



GMSA Rules Of Competition

Updated August 2017



I. Registration

A. All players must be registered with the United States Soccer Federation (USSF) through the Tennessee State Soccer Association (TSSA). All coaches must provide proof of registration of each player on their team at each game, by showing a GMSA Player Card for every player who is to participate in that match. Any players who are unable to provide a player card will NOT be allowed to participate in that match. NO exceptions. If there is an issue with a player's registration, it MUST be addressed to the registrar by each team's coach at least 24 hours in advance of the game in question.

B. At a date announced on the league calendar, posted on memphisoccer.com, each team will be able to begin registering players for that particular season. Rosters may consist of no more than 25 players per team at any time during the season.

C. Each player on the roster must register in advance to be eligible for the start of the season. Players may also register throughout the season, up to each season's "roster freeze deadline" date...players registering in mid-season will only be able to participate in those matches after their registration process is complete.

D. Players may register either in person, or through the on-line registration system located on the league website. There will be a deadline published in advance of the season, before which all players must register to be eligible for their team's first game.

In-person registration is held approximately three-to-four weeks prior to the start of the season. Dates, times, and locations will be announced via email, posted on the league website and social media, and at each season's coaches meeting. Registration fees are payable by check or cash only during in-person registration. Players must complete all appropriate paperwork and submit a photo for their player card at this time.

Players may also register on-line through Active.com by using a Visa or MasterCard. A link to each season's on-line registration form will be published on the MemphisSoccer.com website prior to the start of each season. A small processing fee is added to the cost of registration fees when the on-line service is used. Players must still submit a photo via email, if they register on-line.

E. Every player must sign a TSSA waiver form to be eligible to participate. These forms will be provided by the league at in person registration; they are available for download from the league website for mail-in registration, and may be completed by electronic signature when registering on-line.

F. All players must provide a photograph for their player card. For players who register in person, a representative of the league will take a digital photograph of that player at that time. For those who register on-line or by mail, the photo may be either mailed in to our PO Box, or emailed to the GMSA Registrar. All photos must be in color, and should clearly show the player from the chest up. The head should be at least the size of a nickel. Printed photos should be at least wallet-size; digital photos should be at least 200 pixels high. All photos become the property of GMSA.

G. Completed player cards will be made available to the coach of that player's team per the schedule of dates listed on the GMSA website for each season. During the season, player pass are collected throughout a given week, with each Wednesday at 6:00 pm being the typical cut-off day. Cards are processed and information sent to TSSA on Thursday, so that a player may participate in all matches beginning with the up-coming Sunday.

H. Players are not permitted to play for more than one men's team simultaneously, regardless of division; nor are players permitted to play for more than one coed team simultaneously, regardless of division. A player MAY play for one GMSA Men's team and one GMSA coed team simultaneously. Players caught circumventing this rule subject themselves and their teams to forfeitures and disciplinary action (suspensions) from the league.

J. The roster freeze deadline is imposed approximately five weeks into the regular season. No team may register, transfer, or make any other transactions concerning new players beyond this point, or during any subsequent league tournament. (Exceptions may be made in rare cases. A team's coach may petition the GMSA Registrar with a description of the unusual circumstances that he/she feels necessitates adding players beyond the roster freeze deadline. Permission of the GMSA Registration and/or League President is required to authorize such action.)

K. At the discretion of the league, any team may be required to post a bond prior to the beginning of each season, equal to one game's worth of referee fees (from both teams) for that particular season (currently \$160).

L. Any player intending to transfer must complete the proper transfer paperwork, and pay a transfer fee. Additionally, the player must notify his/her former coach in writing, via email, and copied to results@memphisoccer.com prior to the transfer. Failure to comply with this notification policy prior to the transfer may result in discipline from the league against the player in question, AND against the coach of the team to which the player is moving. Discipline may include fines, suspensions, or both, depending on the nature of the infraction.

Players and coaches will not be allowed to participate in league play until any imposed penalties are satisfied.

M. A refund of a player's registration fees is available under the following circumstances:

- *Before a team's first game:* If a player has already registered, but determines that he or she cannot play during the up-coming season (schedule change, injury, etc.) prior to his/her team's first scheduled match, then that player may request a refund of all fees paid during registration prior to the date of their team's first match.
- *During a team's first game:* If a player is injured during his or her team's first match, and will be unable to participate further in that season, that player may request that registration fees be "held" for future use. This means that fees cannot be refunded, but rather can be applied to a future season in which that player can participate, up to 18 months out from the date of the injury. (This is done for insurance purposes related to an injury.)

