



Virginia Premier Soccer League Rules of Competition

VIRGINIA PREMIER SOCCER LEAGUE RULES OF COMPETITION

Virginia Premier Soccer League (“VPSL”) operates within the Virginia Premier League, a corporation as defined in the United States and the State of Virginia statutes whose principal purpose is to promote youth travel soccer.

- ECNL Regional League – Virginia is managed and operated by VPSL. While VPSL has reasonable flexibility to manage the division, ECNL has final authority over league decisions. Club accepted to participate in the ECNL Regional League division of VPSL are considered full ECNL Regional League teams as defined by ECNL.
- National Premier League - Virginia is managed and operated by VPSL. While VPSL has reasonable flexibility to manage the division, US Club Soccer has final authority over league decisions. Teams accepted to participate in the NPL division of VPSL are considered NPL teams as defined by US Club Soccer.

1. Definitions

- 1.1. “VPSL” means Virginia Premier Soccer League.
- 1.2. “Member Club” means a member club of VPSL as provided in the league bylaws.
- 1.3. “ECNL” means Elite Clubs National League.
- 1.4. “Regional League” means ECNL Regional League.
- 1.5. “NPL” means US Club Soccer National Premier League.
- 1.6. “VPSL Competition” means a VPSL game played in all divisions and age groups, including those qualifying for post-season competition(s).
- 1.7. “VPSL Fixture” means the VPSL Competition between two VPSL Clubs, that are schedule by VPSL to be completed on the same day.
- 1.8. “VPSL Registered Player” means a player on a VPSL team’s roster and registered with US Club Soccer.
- 1.9. “Regional League Registered Player” means a player on a ECNL Regional League team’s roster and registered in TGS with US Club Soccer.
- 1.10. “NPL Registered Player” means a player on an NPL team’s roster and registered in GotSport with US Club Soccer.
- 1.11. “VPSL Game Roster” is a roster printed from the TGS/GotSport website and used for VPSL League matches.
- 1.12. “Player Card” is the approved US Club Soccer player card printed or presented in digital form.
- 1.13. “Club Pass” is any player properly registered with US Club Soccer from the club or approved affiliate.
- 1.14. “Director” means the point of contact for a VPSL member club.

1.15. "Board Member" means a member of the VPSL Board of Directors

2. EXPECTATIONS

- 2.1. **Lack of knowledge of these VPSL Rules will not relieve any Coach, Team Official, Parent or Player of a team participating in VPSL, or seeking entry into VPSL, from the responsibilities and possible penalties herein.**
- 2.2. All clubs, team officials, parents, and players, by participating in VPSL player, agree that they are bound by these rules.
- 2.3. The league shall adopt corresponding league (ECNL/NPL) Rules and Regulations except where specifically stated through this document or the Game Day Procedures.

3. ROSTER RULES

3.1. Teams and Roster Maximums – ECNL Regional League Division

- 3.1.1. ECNL Regional League Member Clubs are expected to field a team in every age group (U-11, U-12, U-13, U-14, U-15, U-16, U-17, and U-18/19) in the gender(s) in which they are approved members.
- 3.1.2. Guest teams must be approved by the Board of Directors and are generally expected to come from a VPSL member club.
- 3.1.3. Member Clubs may, but are not required to, enter a composite team in the composite division.
- 3.1.4. A maximum of thirty (30) players may be rostered on a Regional League team.

3.2. Teams and Roster Maximums – NPL Division

- 3.2.1. NPL Member Clubs may enter any properly registered team in the NPL Division.
- 3.2.2. Divisional placement is based primarily on league results with promotion and relegation upon final approval by VPSL-appointed Technical Committee.
- 3.2.3. A maximum of twenty-six (26) players may be rostered on an NPL.

3.3. **Registration.** All players **and coaches** on a VPSL roster or on a team's bench must be registered with US Club Soccer.

3.4. VPSL Game Day Roster and Fixture Ties.

3.4.1. Game Day Roster.

- 3.4.1.1. A maximum of sixteen (16) players may be rostered on a U-11 and U-12 game day roster.
- 3.4.1.2. A maximum of eighteen (18) players may be rostered on a U-13 and older game day roster.
- 3.4.2. **Club Pass.** Any US Club Soccer registered player within a VPSL member club or approved affiliate may participate in a VPSL game as outlined in the Game Day Procedures. The

team shall write the club pass player on the game day roster and present the US Club Soccer player card.

