

# **Gainesville Regional Soccer League**

## **SPRING AND FALL SEASON CO-REC RULES AND REGULATIONS**

The following rules and regulations, as approved by the Board of Directors, will govern the Gainesville Recreational Soccer League, Inc. (GRSL) effective January, 2020. These rules and policies are in effect for all divisions of the GRSL, unless otherwise stated or clarified.

The GRSL's Bylaws are established in a separate document.

### **1. REGISTRATION, ELIGIBILITY, AND CHANGES**

#### **a. Teams**

- i. All new team applications and registrations must be approved and certified by the GRSL board. The GRSL board is responsible for regular season registration of GRSL teams within the USSSA.
- ii. Each team shall be required to make an early deposit before the start of the upcoming season. The team must confirm its desire to play in the upcoming season and make a non-refundable deposit of \$350 to the league treasurer.
- iii. This deposit will be deducted from the team fees for the season. The deadline for early commitment is approximately four weeks prior to the upcoming season's first preseason meeting.
- iv. Returning teams must commit to the league to be guaranteed a position for the upcoming season, or they may lose their spot to new teams.
- v. If a new team is added to the GRSL league after the start of the fall season, this team will incur a \$75 USSSA new team fee in addition to the league's registration fees.
- vi. In general new teams will start in the C Division, but they may be placed in another division based on the discretion of the board in order to maintain competitive balance.
- vii. New teams must choose a jersey that is easily distinguishable from all other jerseys being used in the league, as determined by the GRSL board.
- viii. Existing teams may lose their eligibility to play in this league by continuously violating league rules. These criteria include but are not limited to the following:
  1. Forfeiting three games within a defined season and its tournament.
  2. Lack of full payment of season team dues, penalties, and/or fees by the end of the Finals of the respective Fall, Spring, or Summer season.
  3. Consistently disruptive, violent, poor behavior by multiple players.
- ix. The GRSL board may suspend or expel an existing team by a two-thirds vote during any GRSL board meeting.

#### **b. Team Officials**

- i. Each GRSL team must designate at least one captain. This captain's responsibilities includes: attending league captain's meetings, updating the team's roster, reviewing team player conduct, paying all league dues and fees, organizing

team logistics, communicating with all referees during league games, communicating with GRSL board members, and being responsible for awareness of league rules and penalties.

- ii. Non-player members of a team must be registered on USSSA as a Coach. Each team may only have two coaches. All Coaches shall be registered on the USSSA website roster page provided by the GRSL league to all league teams.

c. Registration of Players

- i. All players must be registered by his or her team's captain on their team's roster page on the USSSA website. The ID number assigned by USSSA must be associated with their name in the team's USSSA "Printable Roster" document. Team officials shall be responsible for completing player registration forms and player passes.
- ii. The USSSA pass must be laminated, signed by the player associated with this ID, and contain a high resolution 1.5"X1.25" color portrait photograph. If a USSSA pass is lost or destroyed it must be replaced immediately.
- iii. A player can only register for one team within the GRSL. Each player is prohibited from participating on more than one team in all seasons of the GRSL.
- iv. All players must be at least 18 years of age by the date of the first game of the season starting in the spring 2020 season. Any player on an active team roster determined to be less than 18 years of age will be removed immediately from this roster. Until the spring 2020 season, all players must be at least 17 years old and waivers will be signed by the guardians for 17 year old players.
- v. Over 40 age group men's teams may have a maximum of THREE (3) 35 to 39 year old players on their roster through the end of the Fall 2019 season.
- vi. From the start of the Spring 2020 season and for every season moving forward, no players may be less than 40 years of age at the start of each season.
- vii. Over-40 age men's teams are allowed to have female players age 18 or older on their roster.
- viii. The maximum number of eligible USSSA roster players is 22.
- ix. If a team is found to have intentionally improperly registered players, then the team will forfeit all games in which the improperly registered player participated, and the improperly registered player will be reviewed for additional sanctions by the GRSL board.
- x. The GRSL board may suspend the offending player from the GRSL. Any suspension or expulsion can be appealed to the Appeals Committee.
- xi. If the team captain was found to have knowingly registered a player improperly, then he/she will be removed as the team captain on the offending team, and barred from acting as the team captain for one full year from the date of this infraction.

d. Player/Roster Changes

- i. All player releases and transfers must be reflected on the USSSA roster.

