

SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN MIDDLE SCHOOL SOCCER LEAGUE (SMMSSL)

Bylaws

ARTICLE I, NAME

This organization shall be known as the Southwest Michigan Middle School Soccer League, herein known as The League.

ARTICLE II, PURPOSE

The League's purpose is to provide interplay of Middle/Junior High School teams and school associated club teams of the appropriate age in the Southwest Michigan area. The League shall schedule and shall establish and enforce rules and regulations pursuant to its purpose.

ARTICLE III, AFFILIATION

- 1.) Where applicable The League has aligned with Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) middle school requirements but is not affiliated (MHSAA chartered school teams participating in The League may need to adhere to all MHSAA regulations).

Noted MHSAA exceptions:

- Regulation III Section 2 – Age criteria for The League is listed in Article VIII of these by-laws.
- Regulation IV Section 9 – Time of games is listed in Article XI of these by-laws.
- Regulation IV Section 10.7 – Game format is listed in Article XI of these by-laws.

Suggested self-imposed MHSAA regulations (not mandated nor included in The League by-laws):

- Regulation III Section 3 – Physical examinations are encouraged.
- Regulation III Section 7 – Previous academic credit record eligibility is encouraged.
- Regulation III Section 8 – Current academic record eligibility is encouraged.
- Regulation III Section 13 – Limited team membership is encouraged.

- 2.) All teams must at least informally represent a school / school district and shall be comprised of students from the school / school district being represented.
 - Co-op teams with a commonality shall be permitted but must first be approved by The League president prior to acceptance of application and registration into The League.
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ARTICLE IV, ADMINISTRATION

1. The Executive Board and member teams shall govern The League.
2. The Executive Board shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer.
3. A member team is any Southwest Michigan area Middle/Junior High School, or associated club team, in good standing. All teams that participate in The League are subject to The League rules and discipline.
4. The Executive Board shall have the primary responsibility for the operation of The League. It shall hold quarterly meetings that will be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.
5. The President, with Executive Board ratification, shall have the power to create committees, decide matters of finance or operational policy, and impose fees and/or fines as necessary.
6. Member teams and Executive Board officers are voting members. Voting members that miss three consecutive general meetings shall be dropped as voting members until they attend at least two consecutive general meetings. No individual Executive Board member or league representative may have more than one vote. No proxy votes are allowed. A majority vote of the quorum present is necessary is required for all league changes. In the event of a 50% vote, the matter will be tabled until the next general meeting.
7. General meetings shall typically be scheduled on the third Wednesday of the month in January and July, at a minimum. Additional meetings may be called by the President with notification in compliance with affiliation requirements. All general meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.
 - If an issue is raised that must be resolved before the next regular meeting, the Executive Board may resolve the matter. If the Executive Board acts, that action may be overturned by a two-thirds vote of all league members at the next scheduled general meeting.
 - The Executive Board officers shall be elected to two-year terms. The President and Treasurer shall be elected in odd-numbered years. The Vice-President and Secretary shall be elected in even-numbered years.

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- Each league member and sitting Executive Board officer shall have one vote in the election for each Executive Board member and all motions made at the general meetings.
 - Elections shall be held at the July general meeting. Nominations may be made in writing to the Executive Board or be made from the floor. A majority of the quorum present is necessary for election. Secret ballot voting shall be used in all contested elections. Terms of office shall commence August 1, following the elections.
 - Vacancies on the Executive Board shall be filled by a special election within 45 days of the vacancy.
 - Executive Board members may be involuntarily removed from office by a two-thirds vote, or petition signed by two-thirds of all the members originally eligible to vote for the office being recalled. Trial Board action may deny any individual, league representative or Executive Board member from serving in any official capacity with The League.
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ARTICLE V, DUTIES OF OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS

President (two-year term, elected in odd-numbered years):

- Shall be responsible for the successful operation of The League.
- Shall conduct and control all league meetings.
- Shall act as chairman of Executive Board meetings (non-voting except in the event of a tie) - Shall have general powers and duties required to manage The League.
- Shall approve payment of The League debts.
- Shall have one vote at The League meetings.

Vice-President (two-year term, elected in even-numbered years):

- Shall assume duties of the President in his absence.
- Shall act as The League Trial Board Chairman. - Shall have one vote at The League meetings.

