



Jenelle Wright  
 Principal Recreation Specialist  
[Jenelle.Wright@pgparks.com](mailto:Jenelle.Wright@pgparks.com)

Cassandra Donelan  
 Executive Director  
 301-446-6800

[Cassandra.Donelan@pgcbgc.com](mailto:Cassandra.Donelan@pgcbgc.com)

## **2026 SOCCER RULES: SPRING**

**Refer to the PGCBGC Ground Rules for the following: information governing membership requirements, dues, identification cards, postponements, questionnaires, franchise fees, roster protests, forfeits, game officials, awards, billing, fines, eligibility, playoffs and/or game points.**

These rules are to be used in conjunction with the PGCBGC Ground Rules and the Federation of International Football Association (FIFA) Rules. Exceptions to these rules are noted in Section VIII. Please carry these rules and point out exceptions to officials before every match. Failure to do so will relinquish the right to protest.

- I. US Soccer has implemented a mandate, effective January 1, 2016, which restricts the heading of a soccer ball for players aged 12 and under. Please see below for more complete information on the mandate.
  - a. **Why did US Soccer release a heading mandate?** 1.) Due to a settlement of a lawsuit US Soccer has issued a mandate on heading the ball in training and competition. 2.) This mandate applies to players 12 years old and younger. 3.) The effective date is January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016.
  - b. **Heading mandate:** 1.) Players 11U Division and younger cannot be taught the skill of heading. 2.) Players 11U division and younger cannot intentionally head the ball in a competitive game. 3.) Players who are 12U Division and older can receive heading instruction in training, but training is limited to 30 minutes per week. They can head the ball in competition.
  - c. **Penalty: Indirect free kick for 11U Division and younger:** 1.) An indirect free kick will be awarded to the opposing team if a player deliberately heads the ball on the field. 2.) The indirect free kick will occur at the point of the infraction.
  
- II. **Teams:** Shall be formed by age division based on the players' **age as of January 1 of the current year**. The PGCBGC will form leagues to support the following age divisions:

<b>BOYS:</b>	<b>GIRLS:</b>
6U (5 vs. 5)	6U (5 vs. 5)
8U (7 vs. 7)	8U (7 vs. 7)
10U (9 vs.9)	10U (7 vs. 7)
12U (9 vs. 9)	12U (7 vs. 7)
14U (11 vs. 11)	14U (11 vs. 11)

**\*\*or 11x11 with mutual agreement.**

III. **Questionnaires:** Please refer to the **current** PGCBGC Ground Rules.

IV. **Questionnaires and Rosters are due:**

- Questionnaires:
  - i. Give specific direction to field.
  - ii. Note coach's input on classification of teams so that teams are placed appropriately.
  - iii. Note if you have a modified permanent field for 10U (Boys/Girls).

- iv. Be specific with exceptions and give as much field time as possible.
- Rosters:
  - i. Refer to the PGCBGC Ground Rules.
  - ii. Rosters are due:
  - iii. Roster close date:

**V. PGCBGC I.D.:** Card checks should occur prior to game. This check should be completed by opposing coaches. The referee is responsible for checking the equipment for each team. If only one referee is present, both teams should line up near mid-field in full uniform and with ID's ready for checking. Failure to present ID cards, prior to the start of the game, will result in the forfeiture of the game.

**VI. Eligibility:** Refer to PGCBGC Ground Rules.

**VII. Opening Date: April 11, 2026**

**VIII. Rules:** The Federation of International Football Association (FIFA) Rules will govern play in conjunction with the PGCBGC Ground Rules and the PGCBGC Soccer Rules.

