



## **SOCCER STOP SPORTSPLEX POLICIES, RULES, AND GUIDELINES**

At our core, the Soccer Stop Sportsplex strives to provide our community with family-friendly facilities and programs while always being grounded in positive character, honesty, integrity, and mutual respect. We are dedicated to optimizing the experience for our overall patron-group ... athletes and fans, alike.

The set of policies, rules, and guidelines detailed below has developed over decades of pursuing our vision. Many are tailored to the provision of soccer programming that is balanced, well-developed, and supports competitive spirit and strong sportsmanship. All are focused on ensuring the safety of our patrons. Some have become necessary to help guide individuals that do not share our foundation of positive character, mutual respect, and common sense.

The list is long but essential for positive operation of our facility. It is the responsibility of all who share the Soccer Stop Sportsplex to fully acknowledge and comply with each of them.

### **FACILITY RULES**

- Management of the facility has overarching authority and may use their judgement to ensure the safety and positive experience for all patrons. As such, management (including game officials) may request that individual behavior be modified. Defiance of such requests, whether covered by existing facility policies or not, may result in immediate expulsion from the facility, impacts to game results (curtailment of game/forfeit), involvement of public safety officers, etc.
- The referee's authority begins when they enter the field and ends when they leave the property. The referee's power to penalize extends to offenses committed when the ball is out of play, when the match is suspended, and after the match. The referee has discretionary power to suspend or terminate a game by reason of injuries, behavior of players/coaches/spectators, interference by spectators or other reasons he/she deems necessary. Referee assaults may result in criminal prosecution and a lifetime ban from the facility.
- Violence or dangerous behavior will not be tolerated.
- Foul/inappropriate language, tone, or volume are not allowed.
- Noise making devices are forbidden.
- No gum, seeds, or other messy foods are allowed in the facility or on the fields. Individuals doing so may be asked to leave the facility.
- Spitting is not allowed in the facility. Individuals doing so may be asked to leave the facility.
- Cleats or turf shoes are not allowed in the facility or on the fields. Only flat-soled shoes may be worn on the turf.

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- No one is allowed to stand behind or next to the goals.
- No one is allowed in restricted and staff-only areas. Failure to comply may result in immediate expulsion from the facility.
- Standing on chairs, bleachers, benches, and tables or laying on tables is not allowed.
- The facility is not responsible for your personal property.
- Solicitation is not allowed without approval from facility management.
- No outside food or drinks are allowed without approval from facility management.
- Use athletic equipment & balls only on the fields. Failure to comply may result in confiscation.
- No tobacco products or alternatives are allowed.
- Children must be under parental supervision at all times. Running and “horse play” are not allowed for the safety of the children and others.
- Facility is monitored by video.
- The fields may only be used by patrons in conjunction with a game or rental. Fields may not be used without explicit approval of facility management. Fields may not be used otherwise even if they are empty.
- Patrons arriving in advance of a game or rental may not use the fields.
- Patrons arriving more than 15 minutes in advance of the initial game/rental of the day may not be allowed to enter the facility.
- Loitering at the end of the last game/rental of the day is not allowed. It is expected that patrons associated with the last game or rental leave the facility within 15 minutes of the end of the associated activity.
- Only service animals are allowed in the facility (no pets allowed). Proof of certification may be requested. Failure to comply may result in expulsion from the facility.
- If one has a complaint about a referee or facility staff, please bring it to the attention of facility management. One may be requested to submit their complaint in writing in order to ensure clear communication and interpretation of the issue.
- WEATHER CANCELLATION POLICY: We rarely will close the Soccer Stop Sportsplex for winter weather. In the event weather is severe enough for us to cancel activities, we will leave a message on our voicemail that can be heard by calling 616-393-7768. We will also do our best to notify local television and radio stations in the event we cancel.
- Soccer Stop Sportsplex reserves the right to amend the rules at their discretion.

