

Saugus ACES Referee Guidelines



Thank you for your support in refereeing for Saugus Adult Co-Ed Soccer (ACES). The purpose of this league is to offer opportunities for adults to play soccer in a safe, fun and fair environment, and as a referee you are a key part of the program.

To ensure a consistent and safe experience for our players, please review the following guidelines for our league. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact the League Director.

Overview

Except as specified in this document, all games are played according to the most recent version of the FIFA Laws of the Game, and Decisions of IFAB.

Law 3: The Number of Players

All games are 11v11.

A team must field 7 players for the game to continue. In the case of a large disparity between the numbers of available players on each team, the team with a greater number of players may lend players to the team with fewer players for that game. Such games will be considered a forfeit and recorded as a 3-0 win/loss. In cases where a team plays short to avoid a forfeit, they may declare a forfeit at any time during the game, at which point they may equalize the number of players and continue.

All players must be registered with the League before taking the field. This registration is part of the league registration process, and can only be done online with a credit card. Under no circumstances may any unregistered players participate, even in the case of a forfeit. It is the duty of the league representative at the field to monitor this, but you should be aware of this restriction.

If a team forfeits, they may borrow players from other teams (either the team they are playing, or other teams from the league). The player should wear their regular jersey with a practice vest or pinnie.

Substitutions

Teams have an unlimited number of substitutions. Substitutions follow the procedure set forth in Law 3, and the procedure may be reviewed with the players before the game.

While playing time for each individual player is not tracked or recorded, we follow the principle of "Everyone Plays".

Substitutions may be made at any stoppage of play, at the discretion of the referee.

Law 4: The Player's Equipment

All provisions of Law 4 apply.

Shinguards are mandatory, and under *no circumstances* may a player participate without them.

As stated in Law 4, players must not wear "any kind of jewelry". Please ensure players do not wear earrings or necklaces.

Newer players may not have their numbered jersey yet, in which case practice vests or "pinnies" are acceptable. But generally speaking, all players are expected to wear their jersey.

Law 5: The Authority of the Referee

No changes. All provisions of Law 5 apply.

Law 6: The Assistant Referees

No changes. All games must be officiated using the diagonal system of control. If proper Assistant Referees are not available, Club Linesmen should be used.

Law 7: The Duration of the Match

Our focus is for as many players to play as much soccer as possible.

With that in mind, **games are played with 35 minute halves**, with the expectation that teams will have at least 2-5 substitutes.

In order to allow a sufficient amount of playing time for all players, and to account for the variable number of substitutes that may be present from game to game, the length of the halves may be shortened or lengthened based on that number, according to these guidelines, and at the discretion of the referee, the League Representative, the team captains, and according to the field schedule:

Based on the team with the most players:

0-1 Substitutes: 30 Minute Halves

2-5 Substitutes: 35 Minute Halves

5+ Substitutes: 40 Minutes Halves (very, very rare)

If players continue to arrive during the first half, the length of the halves may be lengthened at the discretion of the referees, league personnel and the team captains.

Games must start on time. Any team that hasn't taken the field for kick-off 5 minutes past the posted game start time will forfeit.

The half-time interval will be a minimum of 5 minutes, and a maximum of 10 minutes.

Law 8: The Start and Restart of Play, Law 9: The Ball in and Out of Play, Law 10: The Method of Scoring

No Changes. All provisions of Laws 8, 9 and 10 apply.

Law 11: Offside

No changes.

Law 12: Fouls and Misconduct

All provisions of Law 12 apply, including Cautions and Send-Offs, with the following emendations:

NO SLIDE TACKLING!

“Slide Tackling” is not allowed. “Slide Tackling” is defined as a player playing for the ball with another player nearby while sliding with one or both feet towards the ball, resulting in the player’s knee or hip supporting him on the ground.

The only exception is the goalkeeper in their own penalty area, who may perform a “safe” slide tackle when playing for the ball.

Slide tackles will be penalized in the following manner:

A “safe” tackle that would normally be allowed in competitive play: Penalized as “Playing in a Dangerous Manner” resulting in an indirect free kick (except for goalkeeper in their own penalty area). No card need be given, but the player should be warned.

A “careless” tackle that would normally result only in a Direct Free Kick or Penalty Kick: Penalized as a caution for “Unsporting Behavior” (Yellow Card), result is a Direct Free Kick or Penalty Kick.

A “reckless” tackle that would normally result in a Caution: Penalized with a send-off (Red Card), result is a Direct Free Kick or Penalty Kick. (“Serious Foul Play”)

A slide tackle with “excessive force”: Penalized with a send-off (Red Card), result is a Direct Free Kick or Penalty Kick. (“Serious Foul Play”)

Cautions and Send-Offs (Yellow and Red Cards)

All Cautionable and Send-Off offenses will be enforced. Players have agreed to a Code of Conduct, and any instances of dissent, unsporting behavior, offensive language or gestures, serious foul play or violent conduct must be dealt with quickly, with the appropriate consequence handed out. Please report all such behavior to the League Director.

(See additional note below*)

Law 13: Free Kicks, Law 14: The Penalty Kick, Law 15: The Throw-In, Law 16: The Goal Kick, Law 17: The Corner Kick - No changes. All provisions apply.

***Note to Referees:**

We are especially concerned with player behavior that reduces the safety or enjoyment of the other players and spectators. As the referee on the field, we rely on you to take the proper steps to punish fouls or misconduct in such a way that everyone enjoys a game that is safe, fair and fun.

Obviously you should use every tool and technique you have to manage the game to this end (including verbal warnings), but players get into bad habits if they “get away” with such actions, and certain problems get compounded over time as offense is taken and frustrations mount (and when players see other players blatantly misbehave without appropriate punishment). As a league, we try and deal with such problems after the games, but without proper consequences (including cards) during the game, it makes our job more difficult when we have to rely on conflicting hearsay and reports from emotional players after the fact.

With this in mind, please help us manage the game by being more strict for behaviors that are blatant and inflammatory, including the following:

- **Defenders blatantly standing close to the ball to delay a free kick (automatic yellow).**
- **Foul language towards other players, referees or spectators.** An isolated momentary outburst of frustration at a call or non-call may be handled with a simple warning (“Let’s watch the language”), **but anything that is loud or repeated, or directed towards another player or referee, must be carded. (Automatic Yellow – USB, Possible Red)**
- **Aggressive actions towards other players, such as going “nose to nose” in an argument in a confrontational manner, or making any aggressive or confrontational statements. (Automatic Yellow – USB)**
- **Reckless or late fouls towards the goalkeeper, or any situation involving goalkeeper safety.**
- **Loud or repeated dissent with the referees.** As with language, a momentary outburst of frustration at a call or non-call may be tolerated, but if it is loud or repeated, it needs to be addressed.

Thank you for your help with these issues.

Jonathan Burk

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