



HOUSTON YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION, INC.

RULES OF PLAY

All clubs under the jurisdiction of Houston Youth Soccer Association (HYSA) shall play under the rules of the game as approved by the United States Soccer Federation (USSF), United States Youth Soccer (USYS), and South Texas Youth Soccer (STYSA), except for changes indicated in the HYSA Constitution and By-Laws and HYSA Rules of Play. In case of conflict, these rules shall apply.

Any club/team refusing or failing to play a game in compliance with the Rules of Play and By-Laws shall forfeit the game.

All HYSA League games, including but not limited to inter-association games, played by member clubs/teams shall be under the jurisdiction of HYSA.

I. ARTICLE I – HYSA League Games

A. Scheduling

The Administrator shall schedule all HYSA games before the season begins except split-brackets as determined at the bracketing meeting and shall schedule or reschedule postponed games. Postponed games may be rescheduled at any time; notice to the coaches of the participating teams and the referee assignor should be made allowing as much time as possible before the game.

1. The following are possible reasons for games to be rescheduled:
 - a) The condition of the field at the time at which the game is to be played is unacceptable. The decision to postpone the game is to be made by the official referee on the day on which the game is to be played or as provided by I.E.4.
 - b) Failure of a designated referee to appear, and a substitute to be agreed upon, as provided by I.B.2.
 - c) Each club shall appoint a Field Representative who shall have authority to decide that any of that club's fields is not playable. He/she must exercise this authority by updating the club field hotline/rainout number and notifying the scheduler and the referee assignor by 8:00 AM on the day of Saturday games and 8:00 AM on the day of Sunday games. After this time, only the match referees may cancel games.
2. Games scheduled or rescheduled by HYSA shall take precedence over any other organized soccer activity on HYSA designated playing fields.
3. If for any reason a game is not played the full duration for that division, the Discipline and Protest Committee shall have the power to:



- a) Order the game to be replayed in full.
 - b) Order the game to stand as played.
4. All games must start within 15 minutes of the scheduled time. After (15) minutes delay, a team that is tardy or fails to appear will forfeit the game except in the following situation: In case of unusual weather or travel conditions, a team that fails to appear at a game may request to have this game deferred to another date.
 5. If for any reason a club/team does not play at least half of its scheduled games, the games played shall not count for or against the opposing teams for the purpose of calculating standings. If at least half of its scheduled games have been played, the situation will be reviewed by the Board of Directors.

B. Referees

1. All games under the jurisdiction of HYSA shall be officiated by USSF certified referees, except as provided in Rule B.2. The official referee shall be the sole judge on the field of play and his decision shall be final. Any complaints about any official referee shall be directed in writing on the HYSA Referee Evaluation form. Referees shall report on HYSA'S official report, the results of the game, personnel of the teams and the goal scores. The referee shall record all misconduct (cautions, send-offs, inappropriate behavior by coaches and spectators) during the game on the official game report which shall be sent using approved methods within 24 hours of the game to the address designated on the report. The referee must ensure their name is on the report as well as assistant referees where applicable.
2. In case the officially appointed referee fails to appear at a game, the coaches may agree to a substitute referee who shall assume the duties of the official referee, or by mutual agreement act themselves in that capacity. If coaches agree to a substitute referee, then the game stands as played. When a game that is not played because the referee assigned by the local club failed to appear, the local club will be fined, and the association shall reschedule the game.
3. The referee is responsible for completing the game report and obtaining a team official's signature at the end of the game from each team. If any coach disputes any event during the game, the referee should note the dispute on the game report.

C. Coaches

1. At every HYSA scheduled game, the team coaches must have laminated official identification cards with an affixed picture as proof of the players'



registration. Adult team officials (coach/assistant coach/ manager/trainer) must have a laminated official Adult Participation Pass ("APP") with an affixed picture as proof of registration. Adult team officials are required to have their APP visible on their person at all times during the games. Failure to comply with this requirement will cause the game to not be played and will result in forfeit of the game to the opposing team.

