



POLICIES AND RULES OF PLAY

CATHOLIC METRO SOCCER LEAGUE

Catholic Metro Sports



Last Amended 08.25.25



Amended August 22, 2024

- These rules supersede all prior rules -

NOTES AND UPDATES

1. The duration of games depends on the age group. See the following pages for your age group. Time is added at the referees discretion.
2. Referees have total power in games they are officiating. Referees can issue "cards" to any player, parent or coach for misconduct. This includes the ability to eject (i.e. "red card") a parent. In the event that any player, parent or coach is ejected from a game they must leave "sight and sound" within 5 minutes of the ejection.
3. Coaches and teams will be on one side of the field with spectators REQUIRED to be on the opposite side. Coaches and subs must stay on their own half of the field (this is called the technical area).
4. NO PLAYER, COACH, PARENT OR SPECTATOR MAY HARASS OR DISAGREE WITH A REFEREE. (The kids will play and the officials will officiate).
5. In instances where a team at any parish or school exceeds the maximum number of participants, causing one or more players to have less than 50% playing time, such limitations will not be grounds for a protest or forfeit.

GENERAL SAFETY

1. Players may not wear jewelry, watches, chains, belts, hair-bows with loops, or wristbands. Newly pierced ears must be taped over for safety.
2. Players may not play with hard casts on arms or wrists.
3. Cleats and Shin guards are mandatory.
4. Intentional headers are not permitted for U10 (4th grade) and below. Players will be penalized by a free kick from the spot of the incident, if a player heads the ball in the box, the referee will take the ball to the nearest spot outside the box and award a free kick from there. Directors and Coaches need to create awareness and educate all players about the dangers of headers and not practice doing them.
5. Slide tackles are not permitted for U10 (4th grade) and below. Slide tackling shall be defined as: (1) taking a ball from an opponent while sliding on the ground, (2) taking control of the ball by contacting the ball while sliding on the ground before contacting the opponent, or (3) sliding on the ground to make contact with any player. This definition is not exclusive, and the referee shall be the final word on what is or is not a slide tackle. Goalies are permitted to slide when making a save, as long as they do it in a very safe manner. If the slide tackle occurs inside the goal box and the player makes contact with the advancing player and the





advancing player is injured, a penalty kick (for U10) can occur if deemed necessary by the referee. From anywhere else on the field, slide tackling will result in a free kick.

RULES

Rule 1.0 SPORTSMANSHIP

- A. The CMSL is a participation based recreation league. Behavior and decorum typical of this format of play is expected at all times. All coaches, parents, school representatives, etc., share in the responsibility for the success of our league, and for maintaining our reputation as a home of good sportsmanship, character and class.
1. Any coaches or parents displaying unsportsmanlike conduct may be asked to leave the playing area for the duration of the game. Head Coaches will be responsible for all adults associated with their team.
 2. Coaches need to lead by example. Soccer can be an emotional game and the players will look at the coach as a figure of respect and behavioral example. Coaches should control their emotions and always display proper reasoning in tough situations.
 3. Parents misconduct resulting in an ejection will be reported to the parish, school or association where such parent's child attends.

Rule 2.0 PROTESTS

Regular season game protests must be made to the soccer director no later than 24 hours after completion of the game. Tournament protests must be made and delivered to the CMSL Commissioner in writing no later than one (1) hour after completion of the game.

Protest fee: Recognizing that this is an all-volunteer league and that protests take time to administer and resolve, a condition of consideration of any protest submitted is that the protest must be accompanied by a \$100 protest fee. This fee is non-refundable. Judgment calls (or referee performance deemed to be subpar) cannot be protested under ANY circumstances. A protest of this nature WILL NOT receive any consideration from the CMSL.





Rule 3.0 Mercy Rule

- A. Should a team gain a five (5) goal lead, the coaches must adhere to the Mercy Rule below:

Administering the Mercy Rule:

1. It is the responsibility of the coach to adhere to this Policy. Our referees may remind the coach, but it is NOT their responsibility to bring this to the coaches' attention or force the coaches to take the necessary steps. Please take the lead and do not put referees in an awkward situation.
2. Should a team gain a five (5) goal lead, the losing team shall add a player.
3. The coach will reposition players so that their offense is no longer a threat to the opposition. This can involve moving stronger players into the defense, insisting that they complete 5 passes before any shots on goals, or any other creative means to keep the score even, while still allowing the players to play to the best of their ability.
4. If despite all best efforts by the winning team to keep the score down the goal differential increases to seven (7) goals, a player must be removed from the winning team. When doing so, it is expressly understood that not every player will play 50% of each game.

Rule 4.0 EXCESSIVE SCORING

"Excessive scoring" is defined as any goal differential of eight (8) goals or greater.

