



OFFICIAL LEAGUE RULEBOOK

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Preface

Our Mission

Our objective with this league is to create a fun, competitive, and fair environment for the North American Pro Soccer Online community. We aim to organize the league to the benefit and interests of the community as a whole and not our own self interests.

Code of Conduct

All members of the community are expected to adhere to the rules and conduct codes written in this rule book and posted throughout the official Discord. Violation of this will result in punitive action appropriate for the violation. All rules and conducts are created in the spirit of the game. Exploiting loopholes or stretching the rules will be punished as violations of the rules and codes

Administrators and League Staff Conduct

League Admins and League Staff are direct representatives of PSO Evolution League as a whole and therefore are expected to conduct themselves accordingly. For this reason, you are held to a higher standard and shall receive no exceptions or beneficial treatment when violating any rules or expected conduct.

You are expected to:

- Be active and participating members of the PSO community
- Represent the community with respect and a reasonable level of professionalism
- Honor the power and trust that has been placed in your hands and not abuse it
- Recuse yourself from any decisions or actions related to incidents by which you have an objective bias or conflict of interest
- Perform your expected duties within your role (handling tickets, performing roster transactions, scheduling, etc.)
- Be an ambassador to the community by being helpful to new players/teams

Referee Conduct

League Referees are also direct representatives of the league both in PUG's and in league games and therefore are held to a higher standard and shall receive no exceptions or beneficial treatment when violating any rules or expected conduct.

You are expected to:

- Be active and participating members of the PSO community
- Represent the community with respect and a reasonable level of professionalism
- Moderate PUG's by enforcing the rules and punitive codes as published in Discord
- Livestream league games by which are assigned

- You may choose to verbally cast or not, it's up to you
- You may choose your streaming venue (i.e. twitch, youtube, or in the streaming channel in the official Discord)
- You MUST clip any potential infractions during games or questionable moments and submit them for staff review
 - If you are able to record entire VOD's of games, post the link or provide the file to someone who can post the VOD for you
- Screenshot results, team statistics, and players statistics (to the best of your ability) any league game by which you are assigned and submit them accordingly
- Do not assign yourself to any games by which you have an objective conflict of interest unless you are capable of providing evidence for secondary review (i.e. Refereeing games for your own team if you are not playing, unless you will post the entire recorded VOD)

Team Management Conduct

Team Owners are ultimately responsible for their team. They may nominate someone on their team to assist/perform these duties as Team Managers, but the Team Owner ultimately bears the responsibilities expected. Failure to meet your expectations as a Team Owner may result in punitive action up to and including being barred from owning or managing teams in the future.

You are expected to:

- Properly communicate with other Team Owners/Managers, League Staff and Referees, and your own team's players
- Work with other teams management and your own team's players to schedule games
 - You are expected to communicate the scheduled game information with your team's players as well as League Referees
 - You are expected to communicate and gather your players availability
- Lead your team within league games (i.e. make substitutions, choose kits, declare when Ready, etc.)
- Operate your team within the rules defined within this rulebook

Player Conduct

Players are the lifeblood of any league and as such there are expectations of players in order for the league to perform effectively. Violations of the expectations can lead to warnings or suspensions

You are expected to:

- Communicate effectively to your team's management as your availability for league games
 - Be available and sufficiently active so that your management can effectively schedule games

- Do your best to show up when you've said you're going to be available (things happen, but don't make a habit out of it)
- Stay in game until statistics can be properly gathered by League Referees at the end of the game.
- Play with integrity, seriousness, and to the betterment of your team at all times.
- Do not abuse in game chat with spam, harassment of players or referees, or other objectively toxic behavior during league games

Grievances and Violations

If you believe there has been a violation of any rules or codes of conduct in any way, please start by opening a ticket via the #help-desk channel in the official league Discord. You may also open any tickets if you have any grievances with League Staff or Referees or with how violations have been handled so that the issue can be discussed in detail.

Team Registration and Rosters

Team Registration

If you would like to register or create a new team, you can start by creating a ticket via the #help-desk channel in the official league discord. You will be asked to provide a Team Logo, the Team's Management information, likely/preferred days of scheduling availability, and your team's roster. You do not have to have all of this information ready to submit the ticket however you are expected to begin working to gather everything as soon as possible. League Staff can and will be available to help along the way.

