SUPPORT. COMPETE. UNITE.

MINNESOTA
WOMEN'S SOCCER LEAGUE

Rules & Regulations

Minnesota Women's Soccer League | Updated October 2026

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Article 1: Fees

1.01 Fees (including those from the United States Soccer Federation (USSF)) will be set annually by the MWSL Board of Directors and documented, along with the timing, in the Fees & Fines document.

1.02 The amount and timing of the fees will be covered in the Fees and Fines document.

1,03 Failure to pay fees by the deadline set by the Board each season may result in a weekly fine, teams and its players being prevented from registering for upcoming seasons, and teams playing in a scheduled match. If a team is removed from the schedule due to not paying fees, the team will be awarded a forfeit in the standings and is still responsible for the referee fee.

1.04 The fee to register a team for a season will be due in full upon registration. A team's registration will not be approved until the fee is confirmed by the MWSL. Teams who withdraw any time after registering will not receive a refund.

1.05 Any unpaid games (i.e. cancelled games, attempted rescheduled games, games absent a referee, and bye weeks) will not warrant a refund to teams.

Article 2: Assessments

2.01 The Board may assess members to make up any deficits in the cost of operation of the league that are not covered by team and player registration fees.

Article 3: Fines

3.01 Fines will be set by the Board and documented in the Fees & Fines document.

3.02 Fines must only be paid via the team's performance bond.

3.03 Teams' and players' future games are subject to forfeiture until delinquent fines are paid. Teams may be required to post additional funds to their performance bond prior to reinstatement.

Article 4: Performance Bonds

4.01 Performance Bonds will be set annually by the MWSL Board of Directors and documented in the Fees & Fines document.

4.02 Performance Bonds will be drawn on to satisfy fines and may be drawn on to satisfy member indebtedness.

4.03 If a team does not complete the official playing season, the bond shall be forfeited.

4.04 At the end of the official playing season, the remaining balance of the Performance Bond will be refunded to the Team Representative or rolled over to the next applicable season, upon request. It is the responsibility of the Team Representative to initiate either action by contacting the MWSL Treasurer. Performance bonds held by the MWSL that receive no requests from a Team Representative will be rolled over to next year's same season. (e.g. summer to summer, fall to fall, etc.) Should a team not register for the next year's same season, and not request a refund or roll-over, the performance bond will be forfeited to the MWSL general fund.

4.05 The Board may determine that an additional Performance Bond amount is required if a member or a team has had financial or disciplinary issues in a past season(s).

Article 5: Payments to MWSL

5.01 All payments to MWSL, or to any unit thereof, shall be made by credit card via the MWSL website.

Article 6: Budget

6.01 The Board shall consider, revise, and approve the budget for the next year.

Article 7: Registration

7.01 A player participating in an MWSL game must be registered with the MWSL Registrar. All players must be eighteen (18) years of age or older on, or before, the date of the first league game for that season.

7.02 Each player must be registered for the season in which they intend to play, and can be registered with multiple teams. Registration must be completed digitally via the MWSL website and is valid only for the season in which the individual registered.

7.03 Each player will be issued a player pass, and will be valid for the current season only, indicated by the date range on the pass. All players and any subs must present a printed, valid player pass to participate in the match.

7.04 Each team in the MWSL must complete an online team registration. Each team's roster will be maintained electronically by the MWSL based on player registration.

Article 8: League Divisions

8.01 Though the Board is not responsible for placing teams within divisions or qualifying individuals' skill level, they reserve the right to review, approve, deny, or modify a team's registration into a chosen division if, but not limited to, the quantity or competitive balance is substantially uneven or a team's demonstrated level of play does not match the division they registered for.