The following actions will be taken regardless of circumstances that may have attributed to the final score:

- a. First Offense: Coach of team committing excessive scoring offense will be issued a warning from CMSL Commissioner. This warning is in effect, issued or not, upon the second offense.
- b. Second Offense: Team committing the excessive scoring offense will have the game score recorded as a forfeit (3-0) loss.
- c. Third Offense: The team shall not be eligible for tournament play, and shall not be recognized as league Champions.





Rule 5.0 PARITY WITHIN EACH SCHOOL/ PROGRAM

All soccer directors share the commitment to ensure as much parity as possible within each respective program. Parity is required. The directors will be responsible for signing off on their teams with respect to parity. If there are two (or more) teams in any age group, the school, parish, or association is required to conduct an evaluation. U10, U12, and U14 may not be divided into grades (or by gender in case of coed teams such as U14).

Rule 6.0 FIELD OF PLAY

A. Outer Dimensions (Yards)

AGE GROUP	MINIMUM L x W	MAXIMUM L x W	RECOMMENDED
Pre K / K	20 x 15	30 x 20	25 x 20
1st	25 x 20	35 x 30	35 x 25
2nd	25 x 20	35 x 30	35 x 25
3rd / 4th	45 x 35	60 x 45	50 x 40
5th / 6th	70 x 45	80 x 55	75 x 50
7th / 8th	70 x 45	80 x 55	75 x 50

B. Inside Dimensions (Yards)

AGE GROUP	PENALTY AREA	GOAL AREA	PENALTY KICK MARK
Pre K / K	None	3 Yard Arc	None
1st	None	3 Yard Arc	None
2nd	None	3 Yard Arc	None
3rd / 4th	26 x 10	18 x 6	8
5th / 6th	30 x 14	18 x 6	10
7th / 8th	30 x 14	18 x 6	10





C. Goal Dimension

AGE GROUP	INSIDE HEIGHT	INSIDE WIDTH	RECOMMENDED H x W (ft)
Pre K / K / 1st	4 Feet (approx.)	2 Feet (approx.)	4 x 6
2nd	6 Feet (approx.)	6 Feet (approx.)	6 x 12
3rd / 4th	6 Feet (approx.)	6 Feet (approx.)	6 x 18
5th / 6th	6 Feet (approx.)	6 Feet (approx.)	6 x 18
7th / 8th	6 Feet (approx.)	6 Feet (approx.)	6 x 18

Rule 7.0 THE BALL

Ball Size

AGE GROUP	BALL
Pre K / K	Size 3
1st / 2nd	Size 3
3rd / 4th 5th / 6th	Size 4
7th / 8th	Size 5





Rule 8.0 NUMBER OF PLAYERS: Goalies, Forfeits, Minimum Time

A. Team Size

1. Minimum and Maximum: Age/Grade Classifications
 - a. **Minimum and Maximum; Age/Grade Classifications**

Pre K K	1st Grade	2nd Fall	3rd	3rd 4th	5th 6th	7th 8th
U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U12	U14

	Pre K K	1st	2nd	3rd 4th	5th 6th	7th 8th
Minimum Team Size	5	5	6	10	12	12
Max. Game Roster Size	7	8	10	12	15	15
Min. Number on the Field	3	3	4	5	7	7
Max. Number on the Field	3	4	5	7	9	9

2. AGE CLASSIFICATIONS

For the CMSL (only), divisions are by grade. That is, a 4th grader may be over the “age cut off” as established by USYSA or other entities such as Georgia Soccer. Participants will be grouped by grade. In accordance with the stated rules for CMSL, a player may play “up” a grade.





B. Forfeits and Short Teams

1. Forfeited scores will be recorded as a 3-0 loss.
2. A 10-minute grace period will be allowed for teams who are short the minimum number of players allowed on the field.
3. Teams will be allowed to play and begin a game if they are short as long as they have the minimum necessary to play.

AGE GROUP	# OF PLAYERS	MIN. TO START	IF SHORT
Pre K / K	3 v 3 (*)	3	3 v 3
1st	4 v 4	3	4 v 3
2nd	5 v 5	4	5 v 4
3rd / 4th	7 v 7	6	7 v 6
5th / 6th	9 v 9	8	9 v 8
7th / 8th	9 v 9	8	9 v 8

(*) Pre-K/K plays 'Micro soccer' format: a player cannot be permanently positioned in front of the goal. Players are allowed to move into and through the 3 yard arc around the goal, but are not allowed to stay there unless they are playing the ball.

C. Goalie Requirements

1. No Goalie for PreK, K and 1st Grade.
2. Goalies are required for all others (except for when trying to comply with the Mercy Rule).





Rule 9.0 SUBSTITUTION RULES

Substitutions and Minimum Playing Time for Pre K/K through 7th/8th Grade.

