

MASSACHUSETTS YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION, INCORPORATED



POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND REGULATIONS

Last Revised: November, 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	AUTHORITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	3
2.	REGISTRATION PROCEDURES	4
3.	KIDSAFE PROGRAM – CORI REGISTRATION	7
4.	ELIGIBILITY AND PLAYING RULES	10
5.	LIMIT DEFINITION.....	11
6.	TRAVEL AND TOURNAMENT GAMES	12
7.	SENIOR TRIAL GAMES	14
8.	PLAYING WITH PROFESSIONAL PLAYERS	14
9.	DISCIPLINARY; PROTEST AND APPEAL PROCEDURES	14
10.	INSURANCE.....	18
11.	ATHLETES’ BILL OF RIGHTS.....	19
12.	RECOMMENDED PLAYING GUIDELINES.....	19
13.	PRIORITY GUIDE FOR MULTIPLE ROSTERED PLAYERS.....	20

GENERAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

1. AUTHORITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1.01. The rules contained herein shall govern members of this Association in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the Constitution and Bylaws of this Association, USYS, and USSF. All competition shall be governed by the rules stated herein unless the rules of a specific competition determine otherwise.
- 1.02. Affiliated leagues may deem fit to include rules and regulations more stringent than those included herein, but in no case may rules and regulations be less stringent. Affiliated leagues must submit their rules and regulations for review and approval by the Board of Directors of this Association.
- 1.03. Each team shall be responsible for the conduct of its players, coach, manager, team assistants and parents and it is the responsibility of each team to ensure that its actions, on or off the field, do not bring disrespect upon this Association. Each Organization and affiliated League shall be responsible for the conduct of those persons associated with its operations and it is the responsibility of each Organization and affiliated League to ensure that its actions do not bring disrespect upon this Association.

1.04 **Board Directors Role and Description**

Directors

Each Director, being elected to a three year term by the whole organization at the AGM, plays a vital role in developing and promoting the goals and objectives of the Massachusetts Youth Soccer. The Director is expected to: attend all Board of Directors meetings; contribute knowledge and skill in at least one area essential to Board governance by serving on Committees or task forces and/or accepting assignments; attend Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association Program meetings, events and functions as requested by the President; help to develop new initiatives, a strategic vision and set long-term priorities for the growth of the Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association; actively engage in professional development opportunities; celebrate the successes of the Association through an annual program update presentation to the Board of Directors.

Note: The Officers of the Mass Youth Soccer Board of Directors Roles are located in the Organization By-Laws, Section 6.

2. REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

- 2.01. All players, team officials, and administrators affiliated with an Organization or affiliated League shall annually register with Mass Youth Soccer and timely pay all dues and fees. Registrations should be submitted electronically. Electronic registration shall follow guidelines established by Mass Youth Soccer, including complete information pertaining to each player, coach, manager, and director provided in Mass Youth Soccer-mandated database format and timely submitted within designated deadlines. If an Organization or affiliated League uses electronic registration, it does not need to submit hard copies of registration forms.

At its sole discretion, Mass Youth Soccer may agree to accept manual registrations and may assess any additional processing fee therefor as it deems necessary. All manual registrations will be done using the forms and format prescribed by Mass Youth Soccer.

All registrations must be accompanied by all other supporting documents and fees as may be required by Mass Youth Soccer, and fees shall be noted in the fee submission form and paid at the time of submission of the registration.

- 2.02. Any player may register with any Organization or affiliated League within this Association without restriction by the Mass Youth Soccer Board of Directors, its Members, its Program administrators, or its affiliated Leagues. This section does not change the right and authority of affiliated Leagues to, among other things, establish the rules governing the players, team officials, and teams registered with the affiliated League, including the right and authority of affiliated Leagues not to accept any person as a team official or any player the affiliated League chooses not to accept.
- 2.03. The rostering of a player to a Mass Youth Soccer team binds the player to that team for the seasonal year unless the player is granted a transfer or a release. All requests for transfers shall be submitted to Mass Youth Soccer using its Player Release/Transfer Form, or to the involved affiliated League(s). In the case of a transfer involving one or more teams eligible for MTOC, the Leagues agreement shall control whether or not the affected team(s) shall remain MTOC-eligible.
- 2.04. All Organizations registering players and adults with Mass Youth Soccer shall have a current copy of their respective Constitutions and Bylaws on file at the Mass Youth Soccer office. The Organization shall insure the timely and proper registration and payment of fees for all players and adults within its Organization.
- 2.05. Each affiliated League shall be responsible for ensuring proper registration of the players, team officials (i.e., coach, assistant coach, team manager, and team official) and teams, proper accounting of fiscal transactions and accurate reporting within the time frames that have been set by Mass Youth Soccer. Each League

shall have a current copy of its Constitution and Bylaws on file at the Mass Youth Soccer office.

