

# Central Mass Over 35 Soccer League Bylaws and League Specific Rules

*As amended December 10, 2017*

## **1.0 League Meetings**

There shall be a minimum of three League meetings per year, Spring, Fall and Annual: Spring meeting prior to the start of the Spring season, Fall meeting prior to the start of the Fall season and the Annual meeting held after the completion of the Fall season and before the end of the year.

All teams are required to have a Team Coordinator or designee at all league meetings. Any team not sending a Team Coordinator or representative will be assessed a \$25 fine, payable to the league. Two consecutive meetings missed will result in a vote for that team being suspended from the league.

## **2.0 League Officials**

The league may elect any officials or structure in order to meet its business needs at its Annual meeting. Officers, Bylaws and Rules are approved by a majority of the member teams present at the Annual Meeting as stakeholders in the organization. All League Officials shall be voted on for a one year term by the Team Coordinators at the Annual meeting. Other changes, business, concern or items required voting may also be taken up at the Spring or Fall supplemental meetings. The league designated the following management structure at its annual meeting:

1. **President:** Oversees all business, is the primary contact for the league, is the final arbitrator for league decisions and delegates tasks and responsibilities when required to meet league needs, handles all League finances in conjunction with the Treasurer;
2. **Vice President:** Shall preside in the absence of the President; shall work with other officers and shall carry out such other duties as delegated by the President;
3. **Treasurer:** Handles all league finances in conjunction with the President, verifies payment of any bills, including team payments and fines, follows through with any paperwork or correspondence required for league affiliation and reports semi-annually at the league meetings on income, expenses, fines and league finances;
4. **Secretary/Website Administrator:** Takes and records meeting minutes including business issues and votes, prepares and updates league rules and materials and ensure that all players submitted for membership are eligible for league play, registered with the Mass Adult State Soccer Association (MASSA) and that all team rosters are certified. Manages and updates league website and keeps information current, including scores, standings, disciplinary information and league contact information.
5. **The Competition Committee** shall be comprised of the Referee Coordinator and four registered league members. The Competition Committee is responsible for investigating and completing reports on all red cards or league rule infractions, reviewing league rules and practices and recommending changes and/or improvements at league meetings, addressing, in a timely manner any appeals requested by a team coordinator. Members must abstain from participating in any issues brought to the Committee that involve a player of the member's team or for any reason that would give the appearance of a conflict of interest. When a voting member must abstain and there is a tie in the final vote the President shall have the deciding vote. At no time may a Competition Committee member be on the same team as another member;

## 2.0 League Officials continued

6. Team Coordinator & Captain: Each team must designate a Team Coordinator and a Team Captain. The Team Coordinator will represent that team at all League business meetings and is the only member who may request any appeals or address League Officials on behalf of team members. All team members must address any League or Referee issues through the Team Coordinator only. Before, during or after the match only Team Coordinator or the Team Captain may approach the Referee regarding any game issue (i.e. passcards, rosters, fouls called, etc.).
7. Referee Coordinator: Will act as the liaison between referees and the league, will schedule qualified, certified referees for each scheduled match and shall be a member of the Competition Committee.

## 3.0 Payments and Fines

All league fees, payments and outstanding fines must be paid to the league prior to the first game of each spring or fall season or that team cannot officially play in the league. The league president may grant special circumstances. Any fines generated during the season must be paid to the league prior to the next scheduled game or either the team being assessed will forfeit the following game or the player assessed will be ineligible to play.

## 4.0 Legal Players

All players must be registered with CMO35 and the Massachusetts Adult State Soccer Association (MASSA) due to fairness, safety and insurance reasons. The league is a recreational league and tries to be as accommodating as possible to allow players to play in a safe and fair manner in the spirit of recreation and fair play. Registering players allows the league to control players for conduct and fouls, gives accountability to the league and referees and conforms to standard state and nationwide league practices. The CMO35 League will honor any sanction or suspension given to a player from any other recognized league and will not allow that player to join the CMO35 league until the circumstances of their suspension is positively resolved or period of sanction is completed. The league, through the Competition Committee reserves the right to not admit or suspend any player whom the league believes is not keeping within the spirit of recreational fair play or may pose a danger or threat to any other player registered in the league.

