



HSSA Association Rules

Revised 02/26/25

Purpose

The purpose of the Association is to provide high school aged players the opportunity to continue to play the game on a recreational level. The objective is to have fun. Anyone exhibiting behavior to the contrary will be asked to discontinue their participation. *The Sponsoring League for teams playing in HSSA is responsible for adherence to the Purpose and Rules of the Association and the Laws of the Game.*

Sanctioning Body

Games are played as "friendlies", as defined by the Ohio Soccer Association (OSA) and considered under-19 as an age group. All teams (and players) are required to have liability coverage and encouraged to be affiliated with OSA through a club or league member.

Team Formation

All players who register to play should be included on a team; provided a sufficient number of players, both boys and girls, register to form a team and a coach can be secured for the team. Teams may not be formed on the basis of a tryout.

Team Declarations and Division Placement

Team Declarations and subsequent Division Placement is the responsibility of the respective Sponsoring League's HSSA Coordinator. The HSSA Administrator has the authority to override the League Coordinator's decisions in this regard if the Administrator has reason to believe an error in placement may have occurred. The HSSA Administrator will discuss the matter with the respective League Coordinator before a final placement decision is made. *Team rosters that include players that played on their Fall High School team would probably be declared as an "A" Team for the spring.*

Player Eligibility

The Sponsoring League is responsible for assuring that ONLY eligible players are playing in HSSA. If any dispute arises regarding player eligibility, the Sponsoring League is responsible for documenting their player's eligibility. The teams must be comprised of 9th, 10th, 11th, or 12th grade players and within the U-19 age group requirement (Born between 2010 and 2006 and in high school).

Exception: An exception may be made for an 8th grade player to play in HSSA, provided that:

- a) *The exception must be requested, in writing, by the League HSSA Coordinator of the Sponsoring League.*
- b) *The Sponsoring League must receive confirmation from the player's parents or guardian that they understand their player will be playing against players aged 14 through 18.*

Players MAY NOT play on an OHSAA high school team, a select (travel) team, or club team, at the same time they are playing on an HSSA team.

Playing Time

As a recreational association, all players should play at least half of each game. If a violation of this rule is documented, that game may be declared a forfeit.

Ohio High School Athletic Association Restrictions

Team rosters for spring season may include players from a fall, high school interscholastic team. However, Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) restrictions may apply, specifically regulation 7.3.

Players who play on their high school team, and their high school team is affiliated with OHSAA, need to be aware of the OHSAA "6 player" restriction. No more than six (6) players from the same high school program may play together on the same outdoor team in the spring. This restriction applies to all players, from all levels of teams in the school (i.e. freshman, junior varsity, varsity). Boys' programs and girls' programs are considered separate entities for application of this rule; so, theoretically, 6 girls and 6 boys from the same high school could play together, provided their school has separate boys and girls soccer programs.

Students who did NOT play for an interscholastic team the previous year do not count in the team limitation of that sport. Graduating seniors also do not count toward the maximum non-interscholastic limitation. Additional information can be found at the OHSAA website, OHSAA.ORG.

The responsibility for the interpretation and enforcement of these restrictions lies with the sponsoring league, coach and players. The High School Soccer Association (HSSA) bears no responsibility for interpretation of the OHSAA rules and restrictions.

Laws of the Game

USFF Laws of the Game for U-19 play will be followed, except as noted throughout these rules. The format for play will be 11 v 11, on a regulation size field. Games will consist of two (2), thirty-five (35) minute halves, with a running clock, except for serious injuries. In which case, the Head Referee may add time to the game to account for lost time due to the serious injury.

The start of the game may be delayed up to fifteen (15) minutes from the scheduled start time, to allow for the arrival of both teams before a forfeit is ruled. **Games should not start** without both teams' coaches being present. If a coach is not present, a parent from that team may assume the coaching responsibilities.

According to USSF Laws of the Game, a minimum of 7 players must be on the field during the match. A team may not begin a match with fewer than 7 players. If, during the course of the game, a team falls below the minimum of 7 players on the field, the match will be suspended and rescheduled for a later date, if possible.

Substitution Rule

An unlimited number of substitutions may be made (with the referee's permission) as follows:

1. Before a throw-in in your team's favor. If a player for the opposing team is at the mid-field flag waiting to be a substitute when the team that is awarded a throw-in has a substitute to enter the game, the substitute for the opposing team may also enter the game. If the team that has been awarded a throw-in does not have a substitute, then neither team may substitute a player.
2. Before a goal kick for either team
3. After a score by either team
4. Prior to kick-off of the second half
5. After an injury, if the injured player is substituted

Slide Tackles Involving An Opponent Are Prohibited

Referees, coaches and participants are to be reminded at the start of each match that, as a co-ed program, slide tackles involving an opponent are prohibited to reduce the chance for injury. An infraction will result in an indirect free kick (IFK).