2. If coaching occurs by spectators, the coach/manager will be requested by the referee to control the situation. If the coach/manager is unable or unwilling to control the situation, the referee may caution the coach/manager. If the infringement continues after a caution from the referee, the coach/manager may be sent off by the referee. If the coach/manager refuses to leave or coaching by spectators continues after the coach/manager leaves, the referee may abandon the game.
3. The manager, coach or captain of each team shall furnish the referee, prior to the start of the game, the game report with player roster for their team in the game being played. This game report must be produced and printed after 9 am on the Thursday prior to the game. The home team's game card shall be deemed official unless there is a dispute, in which case the most recently produced and printed game card becomes the official card. Failure to provide a game report will result in disciplinary action. Also, the referees will not officiate the game or a friendly without a proper game report.
4. Write-ins are not allowed on the game report, and doing so will result in disciplinary action.
5. Coaches must play each registered player that is present at pre-game check-in one-half of the game unless unable to do so due to the player's illness or injury or for disciplinary reasons. In the event that a player is present but will not be playing or shall possibly be playing restricted minutes, the coach must inform the referee and the opposing coach the reason that player will not participate prior to the start of the game.
6. In order to be considered for discipline and protest purposes, any disputes about the game must be reported to the referee and noted on the game report. Once signed by the coach at the end of the game, all records noted on the game report are deemed to be final.
7. A coach in HYSA league play may be cautioned (no card necessary) by the referee for inappropriate behavior or should they violate any laws of the game. A coach may also be sent off or ejected (no card necessary) by a referee for continued inappropriate behavior.
8. If a coach, assistant coach or trainer is sent off or ejected or asked to leave a game by the referee, then the minimum suspension is:
 - a) for the remainder of that day,



- b) for the next regularly scheduled match day, and
- c) for the next game actually played by the team which played the game from which he / she was ejected. Suspension will not be served in forfeited, friendly or invitational tournament matches.
- d) See HYSA Appeals Guidelines Discipline, Protest, and Grievance Procedures for further possible disciplinary actions.

D. Players

1. An eligible player is one properly registered with STYSA either through HYSA or their home association for inter-association play. Any team playing an ineligible player shall forfeit the game to the opposing team and may face further disciplinary actions.
2. A player listed on the official game report roster shall be considered as a competing player even if that player does not participate in the game.
3. A player shall be considered "suited-up" for a game when, in the opinion of the official referee, he/she:
 - a) Satisfies all eligibility requirements,
 - b) Wears the official team uniform (shirts, shorts, and socks) in that club's colors, except goalkeepers; their shirts must have individual numbers, minimum 8 inches high, on the back, except goalkeepers.
 - c) Is wearing shin guards which are commercially produced and specifically designed to provide protection to the shins, and
 - d) Otherwise wears appropriate soccer clothing.
 - e) Players may wear sliding, bike, cyclist, or tight fitting pants which are underneath their soccer shorts, do not protrude below the top of the knee, and are the same color as their soccer shorts. This does not prohibit players from wearing loose fitting, long-legged sweat pants or tights when it is cold or goalkeepers from wearing goalkeeper pants which may be tight and have padding.
4. Prohibited Items
 - a) No player will be allowed to play with a hard cast (padded or otherwise) at all.
 - b) No player will be allowed to play with any brace (knee or otherwise) that contains exposed metal or hard plastics, unless it is wrapped with a minimum of ½ inch high-density foam



wrapping or the manufacturer's recommended protective coating.

- c) Bandannas of any style may not be worn during any game. Players may not wear a bandanna either on their heads, legs or arms.
- d) Jewelry must be removed and may not be worn by any player except for medical reasons.

5. In all games, substitutes will be allowed as follows:

- a) The number of substitutions shall be unlimited.
- b) Substitutions may be made, with the consent of the referee:
 - (1) Prior to a throw-in by the team in possession only.
 - (2) Prior to a goal kick, by either team.
 - (3) After a goal, by either team.
 - (4) After an injury, by either team, when the referee stops the play.
 - (5) At half time.
 - (6) After a caution (the player(s) receiving a caution only).
- c) A player for whom a substitution has been made can return to the same game.

6. If a player is sent off for any reason, the minimum punishment shall include suspension for the next game actually player by the team to which the player is currently rostered. Suspension shall not be served in forfeited, friendly or invitational tournament matches.

E. Teams

- 1. When the colors of two competing teams are similar in the opinion of the referee, the home team must change; however, if a visiting team is not wearing the official club uniform colors, the visiting team shall change. Goalkeepers must wear colors which distinguish them from the other players.
- 2. The home team is responsible for providing a proper game ball.
- 3. Coaches/managers/trainers and substitutes shall be on the opposite side of the field directly across from their spectators. A maximum of four coaches/managers/trainers per team, each with a current Adult Participation Pass ("APP"), are allowed in the team's technical area. Except as provided in Rule F.3., all coaches/managers, trainers and substitute players will remain in their team's technical area. Team



spectators will remain behind the restraining line on their respective side of the field and shall come no closer to any portion of the playing field, unless expressly directed to do so by the referee.