Roster Rules

Team rosters must follow the below:

- A minimum of 11 players (including team management)
- A maximum of 15 players (including team management)
- Players who are suspended or banned by League Staff cannot play in any league games or league sanctioned events
- Player's in game names during games must match their commonly known name (displayed on the website). If a player wishes to change their common name, they must open a ticket via #help-desk in the official league Discord
- Owners and Managers must be on the team they are managing and cannot manage more than one team.
 - Exceptions only for Academy teams officially recognized by League Staff

Roster Transactions

Teams can sign and release players until the officially announced Roster Lock deadline (usually around the middle of the season). After the rosters are locked, teams may perform one emergency signing with the approval of League Staff.

Emergency signings must follow the below standards:

- Player being signed cannot be on any other teams roster within the past 2 weeks (established free agent)
- Team management must provide a legitimate reason for the requirement to make the emergency signing (i.e. incapability of scheduling games due to sudden unavailability of some players)
- Approval of the transaction by League Staff

Below are the required actions and standards for all signings and releases:

- Team management is expected to submit all signings and releases via a ticket
- Players are only allowed to be signed to a maximum of 2 teams during a single season
- Team management is expected to have permission from the player they are signing

League Format

League Structure

The league structure may change based on the preferences of the community on a per season basis. The League Admins may post community polls to gather input from the community before performing and changes to the league structure.

General Format

The league will be organized following the below structure:

- Bring Your Own Team (BYOT) format
 - Team owners are responsible for forming their own rosters of players and managing the teams accordingly
- If enough teams register, teams will be divided into conferences
- A game week will be from Monday through Sunday
- Each team will be assigned a maximum of 2 games per game week
 - Each team will play teams within their conference a minimum of 2 times
 - Each team will have a minimum of 3 interconference games per season
- Regular season games will be a Best of 1 (BO1) series with a length of 16 minutes and no Golden Goal
- Points will be awarded based on the results of the game (Win: 3 points, Tie/Draw: 1 point, Loss: 0 points)
- When a team is leading by 6 goals during a game, the mercy rule will end the game and freeze stats as they are at that time.
- Standings will be determined in the following order: Points, Goal Differential, Head to Head Record, Goals Scored, Tie-Breaker Game

Conferences

Conferences are a method to keep the number of games and the season length under reasonable control. Input from the community will determine the method by which teams are assigned to conferences on a per season basis.

Season 1 conferences have been organized by the following method:

- Community poll indicated the desire to have league staff organize teams by perceived skill as well as schedule availability and keep the conferences as balanced as possible
- All League Admins individually created a sorted list of all registered teams based on perceived skill. The lists were then combined and a master list was formed based on the average scores.
- Due to an uneven number of teams (11) it was determined that the best way to keep the schedule balanced was to have two conferences.
- Teams were assigned to their conferences using the Snake Draft method (i.e. Conference A: Team 1 - Conference B: Team 2, Team 3 - Conference A: Team 4, etc.)