1. On the first occurrence a verbal warning will be given.
2. On the second occurrence, a yellow card caution may be issued.

The accumulation of two yellow card cautions to any one player during the match will result in the issuance of a red card send-off.

Roster Adjustments

To have eleven (11) players, HSSA Co-ed teams are required to have a minimum of three (3) female players on the field during the match. Adjustments will be made as follows:

- If 3 girls are on the field, a maximum of 8 boys may play. Total field players = 11.
- If 2 girls are on the field, a maximum of 8 boys may play. Total field players = 10.
- If 1 girl is on the field, a maximum of 8 boys may play. Total players on the Field = 9.

If a team is unable to place any girls on the field, the game should be rescheduled for a date when girls can be present for play. A Mercy Rule no longer applies in HSSA.

Uniforms

The respective team's jersey colors should be confirmed by both coaches. If there is a color conflict, the HOME TEAM must change colors or wear pinnies. All jerseys should be of a similar design, numbered, and should not have any duplicate numbers.

Religious Clothing

According to Law 4, The Players' Equipment:

A player must not use equipment or wear anything which is dangerous to himself or another player. The basic compulsory equipment of a player is a jersey or shirt, shorts, stockings, shin guards, and footwear. There is no provision for a player to wear a skirt or similar clothing. However, in an analogous situation, in respect of certain religions that require members to wear head coverings, the Secretary General of the United States Soccer Federation has given permission to those bound by religious law to wear such head coverings, usually a turban or yarmulke, provided the referee finds that the headgear does not pose a danger to the player wearing it, or to the other players. This principle could be extended to other clothing required of members by their religion.

Scheduling

The Association Administrator schedules ONLY the games; the date and the home and visiting teams. The Home Team, through their League's HSSA Coordinator, schedules the fields, times and referees for their HOME games. The HOME TEAM COACH must contact the Visiting Team Coach to advise as to the field location/number and the time of the game. These contacts should be made as soon as possible at the beginning of the season, rather than on a week-by-week basis.

Game Days and Times

All games will be played on Sundays, preferably after 1:00pm. Game days and times may be re-scheduled at the discretion of, and with the agreement of, both coaches.

Scheduling Communication

HSSA will email schedules to all Coaches and League Coordinators. League Coordinators will advise their league's coaches of the field assignments and game times for their home games. The HOME TEAM COACH must contact the Visiting Team Coach to advise as to the field location/number and the time of the game. Team colors should also be confirmed. If there is a color conflict, the HOME TEAM must change colors.

Reporting Game Scores

If you wish, game scores can be reported to HSSA by the HOME TEAM on the day the game is played. When reporting scores, please email the following information. Please also indicate that you are reporting a game score for an HSSA game.

1. Scheduled date of game. (Which may or may not be the date it was played.)
2. Home Team Name and number of goals scored.
3. Visiting Team Name and number of goals scored.

Ohio Return-to-Play Law

1. All participating Leagues are responsible for the implementation of the Law for their League Sponsored Teams.
2. All participating Leagues are responsible for making sure their Coaches, Parents, Players, Other League Officials and Referees are aware of the Law and take the matter seriously. We have no choice in this. IT IS THE LAW.
3. *If a player is identified with the possible symptoms of a concussion by a Referee, the Coach of the player's team, or Other League Official; that player must be removed from the field and may not return to the field that day, nor participate in any future team practices or games, until being cleared, in writing, by one of the following:*
 - *a physician. (M.D., or D.O.)*
 - *an athletic trainer whose work is supervised by a physician.*
 - *a physician's assistant.*
 - *a nurse practitioner.*
4. *No Coach, Substitute Coach, Referee, or Club Assistant Referee shall be required to demonstrate or prove to any other coach, substitute coach, referee, club assistant referee, player, or parent that they are in compliance with the requirements of Ohio's Return-to-Play Law.*
5. *Coaches will have no standing to make an "official determination" as to whether **a player on another team** is exhibiting possible symptoms of a concussion.*

Field and Goal Requirements

Each participating League and/or Team must provide a field for their home games. The minimum field size is 50 yards by 100 yards. Fields must be safe for play and properly lined and equipped, per USSF guidelines. Goal dimensions must be 8' x 24', with nets, and they must be securely anchored. The senior referee is responsible for adherence to these requirements.

Team and Spectator Locations

Both team benches must be on one side of the field and all spectators on the opposite side of the field. A maximum of three (3) coaches are allowed on the bench.

