



**Laguna Niguel AYSO Region 5181**

**Adult League Rules & Guidelines**

**Revised: March 25, 2025**

## Table of Contents

I.	LEAGUE PHILOSOPHY	3
II.	JURISDICTION	3
III.	MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE	4
IV.	FEES	4
V.	PLAYER/TEAM REGISTRATION	6
VI.	UNIFORMS	6
VII.	RAINOUT/ CANCELLATION	6
VIII.	TEAMS/MANAGERS/PLAYERS	8
IX.	REFEREES	9
X.	FIELDS	9
XI.	TEAM PRACTICES	9
XII.	PRE GAME CHECK-IN	10
XIII.	GAMES	9
XIV.	STANDINGS	12
XV.	PLAYER CONDUCT and DISCIPLINE POLICIES	12
XVI.	PROTESTS	14
XVII.	RULES INTERPRETATION	14

## I. LEAGUE PHILOSOPHY

The Laguna Niguel AYSO Region 5181 adult league is operated for the purpose of giving adults the same opportunity as the youth of our community to learn and enjoy the game of soccer. This league is geared to those volunteers who give a significant amount of their time towards the kids in Laguna Niguel AYSO Region 41.

This league is considered a family event. Our goal is to provide a safe, fun and fair environment for all who want to simply enjoy the game and get some exercise. Our aim is to provide a venue for recreational play. We will maintain a recreational mindset among the players and make every effort to reduce overzealous play. We do not tolerate out of control play or action, our goal is to promote adult behavior and good sportsmanship.

This is a recreational adult coed soccer program. The league is designed to accommodate a wide range of player skill levels. Some players have never played soccer before, while others are highly skilled. The only requirement is that you come out to have some fun. The intent is to play soccer on Thursday nights, then coach and referee your kids AYSO games on the weekend and then go to work on Monday.

## II. JURISDICTION

- A. Unless otherwise noted in this document, the current AYSO National Rules and Regulations related to the NAASA (North American Adult Soccer Association) Program and FIFA Laws of the Game will be used for the Laguna Niguel AYSO Region 5181 adult league season with certain modifications and exceptions as outlined below.
- B. The Laguna Niguel AYSO Region 5181 will have jurisdiction over all games played.
- C. Laguna Niguel AYSO Region 5181 will
  - a. Create and manage Sports Connect portal for the adult program
  - b. Ensure that registered players meet the eligibility requirements
  - c. Collect all necessary fees (except for uniform and referee fees).
  - d. Player priority placement should be as follows:
    - i. Board members, referees (minimum hours required), coaches in Laguna Niguel AYSO Region 41
    - ii. Other volunteers – must complete 10 hours volunteering with Laguna Niguel AYSO Region 41 during the AYSO year (August-July). Players returning from the previous year will not be eligible to participate if this requirement was not completed during the previous year. Players returning from the Fall season for the Spring will not be eligible to participate if half of the requirement (5 hours) was not completed during the Fall season. (Interpretation – 1) you can't play in the Fall, do nothing and then play in the Spring claiming you will get all

of your hours in during that season. 2) Referees must be actively refereeing in the Fall primary season in order to play in the Spring – not just waiting for the Spring to do all of their games. A volunteer who performed 5 hours in the fall and 0 in the Spring may not play the following Fall. 4) A coach of a Fall team whose children do not play in the Spring, is eligible to play in the following Spring and may play again in the following Fall if they continue to volunteer that Fall.)

iii. NO GUEST PLAYERS ARE ALLOWED

- D. Each participating region is responsible for the following:
  - a. Verify that players are properly registered in their Region's youth Sports Connect system as volunteers, that they have passed their background investigation and meet the eligibility requirements based on volunteer activity.
- E. Referee judgment calls are NOT subject to dispute or protest!
- F. Misconducts are adjudicated by the Misconduct coordinator.

III. MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

- A. League Commissioner
- B. Referee Administrator
- C. Treasurer
- D. Registrar

IV. FEES

- A. Fees are due in full at the time of registration. No refunds will be issued after the first game for any reason. The national player fee is never refundable.
- B. The player registration fee is \$99.00 per player per season (subject to change by the league). This fee will cover all program expenses related to the playing season, including but not limited to field fees and light fees with the exception of referee and uniform fees.
- C. All unused funds may be donated to our Laguna Niguel AYSO Region 41 EPIC Program.
- D. Players will pay an additional \$30.00 fee annually for the United States Adult Soccer Association (USASA) Membership Fee.
  - 1. This fee is charged by the AYSO National office and includes accident & liability insurance and membership in the United States Adult Soccer Association (USASA)
  - 2. The annual membership is valid from September 1 to August 31.

3. By having this membership, it will cover liability insurance for fields and league officers, secondary insurance up to \$25,000, and fees to both U.S.A.S.A. (United States Adult Soccer Association) and to U.S. Soccer.
  4. Players who previously registered and paid this fee in an affiliated league in that membership year do not have to pay this fee. It is solely the responsibility of the player to solve any issues regarding the avoidance of any redundancy of this fee.
- E. Refund requests must be submitted to the registrar before the season in question commences. There will be no refunds after this deadline.
- F. Referee fees
1. Referee fees are not included in the player registration fee.
  2. Teams are responsible for paying the referee fees directly during the team check-in at each game.
  3. It is preferred that referee fees are paid in cash.
  4. Referee fees are taxable income. It is the referee's responsibility to report this income on their respective tax returns.
  5. Referee fee schedule:
    - a) Three-man crew - \$120/match (\$60/team)
      - (1) Divided \$50 center referee, \$35/each assistant referee.
    - b) Two-man crew - \$100/match (\$50/team)
      - (1) \$55 center referee, \$45 AR
      - (2) optional club linesman may be used
    - c) One-man crew - \$70/match (\$35/team.)
      - (1) Use of Club Linesman is optional but they are not paid.
- G. Forfeit Deposit
1. A team forfeits if notice of their inability to play is less than 24 hours prior to the scheduled kick off time.
  2. Each team will pay a forfeit deposit to AYSO Region 5181 in the amount of \$360.00 (3 games) (included in the registration fee).
  3. In the event that a team forfeits any games, their deposit will be used to pay the referee fees for both teams for that match.
  4. At the end of a playing season, if the team does not forfeit any of their games, they can request a refund of their deposit or request that it be applied to the Laguna Niguel AYSO Region 41 EPIC program donation.
- V. PLAYER/TEAM REGISTRATION
- A. Players wishing to play together are free to form a "Team". Being part of a team does not excuse players from meeting all eligibility requirements.
  - B. Teams will be formed either by request (players that want to play together) or by the league registrar (players that do not have a team).
  - C. Players must register through the Laguna Niguel AYSO Region 5181 registration system by the published deadline date.