1. General

- a. The official game clock (managed by the referee) will continue to run during substitution times.
- b. Players wanting to substitute must be waiting at the halfway line when play stops. Teams shall substitute from the mid field line.
- c. In case of an injured player, the player **must** be substituted if the coach is called onto the field by the referee.
- d. Players must wait for the referee to give permission for them to enter the field of play.
- e. Substitutions must be made prior to a throw-in in favor of your team, prior to a goal kick by either team, following an injury to a player from either team, or at halftime. Additional rules may apply for PreK – 2nd grade as listed below.

2. K and 1st Grade (U6 and U7 Divisions)

- a. Substitution is mandatory:
 - i) In the middle of each quarter of play AND at the end of each quarter of play (this includes half time). There shall be seven (7) instances to sub.
 - ii) At a stoppage in play for an injury.
 - iii) Both teams shall substitute at the same time.
- b. Each player must play a minimum of half of each half of a match.
- c. No player shall play the entire game unless every other team player has played three-fourths (3/4) of the game.

2. 2nd Grade – U8 Division

- a. Free substitution.
- b. Each player must play a minimum of half of the game.





c. No player shall play the entire game unless every other team player has played three-fourths (3/4) of the game.

d. Two (2) GOALIES MINIMUM: A 2nd grade team must play at least 2 goalies. One child may only play 50% of any game in goal as a goalkeeper.

3rd and 4th Grade – U10 Division

- 2 Free substitution.
- 3 Each player must play a minimum of 50% of the game.
- 4 Two (2) GOALIE MINIMUM: A 3rd/4th grade team must play at least 2 goalies and may alternate as the coach sees fit.

5th and 6th Grade – U12 Division

- 5 Free substitution.
- 6 Each player must play a minimum of 50% of the game.
- 7 A goalkeeper may play the entire game in goal, as long as each team member has played 50% of the game.
- 8 A player other than the goalkeeper may play the entire game, as long as each team member will have played 50% of the game.

7th and 8th Grade – U14 Division

- 9 Free substitution.
- 10 Each player must play a minimum of 50% of the game.
- 11 A goalkeeper may play the entire game in goal, as long as each team member will have played 50% of the game.
- 12 A player other than the goalkeeper may play the entire game, as long as each team member will have played 50% of the game.





Rule 10.0 ROSTERS & ELIGIBILITY

1. All teams will be composed of boys and girls separately (exception made for U6 & U14).
2. Rosters are to be provided by each team for U10 and above, stating full players name, grade, if a club player and jersey number. These rosters will be posted and made available on the CMSL website.
3. Rosters must be posted on the league's website on the Friday before the second week of each season, no later than 5pm. Any team that fails to meet this rule shall forfeit all games until there is compliance. The roster rules are for U10 and above.
4. Guest Players – A player registered for a CMSL team and noted on a roster for a lower team may play up only as noted in 4(a)
 - a. The plus two exception: In the event that a team may risk a forfeit because it has less than the minimum to start the game, or has less than two substitutes; players from a lower division, duly registered and listed on a CMSL roster, shall be allowed to play in that game. That is, players may play up to avoid a forfeit or to have up to two additional players to serve as substitutes during the game.

Note: A girl is allowed to play on a boys team of the same age group, but a boy cannot play on a girls team, regardless of age group.
 - b. Players may only play up one level except to join 3rd/4th grade teams. A player from 1st or 2nd grade may play up with a 3rd/4th grade team. A player from 3rd or 4th grade may play up with a 5th/6th grade team, and a player from 5th/6th grade may play up on a 7th/8th grade team.
 - c. For U10 and above, if a parish/school has more than one team registered in the same division, players cannot be borrowed to play on the other team.





Rule 11.0 DURATION OF GAME

Length of Games, and match tie-breaking rules for each age group shall be as follows:

AGE GROUP	GAME LENGTH	TOURNAMENT* GAME LENGTH	OVERTIME PERIODS** (CUP & TOURNAMENT)
7th / 8th	Two 30 mins halves	2 x 25 mins	Two 5 mins halves
5th / 6th	Two 30 mins halves	2 x 25 mins	Two 5 mins halves
3rd / 4th	Two 25 mins halves	2 x 20 mins	Two 5 mins halves
2nd	Four 10 mins quarter		N/A
1st	Four 10 mins quarter		N/A
Pre K / K	Four 8 mins quarter		N/A

* Tournament final will be Regular Season game length

**There will be no overtime periods during the regular season.

Rule 12.0 START AND RESTART OF PLAY

- Coin toss determines ball/goal at game start. The team that wins the coin toss chooses which goal to defend.
- The other team starts play with a kick from the center mark.
- Teams alternate kicks from the center mark to start play at the beginning of each quarter or half.
- Players may not touch the ball twice at the start of play.
- For U6, U7 & U8: Opponents should wait for a second player of the kick-off team to touch the ball before attacking. If the ball goes directly to the opposition and/or to the ball crosses the midfield line, after the kick-off, the opposite team is allowed to play the ball.