- 2.06. Each team official (i.e., coach, assistant coach, team manager, and team official) shall be registered with this Association and have a proper USYS membership pass.
- 2.07. Any one of the following shall be deemed to be appropriate verification of age: a birth certificate; a Uniformed Services Identification and Privilege Card (DD Form 1173) issued by the uniformed services of the United States; a birth registration issued by an appropriate government agency or board of health records; a current passport; an alien registration card issued by the United States Government; a certificate issued by the Immigration and Naturalization Service attesting to age; a current driver's license; an un-expired federal, state, or local government identification card (if documentation of date of birth is required); or a certification of a United States citizen born abroad issued by the appropriate government agency. Hospital, baptismal, or religious certificates will not be accepted.
- 2.08. All affiliated adult volunteers or paid staff shall submit a CORI Background form, be registered using a Mass Youth Soccer registration form or procedure, shall be listed on the Mass Youth Soccer adult affiliation form, have provided an accurate date of birth, and pay the current fees required.
- 2.09. All teams competing for MTOC, Regional, National Cups or traveling to invitational tournaments shall comply with all rules and regulations of the competition, complete and submit all appropriate documents, ensure all players and adult volunteers are properly registered, and pay all appropriate fees.
- 2.10. Under-10 and younger players will not be permitted to play on an Under-11 or older team in a results oriented format unless the organization through which the player is registered with Mass Youth Soccer determines, and certifies in writing to its parent League, that:
 - 2.10.1. it does not have enough players to field a team in the older age group without the participation of the player; or
 - 2.10.2. the player is being placed on a team with his or her classmates; or
 - 2.10.3. the player's skills justify the placement.

With respect to any exception noted above, the responsible Organization will notify its parent League of all of the relevant circumstances involving each player.

2.11 Inter-Town/Club Play

1. Towns/Clubs with less than 50 registered U8 players (10-player rosters;5 teams;) may combine with (travel to) adjacent towns/clubs to enjoy inter-town/club play.
2. U8 players/teams will not be required to travel more than 20 miles.

Any town/club needing an exception to these limitations may present an appeal to the Mass Youth Board of Directors.

2.11.1 Tournament Play

1. U8 teams can participate in jamboree type division within a Mass Youth approved tournament competition with the following requirements:
 - a. No scores or standings will be kept or posted.
 - b. U8 players/teams will not be required to travel more than 20 miles.
 - c. U8 teams will be charged participation fees that cover only the direct costs of their division.

2.11.2 Playing Up

1. No more than two U9/U10 teams of each gender per town/club organization may have U8 players rostered; and,
2. Small town/club soccer programs need additional players to have a viable U9/U10 team so it places strong U8 players on a U9/U10 team roster; and,
3. No U9/U10 player is denied a roster spot in favor of a U8 player; and,
4. U8 players comprise less than 40% of a team's roster

A U8 player with a birthday after July 31, but who will be in the third grade in the current school year, may play on a U9 or U10 team with classmates..

2.11.3 Playing numbers

The format for U8 game competitions should be 4v4 (no goalkeepers) per US Youth Soccer National Recommendations. 8 players to 1 ball is developmentally appropriate for these young players, who are attempting to improve their technical skills and basic decision making. The USSF technical leadership is overwhelmingly opposed to having goalkeepers at this age level. We believe that it is more developmentally important for all players in this age group (and younger) to focus on their field player skills.

3. KIDSAFE PROGRAM – CORI REGISTRATION

- 3.01. Standard for Participation in Mass Youth Soccer and its activities and programs.
- 3.02. All adult volunteers and paid staff eighteen (18) years of age and older must complete a Criminal Offender Records Information (CORI) background submission. In addition, pursuant to applicable Massachusetts legal requirements, each adult volunteer and paid staff may have his/her background checked each season of participation.
- 3.03. The Executive Director, in consultation with the Board of Directors, shall prepare and implement policies and procedures so as to fully comply with the CORI requirements and with the procedures and guidelines issued by the Massachusetts Department of Criminal Justice Information Services (DCJIS).
- 3.04. A person will qualify for participation in Mass Youth Soccer and its activities and programs upon completion and passing of the screening process outlined below. A person may be disqualified and prohibited from serving as an employee or volunteer of Mass Youth Soccer and its Organizations and affiliated Leagues if:
- 3.04.1. the person has been convicted or charged but not convicted (including crimes the record of which have been expunged, pleas of “no contest” or pending cases which have been continued without a finding, or charges pending before any court) of any crime of violence against minors, or any crime which indicates the person may pose a risk to the safety and well-being of children under his/her direction and/or stewardship, including, but not limited to:
- Indecent assault and battery on a child under fourteen. C.265, sec. 13B
 - Indecent assault and battery on a mentally retarded person. C.265, sec. 13F
 - Indecent assault and battery on a person who has attained the age of fourteen. C.265, sec 13H
 - Rape. C. 265, sec .22
 - Statutory rape. C. 265, sec. 23
 - Rape of a child under sixteen with force. C. 265, sec. 22A
 - Assault of a child with intent to commit rape. C. 265, sec. 24B
 - Assault with intent to commit rape. C. 265, sec. 24
 - Kidnapping of a child. C. 265, sec. 26 and sec. 26A
 - Distribution and trafficking of narcotics or other controlled substances. C. 94C, multiple sections.
 - Lewd and lascivious conduct. C. 272, sec. 35
 - Open and gross lewdness. C. 272, sec. 16
 - Unnatural and lascivious acts with a child under sixteen. C. 272, sec. 35A