To request a hold on registration fees, the player must notify the league registrar in writing (GMSAreg@comcast.net) within seven days of the injury, or prior to his team's next match, whichever comes first. For example, if a player is injured during the first game of the Spring 2018 season, that player may ask that fees be "held" by the league, to be used for either the Fall 2018, Spring 2019 or Fall 2019 season. After the Fall 2019 season, the fees are forfeited to the league, if the player has not resumed participation at that point. The player would need to contact the registrar to indicate that they wish to use their "held" fees to be able to register for that season. In either case above, the team's manager must surrender that player's "player card" to the registrar.

- *After a team's first match:* If a player is injured at any point after their team's first match, or determines that he/she cannot continue to participate for any other reason, that player is no longer eligible for a refund. All registration fees (payable for field rental, state registration, etc.) are paid to the respective locations around this time, and are no longer refundable at that point.

N. All players must be at least 16 years of age prior to the start of the season in which they are participating.

II. Equipment

A. All players are required by USSF to wear shin guards at all times. If a player is identified on the field without wearing shinguards, he must be substituted for (or in case of 11 or fewer players, leave the field without substitution) until proper shinguards are procured.

B. All teams MUST have **MATCHING JERSEYS**. NO EXCEPTIONS. Each player must have his own unique jersey (i.e., two players swapping the same jersey during a match is not allowed.) Jerseys need not be expensive or detailed in nature (simple short-sleeve T-shirts with numbers are perfectly acceptable.) Remember that this applies to EVERY player, even players who are ADDED during the season. It is recommended by GMSA for teams to purchase a few extra jerseys at the beginning of each season to ensure that each team has enough jerseys to accommodate all players throughout the year. Be sure to check with the league before purchasing new jerseys to help determine the best color selection, so as to avoid conflicts with the jersey colors of other teams, and thus minimize the need for alternate jerseys. The league may also be able to help you in the selection of new jerseys.

C. Each jersey must have a **UNIQUE NUMBER** that is permanently affixed to the shirt...taped-on numbers are NOT acceptable. The goalkeeper is the only player who MAY participate in a match without having a number permanently affixed to his jersey. If the goalkeeper's jersey is unnumbered, he shall be designated by his regular field-player jersey number on the match report, along with the abbreviation "GK"...for example, if #21 is playing in goal, he must be designated as "21-GK" on the match report. If another player becomes the goalkeeper during the match, the notation of "GK" must be made on the match report next to that player's jersey number.

D. If there is a conflict with jersey colors, the HOME TEAM is required to change to an alternate jersey color. Each team's alternate jerseys MUST meet the same requirements as their primary jerseys (same style and color, with numbers). Shirts that are "close" to the same color, or shirts without numbers, are NOT acceptable. GMSA does have a couple of "loaner" sets of jerseys that are available, but it is the obligation of the coach to coordinate arrangements for their use at least one week in advance of when they are needed. **Note:** Both teams should wear the jersey color that they are scheduled to wear, according to the schedule for that match. Should the visiting team wear a color other than that for which they are scheduled, they shall be held responsible for any resulting conflict; should the visiting team be unable to change to their scheduled color, they will forfeit the match.

III. Pregame

A. Each team must present the following items to the referee PRIOR to every match:

- GMSA Player Cards for each player
- GMSA Match Report, pre-typed, listing all players, ID Numbers, and Jersey Numbers
- The fee for the referees for that match, in CASH
- A game ball (the home team is required to supply the game ball; however, it is recommended that both teams be prepared to supply an extra ball at the request of the referee)

B. If a team does not have at least 7 players at the field at game time, they will be allowed a 10-minute grace period from the scheduled kick-off time. (One minute will be subtracted from each half for every two minutes the start of the game is delayed.) If, after the grace period, seven players are not at the field, dressed, checked-in by the referee crew, and ready to play, then the game will be declared a forfeit. There is only a five-minute grace period for all paperwork (cards, match reports, etc.) to be present and ready, or a forfeit will result.