3.4.2.1. **Regional League.** A maximum of three (3) players rostered full-time on an older team (e.g. U-12 player rostered on a U-13 team), ECNL, and/or other national level competitions are eligible for each divisional game. ECNL and/or other national level rostered players are not eligible for the playoffs.

3.4.2.2. **NPL.** ECNL and/or national level competition registered player are not eligible for NPL matches. A maximum of two (2) players rostered full-time on an older team (e.g. U-12 player rostered on a U-13 team), or ECNL Regional League are eligible for each game.

3.5. **Player Drops.** Any player dropped after the roster freeze date from a VPSL roster will be ineligible for all future VPSL matches with the original club.

3.6. **Roster Freeze Date.** Rosters will be frozen 48-hours prior to the first playoff match for each team. Roster additions/changes after the freeze date shall require approval of the league administrator and may not exceed the maximum roster size.

3.7. **Post-Season Roster Tie.** The rules of competition for ECNL, ECNL Regional League and NPL shall govern player movement and rosters, respectively, once a team qualifies for post-season summer competition.

3.8. **Recruiting/Registration.**

3.8.1. VPSL is opposed to the practice of recruiting players from one VPSL member club to another VPSL member club at any time during the seasonal year, and in particular, from the start of the fall season until the conclusion of the spring season.

3.8.2. VPSL clubs may not train, invite a player to train, invited a player to tryout or try out any VPSL registered from another VPSL club prior to March 1st of that season, unless the player has been released by their current club.

3.9. **Tryouts.** Any team may conduct publicly announced, open tryouts to acquire players on or after March 1. Any player and/or his/her parents or guardians may initiate direct contact with any coach or team/club official for the purpose of joining that team for the following registration year.

3.10. **Transfers.**

3.10.1. A player rostered to a team in a VPSL member club is ineligible to transfer to any other team affiliated with a different VPSL club within the same seasonal year except as follows: the player has moved to the geographical area of the new club and beyond reasonable travel distance of the old club AND both Directors agree to the transfer.

3.10.2. All other transfers must be approved by both Directors and league administrator.

3.10.3. Transferring to a team affiliated with another league after being released from a VPSL club team does not make the player eligible to then transfer to another VPSL club team.

3.10.4. Players who have outstanding financial obligations to a member club will be ineligible to register with and play for any other member club until the obligation is satisfied provided:

3.10.4.1. the obligation is part of the stated club rules and/or policies available to the player and parent(s) in writing prior to the player registering with the club, the player and his/her parent(s) were notified appropriately that (1) the obligation was outstanding, (2) the obligation will be reported to the member clubs by a named date, (3) the player has the right to appeal the obligation through a stated club appeals process.

3.10.4.2. Documentation as outlined in 3.10.4.1 is the responsibility of the club the player is leaving.

3.11. Out of League Play (including, but not limited to indoor / tournaments).

3.11.1. A player from a VPSL member club team may not participate in out-of-league play with another VPSL club team if the player's VPSL club has a scheduled commitment unless both Directors waive this restriction.

3.11.2. An invitation to participate in such an event with another team in a VPSL member club must be initiated by the Director of the guest team club with the Director of the player's team club. The Director of the player's team club may submit approval of out-of-league play in writing to the Director of the guest team club.

3.11.3. A player from a VPSL club team who participates in out-of-league play with another VPSL member club team without the written approval of his/her Director is ineligible to play for another VPSL club team in league play for the fall season of the next seasonal year unless the player has moved to the geographical area of the new club and beyond reasonable travel distance of the old club AND both Directors agree to waive the restriction.

3.12. Movement of players registered with a VPSL member club prior to being registered with US Club Soccer.

3.12.1. A player may leave the club but will be subject to all financial obligations to the club if stated in the club rules and/or policies available to the player and parent(s) in writing prior to the player registering with the club.

3.12.2. Another VPSL club may register the player but may not use the player in the following season of VPSL play.

3.12.3. Rules 3.1.2.1 may be waived if the player has moved to the geographical area of the new club and beyond reasonable travel distance of the old club AND both Directors agree to waive the restriction.

3.13. Violation of Recruiting Rules.

3.13.1. Coaches and/or team/club officials who violate any of the above procedures shall be deemed to have recruited the player. Recruitment complaints shall be submitted in writing to the League Office within 30 days of the violation. The complaint will be

reviewed by a Rules & Discipline Committee as selected by the League President. If the complaint is determined to be valid, a hearing will be held in accordance with Rule 8.3.