- ii. Players are automatically released at the end of their team's season. If a team disbands, its players are automatically released unless they are under suspension by the GRSL.
- iii. Unlimited roster changes may be made prior to the 3rd regular season game. After this point, 2 "No Questions Asked (NQA)" roster changes may be made prior to the first tournament game.
- iv. Additional roster changes outside of the 2 NQA changes are allowable prior to the first tournament game if a player experiences an injury.
- v. If a roster change is required after the unlimited change period, the team official must contact the GRSL board to unlock the respective team's USSSA roster page prior to making any change.
- vi. No roster changes may be made after the start of tournament play for any reason.
- vii. These guidelines are subject to the rules below:
  - 1. The deadline for roster changes is 10:00 PM each Thursday before the first game in which the player will play. This roster change must be made on the USSSA website and reflected on the team's USSSA "Printable Roster" document.
  - 2. The replacement player must be a new or unassigned player that has not participated at all in the GRSL during the season in question. Transfers from other GRSL teams to replace players lost to injury will not be permitted.
  - 3. An injury is defined by the following:
    - a. The injury must be diagnosed and specified as such by a physician and backed up with a written, signed, formal doctor's note, letter, or medical diagnosis report. This letter may be in paper or electronic format.
    - b. There is no limit on the number of roster changes of this type.
- viii. Failure to add player information to the USSSA roster and player name/ID on the team's USSSA "Printable Roster" document will result in omitting them from the game report and ineligibility for play on that game day. Any changes or additions will not be accepted on game day.
- ix. If a team disbands after 10:00 PM on the Wednesday before the third official game of the season, then its players will be permitted to transfer to active teams until 10:00 PM of the Wednesday before the fourth official game of the season. In this case, players will be allowed to transfer to another team.

## **2. FIELD CONDITIONS, UNIFORMS, EQUIPMENT, LOST & FOUND**

- a. Field Equipment
  - i. The teams scheduled for the first game of the day are to install the nets and flags. The installation is to be completed to the satisfaction of one of the referees. The teams scheduled for the last game of the day are expected to take down the flags and place the equipment in the shed.
  - ii. One game ball will be provided by each team to the head referee prior to the start of the game. Game balls shall be FIFA certified or approved for play by the center referee.

- b. Field Lining
  - i. Teams assigned lining duties are responsible for making sure that all the fields are properly lined on the Saturday before each league game.
  - ii. Each team is responsible for lining the fields for at least 1 game per season. Field lining occurs at 8:00am on Saturdays and 2 individuals from each team are required to participate. Failure to participate will result in a \$50 fine and loss of a point (see **PENALTIES AND FINES**).
- c. Uniforms
  - i. Each team's players must wear the same jerseys, shorts and socks that match. Jerseys must be clearly and permanently numbered by printing or embroidery on the back. All ink, tape, and peel-and-stick numbers are prohibited for marking numbers on jerseys. Pinnies will not be allowed to be used as a game jersey.
  - ii. Players not in conformance with their team's uniforms, including the numbering and socks will be prevented from playing until the uniform is corrected. The center referee is empowered to determine eligibility.
  - iii. Each team will submit their team colors to the GRSL board at the captain's meeting. Listed will be the color for their primary and optional alternate jerseys, their shorts and socks, as well as a description of any unique designs on each item of the uniform.
  - iv. In the case of a jersey color conflict, the visiting team (the team listed second in the schedule) is required to change color.
  - v. A player may remove their jersey on the sideline after substituting out of a game. Any player that changes jersey numbers without the consent of the referee, or to avoid additional punishment will be suspended a minimum of one (1) game.
- d. Sideline Conditions
  - i. Bench players shall be restricted to the bench area on the appropriate side of the field during their game. Players and coaches will not be allowed to roam up and down the sidelines. Players and coaches must remain at least three feet off the sidelines.
  - ii. Team captains or coaches are responsible for the good order and conduct of all players and support personnel in the bench area.
  - iii. Teams must remove trash (plastic bottles, plastic cups, tape, etc.) from the sideline and field following the game.
- e. Lost & Found
  - i. Lost & found items should be placed into the GRSL equipment room at Forest Park.

