

Spring Branch-Memorial Sports Association

Soccer Program



Official Rules and Regulations



September 15, 2010

Spring Branch-Memorial Sports Association

Soccer Program

The Board of Directors of the Spring Branch-Memorial Sports Association (“SBMSA” or the “Association”) has empowered the Board of the Soccer Program (“Soccer Board”) to administer all phases of this program (that are not specifically reserved for the SBMSA Board of Directors) as outlined in these rules and that are not in direct violation of the SBMSA by-laws. Within these limits, the majority decisions of the Soccer Board will be official.

All participants in the SBMSA Soccer Program are reminded that these games are between teams made up of players ages 13 and younger. It is important to remember that we are not playing professional soccer, and nothing important is at stake. Conduct yourself in a manner that will make your child and your family proud of you.

The objectives of our Soccer Program can be summed up as follows:

- To create an atmosphere of fun for all players and participants;
- To help the players learn the fundamentals of the game and the principles of teamwork; and
- To demonstrate, by example, the concept of good sportsmanship and a healthy competitive attitude.

Keeping these objectives in mind, we ask all participants to recognize the importance of the game referee to our program and to the game of soccer. In any sport, the job of referees, umpires and other officials is not an easy one under the best of circumstances. Many of the decisions they must make will appear wrong to fifty percent of the observers, depending on which team you support. This is the nature of the game.

Whatever the circumstances, however, we must insist that the decisions of the officials at our games be respected at all times, and that they never be harassed, verbally or otherwise, at any time. Many of the games involving our younger players, age 10 and under, will be officiated by high school age students. These officials have been USSF certified and are qualified to referee games throughout the Houston area. Please give them the respect to which they are entitled.

The rules of our Association forbid any type of harassment of officials and players, and the coach / team manager is held responsible for the conduct of the fans of his or her team. We wish to remind you of this and to encourage you to cheer for your team and to support and obey the rules of good sportsmanship and the rules of our Association.

SBMSA Soccer Program

Acknowledgement of Managerial Responsibilities

Dear Manager, Coach, and Assistant Coaches:

The Soccer Board would like to thank you for making the commitment to coach our youth. SBMSA is a volunteer organization focused on supporting area youth through athletics. As such, you are a very necessary part of the organization and the development of our youth. Along those lines, there are some basic rules of conduct and play that the Association and the Soccer Board feel the need to emphasize:

Player Participation: It is your responsibility as a Coach to make sure that *all* of your players satisfy the minimum play requirements for your league. Please see the rulebook for clarification of those requirements. After every game, each Coach must sign a game card affirming that each player on his or her team has met the minimum play requirement for that game. As a courtesy to our statisticians, please also report your final score on these game cards. In order to use discipline as a reason for not meeting the minimum play requirements, you must be prepared to distribute this discipline equally and fairly amongst all players.

Use of Profanity and Excessive Yelling: The use of profanity will not be tolerated! Nobody likes a hothead, and excessive yelling is destructive to the goals we are all trying to achieve. It is the Head Coach's responsibility as the Manager to monitor your Assistant Coaches and Parents. Please be aware of your surroundings and the overall impact you are making on our youth. BE POSITIVE!

Acceptable Coaching Behavior and Sportsmanship: "Acceptable coaching" involves many facets, such as values, beliefs, leadership, sportsmanship, character, teamwork, love for the kids, and love for the sport. It is also accepting the responsibility that you are in charge of someone else's child. Also, acceptable coaching can be defined by:

- the tone of ones voice (i.e., screaming and outbursts are not allowed)
- the appropriate supervision of a child
- how intimidating an adult can be to a child (verbally or physically)
- how harsh a coach acts when a child makes an error or mistake
- arguing in front of the child for any reason
- fighting or arguing with the officials/umpires
- fighting or arguing with another coach or parent
- verbal 'back stabbing' other coaches, parents, umpires, and/or children out loud
- a flaring temper
- unsportsmanlike conduct of any kind

At the end of the day, acceptable coaching is about exemplifying healthy values, being a role model and good example for our children, displaying good moral character, and showing good sportsmanship, win or lose!

Rulebook Acceptance: In addition to the above, a copy of the *Official Rules and*

Regulations of the SBMSA Soccer Program is online and has been made available to you. The Rulebook provides the rules, regulations, and guidance for you as a Coach. If you have any questions, contact one of your Soccer Board members for assistance.

Background Checks: SBMSA will conduct a national background check on each Coach. It is imperative that you and all Assistant Coaches register online as a volunteer so that this can be done in a timely manner. If you have not received official clearance from the league, you are not eligible to coach or be on the side lines at games. If SBMSA has provided you with credentials, you are responsible for having such credentials with you at all league events (practice and games).

2010 SBMSA Soccer Board

As Manager, Coach, and/or Assistant Coach, I agree to be bound by the rules, regulations, and ethical considerations of the Association. *Any violation of these rules could subject me to suspension from the league and possible forfeiture of games played. I also grant SBMSA permission to utilize the information given to perform a background check for the purpose of determining my suitability to coach for SBMSA.*

CONTENTS

	<u>Section</u>
1. PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND ADMINISTRATION	1.00
2. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY, REGISTRATION AND TEAM FORMATION	2.00
3. THE GAME: STARTING, POSTPONING, PLAYERS, ENDING, SCORING, FORFEITS AND PROTESTS	3.00
4. THE BASIC RULES OF SOCCER	4.00
5. PLAYING RULES FOR 6U DIVISION	5.00
6. PLAYING RULES FOR 8U DIVISION	6.00
7. PLAYING RULES FOR 10U DIVISION	7.00
8. PLAYING RULES FOR SENIOR DIVISION	8.00
9. SPORTSMANSHIP, RULES OF CONDUCT AND SANCTIONS	9.00
10. FINAL STANDINGS, PLAYOFFS AND PENALTY-KICK TIEBREAKERS	10.00
APPENDIX	
I. SOCCER GAME REPORT CARDS	

1.00 PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND ADMINISTRATION

1.01 **Soccer Program:** SBMSA’s Soccer Program is made of four (4) age groups, divided between boys and girls, for eight (8) divisions as follows:

	Boys	Girls
5 and 6 years of age:	6U Division	6U Division
7 and 8 years:	8U Division	8U Division
9 and 10 years:	10U Division	10U Division
11, 12 and 13 years:	Senior Division	Senior Division

- (a) For all divisions, applicable age is age as of July 31 of the current year.
- (b) Four (4) years old is the minimum age requirement to play in the SBMSA Soccer Program. A child who is 4 years old as of July 31 may play up into the 6U division.
- (c) Boys and girls 14 years of age as of August 31st may play in the Senior division if they are in the eighth (8th) grade.

1.02 **Proof of Age:** Age is determined as of July 31 for boys and for girls for the playing season. All players must provide a copy of their birth certificate to SBMSA or have a copy of their birth certificate on file with SBMSA prior to the completion of team formation for the current season. Players who fail to do so may not be allowed to participate during the current season. SBMSA Coaches/Team Managers or parents must produce proof of age when requested to do so by the Program Director or their Division Commissioner. Coaches/Team Managers may challenge the age of players on other teams through the Program Director or their Division Commissioner.

1.03 **Board Composition:** The Soccer Board shall be comprised of no fewer than seven (7) members, and the Soccer Board shall administer the program. The Soccer Board shall consist of: the Program Director, who shall be appointed by the President of the SBMSA and approved by the SBMSA Board of Directors; and the balance of the Soccer Board, who shall be selected by the Program Director subject to the approval of the SBMSA Board of Directors.

1.04 **Meetings:** The Soccer Board shall meet from time to time, as called by the Program Director. No meeting is official unless there are at least five (5) members of the Soccer Board present and one of those members present is the Program Director. The Soccer Board may meet by telephone. The Soccer Board may vote by telephone or by e-mail.

1.05 **Responsibilities of the Program Director:** The Program Director answers to the SBMSA Board of Directors; and administers all functions of the Soccer Board in managing, supervising, and delegating authority within the proper guidelines as directed by the SBMSA Board of Directors. The Program Director may delegate some authority to an Assistant Director, Commissioner Coordinator, Field Coordinator, Scheduler and Scorekeeper, Referee Coordinator, Tournament Coordinator or other positions as appropriate. The Program Director administers the soccer program and directs the operations of the Division Commissioners.

- 1.06 **Responsibilities of Division Commissioners:** Division Commissioners answer to the Program Director; recruit Team Managers; direct the operations of their division; coordinate with the Program Director (or his/her delegates) in such areas as game and practice scheduling, field supervision, score-reporting, maintaining division standings, and organizing the post-season tournament; review all proposals and/or complaints from Team Managers and parents; and instruct all Team Managers in the administration of those functions designated by the Soccer Board.
- 1.07 **Responsibilities of Team Managers:** Team Managers, who are generally the head coaches of their team, report to their Division Commissioner. Team Managers direct the operations of their team according to the Rules and Regulations as set forth by the Soccer Board and the SBMSA; appoint assistant coaches and submit a list of such assistants to their Division Commissioner for approval prior to the first practice (but please note that the Soccer Board and/or the SBMSA reserves the right to approve or disapprove any appointments); promote sportsmanship and control the conduct of assistant coaches, parents, and fans of their team; assure players meet minimum playing requirements as set by the Soccer Board; and manage all aspects of team participation in the soccer season. Team Managers should also provide or organize help in maintaining the playing fields at their practices and games; and should return balls or other equipment that are the property of SBMSA. A Team Manager may be referred to as “Team Manager”, “Manager”, “Coach” or “coach” throughout the remainder of this document.
- (a) All coaches must have registered as a coach on SBMSA’s website, cleared a background check, and signed an “Acknowledgement of Managerial Responsibilities” form before they can begin coaching their team.

2.00 PLAYER ELIGIBILITY, REGISTRATION AND TEAM FORMATION

- 2.01 **Player Eligibility:** Any child is eligible to play, subject to these rules:
- (a) Players participating in the program are required to pay the fee set by the SBMSA Board, unless the fee is waived by the Program Director.
- (b) Players participating in the program are required to submit any forms required by the SBMSA Board, including proper proof of age.
- (c) Players register to play prior to the registration deadline.
- 2.02 **Registration:** Registration will be held on dates specified by the Soccer Board.
- (a) Late registrants will be assigned to a team by the Division Commissioner in his/her discretion only if there is a need for additional players and such addition will not be disruptive to the team formation process.

- 2.03 **Playing Up or Down:** Generally a player will play in the division determined by the player's age. However, in certain cases, a player *might* be able to play up or play down, subject to the following:
- (a) Upon written request of a parent or guardian, the Program Director *may* permit a player to play up one age level above the one determined by the player's age if (i) such request is made at registration and prior to the season, (ii) in the judgment of the Program Director the player has acquired the abilities to compete at that level, and (iii) there is a coach willing to accept such player.
 - (b) Upon written request of a parent or guardian, the Program Director *may* permit a player to play down one level below the one determined by the player's official age if (i) such child is enrolled in a special education program because of a physical disability (as a result of placement by an ARD committee B NOTE: The student's IEP must indicate his/her disability or enrollment in an Adaptive Physical Education class, and a copy of the IEP must accompany the participant's registration), (ii) such request is made at registration and prior to the draft or team assignment, (iii) in the judgment of the Program Director, the player does not have the ability to compete in his or her proper age group, and (iv) there is a coach in the lower level willing to accept such a player.
- 2.04 **Team Formation:** While the league reserves the right to form teams at its sole discretion, teams are usually formed by school. Generally, a player who attends a Spring Branch Independent School District ("SBISD") elementary school will be placed on a team with other players from his or her school. A player who attends a private school within SBISD's boundaries will usually be placed on a team with other players from that same private school or with players from the SBISD school to which he or she is zoned. A player who resides within the boundaries of SBISD, but attends school outside of the district, will generally be assigned to the SBISD school to which he or she is zoned. Players may petition the Soccer Board to allow them to be placed in an area different from the one they are assigned to under these rules.
- (a) Players from schools with insufficient registrations to form a team will be placed onto other schools' teams.
 - (b) For schools with a sufficient number of players to form two or more teams in any particular division, teams will be formed by an intra-school draft conducted by the Team Managers at that school. The child or children of Team Managers will be automatically assigned to the Team Manager's team prior to the draft.
 - (c) For any school that requires a draft, a skills evaluation may be held prior to the draft. Skills evaluation sessions will be conducted in the presence of the Team Managers, or designated representative, at which time every player should have an opportunity to demonstrate his or her soccer skills. The purpose of the skills evaluation and draft is to allow for the equalization of talent among the various teams at the school.

- (d) The drafts will be held as soon as practical following the skills evaluation. The precise method for conducting the draft at any particular school will be determined by, or with input from, the Soccer Board, Program Director and/or relevant Division Commissioner.
- (e) Same-sex siblings in the same age group will be placed on the same team unless their parents specifically request otherwise.
- (f) Team Managers should contact each player on their team shortly after the teams have been formed at their school.
- (g) All teams will be completely re-drafted or re-formed each year. In other words, there are no holdovers or legacies that remain with the same team from one year to the next.

2.05 **Team Rosters:** All rosters will be reviewed and approved by the Division Commissioner. Team Managers should complete and maintain a roster form listing all the players on their team. Recommended roster sizes for each of the divisions, boys and girls, are as follows:

- (a) 6U division teams shall be comprised of 6-8 players.
- (b) 8U division teams shall be comprised of 11-13 players.
- (c) 10U division teams shall be comprised of 11-13 players.
- (d) Senior division teams shall be comprised of 14-16 players.