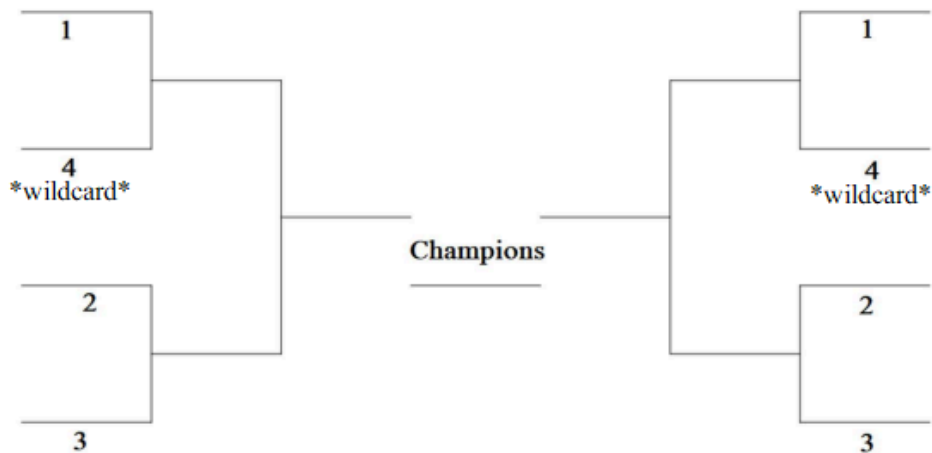
Playoffs

Input from the community will also help determine the playoff format on a per season basis. This will include the number of teams that will make the playoffs, how the playoffs are organized, etc. Playoff format should be determined and announced prior to the regular season beginning, if possible.

Season 1 playoffs will be organized as follows:

- There will be a total of 8 teams that make it to the playoffs, and 3 that do not
 - The top 3 teams within each conference's standings will make the playoffs
 - Additionally, the 2 teams with the best records (irrespective of conference) that did not place high enough to be in the top 3 in their conference will be awarded a wildcard slot in the playoffs
- The community has determined that the playoff brackets should be organized by conference

2) conferences bracket (wildcard team randomly assigned in case of both in same conference)



- Playoffs will be a single elimination, Best of 1 (BO1) game.
- Playoff games will be 16 minutes in length with Golden Goal enabled.

Scheduling Games

Scheduling Rules

Scheduling games and actually playing them is a very important factor in the success of the league over all. For this reason, strict adherence to the scheduling rules must be followed or Team Owners/Managers may be punished accordingly.

1. Scheduled Dates and Times
 - a. All games are originally scheduled with a placeholder date and time.
 - b. Team Owners/Managers are expected to interact with each other to determine an actual scheduled date and time
 - c. Both Team Management must communicate actual scheduled dates and times with League Referees.
2. Deadline
 - a. All game results (meaning games must be completed) are due by 11:59pm PST (Pacific Standard Time) on the Sunday of the game week by which the game was originally assigned
 - b. The only exception to this deadline is with a League Staff approved postponement
3. The 6 Hour Rule
 - a. Games must be scheduled with no less than 6 hours of notice to respective team managers and League Referees. Please note, 6 hours is the minimum, it is preferred to provide at least 1 day notice
 - b. If teams are requesting a postponement, it must be requested via a ticket with the reason for postponement (in detail) no less than 6 hours before the deadline
4. Postponing Games
 - a. A valid reason must be provided to league staff for postponement
 - b. Postponements are provided as a convenience to the teams. Abuse of this will result in punishment up to and including forfeiture of games.
 - c. Postponements requests must be submitted no less than 6 hours in advance of the deadline
 - d. Postponements are highly unlikely to be approved during the last week of the season or during the playoffs. **Keep This In Mind!**
5. Scheduling Issues
 - a. If a teams management is having issues scheduling with another team, it is requested they open a ticket via #help-desk as soon as possible. League Staff can and will attempt to help mediate
 - b. Team managers must be communicative with other team management and league staff, or the game may result in a forfeit
6. Playing Games in Advance of Scheduled Date
 - a. Teams may play games in advance of their scheduled week if both Team Managers agree

- b. Postponements are not required if a game is scheduled in advanced and then needs to be pushed, as long as the game is completed by its original deadline
7. Required Presence of League Referee
 - a. All official league games must be played with a League Referee present
 - b. Games played without a League Referee present will not be recognized by the league
 - c. Exceptions to this rule may be provided by league staff via a ticket, but exceptions will only be provided if requested and approved before the game was played
8. Team managers are expected to notify League Referees and their players of scheduled game dates and times

Forfeitures

The league would like to avoid forfeits whenever it is possible or reasonable to do so. However, to protect the integrity of the league, the season, and the individual games, a forfeit may be necessary. League Staff will not hesitate to issue forfeits when it is reasonable to do so.