## **PAYMENT AND REGISTRATION (rentals and leagues)**

- Full payment is required at the time of facility use (rental or league play). Repeated rental cancellations may require payment of prior to use, a deposit, or other actions. Failure to pay may result in bans for future use.
- For league teams, a complete, online-registration must be completed in order to be considered for participation. If online accessibility is an issue, registrations may be completed at the facility.
- Upon completion of a registration, a \$300 TEAM DEPOSIT MUST BE PROVIDED PRIOR TO GAME SCHEDULING. This payment is non-refundable unless approved by facility ownership. Games will NOT be scheduled (the team will not be considered part of the league) until the deposit payment is received. Facility management reserves the right to require full payment prior to scheduling based on various factors (e.g., non-payment issues, no-shows, etc.)
- Teams that register, pay and drop out after the schedule has been completed will not be refunded the league fee. Further, the team or those associated, may be banned from future registrations or additional fees may be implemented.

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- Balance is due by first game, unpaid balances will result in forfeiture and may result in removal from league. ANY TEAM NOT PAYING THEIR BALANCE IN FULL ON THE DATE OF THEIR FIRST GAME WILL BE CHARGED A \$100 LATE FEE.
- Individual payments from team members will not be accepted. A team coordinator is responsible for providing a single payment for the entire balance.
- Players registering as individuals (not part of a registered team) will be placed on a house team (assuming the availability of viable team numbers), or we will make every effort to place that player on an existing team.
- For team registrations, we make every effort to place teams in the division that best suits their level of development. We consider a variety of factors (e.g., age, level of competition, historical record, etc.). Due to these efforts, we reserve the right to apply a practical degree of flexibility (e.g, highly competitive teams playing up an age group, struggling teams playing down an age group, etc.)
- Team registrations must register for the league that matches the age of the team's oldest player. For example, if a team's oldest player is 12, they must register for the U13 league. Teams registering for the incorrect league with players too old may be charged a \$100 fee.
- Each soccer league consists of 8 games, practice hours are not included in the fee. Practice time must be booked and paid for separately as a field rental.

## **TEAM ROSTERS AND SCHEDULE RULES**

- Roster/Waiver form must be completed in its entirety by the 2nd game. All players listed must have their information completely filled out and the waiver signed. Players will need to prove age if requested by management. Rosters are locked after the 3<sup>rd</sup> game. In the event of long-term injury, management may approve a late addition.
- Teams are allowed to roster up to 18 players.
- Minimum ages: for Adult Coed is 18 years old, Mens Open is 17 years old, Womens Open is 17 years old, High School (including Co-ed) must be 18 years or younger and enrolled in high school.
- Players may play in older division but no more than 2 years up. Players may not play down.
- Male individuals are not allowed on womens teams. Female individuals may play on mens teams.
- A U19 age player currently in college that is registered with a team in GVSA may play in the high school division with their GVSA team only (the team roster must be comprised of have at least 80% of the GVSA team roster).
- Age Verification: We typically do not verify ages of players in our leagues. Our intention is for teams to abide by our rules in the spirit of fun and sportsmanship. However, proof of age must be submitted upon request from Soccer Stop Sportsplex management. If we receive a complaint about ages, we will be asking both teams to provide copies of birth certificates of all registered players prior to their next game. Coordinators/teams found to have players too old for a specific league may be required to submit age verification for any future teams they wish to register. If one suspects that an opponent has players that are too old, a Game Complaint Form must be completed. These forms are available from facility management.
- When completed, schedules will be available online on the website. Coordinators will be emailed when they are finished.
- Rescheduled game requests must be submitted at least one week prior to scheduled date. A fee of \$25 will be charged to team requesting change. Game reschedules requested within one week will not be changed.

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- Standings are updated on a weekly basis and will be posted on the facility website. Teams receive 3 points for a win, 1 for a tie, 0 for a loss.
- Teams are organized in the standings based on points.
- Tiebreakers in the final standings are sorted in this order: head to head results, head to head goal differential (max of 6 per game), most wins, goal differential (max of 6 per game), least goals against, most goals scored.
- Protests are not allowed, and all referee decisions are final.

