

# **BLOSSOMLAND SOCCER LEAGUE**



**2014 2019**  
**HANDBOOK**

**Deletions**  
**New additions**

# **BLOSSOMLAND SOCCER LEAGUE CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**

## **PREFACE**

This handbook describes the organization, rules, policies, and procedures of the Blossomland Soccer League (BSL). It is a composite summary of the decisions of the league board, made either at the time of league formation or at announced board meetings. This publication also includes other documents and details about the league. Amendments to this handbook shall be made periodically, as decided by the board. It is the responsibility of the team managers to share the contents of this handbook with their team members.

## ***ABOUT THE LEAGUE***

The Blossomland Soccer League exists to foster the participation and growth of adult amateur soccer primarily in the area of southwestern Michigan commonly referred to as “Blossomland.” It is operated by volunteers on a non-profit basis. The league is chartered under the auspices of the United States Soccer Federation and is affiliated with the United States Adult Soccer Association and the Michigan Soccer Association and shall comply with the rules and procedures of these organizations. All players who join this league shall be advised of this relationship by their respective team managers, and shall comply with the rules and procedures of the United States Soccer Federation, United States Adult Soccer Association, Michigan Soccer Association, and Blossomland Soccer League.

## ***ABOUT THE BOARD***

The Blossomland Soccer League is operated by a board composed of elected representatives consisting of a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, registrar, referee coordinator, and three directors. All decisions concerning items in the league handbook are made by a consensus of the board at announced board meetings.

### **Article I: PURPOSE**

The purpose of the BSL is to organize, develop, promote, and govern adult amateur soccer in **the** southwestern Michigan **area**.

### **Article II: MEMBERSHIP**

Active members shall be at least 18 years old (or under 18 years old with signed parental/guardian waiver) and must pay an annual fee. Inactive members may participate in non-playing functions and pay no dues. Membership may be terminated by written resignation, failure to pay dues or fines, or expulsion after a vote by the board.

### Article III: THE BOARD

- A. Composition: The board is composed of a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, registrar, referee coordinator, and three directors, who are elected bi-annually.
- B. Elections: a simple majority vote shall carry in all elections for officers.
1. Elections for president, secretary, registrar, and two directors shall be held in odd-numbered years.
  2. Elections for vice-president, treasurer, referee coordinator, and one director shall be held in even-numbered years.
  3. The term of office for each officer is two years.
- C. Collective Duties: The board's duties shall include, but are not limited to:
1. Assisting in the formation and organization of teams;
  2. Setting fees;
  3. Adjudicating appeals;
  4. Authorizing expenses incurred by BSL;
  5. Approving any items in the BSL handbook, and all changes thereof, and any other business coming before the board.
- D. Officers
1. **President:** shall preside at all board meetings, appoint and be ex-officio member of committees, be responsible for the administration of BSL, and chair the appeals committee.
  2. **Vice-President:** shall oversee the field operations of BSL.
  3. **Secretary:** shall keep the minutes of all meetings; notify members of meetings, and keep a record of all BSL correspondence, including this handbook.
  4. **Treasurer:** shall be responsible for the league banking account, deposit monies and write checks, keep all financial records, and report BSL's financial condition at each board meeting.
  5. **Registrar:** shall be the primary contact between BSL and USSF, USASA, and MSA. The registrar is responsible for player passes and keeping a record of team rosters.
  6. **Referee Coordinator:** shall arrange for the assignment and confirmation of referees for each game and address concerns relating to officiating issues.
  7. **Directors:** shall serve primarily as league representatives at assigned games.
- E. Meetings: An annual general meeting shall be held on the first Thursday one to four weeks following the Michigan Soccer Association's Annual General Meeting. In the case of a Fall MSA AGM not being held an alternate date will be selected by the board. Other board meetings may be called by the president as required (committee meetings are called by the committee's chairman). A quorum is constituted by the presence of 60 per cent. of those members eligible to vote. *Robert's Rules of Order* shall apply whenever not in conflict with the rules of USSF, USASA, MSA, and BSL.

#### **Article IV: COMMITTEES**

The president, with the consent of the board, shall appoint committees (e. g., appeals, rules, etc.) when necessary. An appeals committee shall consist of the president as chairman, referee coordinator, and team representative; however, none may vote on an appeal involving a team of which he is a member. A rules committee shall consist of the referee coordinator, another board member, and a team representative. It shall consider all proposed changes to the BSL handbook, insuring that all changes comply with the laws of USSF, USASA, MSA, and the letter and spirit of the Olympic and Amateur Sports Act of 1998. Other committees may be appointed as needed or deemed necessary.