### **3. RULES OF PLAY**

- a. Seasons
  - i. The GRSL will operate two full seasons and one short season per seasonal year. The Fall and Spring season shall be the full seasons and the Summer season shall be the shorter season.

- ii. Promotion and relegation will take place following the Fall and Spring seasons, with the promotion and relegation of the Spring season standing through the subsequent Summer and Fall seasons.
  - iii. Each GRSL season has two distinct phases of competition: Regular Season and Tournament. The Tournament phase includes the Group Stage, Semi-final, and Final matches.
- b. Rosters and Check-In
- i. Each player must present either a government-issued photo ID or a current, valid USSSA player pass to the referee prior to the start of the game in order to be eligible to play in any league-sanctioned game. Government issued ID's include driver licenses, University ID cards, Passport ID's, or a similar ID.
  - ii. A team may not have more than 8 male players on the field at any one time. The maximum allowable male players on the field for a team shall be reduced by the number of red cards issued to the male players of that team. For example, if a co-ed team is playing with 8 men on the field and one is shown a red card and sent off, that team shall play with 7 men on the field.
  - iii. A team may not have more than 8 female players on the field at any one time. The maximum allowable female players on the field for a team shall be reduced by the number of red cards issued to the female players of that team. For example, if a co-ed team is playing with 8 women on the field and one is shown a red card and sent off, that team shall play with 7 women on the field.
  - iv. If a team is unable to field a minimum number of 7 players, the team will forfeit the match.
- c. Substitutions
- i. If the team with possession is making a substitution on a throw in, the other team may make a substitution as well.
  - ii. Players that will substitute shall wait at the midfield line. The referee shall be verbally informed of the proposed substitution before it is made. Substitutes shall enter the field at midfield after the players they are replacing have exited the field, and only after having received acknowledgement from the referee.
- d. Length and Timing of Games
- i. Games shall start at 8am on each Sunday in accordance with the league's schedule.
  - ii. Each set of games will be 2 hour and 15 minutes after the preceding set of games.
  - iii. Each game will consist of (2) 45-minute halves with a 15 minute half time break and a mandatory water break during each half.
  - iv. The latest that an official game will start is 10 minutes after scheduled start time. If the delayed start time is due to tardiness on the part of either team, the half time break will be shortened accordingly.
  - v. If the reason for the delayed start is related to referee tardiness, the game time will remain in full and the half time break will remain at 15 minutes.

- vi. If the start of a game is delayed more than 10 minutes due to the tardiness of one of the teams, the center referee will declare the game a forfeit in favor of the non-offending team.
  - vii. The center referee may allow a game that starts later than 10 minutes after the scheduled start to be counted as an official game if it is approved by both captains. In this situation, the game will be shortened by the number of minutes that this game started late.
  - viii. Games may be shortened due to weather delays. In all instances, the score from a game that lasts for at least ONE half is considered final.
  - ix. If a game is terminated in the second half and before the end of regulation play, the score will count as final at the moment when the game is suspended.
  - x. A mercy rule can be decided if there is a 6 goal differential in the second half. Both team captains and the center referee will meet to decide the outcome.
  - xi. Semifinal and Final games that end in a tie after regulation play will be extended to two-15 minute overtime periods. If the game remains tied at the end of the two overtime periods, then the game shall be decided by penalty kicks.
  - xii. The executors of the penalty kicks shall be chosen from the players that are on the field of play at the end of the second overtime period.
  - xiii. No substitutions will be permitted for the penalty kick phase of the game.
  - xiv. The shoot-out will proceed as follows:
    - 1. The referee shall choose the goal for all penalty kicks by both teams.
    - 2. Each captain will select any five different players on the field, including the goalkeeper, to take the penalty kicks. One of the five players selected must be a female player.
    - 3. If one of these teams does not have any female players, this team will start the penalty kick period down 1-0 with 4 penalty kicks remaining.
    - 4. This rule does not apply to the Over-40 men's teams
  - xv. Otherwise, Law VII, Duration of the Game, of the FIFA Laws of the Game will apply.
- e. Game report form
- i. The game report will be placed at the field by a league representative.
  - ii. Game reports will list both teams playing, with the reverse side lined and diagrammed to provide all referees the space necessary for any additional comments. Team captains and players are not allowed to add additional comments on the game report.
  - iii. Each team captain must review and sign this game report to confirm that the center referee has filled in the goal scorers and misconduct to the right players.
  - iv. After the team captain signs the game report, the report is considered finalized, and the center referee will return each team's player passes.
  - v. The center referee is responsible for submitting each completed game report with the game result, card designations, and additional comments. If a team's captain refuses to sign a game report, player passes will be provided to that team's

