Sacramento Valley Women's Soccer League
Rules and Procedures
(*Revised as of June 24, 2025*)

Rules of Play-General

The Rules of Play for the Sacramento Valley Women's Soccer League ("League" or "SVWSL") shall be the "Laws of the Game" as published by the FIFA on https://www.fifa.com ("FIFA's Laws of the Game") with those modifications stated herein.

1) Coaching from the Sidelines - Each team may have one person coaching from the sidelines provided he or she:
   a. stays within ten yards of the center line while coaching;
   b. uses no mechanical devices;
   c. uses an informative tone of voice and NOT a harangue;
   d. accepts responsibility for the actions of spectators;
   e. and does NOT use profanity nor engage in disruptive behavior of any kind.

   The penalty for violating any of the above rules shall be ejection of the coach from the game by the Referee.

2) Alcoholic Beverages and Illegal Drugs - Players and coaches may NOT consume alcoholic beverages nor use illegal drugs at the field before or during any League game. Players, coaches, or spectators may NOT bring alcohol or illegal drugs onto school property at any time. Players may NOT play while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. Responsibility for enforcing this rule rests with the team involved, and the whole team may be penalized unless it actively attempts to enforce it.

Rule 1: Home Team Responsibility

The Board of Directors will assign a home team to each scheduled League game. The home team shall:

A. Provide a game ball.
B. Provide the game card and see that the game card is filled out correctly.
C. Change jerseys if the visiting team's colors are not distinctly different from the home team's jerseys.

Rule 2: Game Day

A. The League will provide one net and two corner flags to each of its teams. Teams will retain this equipment for the entire season and return it to the League at the end of the seasonal year.
B. Nets and corner flags are required for all games. Referees will officiate the game and note the absence of nets and/or corner flags on the game card.
C. When the league is NOT playing at Cherry Island, each team must bring a set of nets and corner flags to the field. The teams playing the 9 a.m. game will set up their nets and corner flags. The teams playing the 11 a.m. game at said field, will bring their set of nets and corner flags to the field and hand nets and flags over to the departing teams. The 11 a.m. teams will take down the nets and corner flags and take them as their own until the next game. In the event of a third game scheduled at said field, the third time slot teams will **BE REQUIRED** to bring their nets and corner flags and give them to the departing second time slot teams.

Rule 3: Player Substitution

Players may be substituted at the following times:

A. prior to a throw in, by the team taking the throw in;
B. prior to a goal kick, by either team;
C. after a goal, by either team;
D. after an injury, by either team, once the Referee stops play.

When a player is cautioned, only that player may be substituted. At half time, unlimited substitutions are allowed. In all cases, a substitute may enter the field of play only with permission of the Referee.

Rule 4: Glasses and Jewelry
Players may wear prescription glasses on the playing field. Players may not wear non-prescription glasses, earrings, necklaces, watches or bracelets. Players will be required to sign a jewelry waiver as a requirement of registration.

Rule 5: Dangerous Equipment
Casts and/or metal splints shall always be considered dangerous equipment. Knee braces made of hard, unyielding material are illegal, unless the hinges and other hard surfaces are covered with at least ¼ inch of closed-cell, slow-recovery rubber, or other material of the same minimum thickness and having similar physical properties. Any player who uses a knee brace and fails to cover such equipment according to the above specifications prior to taking part in a League game will be cautioned by the Referee. The Referee will note the player's name and specify the nature of the violation on the game card. The Procedures and Discipline (PAD) Committee will review the cautioned player's and her team's actions following the procedures described in rule.

Rule 6: Uniforms
All teams must wear uniforms when playing in League games. The uniform must consist of a numbered, full-length jersey, shorts and matching knee-length socks; uniform colors must be the same for all team members, except the Goalkeeper. The jersey number should be distinctly visible to the Referee and on the back of the shirt. (In inclement weather, sweatshirts or long-sleeved shirts may be worn under the jersey and should be of a neutral color that will not create confusion; sweat pants may be worn over the shorts, but must be the color of the shorts.)

