We encourage everyone to honor the soccer sideline and especially their fellow participants on any given day - the players, parents or fans and of course, the referees. We strongly believe the environment surrounding the club's trainings, games, and general interaction should be a striving, engaging, enjoyable one. Years ago, I had one primary goal, one I set for myself at the beginning of each season...I wanted each player to want to continue playing soccer the following year ...hopefully in my club. I knew if they did continue, they probably enjoyed their soccer, grew as a player, developed enough to their parents' satisfaction and it was a successful season.

Club Competitions:

Our goal is to provide teams with appropriately tiered, local first, then statewide competitions, connected where possible, to season-ending national finals in appropriate age groups. In the younger ages and the lower levels of competition, we seek to avoid unnecessary travel, attempting to create local divisions of play. As teams enter the older age groups and higher levels of play, we still try to avoid unnecessary travel but recognize it becomes more necessary to play games further away. In the younger age groups, we allow Club Directors to assist us in placing their young teams in appropriate

levels of play, lessening the need to win at younger ages, thereby allowing clubs to focus more on developing their players. However, as the players grow older we increasingly use promotion and relegation to determine team placement, thereby gradually increasing the pressure on teams to achieve results, something we believe is important for a striving player's development.

#### Coach Education and Club Development:

Our goal is to provide top-level coach education. We know better coaches, equal better players and a better soccer environment which equals more enjoyment around soccer - therefore more life long soccer fans. From partnering with US Soccer's Education Department, to working with the German Federation and the San Jose Earthquakes on our Summer Soccer Symposium, to our own Norcal Premier Soccer coaching courses, our goal is to expose coaches to a high level of soccer instruction, hopefully stimulating everyone to improve their craft for the benefit of the players. Included within the education department are courses for club officials, the backbone of every soccer club, responsible for most of the off-the-field work necessary to make sure trainings and games happen within a club. From courses on fundraising to accounting to developing a vision for a club; these courses have become increasingly popular. And we aim to do even more!

#### Referee Development:

Our goal is to assist CNRA (California North Referee Association) to identify, develop, support and protect the referees. From countless referee courses, in both English and Spanish, to referee assignors courses, to developing referee mentor programs, to following up on your feedback, our referee department's involvement with CNRA and US Soccer is vitally important for the health of the game. Recently, a member of our Referee Department was asked to assist US Soccer in developing a "Respect" campaign - something we believe necessary in today's youth sports environment. We also support the travel of our top referees to tournaments and events around the country in our quest to assist all levels of referees. Please encourage your club members to expect and allow referees to make errors, because they will; but treat them in a positive manner.

#### Player Development Program (PDP):

Our PDP continues to provide a broad identification and development program. We combine scouting with club recommendations to identify motivated youth players who receive additional training and showcasing opportunities alongside players from outside their clubs. The program has the flexibility to allow players who love the game and work hard to improve, to enter the program throughout the year. From a pathway into the US Club Soccer Id2 program, cooperation with US Soccer's National Training Centers, to competing against local Professional Soccer Academy teams and US Soccer Academy Programs, we seek to assist clubs and their top players in reaching their dreams of playing college and professional soccer. Finally, this past year, 18 boys and 18 girls were selected for the season-ending Gothia Cup in Sweden where the boys advanced to the round of 16 and the girls reached the finals.

Enjoyment around soccer!:

We recognize that players lucky enough to have the desire, ability, and opportunity to play club soccer through high school are more likely to achieve academic success as well as benefit socially with increased confidence while developing many skills necessary to be involved within a team sport. Of course, spending time in cars with their parents may not always seem great to a player at the time, looking back most parents and players will one day cherish the memories built around time spent driving to soccer practice or games. For these reasons, and because we believe there are few things better than playing soccer, futbol, fussball, calico or futebol, we wish everyone a great 2019-2020 season filled with good luck, enjoyment and positive involvement with fellow soccer fans!

Thank you,

Benjamin Ziemer  
President  
NorCal Premier Board of Directors

## **NorCal Premier Mission**

We elevate soccer by developing players, clubs, coaches,  
and referees.

## **NorCal Premier Core Values**

### ***Collaboration***

We collaborate with our soccer community to make wise decisions

### ***Joy***

We celebrate soccer and take fun seriously!

### ***Impact***

We make a meaningful difference

### ***Agility***

We do the right thing, and we move quickly

### ***Competition***

We believe that healthy competition is essential to progress

### ***Education***

We are committed to learning and development

# NorCal Premier League General Rules and Regulations

Applies to all State and Regional Leagues and Cups





## **Section 1: Administration/ Management**

### **1.1 – NorCal Premier League**

The NorCal Premier League, run by NorCal Premier Soccer, is a US Club Soccer sanctioned league and member of the United States Soccer Federation.

### **1.2 – Governance**

All NorCal competitions are governed by regulations approved by the League Office and written in this handbook. The League Office shall rule on all disputes and issues pertaining to NorCal competitions that are not covered in the Code of Ethics. The League Office may overrule rules in this handbook if it is determined to be for the good of the game.

### **1.3 – Club Definition**

In order for a club to be considered a member of NorCal Premier, the following conditions must be satisfied:

1. All teams participating in NorCal events must belong to a single legal entity, with a single leadership structure, a single financial structure, and a single governance structure.
2. All teams participating in NorCal events must have a common Club name, logo, uniform (which should be unique to their club) and practice/play games in the same geographical area of operation.
3. All teams participating in NorCal events must operate under a single technical structure/plan and report to a single Technical Director, Director of Coaching or Executive Director.
4. All players participating in NorCal events must be registered under a single US Club ID.

### **1.4 - Club Pass Rule**

Each US Club Soccer player pass can be used for any age-appropriate team in the issuing club. Thus, players have the ability to move up and down within their club, giving individual teams the ability to make changes game to game due to illness, injury, vacation or other conflicts. It is considered unethical for teams to move players down within a club for the purpose of creating a competitive advantage.

### **1.5 - Team Management**

Overall, clubs are responsible for the management of their teams. In order to compete in NorCal events, each team must have a team manager who oversees the following responsibilities: scheduling games, referee payments, travel cooperation, reporting of scores and communication with appropriate league officials. All team managers must have access to email that is checked on a daily basis and a telephone number connected to a 24-hour answering system during the season.

### **1.6 - Division Formations**

Competitive divisions will be structured according to the playing level of teams as determined by the NorCal League Office, which has final authority on all placement issues. Should NorCal determine there is an insufficient number of teams to constitute an age group division, the teams affected may be allowed to temporarily or partially compete in a different division of play.

### **1.7 - League Standings**

Official standings of teams, the keeping of which is the responsibility of the League Office, are tabulated on a regular basis and displayed on the NorCal website.

### **1.8 – Play Up Request Guidelines**

For teams who wish to request to play up an age group, the NorCal League Office will use the following criteria to determine if a team needs to play up for their development:

1. Team is current State Cup Champion or Finalist within their own age group, AND
2. Team has proven in previous seasons to be a very dominant team within their own age group, OR
3. Team does not have appropriate competition locally and needs to travel significantly in order to find competition within their own age group

Play up requests must be submitted to the League Office. The NorCal League Office has the final say on all Play Up decisions.