2.06 **Illegal and Ineligible Players:** An illegal player is one who plays on a team for which he could not have become eligible within the current year under any circumstances. Use of an illegal player may result in a game forfeiture if a protest is filed and found valid by the Soccer Board. An ineligible player is one who fails to meet certain correctable criteria for participation in a specified division. Among the factors which may bar a player from participating are: failure to submit player registration or parent consent forms; failure to be properly listed on the team roster; and failure to submit acceptable proof of age. Use of an ineligible player in a game before the disqualifying factor has been removed may result in forfeiture of the game if a protest is filed and found valid by the Soccer Board.

- (a) A protest regarding the eligibility of a player will be considered valid only if proper notification of such protest is made during the course of a subject game to the referee and the opposing Team Manager, and if a full written protest is presented to the Program Director or the appropriate Division Commissioner within 24 hours of the game completion. If a protested game is played on a Saturday, the time limit for presentation will be extended to 48 hours from game completion. A protest sent via e-mail satisfies the “written” requirement of a protest. A protest sent via e-mail is deemed made at the time it is sent. All other protests are deemed made at the time received by the Division Commissioner or Program Director. *NOTE: This section of the rules applies only to protests regarding eligibility.*

3.00 THE GAME: STARTING, POSTPONING, PLAYERS, ENDING, SCORING, FORFEITS AND PROTESTS

- 3.01 **Pre-Game Arrival at the Field:** The home team, upon their arrival at the field, will take up their sideline position in the designated home area on the side of the field designated for players and coaches. The visiting team, upon their arrival, will take up their sideline position in the designated visitors area on the same side of the field as the home-team players and coaches. Parents and spectators of both teams will occupy the same side of the field opposite the players and coaches. Diagrams of all the SBMSA soccer fields, with home and visitor areas plus team and spectator sidelines indicated for each field, may be found on the SBMSA website (www.Sbmsa.org) or be provided by the relevant Division Commissioner. If the precise setup of a field is unclear or unknown, the important thing is that players and coaches of both teams share one sideline—with each team taking half of the field—and that parents and spectators of both teams share the other sideline. No parents or supporters are allowed behind either goal line or beyond the penalty areas at the side lines. Coaches are responsible for making sure their parents and supporters adhere to these rules.
- (a) Parents and supporters should set themselves up at least four (4) feet back from the side lines. In addition to people, this 4-foot clear lane should be free of coolers, chairs and other items. A 4-foot clear lane from the side lines must be maintained for the entire game.
 - (b) When, in the opinion of the referee, field conditions require that teams be on the same side of the field, all the parents and supporters must be on the same half of the side line as their team.
- 3.02 **Arrival of the Referee and Game Card:** When the referee arrives at the field prior to the match, the home team shall supply the referee with an SBMSA-issued game report card. The home team shall fill out the necessary information on the card including the date, time, field location, team names, and division. This is to be done prior to handing the card to the referee.
- (a) Any player or players who will not play in the match because of a suspension, injury or disciplinary action should be so noted on the match card. It is the coach's responsibility to make sure this has been done.
- 3.03 **Referee No-Show:** In the event a league-assigned referee fails to appear for a 6U or 8U game, the coaches *must* mutually agree upon an official from available personnel. No 6U or 8U game may be postponed or delayed for lack of a league referee. In the event a league-assigned referee fails to appear for a 10U or Senior division game, the coaches *may* mutually agree upon an official from available personnel. If the 10U or Senior division coaches cannot find, or agree upon, a qualified person to referee the game, the game can be postponed.

- (a) If the coaches agree on a person to call the match in the absence of a league-assigned referee, that official will be considered the referee, and his decisions and call of the play will be binding.

3.04 Supplemental Player: A coach may borrow one player from another team in the same SBMSA age bracket or one age bracket below (subject to 3.04(b) below) to get to (i) the minimum number of players required to avoid a forfeit, or to (ii) the minimum number of players required to avoid a forfeit plus one. If a regular player appears and such player permits the team to field the regular number of players, the supplemental player must then leave the field at the next regular substitution period. A team may not use a supplemental player to achieve a full complement of players. Nothing in this section will be construed to mean the opposing coach is required to loan a player from his or her team.

- (a) **EXAMPLE:** Teams in 8U division games normally field 9 players, although a team can start a game with a minimum of 7 players. Under Rule 3.04 a team with 6 regular players could borrow one supplemental player to get to 7, or a team with 7 regular players could borrow one supplemental player to get to 8. But a team with 8 regular players could not borrow a player to get to 9. If another regular player appears in a game that started with 7 regular players and 1 supplemental player, the supplemental player must leave the field and let the (now) 8 regular players finish the game.
- (b) Prior to the beginning of a game, a coach may request permission from his or her Division Commissioner (or in his absence, the Program Director) to bring up one supplemental player from a lower SBMSA age group as per Rule 3.04. Both the parent and the coach of the player in the lower age group must advise the Division Commissioner (or Program Director) of their agreement to allow the player to “play up” for the requested game. If a schedule conflict exists, the player’s original team schedule takes precedence. The only position such supplemental player is allowed to play is defensive back. Under no circumstances will such player be allowed to play goalkeeper.

3.05 Bad Weather on Game Day: All teams must appear at the field ready to play for each scheduled game unless previously notified of the game’s cancellation due to bad weather. Such prior notification will typically come from an SBMSA official via e-mail, phone call or weather hot line. If a suspect game has not officially been cancelled, if there is any uncertainty as to whether the game has been cancelled or not, or if the “go / no go” decision will be made at the field at game time, teams are still responsible for being present at the field at the scheduled game time. In the case of game-time decisions that are made at the field when the weather is bad, decisions are made by the Division Commissioner, the Program Director and/or the referee. Coaches may not unilaterally call off or re-schedule a game.

- (a) If a team fails to appear for a game that has not been cancelled, or if a team refuses to play when requested to do so by the referee, the game will be considered a forfeit and scored as a 1 to 0 loss for the forfeiting team.

- (b) A game that is cancelled due to bad weather will generally be re-scheduled by the Division Commissioner. The Division Commissioner will notify each team of the new game date and time.

3.06 **Schedule Changes for Reasons Other Than Bad Weather:** Occasionally, because of a conflict with group activities such as a school play, school musical or scout camp-out, a large number of players from a team may be unable to play a soccer game on a given night. The best way to handle such conflicts, when they are known in advance, is for the Managers to advise their Division Commissioner of “no play” dates before the season schedules are finalized. Nevertheless, not all such circumstances can be planned around in advance. When, during the season, a Manager can reasonably predict that he or she will be unable to field the minimum number of players for a particular game due to some conflicting activity, that Manager may request of his or her Division Commissioner that the game be re-scheduled. Such request should be made as far in advance as possible. At a minimum, the request must be made no less than 48 hours before the scheduled game time. The predicted absence of a coach or strong player or players is not a sufficient reason for re-scheduling a game. The Division Commissioner will undertake to approve or disapprove of the postponement / re-scheduling request in a timely fashion.

- (a) Under no circumstances may Managers unilaterally re-schedule a game without the involvement and consent of their Division Commissioner.
- (b) A game which has been approved for postponement may only be re-scheduled by the Division Commissioner with the approval of both the Referee Coordinator and the league Scheduler. The Division Commissioner will notify each team of the new game date and time.

3.07 **Scheduled Game Start Time:** By the scheduled game start time, the referee will have inspected the playing field, players’ uniforms and players’ equipment to make sure all is in proper order. In addition, the referee will have conducted the coin flip to determine which team will take the kick-off to start the game. With these preliminaries completed, and assuming each team has present the required minimum number of players along with at least one coach, the game should start at the scheduled game start time.

- (a) If a team does not have the minimum number of players ready to play at the scheduled game start time, there is a ten-minute grace period. If a team is unable to field the minimum number of players by no later than ten (10) minutes after the scheduled game start time (by the referee’s clock), the game will be considered a forfeit and the game will be scored as a 1 to 0 loss for the forfeiting team.
- (b) If a team fails to have a Manager, coach or responsible adult present on the field at the scheduled game start time, there is a ten-minute grace period. If a team is unable to field at least one coach by no later than ten (10) minutes after the scheduled game start time (by the referee’s clock), the game will be

considered a forfeit and the game will be scored as a 1 to 0 loss for the forfeiting team.

- (c) If a team refuses to play a scheduled game when requested to do so by the referee, the game will be considered a forfeit and the game will be scored as a 1 to 0 loss for the forfeiting team.

3.08 **The Game:** All games will be played in accordance with the *Laws of the Game* as established by FIFA, together with certain rule modifications established by SBMSA. In particular, each age group will play the game according to the following sections of this rulebook:

- (a) **6U Division:** The Basic Rules of Soccer (Section 4) plus the Playing Rules for 6U Division (Section 5).
- (b) **8U Division:** The Basic Rules of Soccer (Section 4) plus the Playing Rules for 8U Division (Section 6).
- (c) **10U Division:** The Basic Rules of Soccer (Section 4) plus the Playing Rules for 10U Division (Section 7).
- (d) **Senior Division:** The Basic Rules of Soccer (Section 4) plus the Playing Rules for Senior Division (Section 8).

3.09 **Player Participation:** All players must play a minimum of two (2) quarters, which is 50% of the total playing time in regulation. At the end of the game, each Team Manager must sign the game card confirming, among other things, that all players on his or her team played a minimum of two quarters. Failure to play all players for the minimum of two quarters will result in a forfeit of the game. There are certain exceptions to this rule, such as the common-sense exception that a player who leaves the game early due to injury cannot always satisfy the two-quarter minimum. Another valid exception to this rule would be the supplemental player who is required to leave the game by operation of Rule 3.04.

- (a) **Late-Arriving Players:** Players do not always have to be present at the start of the game in order to play. In the event a team expects to have a player arriving late for the game, such late-arriving player will be able to play provided (i) such late-arriving player plays a minimum of two quarters, and (ii) after allowing for the late-arriving player's playing time, all the other players on the team can still meet the minimum playing time requirement. The team with the late player must still field the minimum number of players to begin the game. Before the start of the game, the Manager of the team with the late-arriving player should notify the opposing coach and the referee that there is a player that is expected to be arriving late. Recognizing that there are sometimes unique or uncontrollable circumstances that can make a player late for a game, the intent of this policy is to err on the side of allowing the children to play soccer.
- (b) **Departing Players:** Sometimes there are circumstances where a player must leave a game early for a reason other than injury. A player is permitted to leave a game early provided such player plays a minimum of two quarters.

Before the start of the game, the Manager of the team with the departing player should notify the opposing coach and the referee that there is a player that is expected to leave the game early.

- (c) **Players Present But Not Playing:** Before the start of the game, Managers must notify the opposing coach and the referee of any roster players who are present but not scheduled to play because of injury, sickness, or for disciplinary reasons.
- (d) **Player Discipline:** If a Manager wants to discipline a player by sitting him the entire game, he may do so only with the prior consent of his Division Commissioner. In order to use discipline as a reason for not meeting the minimum play requirements, a Manager should be prepared (i) to justify the reason for the discipline, and (ii) to affirm that the discipline rules were communicated to his team prior to the start of the game, and that the discipline rules are applied to all team members. Failure to observe these rules and policies may result in the team forfeiting the game.

3.10 **Ending or Suspending a Game Due to Bad Weather:** If a game is called on account of bad weather or the condition of the playing field, it is a regulation game if two (2) or more quarters have been completed. Once the game has started, the referee has final authority to stop the game for weather conditions. It is Soccer Board policy that the appearance of lightning constitutes immediate grounds for delaying or stopping a game. Referees should err on the side of caution in this regard. By contrast, rain, wind, and cold are not considered immediate grounds for delay or stoppage unless there is present a distinct possibility of player injury or field damage. Player discomfort is not a reason for stoppage.

- (a) If a game is called on account of weather or the condition of the playing field after it has become a regulation game, the official score shall be the game score at the time the game was officially called off by the referee. An abbreviated game such as this can end in a tie.
- (b) If a game is called on account of weather or the condition of the playing field before it has become a regulation game, the referee shall declare it suspended and it shall be resumed or re-played on a later date. If the first quarter of the game was completed when the game was suspended (i.e., game was called during the second quarter), the game shall be resumed starting with a new second quarter, with the score at the end of the first quarter carrying over. But if the first quarter of the game was not completed when the game was suspended, the entire game shall be re-played.

3.11 **End of the Game and Game Card:** At the end of the game, the referee shall enter all appropriate game information on the game card. This includes: (i) name of the referee, (ii) goals scored, (iii) red cards given to players, and (iv) red cards given to coaches or spectators. This Rule 3.11 does not apply to the 6U division, as game cards need not be filled out and collected at the end of 6U games.

- (a) The following information is needed for each person that received a red card:
 - (i) name, (ii) team, and (iii) jersey number, if applicable.
- (b) Upon completion of the match, the referee shall check the game card for accuracy before signing his or her name. Either coach may review the game card at the conclusion of the match. Both coaches must sign the game card, doing so under a sentence which reads: “By signing this card, I affirm that each player on my team played a minimum of two (2) quarters or 50% of the total playing time in regulation.”
- (c) The Manager of the winning team is responsible for (i) depositing the game card in the designated drop box immediately after the game, or (ii) sending the game card to his or her Division Commissioner within 72 hours of the match. In the event of a tie, the Manager of the home team is responsible for the above. Except in the 6U division, a game report card must be filed for every match played, even if the match is abandoned or terminated.

3.12 **Score Reporting and Divisional Standings:** The winning Manager is responsible for reporting the correct game score to his or her Division Commissioner and Scorekeeper. If a game ends in a tie, both Managers should report the score. Sending a quick e-mail to the Division Commissioner and Scorekeeper on the night of the game or first thing in the morning is a very good approach. If the winning coach fails to report the score within a reasonable time frame, the game may be scored as a 1-1 tie. Since game scores are not recorded in the 6U division, there is no reporting requirement for 6U games.