captain, but the GRSL board will still consider the game report to be final. Further discussion and review can be held afterwards.

- vi. All incidents relating to a game that occur before, during, and after the game will be reported in writing by the referees on the game report.
- f. Forfeiture
  - i. A team that forfeits a game without giving 48 hour notice will lose one point in the league standings.
  - ii. A forfeited game will be tallied as a 0 to 3 loss for the forfeiting team, and a 3 to 0 win for the opposing team.
  - iii. A forfeiting team can still reach the Semi-Finals following the "Rankings, Team Promotion, and Relegation" procedures.
- g. Rankings, Team Promotion, and Relegation
  - i. A team's standing in the league regular season and in the season-end tournament will be determined by the FIFA point system, with three points for a win, one point for a draw and no points for a defeat.
  - ii. The two teams with the greatest number of points following regular season play will be promoted to the next highest division for the tournament stage and the following season. The two teams with the least number of points following regular season play will be relegated to the next lowest division for the tournament stage and the following season.
  - iii. Promotions and relegations occurring during the Spring season will apply to the following Summer and Fall seasons, whereas promotions and relegations occurring during the Fall season will apply to the following Spring season. Promotions or relegations following the regular Summer season apply only to the Summer tournament.
  - iv. In the league format, the ranking during the Regular Season and Tournament Group Stage phases is determined in exact order as follows:
    - 1. The greatest number of points obtained in the respective phase's matches.
    - 2. Goal difference in the respective phase's matches.
    - 3. Greatest number of goals scored in the respective phase's matches.
  - v. If two or more teams are equal on the basis of the above three criteria, their rankings shall be determined as follows in the exact order:
    - 1. Greatest number of points obtained in the respective phase's matches between the team concerned.
    - 2. Goal difference resulting from the respective phase between the teams concerned.
    - 3. Greater number of goals scored in the respective phase between the teams concerned.
    - 4. Card point system in which the number of yellow card points, red card points, and board punishment points accrued between the teams concerned up to the respective phase's matches are considered. The team with the least number of disciplinary points will be ranked higher.

5. Coin toss or drawing of lots by the GRSL Board. The concerned teams will be notified of the result.

h. Player conduct

- i. If a player (including a goalkeeper) receives a caution, the player must leave the game for 5 minutes and may be replaced by another player during this period of time.
  - ii. A player or team demonstrating behavior unacceptable to the GRSL such as, but not limited to, fighting, threats to other players or referees, violent conduct, vulgar or obscene language, will result in suspension or expulsion from the league.
  - iii. Any player receiving two yellow cards in back-to-back games or three yellow cards during any point of the Regular Season and/or Tournament phase shall be suspended from the next scheduled game, but is eligible for a suspension buy-back. See "Suspension Buy-Backs" for buy-back policy.
  - iv. Straight red cards (a red card that is not the result of 2 consecutive yellow cards) will result in at least a one-game suspension from the game in which this card was received.
  - v. Players receiving straight red cards must completely leave the respective field property and may not be present on the premises during the period of his/hers suspension. Players that receive a red card as a result of receiving two consecutive yellows may be bound by the same restrictions, subject to referee discretion.
  - vi. Verbal abuse will result in suspension from play for at least two games following the game in which the red card was received.
  - vii. Physical abuse will result in suspension from play for at least three games following the game in which the red card was provided.
  - viii. Suspensions may be increased to correspond with the severity of each infraction and prior behavior, subject to review by the GRSL board.
  - ix. If a player receives two multi-game suspensions in the Fall, Spring, and/or Summer season or consecutive seasons, the offending player will be suspended for a minimum of one full spring or fall season.
  - x. Unless otherwise noted, player who have received and fulfilled a multiseason suspension must submit a letter or email to the GRSL Board containing the following and must receive Board approval in order to be roster eligible:
    1. Explanation of the reason for the player's suspension.
    2. A corrective action plan.
    3. Acknowledgment that the player will not behave in a severe manner again.
    4. Name of the Team and Team Official the player would like to play for.
- i. Referees
- i. Only referees certified by USSF will referee GRSL-sponsored soccer games.
  - ii. Prior to the beginning of the season, the referees will need to attend a training session to review league rules. Any referee who joins mid-season, will need to at least read and confirm that he/she has read the league rules with the USSF assignor.