C. Decisions on rainouts will be made as soon as possible, but it may be game time before the decision can be made by referees and league officials. For the latest information on field playability, you can call the Mike Rose Soccer Complex at 751-4223 Option 9, or access the MRSC website at: <http://www.gomrsc.com>. A decision is usually made by MRSC before 3:00 p.m. on weekdays, and by 10:00 a.m. on weekends. After this time, it will be the decision of the referee as to whether or not conditions are suitable for play, should inclement weather occur after the complex decision is made. If there is any doubt as to whether or not a game will be played, plan on showing up at the field as scheduled. (Remember, games are only "called off", they are not "called on".)

D. Game times listed on the schedule are the actual kickoff times. If the game starts late because either team is not ready to play (whether 11 players are present or not), that time will be subtracted from the match (one minute from each half for every two minutes late the match starts). In other words, time starts ticking at the scheduled kickoff time, and you should be ready to begin the match at that time.

E. Each team should supply at least one game ball for each game. Nets and corner flags are supplied by the Mike Rose Complex. But, if any games are played elsewhere, each team must supply its own net. You should put up/take down your net in an expedient manner so as not to delay your match or following matches.

IV. Match Play

A. All players must be legally registered with GMSA, TSSA & USSF, and must be in good standing with the league. Players "not in good standing" include:

1. Those who have not completed the proper registration procedures, paid the proper fees, or who otherwise have not received a GMSA player card
2. Those who are registered, but who are under suspension for on-field actions, based on a review by the league disciplinary committee

Any team caught using players who are ineligible (for any reason) will automatically forfeit the match in question. Both the player and coach will be suspended. Players who participate having not yet registered will not be allowed to register for the remainder of that season. Players who participate while under suspension will have their initial suspensions doubled. Illegal participation puts GMSA in serious legal risk, and subjects the league to potentially damaging liability issues; **ILLEGAL PARTICIPATION WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.**

The referee will not allow players to participate without proper paperwork. If necessary, the referee may wait for a stoppage in play (or halftime, at the referee's discretion) to validate a player's paperwork. If the referee (or assistant referee) cannot independently verify the player's eligibility, the player will not be allowed to participate in that match.

B. Players whose equipment does not properly conform to league standards are also ineligible to participate at the direction of the referee. Violations include non-matching uniforms, improper numbering on jerseys, wearing of jewelry or related items, lack of shinguards, and any other equipment violations. If the referee detects the equipment violation prior to the match, the player in question will not be allowed to enter the field until the violation has been corrected. If the referee detects the violation during play, the player will be directed to leave the field immediately, and may not return until their equipment conforms.

C. In the event a match must be stopped for inclement weather (rain, lightning, etc.), referees and teams shall wait for a minimum of 15 minutes from the point at which the match was stopped and attempt to resume the match if possible. The referee shall have the final authority to determine whether or not conditions are safe to resume the match, unless superseded by Mike Rose Soccer Complex fields and grounds staff. If a match is able to resume, it shall continue from the point at which it was stopped, according to the referee. Any match that does not reach the half-time whistle, and is not able to continue from that point, is not considered to be official, and will be rescheduled at a later date. Referees should return game fees to teams when it is determined that the match will not continue. Any game that reaches the half-time whistle shall be considered official, the score when the match was terminated will be the final score, and the match will be considered "played" and "of record" toward league standings.

V. Player Conduct, Team Conduct, Cards, and Suspensions

A. Any player receiving a yellow card MAY be substituted for at the request of the coach of said player's team, or at the request of the center referee. It is not mandatory that a cautioned player be substituted automatically, but the center referee may request that a coach substitute that player at his discretion, to avoid a confrontational situation and maintain game control. If a cautioned player is asked to leave the field, and that player's team has 11 or fewer players, that team must "play short" until, at the discretion of the referee, the cautioned player is allowed to return to the field. This applies to ALL players, including the goalkeeper. Another player may not serve time for the goalkeeper, even in situations where a team is playing with fewer than 11 players.

B. The accumulation of four yellow cards by one player, during one season for a single team, will result in that player being suspended for the next match played following the issuance of the fourth yellow card.

C. Any player receiving a red card is ejected from the match, and may not be substituted. **An automatic one-game suspension accompanies all red cards;** the ejected player must sit out the next game of record (meaning, any match that is played to full time, played to at least half time, or a match that is declared a forfeit). **There are NO exceptions to this rule.** All ejections are reviewed by the GMSA Disciplinary Committee, and longer

suspensions may be imposed based on the circumstances of the offense. (See sections 5F & 5G below). The Disciplinary Committee holds full authority in this regard.