- Violation of a restraining order involving physical or sexual abuse of a child. C.208 and 209A multiple sections
- Assault and battery of a child; liability of a person having custody. C. 265, sec.13J
- Intent to commit any of the above crimes;

3.04.2. it is determined that: he/she has been adjudged liable for civil penalties or damages involving sexual or physical abuse of children, is subject to any court order involving sexual abuse or physical abuse of a minor, has had his/her parental rights terminated for reasons involving sexual or physical abuse of children; or

3.04.3. Mass Youth Soccer or any one of its Organizations, affiliated Leagues, or Members comes into possession of verified information that he/she has: a history with another organization (volunteer, employment, etc.) of complaints of physical or sexual abuse of minors, resigned, been terminated or been asked to resign from a position, whether paid or unpaid, due to verified complaints of sexual or physical abuse of minors.

3.05. Screening Information & Process. The following information shall be gathered and used in the screening process of all personnel referenced in the above Applicability of Standard: (i) the CORI background information submission, (ii) the Criminal Offender Record Inquiry, a Massachusetts check done on an up to triennial basis, and (iii) the CORI clarification form for certain individuals.

Individuals for whom a CORI or CORI type inquiry received questionable results will receive a CORI clarification letter and form. The individual in question shall not qualify for participation in Mass Youth Soccer and its activities and programs, and shall be suspended pending the return of the CORI clarification form along with substantiating documentation, and the approval of a Risk Management Review.

Individuals, for whom an unfavorable response is received as a result of a CORI or CORI type inquiry, shall not be accepted into Mass Youth Soccer or any one of its Organizations or affiliated Leagues, or shall be terminated or suspended pending appeal. The individual shall have the right to appeal to the KidSafe Appeals Committee, as follows: If, as a result of the above referenced screening process, one is denied, terminated, or suspended pending appeal, that individual, hereinafter, “the Appellant”, shall have the right to appeal to the Executive Director by submitting a written request for such appeal within ten (10) days of postmark date of notice of termination, denial, or suspension, or within ten (10) days of such notice if hand delivered to the Appellant. Failure to appeal within the allowable time period shall be considered a waiver of appeal and the decision for termination, denial, or suspension shall stand. If an appeal is timely requested, the Executive Director shall arrange for a hearing within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the appeal request or as soon as practicable thereafter, but in no event more

than sixty (60) days after the request for appeal is made unless both the Appellant and the Executive Director agree in writing. Once the hearing is requested, the Appellant will be provided a copy of the DCJIS policy concerning correcting one's record or a link to the web site for the policy.

3.06. Appeal Process Guidelines.

- 3.06.1. The hearings shall remain confidential; there shall be one official tape transcript of the hearing, kept and recorded by the Committee. Any exhibits submitted by the Appellant shall be returned to the Appellant with the decision. Copies of those exhibits shall be retained in the hearing file.
- 3.06.2. At the hearing the Appellant may have a counsel present. The Appellant may call witnesses, which witnesses shall remain sequestered until called. The Appellant should be prepared to present his/her case within sixty (60) minutes. The hearing chair shall have the discretion to extend the time if needed and reserves the right to question the Appellant or witnesses during the sixty (60) minutes.
- 3.06.3. If the hearing panel upholds the decision to disqualify and prohibit the Appellant's participation in Mass Youth Soccer activities, the Appellant shall have the right to appeal that decision to the US Soccer National Appeals Committee.
- 3.06.4. If no further appeal is exercised by the Appellant, the file (including the tape transcription) shall be retained at the Mass Youth Soccer office for one year from the date of the hearing and then destroyed. Thereafter, only a record that the hearing took place and the decision rendered shall be kept in a secure file at the Mass Youth Soccer office. That record shall be kept for seven (7) years. If an individual or Appellant is suspended for a period longer than three (3) months or terminated, notification will be provided to the United States Youth Soccer Association in accordance with their established policies and bylaws as stated in section 4 of bylaw 251 of the United States Youth Soccer Association, Inc.
- 3.06.5. If the right of appeal from the Hearing Panel's decision is exercised by the Appellant, the entire file shall be retained for one year after all avenues of an appeal (including litigation) are exhausted. After one year, the file and tape will be destroyed except for any decision and appellate decision in possession of Mass Youth Soccer, which shall be kept for seven (7) years. The Appellant shall have the responsibility of notifying the Executive Director of any reversal of the Hearing Panel's decision by a higher appellate or court authority.