- D. GUEST PLAYERS ARE NOT ALLOWED.
  - E. Game Day Roster Form (Official Match Report & Team Verification Roster which includes Player ID Photos) with photos will be issued by the league.
  - F. Players MUST be on Game Day Roster Form (Official Match Report & Team Verification Roster which includes Player ID Photos) to play any given match.
  - G. Teams must designate a Team Manager who has email and internet access.
  - H. For insurance purposes, the designated Team Manager must be an adult league player.
  - I. You do not need to have a full roster of players in mind to form a team.  
Players from the Free Agent pool will be placed onto teams in need of players.
- VI. UNIFORMS
- A. Teams purchase their own uniforms, which abides by certain standards as stated in AYSO's uniform policy related to the youth program.
  - B. All players on the same team should have matching jerseys and each player MUST HAVE A UNIQUE NUMBER ON THE BACK.
  - C. No player will be allowed to play without a matching uniquely numbered jersey.
  - D. Uniforms can be used season to season. Any player not in proper uniform will not be permitted to play by the referees.
  - E. Having players with the same numbers is not allowed.
  - F. It is the home team's responsibility to change jersey colors if there is a conflict. Pinnies are allowed in lieu of a second jersey.
- VII. RAINOUT/ CANCELLATION
- A. Cancelled games will not be rescheduled, unless time and field availability permits.
  - B. Cancelled games will recorded as "not played" and will not be factored into the standings calculation.
- VIII. TEAMS/MANAGERS/PLAYERS
- A. All players must be properly and currently registered according to the eligibility requirements. Team Managers are ultimately responsible for ensuring players meet these requirements.
  - B. Only properly registered players shall be permitted to play in Adult League matches under the auspices of the Laguna Niguel AYSO Region 5181 Adult Soccer League.
  - C. A team, which knowingly uses unregistered players, underage players, or registered players not in good standing shall automatically forfeit all games in which said player has participated, and further sanctions may be taken by the Laguna Niguel AYSO Region 5181 board against the team and the team manager.
    - 1. In all cases in which an unregistered player, or a player not in good

standing has participated in a league match, the Team Manager, and the unregistered player shall be suspended from any Adult League activity for a full calendar year.

- D. Players may request to be moved to another team's roster. Player transfer requests must be submitted to the registrar by email. The player and both of the Team Managers of the affected teams must agree to the transfer and should be contained in the request. The transfer is not official until the Team Manager receives an updated lineup card and ID card sheet from the league.
- E. Players can only be on 1 roster per season.
- F. No minimum requirement of soccer or physical skill is required.
- G. Minimum age to participate is 30 years old, if under 30 years of age player must get League Director approval.
- H. Team managers are wholly responsible for the conduct of their team members and that of their spectators.
- I. Team managers, players, and spectators are to cooperate fully when required by the league. Failure to cooperate could result in expulsion from the league.
- J. League Structure – depending on the number of teams participating, all teams may be reseeded after the first 3 games of the playing season to ensure teams are placed in appropriate flights.
- K. Any player may only score 2 goals per game. Any goals scored by the same player in the same game will not count and shall be restarted with a goal-kick.

#### IX. REFEREES

- A. Referees in this league will be vetted by the Laguna Niguel AYSO Region 5181 Referee staff.
  - a. Referee position - Ideally, preference is for National and Advance badged AYSO Referees who are rated in the referee position in the 19U Boys level should be considered as Referees in this league.
  - b. Assistant Referees - Ideally, preference is for National, Advance, and Intermediate badged AYSO Referees who are rated in the assistant referee position in the 19U Boys level should be considered as Assistant Referees in this league.
  - c. Laguna Niguel AYSO Region 5181 Adult League reserves the right to use any lower badged AYSO referee for training and mentoring purposes.
  - d. Youth referees are not allowed to officiate any Adult League matches.
- B. Referee jurisdiction begins when he/she arrives at the field, and ends when he/she leaves.
- C. The referee shall have the authority to decide as to the fitness of the field in all matches. The referee shall have the authority to postpone the actual commencement of the game, to interrupt the game for short periods of time, or cancel the game in the event of inclement weather or accidents on or around the playing field.

- D. The referee shall be the sole judge of all plays. Referee calls or judgments are not subject to protest.
- E. The referee has the authority to stop or suspend play in any match where the referee deems it necessary due to spectator interference, and to request that the individual(s) creating the disturbance immediately leave the playing area out of sight and sound of the field. Failure of any individual ejected by the referee to respond within two (2) minutes of the referee's request to leave shall be reported by the referee to the Region 5181 Referee Administrator or his/her designee. Any sanctions resulting from such stoppage will be determined by Laguna Niguel AYSO Region 5181 board.
- F. If a referee attacks a player physically or verbally threatens a player, the team managers have the right to stop the game. The team managers are required to file a written report with the AYSO Region 5181 board within two (2) days. The referee will be excused from all future games until determination of discipline by the AYSO Region 5181 board and until the disciplinary measures have been fulfilled by the referee.