1. All players must be registered with CMO35, MASSA and possess a valid MASSA Player Passcard. Pass cards are available through MASSA.
2. All teams must have a valid roster approved by the league. The league requires proof of identity and age for new players not previously registered to the league. There is no roster minimum or maximum for number of players.
3. All players must turn 35 within the playing year in which they are on a team's roster. Each team is allowed an exception of three players who must be 30 or older during the playing year. All under 35 players must be clearly identified on each team's roster.
4. Rosters are frozen and cannot be added to after the third game of each season. Exceptions may be requested to the league only as a replacement for an injured rostered player who will then be ineligible for the remainder of that season. Replacement players must be registered in advance with CMO35 and MASSA. No player can play without league consent through advance registration. These players must have a valid pass card.
5. The fine for playing with an ineligible player, is \$100 and any game that the player appeared in during active play is forfeit.

#### 4.0 Legal Players continued

6. Each player must have a MASSA player passcard and be on the MASSA supplied team roster. Any player asked by the referee to show identification must show either his passcard or driver's license. Failure to do so will cause that player to be ineligible to play.

#### 5.0 Legal Games

1. All matches start at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday mornings as scheduled unless a different start time is agreed upon by both teams and called into the league president and referee assignor at least 14 hours in advance of the match. There shall be a 15-minute grace period if any team cannot field the minimum (7) rostered players by start time. If the team cannot field a legal team by the end of the grace period (9:45 a.m.) that club shall forfeit the match.
2. Forfeiting team will be responsible for paying the referee as per Section 7.2.
3. The match may be played by mutual agreement as a "mixed squad" or other arrangement; however, the game will still be recorded by the league as a forfeit. The game will not be a sanctioned CMO35 League match but an unsanctioned friendly match. It is up to the referee's discretion to stay as they will then be an independent agent and may not be fully insured by their state association to referee the match. Regardless of their decision, the referee must be paid.
  1. During a 'friendly match' any player receiving a caution or send-off, playing in a violent manner, or any other reportable manner of play shall be governed by Section 8.9 of these bylaws.
4. In the event of a referee no show, the teams have THREE options:
  1. Abandon and reschedule the match;
  2. Play with a designated referee mutually agreed upon by both teams;
  3. Play without a referee and allow players to call fouls.

This decision must be agreed upon by both teams prior to the start of play and any match started under this section will be considered valid and played by the league. Any referee no-show must be reported to the league as soon as possible after the game. In this case only, the winning team is responsible for emailing in the match score to the league Web-site within 24 hours after the conclusion of the match.

5. Each team coordinator will supply the Referee with a valid game day roster as found on the Mass Soccer Web-site. Supplying the game day roster to the referee is the team coordinator's responsibility. NO ROSTER – NO GAME. Only valid dated Mass-Soccer rosters will be accepted.
6. Both teams must be located on the same side of the field. Home team determines side. All adult spectators must be more than 20 feet from the team area. The 'Team area' is determined by the referee. The referee may request the adult spectators be located on the opposite side of the field. This request must be complied with.

## **6.0 Team Placement/Divisions**

1. The league shall keep team statistics for each season played. Team statistics shall determine team placement within each Division. The scoring method for placement shall be: Each win – 3 points, each tie – 1 point. Total points shall determine placement. In the event of a tie the procedure for determining placement shall be:
  - a. Most wins
  - b. Head to Head
  - c. Bonus Points – determined by goal differential with a maximum of 3 per game.
  - d. Least goals against.
  - e. Most goals for (Maximum of 3 per game).
  - f. Coin toss.
2. The League shall consist of three Divisions, Division 'A', Division 'B' and Division 'C'. The number of teams in each division shall be equal whenever possible. All new teams entering the League shall be placed in Division C. Returning teams shall be placed in the last division participated in. At the end of each Season (i.e. Spring & Fall) each division will be re-organized. The procedure for re-organizing shall be:
  - a. First place Division B team shall move to Division A.
  - b. Last place Division A team shall move to Division B.
  - c. First place Division C team shall move to Division B.
  - d. Last place Division B team shall move to Division C
  - e. All remaining teams shall remain in the same division.
3. Divisions may also be re-organized at the end of any Season by a vote of the team coordinators whose team participated in the previous season and the approval of the team(s) changing divisions.

## **7.0 Game Cancellations, Abandonments, Team No-Shows or Forfeits**

1. The Referee will be paid for any game that is not cancelled at least 2 hours in advance due to weather conditions. The Referee shall also be paid if after arriving at the field he/she determines that the field is 'un-playable'. The Home team shall pay the Referee in both cases.
2. In the event that a game is terminated by the Referee due to weather or other field conditions, it shall be considered complete provided that the first half has been completed. When less than one full half has been played the game shall be re-scheduled and played in its entirety.
3. Team No-Show – If the minimum number of players (7) has not arrived within fifteen minutes after the scheduled start time the referee shall be paid by the League and reimbursed by the No-Show team. The no-show team shall forfeit and the game recorded as a 3-0 loss. In addition, there will be a \$50 fine, payable to the league of any team that is a no-show. A second no-show in a season will result in the team being dropped from the league for the following season.
3. Teams are not considered a no-show if they show up with a minimum of 5 rostered players at game time. This team will forfeit and be required to pay the referee but will not be assessed a league fine. Teams that do not have the minimum players (7) for two games in a season will face review by the league and may be dropped from membership.