3.14. **Club Eligibility; Registration.**

3.14.1. **Regional League.** Prior to the start of each year, each active member club of the ECNL Regional League - Virginia shall submit an administrative fee for a full slate of teams, U-11 to U-18/19 as approved by the Board of Directors.

3.14.1.1. Club fees for each team shall exclude referee and player registration fees.

3.14.1.2. Club fees are for a full slate of teams regardless of team declarations.

3.14.2. **NPL.** Prior to the start of each season, registered teams shall pay the registration fee upon acceptance in the NPL.

3.14.2.1. Team fees shall exclude referee and player registration fees unless otherwise stated.

3.15. **Player and Coach Registration.**

3.15.1. Registration by a player with a VPSL member club occurs when a player accepts placement with the club in writing, electronically or on-line for the next seasonal year and pays a deposit required by the club at the time of acceptance.

3.15.2. All players and coaches must be properly registered with US Club Soccer prior to participation in league activities.

3.15.3. Only those players and coaches with a US Club Soccer player pass and included on a current Official Roster shall be deemed duly registered.

3.15.4. Failure to meet this requirement will automatically result in forfeiture of any matches played while improperly registered. The Board of Directors, at their discretion, may also take appropriate disciplinary action against team officials who knowingly allow an unregistered player to participate in league match play.

4. **COMPETITION RULES**

4.1. **General.** All VPSL matches will be played in accordance with the FIFA/USSF Laws of the Game except as modified in these League Rules.

4.2. **League Scheduling.** The VPSL Board of Directors shall determine the dates for competition. All VPSL fixtures shall be played on the schedule day, unless both clubs agree to split the completion. Rule 3.4 applies to all VPSL fixtures, whether split or not.

4.2.1. **Outside Competition.** VPSL league matches must be the priority competition for all VPSL member club teams. VPSL matches may not be rescheduled to accommodate outside competition, except as approved by the Board of Directors.

4.2.2. **Athletic Trainer.** The home team is strongly encouraged to provide a certified athletic trainer at the home club's expense.

- 4.2.2.1. If no certified athletic trainer is available, a player suspected of a head injury by the referee will not be permitted to return to the match.
- 4.2.3. **Failure to Appear.** When a match is declared a forfeit due to a team's failure to field seven (7) players, the following actions are required:
 - 4.2.3.1. The Offended Team shall notify VPSL Administrator within 24 hours of the cancellation.
 - 4.2.3.2. The Offending Team shall submit, in writing, within 48 hours their reasons for failure to field a team.
 - 4.2.3.3. The League Administrator shall review the written explanation and may impose a fine in an amount equal to the referee fees and/or penalty of \$500.00 to be paid to the League Administrator prior to the next scheduled match to be reimbursed to the offended club.
 - 4.2.3.4. If the Offending Team fails to submit a written reason, all of the penalties outlined above shall be automatically levied.
 - 4.2.3.5. Repeat offenses will be subject to additional action by the Board of Directors.
- 4.3. **Heading Policy.** Pursuant to the U.S. Soccer rules of competition, heading is not allowed for any player aged 10 or younger.
 - 4.3.1. Any ball contact with the head at the U-11 age group will be an indirect free kick at the point of contact, unless made inside the penalty area, in which case it will come outside the area.
 - 4.3.2. Coaches are expected to monitor head of any child aged 10 or younger participating in a U-12 or older match.; however, there is no stoppage of play.
- 4.4. **Substitutions.** VPSL encourages clubs and coaches to respect the game in the use of this application of substitutions. Refer to the appropriate Game Day Procedures document for the substitution policy for each competition. Coaches may not agree to changes to the substitution policy.
 - 4.4.1. Unlimited substitutions procedure.
 - 4.4.1.1. Prior to a throw-in by the team in possession; if a substitution is made by the team in possession, the opposing team may also make a substitution.
 - 4.4.1.2. Prior to a goal kick by either team.
 - 4.4.1.3. After a goal has been scored by either team.
 - 4.4.1.4. At the beginning of the second half of play.
 - 4.4.1.5. After an injury, by either team, when the referee stops play
 - 4.4.1.6. After the issuance of a caution, for the offending player. Opposing team may also substitute an equal number of players.
 - 4.4.2. Limited substitutions procedure.