Secretary (two-year term):

- Shall keep complete minutes of all meetings and provide copies of those minutes at the next meeting.
- Shall keep copies of The League correspondence
- Shall keep a listing of authorized league member representatives. - Shall have one vote at The League meetings.

Treasurer (two-year term, elected in odd-numbered years):

- Shall collect all funds and keep a record of funds received and paid.
- Shall disburse all approved League debts by check.
- Shall have one vote at The League meetings

Member League Representative:

- Each member team is required to send a representative to The League meetings and shall have one vote. The representative shall act as liaison between the team and The League.
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ARTICLE VI, TEAMS, PLAYERS, AND COACHES

Registration –

All teams shall be properly registered. Players and team personnel will be registered through their individual teams and teams will be registered each season by completion and approval of The League registration form and submitting payment for registration fees. League fees are used for paying referee assigning and other administrative costs. By completing the registration form, administrators of each team will agree to adhere to the bylaws of The League.

Discipline-

Teams may be denied entry (or later removed from The League) based on past or present:

- Disregard for rules and responsibilities.
- Failure to abide by rulings affirmed by The League.
- Failure to fulfill monetary responsibilities (including, but not limited to: referee fees, bond fees, hold fees, drop fees, rescheduling fees, and registration fees).
- Game schedule obligations.
- Record of violence and/or abusive behavior.
- Recruiting of players not attending the team registered and/or undue Influence to encourage or secure a player (MHSA Regulation III Section 10).

ARTICLE VII, LEVEL OF PLAY

Competitive.

ARTICLE VIII, AGE GROUPINGS

The League shall be comprised of age-appropriate players currently enrolled in 6th, 7th or 8th grade.
A student must be between ten (10) and fourteen (14) years of age as of September 1st of the current season school year.

ARTICLE IX, BOUNDARIES / DIVISIONS

The League will be comprised of middle school teams from Southwest Michigan within these approximate boundaries: East of the Lake Michigan shoreline, west of M66, including the greater Battle Creek area; north of the Michigan state line, including New Carlisle, IN, South of M-89, including Delton, MI. Teams outside these boundaries may also apply for entry and will be considered each season based on the feasibility of travel distances between other teams registered, and the availability of referees.

The League may be organized into divisions determined prior to each season based on geographic location, skillset, or a combination of both.

ARTICLE X, SEASON

Fall Season (Boys) – Registration will be open from the first Saturday in June until the last Saturday in June. Teams will have until the first Saturday in July to submit field availability, blackout dates, etc. A preliminary schedule shall be created and submitted to teams by the last Monday in July; final schedule shall be completed and submitted to teams by the second Saturday in August. Practice may begin the second full week of August. Games may begin the week of Labor Day (exception for earlier start dates may be granted for teams playing in back-to-back games with a high school team). Season ends on the 4th Thursday in October (exception may be granted for make-up games).

Spring Season (Girls) – Registration will be open from the first Saturday in January until the last Saturday in January. Teams will have until the first Saturday in February to submit field availability, blackout dates, etc. A preliminary schedule shall be created and submitted to teams by the last Monday in February; final schedule shall be completed and submitted to teams by the second Saturday in March. Practice may begin the second full week of March. Games may begin the first full week of April. Season ends on the Thursday prior to Memorial Day (exception may be granted for make-up games).

The League season will consist of a maximum of 12 games per team and/or player (No exceptions). Teams are also allowed 4 scrimmages (2 of which may be prior to the start of the season).