3.07. Suspension and Reapplication for Membership

Depending on the severity of the issues indicated in a member's background check, Massachusetts Youth Soccer holds to right to either suspend or expel members. The Executive Director shall determine the length of all CORI related member suspensions and indicate in the suspension letter when a suspended member may reapply for membership rights.

4. ELIGIBILITY AND PLAYING RULES

4.01. Player Eligibility. Mass Youth Soccer eligibility is governed by USSF rules, and to the extent applicable; USYS rules on: registration and fees; age limit definitions and roster limitations; player transfer and release; senior trial games; international players and/or other rules, policies, and procedures as may be applicable.

4.02. Multiple Rostering (Revised February 3, 2016). Multiple rostering permits a player to play for more than one team during the same playing season, only as provided in this section.

A player may be rostered with no more than two (2) Mass Youth Soccer affiliated organizations during a playing season, regardless of age.

Clarifications and Exceptions

- Within the entirety of the MTOC eligible affiliated Leagues, a player can play for only one MTOC league member organization during a playing season. In addition a player may not play in two separate MTOC eligible affiliated Leagues at the same time, in the same season.
- Club Passes: A player holding a current valid Mass Youth Soccer player pass issued by an affiliated sanctioned Mass Youth Soccer league may play with another team within their club under the rules of a Club Pass Policy. When using a Club Pass players must abide by all local league Club Pass Policy rules.
- A player can play on only one team entered in National Championship Series play in a soccer year, regardless of the state in which that competition is played.
- A player on a team playing in any Mass Youth Soccer sanctioned league whose league team does not enter National Championship Series play (i.e., State Cup, Open Cup) may be rostered to another team for National Championship Series play only.

- A player may be placed on a state roster called a “TOURNAMENT TEAM ONLY ROSTER” without the need for multiple rostering. A TOURNAMENT TEAM exists only for the duration of a tournament and is NOT the player’s primary team. For purposes of this rule, MTOC is a competition, not a tournament.
- 4.03. League Eligibility. In order for an affiliated League or team to be eligible for Inter-League, Cup, or Tournament play the organization must:
- 4.03.1. submit annually its Bylaws and Rules to Mass Youth Soccer; and
 - 4.03.2. pay all current fees.
- 4.04. Playing Rules. Playing rules for all Mass Youth Soccer sponsored tournaments and competitions shall be in accordance with USSF and/or USYS rules governing play, substitutions, and length of games, overtime periods, and ball specifications. Significant variations in the USSF and/or USYS playing rules are permitted in the best interest of the development of the sport within Massachusetts in competitions NOT leading to US Youth Soccer Regional and National competitions.
- 4.05. Players’ Equipment. The wearing of shin guards by all players is mandatory.

5. LIMIT DEFINITION

- 5.01. The term “youth” as applied to the Constitution, Bylaws, general procedures and specific rules of this Association, the USYS, and the USSF, shall mean a youth player who has not reached the age of nineteen (19) years prior to August 1st immediately preceding the start of any seasonal year in which they apply for registration.
- 5.02. Age and Grade Groupings
- 5.02.1. All affiliated leagues with youth players or teams playing in statewide competitions leading to regional and national competitions (e.g.: State Cup eligible teams) will adhere to the USYS and USSF promulgated age bracket definitions using the current August 1 date without exception.
 - 5.02.2. Each team eligible for the Massachusetts Tournament of Champions (MTOC) competition shall, in both the fall and spring seasons of play, adhere to the USYS and USSF promulgated age bracket definitions using the current August 1 date without exception.
 - 5.02.3. All other divisions/levels of play in leagues, tournaments, jamborees, etc. may utilize the following combinations of age and grade level for grouping players for play, subject to the stipulations and exceptions also provided below:

- “Grade 8 or U14” as an inclusive bracket;
- “Grade 7 or U13” as an inclusive bracket;
- “Grade 6 or U12” as an inclusive bracket;
- “Grade 5 or U11” as an inclusive bracket;
- “Grade 4 or U10” as an inclusive bracket;
- “Grade 3 or U9” as an inclusive bracket;
- “Grade 2 or U8” as an inclusive bracket.