### **1.9 – Teams Requesting to Play Outside their Region**

For teams who wish to request to play outside of their region, the NorCal League Office will use the following criteria to determine if a team needs to play in a different region:

1. Availability of competitive divisions within the Region

## **Section 2: Scheduling and Communication**

### **2.1 – Required Club Contacts**

Each club's GotSoccer account needs to be kept up to date with the proper contact information. Please keep in mind that this is the primary method by which NorCal communicates with your club. Failing to have the proper contact information may result in your club missing vital league communication. Each club shall maintain the following club contacts:

- DOC
- President
- Administrator (Primary NorCal contact)
- Referee Assignor

## **2.2 - Communication Policy**

Communication between teams is vitally important for all NorCal events. Each team must have at least 2 different contacts listed on your team's GotSoccer page and ensure that both contacts have an email and phone number listed. All team scheduling communication should be done through the GotSoccer chat system so that there is a proper record of the communication. Team contacts must respond to communication within 48 hours. Listing the wrong email or phone number will not be a valid excuse for not responding to communication. [Chat System](#)

## **2.3 - Policy for Scheduling Matches**

The NorCal League Office will provide dates for all matches along with scheduling deadlines. *Teams are expected to be available to play any time on the game dates provided.* For club-hosted games, home teams should take travel time into consideration. Please do not schedule games before 10 AM if a team is required to travel more than one hour. Please do not schedule games for older ages (U15 and up) before 3 pm on SAT/ACT test dates. All games must be scheduled (time and location) by the deadline provided by the NorCal League Office. After the deadline passes, the schedules are locked and games can only be rescheduled if both teams agree. Teams unwilling or unable to attend games will forfeit the game. Any unplayed games will be documented by league officials and may result in a club being removed from NorCal.

*Please Note* - If the NorCal Premier League Office feels that a club is responsible for the game not being scheduled or communication from the away team is not responded to in a timely manner, teams may lose home-field advantage but still pay for referees and field costs.

The grace period for kick-off for late arrival of a team to the game is 15 minutes. NorCal encourages games to be completed, but following game(s) should not be impacted by a late-game start. If it is necessary for a game to be shortened due to a late start, both teams and the referee shall agree on having two equal shortened halves.

## **2.4 – Rescheduling Games**

Once a game has been agreed on in writing, both teams must agree on any scheduling change. After the scheduling deadline passes, a date must be set before any change is made to the schedule. *i.e. If a team would like to reschedule a game following the scheduling deadline, a specific reschedule date must be set before the game can be changed.*

## **2.5 – Rain Outs**

In the event of a forced reschedule (i.e. rainout), it is the home team's responsibility to reschedule the match. All rainouts must be rescheduled within 1 week of the original match date.

## **2.6 - Cancellation/Forfeit Policy**

Teams must give their opponent a 96-hour warning if forfeiting any match or they will be required to pay field and referee costs. Please remember that this is a club competition and not an individual team competition. The following is a list of common excuses teams cite for wanting to reschedule or cancel a game. We recommend the following solutions to frequently posed problems:

- Too many players missing (sick, testing, etc.) - Remember that any player from your club is available to participate with your team as long as they are of the correct age. In league matches please use lower team players or players from younger teams within your club to fill out your roster.
- Missing Coach - Any coach with a valid pass for your club is able to coach any team in that club. If your coach has several commitments then it is recommended that teams have an assistant coach or another coach from the club available to cover games.
- No Fields Available - It is expected that if your team is playing in NorCal, you have access to quality fields. This excuse will not be accepted for cancellation of a match.
- Tournaments/other games - NorCal understands that teams will possibly play in a tournament during the league. This will be an acceptable excuse to ask to reschedule a game, but it must be rescheduled by NorCal scheduling deadlines. Please plan your schedule well in advance so your schedule does not become so full that you are unable to fulfill your league commitment.

## **Section 3: Game Officials**

### **3.1 - Match Officials**

Match officials must be current year USSF licensed referees. The match officials shall consist of the referee and two assistant referees except for 7v7/ 9v9 formats of play may be played with one referee. Clubs may elect to use club linesmen for 7v7/ 9v9 formats of play. No match officials, other than club linesmen, may have family members in the game they are working. Club linesmen may only signal when the ball has left the field of play, they may not call offsides or fouls.

### **3.2 - Assignment of Match Officials**

Match officials shall be assigned and paid by the home club for each match. Each club is required to have a current year certified USSF Referee Assignor active in the assignment of referees for all NorCal games in their club & listed in their GotSoccer account. Failure to do so will result in club sanctions from NorCal, including a review of a club's membership.

## **Section 4: League Discipline**

### **4.1 - Violating League Rules**

The NorCal Premier PAD Committee and the NorCal League Office shall have the authority to suspend, fine, disqualify or otherwise impose sanctions on, players, team officials or competing clubs for violating league rules, the NorCal Code of Ethics or for any action or conduct not in the best interest of soccer or the NorCal Premier League.

### **4.2 - Disciplinary Issues**

Any breach of NorCal Rules outlined in this Handbook should be reported to the appropriate Event Coordinator, who will then refer it to the League Office. Any incidents or breach of the NorCal Code of Ethics should be reported through the PAD Incident Report system. All reports of rule violations or breaches of the NorCal Code of Ethics may only be reported by a club's DOC or President.

### **4.3 - Red Cards**

If a Red Card is shown, it will result in a minimum of a one (1) game suspension. This includes a Red Card as a result of two cautions. If a player is sent off during the weekend, they may not play the remainder of the weekend, regardless of which event the Red Card is issued in. Games sat out that weekend will count against the suspension, as long as noted on the roster and/or Referee Game Report as such. Any player used during a suspension will be considered an illegal player and the team, coach and club will be punished accordingly.

### **4.4 - Red Card Procedure**

In any game where a Red Card is issued, the referee must notify the NorCal League Office within 24 hours and the home team must fill out a Send-Off Report at <http://www.norcalreferees.com/sendoff/>.

Each team manager or coach must report any red cards given in their game by stating the league, game number, date and the player/players/coach who received the red card from each team. This should be reported to [mshafai@norcalpremier.com](mailto:mshafai@norcalpremier.com).

The player card can be returned to the team as long as the Referee Send-Off Report shows the infraction, the player's name, and ID number. In addition to the send-off report, teams must scan and send the completed [verification form](#) to [jmata@norcalpremier.com](mailto:jmata@norcalpremier.com) confirming that suspensions have been served. This should be completed no later than 8:00pm on Thursday for the player to be cleared to play for the upcoming weekend.

### **4.5 - Suspensions**

It is the team's and/or club's responsibility to ensure their Red Carded player/coach serves the minimum 1 game suspension. It is also their responsibility to ensure that their player/coach serves any additional suspension determined by the NorCal PAD committee. There shall be two types of suspensions:

1. Minor Offenses – These include send-offs for normal soccer actions, 2<sup>nd</sup> yellow cards, etc. Minor offenses will be given suspensions for a number of games.
2. Major Offenses – These include send-offs for violent actions. Major offenses will incur suspensions for an amount of time.

