



# 7v7 SOCCER LEAGUE RULES

## ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

1. League registration fees include an eight (8) match season and playoffs.
  - Registration fees include online scheduling and administration, referee fees, and awards for regular season and tournament champions.
    - i. Regular season champions will receive a \$50 discount off the next season's registration fee.
    - ii. Tournament champions (playoffs) will receive both a \$50 discount off the next season's registration fee and a prize.
  - Any team registering after the posted registration deadline must pay an additional late fee.
  - All league fees must be paid in full upon registration; any team which has not paid in full prior to the first (1<sup>st</sup>) game of the season must pay a late fee or may be dropped from the league.
  - No refunds shall be issued after the league schedule has been posted for the season.
  - Registration is open to both new and returning teams. Teams will be accepted on a first come-first serve basis; no priority or special consideration will be given to any team.
  - Registration will close on the posted date **unless the maximum number of teams has already been reached.**
    - The maximum number of teams that can register for one season will be based on available field space and time allotments.
    - Each team seeking registration after enrollment is full will be placed on the waitlist.
    - In the case that league staff pulls from the waitlist, teams will be contacted in order of the waitlist.
2. The League Coordinator/Specialist retains the authority to modify or deviate from any 7v7 Soccer League Rules as deemed necessary in the best interests of the overall program.
3. Team schedules are automatically generated within Team Sideline and will NOT be modified week-to-week unless deemed necessary by the League Coordinator/Specialist.
4. All match times are subject to change and cancellation at the discretion of the League Coordinator/Specialist.
  - In the event of thunder/lightning, all players, officials, and spectators must vacate the fields until it is deemed safe to return by the League Coordinator/Specialist.
  - In the event of cancellation or delays, each team's primary captain will be notified through email and/or text (if registered) via teamsideline.com and will be responsible for notifying their players.
  - The League Coordinator/Specialist shall update the league website, when possible, in the event of cancellation or delays.
  - Matches will be cancelled and re-scheduled in the event of an extended delay (due to inclement weather, etc.) at the discretion of the League Coordinator/Specialist.
  - In order to be considered a complete match, one (1) full half must be completed. After one half, the match shall be considered complete and will count towards the team's regular season record.
5. Each match shall consist of two (2) twenty-two (22) minute halves with a five (5) minute halftime.
  - Matches may end in a tie during the regular season.
  - During the playoffs, two (2) five (5) minute sudden death (GOLDEN GOAL RULES) overtime periods shall be played in the event of a tie at the conclusion of the match. The first team to score wins.
  - If the match remains tied after both the overtime periods, a five shot penalty kick shootout shall decide the winner.
    - i. If still tied after five (5) penalty kicks by each team, the teams will continue with PKs until one team has scored more goals than the opposing team (sudden death).
    - ii. All eligible players on the roster who have signed in before the end of overtime are able to participate in the penalty kick shootout. A player does not have to have been on the field at the end of the game to participate in taking PKs. The player who was the goalkeeper at the end of overtime may be changed for the shootout.
    - iii. Any player who was temporarily suspended and off the field at the end of the game due to receiving a yellow card may participate in the shootout. However, any player that receives a yellow/red card after the end of overtime but before or during the shootout may not proceed further in the shootout.
      1. Each team shall designate any five (5) signed-in roster players for the first PK session.
      2. Any additional PK sessions may use recycled players from previous sessions provided that no

player make take more than one PK in any session of five kicks.