- iii. During the Fall and Spring seasons, each game will have one center referee and two assistant referees.
- iv. If only the center referee and one assistant referee are present, then the center referee will also assume the responsibilities of the second assistant referee to the best of his/her ability, and the assistant referee that is present will manage the sideline nearest to the teams' bench area.
- v. No games in the Fall and Spring seasons shall begin with one referee.
- vi. The center referee will be paid \$60 per game and each assistant referee will be paid \$30 per game.
  - 1. For the games that have one absent assistant referee, the absent referee will go unpaid, and the extra money will be withheld until the end of the season when it will be rewarded to the top three rated referees for their efforts during that respective Fall, Summer, or Spring season.
- vii. Referees will follow and enforce the FIFA Laws of the Game, except for the rules that apply to slide tackles.
  - 1. Slide tackles are banned in GRSL games and will result in a yellow card, or worse, to the offending player.
  - 2. A slide tackle is defined as an attempt to tackle the ball away from an opponent while intentionally sliding on the ground, and without having at least one foot planted on the ground.
  - 3. If a tackle is made with one foot on the ground, it will be considered a standing or a reaching tackle, but can still be considered a dangerous play at the discretion of the referee.
  - 4. If a slide tackle occurs, a direct kick will be awarded to the non-offending team.
  - 5. A penalty kick will be awarded if the slide tackle occurred within the offending team's penalty area.
  - 6. Sliding to obtain or save a ball within a vicinity where no one is around will be allowed at the discretion of the referee.
  - 7. This rule does not apply to goalkeepers unless they are outside of the box.
- j. Accountability and Safety
  - i. All players, team officials, and spectators are responsible for knowing and complying with the City of Gainesville and Alachua County ordinances relating to conduct on public property.
  - ii. All members of the GRSL Board are responsible for enforcing the rules and regulations of this league. Failure to do so may constitute grounds for removal from the GRSL Board.
  - iii. The GRSL does not carry or provide any health insurance for its players. All players are responsible for the cost of any medical care associated with injuries from league play.
  - iv. If an individual player attempts to sue the GRSL, this player will be immediately ineligible to participate in any league games. This player will also be banned from Forest Park on Sundays during league play.