8.02 The Board considers the following, without limitation and in order of precedence, when requesting a team change divisions:

1. the team's seasonal standing data
    - Win-loss record
      (a team will be asked to move up if it places 1st and/or 2nd for three or more applicable, consecutive seasons).
    - Goal differential
      (a team will be asked to move up if their goal differential is at least 50% more than the next closest team for three or more applicable, consecutive seasons)
    - Past division changes
      (If a team moves up a division and then places last in the standings when doing so, they can move back)

2. membership feedback on the team, submitted to the league
   (a team will be asked to move if a pattern of feedback warrants the request appropriate)

3. the team's division preference

8.04 If a team does not agree with its placement, it may appeal to the MWSL Board of Directors for reconsideration.

8.05 If a division does not exist above or below to move into, the team will stay in its current division..

Article 9: Referees

9.01 Game assignments of referees will be coordinated by the MWSL's Referee Assignor. The Referee Assignor will be contractually employed by the MWSL.

9.02 Referees assigned to MWSL games will have current USSF certification.

9.03 The Board will expect the Referee Assignor to coordinate their referees for the MWSL, communicate the MWSL's Rules and Regulations to their referees, and advocate for professional referee performance.

9.04 The center referee is required to complete and submit a digital game report via an online portal, which the Board can access.

9.05 In the event of a weather cancellation before half time or of a forfeit, the center referee is required to notify the Referee Assignor (who will then notify the MWSL) within 10 business days to receive compensation.The referee must also include in the game report the names and addresses of all the referees present that require compensation. If this information is missing or the referee does not notify the Referee Assignor, the MWSL is not obligated to compensate the referee(s).

9.06 Teams shall pay their referee fee to the center referee at halftime of each game (applies to all seasons). Unless a digital form of payment is agreed to by the referee, cash or check must be used.

Article 10: Guidelines for Playing on Other MWSL Teams

10.01 During a match, a team may use players registered on other MWSL teams. These players must be added as write-ins, defined as players whose names are physically hand-written on the printed gameday roster.

- For both 11v11 and 7v7 games, you may have a maximum of 6 write-ins on your roster.

- The Board reserves the right to remedy any situations where the use of players from other teams is being abused.

Article 11: Standings

11.01 Each division within the MWSL will maintain separate standings.

11.02 Records will be calculated based on the following point structure:

- win = 3 points
- tie = 1 point
- loss = 0 points

11.03 If, at the end of the season, two or more teams are tied in points, the following will be used to determine relative standing:

1. head-to-head competition (won-loss record in head-to-head)
2. inter-team goal aggregate (# goals by team A vs. # goals by team B in head-to-head)
3. ratio of [goals scored by: goals scored against] during the entire season

If, at this point, the teams are still tied, a separate play-off game will be held to determine final standings.

11.04 When an official game is later declared to be forfeit, the score recorded will be either the actual score, or 2-0, whichever is the most advantageous for the team winning by forfeit.

11.05 In order to promote sportsmanship between teams, the Commissioner will manually change the score of any game with a spread larger than 7 goals to reflect only a 7-goal spread. This is the official score.

Article 12: Cup Competition

12.01 Rules for the Minnesota State Cup:

- Eligibility will be limited to teams that are in good standing with the MWSL.
- A Minnesota State Association-appointed committee will determine the format of and rules for this competition.
- The Minnesota State Cup shall have a traveling trophy and each team who wins the Cup will receive a replacement award the following year.

Article 13: Suspended Teams

13.01 No team may play against another team that has been suspended by the MWSL or by an organization affiliated with the USSF and/or FIFA.

Article 14: Game Rules & Procedures

14.01 All games sponsored by the MWSL will be conducted in accordance with the most current version of the USSF and/or FIFA Laws of the Game, and in accordance with the rules of the MWSL. Updates to the FIFA Laws of the Game will be adopted by the MWSL at the start of the Fall season during the year in which those updates were published.

14.02 Every team is responsible to the MWSL for the conduct of its players, team officials, and spectators, and as such, is required to take all precautions necessary to prevent threat or assault against visiting persons or referees.