#### **Article V: AMENDMENTS, TERMINATION**

Amendments to the BSL handbook require a two-thirds affirmative vote of board members attending the annual general meeting or any special meeting called for that purpose. In the event of the termination of BSL, the board shall, upon a two-thirds affirmative vote, dispose of any assets in a manner consistent with the purpose of BSL and in accordance with the United States Soccer Federation.

*Amended and approved:*

*2/19/2006,*

*4/3/2008,*

*11/8/2008.*

*xx/xx/2018*

## **BLOSSOMLAND SOCCER LEAGUE RULES AND REGULATIONS**

### **I. REGISTRATION**

- A. Each team's players, coach, manager, and trainer must be registered and identified on its respective roster.
- B. Each team must submit a non-refundable \$100 deposit before the annual registration deadline of February 15<sup>th</sup>. The remainder of the team fee must be paid by March 15<sup>th</sup>. Teams must be registered prior to March 1<sup>st</sup> of each season. All monies paid to BSL shall be the sole property of BSL.
- C. Each player must sign a liability waiver absolving and indemnifying the Blossomland Soccer League and its affiliated organizations (USSF, MSA, et al).
- D. Team managers are responsible for registration, including the verification of each player's age. Players **must should** be at least 18 years of age **or have permission to play from the board**. Players under the age of 18 shall be allowed to play only after presenting to the registrar written permission from a parent or guardian on the prescribed form **AND approval from MYSA**. **No team may register more than 24 players; no team may register more than three bench personnel, with a maximum of 26 team members on the roster**. A coach and/or manager may play with appropriate credentials; a trainer may not play. **No roster may include more than 24 players**. No one is allowed within the team technical area unless he is a registered player, coach, manager, or trainer.
- E. Requests for release or transfer must be made to the registrar in writing on the prescribed form and the team manager must honor **or decline** the request within two weeks.
- F. Any player registering after the start of the season must submit a properly completed and signed registration form and liability waiver and pay fees to the registrar at least 24 hours prior to playing.
- G. **Team fees and player fees are outlined in the Blossomland Soccer League Policies and Procedures.**

### **II. RULES OF COMPETITION**

- A. All games are played according to FIFA Laws of the Game, as modified by USSF.
- B. Unlimited substitutions are allowed with the permission of the referee at the following times for both teams:
  - 1. Prior to a goal kick;
  - 2. After a goal;
  - 3. At halftime;
  - 4. After an injury, when play has been stopped by the referee.
- C. Substitutions are allowed with the permission of the referee for:
  - 1. A team in possession of a throw-in; the team not in possession of the throw-in may substitute only if the team in possession of the throw-in substitutes;
  - 2. A player who has been cautioned (limited to cautioned player(s), other team can substitute like number).
- D. With the exception of the goalkeeper, a player receiving treatment for an injury on the field of play must be removed from the field and may not return until after play has been restarted.
- E. Before the game, each team's manager shall provide the referee with a roster of all players participating in the game and all approved bench personnel. This roster should be in

numerical order on an official BSL roster sheet. **The numbers of players allowed to participate in a game are outlined in Policies and Procedures.**

- F. The players and spectators shall remain on opposite sides of the field. All players and team personnel shall remain in their respective technical areas.
- G. The team designated as “home” (listed first) is responsible for the game ball(s).
- H. All regular season games shall be played in 45-minute halves with a ten-minute halftime period and no overtime periods. Games may be shortened by mutual agreement between both coaches. Overtime shall be used for tournament games (“Cup” play) only and shall consist of two 15-minute periods played in full (no “sudden death”/“golden goal”). If a tournament game is still tied at the end of overtime, “Kicks from the Penalty Mark” shall determine the winner.
- I. Games must start on time. Without prior agreement, a team that cannot field at least seven players 15 minutes after a regularly scheduled start time shall forfeit the match.

### III. UNIFORMS

The uniforms and apparel of players in the Blossomland Soccer League must comply with the Laws of the Game. The following are specific policies of the BSL:

- A. The home team shall wear white or light colored jerseys; the visiting team shall wear dark jerseys. In case of a color conflict the home team shall change its jerseys.
- B. Except for the goalkeeper all players on a team should wear the same color shorts and stockings.
- C. Goalkeepers shall wear colors that distinguish them from all other players and the referees.
- D. All players (except goalkeepers) must wear unique numbers, at least six inches high and of no more than two digits, on their backs (numbers on the fronts of jerseys or shorts are optional).
- E. Captains should wear distinguishing armbands.