Suspension of dual-registered players (those who play for both a men's team and a coed team): Any player playing for two teams, who receives a suspension issued by the Disciplinary Committee for any Class Three or lower offense, will serve the entirety of that suspension in the division in which the player committed said offense. That player will only be eligible to play for his other team during the length of the suspension, unless otherwise stipulated by the DC. The Disciplinary Committee reserves the right to suspend players from ALL league play (all teams, regardless of division), depending on the severity of the infraction.

Any sending off offense of Class Four or greater will result in a suspension from all league play for the duration of the suspension.

D. Any player receiving a second red card during the same season, on the SAME team, including tournament play of that season, will receive an AUTOMATIC minimum suspension of three games. All suspensions carry from season to season, if the duration of the suspension is not satisfied during the current season.

E. Red card offenses are divided into five (5) classes; these classifications are the recommended MINIMUM length of suspensions for each offense. GMSA reserves the right to alter suspension length based on the circumstances and severity of each offense. Misconduct is defined by class as listed below, as adapted from Tennessee Soccer classifications:

1. Class One (Punishable by a minimum 1-game suspension)
 - a. use of profanity by word or sign
 - b. inciting disruptive behavior
 - c. making insulting or derogatory remarks or gestures
2. Class Two (Punishable by a minimum 2-game suspension)
 - a. making threats
 - b. making threatening gestures
 - c. second Class I offense
3. Class Three (Punishable by a minimum 3-game suspension)
 - a. physically striking a player or fighting with a player either before, during, or immediately after a game (includes spitting on another player)
 - b. second Class II offense or three or more Class I offenses
4. Class Four (Punishable by an indefinite suspension as determined by GMSA)*
 - a. physically pushing or striking a coach/assistant coach, team manager, referee, spectator, association official, or TSSA official
 - b. vandalism; willful or malicious destruction of property
 - c. second Class III offense or three or more Class II offenses
5. Class Five - As defined in the USSF Administrative Rule Book

* Within GMSA, any incident involving striking (or striking/spitting at) a referee or association official will result in a minimum automatic suspension for the remainder of the current season from ALL GMSA competition, and an additional 18 month suspension with a three-year probationary period to follow, in which any class three offense or higher committed by the player in question will result in a lifetime ban from GMSA.

F. The disciplinary process for GMSA is as follows:

Note: The GMSA Disciplinary Committee (The "DC") consists of seven-to-ten representatives from across the league, and may include current players, coaches, or managers. Any members whose teams may be directly impacted by a DC decision (i.e., their team is in the same division as that of the player currently under review) will abstain from participation in that particular case.

1. Referee reports received: The DC Chair receives the referee's report on each match, usually within 48 hours of its completion. The DC Chair will screen each report to determine if there was an incident that needs to be reviewed by the full Disciplinary Committee. (Note: All straight red cards are automatically reviewed that involve Serious Foul Play, Violent Conduct, Spitting, or Foul/Abusive Language.) The DC Chair may request additional reports from the referee crew, which may take an additional 48 hours.

2. Notifications are made: The DC Chair will notify the head coach/manager via the email address provided for that coach at the beginning of the season that the incident is being reviewed. The player in question will also be notified, if an email address is readily available. Whether or not a player's email is available or valid, it is ultimately the coach's responsibility to communicate with the player.

3. Statements are gathered: Any player receiving a red card may submit a statement regarding the incident in question to the DC Chair for consideration by the full disciplinary committee if a review is ultimately warranted. Statements may be submitted by the player, and/or the player's coach or manager, and should be submitted in writing via email to the DC Chair, within 72 hours of the incident. Statements from all other parties will only be accepted if directly solicited by the DC Chair. No other unsolicited statements will be accepted. Statements received after the 72 time period are not guaranteed to be considered.

4. Deliberation by DC Members: The members of the DC will review the information presented and deliberate the case, usually via email. They may request that the DC Chair solicit additional information from the referee, coaches, players, or other witnesses as needed.

5. Voting: The DC members shall then, individually and blindly, email their vote on the necessity and/or length of suspension to the DC chair, who tabulates the votes. The DC Chair does not actively vote, except where a tie-breaking vote is needed.