Rule 7: Team Roster
Fifteen minutes before the start of each League game, both participating teams must provide the Referee with a roster of players who will take part in that day's game. The team may register the maximum number of players authorized by our State Association, US Club Soccer, currently that number is 26 or as specified in Rule 36 for 8v8 Small-Sided Games. Only 18 players may appear on the game roster at check in or as specified in Rule 36 for 8v8 Small-Sided Games.

Rule 8: Charging the Goalkeeper

A. Charging the goalkeeper shall not be permitted at any time when she is within her own penalty area, regardless of whether she has possession of the ball. Violation of this rule is a dangerous play.

B. The ball may not be played by another player while it is in the goalkeeper's possession. One finger on the ball is possession. Violation of this rule is a dangerous play.

Rule 9: Sliding Tackles
Slide tackles are only permitted in the open division and in that division's highest level. Both teams must agree allow slide tackling at the coin toss. In the lower open divisions and the over 30 division, no player, including the goalkeeper, may use a sliding tackle. Violation of this rule is a dangerous play.

Rule 10: Player Playing Time
All players on the team must be played for 45 minutes of each game, unless:

A. They are absent from the game,

B. They are subject to health problems or disciplinary action.

Reduced playing time for these reasons must be noted on the game card.

Rule 11: Game Length

A. Unless both teams agree to play without a midpoint stoppage, games will consist of two 45-minute halves, or as specified in Rule 36 for 8v8 Small-Sided Games, with a stoppage at approximately 22-1/2 minutes into each half for the purpose of unlimited substitutions. Stoppages at the midpoint of each half (if any) will be 1 minute long, and the game will resume as with any normal stoppage of the game.

B. If, at the coin toss, each team's captain agrees to play without the above rule in force, the referee will conduct the game accordingly.

C. If (1) either or both teams fail to get nets and corner flags in place five minutes before game time, or (2) either or both teams fail to present at least seven players when called for inspection by the Referee, the Referee may reduce the length of the game accordingly. The Referee will apply half of any reduced time to each half. Before beginning the game, the Referee will inform both teams' captains of the amount of time each half will be reduced. The Referee should note, on the game card, which team or teams have failed to get equipment in place or present their players

for inspection by the appropriate time. If one team feels it has been unfairly penalized by the reduced playing time, it may follow the procedures in Rules 12, 13, 14 and 21.

Rule 12: Referee Decisions

A. Referee judgement calls may NOT be discussed with the Referee nor protested.

B. If a participant in the game believes that a League rule is not being applied or applied incorrectly, or questions how one of FIFA's Laws of the Game is being applied, that rule may be discussed with the Referee during half time or after the game, if the discussion is conducted in a courteous manner and the Referee is willing to participate in the discussion. Protests concerning Referee decisions will be accepted by the PAD Committee pursuant to Rule 21 only if they are related to:

1. Demonstrated lack of knowledge about the rules of play, as used by SVWSL, and a demonstrated unwillingness to learn and/or enforce these rules.
2. Refusal to referee in a professional manner.
3. Refusal to follow League Bylaws and/or these Rules and Procedures.

C. Referee evaluation cards are provided to all team representatives and should be used for each game to provide SVWSL with feedback (positive and negative).

Rule 13: Forfeiture of Games

A. Forfeiture of Game occurs if a team does any of the following:

1. Fails to start the game with a minimum of 7 players within 15 minutes after the scheduled time for the game or as specified in Rule 36 for 8v8 Small-Sided Games;
2. Fails to provide the proper equipment;
3. Fails to provide appropriate player passes;
4. Plays an ineligible player;
5. Causes the game to stop before full-time is completed, unless agreed upon by both teams;
6. Does anything that is deemed by the PAD Committee not to be in the best interest of the game; or,
7. Fails to provide cancellation notice to their opponent and to the League Referee Coordinator and League President no later than the Sunday before the scheduled game;
8. When any team member, coach, or spectator of a team refuses to remove a dog upon request from any field site where no dogs are allowed is posted.