### IV. FORFEITURES, POSTPONEMENTS, CANCELLATIONS

- A. A team which removes itself from the field of play and/or refuses to play when instructed to do so by the referee shall forfeit the game. The final score shall be 3-0 in favor of the opposing team. **A team which forfeits a game shall have one point deducted from its point total.** Forfeits shall be separated into the following categories:
  - 1. Prearranged forfeiture with notification to the referee coordinator at least three days prior to the scheduled contest = \$25 fine;
  - 2. Forfeiture without notification to the referee coordinator at least three days prior to the scheduled contest, but before the day of the game = \$50 fine;
  - 3. Forfeiture due to a team failing to have the minimum number of players before the start of a game = \$50 fine;
  - 4. Forfeiture due to a team failing to have the minimum number of players after the start of the first half = \$25 fine;
  - 5. Forfeiture due to a team’s refusal to play after being instructed to do so by the referee (e. g., refusal to begin play, voluntary removal from the field of play, etc.) = \$100 fine.
- B. Any postponement or cancellation must be made at least three days (**72 hours**) prior to the regularly schedule game. The registrar, referee coordinator, and opposing team must be

notified of this development. Any forfeiture fees must be paid in full, to the President or Treasurer, before that team is allowed to play again.

- C. Allowances may be made in the case of unforeseen circumstances. These include but are not limited to unplayable field, severe weather, death, etc.

## V. APPEALS

- A. Only documented Law violations shall be considered by the appeals committee, outlined in Article IV: Committees, this shall consist of all board members. Referees' judgement calls shall not be heard.
- B. An appeal must be in written form and describe the appealed incident and names of witnesses. It must be delivered to the BSL secretary or his designated representative within 48 hours of the incident. A \$50 appeals fee must be included with the document, which shall include the basis for which the appeal is being submitted (i. e., which Law was violated). This fee is only refunded if the appeal is sustained.

## VI. WEATHER POLICIES

The Blossomland Soccer League shall follow the United States Soccer Federation's severe weather policy which requires that when lightning is observed or thunder is heard, the referee must suspend the game until the danger has passed (a minimum of 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard); or the game must be terminated (a game may not be delayed by weather for more than one hour --- exception: except for first-round games, BSL Cup matches shall be delayed for two hours before termination or rescheduling). If a game is terminated because of weather and one half of the game has been completed, the game shall be considered complete and the score at the time of the termination shall be recorded as the final result. If a game is terminated during the first half, the game shall be rescheduled and replayed in its entirety. The home team must notify the BSL president and referee coordinator of this situation in order to coordinate a new playing date.

## VII. REFEREES

- A. **Certification:** All BSL referees shall be USSF-certified, having received a minimum of 15 hours of introductory referee course work, with five hours of continued course work in each succeeding year. In emergencies, a non-certified official may be used as a club linesman if agreed upon by both coaches.
- B. **System of Control:** The diagonal system of control (one referee and two assistant referees) shall be used for all BSL games. Under no circumstance may the dual system of control (two referees) be used to officiate BSL games.
- C. **Authority:** The referee's authority begins when he arrives at the area of the field of play and continues until he has left the area of the field of play after the game has been completed. The referee's authority extends to time when the ball is not in play, to temporary suspensions, to halftime breaks, and to additional periods of play or kicks from the penalty mark as may be required by the rules of competition.
- D. **Match Suspension/Termination:** The referee may suspend or terminate a match for reasons of safety (e. g., severe weather, darkness), for any serious infringement of the Laws, or because of interference by spectators.
- E. **Match Abandonment:** The referee may abandon a match if there are insufficient numbers of players to meet the requirements of the Laws, if a team does not appear or leaves before the completion of a game, or if the field or any of its equipment does not meet the requirements of the Laws or are otherwise unsafe.