## **7.0 Game Cancellations, Abandonments, Team No-show and Forfeits continued**

4. Teams may re-schedule or cancel matches if mutually agreed upon and the league president and referee assignor are contacted at least 14 hours in advance of the match (7 p.m. the night prior to the match). There are no league fees or penalties for re-scheduling or canceling a match, however, teams that re-schedule or cancel two or more matches in a season will face review by the league and may be sanctioned.
5. When an identifiable team, spectator or specific player(s) that before, during or after a match acts in a manner that leads a referee to abandon the match will cause that team to register a forfeit for the match. The match will not be replayed and the standings will reflect a 3-0 score for the match regardless of the score at the time of abandonment. In a situation where both teams' players or spectators actions cause the match to be abandoned by the referee, both teams will register a forfeit. All matches abandoned by a referee are subject to league review for possible further sanctions and the forfeiting team shall be assessed a \$50.00 fine.

## **8.0 Fouls**

As a recreational league, the CMO35 has adopted the FIFA "Laws Of The Game" with several modified rules as noted below to control the level of play and to best ensure the safety of all players. It is important to remember that this league has no formal standings or championship, is intended to be friendly match play for adults and it is the intent of the league to minimize risks toward players as possible, without diminishing the quality, enthusiasm or effort of each player in the match. Referees have been asked to adhere to the level of play and the spirit of recreation in their game and foul calling.

1. Changes to FIFA Laws of the Game: Law 1&2 No Changes; Law 3 Unlimited number of substitutions, either team may sub on a throw-in; Law 4 through 11 No Changes; Law 12 No Changes except for Sliding Tackles (see # 2 below); Law 13 through 17 No Changes.
2. Referees have been advised that there are absolutely NO sliding tackles allowed. Players may slide to keep a ball from going out of bounds or to gain control of a ball but are not allowed, within CMO35 rules, to slide within playing distance of an opponent, as determined by the referee. Sliding tackles will be sanctioned with a yellow card – caution and an indirect free kick awarded to the opposing team. A sliding tackle that would be considered a foul under the F.I.F.A. Laws of the Game will be sanctioned per F.I.F.A. rules.
3. The CMO35 League does not allow excessively hard, but otherwise legal challenges. First offense will be signaled as a foul and a warning given to the offending player. Subsequent challenges of this manner may be sanctioned as a caution or send-off at the discretion of the referee.
4. A yellow card given in a match does not carry over to subsequent games and there is no fine imposed by the League. However, players who receive three or more yellow cards within a season (i.e. Spring or Fall) will result in a \$25 fine and receive a one (1) game suspension. The League Competition Committee will review additional yellow cards to determine if further sanctions are necessary. Two yellow cards in a match, resulting in a send-off (red card) will be sanctioned with a \$25 fine and the player must sit out the following two (2) scheduled matches. Two yellows in a game may be appealed to request a one (1) game suspension to the League Competition Committee, if the cards were for a technical or minor nature. (Excludes physical contact with the referee, violent action or intent toward another player). All sanctions shall carry over to the following season.

## **8.0 Fouls continued**

5. A send-off will result in a \$25 fine for the first offense in a season and the player must sit out the following two (2) matches. The sanction will carry over to the next season if required. The number of games penalized may be increased by agreement by members of the League Competition Committee. Any increase in game suspensions issued by the Competition Committee is appealable only through the Mass. Adult Soccer Association appeal process. The fine must be paid before the player will be eligible to play in any subsequent matches. The team Coordinator may appeal the two game suspensions to the Competition Committee.
6. A second send-off in a season will result in a \$50 fine being assessed and that player penalized by sitting out the remainder of the season (minimum suspension 5 games). This suspension will carry over to the subsequent season if required. The number of games penalized may be increased by agreement by members of the League Competition Committee.
7. No player will be eligible to resume play until their suspension is served and any assessed fine is received by the League.
8. In the event of an appeal of any disciplinary action to the league, the player(s) suspension as required by the stated rules will be in force until the appeal is heard and an agreement of the Competition Committee is reached. The League President has the right to act on an appeal only when a final decision from the Competition Committee has not been reached within 24 hours of when the action being appealed goes into effect. Note: Only Team Coordinators may request an appeal. Players cannot appeal any red card.
9. Violent Conduct or assault on a player, referee or spectator will result in the player, team official or spectator suspended for a minimum of one year and a maximum of permanent ban from the CMO35 League. All players sanctioned for this offense will also be reported to state league authorities. Violent Conduct (VC) is to be defined as actions not part of normal game play intended to cause pain or harm to another player, team personnel or spectator. VC can occur and be assessed at any time during, before or after a match during the presence of a referee. VC is assessed by a referee and as such discernible from Serious Foul Play.

