

**Soccer Association of Montgomery  
Recreational Rules of Play  
Maryland SoccerPlex Rules & Conduct Policy**

All SAM rules herein are final. Questions or concerns may be brought to the attention of the league commissioner by a team official (head coach, assistant coach or team manager).

All SAM participants shall practice good sportsmanship, fair play, safety and sound fundamentals at all practices and games.

The SAM TEAM reserves the right to remove any coach, player or team whose conduct is considered detrimental to the best interest of SAM and the teams within the league.

*SAM rules are based on FIFA Laws of the Game with modifications.  
Modifications are specified below.*

### **Injuries**

**Please call the athletic trainer to help assist with any injuries. Number is 240-801-2006**

### **Playing Time**

All players are required to play a minimum of 50% of every game. It is recommended that no player play more than 50% of the game as a goalkeeper.

### **Lopsided Rule**

When a team reaches a five-goal (5) lead the opposing team will be allowed to add another player.

### **Equipment & Uniforms**

All players must wear the SAM issued uniforms and also have shin guards under their soccer socks. Cleats are recommended, but not required. Metal cleats are not permitted.

Jerseys should be tucked in at all times.

Safety eyewear is mandatory for those players requiring prescription lenses.

All jewelry, including pierced earrings, must be removed, (no rings, bracelets, necklaces, etc.).

- Earrings need to be fully removed prior to the start of the game. Covering them with tape or a Band-Aid is not permitted.

Long hair may be tied back. Hard clips and accessories are not permitted.

### **Field Equipment**

All equipment is to be left as it is set-up. Goals are not to be moved, laid-down or stood upright. If you feel there is a problem with the positioning of a goal, please contact SAM Soccer at 301-528-1480 and someone will verify the positioning and move the goals if required.

### **Rosters & Age Divisions**

Players are not permitted to play on two (2) SAM teams within the same age group in the same season. Players are not permitted to “play-up” more than one age group. Players are not permitted to “play down”. (*Extenuating circumstances that would result in an exception to this rule may only occur with approval from the league administrator.*)

Coaches are not to recruit players from other teams. They are also not to add/drop players from their team without permission of the league administrator. All rosters are created by SAM, not coaches.

All age verification must be done before the season starts so rosters are accurate.

### **Minimum Number of Players**

Teams must be ready to play at the scheduled kickoff time. The minimum number of players required to play is listed below in the age-specific rules. If teams do not have the minimum number of players, they will be granted a ten (10) minute grace period. If the minimum number of players is not present after the grace period, that team will forfeit the match. For Under 8, 9, and Under 10 division teams, the minimum number of players shall be six (6). In all other age divisions, the minimum number of players shall be seven (7).

### **Carded Players or Player unregistered/illegal players on teams**

Players possessing a player card for playing in a travel league (MSYSA, US Club Soccer, MSI Classic, MSI Travel or SAM SELECT) are considered travel players and are not permitted to play on SAM recreational teams.

Teams using carded players not meeting the criteria listed above will forfeit all games in which that player participated. Additionally, carded players will be removed from the roster.

Any coach/team playing unregistered/illegal players may be asked to forfeit the game, be deducted points or asked to leave the league.

Coaches who knowingly allow carded players to participate may face additional sanctions.

### **Sanctioning – Players**

See age-specific rules below.

### **Sanctioning – Coaches and/or Spectators**

Referees are authorized to warn coaches using a yellow card for the first warning and a red card if the warning is not adhered to. Failure to follow the referee's direction may result in forfeiture of the game and potential disciplinary action from SAM Soccer. If a coach receives a red card, they will be ejected from the game and will not be permitted to attend the next scheduled game at a minimum.

Coaches who receive a red card must immediately leave the field and sit in their car and/or leave the complex.

Spectators are not shown red or yellow cards, however, they may be asked to leave the field by a referee. If a spectator is removed from the game, they must immediately leave the field and sit in their car and/or leave the complex.

Coaches are responsible for their players and parents/spectators.

### **Referees**

Referees are scheduled for every game 8U and above. If the referee does not arrive at the scheduled start time, the game may be played with volunteer referees agreed to by the coaches. Referee "no shows" must be reported to the SAM Soccer Program Manager by the team coaches so appropriate action can be taken.

### **Games & Practices**

Teams cannot play their games or hold a practice unless a "SAM-approved" coach or assistant coach is present. "SAM-approved" coaches, assistant coaches and volunteers **MUST** have completed a background check and concussion test by the August or March coaches' meetings each year.

### **Benches & Spectators**

Players/coaches may occupy the provided benches.

All spectators must stand/sit completely off the field and in the taller grass to limit damage to the fields.

No coaches or spectators are allowed on the field or behind the goal line during the game with the exception of injuries. Coaches may not go beyond the penalty box lines while on the

sidelines. Coaches and spectators must stay on their team's half of the field until the completion of the game. Coaches cannot cross the half line to coach their team even when the teams have switched sides.