5.02.4. Stipulations:

- a) No player may be more than one year older than the stated soccer age bracket regardless of school grade level (e.g.: a player with a ‘soccer age’ of U15 may play on a “Grade 8 or U14” team as long as that player is in grade 8. A player with a soccer age of U16 may not play on a “Grade 8 or U14 team even if that player is in Grade 8.)
- b) Any league electing to use the above grade or age determinants must adjust their player registration materials to provide notice to registrants and their parents.
- c) The above age/grade level combinations are an option, and any league may elect more restrictive age groupings but may not be more restrictive than the USYS/USSF definitions.

5.02.5. Exceptions:

- a) In the event of a properly documented ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) request, appropriate accommodation will be granted.
- b) Intramural programs within a town may elect to group players solely by grade level/levels at their option.

6. TRAVEL AND TOURNAMENT GAMES

6.01. Travel and Tournament Procedures. The USYS Travel and Tournaments Manual of the current season describes all current procedures for hosting and traveling to tournaments.

6.02. Permission to Travel to Out of State and Invitational Tournaments and Games. Travel by an Organization to play in an out-of-state tournament or event is governed by the following guidelines.

6.02.1. Eligibility – Any team in good standing may participate in invitational tournaments. It is strongly recommended that U-10 or younger Mass Youth Soccer affiliated teams, or any Mass Youth Soccer affiliated

team having more than fifty percent (50%) of its players U-10 eligible or younger, do not enter any age group of any tournament having a results oriented format (standings not kept, no playoff system).

6.02.2. Process – A team looking to travel and play out-of-state must request and fill out the on-line Permission to Travel Form and comply with all other instructions contained in that Form. There are no fees associated with these requests and all such requests will be approved, provided the team, its players and coaches are in good standing. All Mass Youth Soccer affiliated teams traveling must have immediate access to medical release forms of all players at all times when traveling.

6.03. Permission to Travel Outside the United States. Travel outside of the United States requires USSF permission. This includes such short trips as to Canada and much longer trips to Europe and Asia.

Teams must complete the following:

1. Application for Foreign Travel;
2. Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sport Act statement; and
3. Send all the required documents directly to Mass Youth Soccer for approval along with the fee required by USSF. All checks should be made payable to “US Soccer”.

These forms are available under the forms section of our web site

6.04. Permission to Host Invitational Tournaments and Games. An Organization or affiliated League may apply to host an invitational tournament or event and is governed by the following guidelines.

Eligibility – Any Organization or affiliated League in good standing may request to host an invitational tournament.

Process – The Organization or affiliated League must request and fill out a Permission to Host Form and comply with all other instructions contained in that Form. The materials must be submitted to the Mass Youth Soccer office at least thirty (30) days before Tournament. The required fee must be paid with the submission. The request to host is effective upon approval by Mass Youth Soccer.

The Organization or affiliated League must establish any special tournament requirements prior to filling out form.

Mass Youth Soccer will not sanction any tournament that has age groups for U-10 and younger unless the competition at those age groups is based upon (a) small-sided games, and (b) a non-results format (i.e., no 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc., placement for players and teams). Participation awards for all participants is preferred and

strongly encouraged.

Failure to timely submit the required post-tournament within thirty (30) days following the tournament's conclusion, using the Mass Youth Soccer required form, will result in the Organization or affiliated League host incurring a \$500 fine.

7. SENIOR TRIAL GAMES

- 7.01. A youth player will be permitted to play an unlimited number of senior games without losing his/her youth eligibility. The youth player must obtain permission from his/her youth coach or other authorized team official. The coach or authorized team official shall, in writing or by form, request eligibility clearance from Mass Youth Soccer. The youth coach or other authorized team official must, in writing, or by form, request permission from Mass Youth Soccer. When the clearance and permissions have been granted, Mass Youth Soccer has sole discretion in permitting a youth player to play senior games and will be responsible for establishing the procedure under which this will be implemented.
- 7.02. Any youth playing for a senior club without the approval of the Board of Directors shall be declared ineligible for youth games. Any youth team using such ineligible player shall forfeit all games in which that player took part by a score of 1-0.

8. PLAYING WITH PROFESSIONAL PLAYERS

- 8.01. Any player signing a "Letter of Intent," a professional contract, or playing with a professional team, without the permission of the Board of Directors of this Association, shall be declared a professional player and shall lose all privileges of youth amateur status.
- 8.02. The Board of Directors of this Association may grant youth amateur player permission to play in benefit or exhibition games only, where professional players are involved. Permission must be requested in writing.
- 8.03. A player who has signed a "Letter of Intent," a contract, or played in any game where professional players are involved without prior permission of the Board of Directors of the Association, will not be permitted to be reinstated to youth amateur status.