## VIII. DISCIPLINE

The Blossomland Soccer League expects its players and coaches to conduct themselves within the governing rules and principles of fair play and good sportsmanship. It is each team's responsibility to have its members follow all items in the BSL handbook, and the requirements of the MSA, USASA, USSF, and FIFA, whose rules and regulations govern the following violations:

- A. **Player Profanity/Obscenity:** A player, coach, manager, or team official guilty of using profanity or obscenity, either by word or gesture, against another player, coach, manager, team official, spectator, or any league official shall receive a one-game suspension.  
*Second offense:* two-game suspension.  
*Third offense:* four-game suspension.
- B. **Threats/Coercion:** A player, coach, manager, or team official guilty of attempting to coerce a league official or referee, or using threatening language or making threatening gestures against another player, coach, manager, team official, spectator, or any league official shall receive a one-game suspension.  
*Second offense:* two-game suspension.  
*Third offense:* four-game suspension.
- C. **Fighting:** A player guilty of fighting with another player before, during, or after a game shall receive a two-game suspension.  
*Second offense:* four-game suspension.  
*Third offense:* eight-game suspension.
- D. **Brawl:** Involvement in a brawl is sanctioned with a suspension for at least six matches. Anyone who has tried merely to prevent a fight, shield others, or separate those involved in a brawl is not subject to punishment.
- E. **Discrimination:** Anyone who offends the dignity of a person or group of persons through contemptuous, discriminatory or derogatory words or actions concerning race, color, language, religion or origin shall be suspended for at least five matches. Spectators who breach this point shall be banned from appearing at league matches for two years.
- F. **Provocation of the General Public:** Anyone who provokes the general public during a match shall be suspended for two matches.
- G. **Inciting Hatred and Violence:** A player or team official who publicly incites others to hatred or violence shall be sanctioned with match suspensions for no less than one year.
- H. **Assault on Non-Player/Player:**
  - 1. A player, coach, manager, or team official guilty of assaulting any other coach, manager, team official, spectator, or any league official shall receive a minimum one-year suspension, unless the assault is committed against an individual who is a minor, in which case the suspension is for a minimum of three years. In either case, if serious injuries are inflicted, the suspension is for a minimum of five years. Except in the case of player fighting, an assault on a player by any of the aforementioned individuals shall also warrant the same disciplinary action(s) as stated above.
  - 2. Assault is any intentional act of physical violence, including, but not limited to: hitting, kicking, punching, choking, spitting on, grabbing or bodily running into an individual, head-butting, the act of kicking or throwing any object at an individual that could inflict injury; damaging the individual's uniform/clothing and/or personal property (e. g., vehicle, equipment, etc.) Unintended consequences of any act of assaults are irrelevant. Any subsequent act of assault shall be reviewed by the BSL disciplinary committee, which reserves the right to permanently ban any individual from participation in the Blossomland Soccer League.
- I. **Unidentified Aggressors:** If, in the case of violence, it is not possible to identify the perpetrator(s), the BSL Board shall sanction the club to which the aggressors belong.

J. **Referee/Assistant Referee Abuse, Assault, Mistreatment:** All incidents of referee or assistant referee abuse, assault, or mistreatment comes under the immediate jurisdiction of the MSA, USSF Policy 531-9. Referees must report any incident of abuse, assault, or mistreatment directly to the MSA secretary and send a copy of the report to the secretary of BSL. Reported party(ies) shall stand suspended until a hearing by the MSA disciplinary committee is held.

#### FIFA GUIDELINES

- Referee Abuse = minimum three match suspension
- Unsporting conduct towards a match officials, including minor/slight touching = minimum four match suspension
- Assault = minimum six games, unless against minor by adult = three year suspension; serious injuries are inflicted = five year suspension.
- Spitting at/on match official = minimum one year suspension.

K. **Coach and fan misconduct:** Coaches, managers, and other team officials shall be subject to all rules pertaining to misconduct, including cautions/official warnings, send offs/expulsions, and suspensions. Coaches, managers, and team officials are responsible for the behavior of their fans. If a team's spectators make it necessary for a referee to terminate a match, that team shall forfeit the match. Spectators who breach this point shall be banned from appearing at league matches for a period to be determined by the BSL Board.

L. **Cautions/Official Warnings:** A player who receives three cautions or a coach, manager, or team official who receives three official warnings during a playing season shall be suspended for the next game. Two cautions (player) or two official warnings (team official) received during the same game shall be treated as a send-off (player) or expulsion (team official) and shall not accrue toward the aforementioned total of three cautions (player) or official warnings (team official).