Suspensions for both minor and major offenses, for both players and coaches, shall be served immediately in upcoming NorCal games, regardless of the NorCal competition. The player/coach shall serve the suspension with the team the violation occurred with. Players may not compete for another team in their club in NorCal competitions until their suspension is served in full. However, coaches may coach another team in their club during their suspension but must serve their suspension in full with the team the violation occurred, only if the suspension is a fixed amount of games (as opposed to a period of time).

The NorCal League Office has the ability to postpone or re-allocate suspensions in the best interests of the game and the integrity of the competition. For the avoidance of doubt, Play Date games do count towards suspensions for both players and coaches.

## **Section 5: Equipment**

### **5.1 - Safety**

A player must not use equipment or wear anything which is dangerous to themselves or another player (including all jewelry).

### **5.2 - Casts**

No orthopedic (hard) casts, air splints or metal splints may be worn. Players will be allowed to play in a soft cast at the discretion of the Referee.

### **5.3 - Jewelry**

Absolutely no jewelry, including rings, chains, watches, jewelry, hair clips, bobby pins, earrings, bracelets, rubber bracelets, or abnormally long fingernails may be worn while participating in any NorCal games. Only Medical Alert Warning Bracelets may be worn and shall be taped to secure them to the player's body. Earrings and other piercings cannot be taped and must be removed.

### **5.4 - Shinguards**

All players are required to use shin guards at all times. They must be worn properly and be professionally manufactured and unaltered. Socks must completely cover shin guards.

### **5.5 - Braces**

It is strongly recommended for the safety of the player, that a player does not wear a brace during NorCal games. Braces are allowed as long as the referee decides that the brace will not or cannot hurt the player wearing the brace or any other player. All metal,

metal-like, or plastic brace supports are to be properly covered for the duration of the match. Elastic-type supports without any metal, carbon fiber, hard plastic or like devices are permitted provided the referee does not deem the support to be potentially harmful to other players.

#### **5.6 - Eyeglasses**

Players who must wear eyeglasses are encouraged to wear sports goggles. Lenses must be unbreakable and frames must be unbreakable plastic or sturdy metal.

#### **5.7 – Player Uniforms**

The two teams must wear colors that distinguish them from each other and also the referee and the assistant referees. *It is recommended that the home team wear dark uniforms while the away team wears light uniforms.* Each goalkeeper must wear colors that distinguish them from the other players, the referee, and the assistant referees. All players on a team except the goalkeeper shall wear identical uniforms (shirts, shorts, and socks).

If there is a conflict in the uniform color, the home team shall change uniforms.

#### **5.8 - Player Numbers**

Player numbers must be affixed to the back of the uniform shirt. Each player on a team shall wear a unique number.

#### **5.9 – Undergarments**

If undershirts or shorts are worn they must match the main color of the jersey or short. If tape or other material is applied externally to the socks it must be the same color as the part of the sock to which it is applied.

#### **5.10 - Home Team**

The home team is the team listed first on the official schedule. The home team will furnish the game balls.

#### **5.13 - Technical Area**

NorCal encourages both team benches to be on the same side of the field.

**NorCal Premier League Rules and Regulations**  
Applies to all Youth Premier Leagues, Regional Leagues & Pre-NPL (U12-U13)





## Section 1: Competition Rules

### 1.1 - Playing Rules

All games under league jurisdiction shall be played according to the rules and regulations recognized by the NorCal Premier League which shall be the same rules set by FIFA/ U.S. Soccer (USSF) except for those exceptions authorized by FIFA or USSF.

### 1.2 - Point System

All NorCal Premier Leagues shall operate under a point system. The point system shall award three points for a win, one point for a tie and no points for a loss.

### 1.3 - Tie Breakers

In case of a tie on points in the standings within a league, the following will be used as tiebreakers:

1. "Head to head" points (win/lose/draw) between teams
2. Overall Goal Differential (up to 4)
3. Goals for (up to 4)
4. Goals against (up to 4)
5. Most points against the highest non-tied team in the group
6. Best goal differential against the highest non-tied team in the group
7. Most shutouts
8. Fewest red cards
9. Coin toss

In a situation where a season can not be completed due to exceptional circumstances, and teams have played an unequal number of games, NorCal may use Points Per Game (PPG) to decide league standings.

### 1.4 - Game Details

	U8	U9-U10	U11	U12	U13	U14-U16	U17-U19
<b>* Field Size (yds)</b>	25/35 L 15/25 W	55/65 L 35/45 W	70/80 L 45/55 W	70/80 L 45/55 W	100/120 L 50/80 W	100/120 L 50/80 W	100/120 L 55/80 W
<b>**Number of Referees</b>	None	1	1	1	3	3	3
<b>Number of Players</b>	4v4	7V7	9v9	9v9	11v11	11v11	11v11
<b>Minimum # of Players</b>	4	5	6	6	7	7	7

<b>Goalkeeper</b>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Playing Time</b>	4x10	2x25	2x30	2x30	2x35	2x40	2x45
<b>Ball Size</b>	3	4	4	4	5	5	5
<b>Goal Mouth Size (feet)</b>	4x6	6.5x18.5 - 7x21	6.5x18.5 - 7x21	6.5x18.5 - 7x21	8x24	8x24	8x24
<b>Offside</b>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Substitutions</b>	Any Stoppage	Any Stoppage	Any Stoppage	Any Stoppage	Any Stoppage	Any Stoppage	Any Stoppage
<b>Fouls (type of kick)</b>	Indirect Free Kicks Only	Indirect & Direct Free Kicks	Indirect / Direct Free Kicks	Indirect / Direct Free Kicks	Indirect / Direct Free Kicks	Indirect / Direct Free Kicks	Indirect / Direct Free Kicks
<b>Free Kick clearance</b>	10 ft	8 yd	8 yd	8 yd	10 yd	10 yd	10 yd
<b>Throw-in</b>	1 Re-throw	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal
<b>Penalty Kicks</b>	None	Yes (mark at 10 yds)	Yes (mark at 10 yds)	Yes (mark at 10 yds)	Yes (mark at 12 yds)	Yes (mark at 12 yds)	Yes (mark at 12 yds)
<b>Penalty Area (yds)</b>	None	12x24	14x36	14x36	18 x 44	18 x 44	18 x 44
<b>Goal Area (yards)</b>	3x8	4x8	5x16	5x16	6 x 20	6 x 20	6 x 20
<b>Heading</b>	None	None	None	per Laws/Rules	per Laws/Rules	per Laws/Rules	per Laws/Rules
<b>Build-Out Line</b>	None	Yes	None	None	None	None	None
<b>Half-Time Break</b>	n/a	5 mins	10 mins	10 mins	10 mins	10 mins	10 mins

\*\*Recommended minimum number of referees

\*Use of cones for lines allowed

### **1.5 - Fields**

The playing field used by each team must be lined according to USSF standards with goals (games can be played as long as both goals are the same size), nets and flags. The goal of each club shall be to provide an enjoyable experience for the fans, players, officials, and everyone involved with the staging of a soccer game.