- (a) Using the accurate and timely scores reported by winning Managers, Division Commissioners in the 8U, 10U and Senior divisions, together with the league Scorekeeper, maintain divisional standings. Standings are determined first and foremost by the total number of “points” earned in the games played. Points are defined as the sum of (i) the number of wins times 3, plus (ii) the number of ties. In other words, a team earns 3 points for each win, 1 point for each tie, and zero points for each loss. In the event of a tie between two or more teams on total points, the head-to-head result (if any) is the first tiebreaker. The Division Commissioner and/or Scorekeeper are responsible for reporting divisional standings on a timely, periodic basis. Generally, the divisional standings will be posted to SBMSA’s website for the viewing pleasure of all interested parties. No standings are kept for the 6U division.

3.13 **Forfeits:** Forfeits will be scored as a 1 to 0 loss for the forfeiting team. Grounds for forfeits of games are as follows:

- (a) Failing to appear ready for play with the required minimum number of eligible players by no later than ten (10) minutes after the scheduled game start time by the referee’s clock;

- (b) Failing to have a Team Manager, coach or responsible adult present on the field by no later than ten (10) minutes after the scheduled game start time by the referee's clock;
- (c) Refusing to play a scheduled game when requested to do so by the referee;
- (d) Failing to play because of the non-appearance of a designated referee in the 6U and 8U divisions;
- (e) Fielding an ineligible player;
- (f) Failing to play an eligible player for at least two quarters or 50% of the game;
- (g) Not controlling a player, coach, parent or supporter that has been ejected from the field; or
- (h) Breach of the Rules of Conduct or violation of other playing rules as determined by the Program Director.

3.14 **Protests:** The only protest allowed is a protest based on the contention that a team has violated the rules by playing an ineligible player; playing an eligible player less than the minimum playing time; using a suspended Manager, coach or player; or interference by a coach, supporter, or parent that affects the outcome of the game.

- (a) If a team desires to protest a game, such protest will be considered valid only if a full written protest is presented to the appropriate Division Commissioner or, in his or her absence, the Program Director within 24 hours of the game completion. If a protested game is played on a Saturday, the time limit for presentation will be extended to 48 hours from game completion. A protest sent via e-mail satisfies the "written" requirement of a protest. A protest sent via e-mail is deemed made at the time it is sent. All other protests are deemed made at the time received by the Division Commissioner or Program Director. For an ineligible or suspended player, the protest must give the name and playing number of the player in question. For a suspended Manager or coach, the protest must give the name of the person in question. Notwithstanding the above, the Soccer Board may hear a protest regarding violation of the player participation rules at any reasonable time, regardless of whether the Soccer Board received the protest with 24 hours.
- (b) The Soccer Board will undertake to make a ruling on the protest within 72 hours. If the protest is allowed, the offending team will forfeit the protested game, with the score reported as a 1 to 0 loss for the forfeiting team. No appeals are permitted.

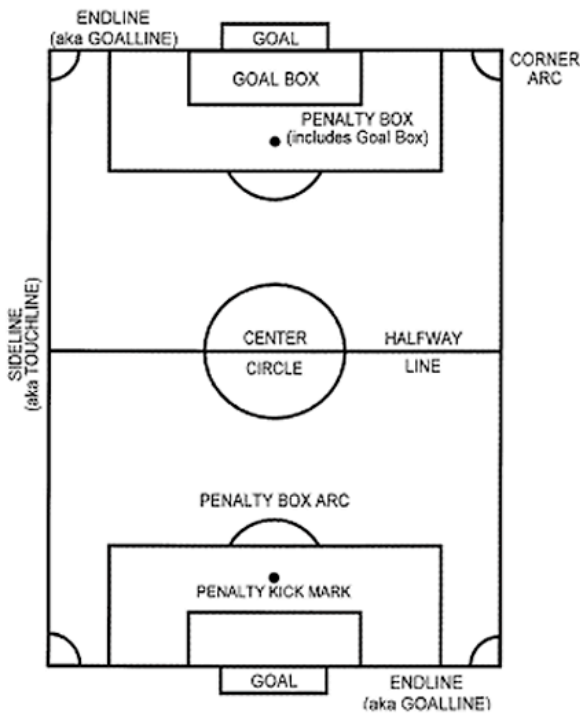
4.00 THE BASIC RULES OF SOCCER

For the playing rules of its youth soccer program, SBMSA takes as its starting point the official rules of soccer, which are called the *Laws of the Game*. The *Laws of the Game* are revised annually by FIFA, the world soccer governing body. You can find the most recent *Laws of the Game* at www.fifa.com (on the FIFA Home Page enter "Laws of the Game" in the search feature). There are seventeen (17) rules or "laws" in soccer. These 17 official FIFA rules are covered in the first 49 pages of the current version of the *Laws of the Game*, which runs to 140 pages. Much of the balance of the document is an interpretation of those rules and a guideline for referees. Soccer rules and their interpretation do not end with this official document: rule interpretations are discussed in referee clinics, special memos, videos for referees, and a guidebook for soccer officials that is 300+ pages long. Because the official soccer rules encompass such an extensive body of work, the presentation herein of the official soccer rules does not, and is not intended to, encompass every rule nuance of the game of soccer. However, we do believe that the following pages provide a very good treatment of the basic rules of soccer.

Like most youth soccer organizations, SBMSA modifies many of the FIFA soccer rules to fit children. Modifications include field sizes, ball sizes, game lengths, number of players per team, and how strictly "offside" is enforced. And, in many cases, these modifications vary by age group. Many of the rule modifications that SBMSA has made in its soccer program are the same as those recommended by US Youth Soccer Association, the youth affiliate of the United States Soccer Federation, the governing body for soccer in the United States.

Using the same structure as the official FIFA rules, SBMSA has organized its soccer playing rules into 17 laws. In presenting these 17 laws in the remainder of this Section 4, the official FIFA rule is summarized first, followed by the general rule modification (if any) that SBMSA has adopted for its soccer program. Because the specific rule modifications can vary from age group to age group, the specific rules for each age group are provided in the sections that follow this general treatment of the rules. The age-specific rule sections also use the 17-law format.

4.01 **Law 1—The Field of Play:** As per FIFA, a proper field of play is rectangular and consists of an outer boundary, two goals at opposite ends of the field, a penalty area, a goal area, a halfway line, and a few other specialized markings. The official specifications for the regulation size field are as follows:



- (a) **Dimensions:** The field of play must be rectangular. The length of the touch line (side line) must be greater than the length of the goal line (end line). These lines belong to the areas of which they are boundaries.
- (b) **Length (touch line):** Minimum 100 yards; maximum 130 yards.
- (c) **Width (goal line):** Minimum 50 yards; maximum 100 yards.
- (d) **Field Markings:** Distinctive lines not more than five (5) inches wide. The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The center mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of ten (10) yards is marked around it.

- (e) **The Goal Area:** The goal area (or goal box) is a rectangular area in front of each goal with a parallel line six (6) yards in front of the goal line joined by perpendicular lines six (6) yards from the inside of each goalpost.
- (f) **The Penalty Area:** The penalty area (or penalty box) is a rectangular area in front of each goal with a parallel line eighteen (18) yards in front of the goal line joined by perpendicular lines eighteen (18) yards from the inside of each goalpost. Within each penalty area, a penalty mark is made twelve (12) yards from the midpoint between the goalposts and equidistant to them. An arc of a circle with a radius of ten (10) yards from each penalty mark is drawn outside the penalty area.
- (g) **Flagposts:** A flagpost, not less than five (5) feet high, with a non-pointed top and a flag must be placed at each corner. Flagposts may also be placed at each end of the halfway line, not less than one (1) yard outside the touch line.
- (h) **The Corner Arc:** The corner arc is a quarter circle drawn inside the field of play at each corner having a radius of one (1) yard.
- (i) **Goals:** A goal must be placed on the center of each goal line. A goal consists of two upright posts equidistant from the corner flagposts and joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar. The goalposts and crossbar may be square, rectangular, round or elliptical in shape and must not be dangerous to players. The distance between the goalposts is eight (8) yards (that is, 24 feet wide) and the distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is eight (8) feet. Both goalposts and the crossbar have the same width and depth, which do not exceed five (5) inches. The goal lines must be of the same width as the goalposts and the crossbar. Nets may be attached to the goals and the ground behind the goal, provided that they are properly

supported and do not interfere with the goalkeeper.

- (j) **SBMSA Modifications:** Like most youth soccer leagues, SBMSA modifies the field size, making the field size progressively smaller for the progressively younger age groups. Likewise, the goal size and other field specifications are scaled down for the youth soccer game. SBMSA provides more guidance with regard to the field of play as follows. The goals and field markings (especially outer boundaries and penalty areas) must be sufficient for the referee to perform his essential duties and for the players to effectively play the game. The field of play must be safe for the players (for example, no dangerous holes). The field supervisor will be solely responsible for declaring a field playable until such time as the referee takes control of the game.

4.02 **Law 2—The Ball:** As per FIFA, the official ball size is five (5), which measures 27 to 28 inches in circumference and 14 to 16 ounces in weight. The ball should be inflated to 9.0 to 10.5 lbs per square inch.

- (a) **SBMSA Modifications:** Like most youth soccer leagues, SBMSA modifies the ball size, using smaller balls for smaller players. Smaller balls are lighter and more easily kicked, received, dribbled and passed. The 6U division uses a size three (3) ball, which measures 23 to 24 inches in circumference and 10 to 12 ounces in weight. The 8U and 10U divisions use a size four (4) ball, which measures 25 to 26 inches in circumference and 11 to 13 ounces in weight. The Senior division uses a size five (5) ball, the same as in official soccer.
- (b) The ball must be safe for the player to use. For example, a ball that is too hard or that has a sharp edge would be dangerous to players.

4.03 **Law 3—The Number of Players:** As per FIFA, a match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than eleven (11) players, one of whom is the goalkeeper. A match may not start if either team consists of fewer than seven (7) players. Any of the other players on the field may change places with the goalkeeper, provided the referee is informed prior to the change and the change is made during a stoppage in play. FIFA has a set of player-substitution rules and procedures that work well for the adult soccer game, but not that well for the youth game.

- (a) **SBMSA Modifications:** Like most youth soccer leagues, SBMSA modifies the number of players that play in a game, from four (4) players in the youngest age group to eleven (11) players in the oldest age group. As well, for each age group there is a specified minimum number of players required to play a valid game. If a team is unable to field the minimum number of players by no later than ten (10) minutes after the scheduled game start time (by the referee's clock), the game will be considered a forfeit and the game will be scored as a 1 to 0 loss for the forfeiting team. The number of players on each team should be comparable so that the game will be competitive. For example, six against eleven players would not be competitive and so is not recommended.
- (b) SBMSA modifies the FIFA **substitution rules** as follows. In the 8U, 10U and Senior divisions, substitutions can be made at the following times only: (i) at each quarter, (ii) after a yellow card is given, with the consent of the referee, and (iii) due to injury or illness, with the consent of the referee. In the 6U division, the rule is free substitution, meaning unlimited substitutions at any time. With regard to injuries, the **Blood Rule** shall be strictly enforced. Under the Blood Rule, any player who is bleeding must be replaced by a substitute and cannot

re-enter the game until the bleeding has *completely* stopped. The injured player may re-enter the game with the consent of the referee and must replace the designated substitute. Any player entering the game at times other than those stated above shall be considered an ineligible player. Except in the 6U division, an ejected player may not be replaced.

- (c) As more fully described in Rule 3.09, all players must play a **minimum of two (2) quarters**, which is 50% of the total playing time in regulation.

4.04 **Law 4—The Players' Equipment:** As per FIFA, players may not use equipment or wear anything that would be dangerous to himself or to another player (including any kind of jewelry). Shin guards are required to be worn, and they should be worn under the socks. FIFA also requires that the players for the two teams be easily distinguishable, with the goalkeepers and referee being easily recognizable from the other players. The goalkeeper shall wear a different color shirt than the referee and the other players (both teams).

- (a) **SBMSA Modifications:** SBMSA supplements these official equipment rules as follows: players shall not wear anything that is dangerous to another player—such as watches, rings, earrings, bracelets, chains, scarves—or increases the risk of injury to themselves. The Program Director or the referee makes the determination as to what is dangerous or not. Aluminum cleats are not allowed. Shoes with soft plastic molded cleats (soccer cleats, not baseball cleats) or sneakers may be worn by the players. No hard casts are allowed. The referee must approve of any casts other than hard casts.
- (b) Additionally, SBMSA requires that the **uniforms** issued by the league to the players be worn at all games. Teams are not allowed to participate in league games wearing uniforms not issued by SBMSA. An individual player who shows up at a game without part or parts of his SBMSA uniform is given some leeway. If an individual player (or players) has the same or similar color jersey, shorts and/or socks as his team's SBMSA uniform, that player may be allowed to participate in the game at the discretion of the referee. When teams appear for a game with the same or very similar color jerseys, the home team will play in practice jerseys if available.

4.05 **Law 5—The Referee:** As per FIFA, each match is controlled by a referee who has full authority to enforce the *Laws of the Game* in connection with the match to which he has been appointed. The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play, including whether or not a goal is scored and the result of the match, are final.