9. DISCIPLINARY; PROTEST AND APPEAL PROCEDURES

- 9.01. Disciplinary Actions. Any person (i.e., individual or entity affiliated with Mass Youth Soccer, an Organization, or an affiliated League) charged with violating the Constitution, Bylaws, general procedures, specific rules, and/or policy interpretation memoranda of this Association, USYS, or USSF may be asked to appear before the Board of Directors or a designated committee of the Board of Directors, in order to explain his/her action(s). Failure to appear and cooperate

with any investigation shall be grounds for immediate suspension and/or expulsion.

Any person may also be suspended as an outcome of a referee assault or abuse hearing, or as an outcome of any other type of disciplinary hearing held under the authority of any Organization or affiliated League. In such cases, it is the responsibility of the 'host' Organization or League to ensure that any penalty assessed is carried out.

Any person who is the subject of a disciplinary hearing may be suspended by Mass Youth Soccer, the League, and/or the Organization conducting the hearing from the date written notification is given to such person until such time as the disciplinary hearing is held; provided, that the disciplinary hearing must be held within 30 calendar days of the date written notice is provided to such person.

Organizations and Leagues may be expelled only by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the general Membership at a meeting called for this purpose. The involved Organization or League shall be given reasonable notice of such action and may make a statement in front of the Membership before the vote is taken.

If a player or coach is suspended by an Organization or affiliated League for a playing season (fall or spring) or longer, Mass Youth Soccer shall be notified, whereupon the President shall appoint a three member panel of the Board of Directors which will review the suspension. The panel will offer its recommendation whether the suspension should be honored by Mass Youth Soccer and all Organizations and affiliated Leagues; if such is the panel's recommendation, then said suspension shall be honored by all Organizations and affiliated Leagues, and the Leagues Committee shall be so notified.

A plea of ignorance to the Constitution, Bylaws, general procedures, specific rules, and policy interpretation memoranda of this Association, USYS, and/or USSF, is not sufficient and violators may expect appropriate action by the Board of Directors.

- 9.02. Suspension and Expulsion Process. Any person becoming the subject of any disciplinary action that could result in suspension or expulsion shall be given reasonable notice of the intended action and may make a statement to the Board of Directors before the matter is put to a vote; provided, if the subject matter of the contemplated suspension involves criminal charges, or if the Executive Committee determines, by a vote of no less than three of its members, that the subject matter and/or conduct creates an extreme threat to the wellbeing and safety of Mass Youth Soccer participants or its community, then such suspension may be effected immediately by the Executive Director, such suspension to continue subject to prompt ratification thereof by the Board of Directors.

After due consideration, the Board of Directors shall determine to suspend or

expel such person only upon vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Directors at a meeting duly called and held to consider such suspension or expulsion.

- 9.03. Members in Bad Standing. Any Member may be placed in Bad Standing for failing to observe the rules, regulations, or procedures of USSF, USYS, or Mass Youth Soccer or its Organizations or affiliated Leagues.

Members charged with conduct that could result in being placed in Bad Standing shall be given written notice of the intended action and will have a reasonable time to comply. Members placed in Bad Standing may not participate in Mass Youth Soccer affiliated soccer activities and will not be allowed to vote on any matters before the Members.

Once a Member placed in Bad Standing rectifies the violations of the rules, regulations, or procedures which led to being placed in Bad Standing, it will be assessed a Reinstatement Fee. Upon payment of the Reinstatement Fee, such Member will be placed in good standing and thereafter will be eligible to participate in all Mass Youth Soccer affiliated soccer activities and will be allowed to vote on any matters before the Members.

- 9.04. Appeal Procedures. The Mass Youth Soccer appeals procedure shall follow the procedure outlined in US Soccer National Appeals Bylaw, including what constitutes an action that can be appealed. No appeal can be made to the Appeals Committee for an issue or action that cannot be appealed to USSF. The determination of what constitutes an action that can be appealed shall be made solely by the Appeals Committee. The provisions of this Bylaw shall apply to all Members, Organizations, and affiliated Leagues. No Mass Youth Soccer affiliate shall limit the right of a player, coach, team, etc., to appeal a decision to the next higher level.

9.04.1. An appeals panel shall consist of no less than three (3) members, unless otherwise required. The Executive Director, in consultation with the Appeals Committee chair, shall form panels as necessary. In the absence of an appointed Appeals Committee chair, the Executive Director shall form appeals panels as necessary and the panel shall designate a chairperson for the hearing. No member of a panel may be from, or affiliated with the League with which any party to the appeal is affiliated.