In all small sided formats (4v4, 7v7 and 9v9), the use of cones is permitted for the formation of the field lines.

### **1.6 – Heading Game Rule**

For U11 and below, when a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick 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.

*This rule shall apply to the age groups of U11 and below. Players who are playing up will play according to the rules of the age group in which they are playing. It is the club's responsibility to understand the effects of this rule on players playing up.*

### **1.7 – No Re-Entry Protocol (for Head Injury)**

In accordance with the US Soccer return to play guidelines, 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.

### **1.8 – Healthcare Professional**

A healthcare professional is defined as “a licensed healthcare professional such as an athletic trainer certified (ATC), or a physician (MD/DO), with a skill set in emergency care and sports medicine injuries and with knowledge and experience related to concussion evaluation and management.” It will be up to each club to decide whether they will provide a healthcare professional at their matches and to ensure that this individual has the correct certification to be evaluating players for head trauma. If a club plans to use a healthcare professional to evaluate suspected head injuries during a NorCal match, the healthcare professional must be presented to the referee prior to the start of the match. Referees will not allow the re-entry of players removed from the field of play for suspected head injuries unless they are informed of the presence of, and meet with, a healthcare professional prior to the start of the match.

### **1.9 - Substitutions**

As per FIFA guidelines, unlimited substitutions are allowed in all ages group (except for NPL and see NPL rules of competition). However, teams may substitute only with the referee's permission. Substitutes must wait on the sideline (off of the field of play) until

the field player has left the field of play and/or the referee has indicated the substitute may enter the field of play.

*Substitutions by either team are allowed at any stoppage of play with the permission of the referee. Referees will be instructed not to allow substitutions that are deemed “excessive” or of a “time wasting” nature. Please be respectful of the integrity of the game and do not use the free substitution rules as a means to disrupt the match.*

### **1.10 – Ties in League Play**

If a league game is tied after regulation, the tie stands and will be posted as a tie.

### **1.11 - Playoffs for League**

For matches that need a winner, the team with the most goals after regulation time will be the winner. If the match is tied after regulation for U9-U19 teams, two 5-minute periods will be played. Teams will have a 5-minute break before the first overtime. After 5 minutes, teams will change sides, with no break, and play the remaining 5 minutes. If the game is still tied after the two overtime periods, then kicks from the mark per FIFA rules will determine the winner.

*Please make sure you arrive for your game knowing if the game can end in a draw or if a winning team is required.*

### **1.12 - Incomplete games**

In the event that a game cannot be completed, the game will stand if half or more of the game was played; provided, however that if any team is directly responsible for the termination of the game, no matter how much of the match remains, due to poor sportsmanship towards a referee, opposing fans, or opposing players, the team will be required to forfeit the match. This could also lead to other sanctions set forth by the NorCal League Office or NorCal PAD Committee. If there is no result, and the match is suspended prior to the expiration of one half, the game shall be replayed at a time agreed upon by the competing teams in consultation with the NorCal League Office. *Referees are required to submit an incident report for all matches that are ended early.*

### **1.13 - No-Shows**

A no-show occurs when a team willfully does not show up to a game agreed to by the teams. The penalty for a no-show shall be a forfeit to the opposing team with a 0-3 score as well as a \$300 fine imposed on the club. One no-show may result in the offending team being removed from the league. Two no-shows in a single season shall result in the offending team’s removal from the competition.

### **1.14 - Forfeits**

A forfeit occurs when a team is unable to attend a scheduled game and the teams are unable to come to terms on a time to reschedule (after the scheduling deadline has passed). A forfeit will result in a 3-0 win to the team not at fault. The forfeiting club will be fined \$300 to cover all referee and field costs if they inform the opponent less than 96 hours before the scheduled game time. A team unable to attend a scheduled game because of an accident, or “Act of God” should immediately notify the opponent and the

League Office. In these circumstances, the League Office will review and rule on the situation.

### **1.15 - Protests**

Protests regarding the match conditions (i.e. field condition, etc.) must be made prior to the start of the match and be clearly written on the official game card. Protests regarding the use of illegal players may be made prior to or following the match and be clearly written on the game card. Specific referee decisions cannot be protested. No match condition protests will be allowed at NorCal hosted events. All protested games should be sent to the appropriate event coordinator, who will forward to the League Office for a ruling.

### **1.16 – Fines**

The NorCal League Office may impose the following fines:

- Team drops out of the league after final brackets are posted: \$250
- Team drops out of the league after 1<sup>st</sup> game is played: \$100 per game missed
- No-show/ Forfeit within 96 hours to a scheduled game: \$300
- Failure to Provide three current year licensed referees - \$150 per missing referee
  - The NorCal League Office reserves the right to class the game as a forfeit, and/or remove a team from NorCal Competitions for using unlicensed referees
- Any team who does not complete payment within 60 days will be subject to a late fee of 15%

Aside from fines for forfeits (which go to the hosting club, if appropriate), all fines will be added to the travel fund for teams qualifying for national events via NorCal competitions, after the deduction of admin costs.

## **Section 2: Rosters**

### **2.1 - Player Registration**

Players shall be registered according to [US Club Soccer](#) rules.

### **2.2 - Game Roster**

Each team must create an official NorCal roster in their GotSoccer account. Only players who are listed on the official Game Card will be eligible to play in NorCal Premier League matches. *Player's names may not be handwritten on the NorCal Game Card.* If any player is not listed on the NorCal Game Card, he/she must be added electronically to the roster before the player is eligible to play. Team rosters may contain up to 26 players, and there is no limit to the number of changes that can be made to the roster, provided the players are active in the team's club and are not on another club's US Club Roster.

*Players may not play for 2 teams in the same division of play (a division of play is a combination of age group and level, ie: two teams from the same club may not share players if they're playing in the same set of division standings). No matter how many players are listed on a team's roster, only 18 players for U13 and up, 16 players for U11-U12 and 14 players for U9-U10 may be used for NorCal Premier League matches.*

[Create NorCal Event Roster](#)

### **2.3 - US Club Soccer Player Pass**

All players and coaches must present their US Club Soccer player pass to the referee prior to the match. If the individual picture is not on the ID card and the card is not laminated, the individual will not be eligible for the match.

### **2.4 - Forgotten US Club Player Credentials**

If a team forgets their US Club player passes for a NorCal Premier League game, the game should be played under protest. Any players that wish to play must have a picture taken prior to the game and submitted to the League Office to verify that the players were eligible to participate. If this is a continuous issue with a team or club, the League Office may remove that team from the league.

### **2.5 - Guest Players**

No guest players are allowed in the NorCal Premier League.