Reasons

Reasons for forfeiture may include:

- Team management incapability to properly schedule the game as required by the Code of Conduct
- Failure to complete the scheduled game by the deadline
- Team management failure to provide proper notice to players and/or League Referees as per the 6 Hour Rule
- Team suspensions issued by League Staff for violations of rules or conduct
- Violations of in-game rules as determined by League Referee/Staff in review

Impacts on Statistics

We want to avoid impacting statistics as much as we possibly can. This means we will not artificially increase score lines or individual statistics if it can be avoided. This is primarily to protect the integrity of the League Standings and League Awards.

Standard will be followed as below:

- Forfeits that are issued before a game has been played will have the following results:
 - In the event of a single forfeit (only one team is determined to be at fault), the scoreline will reflect 1-0 in favor of the non forfeited team
 - In the event of a double forfeit (both teams are at fault) the score line will reflect a 0-0 tie.
 - All players will receive no statistics (all 0's) for the particular game forfeited
- Forfeits issued after a game has been played will have results adjusted on a case by case basis, but should generally try to follow the below standards:

- Goals or statistics should not be artificially awarded to players/teams
- Instead, goals or statistics should be removed in accordance to the violation
- If at all possible and fair, individual player statistics should be left intact and adjustments should be made to the team bases statistics

Punishments

Forfeits will not be taken lightly by the league staff as we have and will provide alternative paths to avoid these wherever possible and reasonable. Therefore, in most circumstances, forfeits will result in punishments being issued by the League Staff. However, this will be determined on a case by case basis.

The punishments may include:

- Individual player suspensions (player is not allowed to play x number of games)
- Team suspensions (teams will forfeit future games)
- Individuals may be prevented from participating in pugs, or chatting in the official league Discord
- Team Owners/Managers may be removed from their team or barred from owning/managing a team in the future

In-Game Rules

Introduction

To protect the integrity of the game, all team owners, managers, players, and referees are expected to know and understand the rules. There will be no exceptions made due to ignorance of these rules under any circumstances. The primary goal of these rules is to hopefully prevent these situations from happening in a game and the best way to do that is for everyone to read them.

In a situation where a rule may have been violated, please do not attempt to fix it during the game. The League Referees will gather video clips and take notes on the particular incident and it will be reviewed by League Staff later. Any corrections due to violations will be done in post.

Rules

Game Setup

All games should be setup as follows:

- Lobbies should be created by the League Referee no later than 5 minutes prior to the scheduled game time. League Referees should provide the password to both team's management by this time as well.
- Lobbies should be password locked and set to the maximum amount of players to allow for substitutes and casters/co-casters
- Game length should be set to 16 minutes. In regular season games, Golden Goal should be turned off, however in playoff games it should be turned on.
- Both teams are required to have their players on the field and ready no more than 15 minutes after the scheduled game time. Failure to do so will result in a forfeit

Fair Play

Fair play will only be used for throw-ins where there is absolutely no doubt that the game bugged. If this happens, the throw-in must be given back to the team in which the throw-in originally bugged for.

The only situations this applies to are:

- The ball has glitched and the throw in timer continues to count down even when rolling around
- The ball is stuck floating in the air or stuck to a players chest and they are unable to throw it

- The team awarded the original throw in are prevented from getting to the ball to pick it up and throw it

Anyone who wrongly says fairplay when the situation does not apply to these rules may be punished with a game suspension or more depending on the circumstances.

Substitutions

Substitutions can be made only by the team with possession of the ball, except at half time. Anytime a substitution is made, team management for the team making the substitution is required to grab a screenshot of the players stats and provide that screenshot to the League Referee.

Substitutions may only be performed under the following circumstances:

- It's half-time
- It is a dead-ball/set piece for the team making the substitution (i.e. throw ins, goal kicks, free kicks)
- Substitutions must be completed before play begins
- The player being substituted in cannot have been previously substituted off (once you are subbed off you are not allowed to return to the game)
- Team has not exhausted their maximum number of 4 substitutions per game

Lagging out / Disconnecting

The following should apply when a player is lagged out of the game or disconnected:

- If a player is kicked before the kickoff is taken, the game should be restarted
- If a player disconnects, a substitute player may join in the place of the disconnected player during a dead ball. This will not count as a used sub
- When a disconnected player rejoins the lobby:
 - If a player has not taken their spot, they may rejoin on a dead ball with no substitutions being used
 - If a player has taken their spot, they may substitute back in their spot, but a substitution will be used and the player being subbed off cannot rejoin the field
- If a goalkeeper disconnects during the run of play, an on field player may instantly switch to the GK spot. Once the goalkeeper returns to the lobby, they may take their spot back during a dead ball moving the field player back to their position. However, if a substitute took the fielders spot, this move will require a field player to leave the field which will cost a substitution

Free Kicks

- When shooting a free kick, the player is required to do a run up from at minimum 3 feet away and wait at least 4 seconds before shooting
- When passing a free kick:
 - If the ball is coming off the ground in the opponents half, a run up of a minimum of 3 feet away is required
 - If the ball is coming off the ground in the free kick takers half, a run up is not required
 - Passing a free kick cannot be done as a small tap to another player allowing for a pre-charged or instantly redirected shot from a teammate
- A run up requires consistent movement forward while taking it.
 - If a player stops at any time before the ball is kicked then they are required to reset and wait a minimum 4 seconds before attempting again. They are also required to allow the opposing team a reasonable amount of time to reset
- Faking a free kick is only allowed if the player faking is not the one actually kicking the ball

Penalty Kicks

- The kicking player must wait a minimum of 4 second before taking a penalty kick
- The same run-up rules apply to penalty kicks as free kicks
- Faking a penalty kick is explicitly disallowed
- If the kicking player misses the ball they are required to fully reset and allow a reasonable amount of time for the goalie to get reset
 - This situation must always be clipped by League Referees. If it is determined by League Staff that the miss was intentional, the goal may be disallowed/removed

Goalie Blocking

Players are absolutely forbidden from using their bodies to block the opposing goal in any capacity. However, players are permitted to stand in front of the goalie in an onside position and block the goalies vision. Goals scored during or shortly after goalie blocking has occurred will be disallowed/removed and the offending player may be issued a suspension by League Staff.

Mercy Rule

If a team is losing by 6 goals at any point then the game is over. Players are not permitted to leave the game until the League Referee has confirmed they have the screenshots of stats as required. Players should also avoid kicking the ball after a mercy to prevent the statistics from being altered before a screenshot can be taken.

Game Time Errors

If a game is accidentally started at an incorrect length (shorter than the standard length), then the game should be fully played out and then followed up with an additional game as necessary. (i.e. if a 12 minute game is played, then 1 half of an 8 minute game should be played). Look to the League Referee to make the determination as to what is appropriate in this circumstance.

Team Kit Rules

The following rules apply to kits used in league games:

- Teams are required to avoid using clashing colors as much as reasonably possible
- Goalkeeper kit colors should be clearly distinguishable from their fellow teammates in the field as well as the opposing team as much as reasonably possible
-

Leaving Early

In the event that a team leaves the game early then the leaving team will be given a forfeit and the score/statistics will be altered in a manner deemed appropriate by league staff. The only time leaving early is permitted is when Mercy Rule is involved, but teams must still wait until screenshots of stats are taken.

Rules Intentions

All of the rules defined above are written with the intent to keep the peace and maintain a fair and enjoyable competitive league experience for all parties involved. The rules will be amended in the future when new circumstances arise. It is the responsibility of League Staff to publicly announce any major or considerable modifications to this rulebook, and it is the responsibility of all Teams and Players to read and understand the rules at all times.

Punishments

Punishments for rule violations may vary and will be applied as deemed necessary by league staff. For greater detail on punishments for specific violations, see the previous sections inside this rule book or open a ticket with the League Staff to gain further clarification.

Punishments may include any of the following:

- Warning
- Team and/or Player Suspension
- Game Forfeits
- Bans from PUGs
- Individuals being barred from owning/managing teams
- Any other punishment deemed appropriate by League Staff given the circumstances of the violation

As stated earlier, any attempt to circumvent, bend the rules, or exploit loopholes will be treated as violations of the rules themselves. In the event of an unforeseen circumstance, League Staff may deem it appropriate to allow the action/event and amend the rules to prevent it in the future, but this is not to be exploited by any teams or players.