14.03 Team managers (both home and away) must print and present the match referee with a gameday roster. It shall include the match information along with all players approved to play on that team as either a primary member of that team, or as a sub. Only the official gameday roster will be accepted, and a fine will be assessed if a team fails to present it to the referee.

14.05 Each player must show their printed player pass for the current season to the referee before each game. Late players shall present their pass to a referee before entering the game. If the player fails to present their pass, the player is prohibited from participating in that game. Teams who allow a player to misuse a player pass card (including, but not limited to, a MWSL player pass card from a prior season, a player pass card from another league, a player pass card belonging to a different individual, or a counterfeit player pass) will be fined. A screenshot of your pass is not a valid pass.

14.06 During regularly scheduled 11v11 games/competitions, only eighteen, (18) players may be suited up. This includes any subs from other teams. During regularly scheduled 7v7 games/competitions, only thirteen, (13) players may be suited up. This includes any subs from other teams.

14.07 If a team does not have at least seven (7) players available within 15 minutes after the scheduled start time of an 11v11 game (or five (5) players for a 7v7 game), the game may not be started and cannot be considered an official match. The team lacking the minimum amount of players must forfeit. If both teams lack the minimum amount of players, the game must be declared forfeit for both teams.

14.08 As accordance to FIFA Laws of the Game, if a game is not started because of Section 15.05 or Section 17.02, and the referee is being paid the full game fees, the referees are expected to referee a "friendly" game, if it is started within 15 minutes of the forfeit time. (For example, scheduled time is 6:45, one team forfeits at 7:00, referees may leave the field if no friendly game is in progress by 7:15). The exception is if the forfeiture results from field conditions.

14.09 If no assigned referee appears to officiate a game within 15 minutes after the scheduled start time, the game must be rescheduled. The home team must notify the MWSL Field and Schedule Coordinator immediately. If both the home and away team agree to play and count the game as official, both teams agree that they will not hold the MWSL liable for any injuries or incidents that occur.

14.10 if one team forfeits a game as described in Section 15.05, 16.03, or 17.02, that team will pay the full referee's fee to the MWSL(as described in the Fees and Fines document).

14.11 If both teams are declared forfeit as described in Section 15.05, they will each pay half the referee's fee to the MWSL (as described in the Fees and Fines document).

14.12 The referees will be on the field 15 minutes before the game's scheduled start time.

14.13 Referees will use the 3-person, diagonal system of control, with the exception of the Recreational division which only has one referee present. If only 2 referees are present, FIFA Laws of the Game do not permit 2 referees on the field at one time (one will be the Center while the other will be AR1).

14.14 The referee will enforce all MWSL and FIFA rules and decide any disputed point. The referee's decision on points of fact connected with the play will be final so far as the result of the game is concerned.

14.15 For an ejected player(s), referees must note the names of the ejected player(s), along with the reason for the ejection, on the game report submitted to the Referee Assignor within 24 hours of the incident. For so long as the player is suspended, the MWSL Commissioner will make note on the player’s account, and make the Ref Assignor, opposing team representatives, and the suspended player’s team manager aware of the suspension. If a suspended player attempts to play during their suspension the MWSL Commissioner has the right to take further disciplinary action.

14.16 There shall be unlimited substitution during a game, but \will only be allowed at the following points:

- after a goal by either team
- after a goal kick has been awarded to either team
- at half-time
- when a player leaves the field with an injury
- at a throw-in, but only by the team with the ball

14.17 Players not participating in the match should remain within a limited area.

14.18 A game stopped by the referee at or after half time will be declared an official game. The score at the time of stoppage will be the final score unless the game is declared forfeited upon review.

14.19 A game stopped by the referee before half time, must be rescheduled, unless the game is declared forfeited upon review. If both the home and away team agree to play and count the game as official, both teams agree that they will not hold the MWSL liable for any injuries or incidents that occur.

14.20 Both teams are responsible for notifying the MWSL of postponements and referee-no-shows within 48 hours after the game time.