F. Fields

1. **RESTRAINING LINE** – A restraining line shall be established on both sides of all HYSA playing fields. The distance from each restraining line to the touchline shall be six (6) feet or further, unless such distance is not possible. The Field Inspection Committee shall decide exceptions to distances. The restraining line will go no further than from the halfway line to the top of the penalty box.
2. **TECHNICAL AREA** – The area marked on the side of the field in which all coaches/managers, trainers, and substitute players for a team will remain during a competition. The referee shall have final authority over who is allowed to be in the technical area and/or who is allowed on the team side of the field.
3. A coach or trainer may briefly leave the TECHNICAL AREA as defined in I.F.2. but may not go beyond the RESTRAINING LINE as defined in I.F.1. on his/her team's side of the field to convey appropriate tactical advice to players from the touchline and must return to the technical area, behind the restraining line, as soon as they have done so.
4. Spectators must remain inside the restraining area as defined by the RESTRAINING LINE as defined in I.F.1. at all times and coaching by spectators is prohibited.
5. If no TECHNICAL AREA or RESTRAINING LINE is marked on the field, then such line shall be deemed to exist at a distance of 6 feet from the touch lines extending from a point even with the penalty box line to the halfway line.

G. Game Play Rule Variations

1. The FIFA Law with respect to the charging of the goalkeeper shall not apply in youth soccer. There shall be no charging of the goalkeeper, fairly or unfairly, in HYSA sanctioned competitions. Any such act will be considered as "dangerous play" at the least and punished according.

H. Protests

1. Any team protesting a game based on infraction of rules other than in H.2. and H.3. below must, through its coach, make such protest verbally to the coach of the opposing team in the presence of the referee. A statement of the protest in writing, stating all known facts, shall be sent to the HYSA Administrator within three (3) days after the game, accompanied by a deposit of \$150.00 which shall be returned if the



protest is sustained. A copy of the formal protest must also be sent by certified mail to the opposing team manager three (3) days after the game.

2. Protests based on late starts and/or the field of play and appurtenances shall be filed with the referee in writing prior to the starting of the game on the official game report. A statement of the protest shall be handed to the coach of the opposing team at the same time.
3. Protests based on alleged ineligible players shall be filed not later than one (1) week after the game in which the alleged ineligible player or players participated. A copy of the formal protest must be sent to the opposing team coach within seven (7) days after the game.

II. ARTICLE II – 13U through 19U

The playing rules for 13U through 19U shall be those adopted by the current USSFFIFA Law Book, STYSA, and Article I with the following exceptions. In case of conflict, the following shall control.

A. Players

1. Number of players *(updated 9/21)*
 - a) No 13U through 19U team shall be allowed more than twenty two (22) players at any given time on a roster with no more than eighteen (18) players active (dressed to participate) for any particular game.
 - b) Minimum number of players to start game is seven (7).

B. Game Length

1. All youth games in the following age groups shall consist of:
 - a) 19U - 90 minutes, two 45-minute halves
 - b) 18U - 90 minutes, two 45-minute halves
 - c) 17U - 90 minutes, two 45-minute halves
 - d) 16U - 80 minutes, two 40-minute halves
 - e) 15U - 80 minutes, two 40-minute halves
 - f) 14U - 70 minutes, two 35-minute halves
 - g) 13U - 70 minutes, two 35-minute halves
 - h) All 13U through 19U games shall include a 15-minute half time.
2. In case of a tie after regulation time in championship and tie-breaker games, playoff rules shall be as follows: two 15-minute overtimes for 15U through 19U and two 10-minute half overtimes for 13U through



14U. If the game is then tied, FIFA Kicks from the Mark Procedure shall be followed.

C. Field of Play

1. 50 to 100 yards wide by 100 to 130 yards long (USSF recommends 75 x 112)
2. Center Circle - 10 yards in radius
3. Penalty Area - 18 yards by 44 yards
4. Goal area - 6 yards by 20 yards
5. Penalty spot: 12 yards and perpendicular from the midpoint of the goal line
6. Penalty arc: 10-yard radius from the penalty spot

III. Article III – 11U through 12U

Rules of play for 11U through 12U shall be those adopted by the current USSF-FIFA Law Book, STYSA, and Article I with the following exceptions. In case of conflict, the following shall control.