- 4.4.2.1. Each player may only appear once in each half.
 - 4.4.2.2. Substitutions may be made at any stoppage at the discretion and upon consent of the referee.
- 4.5. **Red Card (Player).** Any player or coach receiving a red card in a VPSL match must sit out the remainder of that match plus his/her team's next League match. If the red card is issued in the last League match of the season, the sit-out will be taken in the next League match of the following season.
 - 4.5.1. No substitutions may be made for the ejected player during the match in which the red card is issued.
 - 4.5.2. It is the duty of the coach to withhold the red-carded player from the next game.
 - 4.5.3. Any team allowing a player, coach, or team official to participate in a League match while under suspension shall forfeit the match in which the team participates. The coach sponsoring the offending team shall be liable for any referee fees incurred.
- 4.6. **Red Card (Coach).** A coach receiving a sanction from the referee must leave the field and the area surrounding the field for the remainder of the match. In addition, the coach is prohibited from participating in the next match and is not allowed to be present at the field or in the area surrounding the field.
 - 4.6.1. It is the coach's duty to self-impose the appropriate suspension. If a suspended coach participates, enters the field of play, or the area surrounding the field while under suspension, or communicates with the team/team officials via electronic or other means, the team shall forfeit the match and the club sponsoring the team shall be liable for any referee's fees incurred.
 - 4.6.2. Because of the seriousness of such instances, red cards or sanctions issued after the end of the match or as a result of physical assault, are subject to review by the Directors and more serious penalties, which are not subject to appeal, may be employed. However, see Federation Rule 3041 in regard to referee assault.
- 4.7. **Yellow Card Accumulation.** There shall be no yellow card accumulation policy for VPSL league matches.
- 4.8. **Points.** In all VPSL competitions, teams shall be awarded three (3) points for a win, one (1) point for a tie, and zero (0) points for a loss.
- 4.9. **Standings.** The home team is required to submit the result of each match, including yellow and red cards on the league website by the end of day in which the match is played. Scores and standings will be displayed publicly. The final league standings will be determined by the team with the most points in each age division.
 - 4.9.1. **Qualification for Post-Season.** League standings will be used to determine post-season qualification.
- 4.10. **Tie-Breakers.** The following tie-breakers will be used for resolving ties in the standings:
 - 4.10.1. Results in head to head in competition. (Does not apply if more than two teams.)

- 4.10.2. Goal Difference (maximum 5 per game)
- 4.10.3. Goals Against
- 4.10.4. Results against teams in division from highest to lowest
- 4.11. **Age Groups.** VPSL age groups shall follow ECNL published policy
- 4.12. **Game Length.** Refer to Game Day Procedures for each competition.
- 4.13. **Field and Goal Sizes.** VPSL recognizes existing fields and goals may not meet the new dimension requirements. Provided the field is deemed safe for competition by the referee, matches shall be played without penalty.
 - 4.13.1. U-11 & U-12. Field Length 70-80 yards. Field Width 45-55 yards.
 - 4.13.2. U-11 & U-12. Goal Height 7 feet. Goal Width 21 feet.
- 4.14. **Facility Standards.** Each club is required to provide enough quality fields to fulfill its match schedule.
- 4.15. **Game Ball.** The home team shall provide at least two (2) quality game ball.
- 4.16. **Canceled/Terminated Matches.** Participation in League play carries the responsibility to abide by the League Schedule, playing all matches, as scheduled, unless compelling reasons exist to reschedule.
- 4.17. **Rainouts.** In the event of inclement weather or at any time there is a doubt as to the playability of the fields, the home club director shall notify the visiting club director in appropriate time allowed for driving distances. The following actions are required by the home team:
 - 4.17.1. Home Club Directors shall verify the conditions of their fields.
 - 4.17.2. Clubs canceling a match(es) due to weather or other conditions shall be responsible for notifying the opposing Director or alternate.
 - 4.17.3. If the fields are under the control of another club or activity (e.g., schools, park authorities) and these organizations determine playability of fields, club Representatives must coordinate closely to ensure early decisions and proper notifications are made.
- 4.18. **Referee Decision of Unplayable Conditions.** A referee may suspend or terminate a match due to weather conditions, i.e., lightening, rain, fog, etc. before or during a match. Under these conditions, the referee's decision is final. If at least half of the match has been played, the match shall be deemed completed and the score shall stand.
 - 4.18.1. Liability for the referee fee shall be determined by the Referee's Association Contract with each club.
 - 4.18.2. Inconvenience to the visiting team who has traveled or may travel to the site cannot be helped if weather conditions worsen during the visiting team's travel time.
 - 4.18.3. If a team fails to provide fields or referees for a rescheduled match, the game will be recorded as a forfeit for that team.