14.21 The burden of rescheduling a game will rest with the team that originally requested it. If the two teams are unable to decide upon a date, the MWSL Field and Schedule Coordinator will set one. The Board must declare a forfeit if one or both of the teams fail to appear on the date scheduled.

14.21 If the game is suspended due to weather prior to half-time, a fine applies, as documented in the Fees & Fines document. If the game is suspended due to weather at half-time or later, the match is considered complete and each team must pay the referees the full game fee.

14.22 The Field and Schedule Coordinator must be notified of any changes, reschedules, or cancellations to a game as far in advance as possible to the scheduled game time. Any changes made to a game, initiated by one or both of the teams, may result in a fine as documented in the Fines and Fees document.

14.23 If a game is cancelled, for any reason, it may be considered a forfeit for the team initiating the cancellation and a fine may be assessed (see the Fines and Fees Document). If both teams, in agreement with each other, are forfeiting, changing, or re-scheduling their game, both teams will split the associated fine for that game (see the Fines and Fees Document). These fines will be deducted from teams' performance bond.

14.24 The exception to rule 14.21 or 14.22 is when the field manager prohibits play or encounters a double-booking. The Field and Schedule Coordinator may request a written letter or verbal confirmation from the field manager to verify the game cancellation or change.

14.25 Slide-tackling (except for the goalkeeper) is prohibited in the Recreational 11v11 division. Restart is an indirect free kick. Players may slide to play or block a ball, but NOT to tackle an opponent. Slide-tackling is allowed in all other 11v11 divisions.

Article 15: Uniforms

15.01 All players on a team will wear shirts that match in color, except the goalkeepers, who shall wear colors that contrast with their own team and with the visiting team.

15.02 Each player will wear a shirt with a number on the back. Each team member must have a different number.

15.03 When the referee determines that the color of the shirts of competing teams is too similar to play the game, the home team must change. Alternate shirts do not need a number on the back. If there is no remedy, the game will not be played and may be forfeit.

15.04 In accordance with FIFA Laws of the Game, a player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous. Accessories are permitted as long as they are not dangerous and are safely and securely covered. Dangerous items must be removed and not taped or covered. Referees may inspect before and during the match for dangerous items and ask that the player remove them. Teams with players not in accordance with this rule may be fined.

15.04 Teams must have a captain who can be easily identified by the referee by an armband. The team captain must wear the armband issued or authorised by the relevant competition organiser, or a single-coloured armband that may also have the word ‘captain’ or the letter ‘C’ or a translation thereof, which should also be a single color.

Article 16: Playing Fields

16.01 The home team is responsible for the proper preparation of the field. This includes the anchoring goals, nets, corner flags and game ball. If a team reserves their own fields, every attempt should be made to find safe and suitable playing surfaces. If the field was scheduled by the MWSL, the team is responsible to notify the MWSL Field and Schedule Coordinator within 48 hours of any issues with the field. The MWSL will work with the field directly to remedy any problems.

16.02 If the referee informs the home team that the field is not in compliance with Section 17.01, the home team must remedy the problem or the game may not be played. The game may be forfeit.

16.03 Games must be played within 35 driving miles from the address 1265 North Snelling Ave. St. Paul MN 55108 (MN State Fairgrounds).

Article 17: Disciplinary Matters

17.01 The MWSL will have the power to take disciplinary action on violations of the Laws of the Game and of the rules and regulations of the MWSL, USSF, and FIFA.

17.02 The MWSL shall have the authority to:

- levy fines, suspensions, revocations of membership, affiliation, and/or registration
- order forfeiture, replay and/or cancellation of games

Individuals cannot be fined for their conduct. Instead, the team will be charged (by way of the team manager) or performance bond billed

17.03 The MWSL Commissioner will consider allegations of violations or misconduct by teams or persons and take appropriate disciplinary action.