B. Except as otherwise specified in Rule 13, if any of the items listed above occur, the team who has caused the forfeit will be responsible for paying the following: a $100 forfeit fine which must be paid prior to the forfeiting team's next scheduled game, the referee fees for the forfeiting team, and the referee fees for the non-forfeiting team.

C. All forfeits will result in a 1-0 win for the non-forfeiting team.

Rule 14: No-Shows, Cancellations and Forfeits

A. If a team cannot field a team for a scheduled game, the team MUST provide cancellation notice to their opponent and to the League Referee Coordinator and League President no later than the Sunday before the scheduled game. Failure to give timely cancellation notice will be considered a "forfeit" as described in Rule 13, and the forfeiting team will incur the fines described in Rule 13(b).

B. If a team shows up at the field with less than 7 players but at least 6 players, the game will be considered as a forfeit for purposes of the game score, and both teams are obligated to play a friendly scrimmage for at least three quarters of scheduled game time. If the teams scrimmage, the teams are encouraged to share players and the forfeiting team will not incur the $100 forfeit fine and the forfeiting team will not be required to pay the referee fees for the non-forfeiting team. If the forfeiting team refuses to scrimmage or has less than 6 players, then the forfeiting team will incur the fines described in Rule 13(b). All players playing the scrimmage must be rostered members of the scheduled teams and all will be required to provide their player pass to the referees. No other players rostered on other teams will be permitted to play, or the team that is short players will incur the entire fines described in Rule 13(b).

C. Any team that fails to show, cancels or forfeits more than 2 games within a season MAY be suspended for the remainder of the season.

Rule 15: Game Cancellations

A. Games may be cancelled:

1. By the League President; or
2. at the discretion of the Referee, due to inclement weather or poor field conditions (game will not normally be cancelled due to rain).
    a. If a game is cancelled during game play or due to poor field conditions, the league will work with the teams to reschedule the game. The teams will not incur any additional costs.

B. In other circumstances as approved by the Board of Directors for reasons which are in the best interest of the League as whole (i.e., competition in tournaments).

Rule 16: Team Management

When conditions exist within a team that reflect poor management which is not in accordance with these Bylaws and/or not in the best interest of soccer or the League, the PAD Committee shall have the power to suspend the team members involved and to revoke their membership in the League.

Rule 17: Responsibility for Enforcing League Bylaws, Rules and Procedures

Each member of the League is responsible for her actions at all times. In addition, a team may be held responsible for the action of a team member, coach, or spectator if the team fails to take action to ensure that the rules are followed.

A. The League, Players, coaches, referees and spectators shall model inclusive behavior, actively supporting cultural diversity while opposing all types of discrimination, including but not limited to racism. There shall be no discrimination as a result of race, ethnicity, language, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, gender, socio-economic status, age, and physical and mental ability.

Rule 18: Team Name

Each team must have an official name. All names must be approved by the Executive Committee.

Rule 19: Disciplinary and Judicial Process

The Procedure and Disciplinary (PAD) committee will hear all protests or appeals of any kind relating to the interpretation of the SVWSL Rules and Procedures, complaints against a referee, member team, coach or individual according to the following procedure:

A. <u>Protests, Complaints and Grievances</u>

1. Protests, Complaints and Grievances shall be in writing (email is adequate) to the President of SVWSL and PAD Committee chair accompanied by a $10.00 fee. The Protest, Complaint/or Grievance should contain at a Minimum the following information:
    a. Name and telephone number of the person filing the grievance.
    b. The cause of the complaint and other parties involved.
    c. The steps taken to resolve the complaint.
    d. The action requested of the PAD Committee.
2. Any registered player, manager, or team in good standing may bring an action or complaint to the attention of SVWSL.
3. The SVWSL President will refer all appropriate matters to the PAD Committee chair for review and action, if necessary. The PAD Committee Chair may, at her discretion, convene a PAD committee meeting, as stated in Rule 19, Section B.
4. If the PAD Committee Chair decides to convene a meeting, the Chair will appoint four members to serve. The Chair will reside over the meeting and have voting rights in case of a tie. No member of the PAD Committee hearing an issue shall be a member of a team involved or any team that might be affected by any action taken, nor will they be directly or indirectly related to the parties involved.