- Matches: Soccer matches will be played on Saturday's no earlier than 9:00 am unless otherwise specified. Games will also be scheduled on Sunday as needed, no earlier than 12:00 Noon. (unless otherwise specified)
- Grace Period: 15 minutes following the scheduled starting time for the first game of the day only. After that period, the match must be forfeited.
  - 1. Exceptions will not be made for tardiness due to directions to the field. Coaches are responsible for providing the proper directions. Forfeit time is not included in game time.
- All matches will be played as follows: Leagues for age 9 & under (the 7 on 7 age groups), the offside rule is not enforced. It is enforced for all leagues 10 and older. Any questions regarding this rule should be directed to the official for clarification before the game begins.
- Minimum players to start game: Teams with 11 players: Eight players to start, seven or more to continue. If a team is playing with fewer than 11 players, except for red cards or illegal equipment, the team may add players as they arrive at any stoppage in game with permission from the official. 7 vs. 7 ages: Six players to start, 5 or more to continue. 8 vs. 8: 7 players to start, 6 or more to continue. 9 vs. 9: 8 players to start, 7 or more to continue. 5 vs. 5: 4 players to start, 3 or more to continue.
- **Player Development Rule.** For play in age divisions 8u and under the following rules will be in place.
  - A. **Build-out Line 6U and 8U.** The spirit of this rule is to encourage the 6U and 8U teams to learn how to play the ball forward from the first third, from either a goalie save or goal kick. The objective is for the players learning how to progress the ball forward (dribble or pass) from defense to midfield to the attackers.
    - 1.) When the goalkeeper (Team A) has the ball in his/her hands during play, the opposing team (Team B) must **move or retreat behind the midfield (build-out line)** until the ball is released from the goalkeeper's possession and crosses the penalty area (or midfield). Once the opposing team is behind the midfield (build-out), the goalkeeper can release the ball by passing (NOT dribbling), throwing, or rolling the ball to a teammate who is on his/her side of the build-out line or beyond the build-out line. After the ball is released from the goalkeeper's possession and crosses the penalty area (or midfield), the opposing team may cross the midfield build-out line) and play resumes as normal.
    - 2.) The goalkeeper releasing the ball from possession or the player taking the goal kick does not have to wait for the opposing players to move behind the midfield (build-out line). In such circumstances, the attacking team may play the ball as normal.
    - 3.) Goal Kicks, the ball must be kicked and cross the penalty area (or midfield) before the opposing team can cross the midfield (build out line) to attack the ball.

4.) The coaches from either team must instruct players to retreat to midfield for any goal save or goal kick. Coaches' persistent failure to instruct players to respect the build-outline may be subject to caution (Yellow Card) by the referees.

B. **10 Goal Differential.** If any team is leading by 10 or more goals the leading team must remove a player from play for the remainder of the game.

- Substitutions: Substitutions may be made by the team gaining possession during a throw-in. A team that lost possession **may only substitute if the team gaining possession substitutes.** Either team may substitute during game stoppages including goal kicks, goals, period end, cautions and ejections. In case of injury, when a coach comes on the field and a player must be substituted, the opponent may also substitute one player (one for one). **However, no substitution is allowed on corner kicks.**

Only players standing in the substitution box (field sideline) at the time the referee calls for substitutes will be allowed (except in the case of substitutions for an injured player). Players not in the box at that time must wait until the next substitution opportunity.

- Field Restraining Line: On the spectator side of the field a line 3' from the sideline shall be drawn the length of the field and all spectators will be required to stay behind the line.
- Uniform: T-shirts or jerseys, shorts without pockets (long pants optional in cold weather), round multi-studded soccer shoes, no metal cleats (tennis shoes are optional) and shin guards are mandatory. Shin guards must be completely covered by socks unless sock type (soft pad) is worn. Street shoes are prohibited. Matching socks are not required but recommended. Goalkeeper may wear padded helmet. Knitted hats are permitted in cold weather.
  1. No hard objects (buckles, jewelry, etc.) may be worn. (See FIFA rules) Attention should be given to assure removal of pierced earrings and girl's hair devices (use rubber bands). Casts or hard splints are forbidden. Compression shorts may be worn under uniforms, however, same color as uniform shorts is recommended.