6. Each match will begin within five (5) minutes after the conclusion of any preceding match that has run late.
7. A team may play with a minimum of five (5) players. A forfeit shall be called if a team cannot field five rostered players within 5 minutes of the designated start time for the match. If both teams agree, then a scrimmage match may be played.
  - A team may temporarily continue the game with fewer than five (5) players if one (1) or more of its players are temporarily out of the game due to injury, equipment, yellow card suspension, or otherwise.
  - In the event of a scrimmage match: no referee shall be provided.
8. The League Coordinator/Specialist retains the authority to move any team to a different division prior to the start of each season as deemed necessary and in the best interests of the league.
  - The top two (2) teams in each division at the end of any season may be promoted up to the next higher division for the following season at the discretion of the League Coordinator/Specialist.
  - The bottom two (2) teams in each division at the end of any season may be relegated down to a lower division for the following season as deemed necessary by the League Coordinator/Specialist.
  - Relegation guidelines are in places for TEAMS. New players will not affect a team's relegation status.
    - Teams with the same roster from a previous season but a new/different team name will be considered a new team and will be placed in a division accordingly.
  - Any division placement for teams outside of the top and bottom two as stated above shall be made based on the prior season's regular season performance and standings (playoffs do NOT apply). The preference to play in a particular division listed during registration is taken into account but NOT guaranteed.
  - All division placements come at the discretion of the League Coordinator/Specialist for the betterment of the overall league.
  - Teams playing in the Competitive Divisions will be permitted to enter the Recreational Divisions the following season only at the discretion of the League Coordinator/Specialist.
  - Forfeits will count as a 2-0 loss toward the forfeiting team's record.
9. Current League Structure:
  - Competitive Divisions:
    - i. Division I
    - ii. Division II
  - Recreational Divisions:
    - i. Recreational I
    - ii. Recreational II
    - iii. Recreational III
    - iv. Recreational IV
  - Over 35 Divisions
    - i. Over 35 Division I
    - ii. Over 35 Division II
    - iii. Over 35 Division III
10. Regular season matches shall have one referee.
11. Each division shall hold a separate post season single elimination tournament.
  - Non-championship playoff matches (quarterfinals, semifinals) shall have one (1) referee. Championship matches shall have two (2) referees.
12. League standings (to determine league champions and post season tournament seedings) are based a point system as follows: Win = 3 points; Tie = 1 point; Loss = 0 points. Tiebreakers will be based on the following order: 1) Head-to-Head 2) Total Goal Differential 3) Total Goals Scored 4) Total Goals Allowed 5) Coin Flip.
13. Rewards given in the 7v7 Adult Soccer League are as follows:
  - i. Regular season champions (teams that finish in first place of their respective division) will receive a \$50 credit on their team captain's account to be used for a future soccer league registration.
  - ii. Tournament champions will receive a \$50 credit on their team captain's account to be used for a future soccer league registration as well as a prize.

## ROSTERS

1. All players must be at least eighteen (18) years of age. Each team may have up to twenty (20) players on the roster.
  - Rosters will be locked and changes shall not be permitted after the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) week of the season, regardless of bye weeks, except in extenuating circumstances subject to the discretion of the League Coordinator/Specialist.
  - All rosters must be submitted in the approved template provided by the League Coordinator/Specialist.
  - Each player's name must appear on the roster as it appears on their photo I.D.
  - Any player written onto the roster prior to any match during the season will not be added to the roster of said team. An email must be sent to the League Coordinator/Specialist with the updated roster in the approved format. No updates will be accepted after the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) overall week of the season, regardless of bye weeks.
2. **For teams competing in the Over 35 Divisions, all players on the roster except three (3) must be over the age of 35. The three (3) players that are not over age 35, however, must be at least 30 years of age.**
3. Players are permitted to participate on multiple teams in different divisions (e.g., Division II and Over 35 Division I) at the discretion of the League Coordinator/Specialist. These are referred to as "crossover players".
  - All crossover players must be declared on the roster and approved by the League Coordinator/Specialist.
    - i. Playing as a crossover player comes with the risk of possible schedule conflicts, such as but not limited to, teams playing at the same times or missing multiple matches due to suspension.
    - ii. Playing as a crossover player is a choice, and it is the responsibility of the team captain to ensure that their team can participate with or without crossover players.
    - iii. The 7v7 Adult Soccer League is NOT responsible for any scheduling conflicts due to crossover players, and schedules will NOT be changed to accommodate crossover players.
  - Crossover players are prohibited from playing on more than one team in the same division (e.g., two different teams in Recreational Divisions).
  - **Teams may not compete in multiple divisions and will be disqualified if five (5) or more players play on the same two teams. Rosters will be crossed checked.**
4. During the regular season, the captain of a team with fewer than seven (7) roster players present may request permission from the opponent's captain to allow "guest" players to participate for that match. A team must have a minimum of five (5) registered players from the team roster to play the match. The team can borrow up to two (2) guest players, provided they do not play on another team in the same division.
  - The captain of the opposing team shall have the sole decision whether to allow guest players to play or not.
  - If the opposing captain allows guest players to compete for the other team, the maximum number of guest players and roster players shall not exceed seven (7) (e.g., six (6) roster players and one (1) guest player). If additional roster players arrive after the match has begun, the team with the guest players must withdraw the guest players from the game (if exceeds 7 players) and substitute rostered players.
5. During the postseason tournament, a team may only use players who are on the team's official roster. No "guest" players are allowed.
6. All players must bring some form of photo identification (driver's license, passport, school ID, league ID, etc.) to be eligible to play in every match. There will be no exceptions. Players which are unable to present a photo ID will NOT be permitted to play; no exceptions.