6. Notification of Verdict: The DC chair will notify the coach of the verdict. The DC chair will also notify the player, if a contact email is available. Regardless of whether or not the player is notified directly, the coach is responsible for relaying the information to the player, and is responsible for seeing that he sits out the correct number of games.

7. Right of Appeal: Appeals are not eligible for any suspension that falls within the minimum recommendations given via second E above – only the suspended games beyond the stated minimums can be contested. Suspended players have five (5) days from the date (and time) of the notification to appeal the decision. Passage of five days renders the player's right to appeal as null and void. Any appeal must be submitted in writing by the PLAYER, via email to the DC Chair and/or GMSA President.

NOTE: Appeals are administered by the GMSA President and deliberated by the GMSA Executive Committee ("the EC"), to allow for an entirely independent review of the facts/statements, with the only overlap being that the EC is told the verdict of the DC. The EC review is independent of the DC ruling; the verdict rendered by the EC may confirm the original ruling, or may augment (either decrease or increase) the length of suspension. If an appeal is filed, the Executive Committee will review the case and will either confirm or amend the original decision, usually within five days of the submission of the appeal.

8. Duration of process: The length of each case varies depending on the complexity of the circumstances, but will usually average approximately seven days from start to finish. Since red-carded players automatically sit out one game, the DC verdict is almost always rendered at least 2 days before the next match for which the player could (potentially) be eligible. If there are unusual circumstances related to a particular case (i.e., the review is taking longer than expected, or a team is playing more than one game before a decision can be rendered), the DC Chair will notify the coach as to whether or not that player should resume participation or not. If a player is under review for an offense involving excessive violence toward another player, referee, or official, the DC Chair will likely instruct the coach to withhold that player from competition indefinitely until a decision is reached.

G. The DC has the right to determine and impose suspensions for the player in question on the team in question, and for any other team the player may play for in GMSA – presently or in the future. Suspensions or probationary periods involving the entire team and/or coach are also possible. Infractions reported by GMSA to TSSA are subject to state-wide bans as dictated by TSSA. Any offense of Class Three or higher also carries a probationary period for the player in question (across all league play); should the player in question be guilty of another Class Three or higher sending off offense within that same season, it will result in a suspension for the remainder of the season from all GMSA competition. Furthermore, any player(s), or team(s) as a whole that is (are) involved in any incident that forces the abandonment of a match by the referee, will be subject to a GMSA Disciplinary Committee review.

H. The Disciplinary Chair holds the authority to augment the method of all deliberations as circumstances necessitate.

VI. Forfeits, Inability To Field A Team

A. If a team does not have at least seven players at the field at game time, they will be allowed a 10-minute grace period from the scheduled kick-off time. One minute will be subtracted from each half for every two minutes the start of the game is delayed. If, after the grace period, 7 players are still not at the field, checked in, and in uniform, the game will be declared a forfeit. Referees are instructed to begin the match as soon as seven players are present and ready for each team. The referee will blow his whistle to bring players on to the field; if after one minute, the team has not lined up on the field and made themselves ready to begin, the referee may caution the captain of the team for delaying the start of the game.

B. Any team viewed to be at fault for causing a match to be abandoned (in the opinion of the referees at the field) will automatically forfeit the match, no matter what the score of the match at the time of the abandonment.

C. If a team cannot field a team for a scheduled match (at least seven players for full-sided matches, at least five players for 7v7 matches), then that team will forfeit the match. Such games will NOT be rescheduled. In order to avoid the forfeiture fine, that coach is responsible for contacting the league by emailing their division coordinator and league president to give notice of the cancellation at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled kick-off. Any team giving less than 48 hours notice of not being able to field a team will be responsible for the \$160 referee match fee. (GMSA games are ONLY rescheduled in case of weather-related postponement.) If fields are declared playable (by the Mike Rose Soccer Complex, and subsequently by the referee at the field), all matches will be played as scheduled. (GMSA does not reschedule matches to a later date, simply because a team cannot field enough players.)

D. For "unplayed" games (where a team does not show up with at least seven players, or does not give the minimum notice for cancellations that are declared forfeits), the team causing the forfeit will be responsible for the FULL referee match fee of \$160 (which is the \$80 that each team would normally pay.) In those cases where the league was to sponsor the referee fees (such as advanced tournament games), the forfeiting team must pay the \$160 fee back to the league.