4.19. **Rescheduling.** Matches cancelled due to weather or other compelling reasons will be rescheduled at the makeup date set for each season or another date mutually agreed to by the two Directors.

4.19.1. If a mutual date is set, both teams are obligated to play on that date.

4.19.2. If a mutual date cannot be set, the league administrator will intervene and determine a date by which all match shall be played.

4.19.3. If one team is unable to play, the game will be recorded as a forfeit for that team.

4.19.4. If both teams are unable to play, the game will be recorded as a dual forfeit with both teams receiving zero points.

4.19.5. If the makeup date is unplayable due to weather or other reason beyond the control of both teams, the game will be recorded as a no contest and shall not count against either team.

5. **GAME DAY PROCEDURES**

5.1. **Uniforms.** Each club shall indicate their home and away colors on the public schedule.

5.1.1. The home team shall wear light colored uniform. The away team shall wear dark colored uniforms.

5.1.2. The home team director or designee shall confirm the uniform colors for each team prior to the match. In case of conflict, the home team shall change if the uniform color was not communicated in advance.

5.1.3. With the exception of the goalkeeper, all players must have uniforms with individual numbers on the shirt. The goalkeeper's shirt must be easily distinguishable from all other players and referees.

5.1.4. Players must wear jerseys whose numbers correspond with the numbers on the team's Game Day Roster.

5.2. **Additional Equipment.** Players may wear additional equipment if in the determination of the referee it meets the standard of safety for all players.

5.2.1. Players who are wearing corrective glasses may be allowed to play at the discretion of the referee.

5.2.2. Casts are permitted if properly padded and approved by the Referee and Athletic Trainer (if available).

5.3. **Pre-Game Procedures.** Referees are not required to check the official roster printed on the game card nor US Club Soccer player cards unless specifically requested by the league and/or a director.

5.3.1. All teams must have an official US Club Soccer team roster available for review upon request.

5.3.2. All players must have an official US Club Soccer player card available for review upon request.

- 5.4. **Spectator and Coaching Areas.** Home teams shall provide clear direction for spectator areas.
- 5.4.1. All coaches, players, and spectators will remain eighteen (18) yards from the goal lines.
 - 5.4.2. Where possible, coaches and players are to take opposite sides of the field from the spectators.
 - 5.4.3. No coaching may take place from behind the goal lines.
 - 5.4.4. All coaches and spectators must remain at least one (1) meter from the touchline at all times.
- 5.5. **Official Match / Referee Report.** The referee's authority begins when they arrive at the match site and continues until they depart the match site.
- 5.5.1. It is the responsibility of the Director of each club to coordinate with the appropriate Referees' Association concerning all home club activities, matches, and schedule changes.
 - 5.5.2. Each VPSL member club is responsible for all fees associated with each home match.
 - 5.5.3. The officials are responsible for conducting the matches in accordance with FIFA/USSF Laws of the Game, ECNL Regional League and/or VPSL Rules and Procedures, which shall take precedence.
 - 5.5.4. Such individuals are capable of conducting the matches in accordance with FIFA/USSF Laws of the Game and VPSL Rules and Procedures.
 - 5.5.5. Such individuals are registered in the database for insurance purposes.
 - 5.5.6. The Pre-Game responsibilities shall be provided to the Referees' Association by the VPSL member club, prior to the beginning of each season. They will also be posted on the league website.
- 5.6. **Failure to Appear.** When request for services was made to the Referees' Association.
- 5.6.1. A certified center referee must be present or the match cannot be played. If there is no qualified center referee after a 30-minute grace period from the scheduled start time, the match will be recorded as a forfeit for the home team.
 - 5.6.2. During the 30-minute grace period:
 - 5.6.2.1. The directors may mutually agree to play the game with a substitute certified center referee as long as the game begins within the 30-minute grace period.
 - 5.6.2.2. The directors will agree before the start of the game if the assigned center referee will assume control of the match if he/she arrives late.
 - 5.6.2.3. The home club will pay the substitute center referee.
 - 5.6.2.4. The directors may mutually agree to cancel the game, and the game will be rescheduled in which case no referee fee shall be incurred.