- Ball:

1. **5-6 Pee Wee: Size #4**
2. **7U-10U: Size #4**
3. **11U and Older: Size #5**

- Contact between players must be kept to a minimum. Continued violation can lead to termination of the game after one warning by the official(s).
- Charging Goalkeeper: Keeper who has ball possession cannot be charged in his/her penalty area unless dribbling ball with his/her feet.
- Any player who leaves his or her feet at any time of the game to slide tackle an opponent in challenging for the ball from the front, from the side or from behind using one or both legs, are endangering the safety of their opponent and therefore guilty of foul play.
  - A slide tackle in the middle of the field will result in a caution
  - A slide tackle within the defending teams penalty box will result in a penalty kick for the opposing team and a caution for the player
- Body-trap: This applies to girls only. When a girl is attempting a body-trap, she may protect herself by covering her chest with her hands and arms. Arms and hands **MUST** remain in body contact at all times during the ball contact.
- A disqualified player or coach, at minimum, will be barred from participating in the team's next scheduled game. Officials should note all disqualifications on the team's line-up sheet.
- When an official discovers a player who is bleeding, has an open wound or excessive amount of blood on his/her uniform, the official must stop play. The player must be removed from the

playing area and proper first aid must be administered. The player cannot return to the game until the bleeding is completely stopped, open wound covered and bloody clothing has been changed.

- Playoff Rules – Tied games: If games are tied after regulation play, then a 5-minute sudden death (golden goal) overtime period will be played. If still tied, there will be a 5 player shootout, best total shots made. If still tied, its one player vs. one player until the tie is broken. Only those players on the field at the end of the overtime are eligible to participate in the shootout. The goalie is also included as an eligible shooter.
- Special Pee Wee Rules:
  1. Coaches are only allowed to run in a 3' neutral zone outside the sideline on their half of the field (coaches cannot go past the midline of the field). The neutral zone will run the length of the field on the sideline occupied by players and coaches.
  2. Timing: Pee Wee games shall consist of 2-15 minute halves.
  3. No Penalty kicks will be awarded.

#### **IX: Officials:**

- The one-referee system with two neutral-volunteer linesmen (one from each team) is used for 7 vs. 7 games. However, the two (2) referee system will be used for all 9 vs.9 and 11 vs. 11 games and all playoff games. The referee is not required to check player ID's.
- Officials shall certify the score. Coaches are responsible for sending line-up sheets to the Sports Office by faxing: 301/446-6801. When Sports Supervisors are present, they will take possession and forward to Sports Office.
- Official can forfeit game if there are less than 8 players to **start** on 11 vs. 11. Official can forfeit game if there are less than 6 players to start on 7 vs. 7, less than 7 players for 8 vs. 8, less than 8 for 9 vs. 9 and less than 4 players for 5 vs. 5
- Official must enforce blood rule. (VIII-N)

#### **X. Administration:**

- Line-up Sheets: Will be provided by PGCBGC office and must be used for all league matches. Coaches/or if present, Sports Supervisor will collect line-up sheets and submit to Sports office via fax or e-mail. Fax number: 301/446-6801 or E-mail to [scorekeeper@pgcbgc.com](mailto:scorekeeper@pgcbgc.com).
- **Official Game: Games cancelled during or after halftime will be considered official or complete games. The score at that time will stand. Games cancelled before halftime will be considered incomplete games and will be replayed in full.**
- Postponements:
  - i. No postponements except when the home team coach postpones game due to field or weather conditions or both unplayable. Both coaches must agree. Refer to home team coach's responsibilities and PGCBGC Ground Rules. Referee may also declare field unplayable. Home team coach/commissioner must notify visiting team and Sports Coordinator, Byron Thompson of postponements if field is unplayable due to weather conditions.
  - ii. Games are only rescheduled for reasons listed in the Postponements Section of the PGCBGC Ground Rules.
- Coaching Requirements:
  - i. Coaches must bring a picture ID to the game.
  - ii. They will be verified, by staff, against the current coaches list. To complete the necessary steps to get on the coaches list, check on [www.pgcbgc.com](http://www.pgcbgc.com) "Coaches Corner" for all requirements.
  - iii. Coaching behavior: Coaching will be limited to the sideline only; between the centerline and front end of the goal area at either end. Coaches, please impress

upon your players to leave Goalies alone when he or she has possession of the ball. Coaches are reminded of the PGCBGC Code of Conduct in the Ground Rules and Definitions which will be strictly reinforced.