- (a) **SBMSA Modifications:** SBMSA modifies and supplements these official referee rules as follows. The referee has complete authority for controlling the game and enforcing the applicable rules of soccer for the subject age group. The referee's authority starts from the time he enters the field of play and ends at the time he exits the field complex at the end of the game. The referee's decisions are final.
- (b) The referee's duty is to ensure that the game is played fairly and safely for the maximum enjoyment of the players with as little interference by the referee as possible. The referee acts as the timekeeper and keeps a record of the game.
- (c) The referee can stop the game for infringement of the rules. The referee shall enforce the rules of soccer, but shall refrain from stopping the game for an infraction if he believes that by doing so the offending team would gain an advantage. If the advantage does not materialize,

the referee may then call the foul within a reasonable period of time (2-3 seconds, say). This is the so-called “advantage clause”.

- (d) The referee can suspend or terminate a game whenever he deems it necessary (example: severe weather or interference by spectators or coaches). The referee can caution a player and shall eject from play any player guilty of violent conduct or serious foul play, using foul or abusive language, or persistent infringement of the playing rules.
- (e) The referee can eject from the game any player, coach, parent or fan for unsportsmanlike conduct. And the referee can terminate a match, resulting in a forfeit to the offending team, if a coach or spectator refuses to leave the premises after being ejected.
- (f) In the event a referee is not assigned by the league or fails to appear for the game, the coaches may mutually agree upon an official from available personnel. This official will be considered the referee, and his decisions and call of the play will be binding upon both teams.

4.06 **Law 6—The Assistant Referees:** As per FIFA, there may be two assistant referees (sometimes called “linesman”) who help the referee control the 11-on-11 game. One on each side line, they mainly “call the lines” and offside, but can also report fouls and advise the referee. On throw-ins, they indicate when the ball is out-of-bounds by pointing the flag in the direction in which the attackers will advance. The referee always makes the final decision of the action to be taken even if the initial signal is to the contrary. Only the referee can stop the game.

- (a) **SBMSA Modifications:** SBMSA will not provide any assistant referees for games.

4.07 **Law 7—The Duration of the Match:** As per FIFA, the official game time is two 45-minute halves, with a half-time interval of fifteen (15) minutes. Time shall be extended to allow a penalty kick to be taken.

- (a) **SBMSA Modifications:** Like most youth soccer leagues, SBMSA modifies the match by breaking the game into four (4) equal quarters. The youth game times are much shorter than the 90-minute official game time. Depending on the age group, the duration of the match is 40 to 68 minutes. As well, half-time breaks are shorter, and there is a small break between quarters. The players are entitled to the entire designated playing time for the game unless the game must be suspended.

4.08 **Law 8—The Start and Restart of Play:** As per FIFA, a kick-off is a way of starting or restarting play at the start of the game, the start of subsequent periods, and after a goal has been scored. The first kick-off of the game is determined by a coin toss. The kick-off is taken at the center of the field, and the ball must be stationary on the ground at that center spot. In a kick-off, all players must line up in their own half of the field, opponents must be at least ten (10) yards away from the ball until it is put in play, and the ball has to move forward to start play. The kicker must not touch the ball again until it has touched another player. If the kicker infringes this rule, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team to be taken from the spot where the infringement occurred. Since the kick-off is considered to be a direct kick, a goal can be scored directly from a kick-off.

- (a) Continuing on with the official FIFA rules, in a kick-off, every player on each team must be in his own half of the field, and all players of the team opposing the kicker must be outside the center circle when the ball is put into play. If this rule is violated, the kick-off shall be

retaken. In a kick-off, the ball is in play when it is kicked and moves forward.

- (b) As per FIFA, if, while the ball is still in play, the referee temporarily stops play for any reason not otherwise mentioned in the *Laws of the Game*, the match is restarted with a dropped ball. The referee drops the ball at the place where it was located when play was stopped, and play restarts when the ball touches the ground. A player may not play the ball until it touches the ground. If this rule is violated, the dropped ball shall be retaken. A goal may be scored directly from a dropped ball. If the ball is out of play at the time of the stoppage, play will continue from that point when the game is restarted (i.e., throw-ins, corner kicks, goal kicks).
- (c) **SBMSA Modifications:** SBMSA modifies and supplements these official start/restart rules as follows. In the coin toss for the first kick-off of the game, the team that wins the toss decides which goal it will attack in the first quarter. The team that lost the coin toss takes the kick-off to start the game. Kick-offs are then alternated at the start of subsequent quarters. At half time, the teams shall change ends and attack the opposite goals.
- (d) Like most youth soccer leagues, SBMSA modifies the distance which the young defender must stand back from the ball on kick-offs. Because opposing players must be outside the center circle when the ball is put into play, defenders must stay back at a distance consistent with the radius of the center circle. Thus in the in the 6U division, all defenders must stand four (4) yards back until the ball is put in play. In the 8U and 10U divisions, all defenders must be eight (8) yards away from the ball. The distance in the Senior division is ten (10) yards, the same as FIFA.
- (e) In the 6U division, a goal cannot be scored directly from the kick-off. If that happens, the kick-off is replayed. SBMSA deviates from FIFA for the 6U players in a bid to encourage them to dribble, pass and work together as a team. A player should not be rewarded for starting play by taking a big kick on an empty goal in the middle of the field.

4.09 **Law 9—The Ball In and Out of Play:** As per FIFA, the ball is out of play when it *completely* goes over the goal line or touch line. It doesn't matter whether it is in the air or on the ground. The ball is also out of play when the game has been stopped by the referee. The ball is in play at all other times, including when the ball rebounds off a goalpost, crossbar or corner flagpost and remains in the field of play. The ball is also in play when it rebounds off either the referee or an assistant referee when they are on the field of play. Said differently, the play continues unless the referee stops the game or unless the ball goes entirely outside of the field of play.

4.10 **Law 10—The Method of Scoring:** As per FIFA, the ball must go completely across the line into the goal for a goal to be scored. Said differently, a goal is scored when the whole of the ball crosses the goal line between the goalposts and under the crossbar, provided it was not thrown, carried, or intentionally propelled by arm or hand by an attacking player (except the goalkeeper who throws the ball from his own penalty area). If a defending player deflects the ball with his hand or arm and the ball goes in the goal, a goal is scored. Each goal scored counts one point. The team scoring the greater number of goals during the game wins the match. When competition rules require there to be a winning team after a match or home-and-away tie, the only permitted procedures for determining the winning team are as follows: (i) away goals rule, (ii) extra time, or (iii) kicks from the penalty mark.

- (a) **SBMSA Modifications:** SBMSA's rules of competition do not require there to be a winning team in regular-season games. In other words, regular-season games may end in a tie. In the playoffs, however, there must be a winning team. In the playoffs, if a game is tied at the end

of regulation play, the outcome will be decided by a tiebreaker using penalty kicks. SBMSA's procedures for the penalty-kick tiebreaker are detailed in Rule 10.03.

4.11 **Law 11—Offside:** Undoubtedly, offside is the most difficult rule in soccer to understand. The offside rule is designed to prevent attacking players from hanging out by the opposing goal and waiting for an easy chance to score. In this short paragraph, a simplified explanation of this rule is provided. As per FIFA, a player is in an offside position if, when he is on his opponent's half of the field, he is past both the ball and the second to last defender (where the last defender is usually the opposing goalkeeper). It is not an offense in itself to be in an offside position. A player in an offside position commits an offside offense when, at the *moment* the ball is played by his teammate, he or his team is judged by the referee to be gaining an advantage by his being in that position. There is no offside offense if a player receives the ball directly from a goal kick, corner kick, or throw-in. The penalty for an offside offense is that an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team to be taken from the place where the offside occurred.

- (a) For the inspired reader, the following is a more detailed explanation of the offside rule. To be charged with an offside offense, a player is required to be doing two things: (i) be in an "offside position" at the "moment" the ball is played by a teammate, and (ii) be involved in "active play". To be in an "offside position", a player must be on the opponent's half of the field and be closer to the opponent's goal line than both the ball and the second-to-last defender. A player is *not* in an offside position if he is on his own half of the field, even with the second-to-last defender, or even with the last two defenders. As the word "moment" implies in the definition of offside, the precise timing of when a player is and is not in the offside position is critical. For example, if a player who is even with the second-to-last defender runs past such defender a split second after his teammate makes a through pass, the player is not offside because he was in an onside position at the *moment* the ball was played. This would be an example of one of those situations (perplexing to some) where a player can be in an "offside position" without being offside. Of course, being in an offside position at the right moment in time is only the first of the two necessary conditions for being judged offside. The second is that the player in the offside position must also be involved in "active play" by either: (i) gaining an advantage by being in that position, or (ii) interfering with play, or (iii) interfering with an opponent. So the classic offside offense is committed by the player who, from an "offside position", receives a through pass and becomes a scoring threat. Such player is clearly gaining an advantage and is certainly involved in the play. But what about less clear-cut scenarios such as when an on-ball attacker is to the right of the goal and his teammate is in an "offside position" to the left of the goal? These can be tough, judgment calls for the referee. On the one hand, the referee could say the player in the offside position was not offside because he was not involved in the play. But on the other hand, the referee could argue that there was an offside offense on the basis that advantage was gained from the offside position because the goalkeeper had to worry about the possibility of a crossing pass. In this case, the referee's decision might depend on whether he felt the goalkeeper was influenced by the player in the offside position. Now, no rule is complete without its exceptions. In the case of offside, the exception is that a player is not offside if he receives the ball directly from a goal kick, corner kick, or throw-in, even if he is in an "offside position". However, once touched, the offside rule starts and if it is then played to a player in an "offside position", offside may be called. A player is also not offside if he passes the ball backward,

even if doing so leaves him in an "offside position". The penalty for an offside offense is that an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team to be taken from the place where the offside occurred.

- (b) **SBMSA Modifications:** While many youth soccer leagues choose not to enforce the offside rule, SBMSA believes that it is better to learn and play by this distinctive soccer rule at an early age. Thus, starting with the 8U division and up, SBMSA enforces offside. It is only with the 6U division that SBSMA does not apply the offside rule.

4.12 **Law 12—Fouls and Misconduct:** As per FIFA, fouls are penalized by awarding free kicks to the opponent, and players who engage in misconduct are disciplined according to the nature of the offense committed. The referee has the authority to take disciplinary sanctions from the moment he enters the field of play until he leaves the field of play after the final whistle. The official rules on direct kick fouls (there are 10 of them), handling the ball (one of the 10 direct kick fouls), indirect kick fouls (8 of them), yellow cards (for cautionable offenses), red cards (for ejections) and the advantage clause are discussed below.

- (a) **Direct Kick Fouls:** This is a foul for which the other team receives a "direct free kick", meaning a goal can be scored by kicking the ball straight into the goal or a "penalty kick" if the foul occurs within the offender's penalty area. A direct free kick is taken from the place where the offense occurred. A direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following seven (7) offenses in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless or using excessive force.

- (1) kicks or attempts to kick an opponent;
- (2) trips or attempts to trip an opponent;
- (3) jumps at an opponent;
- (4) charges an opponent;
- (5) strikes or attempts to strike an opponent;
- (6) pushes an opponent; or
- (7) tackles an opponent.

A direct free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following three (3) offenses:

- (8) holds an opponent;
- (9) spits at an opponent; or
- (10) handles the ball deliberately (except for the goalkeeper within his own penalty area).

A penalty kick is awarded if any of the above ten (10) offenses is committed by a player inside his own penalty area, irrespective of the position of the ball, provided it is in play.

- (b) **Handling The Ball:** "Deliberately handling the ball" is the 10th direct kick foul. This foul should be called if a player (other than the goalkeeper inside his own penalty area) *deliberately* handles the ball, meaning he deliberately touches the ball with any part of the arm from the finger tips to the top of the shoulder. If the player handles it for the purpose of preventing an opponent from gaining possession, a yellow card should be given. If a player deliberately handles the ball to deny an obvious goal scoring opportunity, a red card should be given and the player ejected from the game. A violation should not be called if a player is instinctively

trying to protect himself from injury, or if the player did not deliberately touch the ball but the ball hit the arm while it was in a natural position near the player's side and had not been moved toward the ball. However, if the player's arms were in an unnatural position such as above his shoulders or sticking out to the sides, then he should be called for deliberately handling the ball.

- (c) **Indirect Kick Fouls:** This is a foul for which the other team receives an "indirect free kick", meaning a goal may not be scored until the ball has been played or touched by another player of either team. The indirect free kick is taken from the place where the offense occurred. An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following four (4) offenses:
- (1) plays in a dangerous manner;
 - (2) obstructs or impedes the progress of an opponent;
 - (3) prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands; or
 - (4) commits any other offense, not previously mentioned in Law 12, for which play is stopped to caution (via yellow card) or dismiss a player (via red card).

There are also indirect kick fouls that only apply to the goalkeeper and only if committed inside the penalty area. (Please note that the goalkeeper is treated like a regular field player when he is outside the penalty area.) An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper, inside his own penalty area, commits any of the following four (4) offenses:

- (5) delays the game by controlling the ball with his hands for more than six (6) seconds before releasing it from his possession;
 - (6) touches the ball again with his hands after he has released it from his possession and before it has touched another player;
 - (7) touches the ball with his hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him by a teammate;
 - (8) touches the ball with his hands after he has received it directly from a throw-in taken by a teammate.
- (d) **Yellow Cards and Cautionable Offenses:** As per FIFA, the yellow card is used to communicate that a player has been cautioned. A player is cautioned and shown the yellow card if he or she does, among other things, the following: persistently infringes the *Laws of the Game*; dissents from any decision by the referee; engages in unsportsmanlike conduct; or enters the game without the referee's permission.
- (e) **SBMSA Yellow Card Modifications:** SBMSA modifies the yellow card rules to give the referee full authority to enforce (i) good sportsmanship and the rules of the game for players on the field; and (ii) good sportsmanship for players, coaches, parents and fans off the field. As such, a referee may issue a yellow card to any player, coach, parent or fan for violation of the Rules of Conduct (see Section 9.00). The referee has the discretion to verbally warn the player, coach, parent or fan before issuing such person a yellow card. Because a second yellow card means ejection from the game, the issuance of a yellow card is effectively the last warning before ejection. A coach may substitute out a yellow-carded player at the time the yellow card is issued, but such yellow-carded player may only return to the field at one of the regular substitution periods. In the 6U division, no cards (yellow or red) are shown to players for misconduct.