5. Any decision made by the PAD committee chair may be appealed by following the procedures set forth in Rule 19, Section B.
6. Grounds for protest shall be limited to: misapplication of FIFA's Laws of the Game, USSF Administrative Rules, SVWSL Bylaws and Rules. In no event will a judgment call by a referee be grounds for any protest or appeal.
7. Any protest regarding field conditions, uniform colors, or player equipment must be made before the start of the match to the referee and the opposing team. The referee will note that the match was played under protest. An official protest still needs to be filed as stated in Rule 19, Section A(1).

B. Appeal of PAD Committee Decision

Assuming all procedures were followed in Rule 19, Section A. any decision by the PAD Committee Chair or Committee may be appealed in the following manner:

1. Within 10 days of being notified in writing (email DOES NOT suffice) by the PAD Committee Chair of action taken by the PAD Committee, the SVWSL President and PAD Committee Chair shall be notified in writing of the intent to appeal (email Does Not suffice). A $10 fee will accompany the written notification to the SVWSL President.
2. The SVWSL President will direct the PAD Committee Chair to appoint a committee to hear the appeal.
3. The PAD Committee Chair will notify all parties of the date, time and place of the hearing and the matter involved. The PAD Committee Chair or any party may request the presence of additional parties or witness as deemed necessary.
4. The PAD Committee Chair will appoint three members to an Appeals Committee. The Chair will reside over the meeting but will not be present during deliberation of the committee and will not vote. No member of the Appeals Committee shall be a member of a team involved or any team that might be affected by any action taken, nor will they be directly or indirectly related to the parties involved. No member of the Appeals Committee shall have set on the original PAD committee first hearing the issue.
5. The appellant or any parties involved may be requested to attend the meeting where the appeal is to be heard. The appellant or any party involved has the right to attend the meeting in which the appeal is to be heard. Additional parties and /or documentation may also be requested by the Appeals Committee.
6. A decision shall be reached by a simple majority of the present eligible Committee members.
7. The decision shall be communicated verbally to the parties at the conclusion of the deliberations. The decision shall be effective immediately and shall be binding. The SVWSL President will forward written notification to the involved parties within 10 days.
8. A party who wishes to appeal the decision of the SVWSL has further rights within US Club Soccer, the USASA and USSF. No party in any action may invoke the air of the Courts of the United State without first exhausting all available remedies within the appropriated soccer organization.

Rule 20: Procedure for Handling Ejections from a Game

Any player ejected from a game will automatically be suspended from play for her team's next scheduled game. Any coach ejected from a game will automatically be excluded from participating in the team's next scheduled game. If a player or coach is ejected from a game:

A. The Referee Coordinator will notify the Chairperson of the PAD Committee and the league President.

B. The PAD Chairperson will review the reason for the ejection and the background of the team and the player or coach. If further action is deemed necessary, the Chairperson will:

1. Schedule a formal PAD hearing no later than the Wednesday 10 days following the date of the ejection.
2. Notify the Board Representative and /or the Team Coordinator of the hearing. The Board Representative and/or Team Coordinator is responsible for notifying the ejected player or coach and requesting that they be present. (If one or both elect not to attend the hearing, the absence will in no way affect the Committee's authority to apply penalties.)

C. All affected parties will be informed of the Committee's or Chairperson's action either in writing or orally before the affected team's next scheduled game.

Rule 21: Procedure for Handling Protests of Referee Decisions

A. If a team wishes to protest the action of a Referee pursuant to Rule 12, it must:

1. Inform the PAD Chairperson of the intent to protest within 24 hours of the end of the game.
2. Provide the Chairperson with the name(s) of the Referee(s), the game card, and $20 filing fee, and a written statement of the call(s) and the rules or procedures that were incorrectly applied within 48 hours.