### **2.6 - Illegal Players**

Any player who does not appear on the official NorCal game card or has a valid US Club Soccer Player Pass issued by the same club at the time of the match shall be considered an illegal player. Any team using, or attempting to use, an illegal player shall forfeit the game, the coach of the team using the illegal player will be suspended from all NorCal competitions for one year, and the Club of the illegal player will incur a \$500 fine.

## **Section 3: Game Day Procedures**

### **3.1 - Pre-Game Procedures**

Home Team Responsibilities

- Schedule and time in GotSoccer
- Provide properly lined field
- Provide and pay current year licensed USSF referees
- Provide [NorCal Game Card](#) (with both team rosters) to the center referee
- Provide referee with current year US Club Soccer player passes for each player and team official.

Visiting team responsibilities:

- Provide referee US Club Soccer player passes for each player and team official
- Have a copy of official NorCal Game Card if needed by the center referee

### 3.2 - Game Day Procedures

Each manager should have the following at every game

- [NorCal Game Card](#)
- US Club Medical Release forms
- US Club Soccer roster of the team
- US Club Soccer passes for its players and team officials

#### Pre-NPL Game Day Requirements\*

Each game should have the following:

- Benches for both teams
- Easy-up or bench cover set up for both Home and Away team
- Water for both teams

*\*These are required for Pre-NPL (U12-U13) games only, not for regular NorCal league games*

### 3.3 - Post-Game Procedure

Home team Responsibilities:

- Coach or manager sign the Game Card following the game
- If no red card is given, the home team holds onto the Game Card until the end of the season
- If a red card is given, see red card procedure above – this requires immediate action from the center referee and manager
- [Post score within 24 hours](#) (away team may also report score)
- Game Report

Visiting team responsibilities:

- Coach or manager must sign the Game Card following the game

### 3.4 - Personnel on the bench

A maximum of 3 team officials are allowed in each team's technical area. Team officials must have a US Club pass in order to sit in the technical area. It is highly recommended that teams have several credentialed coaches or managers with passes for the team just in case something happens to the head coach. A US Club pass makes a person eligible to coach any team in the club for which that coach or manager is credentialed.

### 3.5 - [Score reports](#)

The home team will post the score in GotSoccer within 24 hours of the game. The home team will keep and file the Game Card for possible future reference.

### 3.6 - [Game Card](#)

Both teams must have a copy of the NorCal Game Card. The home team will supply the Game Card to the match officials before the match. The away team should have a copy of the Game Card in case it is needed. Following the match, the Officials and each coach need to sign the Game Card. The home team will keep and file the Game Card for future reference.

### **3.7 – Jersey Conflict**

If there is a conflict in jersey colors, it is the home team's responsibility to change colors. NorCal encourages home teams to wear their dark colors, while away teams wear light colors.

### **3.8 – Additional Instructions for Nickel Divisions**

1. All players playing in the Nickel Division should be registered with US Club via the Super Rec Registration form. The cost is \$10 per player and \$5 per coach.
2. You will not need player passes for the games.
3. All teams will bring a laminated roster from their home club registration system. This is the roster the referee will use to check in players. There will be no passes so this will be on the honor system.
4. Managers or coaches will be able to log in to the team account and print a Game Card directly from the schedule. The home team and away team should each bring a copy of the Game Card for the referee.
5. Once a game is complete, coaches are responsible to report the score of the match. Both coaches should record the score and both coaches should keep a copy of the Game Card for their records in case there is any question about the final score of the game.



# **NorCal National Premier League (NPL) Rules and Regulations**

**Applies to all NorCal NPL league games (U14-U19 only)**



*The NorCal NPL serves as the National Premier Leagues (NPL) Division of the NorCal Premier League. The NorCal NPL Division is one of 19+ leagues across the United States that are part of the NPL, which has been created to provide a national developmental platform with the highest level of competition in given geographic areas, and to elevate and change the competitive youth soccer landscape based upon fundamental principles in US Club Soccer's vision.*

## **Section 1: Competition Rules**

### **1.1 - Playing Rules**

All games under league jurisdiction shall be played according to the rules and regulations recognized by the NorCal NPL which shall be the same rules set by FIFA/ U.S. Soccer (USSF) except for those exceptions authorized by FIFA or USSF.

### **1.2 - Point System**

The NorCal NPL shall operate under a point system. The point system shall award three points for a win, one point for a tie and no points for a loss.

### **1.3 - Tie Breakers**

In case of a tie on points in the standings within a league, the following will be used as tiebreakers:

1. "Head to head" points (win/lose/ draw) between teams
2. Overall Goal Differential
3. Goals for
4. Goals against
5. Most points against the highest non-tied team in the group
6. Best goal differential against the highest non-tied team in the group
7. Most shutouts
8. Least red cards
9. Coin toss

In a situation where a season can not be completed due to exceptional circumstances, and teams have played an unequal number of games, NorCal may use Points Per Game (PPG) to decide league standings.

### **1.4 – Ties in NPL**

If an NPL game is tied after regulation, the tie stands and will be posted as a tie.

### **1.5 - Game Lengths**

All NPL matches will be played in full. All games will be played 11v11 with a size five ball. The following is the list of game lengths for each age group:

- U14 – play 2x40 minutes; 10-minute halftime
- U15 – play 2x40 minutes; 10-minute halftime
- U16 – play 2x40 minutes; 10-minute halftime
- U17 – play 2x45 minutes; 10-minute halftime
- U19 – play 2x45 minutes; 10-minute halftime

### **1.6 - Fields**

It is expected that all Club Fields be of the highest quality for NPL competition. It is expected that fields are properly lined, mowed, and have nets and corner flags. In case the above conditions are not met, the game will be played under protest (view section on protests). If NorCal finds that a field is not to the standards of the NorCal NPL, clubs may be asked to move their matches to another field.

Expected field dimensions for NorCal NPL matches:

- U14 – Maximum 120 yards x 80 yards; Minimum 100 yards x 55 yards
- U15-U19 – Maximum 120 yards x 80 yards; Minimum 105 yards x 60 yards

All goals are expected to be regulation size 8’ height x 24’ width.

### **1.7 – No Re-Entry Protocol (Head Injury)**

In accordance with the US Soccer return to play guidelines, 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.

### **1.8 – Healthcare Professional**

A healthcare professional is defined as “a licensed healthcare professional such as an athletic trainer certified (ATC), or a physician (MD/DO), with a skill set in emergency care and sports medicine injuries and with knowledge and experience related to concussion evaluation and management.” It will be up to each club to decide whether they will provide a healthcare professional at their matches and to ensure that this individual has the correct certification to be evaluating players for head trauma. If a club plans to use a healthcare professional to evaluate suspected head injuries during a NorCal match, the healthcare professional must be presented to the referee prior to the start of the match. Referees will not allow the re-entry of players removed from the field of play for suspected head injuries unless they are informed of the presence of, and meet with, a healthcare professional prior to the start of the match.

### **1.9 - Substitutions**

A substitution can take place at any stoppage with the referee’s permission.

Substitutions are permitted as follows:

- First Half - No Re-Entry
- Second Half – One (1) Re-Entry

There will be 1 re-entry per half for an injured GK (no field player re-entry).