E. The forfeiture fees must be paid within 15 days of the date of the forfeited game. If not paid, all games following the 14-day period (beginning on the 15th day) will be cancelled and declared forfeits until the forfeit fee is paid. (NOTE: For teams having posted a \$160 forfeiture bond, that money is surrendered to the league and the standard \$160 forfeit fee must still be paid per standard GMSA policy.)

F. The score of a forfeited match is usually recorded as 2F-0. Should the team causing the abandonment of a match be trailing by a margin greater than 2-0, then the score at the time of the abandonment may be allowed to stand, if it is to the statistical advantage of the winning team. If both teams are viewed to be equally at fault, then GMSA shall rule that either (a) the match will be declared a double-forfeit, or (b) the score of the match at the time of the abandonment will stand as the final score.

G. Teams who incur a "no-show forfeit" three times in the same season (meaning that the team does not show up with at least seven players without giving required notice) shall be expelled from the remainder of league competition. The team in question is still responsible for repaying the forfeit fees incurred for these matches. Should payment not be made, individual players from that team will not be allowed to reregister for other teams during the following season, unless they pay their "percentage" of the fees still owed. (i.e., players on a team with a 16 man roster that owes \$320 in forfeit fees will not be allowed to re-register with another team until they pay an extra \$20 to the league, over and above standard registration fees.)

H. Teams who are unable to field a team for each potential tournament game must notify the league prior to the commencement of the tournament. If a team finds that they cannot field a team for any tournament match, then the standard 48-hour notice and forfeiture fees still apply. The tournament director has the right to substitute a team in the spot of the forfeiting team. Additionally, the tournament director has the right to declare forfeits in any or all prior tournament matches, and record those games as a 2F-0 loss.

VII. Team Probation

A. GMSA has established a points system to track teams with disciplinary problems. Any GMSA team who reaches a cumulative point total of nine (9) will be subject to team probation. Points are accumulated through any sending off violation throughout the course of a season. Points are equivalent to the "class" of offense as dictated by the Tennessee State Soccer Association (see section 5E). All "regular" red cards (serious foul play, preventing obvious goal-scoring opportunity, second yellow card, etc.), and all Class One offenses are equal to one (1) team probation point. All Class Two offenses are equal to two (2) team probation points; and so on.

B. When a team accumulates a total of nine (9) points in one season, that team is placed on probation for the following season. At that time, the team will be required to post a \$160 bond at least two weeks prior to start of the season. If the team fails to provide the bond, the team will not be included on the schedule for the coming season. (Checks should be paid directly to the GMSA treasurer.) The team is also automatically declared ineligible for the league tournament held during the following season.

C. If the team does NOT accumulate five (5) team probation points during the probationary season, and avoids all class three (or higher) offenses, over the specified time frame, the \$160 bond will be returned at the end of the probationary period.

D. However, if the team DOES accumulate five (5) or more team probation points over the specified time frame, OR receives a red card (ejection) for an offense of class three status or higher (i.e., fighting), the \$160 bond will be forfeited to the league. The team will also be expelled from the league immediately for at least one full season. Any games remaining in the current season will be cancelled, and will not be rescheduled. Refunds of lost registration fees will not be given to team members for any reason.

E. If a team is allowed to return to GMSA following an expulsion, it will be subject to the same probationary criteria as described in section 7B.

VIII. Co-Ed Divisions

A. In all co-ed division matches, there must always be at least four (4) members of the same gender on the field at the same time. The following are acceptable combinations: 7 men, 4 women -- 6 men, 5 women -- 5 men, 6 women -- 4 men, 7 women. If a team does not have a minimum of 4 women/men, then they must play short by that many players, even if there are more than 7 members of the opposite gender at the game. For example, if a team has 10 men and 2 women present at a match, they will only be allowed to play 9 players (7 men and 2 women on the field, with 3 men as substitutes.) A team must have at least one female and/or male on the field to begin the match.

B. In any co-ed matches that are played to completion that also involve penalty-kick shootouts, kicks must be taken alternately by males/females through the first five kicks. Any "sudden death" kicks may be taken by any player, regardless of gender.

IX. Over-35 Legends Division

A. Men's over-35 "Legends" Division games are played in a 7v7 format on small-sided fields. All normal GMSA rules and regulations with respect to registration, uniforms, etc., will be observed. All laws of the game for normal competition will be observed, with the exception of items below.