B. The PAD Chairperson will review the written statement and determine whether the protest meets the criteria established in Rule 12.

1. If the Chairperson determines that the criteria are not met, the team will forfeit its $20 fee to the League, except that if the PAD Chairperson does not handle the problem to the satisfaction of the complainant and if she declines to call a PAD meeting, the complainant may file a grievance.
2. If the Chairperson determines that the criteria are met, she will:
    a. Schedule a formal PAD hearing at least 24 hours before the affected team is scheduled to play again.
    b. Notify the Referee(s) and Team Coordinators of the affected teams of the meeting and request that they be present. If any one of these parties elects not to attend the hearing, the absence will in no way affect the Committee's authority to act.

C. In resolving a protest, the PAD Committee cannot award a win, loss, or tie. It may cancel the record of the game and require that the game be rescheduled.

D. If the protest is found to be in favor of the complainant, the $20 filing fee will be refunded.

E. All members have the right to make an appeal to our State Association, US Club Soccer, if they are unsatisfied with the league's decision.

Rule 22: Standings

A. Standings will be maintained for each playing group, category, section, or division (whichever is lowest).

B. Standings will be computed as follows: Win = 2 points; Tie = 1 point; Loss or Forfeit = 0 points. In the case of a tie in final points, total goal difference (total goals for minus total goals against) will be used to break the tie.

C. Results of the game as shown on the game card will be final unless the game is rescheduled by the PAD Committee.

Rule 23: Retention, Relegation and Promotion

A. Teams finishing at the top of their given division or group, may be promoted to the next highest division.

B. Teams finishing at the bottom of their given division or group may be demoted to the next lowest division.

C. All such retentions, relegations and promotions are at the discretion of the Executive Committee.

Rule 24: Tournaments

The League will have at least one open tournament each seasonal year. This tournament will be called the "Valley Cup." The League may have additional open or invitational tournaments.

Rule 25: Players Under 18 years of age

A. Up to two (2) players under 18 years of age may be registered per team in the lowest Open Division bracket

B. Up to three (3) players under 18 years of age may be registered per team in the mid-level Open Division brackets

C. Up to four (4) players under 18 years of age may be registered per team in the highest Open Division brackets

Rule 26: Medical Insurance

A. The Sacramento Valley Women's Soccer League does not provide medical or dental insurance.

Rule 27: Liabilities and Debts

A. The League will not provide compensatory damages for any personal injuries sustained while participating in any League function. Neither the League nor anyone associated with the League is liable for any expenses incurred for

supplies, medical treatment, or transportation while participating in any function dealing directly or indirectly with the League.

B. The League shall not assume nor be liable for the debts nor the financial responsibilities, either implied or incurred, of any of its member.

Rule 28: Governance
The SVWSL shall be governed by the Bylaws and these Rules and Procedures, except when these are superseded by the United States Soccer Federation and its affiliates.

Rule 29: Fines for Late Registration
Any team that misses the team registration deadline established by the Registrar for the Fall and Winter season will incur a $25 fine plus an additional fine of $5 will accrue for each calendar day until a completed registration packet is delivered to the Registrar. If a team has accrued fines for late registration, the fines must be paid at the same time the team registration is submitted. If the team registration materials do not contain the items the Registrar has specifically requested (i.e., team roster with at least 11 players, registration fees/forms, etc.), it will be considered late and late fines will accrue.

Rule 30: Missed Board of Directors Meeting Fines
Any team that does not have a team representative in attendance at a SVWSL Board of Directors meeting will incur the following fine(s):

A. For the 1st meeting missed during a soccer year, the team will incur a fine of $30

B. For the 2nd meeting missed during a soccer year, the team will incur a fine of $50

C. For the 3rd and any subsequent meetings missed during a soccer year, the team will incur a fine of $100.

Fines must be paid prior to the teams' next scheduled game. The soccer year is defined as September 1 through August 31 in accordance with the League's Bylaws. Notices for upcoming Board of Directors meetings will be sent out to the team representatives at least 30 days in advance with a specific date and time and will also be posted to the League's website.