- (f) **Red Cards and Sending-off Offenses:** As per FIFA, the red card is used to communicate that a player has been sent off, meaning ejected from the game. A player is shown the red card and ejected if he or she does, among other things, the following: engages in violent conduct or serious foul play; uses foul or abusive language; or receives a second yellow card in the same match. An ejected player may not be replaced, resulting in his team having to play short.
 - (g) **SBMSA Red Card Modifications:** SBMSA modifies the red card rules to give the referee full authority to enforce (i) good sportsmanship and the rules of the game for players on the field; and (ii) good sportsmanship for players, coaches, parents and fans off the field. As such, a referee may issue a red card to any player, coach, parent or fan for violation of the Rules of Conduct (see Section 9.00). It is at the referee's discretion as to what constitutes a red card infraction. A red card may be issued without any previous warning depending on the severity of the offense. Or a red card can be issued after a previous yellow card warning. In the 6U division, no cards (yellow or red) are shown to players for misconduct. However, a 6U player can still be ejected from the game. In the 6U division only, an ejected player may be replaced.
 - (i) Whereas a red card for a player means ejection from the game, a red card for a coach, parent or fan means ejection from the premises. If a red card is issued to a coach, parent or fan and they refuse to leave the premises, the referee will call the game and declare a forfeit, with the score reported as a 1 to 0 loss for the forfeiting team.
 - (ii) In addition to being ejected from the current game, as per Rule 9.04 there is a mandatory suspension for the next game for any coach, parent or fan who receives a red card for poor sportsmanship. A red-carded player may or may not be suspended from the next game. The decision rests with the Program Director and Soccer Board, and will be based on the level of poor sportsmanship exhibited by the red-carded player in the particular offense that led to his or her ejection.
 - (iii) Coaches must report all red card ejections (their team or the opposing team) to their Division Commissioner within 24 hours of the match. In addition, referees will report all red cards and details to a league official within 24 hours of the match.
 - (h) **Advantage Clause:** As per Law 5, the referee may, at his discretion, decide not to stop play due to a foul if stopping play would give an advantage to the offending team. The idea is that the team that was fouled should not be punished by having an attack stopped which might result in a goal and, conversely, that the team which committed the foul should not gain an advantage as a result of the foul. An offending player may still be cautioned or ejected from the game even if a free kick is not awarded due to application of the advantage clause.
 - (i) **SBMSA Goalkeeper Rule Modifications:** In the name of protecting the goalkeeper, SBMSA modifies certain FIFA rules. Under SBMSA's so-called "Goalkeeper Possession Rule", the goalkeeper shall be considered to have possession of the ball at any time (i) the ball is motionless and being touched by any part of the goalkeeper's body, (ii) the ball is trapped by the goalkeeper, or (iii) the ball is held by the goalkeeper. When the ball is in the possession of the goalkeeper, offensive players may not charge him, attempt to kick the ball, or attempt to block the goalkeeper's kick. SBMSA provides more guidance with regard to goalkeepers as follows. The goalkeeper may take as many steps as he wants and run anywhere within the penalty area with the ball in his possession. However, the goalkeeper may not waste playing time through stalling tactics. There are no goalkeepers in the 6U division.
- 4.13 **Law 13—Free Kicks:** As per FIFA, when one team is penalized for a foul, the other team is usually awarded a "free kick". There are two types of free kicks: a direct free kick and an indirect free kick.

There is also a special type of direct free kick called a penalty kick. If a direct free kick is kicked directly into the opponent's goal, a goal is scored. If an indirect free kick (defined as a kick where a goal can be scored only if the ball subsequently touches another player before it enters the goal) is kicked directly into the opponent's goal, the goal does not count and the other team is awarded a goal kick. Direct free kicks are awarded only for the ten (10) direct kick fouls under Law 12. All other offenses are penalized with an indirect free kick award unless specifically stated otherwise in the Law describing the offense. When a player commits a direct kick foul inside his own penalty area, the other team is given a penalty kick.

- (a) **All Free Kicks (FIFA):** For all direct and indirect free kicks, all opponents must be at least ten (10) yards from the ball until it is in play. If this distance rule is violated, the free kick is retaken. For all free kicks, the ball must be stationary when the kick is taken, and the kicker must not touch the ball again until it has touched another player. The offside rule applies on all free kicks.
- (b) **Free Kicks Outside the Penalty Area (FIFA):** When the foul that gave rise to the free kick award occurred outside the penalty area, the free kick is taken from the place where the infringement occurred. All opponents must be at least ten (10) yards from the ball until it is in play. The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves.
- (c) **Free Kicks Inside the Penalty Area Taken by Defending Team (FIFA):** When the foul that gave rise to the free kick award to the defending team occurred inside its own penalty area, the free kick is taken from the place where the infringement occurred. However, a free kick awarded in the goal area may be taken from *any* point within that goal area, including on the line. All opponents must be at least ten (10) yards from the ball and must remain outside the penalty area until the ball is in play. The ball is in play when it is kicked directly out of the penalty area. If the ball is not kicked directly out of the penalty area, the kick is retaken.
- (d) **Indirect Free Kicks Inside the Penalty Area Taken by Attacking Team (FIFA):** When the foul that gave rise to the indirect free kick award to the attacking team occurred inside the defending team's penalty area, the indirect free kick is taken from the place where the infringement occurred. However, an indirect free kick awarded inside the goal area must be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred. All opponents must be at least ten (10) yards from the ball until it is in play, unless they are on their own goal line between the goalposts. The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves.
- (e) **Direct Free Kicks Inside the Penalty Area Taken by Attacking Team (FIFA):** This is a "penalty kick" and is the subject of Law 14 below.
- (f) **SBMSA Modifications:** SBMSA modifies the official free kick rules as follows. In the 6U division, there are no indirect kicks. All free kicks are direct kicks regardless of the spot and type of foul. Using direct kicks exclusively should keep the 6U game flowing and keep the attention of the kids. In the 8U division, indirect kicks awarded to the attacking team in the penalty area are moved back from the point of infraction (to a specified point) for the safety of the defenders. Like most youth soccer leagues, SBMSA modifies the distance which the young defender must stand back from the ball on free kicks. Defenders must stay four (4) yards back in the 6U division and eight (8) yards back in the 8U and 10U divisions. The Senior division is ten (10) yards, the same as FIFA. SBMSA encourages teams to take their free kicks without delay and without interference from the opposing team so that the game can proceed as rapidly as possible.

4.14 **Law 14—The Penalty Kick:** As per FIFA, a penalty kick is a special type of direct free kick. When a player commits any one of the ten direct kicks fouls within his own penalty area, the other team is awarded a penalty kick. On a penalty kick, a player from the fouled team gets a free shot at goal from the penalty mark, which is twelve (12) yards out from the goal, with only the goalkeeper to stop the shot. All players except the kicker and the goalkeeper must be outside the penalty area, behind the penalty mark and at least ten (10) yards away from the penalty mark until the ball is kicked. The goalkeeper must remain on the goal line until the ball is kicked, but he can move laterally along the goal line between the goalposts before the ball is kicked. The goalkeeper cannot take actions (such as waving his arms or yelling) to try to intentionally distract the kicker because that would be "unsporting". Nor, for the same reason, can the kicker start his run and then stop for the purpose of faking the goalkeeper. The player taking the penalty kick must kick the ball forward. Once the ball is kicked and moves forward, it is in play and can then be touched by any player other than the kicker. The kicker must not play the ball again until it has touched another player. A goal may be scored directly from a penalty kick. Additional time is allowed for a penalty kick to be taken at the end of regulation periods or at the end of periods of extra time.

- (a) Continuing on with the official FIFA rules, if, after the penalty kick has been taken, the kicker touches the ball a second time (except with his hands) before it has touched another player, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team. However, if the kicker deliberately touches the ball with his hands before it has touched another player, a direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team. Under these rules, if a kicker played the ball immediately after his penalty kick bounced back off the goalpost or crossbar, he would be in violation and the opposing team would get a free kick.
- (b) **SBMSA Modifications:** SBMSA modifies the official penalty kick rules as follows. In the 6U division, there are no penalty kicks. All free kicks in the 6U game are direct kicks regardless of the spot and type of foul. Like most youth soccer leagues, SBMSA modifies the various penalty-kick distances. In the 8U and 10U divisions, the penalty mark is at nine (9) yards, and players other than the kicker and the goalkeeper must be at least 8 yards from the penalty mark. Penalty-kick distances in the Senior division conform to FIFA. SBMSA encourages teams to take their penalty kicks without delay and without interference from the opposing team so that the game can proceed as rapidly as possible.

4.15 **Law 15—The Throw-In:** As per FIFA, a throw-in is a method of restarting play after the whole of the ball crosses the touch line (side line), either on the ground or in the air. A throw-in is awarded to the opponents of the player who last touched the ball before it went out of play to the side. For a proper throw-in, at the moment of delivering the ball, the thrower must (i) face the field, (ii) have part of each foot on the ground either on the touch line or outside the field of play, (iii) hold the ball with both hands, and (iv) deliver the ball from behind and over his head. If the throw-in is improper, a throw-in from the same place shall be awarded to the opposing team. All opponents must stand no less than two (2) yards from the point at which the throw-in is taken. The ball is in play immediately upon entering the field of play, but may not be played by the thrower before being touched by another player. A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in.

- (a) **SBMSA Modifications:** While some youth soccer leagues choose not to enforce the rules on throw-ins or allow the young player two chances at a proper throw-in, SBMSA believes that it is important to teach the proper technique on throw-ins at an early age. Thus, starting with the

8U division and up, SBMSA fully enforces the throw-in rules. This means that no re-takes on throw-ins are allowed. There are no throw-ins in the 6U division since most 6U players do not yet have the eye-hand coordination to execute a proper throw-in. Throw-ins are replaced with “kick-ins”. For a kick-in, the ball is placed on the ground and stationary so that the player has a better chance of striking it correctly. SBMSA encourages teams to take their throw-ins without delay so that the game can proceed as rapidly as possible.

4.16 **Law 16—The Goal Kick:** As per FIFA, a goal kick is a method of restarting play after the attacking team kicks the ball over the goal line. When the entire ball goes out of bounds over the goal line (end line), either on the ground or in the air, and was last touched by the attacking team, a goal kick is awarded to the defending team. In a goal kick, a player on the defending team kicks the ball from *any* point within the goal area, including on the line. The kicked ball cannot be touched by anyone on either team until it clears the penalty area. All opposing players must remain outside the penalty area until the ball clears the penalty area. The kicking team can be in the penalty area or can run across it, but cannot touch the ball until it clears the penalty area. Once the ball travels outside the penalty area, it is in play. If the ball does not travel outside the penalty area, the kick shall be retaken. The kicker cannot play the ball again until it has been touched by another player. A goal may be scored directly from a goal kick, but only against the opposing team.

- (a) **SBMSA Modifications:** SBMSA modifies the official goal kick rule only for the 6U division. The goal kick should be taken within two or three yards of the goal line anywhere across the width of the field of play at the nearest point from where the ball was retrieved. This modification allows the ball to be put back into play quickly, thereby keeping the 6U game flowing and keeping the attention of the kids. SBMSA encourages teams to take their goal kicks without delay and without interference from the opposing team so that the game can proceed as rapidly as possible.

4.17 **Law 17—The Corner Kick:** As per FIFA, a corner kick is a method of restarting play after the defending team kicks the ball over its own goal line. When the entire ball goes out of bounds over the goal line (end line), either on the ground or in the air, and was last touched by the defending team, the attacking team inbounds it from the nearest corner by kicking it in from the corner arc. The ball may be placed anywhere inside the corner arc or on the corner arc lines. All defending players must stay ten (10) yards back from the ball. If they do not, they might get a yellow card. The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves. The kicker may not play the ball a second time until it has touched another player. If the kicker touches the ball again (except with his hands) before it has touched another player, the opposing team shall be awarded an indirect free kick. For other corner-kick violations, the kick is retaken. A player is not offside if he receives the ball from a corner kick. A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.

- (a) **SBMSA Modifications:** Like many youth soccer leagues, SBMSA modifies the distance which the young defender must stand back from the ball on corner kicks. Defenders must stay four (4) yards back in the 6U division and eight (8) yards back in the 8U and 10U divisions. The Senior division is ten (10) yards, the same as FIFA.

5.00 PLAYING RULES FOR 6U DIVISION

The 6U soccer game has been designed with four (4) or five (5) players per side and with no goalkeepers so that all players may chase the ball around the field, getting lots of touches and developing their running, dribbling, kicking and passing skills. To promote such a game, no defensive player will be permitted to play a zone-type defense, hanging out by his or her goal as a de facto goalkeeper. (Again, there are no goalkeepers in the 6U game.) Nor is any offensive player permitted to play a zone-type offense, hanging out by the opponent's goal in the hope of scoring an easy goal. The semi-circles around the goals have been drawn to help the referee enforce the no goalkeeper, no zone defense, and no zone offense aspects of the 6U game.