## CHECK IN

1. Players are required to check in with the referee prior to each match. If a player is not checked in and cannot provide the proper photo identification, they will be ruled ineligible and will not be allowed to play. **There will be no exceptions.** Any player using a false identity (such as signing in under another player's name or using another player's ID) shall at a minimum be suspended from the league for the remainder of the season and the team will forfeit any matches this player participated in. Further sanctions shall be at the discretion of the League Coordinator/Specialist.
2. Late Player Check in – Late players must check in with the referee or an onsite League Official. The player will be eligible for play at the next break in the game after checking in. Late players will be responsible for signing the match report at the half or as soon as possible after arrival.
3. Team Captains are responsible for ensuring their teammates are signed in prior to each match. In addition, Team Captains are also responsible for checking the opposing team's roster prior to each match.
4. Match reports will be in a clip board at midfield each Sunday. All players are responsible for signing the match report (next to their name on the roster) before they begin playing. All "guest" players must sign the match report prior to entering the match. Any player who fails to sign-in on the match report shall be considered ineligible.

## EQUIPMENT

1. Each team must have similarly colored jerseys for each player and each player must display a different permanent number (numbers must be at least six inches tall) on each jersey. No team may have multiple jerseys with the same number. The goalkeeper must wear a jersey that distinguishes him from field players and the referee.
  - A player not wearing the appropriate uniform will not be allowed to enter the game at the discretion of the referee.
  - All teams have until the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) match of the season to meet these uniform criteria.
  - Pinnies will only be used in the event that the two teams have the same or similar color uniforms or in the event that “guest” players are being utilized.
  - **In the event both teams have the same or similarly colored uniforms, it is the responsibility of the home team to change to a different color or wear pinnies. It is the referee’s decision as to whether teams’ uniforms are too close in color to necessitate the home team to change.**
2. Shin guards are mandatory with the top of the shin guard being covered by a sock.
3. Goalkeeper materials must be provided by the teams.
4. Braces and Casts:
  - Any brace or cast must be sufficiently padded to prevent other players from being injured if struck.
  - The referee may require a player with a brace or cast to leave the field in the event they feel the player is playing in a manner that is dangerous to him/her or the other players on the field. Another player may be substituted in this instance.
  - The decision of whether to allow a cast/brace is at the sole discretion of the referee.
5. The following are prohibited: sunglasses, hard billed hats, knotted bandanas, and any jewelry or other items deemed dangerous by the referee.