Rule 31: Player Pass Suspension
Upon the request of a registered team's representative, the League player pass of a player who owes fees, team jerseys, or other equipment to a team, regardless of which team the player is currently registered on, may be suspended until the fees owed to the team are paid in full.

Rule 32: Over 30 Division Players
Teams in the Over 30 Division may have up to 2 players between 28 and 30 years old at the time of play. All other rostered players must turn 30 on or before the end of the seasonal year, currently defined in the Bylaws as September 1st through August 31st.

Rule 33: Over 40 Division Players
Teams in the Over 40 Division may have up to 2 players between 38 and 40 years old at the time of play. All other rostered players must turn 40 on or before the end of the seasonal year, currently defined in the Bylaws as September 1st through August 31st. (*Effective Fall Season 2025*)

Rule 34: Over 50 Division Players
Teams in the Over 50 Division may have up to 2 players between 48 and 50 years old at the time of play. All other rostered players must turn 50 on or before the end of the seasonal year, currently defined in the Bylaws as September 1st through August 31st.

Rule 35: Over 60 Division Players
Teams in the Over 60 Division may have up to 2 players between 58 and 60 years old at the time of play. All other rostered players must turn 60 on or before the end of the seasonal year, currently defined in the Bylaws as September 1st through August 31st.

Rule 36: 8v8 Small-Sided Games
SVWSL 8v8 games follow FIFA's Laws of the Game, SVWSL's Rules of Procedures, with the following modifications:

A. Field Size/Markings: The size of the 8v8 field equals one half of a full-size soccer field, approximately 70-80 yards long and 40-60 yards wide. Pitch markings will be determined by the markings already existing at each SVWSL field locations.

B. Referee Assignment: A single referee will be assigned to each 8v8 game and 2 referees will be assigned starting with the Fall Season in 2025.

C. Game Length: For 8v8 league games, normal game length is 70 minutes with two 35-minute halves and a 5-minute halftime, unless stated otherwise. Time is not stopped if the ball is out of play and there are no time-outs. Teams may choose to play four 17-minute quarters, with a 1-minute water break between quarter 1 and quarter 2 and another between quarter 3 and quarter 4.

D. Forfeiture of Games: A game cannot start unless both teams have a minimum of 5 players each, including a keeper. If a team fails to start the game with a minimum of 5 players within 15 minutes after the scheduled time for the game they will be forced to forfeit the game. If a game is started late, the referee may shorten game length and/or halftime as necessary. Except as noted here, Rule 13: Forfeiture of Games also applies.

E. Kick-off procedure: Taken from the center spot, the player who has kicked the ball from a stationary position cannot touch the ball again until it has been touched by another player. A team can score on a kick-off. The ball may be moved in any direction on a kick-off pursuant to FIFA rules.

F. Goalkeeper Restrictions: The goalkeeper may not kick the ball beyond the halfway line unless:

1) prior to the kick, the ball first touches the ground after being released by the goalkeeper, or
2) after the kick, the ball first touches the ground or another player from either team before crossing the halfway line.

If 1) or 2) does NOT happen, the referee will award the opposing team an indirect free kick at the place where the ball landed on the other side of the mid-line. This rule applies to the goal keeper's drop-kicks, punts and throws. The goalkeeper may completely release the ball from their hands to the ground and then play it as any field player and may be challenged by their opponent.

G. Mercy Rule: If one team is up by 4 goals, that team must remove 1 player from the field of play. If the score differential increases to 8 goals, the trailing team may add 1 player. If the score differential returns to 2 goals, then the player from the winning team may return to the field of play.

H. Team Roster: Rosters may carry up to 16 players, however the maximum game day roster is limited to 14.