ARTICLE XI, GAMES

- 1.) **Fields** – Fields shall conform to NFHS Rules. The home team is responsible for the marking and setup of the field. Corner flags and anchored goals are required for all League games. A game may not be played on a field where the goals have not been anchored.
- 2.) **Duration** – Games shall be played in two 30-minute halves with a 10- minute halftime break.
- 3.) **Ties** – Games which are tied at the end of regulation playing time shall remain tied. (MHSA)
- 4.) **Maximum** – A maximum of three (3) games may be played each week per team, of which only two (2) may be played on evenings/nights prior to a school day.
- 5.) **Start Time** – Games shall start at 5:30pm but may be scheduled at times convenient to both teams.
- 6.) **Mercy Rule** – By Default the MHSA point differential rule shall be in effect. Prior the start of games, an exception to this rule may be put in place by mutual agreement between coaches while a referee is present.
- 7.) **Referees** –The team designated as “home” on the official league schedule is responsible for paying the referees. A two-person referee crew shall be requested for all league games and assigned by the local referee assignor(s) established by the league at the beginning of each season. A minimum of one referee is required in order to play the match. Youth referees (17 years and younger) shall not center any league game without having at least one-year experience as a certified USSF referee and must be at least two-years older than the age level they are officiating. Playing a game in violation of the referee requirements listed in this section of the by-laws voids all ability to protest any fact or occurrence in the game. Article XII of these by-laws contains additional information.
- 8.) **Ball** – Size 5; the home team shall provide the game balls (minimum of 2).
- 9.) **Uniform Colors** – Teams must wear uniforms consisting of matching jerseys/shirts, shorts, and socks. All players shall have a unique number on their jersey. The home team shall wear dark color jerseys. The visiting team shall wear white or light color jerseys. If a home jersey is black, dark blue does not constitute “light color”. Goalkeepers shall wear colors that distinguish them from all other players and referees. In the event the colors are too similar (as determined by the referee as a color conflict) the non-conforming team must assure a distinct difference between the teams (pinafores or color matching t-shirts will be acceptable as an alternate). The Referee shall be the sole arbiter of what constitutes a color conflict.
- 10.) **Lineup Sheets**– Prior to the start of the game, each team is required to provide the referees with a completed league lineup sheet showing the name and number of each player participating in the game and the names of all coaches and bench personnel. The referees will keep the lineup sheet s after the game. Blank lineup sheets will be provided by The League or are available for download at www.smmsl.mittensoccer.com.

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- 11.) **Player loans** – NO players shall be borrowed or loaned for play within The League. If a school has more than one team participating per season, players may be interchanged on those teams if needed but players may not participate in more than 12 contests nor play an opponent more than once (unless same teams are scheduled more than once) during the season.
- 12.) **Forfeiture** – The game shall not be played and the offending team shall forfeit the match if:
- A team does not have seven eligible players within 15 minutes after the scheduled start time
 - A team is reduced to fewer than seven eligible players after play has started.
- 13.) **Coaches/Administrators/Spectators** – Each team is required to have at least one responsible adult administrator (18 years of age or older). The home team shall select its bench area and the visitors shall occupy the other bench area. All persons affiliated with the team (parents, siblings, friends, supporters, etc.) shall remain on the opposite side of the field as their team. The exception to this involves games played at a field with bleachers or a stadium where there is separation between the teams and the supporters. In these venues, supporters may be on the same side as the teams.
- 14.) **Substitutions** – Substitutions are made with the consent of the referee in accordance with MHSAA rules.
- 15.) **Standings** – Standings are kept for reference purposes only; there is not a champion of The League. Standings are based on the total number of points credited to the team as follows: WIN +3, TIE +1, LOSS. Within 24 hours of match completion the winning team coach, home team coach if game ends in a tie, will report the final score using the on-line reporting form available on the league's website (www.smmssl.mittensoccer.com).
- 16.) **Schedules** – It is expected that teams shall follow the finalized schedule. If a game cannot be played due to valid reasons (weather, field conditions, etc.) or actions of individuals or agencies not under the control of either team, the game shall be rescheduled per Section 17 (below). The Director of Scheduling has general authority to resolve scheduling problems. Failure to give proper notice of changes per Article XII or the inability to play a scheduled game due to field conflicts under the control of the home club shall result in forfeiture.
- 17.) **Rescheduling** – No game is to be rescheduled without permission from The Director of Scheduling. The home team shall be responsible for scheduling the field. The local referee assignor must be notified by the Director of Scheduling to secure officials per the assignors' agreement with The League.
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ARTICLE XII, REFEREES

- Two Referees, Dual System, will be used for The League. In unforeseen situations, a single referee may be used.
- All teams must use a certified assignor for assigning USSF certified referees.
- Referee fees shall be paid at the field before the match or, if using an electronic payment, within 24hrs following the game. The fee for two referees is \$50 each: \$70 for one referee.
- If games are postponed or terminated for weather after the referee(s) arrive at field, referee(s) must still be paid.
- Fees for cancellations / changes
 - There will be a \$100 fee for non-weather-related schedule changes or cancellations made less than 48 hours prior to the game.
 - Some exceptions apply (e.g. "School rescheduled rained out varsity game from yesterday to today and field is no longer available", "Too many players out sick", etc.). Players missing for foreseen conflicts (e.g. "7th grade has a field trip", etc.) will not be a valid exception.
 - There will be a \$50 fee for schedule changes or cancellations made less than 5 days prior to the game.
 - Some exceptions apply (e.g. "School rescheduled rained out varsity game from yesterday to today and field is no longer available", "Too many players out sick", etc.). Players missing for foreseen conflicts (e.g. "7th grade has a field trip", etc.) will not be a valid exception.
- Procedure for schedule change after schedule has been finalized:
 - The team requesting the change shall work out the reschedule with opposing team (date, field location and time need to be verified).
 - The team requesting change shall send request to The League director of scheduling for approval. The change request shall indicate why there is a change, the new date, and the location and time.
 - The League director of scheduling, after approving, shall email the schedule change request to the appropriate assignor.
 - Assignor will notify the referees on the original game, make the change to arbiter, and reassign referees to the rescheduled game.