- **Spectators/Coaches: Limited to the side lines opposite teams and coaches. Referee has the authority to red card the coach for the conduct of his/her fans and/or spectators. Unruly coaches or spectators will be asked to leave the vicinity of the field. Failure to do so may result in termination of the match.**
- Protests: Refer to the PGCBGC Ground rules. All protests must be made to the official referee of the match at the first opportunity after violation, and the official must sign the lineup sheet acknowledging the protest. Note: Judgment calls cannot be protested.
- Teams and Coaches: Both teams will be stationed on the same sideline, opposite the spectator's sideline.

#### **XI Home Team Responsibilities:**

- It is the home team's responsibility to have an emergency medical plan (know where the nearest phone is located, designated person in charge, etc). However, it is every coach's responsibility to have a first aid kit, water jug, ice and knowledge of CPR and Basic First Aid. **There will be an \$150.00 fine for all teams not having a First Aid Kit for their team.**
- A number of games may be scheduled on neutral fields. Coaches should communicate with each other about field set-ups (nets, restraining ropes, etc). Home team must provide these if not available at neutral field.
- Make certain that the field is properly marked and set up with goal nets and corner flags/cones or the match will be FORFEITED.
- Make certain that restraining ropes or lined areas are positioned 15 feet away from the sideline reaching from penalty area to penalty area on both sides of the field. The intent is to keep spectators away from play. Failure to provide these ropes will result in a \$125.00 fine.
- Provide the correct size of match ball.
- Change team jerseys where there is a color conflict with the visiting team. Home team shall call visiting team one-week prior to game to determine uniform colors. Also refer to uniform chart provided by PGCBGC with the soccer schedules.
- Contact visiting team coach to notify of postponement due to inclement weather or field conditions. Must notify Mrs. Jenelle Wright (301) 446-6822 or via soccer team chat.
- Check the M-NCPPC weather line: 301-927-0822.
- Notify Sports Office of any postponements within 48 hours of scheduled match. The Sports Office will reschedule games as soon as possible during the regular season.

#### **XII. ID Cards And Line-up Sheets:**

- Each player must have a valid ID card in order to be eligible to participate.
- Players on each team will be required to show their ID Cards 15 minutes prior to game time with the PGCBGC Field Supervisor. Line-up sheets will be given to the Field Supervisor at this time and players who do not show a sanctioned laminated ID card or Government-issued ID will be crossed off the Line-up sheet and therefore cannot play. If a field supervisor is not present 15 minutes before game time, coaches MUST check their opposition's ID cards and e-mail or fax in their own line-up sheets after the game. Invalid ID cards will be reported to the Sports Office by Field Supervisors.
- Late players - Must present their ID cards to the Field Supervisor (or to the opposing Coach if the Supervisor is not present) before entering the game.

#### **XIII. League Standings:**

- For accurate league standings scores must be reported within 48 hours after each game. Scores may be reported by email to the scorekeeper at [scorekeeper@pgcbgc.com](mailto:scorekeeper@pgcbgc.com) or by fax to 301-446-6801.

- Reporting scores is mandatory. In addition, each team **must** submit line-up sheets for each game.
- **Submission of Line-Up Sheets is mandatory.**

**XIV. Playing Conditions and Postponements:**

- For information on field cancellations, please call the Weather Line at (301) 927-0822 after 3:00 pm, on weekdays. Weekends will be handled on an individual basis. Please be sure to contact the opposing team.
- The Sports Office will reschedule all postponed games as soon as possible during the regular schedule.

**Remember: To avoid discrepancies, carry rules and laminated ID Cards to every game.**