B. All players must turn 35 years of age during the current calendar year in order to be eligible to participate.

C. No slide tackles are allowed, with the exception of the goalkeeper in and around his own penalty area. (Penalty...indirect kick if it would have been a legal tackle otherwise, direct/penalty kick if it would have been an illegal tackle otherwise).

D. No punts/dropkicks are allowed by goalkeepers. Goalkeepers have the standard six seconds to release the ball (by throwing/rolling it, or dropping it and playing with their feet) once they gain possession of it. (First offense, warning; second offense, indirect kick at the spot of the infraction.)

E. Games will consist of two 25-minute halves, with a 5-minute half-time.

F. Substitutions may be made by either team, at the referee's discretion, any time the ball goes out of play (throw-in, goal-kick, corner kick, prior to kickoff.) Substitutions may NOT be made "on the fly".

G. There will be no offside violation for 7v7 matches.

H. Teams must have a minimum roster of 10 players; to begin each match, each team must have a minimum of five (5) players on the field.

X. Miscellaneous

A. All regular season matches may end in a tie. All tournament matches in elimination format must have a winner. All opening round matches through semi-final matches will be decided by standard FIFA shots from the penalty mark. Finals shall, if tied at the end of regulation, be decided by two, 10-minute overtime periods. (Depending on tourney format, the semi-finals may also include overtime periods.) If no goals are scored in the overtime periods, then the match will be decided by kicks from the mark.

B. The team leading the standings of their division (based on points and/or all applicable tie-breakers) at the end of each season will automatically be promoted to the next highest division during the following season. The team with the fewest points in their division (based on points and/or all applicable tie-breakers) at the end of each season will automatically be relegated to the next lowest division during the following season. Any team not willing to comply with promotion or relegation policies will forfeit any prize winnings for that season, and will not be invited to return to GMSA during the following season. Teams may not attempt to re-enter the league under a different team name to avoid promotion/relegation. Any "new" team entering GMSA must consist of at least 50% of the roster having not been previously registered to a team who was "dissolved" following non-compliance with promotion or relegation. (Certain modifications may be made to the promotion/relegation system following a given season, depending on division size, new teams entering the league, existing teams folding, or other circumstances.)

C. Prize money will be award to each division winner following each season; prize money may be put toward referee fees for the following season, new uniforms, or other team needs. Money will be distributed to each team's coach/manager at the coaches meeting held prior to the start of the following season. Team participation in the subsequent season is a league requirement for acceptance of prize money; teams that win their division, but do not return for the following season will forfeit their prize money to the league.

D. Should two teams be tied for first place in their division at the end of the season, and if the first tiebreaker (head-to-head play) does not resolve the tie, then there shall be a playoff game to determine the winner. This applies ONLY to a tie for first place. All other places in the table shall be determined by the remaining tiebreaker system. The order of tiebreakers is as follows: 1. Head-to-head competition; 2. Fewest Goals Allowed; 3. Fewest Ejections; 4. Fewest Cautions; 5. Coin Flip

E. Should there be a three-way tie for first place that is not decided by the head-to-head tiebreaker, there will be a unique, one-day tiebreaker system. All three teams (A, B, C) will play each other in 50-minute mini-games. The teams will draw numbers to see who plays who, and who plays where. First match will be Team A vs. Team B; second match will be Team A vs. Team C; third match will be Team B vs. Team C. The team with the highest cumulative goal total will be declared the winner. In the event of a tie, the fewest cumulative goals allowed will determine the winner. If still tied, a shootout will determine the winner. If there is a three-way tie, a drawing will be held for one team to earn a shootout bye. The remaining two teams will contest a shootout until a winner has been decided. That team will then face the third team in a shootout to determine the league champion.

F. In the event of a four-way tie for first place, the four teams will be seeded according to the remaining tiebreakers in the usual tiebreaker systems. Team 1 will play Team 4, Team 2 will play Team 3 simultaneously in 60-minute mini-games. (Should either match end tied, they will be decided by a shootout.) The two winners will play immediately thereafter in an additional 60-minute match to determine the league champion. (Should this match end in a tie, it will also go straight to a shootout to determine a winner.)

G. The GMSA Executive Committee reserves the right to amend the above-mentioned rules as circumstances dictate, or to make rulings and/or judgments on situations not specifically covered in these rules.