ARTICLE XIII, MISCONDUCT

- Red Cards** – If the referee ejects a player or any team personnel, the referee shall complete a report describing the events of the ejection to The League Vice-President within 48 hours. Any player or team personnel receiving a Red Card, at a minimum, shall not be allowed to participate in his/her next League game (see following paragraphs). All ejections shall be reviewed by The League Vice-President for classification per the Penalty Code and be assigned the mandatory penalties and/or be referred to the Trial Board Chairman for further action. The Trial Board, particularly if the ejection was for violent conduct, may issue further sanctions. The Team Coach is responsible for assuring that the game bans and/or suspensions are observed.
- Yellow Cards** – Cautions shall be noted by the referee on the electronic game report provided by the assigning system. The League shall consider four yellow cards to be the equivalent of one Red Card for punishment purposes.

ARTICLE XIV, TERMINATED, SUSPENDED, OR PROTESTED GAMES

Terminated Games: (Due to actions of individuals)

- Terminated games shall be treated as protested games.
- Terminated games may be ruled complete, ordered re-played, or continued from the point of stoppage.

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- Terminated games may be ruled as a forfeit by a team when the actions of that team's players, coaches or spectators have caused the termination.
 - Misconduct in terminated games shall stand and punishments shall be sanctioned accordingly.

Suspended Games: (Due to the elements)

- Prior to the completion of the first half, the game shall be re-played from the point of stoppage. If a game is ended at halftime or during the second half, the game shall be considered complete.
- Misconduct in suspended games shall stand and punishments shall be sanctioned accordingly.

Protests:

- Only protests based on the violation of a requirement of this document, the misinterpretation of a playing rule by a referee, or the use of an ineligible player shall be considered. No protest shall be considered involving a referee's judgment.
- Only the coaches or administrators of the contesting teams shall have the right to protest events arising from the competition of those specific teams.
- All protests shall be written and mailed to The League Secretary within 48 hours of the incident with a \$50.00 fee (certified check only). The fee shall be refunded only if the protest is upheld.
- Protests shall be reviewed by the Executive Board. If the protested event cannot be validated, the protest shall be denied and the litigants notified. Validated protests shall be adjudicated at a hearing called by The League President. The result of the hearing is final and may not be appealed. If the protest is upheld, the fee shall be refunded.

ARTICLE XV, TRIAL BOARD

- The Trial Board shall consist of The League Vice-President (Chairman), a representative of the parties charged, and one to three other persons selected by the Chairman. No one whose team is involved in the complaint shall sit on the Trial Board.
- The Trial Board Chairman shall review all misconduct reports.
- A Trial Board may be convened to review any ejection, report of misconduct, or similar significant event for which action may be necessary. The Trial Board may impose penalties (including game bans, suspensions, or fines, etc.) as it deems appropriate.
- The Executive Board, by majority vote, may elect to initiate action and sit as the Trial Board on any matter.
- Trial Board decisions are final.

ARTICLE XVI, AMENDMENTS

These by-laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of those eligible and present to vote at a League general meeting. Proposed changes must be submitted in writing and distributed to the membership for review 30 days in advance of the meeting.

ARTICLE XVI, CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A conflict of interest shall exist when an issue arises which may affect The League/club or team in which The League Board member is involved. No Executive Board member, while participating in an Executive Board meeting, may vote on an issue which affects his/her team. No Executive Board member may act as an Executive Board member on issues which have a direct impact on his/her team. A conflict of interest does not exist when a League Board member does not serve on a team board, hold an administrative position with said team, act as a coach/manager, or is a parent of a player with a team affected by a League board decision.