## **LEAGUE/TEAM RULES**

- All team members must wear the same color shirt. In the event both teams are wearing the same color, the team listed as the home team on the referee's game sheet will be required to change or wear pinnies. Teams are urged to bring two colors.
- Coed teams must have 2 females as field players at all times. Goalkeepers do not count towards the 2 players. Yellow and red cards would be exceptions to this requirement.
- Teams will forfeit if at any point after 5 minutes of the scheduled start time, they have fewer than 4 eligible players (5 for U11/12, 6 for U8/9/10). If 4 or more players are at the field, the game will start at 5 minutes.
- Teams using ineligible players will forfeit their game.
- Any team that creates a goal differential greater than 10 points for any individual game will be met with by facility management to obtain an understanding as to why it occurred and what was done to avoid it. Future occurrences of "running up the score" may result in forfeiture of the game and requirement of that team to play in a higher division in subsequent sessions.
- All youth teams (U19 and below) must have an adult over the age of 25 on their sideline during games. Failure to do so at the start of the game will result in a forfeit.
- Only players and coaches are allowed on the player's side of the field. Each team is allowed a maximum of 2 coaches on the sideline. Videographers and photographers are exceptions to this rule (permission required from facility management prior to entering the sideline).
- No gum, seeds, or other messy foods are allowed on the fields. Players chewing gum on the field will result in a yellow card for the first offense and a red card on the second offense.
- Spitting is not allowed on the fields. Players spitting on the field will result in a yellow card for the first offense and a red card on the second offense.
- Cleats or turf shoes are not allowed on the fields. Only flat-soled shoes may be worn on the turf. Players entering play without "flats" will receive a "2-minute penalty" similar to the yellow card penalty. A maximum of 2 players per team can serve 2 minute penalties simultaneously. Player must be properly equipped to return to play.
- Shin guards are required of all players in all youth leagues (high school and below). Players entering play without shin guards will receive a "2-minute penalty" similar to the yellow card penalty. A maximum of 2 players per team can serve 2-minute penalties simultaneously. Player must be properly equipped to return to play.

## **GAME-PLAY RULES**

- FIFA/USISA rules govern most aspects of play with the exception of the modifications identified below.

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- Defiance of the game official or facility management will be an immediate red card and expulsion from the facility premises.
- Game times will be either two-25 minutes halves (during 1-hour block) or two-24 minute halves (during 55 minute block).
- Clocks do not stop for injuries, except in the last 3 minutes of the game. In the event of a serious injury, requiring emergency personnel, it will be management's determination as to whether or not to stop the clock based on time remaining, score, and other factors. Games stopped for a serious injury in the second half can be declared complete.
- Ball size: U12 and below uses size 4, U13+ use size 5. In the event a division consists of teams from multiple age groups, ball size and number of players rules revert to the youngest team.
- Home team responsible for game ball.
- Number of players: U12 and below play 7v7, U13+ play 6v6. These numbers include the goalkeeper.
- Teams trailing by 6 or more goals can add one additional player until the difference is no longer 6 or more.
- Substitutions are done on the fly and are permitted at any time provided play is not near the boards. Players leaving the field must be no more than 2 yards away from the door when the new player enters. Failing to do so may result in a free kick being awarded to the opposing team.
- Ball out of play: a ball is out of play when the game is stopped by the referee, when it crosses the perimeter wall or when it hits any part of the field netting.
- Restarts – ALL RESTARTS ARE DIRECT KICKS
  - Defending team must be 10 feet away on restarts. Teams/individuals consistently failing to yield the proper distance may be given a yellow card at the referee's discretion without a prior warning.
  - Offensive teams have 6 seconds to put the ball back in play after it is placed and the defending team has given the required distance.
  - Goalkeepers must put the ball into play within 6 seconds of "gathering" themselves.
  - Kickoffs: all players must be in their own half until the ball is played. Kickoffs may travel backwards.
  - Corner Kicks: result from defensive team playing the ball into the vertical net above/behind the taller end boards, corners are taken from the white dots in the corners.
  - Goal Kicks: result from the offensive team playing the ball into the vertical net above/behind the taller end boards, goal kicks are taken on the ground from anywhere inside the penalty box.
  - Side netting/team area: balls hitting the side netting or going over the bench area walls will result in a free kick for the opposing to be played from the hash line within a yard of where the ball went out of play.
  - Ceiling netting: balls hitting the ceiling netting result in a free kick for the opposing team directly under where the ball hit the net unless the ball touched the net inside the yellow line on both ends, that results in a free kick from the yellow line.
  - Penalty kicks: All kicks are direct; however, penalty kicks are only given to infractions that would typically result in direct free kicks under normal rules. Infractions that would typically result in indirect free kicks will be taken from either the arc or the yellow dot (offensive team's preference). PKs will be taken from the dot inside the box. All other players must remain behind the yellow line until the ball is kicked.