M. **Send-Offs/Expulsions:**

1. A player who is sent-off or a coach, manager, or team official who is expelled shall receive a one-game suspension.  
*Second offense:* two-game suspension and appearance before the BSL disciplinary committee (the hearing must be requested by the offender, **to the Referee Coordinator** – a player, coach, manager, or team official shall not be allowed to participate before a hearing is held).  
*Third offense:* suspension for the remainder of the season and mandatory appearance before the BSL disciplinary committee (four-game minimum suspension if suspension carries over into the next season).
2. A PLAYER WHO IS SENT-OFF, OR A COACH, MANAGER, OR TEAM OFFICIAL WHO IS EXPELLED SHALL LEAVE THE AREA OF THE FIELD OF PLAY. PLAY SHALL NOT BE RESTARTED UNTIL THIS PROVISION HAS BEEN MET. IF A SENT-OFF PLAYER OR EXPELLED COACH, MANAGER, OR TEAM OFFICIAL DOES NOT COMPLY IN A TIMELY MANNER, THE MATCH SHALL BE TERMINATED AND HIS TEAM SHALL FORFEIT THE MATCH. **The only exception is a player under 18 years of age may be allowed to remain on the bench. They shall remain seated on the end of the bench farthest from the players and have no contact with players, management of the team, referees or league officials.**

**NOTE ON NON-PLAYER MISCONDUCT:** Although non-players are not shown cards by the referee for their misconduct, this fact does not negate any disciplinary sanctions pertaining to those individuals.

N. **Misconduct in games terminated/abandoned:** Any sanctions related to the misconduct of a player, coach, manager, or team official occurring in a game terminated/abandoned (either in the first or second half) shall stand, and any suspensions

shall be applied beginning with that team's next scheduled game.

**O. Playing during a suspension**

Any coach, manager, or team official allowing a suspended player to play shall be suspended for two games and his team shall forfeit any game(s) in which a suspended player participates. A player serving a suspension who plays during this period shall receive an additional one-game suspension for each game played.

**P. In-season suspension policy:**

1. A player, coach, manager, or team official serving a suspension may attend his team's next game(s) as a spectator only. He is not permitted in his team's technical area, nor is he permitted to have contact with his team during play (including all time during which the referee has authority over the game [e. g., pre-game, halftime, post-game]).
2. Any misconduct by an aforementioned individual during this period shall result in a mandatory appearance before the BSL disciplinary committee, which shall determine further sanctions (including possible banishment from BSL games). The reported individual shall continue to stand in suspension until the hearing is held.

**Q. Next season suspension policy:** Any applicable suspension(s) shall carry over into the next season(s) **of that individual's participation.**

**R. Illegal participation:** A player who participates in a BSL game without proper registration shall be banned from further BSL participation for a period of one year. All games in which that player participates shall be forfeited. **This includes and applies to all team management personnel.**

**S. Falsification of records:** A player, coach, manager, or team official who alters or falsifies a roster or player pass shall receive a six-game suspension.

**ALL DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS ARE GUIDELINES FOR THE LEAGUE BOARD WHICH SHALL DETERMINE FINAL SANCTIONS AGAINST THE OFFENDING PARTY(IES) INVOLVED. THE LEAGUE BOARD SHALL HAVE ALL RIGHTS TO MAKE DECISIONS UPON MATTERS NOT SPECIFICALLY STATED WITHIN THE LEAGUE HANDBOOK.**

**IX. LEAGUE STANDINGS AND CHAMPIONSHIP**

**A.** A first place trophy shall be awarded to each season's BSL champion. **Players on first place teams shall receive gold medals.** The scoring of play shall be determined in the following manner:

1. WIN = three points;
2. TIE = one point;
3. LOSS = zero points;
4. FORFEIT = minus one point.

**B.** At the end of the season the team with the highest number of points shall be the league champion. **The team with the second highest number of points shall be the league runners-up.** If there is a tie for the most number of points, the tie-breaker system **as outlined in Policies and Procedures.** Below shall be used to determine first place. This system shall also determine the league standings for all other teams:

***TIE BREAKER***

1. "points" in head-to-head competition;
2. "goal difference" in head-to-head competition;
3. total "goals for" in head-to-head competition;
4. fewest "goals allowed" in head-to-head competition;
5. fewest "team misconduct points" in a season (one point for each caution/official warning, two points for each send off/expulsion);
6. "goal difference" in team play;
7. total "goals for" in team play;
8. fewest "goals allowed" in team play;
9. most wins in league play;

10. coin toss.

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