9.04.2. All appeals and protests made to Mass Youth Soccer shall be heard by the Appeals Committee.

9.04.3. The decision rendered from which an appeal is taken may be suspended pending determination of the appeal by the panel only upon written application by the appellant which accompanies the Notice of Appeal and a unanimous finding by the panel that there is a strong likelihood of the appeal's success and that circumstances are present

which clearly show that the appellant will suffer irreparable harm unless the decision from which the appeal is taken is suspended pending determination of the appeal. The decision of the AP regarding any suspension of the decision pending determination of the appeal shall be final and may not be further appealed.

- 9.04.4. Each appellant shall pay a non-refundable appeal fee of \$200.00.
- 9.04.5. An appeal to Mass Youth Soccer must be made in writing within ten (10) days of the incident or ruling by a lower appeals, protest, or hearing board, or such right to appeal is waived. The written appeal must be accompanied by a check for the appeal fee made out to the Mass Youth Soccer. The appeal fee is non-refundable regardless of the outcome of the appeal. The appeal must include seven (7) copies of all documents pertinent to the appeal.

The Appeals Committee shall hold a formal hearing to which all parties will have been notified and invited within twenty (20) business days of the committee's receipt of the written appeal, all supporting documentation, and the appeal fee. Appellate proceedings shall be held in executive session, limited to the panel and the parties, and witnesses (if any). The panel will determine its procedures, including whether to allow oral argument and, if allowed, it may set time limits. The panel may waive oral argument and decide the matter based solely upon the record and the parties' written arguments.

The appellant shall bear the burden of showing that the decision being appealed from is clearly erroneous.

No new evidence may be presented unless circumstances have materially changed, or new facts are discovered that were unavailable at the time of the hearing from which appeal is being taken. In such cases, the panel may allow that such new evidence be presented provided all parties to the appeal have been given notice and are given an opportunity to respond to the materially changed circumstances or previously unavailable or undiscovered facts.

The Appeals Committee will render a decision in writing to all parties in the appeal.

- 9.04.6. If an appellant fails to submit arguments by the deadline for submitting appellant's arguments and no continuance has been granted by the panel, the appeal shall be considered abandoned. If oral argument is allowed and the appellant fails to participate in oral argument without excuse, the appeal shall be considered abandoned.

- 9.04.7. Any decision rendered by Appeals Committee may be appealed directly to the US Soccer National Appeals Committee. The appeal to USSF must be made by completing the Notice of Appeal Form and submitting that Form and the required appeal fee to USSF. The US Soccer National Appeals Committee has the authority to approve, modify, or reverse a decision made by the Appeals Committee.

No party to an appeal or protest may invoke the aid of the Courts of any State or of the United States without first exhausting all available remedies herein and within the rules and procedures established by USSF.

- 9.04.8. Invitational Tournaments may have rules limiting protests or appeals provided that such limitations are clearly listed in the permission to host and in the tournament invitation. Such limitation can apply only to game results. A Tournament Committee cannot limit the right of a player, coach, or team to protest to USSF the failure of the Tournament Host to deliver on promises given in the Tournament Invitation. USYS National Championships may have special channels of appeal and protest which apply to that competition only.

10. INSURANCE

- 10.01. Insurance. Mass Youth Soccer provides Association-wide insurance coverage providing liability, director and officer, and excess medical coverage.

- 10.02. Liability Insurance. Mass Youth Soccer membership privileges includes liability coverage. All officers, directors, in-house referees, coaches, employees, and officials who are registered with Mass Youth Soccer are covered by general liability insurance. The liability policy provides \$2,000,000 of coverage after a \$250 deductible for participants and spectators for bodily injury or property damage arising from all affiliated soccer activities. Any affiliated Organization participating in non-affiliated activities will NOT be covered by this liability insurance.

Liability insurance is provided for the owners of the fields and facilities used by affiliated Organizations, provided that the Organization registers these facilities with Mass Youth Soccer at the time of affiliation.

- 10.03. Excess Medical Soccer Accident Coverage. Mass Youth Soccer membership privileges includes excess medical soccer accident coverage. All players, officers, directors, in-house referees, coaches, employees, and officials who are registered with Mass Youth Soccer are covered by this coverage.

This excess medical soccer accident coverage is an excess coverage plan that pays benefits after the insured's basic medical coverage pays its benefits. In the event that the insured is not covered by basic medical coverage, this plan becomes

primary. The plan provides up to \$100,000 of benefits after a deductible (\$100 for dental expenses and \$250 for medical expenses) and will pay expenses incurred within a two-year period.