- 5.6.2.5. If an assigned/substitute certified center referee is available after the 30-minute grace period, the directors may mutually agree to play a scrimmage game as long as the scrimmage does not exceed the time block allotted for the originally scheduled game. The home club will pay the substitute center referee.
- 5.6.3. If a certified center referee is present at the scheduled start time but one or both official referee assistants fail to appear at the scheduled start time, the Directors shall mutually appoint club referee assistant(s) and play the match. Club referee assistant(s) who are not certified will be limited to helping with balls in and out of bounds.
- 5.7. **Failure to Appear.** When request for services was NOT made to the Referees' Association.
 - 5.7.1. All games will be recorded as forfeits for the home team.
 - 5.7.2. The Directors may agree to play scrimmages on a team-by-team basis providing a qualified center referee is present. The scrimmages must fall within the time block allotted for the originally scheduled games.
 - 5.7.3. In case of a dispute, Directors are responsible for providing written confirmation from the Referees' Association to verify that a request for services was made.

6. POST-SEASON COMPETITION

- 6.1. **ECNL Regional League.** ECNL shall establish the qualification pathway, including the number of qualifiers from VPSL. Teams will qualify for the pathway through divisional league play and VPSL playoffs.
 - 6.1.1. VPSL will pay the team entry fee for all qualified teams.
 - 6.1.2. ECNL Regional League qualification shall be the priority for all Regional League teams. Teams who decline their earned position shall be fined and invoiced the cost of the entry fee.
- 6.2. **NPL Finals.** US Club Soccer shall establish the qualification pathway, including the number of qualifiers from VPSL. Teams will qualify for the pathway through divisional league play and VPSL playoffs.
 - 6.2.1. VPSL will pay the team entry fee for all qualified teams.
 - 6.2.2. NPL Finals qualification shall be the priority for all NPL teams. Teams who decline their earned position shall be fined and invoiced the cost of the entry fee.
- 6.3. **Virginia State Cup.** US Club Soccer shall establish the qualification pathway, including the number of qualifiers from VPSL. Teams will qualify for the pathway through State Cup competition.
 - 6.3.1. VPSL will pay the team entry fee for all qualified teams.
 - 6.3.2. With the exception of teams who qualify for either ECNL Regional League Playoffs or NPL Finals, teams who decline their earned position shall be fined and invoiced the cost of the entry fee.

7. CONDUCT

- 7.1. **Standards of Conduct.** The League exists to provide youth of Virginia the opportunity to acquire and develop soccer skills through a higher level of competition. These skills, as well as the individual growth of the players, cannot be nurtured in an environment that permits confrontation, poor sportsmanship, and verbal and physical abuse among spectators, game participants, and game officials. While VPSL cannot dictate the internal administrative rules and regulations of its member clubs, it must provide a framework for governing undesirable behavior within which member clubs must administer their teams. Players are expected to perform in a manner consistent with the principles of good sportsmanship. Coaches and spectators should act in a manner that reinforces the concepts of good sportsmanship.
- 7.1.1. Under no circumstances shall a player, coach, parent or spectator enter the field of play during the match unless invited by the referee.
- 7.1.2. The coach is responsible for the actions of parents and spectators on the sidelines. Coaches can be sent off the field or even banned from future games for their misbehavior.
- 7.1.3. Parents and spectators can be asked by the referee to leave the playing site, and if the request is refused, the referee can, at his/ her discretion, terminate the match.
- 7.1.4. If any player, substitute, or coach refuses to leave the playing site immediately after an ejection by the referee, the referee may terminate the match, and the match will be scored as a forfeit with the offending team losing by a score of 3-0. The referee has the discretionary power to suspend or terminate a match whenever, by reason of the elements, interference by spectators, or other causes, he/she deems such stoppage necessary.
- 7.1.5. Member clubs shall insure that these standards of conduct are distributed and understood throughout their club. Repetition of occurrences of misconduct which show a “disregard for these guidelines” could lead to long-term penalties, up to and including prohibition for further participation.

8. PROTESTS

- 8.1. **General.** A protest is a dispute over a point of fact dealing with the misapplication of the Laws of the Game by a match official. Protests on the grounds of judgmental actions on the part of a match official shall not be considered. The Referee Evaluation Form is the appropriate instrument for reporting disputed judgmental actions by a match official.
- 8.2. **Submission.** A protest shall be submitted in writing to the Directors within two (2) days of the conclusion of the match as verified by postmark.
- 8.3. **Review by the Board of Directors.** The Board of Directors shall investigate, evaluate and provide the recommendations within ten (10) days of receipt of the protest.