5.01 **Law 1—The Field of Play:** The specifications for the scaled-down size field are as follows:

- (a) **Dimensions:** The field of play must be rectangular. The touch line (side line) must be longer than the goal line (end line).
- (b) **Length:** Minimum 25 yards; maximum 50 yards.
- (c) **Width:** Minimum 20 yards; maximum 40 yards.
- (d) **Field Markings:** Distinctive lines not more than (5) inches wide. The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The center mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of two (2) yards is marked around it.
- (e) **The Goal Area:** A semi-circle with a radius of three (3) yards is marked in front of each goal. No players, on offense or defense, are allowed to position themselves inside these semi-circles until the action of the ball has moved to the area in and around the goal.
- (f) **The Penalty Area:** None.
- (g) **Flagposts:** None.
- (h) **The Corner Arc:** Conform to FIFA.
- (i) **Goals:** Conform to FIFA with exception that the distance between the posts is 18 feet and the distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is 6 feet. Goals may be smaller in dimension.

5.02 **Law 2—The Ball:** Size three (3).

5.03 **Law 3—The Number of Players:** A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than four (4) players in the girls division and five (5) players in the boys division. A match may not start if either team consists of fewer than three (3) players. There are no goalkeepers.

- (a) Free substitution, meaning unlimited substitutions at any time.
- (b) All players must play a minimum of two (2) quarters, which is 50% of the total playing time in regulation.

5.04 **Law 4—The Players' Equipment:** Conform to FIFA, together with the SBMSA rule modifications (of Rule 4.04) that apply to all age groups.

5.05 **Law 5—The Referee:** Generally a USSF-registered referee. All rule infringements shall be briefly explained to the offending player. The referee's authority, power and duties conform to FIFA, together with the SBMSA rule modifications (of Rule 4.05) that apply to all age groups.

- 5.06 **Law 6—The Assistant Referees:** None.
- 5.07 **Law 7—The Duration of the Match:** The 40-minute match shall be divided into four (4) equal, ten (10) minute quarters. There shall be a 3 minute break between quarters one and two and another 3 minute break between quarters three and four. There shall be a half-time interval of 5 minutes. At the discretion of the referee, the breaks can be extended (e.g., very hot Houston day).
- 5.08 **Law 8—The Start and Restart of Play:** Conform to FIFA, together with the SBMSA rule modifications. All defenders must stand 4 yards back from the ball on kick-offs. A goal cannot be scored directly from the kick-off. If that happens, the kick-off is replayed.
- 5.09 **Law 9—The Ball In and Out of Play:** Conform to FIFA.
- 5.10 **Law 10—The Method of Scoring:** Conform to FIFA. Game scores are not recorded.
- 5.11 **Law 11—Offside:** None.
- 5.12 **Law 12—Fouls and Misconduct:** Conform to FIFA, with the following exceptions. All fouls shall result in a direct free kick. The referee must explain all infringements to the offending player. No cards shown for misconduct. An ejected player may be replaced.
- 5.13 **Law 13—Free Kicks:** Conform to FIFA, with the exceptions that all free kicks are direct and all opponents are at least 4 yards from the ball until it is in play.
- (a) All free kicks should be spotted so that there is at least six (6) yards between the spot of the ball and the goal. Thus, if the point of infraction is within 6 yards of the goal line between the goalposts, the ball should be moved straight back and placed at a spot that is 6 yards away from the goal line.
- 5.14 **Law 14—The Penalty Kick:** None.
- 5.15 **Law 15—The “Kick-In”:** There are no throw-ins. Throw-ins are replaced with “kick-ins”. For a kick-in, the ball is placed on the ground and stationary so that the player has a better chance of striking it correctly. A kick-in is considered as a direct free kick with the opponents 4 yards from the ball until it is in play.
- 5.16 **Law 16—The Goal Kick:** The goal kick should be taken within 2 to 3 yards of the goal line anywhere across the width of the field of play at the nearest point from where the ball was retrieved. Opposing players must be 4 yards away from the ball until it is in play.
- 5.17 **Law 17—The Corner Kick:** Conform to FIFA, with the exception that opponents remain at least 4 yards away from the ball until it is in play.

6.00 PLAYING RULES FOR 8U DIVISION

- 6.01 **Law 1—The Field of Play:** The specifications for the scaled-down size field are as follows:
- (a) **Dimensions:** The field of play must be rectangular. The touch line (side line) must be longer than the goal line (end line).
 - (b) **Length:** Minimum 60 yards; maximum 80 yards.
 - (c) **Width:** Minimum 40 yards; maximum 60 yards.
 - (d) **Field Markings:** Distinctive lines not more than 5 inches wide. The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The center mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of eight (8) yards is marked around it.
 - (e) **The Goal Area:** The goal area is a rectangular area in front of each goal with a parallel line 6 yards in front of the goal line joined by perpendicular lines 6 yards from the inside of each goalpost. (This conforms to FIFA.)
 - (f) **The Penalty Area:** The penalty area is a rectangular area in front of each goal with a parallel line 13.5 yards in front of the goal line joined by perpendicular lines 13.5 yards from the inside of each goalpost. Within each penalty area, a penalty mark is made nine (9) yards from the midpoint between the goalposts and equidistant to them. An arc of a circle with a radius of 8 yards from each penalty mark is drawn outside the penalty area.
 - (g) **Flagposts:** None.
 - (h) **The Corner Arc:** Conform to FIFA.
 - (i) **Goals:** Conform to FIFA, with the exception that the distance between the posts is 18 feet and the distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is 6 feet.
- 6.02 **Law 2—The Ball:** Size four (4).
- 6.03 **Law 3—The Number of Players:** A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than nine (9) players, one of whom is the goalkeeper. A match may not start if either team consists of fewer than seven (7) players.
- (a) All players must play a minimum of two (2) quarters, which is 50% of the total playing time in regulation.
 - (b) No substitutions except at the quarter, half or for an injury. Injured player may return. Blood Rule to apply.
- 6.04 **Law 4—The Players' Equipment:** Conform to FIFA, plus SBMSA rule modifications.
- (a) No jewelry, watches, rings, or anything that could cause harm to any player. No aluminum cleats. No hard casts allowed. Other casts subject to referee approval.
 - (b) All players must wear shin guards. Shin guards should be worn under socks.
- 6.05 **Law 5—The Referee:** Generally a USSF-registered referee. All rule infringements shall be briefly explained to the offending player. The referee's authority, power and duties conform to FIFA, together with the SBMSA rule modifications (of Rule 4.05) that apply to all age groups.

- 6.06 **Law 6—The Assistant Referees:** None.
- 6.07 **Law 7—The Duration of the Match:** The 48-minute match shall be divided into four (4) equal, twelve (12) minute quarters. There shall be a 3 minute break between quarters one and two and another 3 minute break between quarters three and four. There shall be a half-time interval of 5 minutes. At the discretion of the referee, the breaks can be extended (e.g., very hot Houston day).
- 6.08 **Law 8—The Start and Restart of Play:** Conform to FIFA, plus SBMSA modifications.
- (a) Kick-off each quarter. Alternate kick-offs by team each quarter. Reverse sides at the half. Goals can be scored from kick-offs and goal kicks.
 - (b) Consistent with the radius of the center circle, all defenders must stand 8 yards back from the ball on kick-offs.
- 6.09 **Law 9—The Ball In and Out of Play:** Conform to FIFA.
- 6.10 **Law 10—The Method of Scoring:** Conform to FIFA.
- 6.11 **Law 11—Offside:** Conform to FIFA.
- 6.12 **Law 12—Fouls and Misconduct:** Conform to FIFA, plus SBMSA rule modifications. The referee must explain all infringements to the offending player.
- (a) The goalkeeper shall be considered to have possession of the ball at any time ball is motionless and being touched by any part of the goalkeeper's body, trapped, or held.
- 6.13 **Law 13—Free Kicks:** Conform to FIFA, with the following exceptions. For indirect kicks awarded to the attacking team in the penalty area and outside the goal area, the indirect kick is taken at the penalty area line nearest to the point of infraction.
- (a) For indirect kicks awarded to the attacking team in the goal area, the indirect kick is taken at the imaginary nine (9) yard line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to the point of infraction. Said differently, the ball is placed three (3) yards away from the goal area line that is parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to the point of infraction. Such placement would leave the ball on a line parallel with the penalty mark, which is set at 9 yards from the goal line.
 - (b) On all free kicks, opponents must stand at least 8 yards from ball until it is in play.
- 6.14 **Law 14—The Penalty Kick:** Conform to FIFA, with the exceptions that the penalty mark is at nine (9) yards and that players other than the kicker and defending goalkeeper are at least 8 yards from the penalty mark.
- 6.15 **Law 15—The Throw-In:** Conform to FIFA; no re-takes after an improper throw-in.
- 6.16 **Law 16—The Goal Kick:** Conform to FIFA.
- 6.17 **Law 17—The Corner Kick:** Conform to FIFA, with the exception that opponents remain at least 8 yards away from the ball until it is in play.

7.00 PLAYING RULES FOR 10U DIVISION

7.01 **Law 1—The Field of Play:** The specifications for the scaled-down size field are as follows:

- (a) **Dimensions:** The field of play must be rectangular. The touch line (side line) must be longer than the goal line (end line).
- (b) **Length:** Minimum 60 yards; maximum 80 yards.
- (c) **Width:** Minimum 40 yards; maximum 60 yards.
- (d) **Field Markings:** Distinctive lines not more than 5 inches wide. The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The center mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of eight (8) yards is marked around it.
- (e) **The Goal Area:** The goal area is a rectangular area in front of each goal with a parallel line 6 yards in front of the goal line joined by perpendicular lines 6 yards from the inside of each goalpost. (This conforms to FIFA.)
- (f) **The Penalty Area:** The penalty area is a rectangular area in front of each goal with a parallel line 13.5 yards in front of the goal line joined by perpendicular lines 13.5 yards from the inside of each goalpost. Within each penalty area, a penalty mark is made nine (9) yards from the midpoint between the goalposts and equidistant to them. An arc of a circle with a radius of 8 yards from each penalty mark is drawn outside the penalty area.
- (g) **Flagposts:** None.
- (h) **The Corner Arc:** Conform to FIFA.
- (i) **Goals:** Conform to FIFA, with exception that the distance between the posts is 18 feet and the distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is 6 feet.

7.02 **Law 2—The Ball:** Size four (4).

7.03 **Law 3—The Number of Players:** A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than nine (9) players, one of whom is the goalkeeper. A match may not start if either team consists of fewer than seven (7) players.

- (a) All players must play a minimum of two (2) quarters, which is 50% of the total playing time in regulation.
- (b) No substitutions except at the quarter, half or for an injury. Injured player may return. Blood Rule to apply.

7.04 **Law 4—The Players' Equipment:** Conform to FIFA, plus SBMSA modifications.

- (a) No jewelry, watches, rings, or anything that could cause harm to any player. No aluminum cleats. No hard casts allowed. Other casts subject to referee approval.
- (b) All players must wear shin guards. Shin guards should be worn under socks.

- 7.05 **Law 5—The Referee:** Generally a USSF-registered referee. The referee's authority, power and duties conform to FIFA, together with the SBMSA rule modifications (of Rule 4.05) that apply to all age groups.
- 7.06 **Law 6—The Assistant Referees:** None.
- 7.07 **Law 7—The Duration of the Match:** The 60-minute match shall be divided into four (4) equal, fifteen (15) minute quarters. There shall be a 3 minute break between quarters one and two and another 3 minute break between quarters three and four. There shall be a half-time interval of 5 minutes. At the discretion of the referee, the breaks can be extended (e.g., very hot Houston day).
- 7.08 **Law 8—The Start and Restart of Play:** Conform to FIFA, together with the SBMSA rule modifications.
- (a) Kick-off each quarter. Alternate kick-offs by team each quarter. Reverse sides at the half. Goals can be scored from kick-offs and goal kicks.
 - (b) Consistent with the radius of the center circle, all defenders must stand 8 yards back from the ball on kick-offs.
- 7.09 **Law 9—The Ball In and Out of Play:** Conform to FIFA.
- 7.10 **Law 10—The Method of Scoring:** Conform to FIFA.
- 7.11 **Law 11—Offside:** Conform to FIFA.
- 7.12 **Law 12—Fouls and Misconduct:** Conform to FIFA, together with the SBMSA rule modifications (of Rule 4.12) applicable to all ages plus the slide-tackle exception.
- (a) The goalkeeper shall be considered to have possession of the ball at any time the ball is motionless and being touched by any part of the goalkeeper's body, trapped, or held.
 - (b) Slide-tackles are not allowed in 10U. A slide-tackle offense results in an indirect free kick awarded to the opposing team at the point of infraction.
- 7.13 **Law 13—Free Kicks:** Conform to FIFA, with the exception that opponents are at least 8 yards from the ball until it is in play.
- 7.14 **Law 14—The Penalty Kick:** Conform to FIFA, with the exceptions that the penalty mark is at nine (9) yards and that players other than the kicker and defending goalkeeper are at least 8 yards from the penalty mark.
- 7.15 **Law 15—The Throw-In:** Conform to FIFA.
- 7.16 **Law 16—The Goal Kick:** Conform to FIFA.
- 7.17 **Law 17—The Corner Kick:** Conform to FIFA, with the exception that opponents remain at least 8 yards away from the ball until it is in play.