For full-sided games, spectators are to be on opposite side of the field from the players/coaches. For small-sided games, spectators must sit behind the teams.

### **Kick –Offs**

The ball does not have to go forwards anymore. The ball can go directly backwards from kick off.

### **Throw-Ins**

6U/7U can introduce throw ins or play with kick ins. 8U and above throw-ins will be used. The referee will make the determination if the throw-in is legal. Both feet must be on the ground and the ball must be thrown from behind the head.

### **Goal Kicks**

For 7U and below there are no goal kicks. For 8U/9U and 10U all players must stand behind the build out line. 11U and above goal kicks are taken from the 6-yard box.

### **Build Out Lines**

These lines allow for goalkeepers to pass, throw or roll the ball out from the defensive third of the field to his/her teammate. **NO PUNTING IS ALLOWED**, this includes drop kicks. The opponent must retreat back behind the build out line. Once the ball leaves the goalkeepers hands, the opponent may then pressure the ball once again. Play resumes as normal. Build out lines will be used for the 8U, 9U & 10U divisions.

### **Noise Makers**

Noise makers, including air horns, are not allowed at games.

### **Lightning Detection and how it Works**

The Maryland SoccerPlex is equipped with a lightning detection system. The purpose of this system is to protect patrons using the facility when dangerous storms pass through.

Sensors have been installed on the roof of the Discovery Sports Center. When dangerous conditions exist, the following steps will take place:

- Horns on the roof will sound for 15 seconds
- The 15-second blast indicates ALL patrons must immediately go to their cars

- This 15-second horn will blast when dangerous conditions have been identified, even if you do not see lightning, do not ignore this signal
- When dangerous conditions no longer exist, the horns will blast three (3) shorter blasts.

### **What to do When the Lightning Alarm Sounds**

- Immediately leave the field and go to your car or the Discovery Sports Center
- DO NOT LEAVE THE COMPLEX
- Wait for the all clear signal (3 blasts of the horn)
- Once the all clear signal sounds, go back to the field and resume the match where you left off
- Games should be played in full (do not end early so that the next match can start on time)

The Maryland SoccerPlex Operations staff continually stays up to date with weather forecasts and radar information. If it appears that the weather will not clear and games cannot resume, the facility will close. Closure information will be posted on the SAM homepage, [www.samsoccer.org](http://www.samsoccer.org) and the SoccerPlex Weather Hotline, 301-528-1497.

### **Weather Cancellations**

If a game is cancelled part-way through due to weather, use the following procedures:

- Games cancelled before half-time will be rescheduled at a time to be determined. The game will be replayed in full.
- Games cancelled during or after halftime are considered complete. The score at that time will stand.

### **Age-Specific Exceptions**

*Where age divisions are combined, the rules of the older age division will be applied. (For example, a combined 11U/12U age division will follow the 12U rules.)*

**6U & 7U: Play at this level is very instructional.** Emphasis is placed on developing basic skills, including: running, balance, positioning, rules, and ball control. Ball control skills include dribbling, passing and shooting with an emphasis on using both feet. The reduced number of players will allow for better instruction. Scores are not maintained and participation awards are given to all players.

- The number of players on the field per team is four (4).
- Roster maximum is twelve (12) players.
- Games consist of eight (8) minute quarters with three (3) minute breaks between quarters and a five (5) minute break at half time.
- There are no slide tackles; off sides or direct kicks.
- Substitutions are “on-the-fly” and are not to disrupt the flow of the game (no time outs).

- Ball size #3.
- No Heading

**8U, 9U & 10U: Play at this level continues to be developmental with the addition of referees in preparation for the next level.** Comfort using all parts of both feet will be developed. Additional skills of shielding, turning, attacking, and play formation will also be taught. As appropriate, more advanced skills can be introduced. Scores and standings are maintained. Only champions will receive trophies. 8U players receive participation medals only.

- The number of players on the field per team is seven (7). Minimum number of players to start a game is 5.
- Roster maximum is twelve (12) players.
- Game consists of two (2) twenty-five (25) minute halves and a five (5) minute break at half time.
- The offside rule is enforced.
- There will be build out lines.
- There are **no slide tackles** or direct kicks. Fouls within the penalty box result in indirect kicks only.
- Substitutions are “on-the-fly” and are not to disrupt the flow of the game (no time outs).
- The winning team coach/manager (listed first on the schedule) must report scores to SAM Soccer by emailing [scores@samsoccer.org](mailto:scores@samsoccer.org). **Scores must be reported by noon on the Monday following the game by 9U and 10U only.**
- NO 8U SCORES ARE KEPT.
- Ball size: #4.
- No Heading
  - In adherence to USSF rules on heading, when a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick (IFK) should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If the deliberate header occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred.