A. Players

1. No 11U-12U team shall be allowed more than 16 players on its roster at any given time.
2. Each 11U-12U team during a game shall play with no more than nine (9) players on the field at a time, unless a different number is mandated by USYS.
3. Forfeits for too few players -- The referee shall abandon a game and record the reason on the game report if a team has less than the requisite number of players on the field ready to play within a reasonable time after the game was scheduled to start. The requisite number of players shall be six (6).

B. Games shall be played with a Size 4 soccer ball.

C. Goals shall be between eighteen (18) and twenty-one (21) feet wide and six (6) to seven (7) feet tall (USSF recommends 18.5 x 6.5).

D. Field of Play

1. 40 to 70 yards wide by 60 to 90 yards long (USSF recommends 45-55 x 70-80)
2. Center Circle - 7 yards in radius
3. Penalty Area - 12 yards by 30 yards



4. Goal area - 4 yards by 14 yards
5. Penalty spot: 8 yards and perpendicular from the midpoint of the goal line
6. Penalty arc: 7-yard radius from the penalty spot

E. Game Length

1. Two (2) thirty (30) minute halves with a ten (10) minute halftime
2. In case of a tie after regulation time in championship and tie-breaker games only, playoff rules shall be as follows: two 10-minute half overtimes for 11U through 12U. If the game is then tied, FIFA Kicks from the Mark Procedure shall be followed.

F. Rule Variations for 11U Only (Does not apply to 12U)

1. If in the opinion of the referee a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick (IFK) shall be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If the deliberate header occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick shall be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred. If in the opinion of the referee a player does not deliberately head the ball, then play should continue.

IV. Article IV – 9U through 10U

Rules of play for 9U through 10U shall be those adopted by the current USSF-FIFA Law Book, STYSA, and Article I with the following exceptions. In case of conflict, the following shall control.

A. Players

1. No 9U-10U team shall be allowed more than 12 players on its game card roster at any given time. For open roster teams, only 12 players may be selected to play in any given game.
2. No 9U-10U team shall be allowed to have U7 or younger players on its roster.
3. Each 9U-10U team during a game shall play with no more than seven (7) players on the field at a time, unless a different number is mandated by USYS.
4. Forfeits for too few players -- The referee shall abandon a game and record the reason on the game report if a team has less than the requisite number of players on the field ready to play within a reasonable time after the game was scheduled to start. The requisite number of players shall be five (5).



- B. Games shall be played with a Size 4 soccer ball.
- C. Goals shall be between eighteen (18) and twenty-one (21) feet wide and six (6) to seven (7) feet tall (USSF recommends 18.5 x 6.5).
- D. Field of Play
 1. 30 to 60 yards wide by 45 to 80 yards long (USSF recommends 35-45 x 55-65)
 2. Center Circle - 7 yards in radius
 3. Penalty Area - 10 yards by 20 yards
 4. Goal area - 4 yards by 14 yards
 5. Penalty spot: 8 yards and perpendicular from the midpoint of the goal line
 6. Penalty arc: 7-yard radius from the penalty spot
 7. Build-out line: 14 to 24 yards (30% of field length) from and parallel to each end line
- E. Game Length
 1. Two (2) twenty-five (25) minute halves with a ten (10) minute halftime
 2. In case of a tie after regulation time in championship and tie-breaker games only, playoff rules shall be as follows: two 10-minute half overtimes for U-12 through U-11. If the game is then tied, FIFA Penalty Kick Rule shall be followed.
- F. Rule Variations
 1. If in the opinion of the referee a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick (IFK) shall be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If the deliberate header occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick shall be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred. If in the opinion of the referee a player does not deliberately head the ball, then play should continue.
 2. Goal kicks: the defending team players may not be closer to spot of the goal kick than a build-out line, marked or not marked as defined in IV.D.7.
 3. Goalkeeper possession: When the goalkeeper has the ball, either during play or from a goal kick, the opposing team must move behind the build out line, marked or not marked as defined in IV.D.7.
 4. Goalkeeper distribution: No ball may be directly, meaning without being touched by another player, punted or drop-kicked in the air by the



goalkeeper from one penalty area into the opponents' penalty area. The infraction is punished by giving the ball to the opponents for an indirect free kick taken at the center spot on the halfway line.

V. Article V –8U and younger

HYSA does not offer league play for 8 and younger age players. Registration and rules of play for the 8 and younger ages will be governed by each member club.