8.00 PLAYING RULES FOR SENIOR DIVISION

8.01 **Law 1—The Field of Play:** The specifications for the regulation size field are as follows:

- (a) **Dimensions:** The field of play must be rectangular. The touch line (side line) must be longer than the goal line (end line).
- (b) **Length:** Minimum 100 yards; maximum 130 yards.
- (c) **Width:** Minimum 50 yards; maximum 100 yards.
- (d) **Field Markings:** Distinctive lines not more than (5) inches wide. The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The center mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of ten (10) yards is marked around it.
- (e) **The Goal Area:** The goal area is a rectangular area in front of each goal with a parallel line 6 yards in front of the goal line joined by perpendicular lines 6 yards from the inside of each goalpost.
- (f) **The Penalty Area:** The penalty area is a rectangular area in front of each goal with a parallel line 18 yards in front of the goal line joined by perpendicular lines 18 yards from the inside of each goalpost. Within each penalty area, a penalty mark is made twelve (12) yards from the midpoint between the goalposts and equidistant to them. An arc of a circle with a radius of 10 yards from each penalty mark is drawn outside the penalty area.
- (g) **Flagposts:** None.
- (h) **The Corner Arc:** Conform to FIFA.
- (i) **Goals:** Conform to FIFA, which means that the distance between the posts is 24 feet and the distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is 8 feet.

8.02 **Law 2—The Ball:** Size five (5).

8.03 **Law 3—The Number of Players:** A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than eleven (11) players, one of whom is the goalkeeper. A match may not start if either team consists of fewer than nine (9) players.

- (a) All players must play a minimum of two (2) quarters, which is 50% of the total playing time in regulation.
- (b) No substitutions except at the quarter, half or for an injury. Injured player may return. Blood Rule to apply.

8.04 **Law 4—The Players' Equipment:** Conform to FIFA, plus SBMSA modifications.

- (a) No jewelry, watches, rings, or anything that could cause harm to any player. No aluminum cleats. No hard casts allowed. Other casts subject to referee approval.
- (b) All players must wear shin guards. Shin guards should be worn under socks.

- 8.05 **Law 5—The Referee:** Generally a USSF-registered referee. The referee’s authority, power and duties conform to FIFA, together with the SBMSA rule modifications (of Rule 4.05) that apply to all age groups.
- 8.06 **Law 6—The Assistant Referees:** None.
- 8.07 **Law 7—The Duration of the Match:** The 68-minute match shall be divided into four (4) equal, seventeen (17) minute quarters. There shall be a 3 minute break between quarters one and two and another 3 minute break between quarters three and four. There shall be a half-time interval of 5 minutes. At the discretion of the referee, the breaks can be extended (e.g., very hot Houston day).
- 8.08 **Law 8—The Start and Restart of Play:** Conform to FIFA, together with the SBMSA rule modifications.
- (a) Kick-off each quarter. Alternate kick-offs by team each quarter. Reverse sides at the half. Goals can be scored from kick-offs and goal kicks.
- 8.09 **Law 9—The Ball In and Out of Play:** Conform to FIFA.
- 8.10 **Law 10—The Method of Scoring:** Conform to FIFA.
- 8.11 **Law 11—Offside:** Conform to FIFA.
- 8.12 **Law 12—Fouls and Misconduct:** Conform to FIFA, together with the SBMSA rule modifications (of Rule 4.12) that apply to all age groups.
- (a) The goalkeeper shall be considered to have possession of the ball at any time the ball is motionless and being touched by any part of the goalkeeper’s body, trapped, or held.
- 8.13 **Law 13—Free Kicks:** Conform to FIFA.
- 8.14 **Law 14—The Penalty Kick:** Conform to FIFA.
- 8.15 **Law 15—The Throw-In:** Conform to FIFA.
- 8.16 **Law 16—The Goal Kick:** Conform to FIFA.
- 8.17 **Law 17—The Corner Kick:** Conform to FIFA.

9.00 SPORTSMANSHIP, RULES OF CONDUCT AND SANCTIONS

9.01 **Sportsmanship:** One of the primary goals of SBMSA is to teach good sportsmanship to our area youth. All players, coaches, parents and spectators are expected to demonstrate sporting behavior before, during and after games, scrimmages, and practices. Displays of poor sportsmanship by players, coaches, parents or fans will not be tolerated. There is absolutely no tolerance for verbal abuse, physical abuse or harassment by anyone involved in the league. It is expected that all participants in the Soccer Program will treat each other with courtesy and respect. If our coaches, parents and adult fans can offer themselves as positive role models and set the standard for sportsmanship, our young players can learn to compete in a controlled, sportsmanlike and responsible way.

9.02 **Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** Examples of unsportsmanlike conduct that will not be tolerated in the league include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) Using obscene or abusive language;
- (b) Making profane or derogatory remarks or gestures against anyone, including dissent arising from the referees' decisions;
- (c) Harassing or otherwise disrespecting individual players, teams or referees;
- (d) Making insulting or disparaging remarks to or about the referee;
- (e) Entering the field of play during a game without permission from the referee;
- (f) Inviting confrontation with referees, coaches, or opposing team parents;
- (g) Fighting before, during, or after the game on the field or in the parking lot;
- (h) Physically attacking or abusing any person attending or playing in the game;
- (i) Inciting disruptive behavior;
- (j) Using alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs before, during or after a match;
- (k) Allowing animals onto the field.

9.03 **Coaching and Sideline Behavior:** The primary rule of sideline behavior is that coaches, players, and spectators may not make comments toward or about their opponents and their play, or toward or about the referees and their decisions. Coaches are responsible for the actions of all the roster players on their side line. Coaches will maintain order on the team bench and prohibit their players from engaging in any kind of disruptive behavior. Coaches are also responsible for the actions of all spectators on their side line. Spectators will not incite disruptive behavior and will not make profane or derogatory remarks or gestures against anyone, including dissent arising from the referees' decisions. Either the coach or referee may require offending spectators to leave the field.

- (a) Coaching from the side lines—that is, giving direction to one's team on points of strategy and position—is permitted provided that:
 - (i) The coach remains in the technical area, which is the space between the penalty areas;
 - (ii) The tone of voice is informative and not abusive; excessive verbal coaching may be limited by the referee;

- (iii) Each team is limited to a maximum of three (3) sideline coaches.
- (b) Players, when not on the playing field, may not walk the side lines or enter the field of play. They should stay with the rest of their team at a designated spot at least four (4) feet back from the side line.
- (c) Parents and supporters must remain at least four (4) feet back from the side lines while the match is in progress. Maintenance of a 4-foot clear lane from the side lines makes the game safer for the players, facilitates the movement of the sideline coaches up and down the field, and allows the referee to better follow play. In addition to people, the 4-foot lane should be clear of coolers, chairs and other items.
- (d) No coach, parent or spectator is allowed behind the goal lines or beyond the penalty areas at the side lines. In other words, coaches, parents and spectators must remain on the side line between the penalty areas.
- (e) As per Rule 3.01, each team shall be coached from opposite sides of the field. Each coach is responsible for making sure that his or her players, parents and supporters occupy the correct side of the field during the course of the game.
- (f) Referees should limit their remarks and instructions only to players and the coaches present on the field.

9.04 **Rules of Conduct—Sanctions and Enforcement:** The sportsmanship guidelines and rules of conduct described in Rules 9.01 to 9.03 are collectively referred to as the “Rules of Conduct” for the Soccer Program. These “Rules of Conduct” will be monitored and enforced by the various Division Commissioners, the Program Director, the Soccer Board and the game referee.

- (a) **Referee:** The referee has full authority to enforce the Rules of Conduct of the league. The referee’s authority starts from the time he enters the field of play and ends at the time he exits the field complex at the end of the game. In enforcing good sportsmanship, the referee can, at his discretion, (i) verbally warn the offending person, (ii) formally warn the person by showing a yellow card, or (iii) eject the person by showing a red card. The referee can eject any player, coach, parent or fan from the game for unsportsmanlike conduct. And the referee can terminate a match, resulting in a forfeit to the offending team, if a coach or spectator refuses to leave the premises after being ejected. A red card given by a referee after a game for remarks to a referee or league official will carry over to the next game and result in a suspension from that next game.
- (b) **Players:** Breach of the Rules of Conduct by a player may result in his or her immediate removal from the game for the remainder of the game. The referee could make such a red-card ejection of a player with or without prior warning. A red-carded player may or may not be suspended from the next game. The decision rests with the Program Director and Soccer Board, and will be based on the level of poor sportsmanship exhibited by the red-carded player in the particular offense that led to his or her ejection.
- (c) **Coaches:** Coaches may be warned for a first violation of the Rules of Conduct, and removed from the game for a second violation. Or, if the first

offense is judged to be severe enough, a coach may receive a red-card ejection without any previous warning. A coach may also be warned and/or penalized for violations committed by parents and supporters. Any coach who is ejected from the game by the referee must immediately remove himself from the sideline area and then leave the field complex and parking area. If a red card is issued to a coach and he refuses to leave the premises, the referee will call the game and declare a forfeit. There is a mandatory suspension for the next game for any coach who is ejected from the game for poor sportsmanship.

- (d) **Spectators:** A parent or supporter engaging in unsportsmanlike conduct may be warned by the coach, referee, Division Commissioner, other league official or member of the Soccer Board. If the spectator fails to respond to the request to stop violating the Rules of Conduct, or if presented a red card by a referee (which, for egregious behavior, could happen without prior warning), the offending spectator will be ejected from the game. Any parent or supporter who is ejected from the game by the referee must immediately leave the field complex and parking area. If an ejected parent or supporter refuses to leave the premises, the referee could terminate the game and declare a forfeit. There is a mandatory suspension for the next game for any spectator who is ejected from the game for poor sportsmanship. Irresponsible behavior on the part of side line spectators could also lead to sanctions against the coach because coaches are responsible for the actions of all spectators on their side line.
- (e) **Mandatory Suspension:** A one-game suspension is mandated for the next succeeding game for any coach, parent or fan ejected from a game by a referee or league official for poor sportsmanship. The Program Director and the Soccer Board shall administer the suspension.
- (f) **Soccer Board:** While the one-game suspension is mandatory, the Soccer Board may, for particularly outrageous behavior or recurring incidents, levy additional suspensions. The Soccer Board has the authority to impose further sanctions for poor sportsmanship, including game suspensions, remainder-of-season suspensions, and future-season suspensions. Repeated violation of the Rules of Conduct by players or coaches may be grounds for their removal from the program. Persistent violation of the Rules of Conduct by a parent may be grounds for the removal of the offender's child from the program by the Soccer Board.

10.00 FINAL STANDINGS, PLAYOFFS AND PENALTY-KICK TIEBREAKERS

10.01 **Final Standings and Tiebreaker Rules:** Final standings for the regular season for each division will be determined first by the total number of points earned by each team, pursuant to Rule 3.12(a). The team having the largest number of points will be declared the division winner. In the event of a tie between two or more teams on total points, the order of tiebreakers will be as follows:

- (a) **Head to head result.** In the event that two or more teams come to this tiebreaker, the head to head result will be determined by points considering only the games played between the teams that have come to this tiebreaker.
- (b) **Points vs. common opponents.** If the teams are still tied after the head to head tiebreaker, the next tiebreaker is the teams' points against common opponents. Points are re-computed using only the results of games played against common opponents.
- (c) **Goal differential vs. common opponents.** If the teams are still tied after the second tiebreaker, the next tiebreaker is the teams' goal differential in games involving common opponents. Goal differential is computed as "goals for" minus "goals against." The maximum goal differential per game is plus or minus three (+3 or -3). Total goal differential is the sum of each game's differential.
- (d) **Shut-outs of common opponents.** If the teams are still tied after the third tiebreaker, the next tiebreaker is the teams' number of shut-outs won against common opponents.
- (e) **Goal differential vs. all opponents.** If the teams are still tied after the fourth tiebreaker, the next tiebreaker is the teams' goal differential for all games played in the regular season. Goal differential is computed as "goals for" minus "goals against." The maximum goal differential per game is plus or minus three (+3 or -3). Total goal differential is the sum of each game's differential.
- (f) **Shut-outs of all opponents.** If the teams are still tied after the fifth tiebreaker, the next tiebreaker is the teams' number of shut-outs won against all opponents.
- (g) **Shut-outs lost to all opponents.** If the teams are still tied after the sixth tiebreaker, the next tiebreaker is the teams' number of shut-outs lost to all opponents. Fewest number wins.
- (h) **Coin flip.**

10.02 **Playoffs:** All teams will make the playoffs. In the 8U division, the teams in the top half of the final standings will play a double-elimination "World Cup" tournament, while the teams in the bottom half of the final standings play a double-elimination "North American Cup" tournament. In the 10U division, the teams in the top half of the final standings will play a double-elimination "Gold" tournament, while the teams in the bottom half of the final standings play a double-elimination "Silver" tournament. In the Senior division, all teams will play a double-elimination tournament. Seedings in the playoffs are determined by the regular-season final

standings. In the 6U division, the format of the post-season “tournament” is determined by the Division Commissioner and may change from year to year.

- (a) Coaches are responsible for keeping their players informed of all playoff games, dates and times.