#### X. FIELDS

- A. Field space in Laguna Niguel is scarce so game scheduling is not limited to specific days and times. It is anticipated that most games will occur on Wednesday and Thursday nights.
- B. Teams should arrive in sufficient time to setup the field before the scheduled start time if needed.
- C. The last games of the day are responsible for putting the field equipment away. If teams are not sure if they are the last game of the day, they should err on the side of caution and put the field equipment away.
- D. Teams will be expected to clean up all trash in their area before leaving.
- E. No pets are allowed!

#### XI. TEAM PRACTICES

- A. Due to the very limited availability of weekday field space, practice fields will not be available for adult league teams.
- B. Any ad hoc practices are not official league events.
  - 1. Any injuries, property damage or incidents from unofficial events are not covered by league insurance.
  - 2. Players participating in an ad hoc practice do so at their own risk.

#### XII. PREGAME CHECK-IN

- A. Teams should be prepared to check-in with the referee 15 minutes before the game's schedule start time.
- B. The Game Day Roster Form (Official Match Report & Team Verification Roster which includes Player ID Photos) will be provided to the Team



Manager prior to the start of the season. The team must Game Day Roster Form (Official Match Report & Team Verification Roster which includes Player ID Photos) to the referee. Only players on the Game Day Roster Form (Official Match Report & Team Verification Roster which includes Player ID Photos) will be allowed to play. No handwritten names on the team roster are allowed. Only jersey numbers can be handwritten on the roster card.

- C. The team rosters serve as proof of insurance coverage for the players on the roster. Teams unable to present an official roster to the referee will not be allowed to play and the match will be forfeited. Only members in good standing shall be permitted to play in AYSO Adult League matches.
- D. Shin guards are mandatory for all players, including goalkeepers. There will be no exceptions allowed.
- E. No bare feet players will be allowed. Shoes must be worn. Soccer cleats are highly recommended.
- F. Player's jerseys and socks from the same team must all match.
- G. It is the home team's responsibility to change jerseys if there is a color conflict. Pinnies are allowed.
- H. No jewelry of any kind is allowed.
- I. No hard casts allowed.
- J. Referee is the sole judge of determining the safety of any braces, and playability of the field.
- K. Home team is responsible for providing 3 adequate game balls.
- L. Referee fees should be paid directly to the center referee prior to the team check-in process.

### XIII. GAMES

#### A. Laws of The Game

1. All AYSO Adult League matches will use the current edition of the FIFA "LAWS OF THE GAME" with the following modifications and exceptions:
  - a) Law 1: The Field of Play
    - (1) The size of the field will vary depending on the fields available for use in each venue.
  - b) Law 3: The Number Of Players
    - (1) Coed Matches
      - a. Of the eight (8) team players fielded, there may not be more than eight (6) male players on the field at one time. There is no maximum number of women that may be fielded when making eight (8) players.
      - b. Unlimited substitutions per FIFA Laws of the Game are allowed with permission of the Referee.
  - c) Law 4: The Players' Equipment