## FIELDS

1. Matches will typically be played at the following locations on all-weather turf fields but may be relocated to alternative fields (grass or turf) and/or locations at the discretion of the league.
  - Bear Branch Sports Fields - 5205 Research Forest Dr, The Woodlands, TX 77381
  - Gosling Sports Park - 4055 Marisco Pl, The Woodlands, TX 77384
  - Alden Bridge Sports Park - 4751 TX-242, The Woodlands, TX 77384
2. 6’x18’ goals will typically be used for all matches. In the event that standard size goals are not available, then alternate goals may be utilized for any matches.

## ADVICE TO PLAYERS

1. Always bring adequate photo identification to all matches. You will not be permitted to play without it.
2. The Woodlands Township promotes a family friendly environment by taking a strong stance against foul and abusive language while on Township property. **Excessive cursing, offensive language, derogatory or racist comments of any nature are prohibited and will be subject to disciplinary action by the referees and/or the League Coordinator/Specialist.**
3. Players will be held accountable for their conduct prior to and following their matches in reference to unsuitable behavior. The League Coordinator/Specialist may address this conduct with further sanctions (suspensions) as deemed necessary.
4. **Verbal abuse of league referees/officials will not be tolerated and may result in serious disciplinary action as deemed necessary by the League Coordinator/Specialist.**
5. A player may shoot and score a goal directly from the kickoff.
6. A “handball” shall be called and sanctioned with a direct free kick if a player deliberately handles the ball with either their hand(s) or arm(s). A player is considered to have committed “handling” if: (a) their hand or arm is not in a natural position when hit by the ball; or (2) the player handles the ball in an effort to protect their head, chest, or groin areas, even if done reflectively. However, a player in a defensive wall may place their hands in front of their groin or chest so long as this is done before the free kick is taken.
7. All referee judgment decisions are FINAL and may not be protested to the league. Only incorrect applications of the rules may be protested.

## EXCEPTIONS TO THE LAWS OF SOCCER

Please note that The Woodlands Township's 7v7 Soccer League adopts the latest FIFA Laws in conjunction to the additional Township Rules and Regulations listed below. The exceptions to the FIFA Laws of Soccer have been implemented to make the game less intense, less dangerous, and so that we may all enjoy the matches on Sunday and return to work on Monday.

1. The home team shall kick off in the 1<sup>st</sup> half and the visiting team shall kick off in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half. There shall be no coin flip. The visiting team shall choose which side of the field to start the game.
2. Both teams are responsible for providing at least one (1) suitable game ball.
3. When a player receives a yellow card, they must be immediately substituted out of the match for a minimum of five (5) minutes. If there are no substitute players available for the team, the team will play short until the referee allows the yellow carded player to return to the game.
  - A team is not allowed to play short with any less than four (4) players. If an additional yellow card is given and drops the number of players on the field to three (3), the match will end and the score will stand.
  - The referee may add additional time to a yellow carded player's suspension due to 'delay of game tactics' and the team will return to full strength at the referee's discretion.
4. "Slide tackles" by any player (including the goalkeeper) are prohibited and will result in a direct free kick to the opposing team.
  - For field players, a slide tackle is an attempt to win possession of the ball, typically by sliding or lunging along the ground. Additionally, a tackle where a player challenges an opponent for the ball while sliding on the ground for any reason (to include a knee on the ground with an outstretched leg) will be deemed a slide tackle. A player that seeks to block a shot or pass by sliding on the ground and within playing distance of the opposing player shall be deemed to have committed a slide tackle.
  - Merely playing on the ground in a dangerous manner is not a slide tackle and shall only be sanctioned with an indirect free kick.
  - For goalkeepers, a slide tackle is a feet-first attempt to block or win possession of the ball, typically by sliding along the ground. However, goalkeepers are permitted to slide sideways, hands-first, or otherwise slide along the ground in an attempt to block or win possession of the ball provided they do not lead with one or both feet and do not create a dangerous environment.
  - A "slip" is typically the result of being off balance or field conditions and may lead to a challenge that will be sanctioned as a slide tackle if the player attempts to block or win possession of the ball while slipping.
5. "Sliding" is permitted so long as the player is not challenging an opposing player for the ball and is not within playing distance of an opposing player. For example, a player may slide to keep a ball in-bounds or to prevent a ball from entering the goal. A player may also slide in an attempt to block a shot or shoot the ball so long as he is not within playing distance of an opponent.
6. Penalty-kicks shall be taken ten (10) yards from the goal line. During free-kicks, defending players shall be at least ten (10) yards from the ball or on the goal line if the kick is within ten (10) yards of the goal line. All opposing players must move at least ten (10) yards away from the ball on all free kicks and may be issued a yellow card for failing to do so. The kicking team does NOT need to first request the opposing team move away ten (10) yards on a free kick; it is required.
7. Substitutions may be made at any stoppage but only after obtaining permission of the referee.
8. Shin guards must be worn at all times during match play.
9. There is NO offside.