**11U & 12U: Play at this level continues to be instructional,** and is preparing plyers for the full game. Comfort using all parts of both feet will be developed. Additional skills of shielding, turning, attacking, and play formation will also be taught. As appropriate, more advanced skills can be introduced. Scores and standings *are* maintained and awards are given to division champions only.

- The number of players on the field per team is nine (9). The minimum number to start the game is 7.
- Roster maximum is fourteen (14) players.
- Game consists of two (2) thirty (30) minute halves and a five (5) minute break at half time.
- The offside rule is enforced.

- No heading at 11U
  - In adherence to USSF rules on heading, when a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick (IFK) should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If the deliberate header occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred.
- There are **no slide tackles**.
- **Direct kicks and penalty kicks are allowed.**
- Substitutions are “on-the-fly” and are not to disrupt the flow of the game (no time outs).
- The HOME team coach/manager (listed first on the schedule) must report scores to SAM Soccer by emailing [scores@samsoccer.org](mailto:scores@samsoccer.org). **Scores must be reported by noon on the Monday following the game.**
- Ball size: #4.

**13U & 14U: Play at this level is more competitive, 11 v 11** and is governed by FIFA rules with SAM modifications. Scores and standings *are* maintained and awards are given to the first place team.

- The number of players on the field per team is eleven (11).
- The minimum number of players to start a match is nine (9).
- Roster maximum is eighteen (18).
- There are unlimited substitutions.
- Games consist of two thirty-five (35) minute halves with a five (5) minute halftime.
- Ball size: #5
- Scores and standings *are* maintained and awards are given to the first place team.
- The HOME team coach (listed first on the schedule) must report scores to SAM Soccer by emailing [scores@samsoccer.org](mailto:scores@samsoccer.org). **Scores must be reported by noon on the Monday following the game.**

**15U & HS: Play at this level is at the highest competitive level governed by FIFA rules with SAM modifications.** Scores and standings *are* maintained and awards are given to the first place team.

- The number of players on the field is eleven (11).
- The minimum number of players to start a match is nine (9).
- Roster maximum is twenty-two (22).
- There are unlimited substitutions.
- Games consist of two forty (40) minute halves with a five (5) minute halftime.
- Ball size: #5
- Players must be turning 18 to participate in the HS league, no college players are allowed.

- The HOME team coach (listed first on the schedule) must report scores to SAM Soccer by emailing [scores@samsoccer.org](mailto:scores@samsoccer.org). **Scores must be reported by noon on the Monday following the game.**

### **Maryland SoccerPlex Rules & Conduct Policy**

The Maryland SoccerPlex & Discovery Sports Center is a state-of-the art multi-sport athletic facility and we expect all players, coaches and visitors to treat it with respect. **This is your home as much as ours.** Any person(s) found defacing, destroying or damaging Maryland SoccerPlex & Discovery Sports Center property will be asked to leave immediately. They will be suspended from further play if circumstances warrant, without a refund. The Maryland SoccerPlex, Discovery Sports Center and SAM Soccer also reserves the right to require any player, coach, team, or visitor who engages in violent, abusive, threatening or offensive conduct to leave the premises. They will be suspended from further play if circumstances warrant, without refund. This type of behavior will NOT be tolerated.

For Natural Grass Fields:

1. No warming up in the goal area.
2. No warming up or playing on closed fields.
3. Park only in designated spaces.
4. Deposit all trash in garbage cans provided (and recycling in the blue recycling cans).
5. **NO PETS** allowed.
6. All tobacco products prohibited.
7. No alcohol.

For Synthetic Turf Fields:

1. No spitting on fields.
2. No warming up or playing on closed fields.
3. Water is the only drink permitted on the turf. All other food and drinks, including Gatorade or other sports drinks, are prohibited.
4. Park only in designated spaces.
5. Deposit all trash in garbage cans provided.
6. No gum chewing.
7. All tobacco products prohibited.
8. No alcohol.
9. **NO PETS** allowed.
10. No tents with spikes

### **SAM Soccer Code of Conduct**

SAM Soccer is an enjoyable experience for all members of the community. We as an organization want you and others to follow our guidelines and procedures.



1. I will remember that children participate to have fun.
2. I will remember the game is for my child/children and not for me.
3. I will learn the rules of the game and the policies of the league.
4. I (and my guests) will be role model (s) for my child and show sportsmanship.
5. I promise to encourage my child and others in a positive manner.
6. I will show respect to the referees, the other team and parents before, during and after the game.
7. I will not use bad or inappropriate language, including racial slurs and/or abusive language.
8. I will teach my child to play by the rules and not engage in any unsportsmanlike conduct.
9. I will teach my child that doing his/her best is more important than winning.
10. I will praise my child for effort and not ridicule or yell from the sideline or in the car on the way home.
11. I will refrain from coaching my child (or others) from the sidelines unless as a designated coach.

Finally, I also agree by participating in SAM that if I fail to abide by these aforementioned rules and guidelines, I will be subject to disciplinary action that will be decided upon by the SAM soccer committee.