- (1) All players must wear the approved AYSO Adult League uniform. All players on the same team must wear matching uniforms (goalkeeper excepted.)
  - (2) Garments may be worn under the uniform (i.e. long sleeves, etc.) during inclement weather, however the referee will be the judge of what should be allowed or not. Undergarments such as compression shirts and shorts must match the predominant color of the exterior clothing.
- d) Law 5: The Referee
- (1) It is recommend that all matches in this league be officiated using the 3-man diagonal system of control
  - (2) Use of the 2-man or 2 whistle system is not allowed.
  - (3) If there are less than 3 officials present, then use of club linesmen are permitted.
  - (4) Club Linesmen
    - (a) Club Linesmen are sometimes used when neutral assistant referees are not available. Club Linesmen are usually selected from volunteers present at the game and often are supporters of one of the clubs or teams playing in the game. Because of their lack of official training, Club Linesmen have very limited responsibilities.
    - (b) If fewer than three (3) referees are available to officiate a match, teams may be asked to provide a club linesman to help the center referee when the ball goes out of play. Their only duty is to indicate that the ball has left the field of play on the touchline or the goal line by raising their flag. They are not allowed to signal offside, fouls, corner kicks, goal kicks or direction of the throw-in.
    - (c) The club linesman can be a substitute player, team manager or spectator, but must wear a different color jersey from the players on the field or a pinnie. Players may rotate club linesman duties during the match.
    - (d) Club linesmen are not paid.
- e) Law 7: The Duration Of The Match
- (1) All divisions will play 35 minute halves with a 5 minute half-time
  - (2) Match clock starts at the designated kick off time

whether the teams are ready or not.

- (3) If a game does not start on time, the length of play will be shortened by the referees, such that the game ends as scheduled per normal time
- (4) Matches in this league are running clock.
- (5) Pool play games ending in a tie will remain tied and no shoot out or overtime will take place.
- f) Law 11: Offside
  - (1) The current interpretation of the offside law shall be enforced.
- g) Law 12: Fouls And Misconduct
  - (1) Slide tackling against an opponent will be not allowed.
  - (2) A slide tackle is considered a dangerous play and an indirect free kick will be awarded to the opposing team.
  - (3) Slide tackling may result in a yellow card. It is the Referee's sole discretion whether a slide tackle constitutes dangerous play.
  - (4) This rule applies to situations where a player alters his/her direction of play by another player sliding to prevent a ball from going out of bounds or a shot on goal. Sliding for the ball will be allowed where no opponents are within 3 yards.
  - (5) Playing the ball while sitting or lying on the ground will be allowed providing no opponents are within 3 yards. Referee discretion applies.
  - (6) Women are protected at all times. Hard and rough play by men on women is prohibited and is considered dangerous play.

#### B. FORFEITS:

- 1. There will be a five-minute grace period at the start of the game for a team to take the field before a forfeit is declared.
- 2. The score for a forfeited match will be 1-0.
- 3. A minimum of 5 players on the field is required to start or continue a match.
- 4. If a team cannot field the minimum number of players, the game will be abandoned and a forfeit will be declared.
- 5. Any team that walks off or otherwise abandons the field prior to the game being declared finished by the referee, either due to protest or argument, shall automatically have forfeited the game and face possible further sanctioning by the AYSO Region 5181 board.
- 6. The team forfeiting will be responsible for the entire referee fees and will be deducted from their forfeit deposit.

XIV. STANDINGS

- A. League champions will be determined by total points or by a playoff.
- B. Points awarded in the following manner:
  - 1. Win= 3 points
  - 2. Tie= 1 point
  - 3. Loss= 0 points.
- C. One (1) point will be deducted for each send offs of any players, substitutes, coach, or spectator.
- D. If a tie exists at the conclusion of pool play, the final pool standing shall be decided by considering the following tie breakers, in this order:
  - 1. Head-to Head Play (outcome of the game involving the tied teams);
  - 2. Goal Differential: goals scored, less goal allowed, max differential of three goals per game;
  - 3. Team with highest number of goals scored (counting no more than three goals more than their opponent in any game);
  - 4. Team with lowest number goals against; and
  - 5. Coin flip.
- E. Tie stands during pool play games.