In accordance with the new USSF Head Injury guidelines, a substitution for a suspected head injury will not count against re-entry rules.

### **1.10 - Incomplete Games**

In the event that a game cannot be completed, the game counts if half or more of the game was played; provided, however that any team directly responsible for the termination of the game due to poor sportsmanship towards a referee, opposing fans, or opposing players will result in that team forfeiting the match. This could also lead to other possible penalties set by the NorCal League Office and the NorCal PAD committee.

If there is no result, and the match is suspended prior to the expiration of one half, the game shall be repeated at a time agreed upon by the competing teams in consultation with the NorCal NPL Committee.

### **1.11 No-Shows/Forfeits**

A no-show occurs when a team willfully does not show up to a game agreed to by the teams. Penalties for no-shows are as follows:

- A forfeit to the opposing team – 0-3 loss
- See fines for additional repercussions

A team unable to attend a scheduled game because of an accident, weather, or act of God should immediately notify the opponent and the League Office. Each situation shall be reviewed by the NorCal League Office, which shall make a final decision.

### **1.12 Protests**

Protests will be allowed prior to the start of a match. A protest must be clearly written on the official Game Card prior to the match in regards to field quality and any other issues in regards to match conditions not being of the highest quality. Protests in regards to eligible players or the playing of illegal players may be made prior to or following the match. Protests must be sent to the League Office for review. Specific referee decisions shall not be protested.

No Protests will be allowed at NorCal hosted matches except in regard to the possibility of playing illegal players.

## **Section 2: Rosters**

### **2.1 - Personnel on the Bench**

A maximum of 3 non-playing personnel are allowed in each team's technical area.

### **2.2 - Game Roster**

[Create your official NPL roster online](#) on your team's GotSoccer team account. Players' names may not be handwritten onto the NorCal Game Card. Only players listed on the official Game Card will be eligible to play in NPL matches. Exceptions during the first weekend of the season may apply – players must have a pass issued by the same club as the team(s)he is playing for.

### **2.3 - Eligibility**

All players and coaches must present their US Club Player Pass to the referee prior to the match. If the individual picture is not on the ID card and the card is not laminated, the individual will not be eligible for the match. All players must be named on the Game Card presented to the referee at the beginning of each game. Players may only play for one club, their club, during any NPL match. All players from a club are eligible to

participate in NPL matches within the age eligibility limits. No players may play for more than one team within a level of play in the NPL. (a division of play is a combination of age group and level)

Only 18 players may be dressed for a match. The 18 players must be on the official Game Card given to the match official and opposing team before the start of the game. Any players listed on the roster that will not play must have a line through their names on the Game Card.

#### **2.4 - Guest Players**

No Guest Players will be allowed.

#### **2.5 - Illegal Players**

Any player who does not appear on the NorCal Game Card or has a valid US Club Soccer player pass issued by the same club shall be considered an illegal player. Any team using, or attempting to use, an illegal player shall forfeit the game. In addition, the coach of the team using the illegal player will be suspended from all NorCal Premier League competitions for one year. It will also result in a \$500 club fine.

#### **2.6 - In Season Transfers**

Players may only play for one club during a NorCal NPL season unless the NorCal League Office grants a transfer. The NPL Season is defined as the start of the fall season through the final NPL weekend in the spring. If a transfer request is granted, a transferred player must sit out five (5) NPL games before being eligible to play for his/her new club. Any player not sitting out will be considered an illegal player. The NorCal League Office has the final say on all transfers.

### **Section 3: Game Day Procedures**

#### **3.1 - Pre-Game Procedures**

Home Team Responsibilities:

- Schedule and post-game time/location on the website
- Provide quality field equipped with goals, nets, flags and proper lines
- Assign qualified current year licensed referees

Visiting Team Responsibilities:

- Respond to any communication requests from the home team in regards to match within 24 hours

#### **3.2 - Game Day Procedures**

At each NPL match both teams must have possession of:

- [Game Card](#) - home team provides a copy for the center referee
- US Club Soccer player passes for each player and nonplayer in the technical area

### ***Game Day Requirements***

Approximately five minutes prior to each NPL match, it is recommended that teams conduct an International “Walkout.” Following the Walkout, the teams shall shake hands with the referees and the opposing players. It is our hope to foster camaraderie and respect between the teams and referees prior to the start of the match. In case of a highly impacted game schedule, the Walkout can be waived in order to help games start on time. In that case, teams shall still shake hands with the opposing players and the referees. In addition, each game should have the following:

- Benches for both teams
- Easy-up or bench cover set up for both Home and Away team
- Water for both teams

### **3.3 - Post-Game Procedures**

Home Team Responsibilities:

- Coach or manager signs the NorCal Game Card
- [Post score within 24 hours](#) (failure to post scores within 24 hours may result in a fine)
- Report goals and assists for home team scorers
- Coach or DOC fills out the NorCal NPL Online Game Report
- Report any red card (home or away) to the NorCal League Office within 24 hours

Visiting Team Responsibilities:

- Coach or manager signs the NorCal Game Card
- If the Home team does not post the score within 24 hours, the Away team should post the score and inform the NPL Coordinator
- Report goals and assists for visiting team scorers
- Fill out NorCal NPL Online Game Report

### **3.4 – Jersey Conflict**

If there is a conflict in jersey colors, it is the home team’s responsibility to change colors. NorCal encourages the home team to wear their dark uniform color, and the away team to wear their light uniform color.

## **Section 4: Club Fines and Penalties**

### **4.1 - Fines**

1. Team dropping from the league after NPL acceptance - \$350 per team
2. Forfeits, no-shows or cancellations with less than 96 hours notice - \$300 (used for field and referees)
3. Forfeits, no-shows or Cancellations with 96 hours notice - \$100 per game
4. Playing illegal players - \$500 per instance
5. Failure to schedule matches by the league scheduled deadline - \$50 per game
6. Failure to reschedule a canceled match within 48 hours - \$50 per game

7. Home team failed to report score within 24 hours - \$20 per game (each club will receive a warning before being fined for score reporting)
8. Failure to Provide three current year licensed referees - \$150 per missing referee
  - o The NorCal League Office reserves the right to class the game as a forfeit, and/or remove a team from NorCal Competitions for using unlicensed referees
9. Failure to provide shade/tents for both teams - \$50 per occurrence
10. Failure to provide water for both teams - \$50 per occurrence
11. Failure to provide benches for both team - \$50 per occurrence
12. Any team who does not complete payment within 60 days will be subject to a late fee of 15%

Aside from fines for forfeits (which go to the hosting club, if appropriate), all fines will be added to the travel fund for teams qualifying for national events via NorCal competitions, after the deduction of admin costs.

#### **4.2 - Other Penalties**

Accumulation of 2 no-shows for a club in NPL shall result in the Club's removal from NPL.

**NorCal State Cup Rules and Regulations**





## Section 1: Competition Rules

### 1.1 – Playing Rules

All NorCal State Cup games shall be played according to the rules and regulations recognized by NorCal Premier League which shall be the same rules set by FIFA/USSF except for those exceptions authorized by FIFA or USSF.