Rules Regarding Thunder and Lightning

Games (or practices) are to be stopped immediately and players/parents to take cover:

- If lightning of any sort is observed,
- If thunder is heard, even in the distance,
- If a lightning detector/predictor sounds an alarm
- If an audible tornado siren sounds an alarm

Return to the field and resume play (or practice) after:

- Waiting at least 30-minutes after the last observation of lightning of any sort, or
- Waiting at least 30-minutes after the last sound of thunder, even in the distance,
- Waiting at least 30-minutes after the initial alarm from a lightning detector/predictor, unless an all-clear has sounded,
- Waiting at least 30-minutes after the alarm from an audible tornado siren has last been heard,
- Whichever occurs last!

In the case of an audible tornado siren only, play may resume in less than thirty minutes if the warning/watch which initiated the siren has been discontinued or expired.

If the referee does not suspend play, coaches should remove their players from the field and take cover (cars).

Referees

The Home Team will schedule and pay the referees. Certified (USSF/OHSAA) referees must be used for all contests. The Center Referee must be an adult. It is strongly recommended that Assistant Referees also be adults. If a two-person system of control is used, both referees should be adults. If "Club, Assistant Referees" are used, they may only indicate when the ball has left the field of play, unless BOTH coaches AND the Center Referee agree to allow them greater authority.

Coaches

An adult, preferably a parent, must be assigned to each team to serve as the team coach. Games may not commence without an adult coach on the bench. Coaches will be held responsible for the behavior of their players and parents. They may be asked by the referee to correct any undesirable behaviors. Coaches may be disqualified from a match due to the behavior of their players or parents. Games may not continue, without an adult coach on the bench.

Disqualifications

Disqualifications must be reported to the HSSA Office after the game. The Head Referee of the match MUST SUBMIT A WRITTEN REPORT to the League Coordinator of the Home Team. The player's (coach's) name and number, as well as the circumstances should be reported. The League Coordinator will then forward this report to the HSSA League Administrator.

A player, coach, other bench personnel, or spectator that has been disqualified from a contest, shall be barred from participating in the next contest. Additional game suspensions may be invoked after review by the HSSA Office and the League offices of the two teams involved.

Coaches will be held responsible for the behavior of their players and parents and may be asked by the referee to correct any undesirable behaviors. Coaches may be disqualified from a match due to the behavior of their parents or players.

Noisemakers

The use of artificial noisemakers, i.e. air horns, vuvuzelas, tambourines, megaphones, bells, whistles, bugles, or other such devices are discouraged during HSSA games by players, coaches or spectators. Leagues may prohibit their use during any regularly scheduled games. Referees may use their discretion as to whether noisemakers, visual materials or use of drones interferes with the game they are officiating.

Reporting Concerns and/or Complaints

If any Association Participant (Coach, Player, Parent, Referee, etc.) wishes to raise an issue regarding any matter related to the Association, they should first forward that issue to their respective HSSA League Coordinator for resolution. After review, the League Coordinator may choose to forward the issue onto the HSSA Administrator. The HSSA Administrator will review the matter with the League Coordinator and, together, they will determine the appropriate action to be taken.

If the issue involves another League, the HSSA Administrator will forward the matter onto that League's HSSA Coordinator. Together, the HSSA Administrator and the League HSSA Coordinator will review the matter and, together, determine the appropriate action to be taken. The HSSA Administrator will communicate what action has been taken to the League HSSA Coordinator that reported the issue.

The accumulation of two yellow card cautions to any one player during the match will result in the issuance of a red card send-off, regardless of the violations involved in the two incidents.

Regarding Sportsmanship and Fair Play

As indicated above, the purpose of the Association is to have fun. Poor behavior, to the contrary, only creates an unpleasant experience for everyone involved. It should not be tolerated by participating leagues/teams. While everyone wants to win the game, that should not be the primary reason for playing it. As adults, it is our responsibility to instill a spirit of sportsmanship and fair play in our players. That goal cannot be achieved if we allow players, spectators, our assistant coaches, or ourselves, to behave in a manner contrary to that. So, let's be diligent in our efforts to create an atmosphere in which everyone can have an enjoyable time.

Public Health Emergency

Upon government declaration of a public health emergency, the HSSA Administrators, League Coordinators and coaches will coordinate and communicate specific protocols associated with the specific health emergency, such as Covid-19.

Coaches must discuss the protocols that are in place at the HOME Team Fields and communicate same to their parents. While they may all be similar, it will be important to understand any differences - PRIOR TO the Visiting team arriving at the fields. In the event there ARE differences in protocols, those protocols that are in place at the HOME Team Fields will prevail. *If the Visiting Team does not feel the protocols that are in place at the Home Fields provide a sufficiently safe environment to play the game, they may choose to not play the game without any resulting consequences. OR they may choose to work with the Home Team to establish Protocols that do provide for a sufficiently safe environment to play the game.*