## DISCIPLINARY

1. The League Coordinator/Specialist retains the authority to remove and/or suspend any player/individual from the league based on their behavior while on The Woodlands Township's property.
2. Referees have the authority to issue cards to any player who is present (regardless of whether they have signed the match report) as deemed necessary to maintain control of a match. Furthermore, registered individuals will be subject to all league disciplinary rules.
3. Referees have the authority to send off any non-registered coach or spectator as deemed necessary in order to maintain control of the match. Furthermore, these individuals may be subject to additional disciplinary measures as seen fit by the League Coordinator/Specialist.
4. The official match report shall be reviewed by the League Coordinator/Specialist with authority to discipline for cautions, ejections and other disciplinary issues.
5. Verbal abuse by any individual will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action as deemed necessary.
6. Any team or player making an appeal to the League Coordinator/Specialist must send an email no later than two days after the event took place (the Tuesday following the match).

7. There will be absolutely NO DRINKING OF ALCOHOL prior to or during a match. Violation of this rule will result in an equivalent red card (current game and next week) suspension. Please remember that glass (bottles) is not allowed within any of The Woodlands Township's parks.
8. Fights involving two (2) or more players from the same team will automatically result in forfeiture/abandonment of the match. Additionally, any player on the bench which enters the field without the referee's permission in an attempt to participate in any fight will receive a red card and be suspended a minimum of two (2) weeks.
  - The League Coordinator retains the authority to suspend and/or disband any team in these instances.
  - Players on a disbanded team may be eligible for reinstatement by the league under the following stipulations:
    - i. Serve appropriate league suspension; and
    - ii. Agree to stipulations put forth in league reinstatement policy.
9. Disciplinary Cards:
  - Yellow (caution) and red (ejection) cards may be issued by a referee at any time starting with an individual's arrival at the field complex and until departure from the field complex.
  - In order for a suspension to be fully served, the player must miss the full week of matches. **This means that a player who plays on multiple teams must sit out from all games in all divisions in which they play for one week.** For example, a player who receives a red card in their Division II game, but also plays on teams in Rec B and Over-35 Division I, must sit out all games for his three teams for one week.
    - i. "One week suspension" is equivalent to one full day of matches, regardless of division.
  - Yellow and red cards are cumulative over a one (1) season period which includes both league playoffs and across all divisions if a player plays on multiple teams.
  - Yellow cards count as one (1) disciplinary point and red cards count as three (3) disciplinary points. A player that receives a red card as the result of two yellow cards in the same game shall only be assessed three (3) disciplinary points.
    - Three (3) disciplinary points in a season shall result in a minimum one (1) week suspension.
    - Six (6) disciplinary points in a season shall result in a minimum two (2) week suspension.
    - Nine (9) disciplinary points in a season shall result in a minimum six (6) week suspension and automatic suspension of the individual for the remainder of the current season.
    - The League Coordinator/Specialist has the discretion to increase the above suspensions, including imposition of an indefinite suspension, depending on the circumstances.
  - All disciplinary point totals will reset to zero (0) at the beginning of each season. However, any existing suspensions shall carry-over from one season to the next season. For example, if a player is suspended two games and there is only one week left in the current season, that player must sit out the first week of games for the next season.
10. Suspensions:
  - Ejections from a match involving serious foul play, violent conduct, and/or spitting shall result in a minimum two (2) week suspension to be reviewed by the League Coordinator/Specialist who retains the authority to levy additional disciplinary action as deemed necessary.
    - i. Based on severity, a player receiving a red card for fighting may be suspended at the discretion of the League Coordinator/Specialist based on the following criteria:
      - Fighting/striking/punching another player – minimum one (1) season suspension.
      - Assault/striking/punching/violent conduct towards a referee or league official – minimum one (1) year suspension.
  - **Reinstatement Policy** – Any player suspended for an extended period (anything above a league minimum) may be subject to reinstatement on a probationary status and must agree to and sign the reinstatement policy set forth by the League Coordinator.
    - i. The stipulations set forth in the reinstatement policy vary for each individual and are dependent upon the severity of the incident resulting in suspension and the player's disciplinary history.
  - Any crossover player who receives a red card shall be suspended from all league play until they have served the appropriate suspension in the division in which the red card was received.
    - i. Crossover players must sit out the full week of matches in order to serve their suspension, regardless of the division in which the card was received, and are ineligible to play on any other league teams in other divisions during the suspension.
    - ii. Crossover players are NOT permitted to return to competition on the same day that a suspension is being served. All matches regardless of time or division must be missed in order to fulfill suspension.