XV. PLAYER CONDUCT and DISCIPLINE POLICIES

- A. In order to maintain our sportsmanship goals, prevent injuries due to serious foul play or violent behavior, and to ensure the continued use of our playing fields, player misconduct and discipline will be adjudicated using the Area 11L Misconduct Guidelines and Policy currently in place with the exception of the below.
  - 1. Fighting – Players participating in an altercation that results in striking an opponent or attempting to strike an opponent will be expelled from the league.
  - 2. Profanity and Abusive Language – Use of profanity or loud screaming will result in a review by the Discipline Committee and possible suspension. The referees are instructed to card players who use profanity or who complain (dissent) by screaming or yelling exceptionally loud. Referees have the discretion of whether to issue a yellow card or a red card. Any foul or abusive language directed at match officials or the opponent will be an automatic 3 game suspension.
  - 3. Yellow Cards - Players receiving a Yellow Card will be required to sit out for 5 minute “cooling off period” and may only return at the referee’s discretion. Teams shall be allowed to sub for a yellow card. A player’s conduct will be reviewed by the Discipline Committee upon receiving 3 or more Yellow Cards within one season. The Discipline Committee will review the player’s conduct

- and may suspend the player for additional game(s).
4. Red Cards – Any player receiving a Red Card will be suspended for a minimum of 1 game to be served at the team’s next scheduled game. This includes a Red Card received as a result of 2 Yellow Cards in the same game. Any send offs for other than receiving 2 cautions\* in the same match will require the person sent off to attend a disciplinary hearing. After the hearing, any additional game suspensions as determined by the disciplinary review board, if warranted, will be communicated to the player and team manager. A player’s conduct will be reviewed by the Discipline Committee upon receiving 2 or more Red Cards within one season. The Discipline Committee will review the player’s conduct and may suspend the player for additional game(s).
    - \* Any player receiving a red card as a result of a combination of yellows due to dissent will be suspended for the next two (2) scheduled games.
  5. Zero Tolerance with respect to Referee Abuse – Referees are humans. Mistakes are bound to happen. Learn to live with it and adjust your playing style based on the referee’s style of officiating. If you disagree with a call you may respectfully disagree at your own peril. Persistent or extensive disagreement will result in a Yellow or a Red card. Any form of dissent that references or implies anything about a referee’s character, age, sex, or ethnicity will result in a Red card. The Discipline Committee will review all cases of Referee abuse and may suspend the player for additional games or expel the player from the league.
  6. Three (3) points will be deducted from the team’s total points for any send offs of any player, substitute, coach, or spectator.
- B. Referees shall have the right to issue red cards and eject any players or coaches guilty of using profanity, either by word or action, against other players, other coaches, spectators, referees, or any league officials.
  - C. Players guilty of pushing, attacking, or threatening by action, word, or gesture toward a referee or any league officials shall receive a minimum twelve-month suspension. Any player guilty of violating this rule as reported in a referee’s game report shall be subject to an automatic suspension pending investigation by the AYSO Region 5181 board.
  - D. Team managers are wholly responsible for the conduct of their team members and that of their spectators.
  - E. Team managers, players, and spectators are required to cooperate fully when required by the league. Failure to cooperate could result in expulsion from the league.
  - F. Conduct incompatible with recreational play is any conduct that threatens

the ability of the AYSO Region 5181 Adult League to provide a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for recreational adult soccer.

1. Conduct incompatible with recreational play shall include, but is not limited to:
  - a) Verbal abuse of other players, officials, or spectators (using profane, insulting, intimidating, threatening, demeaning, or derogatory communications, including gestures.)
  - b) Cheating (intentional and egregious violations of the rules of play, using ineligible players, fake identifications, etc.)
2. Players who are charged with conduct incompatible with recreational play may receive a sanction in line with the severity of the offense, up to and including a twelve-month suspension.
3. A report, or complaint, describing the alleged conduct in violation of this rule, which may be made in the referee's game report or after the incident by an opposing team or player, shall be investigated by the AYSO Region 5181 board.

G. All spectators must remain a minimum of 2 yards from the touchline and between the 18-yard lines.

XVI. PROTESTS

A. The referee's decision is final. Protests are not allowed in regards to referee decisions on the game.

XVII. RULES INTERPRETATION

A. The AYSO Region 5181 board retains the right to interpret and apply league rules to the optimum benefit of all participants.

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