9. GRIEVANCES

- 9.1. **General.** There is a difference between a grievance and a protest. Grievances concern league policy; protests concern game situations and are detailed in Rule 7.
- 9.2. **Aggrieved Party.** Any member club officer, director, team or player associated with a member club, who feel(s) aggrieved by any action of the Board of Directors concerning league policy,

must submit a written grievance citing the remedy requested and a check in the amount of \$100 payable to VPSL. The grievance and check must be sent by registered mail to the VPSL President, Attn: Mike Cullina, 9716 Limoges Dr., Fairfax, VA 22032, within seven (7) days of the written or verbal publication of information, whichever comes first.

- 9.3. **Determination of Submission.** The President will review the grievance for determination of proper filing and the nature of the matter being grieved. If the President determines the grievance is validly submitted, he will initiate action to resolve the issue. This may be accomplished by consulting other members of the Board of Directors of club representative by phone or personally or by holding a hearing. The President will be the judge of which method of resolution will be used.
- 9.4. **Grievance Committee.** A Grievance Committee, if appointed, will consist of the President of VPSL who will preside and two (2) other members of the Board of Directors who will hear the grievance within 14 days of the receipt of the grievance. A quorum for the meeting is three; the presiding officer will count towards a quorum but will only vote in a tie situation.
- 9.5. **Sustained.** If the grievance is sustained, the check will be returned; if the grievance is denied, the check will be deposited to the general fund of the league.
- 9.6. **Final Decision.** The decision of the Grievance Committee is final within the VAPL and is not appealable to the state association on matters of league rules, policy and/or procedures.
- 9.7. **Legal Costs.** If the aggrieved party remains dissatisfied after having exhausted all requirements concerning grievances, or, if not having exhausted all requirements concerning grievances, if he invokes the aid of the courts of any state or the United States, should the person bringing the action not prevail in such court action, he shall then be liable for all expenses incurred by VPSL in defending such action including, but not limited to, the following:
 - 9.7.1. Court Costs
 - 9.7.2. Attorneys' fees
- 9.8. **Compensation.** Reasonable compensation for time spent by VPSL employees in responding and defending against allegations in the action, including responses to discovery and court appearances.
 - 9.8.1. Travel expenses
 - 9.8.2. Expenses of any special meeting(s) necessitated by the action.

10. BOARDS OF INQUIRY OR HEARINGS

- 10.1. **General.** Periodically, it may be necessary for the Board of Directors to conduct inquiries or hearings on breaches of the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, Rules and Procedures, and/or Laws of the Game.
- 10.2. **Notice.** Inquiries and/or hearings shall be announced at least seven (7) days in advance. An effort shall be made to schedule such activities at the convenience of the majority of the participants, whether members of the Board or persons to appear before the Board.

- 10.3. **Appearance.** When established in accordance with Rule 10.2, persons to appear before a Board shall be so notified. Their personal appearance, or the appearance of an individual(s) acting on their behalf, shall be mandatory.
- 10.3.1. Once notified, persons requested to appear shall have 48 hours to submit in writing matters in extenuation or mitigation that may preclude their appearance. The convening authority shall have sole authority to rule on such matters.
- 10.3.2. Failure to appear, unless duly excused, shall be grounds for sanctions as may be determined by the Board.
- 10.4. **Recruiting Violations.** If the Committee finds a recruiting violation has occurred, the Committee may impose one or more penalties including, but not limited to: forfeiture of one or more games, fines, and temporary or permanent suspension from VPSL club activities.
- 10.5. **Appeals.** Any aggrieved party may appeal any decision or the imposition of any penalty or fine to the Board of Directors.
- 10.5.1. The appeal must be sent by registered mail to the VPSL President, Attn: Mike Cullina, PO Box 2473, Fairfax, VA 22031 within five (5) days of the decision or imposition of penalty or fine.
- 10.5.2. A \$100.00 appeal fee shall accompany the appeal. If the appeal is upheld, the appeal fee will be returned. If the appeal is denied, the fee shall be retained by VPSL.
- 10.5.3. Upon receipt of an appeal, the Board of Directors shall convene a board of inquiry composed of its members.
- 10.5.4. The decision of the Board of Inquiry is final within VPSL. The next avenue of appeal is to US Club Soccer.