Rule 13.0 BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY

- A. The ball is in play until it *completely* crosses over a touchline or goal line.

Rule 14.0 METHOD OF SCORING

- A. A goal is scored when the ball *completely* crosses over the goal line, between the goal posts and below the crossbar.

Rule 15.0 OFFSIDE

- A. Offside is not called for U6, U7, or U8.
- B. A player is not offside if he is in his own half of the field or he is leveled with the second-to-last opponent.
- Offside is determined **ONLY AT THE MOMENT** the ball touches or is played by one of HIS own teammates.
 - Player is **OFFSIDE** and **PENALIZED** only if he is **SEEKING TO GAIN AN ADVANTAGE** by being in that position or interfering with play or with an opponent.
 - A player is not offside just for being in an offside position (must be a part of the play).
 - It is not offside if a player gets the ball directly from a goal kick, corner kick, or throw-in.
- C. An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team at the point where the infraction occurred.





Rule 16.0 FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

- A. Fouls are classified as either Penal (Contact) or Technical (Non-Contact). Penal fouls include tripping, pushing, etc. Technical fouls include dangerous play and impeding (obstruction).
- B. Coaches for younger players deal with inappropriate behavior by removing the players from the game for a “cool down” period.
- C. In the event a coach or an assistant is ejected at any point (before the game or during the game), the coach (or assistant) is suspended from coaching the next game. If the ejection occurs during the tournament, see tournament rules.
- D. In the event a parent or spectator is ejected at any point (before the game or during the game), a person shall be prohibited from attending any further games in that season.

Rule 17.0 FREE KICKS

- A. Free kicks are either direct or indirect.
- B. A goal can be scored from a direct free kick.
- C. Indirect kicks must be touched by another player before going in the goal for the score to count.
- D. All free kicks for U6 thru U8 are indirect free kicks.

Rule 18.0 PENALTY KICK

- A. Penalty kicks are awarded when the defense commits a direct free kick foul in the penalty area.
- B. No penalty kicks in K, 1st Grade, or 2nd Grade.





Rule 19.0 THROW-IN

- A. When the WHOLE ball goes completely over a touch (side) line, a throw-in is awarded to the team opposite of the one that last touched it. A throw-in is taken at the point (give or take a yard) where the ball left the field of play.

At the moment of delivering the ball, the thrower must:

- Face the field of play.
 - Have part of each foot either on the touch line or on the ground outside the touch line.
 - Use both hands, delivering the ball from behind and over his head. Thrower cannot touch the ball again until it has touched another player. (An indirect free kick is awarded.)
- B. A goal may not be scored directly from a throw-in. That is, a goal may not be scored if a player throws the ball in, no one touches it, and the ball crosses the goal line. If so, NO GOAL.

Rule 20.0 GOAL KICK

- A. When the WHOLE of the ball goes completely over the goal line and is not a goal scored (see Rule 19.0) and last touched by a member of the attacking team, a goal kick is awarded to the defending team.
- B. To perform an acceptable goal kick:
The ball can be placed anywhere in the goal area by a player of the defending team and kicked directly outside the penalty box.

Rule 21.0 CORNER KICK

- A. When the WHOLE ball goes completely over the goal line (and a goal is not scored) and having last touched a player from the defending team, a corner kick is awarded to the attacking team.





Rule 22.0 PLAYERS EQUIPMENT

- A. All players on the same team shall wear the same color uniforms.
- B. The goalkeeper shall wear a shirt of a different color from his teammates and the referee.
- C. Players shall not play with a cast.
- D. All players must wear shin guards covered with socks.

Rule 23.0 BUILD-OUT LINES

- A. Build-out lines are used for U10.
- B. Build-out lines should be marked between the penalty area line and the halfway line. In absence of a build-out line, the halfway line will function as the build-out line.
- C. Build-out lines are introduced to allow players to play the ball out from the goalkeeper, without pressure. When the goalkeeper has the ball in his/her hands, or prior to a goal kick, the opposition must retreat behind the build-out line and stay there until another player touches the ball.
- D. For U8, when the goalkeeper has the ball in his/her hands, or prior to a goal kick, the opposition must retreat behind the midfield line and stay there until another player touches the ball.
- E. For U7, prior to a goal kick, the opposition must retreat behind the midfield line and stay there until another player touches the ball.

Rule 24.0 PUNTING

- A. Punting is allowed for U10 (7v7), U12 (9v9), and U14 (9v9). In a situation where the league modifies the format (e.g. 7v7 instead of 9v9) and adjusts the size of the field where these divisions play, the punting rule might change.
- B. Punting is **not** allowed for U8.