### 1.2 – Point System

The NorCal State Cup shall operate under a point system. The point system shall award three points for a win, one point for a tie and no points for a loss.

### 1.3 – Tie Breakers

In case of a tie on points in the standings within a flight, the following will be used as tiebreakers:

1. “Head to Head” points between teams
2. Overall Goal Differential (up to 4)
3. Goals for (up to 4)
4. Goals against (up to 4)
5. Most points against the highest non-tied team in the group (i.e. if the 2<sup>nd</sup> place and 3<sup>rd</sup> place team are tied best record vs. 1<sup>st</sup> place team would win tiebreaker)
6. Best Goal Differential against the highest non-tied team in the group
7. Most Shutouts
8. Fewest Red Cards
9. Coin Toss

If more than two teams are tied, the tie-breaking process will be used until a winner is determined. The tie-breaking procedure does not revert to previous criteria if one team is eliminated.

In a situation where a group can not be completed due to exceptional circumstances, and teams have played an unequal number of games, NorCal may use Points Per Game (PPG) to decide group standings.

### 1.4 – Game Details

	U8	U9-U10	U11	U12	U13	U14-U16	U17-U19
*Field Size (yds)	25/35 L 15/25 W	55/65 L 35/45 W	70/80 L 45/55 W	70/80 L 45/55 W	100/120 L 50/80 W	100/120 L 50/80 W	100/120 L 55/80 W
**Number of Referees	None	1	1	1	3	3	3

<b>Number of Players</b>	<b>4v4</b>	<b>7V7</b>	<b>9v9</b>	<b>9v9</b>	<b>11v11</b>	<b>11v11</b>	<b>11v11</b>
<b>Minimum # of Players</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Goal Keeper</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Playing Time</b>	<b>4x10</b>	<b>2x25</b>	<b>2x30</b>	<b>2x30</b>	<b>2x35</b>	<b>2x40</b>	<b>2x45</b>
<b>Ball Size</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Goal Mouth Size (feet)</b>	<b>4x6</b>	<b>6.5x18.5 - 7x21</b>	<b>6.5x18.5 - 7x21</b>	<b>6.5x18.5 - 7x21</b>	<b>8x24</b>	<b>8x24</b>	<b>8x24</b>
<b>Offside</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Substitutions</b>	<b>Any Stoppage</b>	<b>Any Stoppage</b>	<b>Any Stoppage</b>	<b>Any Stoppage</b>	<b>Any Stoppage</b>	<b>Any Stoppage</b>	<b>Any Stoppage</b>
<b>Fouls (type of kick)</b>	<b>Indirect Free Kicks Only</b>	<b>Indirect &amp; Direct Free Kicks</b>	<b>Indirect / Direct Free Kicks</b>	<b>Indirect / Direct Free Kicks</b>	<b>Indirect / Direct Free Kicks</b>	<b>Indirect / Direct Free Kicks</b>	<b>Indirect / Direct Free Kicks</b>
<b>Free Kick clearance</b>	<b>10 ft</b>	<b>8 yd</b>	<b>8 yd</b>	<b>8 yd</b>	<b>10 yd</b>	<b>10 yd</b>	<b>10 yd</b>
<b>Throw-in</b>	<b>1 Re-throw</b>	<b>Normal</b>	<b>Normal</b>	<b>Normal</b>	<b>Normal</b>	<b>Normal</b>	<b>Normal</b>
<b>Penalty Kicks</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Yes (mark at 10 yds)</b>	<b>Yes (mark at 10 yds)</b>	<b>Yes (mark at 10 yds)</b>	<b>Yes (mark at 12 yds)</b>	<b>Yes (mark at 12 yds)</b>	<b>Yes (mark at 12 yds)</b>
<b>Penalty Area (yds)</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>12x24</b>	<b>14x36</b>	<b>14x36</b>	<b>18 x 44</b>	<b>18 x 44</b>	<b>18 x 44</b>
<b>Goal Area (yards)</b>	<b>3x8</b>	<b>4x8</b>	<b>5x16</b>	<b>5x16</b>	<b>6 x 20</b>	<b>6 x 20</b>	<b>6 x 20</b>
<b>Heading</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>per Laws/Rules</b>	<b>per Laws/Rules</b>	<b>per Laws/Rules</b>	<b>per Laws/Rules</b>
<b>Build-Out Line</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>

\*\*Recommended minimum number of referees

\*Use of cones for lines allowed

### **1.5 – Fields**

The goal of each club shall be to provide an enjoyable experience for the fans, players, officials, and everyone involved with the staging of a soccer game. With that in mind, it is expected that all club hosted fields be of the highest possible quality for NorCal State Cup competition. The playing field used by each team must be lined according to FIFA standards with goals, nets, and flags. If you feel a field is not of proper quality, please play the match under protest and submit the protest to the League Office (view section on protests).

### **1.6 – Heading Game Rule**

For U11 and below, when a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick 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.

### **1.7 – No Re-Entry Protocol (Head Injury)**

In accordance with the US Soccer return to play guidelines, 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.

### **1.8 – Healthcare Professional**

A healthcare professional is defined as “a licensed healthcare professional such as an athletic trainer certified (ATC), or a physician (MD/DO), with a skill set in emergency care and sports medicine injuries and with knowledge and experience related to concussion evaluation and management.” It will be up to each club to decide whether they will provide a healthcare professional at their matches and to ensure that this individual has the correct certification to be evaluating players for head trauma. If a club plans to use a healthcare professional to evaluate suspected head injuries during a NorCal match, the healthcare professional must be presented to the referee prior to the start of the match. Referees will not allow the re-entry of players removed from the field of play for suspected head injuries unless they are informed of the presence of, and meet with, a healthcare professional prior to the start of the match.

### **1.9 – Substitutions**

As per FIFA guidelines, unlimited substitutions are allowed in all ages group (except for NPL and see NPL rules of competition). However, teams may substitute only with the referee's permission. Substitutes must wait on the sideline (off of the field of play) until the field player has left the field of play and/or the referee has indicated the substitute may enter the field of play.

*Substitutions by either team are allowed at any stoppage of play with the permission of the referee. Referees will be instructed not to allow substitutions that are deemed “excessive” or of a “time-wasting” nature. Please be respectful of the integrity of the game and do not use the free substitution rules as a means to disrupt the match.*

### **1.10 - Ties in Group Round**

If a NorCal State Cup Group Stage (U14-U19) or First/ Second Round (U9-U13) match is tied after regulation, the tie stands and will be posted as a tie.

### **1.11 - Matches Needing a Winner**

For matches that need a winner, the team with the most goals after regulation time will be the winner. If the match is tied after regulation, two full-time 5-minute overtime periods will be played. If the game is still tied after two overtime periods, then kicks from the mark per FIFA will determine the winner.