#### 4. PENALTIES AND FINES

- a. Card Point System
  - i. This scoring system is designed to manage the misconduct within the league by assessing points to individual players and teams.
  - ii. Disciplinary points will be assessed to those who have received a yellow card, red card, or Board punishment during or after a game has been played. Point values are the following:
    1. Yellow Card = 1 pt
    2. Red Card = 3 pts
    3. Board Punishment = 1 or 3 pts depending on the offense
  - iii. Player disciplinary points will be added to the respective team's total disciplinary points.
  - iv. Point deductions from the current phase standings will occur at the moment a team reaches any of the following:
    1. team score of  $\geq 15$  pts = -1 pt
    2. team score of  $\geq 20$  pts = -2 pts
    3. team score of  $\geq 25$  pts = -4 pts
    4. team score of  $\geq 30$  pts = -8 pts
  - v. If a team reaches any of the abovementioned scores during the semi-finals or finals, point deductions will be assessed at the team's next season.
  - vi. Additional to receiving point deductions, the team is subject to undergo membership review by the Board.
- b. All Team Fees, Buy-Backs, and Fines are to be Venmo'd to @GRSLTreasurer.
- c. Failure to Pay Team Fees
  - i. A team that fails to pay the entire portion of their team fees by the given date set by the GRSL Board will be penalized one point in the regular season standings. Failure to pay by the Thursday prior to the Tournament will result in a \$100 fine.
- d. Field Conditions
  - i. Teams that consistently do not clean up their trash on the sideline and field will be warned by the GRSL board. Future infractions may result in a penalty determined by the GRSL board.
- e. Field Lining
  - i. Failure to line fields results in a \$50 fine and a loss of one point.
  - ii. \$25 of this will be redirected by @GRSLTreasurer to the non-offending team responsible for lining, and \$25 to the Master Field Liner to compensate them for their time.
- f. Suspension Buy-Backs
  - i. Each player is entitled to and is limited to one yellow card buy-back, but teams are only allowed up to two yellow card buy-backs per season.
  - ii. A suspension buy-back does not remove the card from the individual player's record. Each card remains on a particular player's record for the purpose of

- individual and team accrual, and the bought back suspended game will be highlighted in green.
- iii. A \$15.00 buy-back fee is due by 10pm on the Thursday before the next game. Failure to make payment to the league by that time will result in the suspension remaining listed.
  - iv. All types of red cards are NOT subject to buy-backs.
  - v. If a player receives two yellow cards in the same game, this player may not buy back a yellow card or the suspension. This player will be suspended for the next game at a minimum.
  - g. Unless otherwise noted, any team fees, buy-backs, or fines not paid by the designated deadline are subject to further consequences.

## **5. PROTEST AND APPEAL PROCEDURES AND LINE OF AUTHORITY**

- a. The designated league board member or the league President, in case of a conflict of interest, will make an initial determination of a player's or a team's written appeal based on the game circumstances, the Bylaws of the GRSL, the Rules of the GRSL, and the FIFA Laws Of The Game.
- b. If this appeal is valid, then the Appeals Committee will formally review the circumstances of this appeal in accordance with the Bylaws and Rules of the GRSL.
- c. The appealing player or captain must cite supporting specific rules and regulations, and/or FIFA Laws of the Game in their written appeal.
- d. The GRSL only has the power to act on the length of suspensions. The NCFSOA retains the power to vacate cautions (yellow cards) and sending-off (red cards).
- e. Yellow card offenses and single game suspensions are not subject to an appeal.
- f. Appeals Meeting Procedure:
  - i. Members present: two board members and three (3) league representatives will constitute the Appeals Committee.
  - ii. All five members must be in attendance.
  - iii. The convening board member will start this meeting by providing an overview of the details of the appeal.
  - iv. The appealing player has five minutes to provide an opening statement. No discussion will be allowed during this time. One of the board members will have five minutes to provide an opening statement for the disciplinary decision.
  - v. The appealing player will then have three minutes for rebuttal, again with no debate allowed. The board member will then have three minutes to do the same, with the same limitations.
  - vi. If either party has relevant evidence to present (written statements, media evidence, etc.), these may be brought forward after the uncontested rebuttals.
  - vii. The convening board member will commence a 10 minute discussion on the verbal statements and any evidence. Shouting or other non-constructive behavior will be grounds for dismissal from the remainder of the proceedings.
  - viii. Both sides will then have one minute for final statements.

- ix. The voting members of the committee will then decide by secret ballot whether to uphold, overturn, or modify the disciplinary actions of the board.
- x. The decision of the committee is final and no further appeals to the GRSL may be made.

## **6. RULE CHANGES**

- a. Subject to the limitations of the Bylaws, the Rules of this league may be amended by a majority affirmative vote of the GRSL Captains at any regularly scheduled league meeting.
- b. All changes to the Rules of the GRSL will be effective immediately following a majority affirmative vote. The Rules of the GRSL will not supersede the existing rules of FIFA, the USSF and the FSSA.