CMO35 in order to try to promote an atmosphere of fair play at no time condones violence among its members. It is recognized that during physical games there may be instances of aggression that may be handled sufficiently by a referee and may not be further sanctionable by the league or its designee. The CMO35 league reserves the right to sanction any player, team official or participating spectator who threatens the safety of others at games.

VC will lead to a twenty (20) game suspension from league participation and reported to affiliate league officials. Suspension is automatic and a player is ineligible from play until such time as the suspension is served and any levied fines are paid. If appealed by the team coordinator a player is considered suspended until the appeal process is concluded. Appeals are handled within league rules by the leagues Competition Committee. Review will take into account all credible sources and sources are not subject to appeal.

## **8.0 Fouls continued**

Examples of behavior considered VC, including but not limited to:

1. Closed fist punch to any body part;
2. Open handed strike to any body part (excludes a push);
3. Grappling or throwing an opponent or other person;
4. Head butting an opponent or other person;
5. Spitting at or on an opponent or other person;
6. Kicking or slamming an opponent or other person with clear intent to injure;
7. Use of weapons or objects towards an opponent or other person.
8. A red card designated by the referee as Violent Conduct.

Examples that may or may not lead to suspension subject to Competition Committee review: Unsuccessful attempts using examples above; Pushing or body bumping an opponent or other person.

10. In an "unsanctioned/friendly match" as prior defined, any player receiving a caution or send-off, playing in a violent manner or any other reportable manner of play shall not automatically incur fines/penalties under the CMO35 League rules. However, any reportable conduct by a player shall be reported to the league Competition Committee which may recommend sanctions against that player(s) for conduct detrimental or inconsistent with membership to the league.
11. The Competition Committee shall determine the outcome of a match abandoned by the referee. The Competition Committee shall use the referee and team coordinators reports in determining an outcome, which may include forfeit.

## **9.0 Threat to a Referee**

The league will impose a minimum of a one-year (two playing seasons) and a \$100 fine for any action meant to threaten the safety, seriously intimidate or harm a referee. The following actions are sanctionable, but not exclusive:

- Spitting
- Hard Contact
- Verbal threat or abuse
- Intimidation such as following a referee to their car
- Damage or threat of damage to referees property
- Injury

All reports of threat, intimidation or abuse toward a referee will be reviewed by the League Competition Committee and taken very seriously. The league reserves the right to assess additional sanctions toward a player(s) or a team to protect referees and the league. Findings of actionable offense toward a referee will be reported to state authorities, which may take further action.

Referees may also have legal options under Massachusetts General Laws to file legal complaints against offending parties and will receive any necessary cooperation from the CMO35 league.

## 10.0 League Fees

Each team participating in CMO35 shall pay a seasonal League fee of **\$200.00**. This fee shall be paid in full on or before each Pre-Season meeting.

1. Any games played by a team who's League fee or Bylaw fines are not paid in full shall be recorded as a forfeit and the team considered a 'No-Show' and assessed the League fine as stated in Bylaw Section 7.2.
2. Referee fees: Home team pays the Center referee \$70 prior to the start of the game.
3. Administration fees - At the end of each season (Spring & Fall) the League shall pay the:
  1. Referees; \$20.00 per game report received by the League no later than Tuesday following the game refereed.
  2. Referee assignor; \$40.00 per participating team.
  3. Secretary/Web/Admin; \$40.00 per participating team.
4. At the end of each season (Spring & Fall) a \$200.00 check will be sent, in the name of the first place team in each of the three divisions to the youth soccer league of their choice. The youth league must be a public, non-profit league. The amount each season shall be reviewed annually at the Annual General Meeting and be affective the following Spring and Fall seasons.
5. Mass Adult Soccer Association League Bond to be funded annually. Bond requirements and amount determined by MASA. (Currently \$400.00)