*Make sure you arrive for your game knowing if the game can end in a draw or if a winning team is required.*

### **1.12 - Incomplete games**

In the event that a game cannot be completed, the game counts if half or more of the game was played; provided, however that any team directly responsible for the termination of the game due to poor sportsmanship towards a referee, opposing fans, or opposing players will result in that team forfeiting the match. This could also lead to other possible penalties set by the NorCal League Office and the NorCal PAD committee. If there is no result, and the match is suspended prior to the expiration of one half, the game shall be repeated at a time agreed upon by the competing teams in consultation with the League Office.

### **1.13 - No-Shows/forfeits:**

Until the Quarter-finals, all forfeit situations in the Younger Cup (U9-U13) are handled by the League Office to make sure that the gaining or losing of points by forfeit does not elevate or lower teams into divisions that will have a harmful impact on the event.

A no-show occurs when a team willfully does not show up at a game. Penalties for no-shows are as follows:

- \$300 fine
- A “no show” from the home team will result in the rescheduling of the game and the loss of home field.
- A “no show” from the away team will result in the rescheduling of the game and the away team paying for the field and referees for the rescheduled game.

- A report regarding all no-shows will be sent to the League Office for possible further action. A team unable to attend a scheduled game because of an accident, weather or “Act of God” should immediately notify the opponent and the Tournament Coordinator. Each situation will be reviewed by the League Office, which will render a decision.

### **1.14 - State Cup Championships**

Only the “NorCal State Division” Champion will be considered State Champion in each age group. All other Championship teams must affix the divisional category in front of their Championship (i.e. 2019 Gold Cup Champions).

## **Section 2: Rosters**

### **2.1 – Player Registration**

All players shall be registered according to US Club Soccer rules.

### **2.2 – NorCal State Cup Official Team Roster**

Each team must create their official NorCal State Cup Roster on their team’s GotSoccer online account. Rosters will be capped at 26 players, and once frozen, teams may only use players off this 26-player roster. Roster freeze dates will be posted on the NorCal State Cup Calendar. After the first group stage, there will be a short window during which non-cup-tied players will be allowed to be added for the remainder of the competition. These dates will be adjusted due to the scheduling of games so please check the State Cup website for exact dates.

### **2.3 – Game Roster**

Only players who are listed on the official Game Card will be eligible to play in NorCal State Cup matches. Player’s names may not be handwritten on the NorCal Game Card. If any player is not listed on the NorCal Game Card, he/she must be added electronically to the roster before the player is eligible to play. Only 18 players for U13-U19, 16 players for U11-U12 and 14 players for U9-U10 may be used for NorCal Premier State Cup matches. [Create NorCal Event Rosters](#)

### **2.4 – US Club Soccer Player Pass**

All players and coaches must present their US Club Player Identification Card to the referee prior to the match. If the individual picture is not on the ID card and the card is not laminated, the individual will not be eligible for the match.

### **2.5 – Guest Players**

No Guest Players will be allowed.

## **2.6 – Illegal Players**

Any player who does not appear on the official NorCal Game Card and has a valid US Club Soccer player pass issued by the same club shall be considered an illegal player. Any team using, or attempting to use, an illegal player shall forfeit the game, the coach of the team using the illegal player will be suspended from the NorCal Premier League and all of its events for one year, and the club of the illegal player will incur a \$500 fine.

## **2.7 – “Cup Tied”**

Players may only compete for one team per age group in the NorCal State Cup. A club may place players on more than one 26-player team roster but players may not play on two different teams in the same age group. A player may play up in an older age group while competing in their true age group. Once a player plays for a team in a specific age group that player is “Cup Tied” to that team in that age group. The player may not play for any other team in that age group for the remainder of the NorCal State Cup.

## **2.8 – Emergency Player Rule**

Teams that drop below 12 players for U13 and up, 10 players for U11-U12 and 8 players for U9-U10 may request, from the NorCal League Office, the ability to add players that were registered with their club prior to the roster freeze date, but were not on the State Cup roster. This rule may also be used to add a goalkeeper.

# **Section 3: Game Day Procedures**

## **3.1 - Pre-Game Procedures**

Home Team Responsibilities

- Provide a properly lined field, properly sized goals and, corner flags
- Provide and pay current year licensed USSF referees
- Provide [NorCal Game Card](#) (with both teams rosters) to the center referee
- Provide referee with current year US Club Soccer player passes for each player and team official.

Visiting team responsibilities:

- Provide referee US Club Soccer player passes for each player and team official
- Have a copy of official NorCal Game Card if needed by center referee

## **3.2 - Game Day Procedures**

Each manager should have the following at every game

- [NorCal Game Card](#)
- US Club Medical Release forms
- US Club Soccer roster of the team
- US Club Soccer passes for its players and team officials

### **3.3 - Post-Game Procedure**

Home team Responsibilities:

- Coach or manager sign the game sheet following the game
- If no red card is given, the home team holds onto the game report until the end of the season
- If a red card is given, see red card procedure above – this requires immediate action from the center referee and manager
- [Post score within 24 hours](#)
- Fill out NorCal Game Report online

Visiting team responsibilities:

- Coach or manager must sign the game sheet following the game
- Fill out NorCal Game Report online

### **3.4 - Personnel on the bench**

A maximum of 3 team officials are allowed in each team's technical area. Team officials must have a US Club pass in order to sit in the technical area. It is recommended that teams have several credentialed coaches or managers with passes for the team just in case something happens to the head coach. A US Club pass makes a person eligible to coach any team in the club for which that coach or manager is credentialed.

### **3.5 - [Score reports](#)**

The home team will post the score on the NorCal website within 24 hours of the game. The home team will keep and file the game card for possible future reference.

### **3.6 - [Game Card](#)**

Both teams must have a copy of the NorCal Game Card. The home team will supply the Game Card to the match officials before the match. The away team should have a copy of the Game Card in case it is needed. Following the match, the Officials and each coach need to sign the Game Card. The home team will keep and file the Game Card for future reference.

### **3.7 – Jersey Conflict**

If there is a conflict in jersey colors, it is the home team's responsibility to change colors. NorCal encourages home teams to wear their dark color uniforms and away teams to wear their light color uniforms.

## Section 4: Fines

### 5.1- Fines

- Team dropping from the event after Draw Pots posted - \$250 per team. In addition, could forfeit registration fee as well.
- Forfeits, no-shows or cancellations less than 96 hours notice - \$300
  - The game will still need to be played.
- Failure to Provide three current year licensed referees - \$150 per missing referee
  - The NorCal League Office reserves the right to class the game as a forfeit, and/or remove a team from NorCal Competitions for using unlicensed referees
- Any team who does not complete payment within 60 days will be subject to a late fee of 15%

Aside from fines for forfeits (which go to the hosting club, if appropriate), all fines will be added to the travel fund for teams qualifying for national events via NorCal competitions, after the deduction of admin costs.

### Additional NorCal Documents & Policies

[Season Calendar \(2019/20\)](#)

[RAC Handbook](#) (includes all RAC-specific rules)

[Tryout Window Policy \(2019\)](#)

[Club Merger / Affiliation Policy](#)

[Remote Area Travel Policy - R6 Clubs](#)

[Club Membership Process](#)