- All suspensions will be carried over into subsequent seasons if necessary.
  - i. Players do not receive credit towards their suspension period for weeks in which their team does not participate.
- Any individual receiving a red card MUST leave the field complex and/or The Woodlands Township property within four (4) minutes and may not participate in any other soccer activities in any capacity (even as a spectator) for the remainder of the day. Failure to comply will result in the match being forfeited by his/her team and the red carded player may be subject to additional suspension at the discretion of the League Coordinator/Specialist.

### ALL-WEATHER TURF RULES

*To preserve the quality of the turf and to provide a clean and healthy environment, the following are prohibited on the all-weather turf surface.*

1. Tobacco products (smoke and smokeless)
2. Dogs or animals, service animals excluded
3. Food or beverages (water excluded) including gum, seeds, nuts, and sports drinks
4. Chairs, stakes, spikes, or other pointed materials
5. Use of model planes
6. Metal cleats
7. Motorized vehicles, except for maintenance vehicles
8. Bikes, roller blades, skateboards, and strollers
9. Fields are not permitted to be used if ice is present
10. Only players, coaches, and league officials are permitted on the playing field.

### WEATHER PROCEDURES

- In the event of rain, matches will be played as scheduled. If thunder or lightning is present, matches will be immediately delayed thirty (30) minutes at each sighting of lightning or sound of thunder.
- The League Coordinator/Specialist will have the final say in the start/delay of matches.
- In the event of thunder/lightning delays, all spectators and players must exit the fields for their safety until given the all-clear by the League Coordinator/Specialist.
- In the event matches are delayed beyond one (1) hour, the League Coordinator/Specialist will cancel all remaining matches for the day and reschedule them for a later date.
  - Communication will be sent via teamsideline.com in the event of match cancellations.

### The Woodlands Soccer League Website:

<http://www.teamsideline.com/thewoodlandstownship>

It is the responsibility of each team captain to ensure his/her teammates fully understand the aforementioned rules and regulations. If a player has any questions about the content of the 7v7 Player Handbook, he or she is invited to contact the League Coordinator or League Specialist listed below. Any player who would like to address any concerns regarding match officiating may contact the 7v7 Referee Assignor listed below.

Soccer is an amazing game and we greatly appreciate your enthusiasm and participation in our soccer league.

### LEAGUE OFFICIALS

#### 7v7 League Coordinator

Rachel Palomino  
(281) 210-3955  
rpalomino@thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov

#### 7v7 Referee Assignor

Brandon Ward  
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For general league inquiries please email [soccer@thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov](mailto:soccer@thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov)