



MURSL League Rules

17-U

Ratified 4/2025

Our League is affiliated with the New York State West Youth Soccer Association (NYSWYSA). In order to maintain our affiliation in good standing, we must adhere to certain rules.

Player Eligibility

Only players registered with/insured by the NYSWYSA may participate on MURSL teams. Those holding a current player pass from a competitive soccer program and/or premier league are NOT permitted to play on MURSL teams.

Formation of Teams

The League supports play in 10-U, 13-U & 17-U age groups. The NYSWYSA publishes an age matrix which Organizations should be using actively in order to determine where players belong, based on their dates of birth. All Clubs associated with the League must follow this procedure.

Players are allowed to play "up" as long as they are at the top of the age bracket they belong in; a 12-U player in the 13-U age group would be ineligible for 17-U play for example. Generally, players are not allowed to play "down" an age group, except in consideration of physical or developmental disabilities.

Players in this category seeking to play down must first submit their requests to their home Town/Club programs for local approval. If approved, a "[League Out of Division Request](#)" form must be completed BY THE LAYER'S PARENT/GUARDIAN, signed off on by both the parent/guardian AND Club representative, and submitted to the Executive Committee for League approval. *All submissions must be made 3 weeks before the start of seasonal play.* Requests submitted post-deadline will be returned as unapproved.

Team Rosters

Clubs are expected to submit all coaching applicants to the NYSWYSA for a background check, under their "Risk Management" policy. Clubs are also expected to register all their players with the NYSWYSA as well, **and verify their dates of birth when accepting their registrations.** This allows for official NYSWYSA team rosters to be used, as players will not print on the roster if they are out of division, with the exception of those playing up 1 division, and coaches will not print unless they've completed the background check process and have been issued a Risk Management pass. In the case of teams where players have been approved to play down, NYSWYSA team contact lists can be used. Either way, roster or contact list must be submitted to the League NO LATER THAN 2 weeks before the start of seasonal play. These rosters MUST include player jersey numbers.

Players are only eligible to play on the team they've been rostered on. Programs are not allowed to pull players from one team in division to fill on the other team.

Game Play Concerns

Current [IAFB Laws of the Game](#) and the Universal Guide to Referees are the official rules to be utilized by all coaches, players, and Referees with the following exceptions:

The Field

16-U plays on the full-size field with full-size (8 feet high by 24 feet wide) goals. As defined by FIFA rule, fields SHALL BE NO LARGER than 131 yards long by 100 yards wide, and NO SMALLER than 100 yards long by 49 yards wide. Given that 16U and 19U typically play on the same fields for League play, the RECOMMENDED size is 116 yards long by 75 yards wide. GOALS MUST BE

ANCHORED securely to the ground with viable nets attached. THE GAME SHALL NOT BE PLAYED UNLESS THESE REQUIREMENTS ARE MET.

Spectators and/or Coaches are NOT allowed behind the goals during game play.

Home Team Responsibilities & Advantages

The home team will be responsible for providing the 4 corner flags for their games. Visitors will no longer need to supply flags. If both teams have the same color jerseys, the home team is responsible for wearing an alternate color shirt. The Referee shall decide if the jerseys are too similar in color. Goalkeepers must have a different color jersey than either team. Pinnies are acceptable.

The home team and their supporters get to choose which side of the field they'd like to play from. The visiting team AND THEIR SUPPORTERS shall occupy the opposite sideline. The ONLY exception to this rule shall be if the opposite side of the field is deemed not viable for whatever reason. Coaches are asked to enforce this rule whenever possible, and avoid involving the Referee.

Coaches are ultimately responsible for what happens on their sidelines, in accordance with established [Zero Tolerance Policies](#). This includes keeping spectators from viewing the game from behind the goals.

The Ball

Size 5

Number of Games

12 game season

- 6 home games
- 6 away games

Number of Players

The maximum number of players on the field at any one time shall be eleven, (11); one of which shall be a goalkeeper.

The minimum number of players required to start a match shall be seven, (7) on each team. The minimum number to continue a match is seven, (7) on each team.

Team roster size will be 26 maximum. Coaches MUST make every effort to ensure players are afforded equal playing time. In the event that both teams cannot field the minimum required number of players, the match is canceled and the coaches may agree to scrimmage or may reschedule the match. If a team is unable to field eleven, (11) players, the advantage rule is as follows:

In order that the coach may play each player for half a game, the team with eleven, (11) or more players may play with a one, (1) or a two, (2) player advantage maximum, and under the following circumstances only:

At kick-off – team A has only 8 players, and team B has 18. Team B may play with a 1-man advantage, 9 v. 8, in order to get the other 9 in the game.

Or if, at kick-off, team A has 8 players and team B has 19 or 20, team B may play with a 2-man advantage in order to get the others in the game.

In all other situations, including late-arriving players the teams are to play at even strength – except if a player is ejected from the match, then that team shall play at a player disadvantage.

IN THE SPIRIT OF GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP, AND IN CONSIDERATION OF THE RECREATIONAL NATURE OF THE LEAGUE, **A TEAM MAY ALLOW FOR PLAYERS TO CROSS THE FIELD AND PLAY FOR THEIR OPPONENTS IN EFFORT TO FIELD TEAMS OF EQUAL STRENGTH FOR GAME PLAY ON ANY GIVEN EVENING.**

Substitutions

The number of substitutions is unlimited.

- Substitutions are allowed from either sideline on any stoppage of play.

Injuries

Coaches or bystanders are PROHIBITED from entering the field during play, except in the event of an injury. If an injury occurs, the Referee will stop play and then invite the coaches on the field. If an injury occurs away from the ball, the coach (and only the coach) should respectfully notify the Referee of the injury, such as "Injury, sir."

In the event of an injury with visible blood, the player must come off the field. They may be substituted. The injury shall be bandaged or covered, and the affected area, (including clothing) shall be cleaned to the satisfaction of the Referee before the injured player will be allowed to return to the match. **Substitution for Injury**

If play has been stopped for any sort of injury, and the coach, trainer, or other adult enters the field to attend to the injury, the injured player(s) must leave the field and may be substituted. This includes goalkeepers. Both teams may make unlimited substitutions at the time of an injury stoppage. The injured field player may return at the next substitution opportunity. An injured goalkeeper may return at the next stoppage of play with the Referee's approval.

Players' Equipment

All jewelry must be removed with the exception of medical alert. Covering earrings with tape is not acceptable.

Shin Guards: MANDATORY!! Must be worn inside socks.

Footwear: Sneakers or soft-cleated soccer shoes. NO metal or screw-in cleats shall be allowed.

Referees

U.S.S.F. Registered or associate Referees shall be assigned.

The Referee shall be the final decision-maker on interpreting all rules. Whenever possible, the Referee should explain infractions to the players.

The Referee is paid prior to the start of the match by the coach of the home team. U16 is \$54.00 full match fee.

If the match is;

- canceled *before the start of play*, the Referee shall be paid a \$15.00 travel fee
- canceled *after the start of play*, the Referee shall retain the full match fee
- forfeited *for any reason and not played*, the Referee is entitled to the full match fee.

Please be patient with the Referees. Most of our Referees assigned to these matches are new and young. They are going to make mistakes. That's how they learn. If there is a problem with a Referee, please file a "[MURSL Conduct Report](#)".

If for any reason the Referee is not at the match site five, (5) minutes after the scheduled starting time, the opposing coaches shall agree on a substitute to Referee the match. The substitute shall receive the Referee's match fee. The home team coach shall be responsible for notifying the Referee Assignor that no Referee was present.

The Referee shall be the final decision-maker on interpreting all rules. Whenever possible, the Referee should explain infractions to the players.

Volunteer Linesman and Assistant Referees

Each team shall be responsible to provide a volunteer linesman acceptable to the Referee. The linesman shall not be a team player or coach. The designee should be at least 13 years of age, and is not to coach while handling the flag. The linesman shall only be responsible for signaling when the ball goes out of bounds by raising the flag straight up. The Referee will signal possession for restart.

Match Days, Times & Duration

All match times and dates are pre-scheduled with the knowledge of the Referee Assignor. It is the general policy that all matches will be played as scheduled with exceptions made for field closings

- Boys play Mondays & Wednesdays. Girls play Tuesdays & Thursdays.
- The match shall be divided into two, (2) equal thirty-five, (35) minute halves.
- There shall be a five, (5) minute break at halftime.
- Stoppage time is not added to play time.

- No overtime play.

Slide Tackling, Free & Penalty Kicks

Slide tackling is ALLOWED when done properly, and not in a dangerous manner.

Opposing players shall be at least ten, (10) yards from the ball until it is in play on all free kicks.

Penalty kicks are to be awarded for direct kick fouls that are deliberate and occur in the penalty area.

Throw-Ins

Players shall be given only one chance to make a proper throw in.

Offside

Offside infractions are to be called.

Game Cancellations

If a game is to be cancelled for any reason, the Referee Assignor must be notified DIRECTLY, with as much advance notice as possible. If a game is to be cancelled on the same day it is scheduled to be played, notifying the Referee Assignor PRIOR to 3 PM guarantees that game will be cancelled without incurring any fees. If the notification is made AFTER 3 PM, and the scheduled Referee is unable to be contacted in order to be notified of the cancellation, then that Referee will ultimately be entitled to the full game fee, which will be billed to the Club at the end of the season by the Referee Assignor.

Rescheduling Games

Matches may be rescheduled before the end of the season, which is typically August 1st. The coaches shall be responsible for rescheduling a match.

After both coaches agreed to a rescheduled date, the home team Head Coach shall be responsible for contacting their club representative for a field assignment and then contacting the Referee Assignor, utilizing the “[MURSL Game Change Request Form](#)”. DO NOT submit this form to CANCEL a game. See above under “Game Cancellations” for the proper procedure for cancelling a game.

Home coach must be ready with the following information prior to accessing the game change request form:

- original game; (*found on game schedule via MURSL website*)
 - number
 - time
 - field
- home coaches contact information (*name, phone, email address*)
- away coaches contact information (*name, phone, email address – found on MURSL website*)
- new game; ○ date ○ time ○ field

Home and Away Coaches will receive email back from Referee Assignor confirming game change has been made. **Game**

Suspension and Termination

The health and safety of players and spectators always takes precedence over other considerations in youth soccer matches. With this in mind, the coaches and the Referee must cooperatively share the responsibility for decisions involving weather-related safety. The Referee however, has the final decision regarding the safety of the field and goals.

Cautions, Ejections and Misconduct

Yellow Card (*Caution*) Actions;

- **A player** - shall be sent off the field, and may be replaced by a substitution – or the team may play short-handed.
- **A goalkeeper** - must leave the field, and a new goalkeeper must be designated. Any cautioned player can return to play at the next regular substitution opportunity.

Red Card (*Ejection*) Actions;

- **A player** - shall not be replaced, and the team must play short-handed the remainder of the match.
- **A goalkeeper** - a new goalkeeper must be designated, and the team plays 'short' of field players.

Yellow card infractions and red card ejections will be CUMULATIVE during the season. 3 yellow cards will equal a red card and 2 red cards in a season will result in suspension from League play for the remainder of the season. In order for this rule to work, it **WILL BE NECESSARY** to submit **OFFICIAL ROSTERS** to the League that **INCLUDE JERSEY NUMBERS**.

Any player or coach ejected during or immediately after a game must serve a minimum of 1 (one) game suspension (beyond the game being played); for potential violent conduct ejection- a minimum of 1 game up to a 3-game suspension will be imposed, as agreed to by the 2 MURSL representatives of the clubs involved.

In accordance with the Zero Tolerance Policy, coaches will be held responsible for their own conduct and the conduct of their assistant coaches, players and spectators. Any coach or spectator who is dismissed from the playing field shall have their names turned in to Referee Assignor. The Referee will not restart the match until after the dismissed person leaves the field; out of sight and out of sound.

Any Coach ejected for whatever reason shall not be allowed to continue coaching the game and an assistant coach/parent with a qualified risk management pass will be required to finish game. If no qualified risk management coach/parent is available to take the team the game is concluded. (*Risk management passes will be checked by Referee prior to continuing the game*)

Any club with more than 2% of cumulative ZTP violations per # of games/club, the club will then be under MURSL Probation for 1 year; Expulsion if 2% or more ZTP violations continue to occur during probation year.

The Home and Away coaches are responsible for reporting to their club's MURSL representatives the names of any player and/or coach who have received a red card and been ejected, or any spectator that has been dismissed from the field of play.

Lopsided Games

All member organizations have been asked to submit their version of a "Lopsided Games Action Plan" This information has been compiled and has been made available to all League representatives, for them to distribute to members of their coaching staff. The idea here is to make every attempt, thru education and awareness, to keep our recreational soccer games from becoming blowouts.

Should a coach find him/herself on the favorable end of a lopsided game, he/she ***must*** consider the effect on their opponents. This is recreational soccer, and it's not about our win/loss records as coaches. It's about the kids getting out there and having fun of course, and we all know that players aren't necessarily having much fun when they're getting whopped out there.

There are psychological effects as well that must be considered, affecting players who are strong, players who aren't as strong, spectators AND COACHES. There are many good articles on the subject posted on the League website. Club staff members should be directing their coaches to review this information.

In this regard, coaches are asked to make an attempt to keep their less skilled opponents in the game by challenging their players in their scoring efforts. Use your imagination. Refer to the League Lopsided Games Action Plan. By placing controls on their play, it helps players to develop their skills even further, while at the same working towards accomplishing the desired goal.

Take a moment to communicate with your opposing coach and game officials prior to the start of every game. Discuss the rules, to ensure that all are in agreement and understanding. The focus of recreational play must always be the fun of playing the game, regardless of age or situation.

If at any point a game becomes lopsided the following rules will apply:

- With a 4-goal advantage the stronger team would play down 1 player, dropping one of the stronger players
- With a 6-goal advantage the stronger team would play down another player (at this point 2 of their strongest players) Team may play even again once score is below a 4-goal differential.
- From this point forward, every goal scored by the stronger team would result in removal of a player from the field.

The expectation is that coaches will be making every effort in attempt to prevent the above scenarios from ever occurring.

Remember kids in recreation are out to have fun, socialize, and need to understand what sportsmanship is truly about. We are molding them for the future.

End of the Match

At the end of the match both coaches will have their players line up on the field and shake hands with the other team. Coaches should set an example by shaking hands with each other and the Referee. **There will be no official scores or standings kept.**

Thunder & Lightning Rule

The occurrence of thunder and/or lightning is not subject to interpretation or discussion - thunder is thunder, lightning is lightning. When thunder is heard and/or when lightning is seen, the following procedures should be adhered to:

Practices:

- Suspend play and cancel the remaining practice
- Direct all to take shelter at home, must leave fields
- No one is to be on the field of play during this suspension. Please take this seriously for the safety of individuals.
- Do not permit people to stand under or near a tree; and have all stay away from poles, antennas, towers and underground watering systems.

Games:

- Referee WILL suspend play and direct coaches to inform players and fans to take shelter, a building normally occupied by the public or if a building is unavailable, participants should go inside a vehicle with a solid metal top (e.g. bus, van, car).
- No one is to be on the field of play during this suspension. Please take this seriously for the safety of individuals.
- Do not permit people to stand under or near a tree; and have all stay away from poles, antennas, towers and underground watering systems.
- After thunder and/or lightning have left the area, wait 30 minutes after the last boom is heard or strike is seen before resuming play or competition. This will be the Referee's call only on if game is to be cancelled at any point in time.
- With regard to doubleheaders, if the early game is to be delayed more than 45 minutes, then that game must be cancelled in favor of getting the late game in.

Heat Advisory Rule

MURSL will make a determination by noon if Games/Practices will be cancelled due to Heat Advisory. MURSL will use the following Heat Index Procedure (same rules as NYSPHSAA):

- Heat index will be reviewed at noon before the contest/practice by MURSL when the air temperature is 80 degrees (Fahrenheit) or higher.
- MURSL will use the accuweather.com website to determine the heat index for the area of the contest/practice for both the 6 PM & 7:15 PM slots. The website will give them the air temperature as well as the RealFeel temperature (heat index).
- If the RealFeel (heat index) temperature is 96 degrees (Fahrenheit) or more, the contest/practice will be cancelled.

Please refer to the following chart to take the appropriate actions:

	RealFeel (Heat Index) under 79 degrees	Full activity. No restrictions
RECOMMENDED	Heat Index Caution: RealFeel (Heat Index) 80 degrees to 85 degrees	Provide ample water and multiple breaks. Monitor athletes for heat illness. PRACTICE - Consider reducing the amount of time GAMES - No restrictions

	Heat Index Watch: RealFeel (Heat Index) 86 degrees to 90 degrees	<p>Provide ample water and multiple water breaks. Monitor athletes for heat illness.</p> <p>PRACTICE - Consider postponing practice to a time when RealFeel temp is lower. (I.e. if practice time shows RealFeel of 88 at 6PM, but drops to 83 at 7PM, consider changing practice to 7PM). Consider reducing the amount of time for the practice session.</p> <p>GAMES – Discuss with Referee about dropping from halves to quarters, dropping game time down, substitutions on all throw ins and/or goal kicks.</p>
	Heat Index Warning: RealFeel (Heat Index) 91 degrees to 95 degrees	<p>Provide ample water and water breaks. Monitor athletes for heat illness.</p> <p>PRACTICE - Consider postponing practice to a time when RealFeel temp is much lower. (Same as guideline above) Consider reducing the amount of time for the practice session.</p> <p>GAMES – Speak to Referee about dropping games from halves to quarters, dropping game time down, substitutions on all throw ins and/or goal kicks.</p>
REQUIRED	Heat Index Alert: RealFeel (Heat Index) 96 degrees or greater	<p>No outside activity, practice or contest, should be held.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MURSL board will make call by noon on Game Days and will inform Clubs & Referees • Towns, Clubs, and Coaches should make call early in the day during practice days only.