10.04. Directors and Officers Insurance. Mass Youth Soccer membership privileges includes insurance coverage provided for its Directors and Officers and for the Directors and Officers of all Organizations and affiliated Leagues. Directors and Officers (D&O) insurance provides up to \$2,000,000 in the aggregate each policy year. There is a \$1,000 per loss deductible that applies. The D&O insurance covers liability on all losses for which a covered participant would be legally obligated to pay resulting from civil claims that are made against that individual because of a wrongful act.

11. ATHLETES’ BILL OF RIGHTS

11.01. No Mass Youth Soccer affiliate may deny, or threaten to deny any athlete the opportunity to compete in the Olympic Games, the Pan American Games, or World Cup championship competition; nor may any Mass Youth Soccer affiliate censure, subsequent to such competition, or otherwise penalize, any such athlete who participates in such competition.

11.02. An athlete who alleges that he or she has been denied the right to compete in the above competitions by a Mass Youth Soccer affiliate shall immediately inform the President of the USSF, who shall promptly cause an investigation to be made and steps to be taken to resolve the complaint without delay.

11.03. Mass Youth Soccer, its Organizations and affiliated Leagues, shall not discriminate against the participation of players or teams on the basis of that player’s or team’s membership in, or affiliation with another soccer organization. Organizations and affiliated Leagues are encouraged to allow teams of all other USSF members to participate in tournaments sponsored by Mass Youth Soccer or any of its Organizations or affiliated Leagues, when the teams otherwise comply with the tournament eligibility requirements. A tournament sponsor or host may charge each team of another USSF member an additional fee of not more than \$25 to participate in the tournament.

12. RECOMMENDED PLAYING GUIDELINES

Mass Youth Soccer endorses the following guidelines for the number of players participating in small-sided games.

Age Group	Maximum # of Players	Recommended # of Players	Goalkeepers Permitted
Under-6	4	3	No
Under-8	5	4	No
Under-10	7	6	Yes
Under-12	9	8	Yes

These rules shall be mandatory for teams playing in competitive programs (travel teams or premier teams) as follows:

- For Under-6 and Under-8 age groups – September 1, 2003
- For Under-10 age groups – September 1, 2004.

13. PRIORITY GUIDE FOR MULTIPLE ROSTERED PLAYERS

These “priorities of play” are for players who are multiple rostered. These priorities:

- apply to all State Team players – regardless of age – rostered on any other team.
- apply to all multiple rostered players aged U-14 and younger; but,
- do not apply to non-State Team players age U-15 and above.

These priorities provide players, coaches and parents with a set of expectations for players rostered to multiple teams. They have been developed to enable players to rise to their highest level of soccer while affording them access to all levels of play. They developed with input from representatives of all types and levels of play within the state. They have been developed to eliminate such questions as “Who do I play for?”, “Which practice should I attend?”, or “What team should I play with on a tournament weekend?” These priorities are to be respected and adhered to by all of the various soccer interests that compete for a player’s attention and time.

In general terms, a player’s priorities are as follows.

1. Major Tournaments:
 - a) Regional ODP Tournament (after Memorial Day)
 - b) State Cup
 - c) MTOC and Qualifying Games
 - d) On a major national holiday weekend:
 - Memorial Day – priority to Premier (MAPLE & MASC) Teams
 - Columbus Day – priority to Town Teams
 - All other tournaments – players are to alternate attendance in event of scheduled conflict
2. State Team Tryouts (except Sunday afternoons during MAPLE & MASC seasons)
3. Regularly scheduled League games
4. Make-up games
5. Practices

However, there exist variations in priority based on the playing season. So please read and understand each category and how they interrelate.

Soccer Activity Priority List:

1. Regional ODP Tournament
2. State Cup Tournament
3. MTOC and Qualifying Games
4. State Team Tryouts in summer, fall (other than on Sunday afternoons) and winter seasons only. Try-out dates must also be established and available through the State Office at least one month in advance.
5. All Games:
 - a) State Team – Summer only
 - b) Premier (MAPLE & MASC) Teams – all year for any games scheduled from 11:00 a.m. on Sunday until dusk
 - c) MTOC Eligible Town Teams – all year for any games scheduled from Friday afternoon to Sunday at 11:00 a.m.
 - d) State Team
 - e) Non-MTOC Town, or any fall teams other than Premier or winter teams
6. Tournaments:
 - a) State Team – (summer only)
 - b) Premier (MAPLE & MASC) Teams – priority for Memorial Day Weekend only
 - c) Town Teams – priority for Columbus Day weekend only
 - d) All other tournaments – players are to alternate attendance in event of conflicts.
7. Practices:
 - a) State Team – priority during the Spring season. State Team practice dates must be established and available through the State Office by at least March 15th.
 - b) Premier (MAPLE & MASC) Team – Division 1 only
 - c) All other teams – players are to alternate attendance in event of schedule conflict.