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- Three-Line Rule: balls played OVER all three lines (yellow, white, yellow) toward the opponent's goal result in a yellow dot kick for the opposing team at their offensive end
- FOULS AND MISCONDUCT - FIFA/USISA rules govern most aspects of play with the exception of the following modifications:
  - Defiance of the game official or facility management will be an immediate red card and expulsion from the facility premises.
  - Slide TACKLES are not allowed. Sliding is allowed when players are not in the vicinity. Goalkeepers can slide in their box.
  - Heading the ball is not allowed in divisions consisting entirely of u11 teams or younger (U10 = not allowed, U11=not, U11/12 = allowed). Infractions are penalized by a free kick. PKs will not be given for this foul in the box. Restart will be yellow line. Also, players 10 years old and younger playing in a U11/12 or older league is NOT allowed to head the ball. REFEREES DO NOT KNOW THE AGES, SO IT IS UP TO THE COACH TO POLICE THIS.
  - Goalkeeper Pass-back rule is the same as it would be outdoor. Infractions are taken with a direct free kick from the top of the arc
  - Boarding: pushing a player against the boards is a serious offense and typically will result in either a red or yellow card. Players are urged to use caution along the boards and to slow down their play as they encounter them. Our referees call board play tight.
  - Bracing: players are not allowed to push off using 2 hands to gain leverage on an opponent.
  - Offensive and defensive players must control their speed when playing along the boards or approaching. Fouls can be given for offensive players not under control during board play.
  - Individual persistent infringement will be officiated as it would be anywhere else. The referee also has the right to issue a yellow card to a team that he/she deems is fouling far too often.
  - Fighting, of any nature, may result in a complete ban from the facility.
  - Yellow cards: assessed to a player who commits any of the following offenses in a manner that the referee considers careless, reckless, serious or involving excessive force: kicking, tripping, boarding, charging, striking, elbowing, pushing, goalkeeper endangerment, slide tackling, spitting, chewing gum, foul language, loud voice, use of a noise making device, or decent.
  - Yellow cards result in a 2-minute penalty in which the offending player must leave the field for 2 minutes. That team will play down a man until the entire 2 minutes has elapsed even if goals are scored.
  - Red Cards: assessed to a player for any foul perceived to be excessively violent, reckless or dangerous, a second yellow card, elbowing above the shoulder, fighting, leaving the team bench to engage in any altercation, spitting at a player or official, extreme foul language, excessive loud voice, repeated use of a noise making device, or decent (toward official or facility management).
  - All red cards result in an ejection from the current game, plus a minimum of 1 additional game. All red cards are reviewed by management to determine if additional suspensions/bans can be issued.
  - Teams which a player receives a red card will play down for 5 entire minutes even if goals are scored.
  - A player receiving a red card is not allowed to participate in any other games that day if they are registered on another team. They must leave the facility for the entire day. An individual serving a subsequent red card suspension (unless specified by management) is allowed in the facility but is not allowed in the team bench area.

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