17.04 The President of the MWSL will act as Commissioner if the decision affects a team with which the Commissioner is associated.

17.05 The Commissioner will provide a written report of all decisions to the Board and to such parties directly concerned in the decision.

17.06 If any person under the jurisdiction of the MWSL physically assaults a referee, that person will automatically be suspended for one year from the time of the assault. If circumstances warrant, the period of suspension may be extended.

17.07 Cases of referee assault and abuse must be immediately referred to the Minnesota Soccer Association, which has original jurisdiction over such cases. The suspension of the player will be indefinite until the Minnesota Soccer Association ruling is provided.

17.08 When any player is sent off the field by the referee, they will automatically be suspended from play for a minimum of:

- one game - if the violation is non-physical (e.g. dissent)
- two games - if the violation is physical (e.g. pushing)
- one month - if the violation is for physical assault on another player.

The Commissioner may extend the period of suspension if the circumstances warrant. Demerits (as described in the Guidance for Misconduct document) may also be considered and factor into the period of suspension..

17.09 The MWSL has the authority to direct the Referee Assignor that certain referees not be assigned to MWSL games and to request that a referee be suspended, fined, or otherwise disciplined.

17.10 The Board may exert original jurisdiction over any disciplinary matter within the MWSL except those specifically called out in the rules and regulations of the Minnesota Soccer Association, USSF or FIFA.

Article 18: Protests

18.01 Formal protests concerning games sponsored by the MWSL must be filed, in writing, by a party to the game, and be delivered to the MWSL Commissioner within five (5) days of the protested game.

18.02 A protest will be reviewed and a decision made within five (5) days of receipt. If any decision is required concerning disciplinary action, it will be made within the same five-day period.

18.03 Upon consideration of a protest, the MWSL Commissioner will have the authority to deny the protest, to order a forfeiture, replay, or cancellation of a game. The Commissioner may take whatever disciplinary actions are required.

18.04 The MWSL Commissioner will provide a written report of the considerations and decisions to the Board and to the involved parties.

Article 19: Appeals

19.01 Appeals from the decision of the MWSL Commissioner must be made to the President of the MWSL.

19.02 Appeals must be made in writing, within ten (10) days of notification of the Commissioner's decision.

19.03 The Board will meet and review the appeal at a hearing. Such a meeting will be scheduled within fourteen (14) days of the receipt of the appeal. All concerned parties will be notified well in advance and will be invited to attend. A decision will be made to the appeal, in writing to all parties, within five (5) days of the hearing.

19.04 Appeals from the decision of the Board of Directors may be made to the Minnesota Soccer Association (MSA) in accordance with the rules of the MSA.

19.05 Suspensions ordered by the MWSL Commissioner shall not be postponed unless the President of the MWSL so orders.

Article 20: Procedure When Considering Termination of Membership

20.01 A hearing for terminating membership must be convened by the President of the MWSL. It may be held in conjunction with a Board of Directors meeting.

20.02 The Board will decide whether membership should be terminated and provide that member with a written report of its decision.

20.03 If the member wishes to appeal the decision of the Board, it may be done through the appeal procedure described above, except that where this article reads Commissioner, substitute Board.

Article 21: Procedure When Considering Removal of a Director For Cause

21.01 A communication to the membership will be made if removal of a Director is requested. A meeting will be called with at least a seven-day (7) notice to all parties who would like to attend.

21.02 The subject Director will be advised of the alleged cause in advance of the meeting and will be provided with the opportunity to be present and heard at the meeting.

21.03 Any decision to remove the director must be made by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of members of the MWSL present at the meeting.

Article 22: Exhaustion of Administrative Procedures

22.01 No member or Director of this league, nor any person affiliated with any member of this league shall have standing to commence litigation in any court against this league, or the Minnesota Soccer Association (MSA), or the USSF, unless such a person has exhausted all administrative procedures for the relief to be sought by such litigation in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of this league, of the MSA, and of the USSF.