10.03 **Penalty-Kick Tiebreakers in the Playoffs:** In post-season tournament play, if a game is tied at the end of regulation play, the outcome will be decided by a tiebreaker using penalty kicks. The procedure and rules for the penalty-kick tiebreaker are as follows:

- (a) **Separation of Players and Sequencing of Kickers.** When the whistle blows ending the game, head coaches from both teams shall enter the field, gather their players who were on the field at the end of the game, and move them to the center of the field. All players who were not on the field at the end of the game, along with the other coaches and all parents, must remain on the side lines before and during the tiebreaker, except as noted below. Only players who were on the field at the end of the game participate in the penalty-kick tiebreaker. The coaches shall then determine the sequence in which their players who are gathered in the center of the field will take penalty kicks in Round One and Round Two of the penalty-kick tiebreaker. All players who were on the field at the end of the game, including the goalkeeper, must be included in the kicking. For tiebreakers in the 8U and 10U divisions, each coach gives the referee the sequence by player number of (i) the 5 players who will be taking the kicks in Round One, and (ii) the 4 players who will be taking the kicks in Round Two. For tiebreakers in the Senior division, each coach gives the referee the sequence by player number of (i) the 5 players who will be taking the kicks in Round One, and (ii) the 6 players who will be taking the kicks in Round Two.
- (b) **Coin Toss.** After both coaches have given their sequence of kickers to the referee, the players on the side lines may join their teammates at the center of the field. The referee then conducts a coin toss to determine which team kicks first. The winner of the coin toss can choose to go first or second.
- (c) **Goalkeeper(s).** Each team must select a goalkeeper (or goalkeepers) to defend the penalty kicks. The goalkeeper can be any of the players on the field at the end of the game. It does not have to be the player who was the goalkeeper at the end of the game. Goalkeepers can even be switched during the penalty kicks. The only requirement is that any goalkeeper used in the tiebreaker must have been a player on the field at the end of the game.
- (d) **Round One (5 Kicks).** The first kicker and the first goalkeeper move to their positions for the first penalty kick. All other players must remain at midfield. The goalkeeper must stand with both feet touching the goal line and must not move off the goal line until the ball is kicked. The goalkeeper may move from side to side along the goal line before the ball is in play. The kicker takes his or her penalty-kick shot after the referee gives the signal to kick. The teams then alternate their penalty kicks, one each, until one team is

ahead by more goals than can be scored by the other team with the penalty kicks remaining. If there is no such mathematical elimination, Round One ends with each team taking their fifth penalty kick.

- (e) **Round Two (Sudden Death).** If the teams are still tied after completion of Round One, the teams will proceed to Round Two, which is a sudden death tiebreaker. The first team to secure a goal advantage for equal numbers of kicks will be declared the winner. In the event that an 8U or 10U team has fewer than 4 players on its list of Round Two shooters, Round Two will draw from the list of Round One shooters in their original sequence to get to the 4 players required for Round Two. Similarly, in the event that a Senior team has fewer than 6 players on its list of Round Two shooters, Round Two will draw from the list of Round One shooters in their original sequence to get to the 6 players required for Round Two.
- (f) **More Rounds (Sudden Death).** If the teams are still tied after completion of Round Two, the teams will proceed to Round Three, picking up with the next 5 players in the established sequence of kickers. Using the same sudden death format as Round Two, the first team to secure a goal advantage for equal numbers of kicks is the winner. If there is still a tie after Round Three, the sudden death tiebreaker continues on with rounds of 5 kickers (in the established sequence) until a winner is determined.
- (g) **No Substitutions.** There will be no substitution of players at anytime during a tiebreaker.

10.04 **Mini Games in Tournament Championships:** If a team enters the championship game of its double-elimination tournament undefeated and loses (thereby giving each team one loss in the tournament), a new “Mini Game” will be played to determine the tournament champion. The Mini Game will begin as soon as practical following completion of the prior game. The Mini Game will consist of two (2) quarters, with a one minute break between quarters so that teams can switch sides and substitute players. Each eligible roster player must play at least one quarter in the Mini Game. If the Mini Game ends in a tie, the game (and tournament champion) will be determined by a penalty-kick tiebreaker.

10.05 **Forfeits and Protests in the Playoffs:** Grounds for forfeits of playoff games are the same as those in the regular season (see Rule 3.13). As in the regular seasons, forfeits will be scored as a 1 to 0 loss for the forfeiting team. In double-elimination tournaments, if a team fails to appear for a playoff game, such non-appearing team is disqualified from further tournament play. In such case, the team that did appear for the game advances to the next round.

- (a) Protests in the playoffs will be settled at the end of the game by the Division Commissioner, or in his or her absence, the Program Director. Decisions will be final without recourse to appeals.

10.06 **Soccer Trophy Policy:** SBMSA will award trophies and/or medals for all age groups, boys and girls, as follows:

- (a) **Regular Season:** For divisions with 6 or less teams, a first-place trophy will be awarded. For divisions with 7 to 11 teams, first- and second-place trophies will be awarded. For divisions with 12 or more teams, first-, second- and third-place trophies will be awarded.
 - (i) When a particular age group has more than two divisions (e.g., 8U Boys with a “Red” and “Blue” division) and some regular-season games are played between teams in different divisions, the trophy award is based only on the intra-divisional final standings. In other words, the inter-divisional game results do not figure into the standings that determine regular-season trophy awards.
 - (ii) The Program Director has the authority to order extra trophies (including reordering and/or replacing trophies, if necessary) in the event of ties. In addition, it is recommended that regular-season trophies be of a style that has an inscribed plate (which can easily be removed and re-done) to facilitate last-minute adjustments for ties.
- (b) **Playoffs:** Trophies or medals will be awarded to the first- and second-place winners in all playoff tournaments.

I. SOCCER GAME REPORT CARDS

On the following pages, please find game report cards for:

- 6U Division
- 8U Division
- 10U Division
- Senior Division

**SBMSA SOCCER
GAME REPORT CARD – 6U**

FIELD: _____ DATE: _____ TIME: _____ BOYS GIRLS (circle one)

QUARTER: 10 minutes BETWEEN Q's: 3 minutes HALFTIME: 5 minutes

VISITOR: _____ GOALS: _____

HOME: _____ GOALS: _____

VISITOR COACH: _____ HOME COACH: _____

PLAYERS NOT PLAYING: _____

REFEREE NAME: _____

CAUTIONS / EJECTIONS: _____

By signing this card, I affirm that each player on my team played a minimum of two (2) quarters or 50% of the total playing time in regulation.

VISITOR COACH SIGNATURE: _____ HOME COACH SIGNATURE: _____

SBMSA RULES – 6U

- Both teams on same side of field in their designated home and visitors areas.
- Parents / spectators of both teams on same side of field opposite players / coaches.
- No jewelry, watches, rings, or anything that could cause harm to any player. No aluminum cleats. No hard casts allowed. Other casts subject to referee approval.
- All players must wear shin guards. Shin guards should be worn under socks.
- Minimum # of players to start is three (3). Maximum is four (4) in girls, five (5) in boys.
- Forfeit for failure to take field ten (10) minutes after scheduled start.
- Kick-off each quarter. Alternate kick-offs by team each quarter. Reverse sides at half. A goal cannot be scored directly from the kick-off. A goal can be scored on goal kick.
- Distance defenders must stand back on kick-offs, free kicks and corner kicks in 6U division is four (4) yards.
- There are no goalkeepers in the 6U game. Zone-type defenses or offenses around the goal are not permitted. No players, on offense or defense, are allowed to position themselves inside the semi-circles marked around the goal area until the action of the ball has moved to the area in and around the goal.
- Free substitution at coaches' will. Blood Rule to apply.
- All players must play a minimum of two (2) quarters, which is half the game.
- There is no offside. Throw-ins are replaced with kick-ins.
- There are no indirect kicks or penalty kicks in 6U division.
- All fouls shall result in a direct free kick. All direct free kicks should be spotted so that there is at least six (6) yards between the spot of the ball and the goal.
- All rule infringements shall be explained to offender. No cards shown for misconduct.
- Goal kick should be taken within 2-3 yards of goal line anywhere across width of field.
- No coach, parent or spectator is allowed behind the goal lines.

**SBMSA SOCCER
GAME REPORT CARD – 8U**

FIELD: _____ DATE: _____ TIME: _____ BOYS GIRLS (circle one)

QUARTER: 12 minutes BETWEEN Q's: 3 minutes HALFTIME: 5 minutes

VISITOR: _____ GOALS: _____

HOME: _____ GOALS: _____

VISITOR COACH: _____ HOME COACH: _____

PLAYERS NOT PLAYING: _____

REFEREE NAME: _____

CAUTIONS / EJECTIONS: _____

By signing this card, I affirm that each player on my team played a minimum of two (2) quarters or 50% of the total playing time in regulation.

VISITOR COACH SIGNATURE: _____ HOME COACH SIGNATURE: _____

SBMSA RULES – 8U

- Both teams on same side of field in their designated home and visitors areas.
- Parents / spectators of both teams on same side of field opposite players / coaches.
- No jewelry, watches, rings, or anything that could cause harm to any player. No aluminum cleats. No hard casts allowed. Other casts subject to referee approval.
- All players must wear shin guards. Shin guards should be worn under socks.
- Minimum # of players to start is seven (7). Maximum of nine (9) players on field.
- Forfeit for failure to take field ten (10) minutes after scheduled start.
- Kick-off each quarter. Alternate kick-offs by team each quarter. Reverse sides at the half. Goals can be scored from kick-offs and goal kicks.
- Distance defenders must stand back on kick-offs, free kicks, penalty kicks and corner kicks in 8U division is eight (8) yards. Penalty kick spot in 8U division is nine (9) yards.
- No substitutions except at the quarter, half or for an injury. Injured player may return. Blood Rule to apply.
- All players must play a minimum of two (2) quarters, which is half the game.
- Offside is enforced as per FIFA. Throw-ins as per FIFA. There are no re-takes.
- The goalkeeper shall be considered to have possession of the ball at any time ball is motionless and being touched by any part of the goalkeeper's body, trapped, or held.
- All rule infringements shall be briefly explained to the offending player.
- For indirect kicks awarded to attacking team in penalty area and outside goal area, kick is taken at penalty area line nearest to point of infraction. For infraction in goal area, indirect kick is taken at the imaginary nine (9) yard line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to the point of infraction.
- No person is allowed behind the goal lines or beyond the penalty areas at side lines.
- All other rules as per FIFA.

**SBMSA SOCCER
GAME REPORT CARD – 10U**

FIELD: _____ DATE: _____ TIME: _____ BOYS GIRLS (circle one)

QUARTER: 15 minutes BETWEEN Q's: 3 minutes HALFTIME: 5 minutes

VISITOR: _____ GOALS: _____

HOME: _____ GOALS: _____

VISITOR COACH: _____ HOME COACH: _____

PLAYERS NOT PLAYING: _____

REFEREE NAME: _____

CAUTIONS / EJECTIONS: _____

By signing this card, I affirm that each player on my team played a minimum of two (2) quarters or 50% of the total playing time in regulation.

VISITOR COACH SIGNATURE: _____ HOME COACH SIGNATURE: _____

SBMSA RULES – 10U

- Both teams on same side of field in their designated home and visitors areas.
- Parents / spectators of both teams on same side of field opposite players / coaches.
- No jewelry, watches, rings, or anything that could cause harm to any player. No aluminum cleats. No hard casts allowed. Other casts subject to referee approval.
- All players must wear shin guards. Shin guards should be worn under socks.
- Minimum # of players to start is seven (7). Maximum of nine (9) players on field.
- Forfeit for failure to take field ten (10) minutes after scheduled start.
- Kick-off each quarter. Alternate kick-offs by team each quarter. Reverse sides at the half. Goals can be scored from kick-offs and goal kicks.
- Distance defenders must stand back on kick-offs, free kicks, penalty kicks and corner kicks in 10U division is eight (8) yards. Penalty kick spot in 10U is nine (9) yards.
- No substitutions except at the quarter, half or for an injury. Injured player may return. Blood Rule to apply.
- All players must play a minimum of two (2) quarters, which is half the game.
- Girls only: Slide-tackles are not allowed in 10U. A slide-tackle offense results in an indirect free kick awarded to the opposing team at the point of infraction.
- Offside is enforced as per FIFA. Throw-ins as per FIFA. There are no re-takes.
- The goalkeeper shall be considered to have possession of the ball at any time ball is motionless and being touched by any part of the goalkeeper's body, trapped, or held.
- No person is allowed behind the goal lines or beyond the penalty areas at side lines.
- All other rules as per FIFA.

**SBMSA SOCCER
GAME REPORT CARD – SENIORS**

FIELD: _____ DATE: _____ TIME: _____ BOYS GIRLS (circle one)

QUARTER: 17 minutes BETWEEN Q's: 3 minutes HALFTIME: 5 minutes

VISITOR: _____ GOALS: _____

HOME: _____ GOALS: _____

VISITOR COACH: _____ HOME COACH: _____

PLAYERS NOT PLAYING: _____

REFEREE NAME: _____

CAUTIONS / EJECTIONS: _____

By signing this card, I affirm that each player on my team played a minimum of two (2) quarters or 50% of the total playing time in regulation.

VISITOR COACH SIGNATURE: _____ HOME COACH SIGNATURE: _____

SBMSA RULES – SENIORS

- Both teams on same side of field in their designated home and visitors areas.
- Parents / spectators of both teams on same side of field opposite players / coaches.
- No jewelry, watches, rings, or anything that could cause harm to any player. No aluminum cleats. No hard casts allowed. Other casts subject to referee approval.
- All players must wear shin guards. Shin guards should be worn under socks.
- Minimum # of players to start is nine (9). Maximum of eleven (11) players on field.
- Forfeit for failure to take field ten (10) minutes after scheduled start.
- Kick-off each quarter. Alternate kick-offs by team each quarter. Reverse sides at the half. Goals can be scored from kick-offs and goal kicks.
- No substitutions except at the quarter, half or for an injury. Injured player may return. Blood Rule to apply.
- All players must play a minimum of two (2) quarters, which is half the game.
- Offside is enforced as per FIFA. Throw-ins as per FIFA. There are no re-takes.
- The goalkeeper shall be considered to have possession of the ball at any time ball is motionless and being touched by any part of the goalkeeper's body, trapped, or held.
- No person is allowed behind the goal lines or beyond the penalty areas at side lines.
- All other rules as per FIFA.