

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS  
2024 HOWARD COUNTY ADULT SOCCER LEAGUE RULES

[www.hcrpsports.org/adultsoccer](http://www.hcrpsports.org/adultsoccer)

*The Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks, through the League Commissioner, reserves the right to amend the rules and schedules as conditions may warrant.*

**1. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY**

- 1.1.** Players must be a minimum of 18 years of age except for age specified divisions.
  - 1.1.1. Age determination date is the first scheduled game of the current season. HCRP does provide age exceptions per League Director's approval.
  - 1.1.2. For the 40+ league the players must be at least 40 years old by the first game of the season.
  - 1.1.3. For the 40+ league each team may carry one player between the ages 38-39 years of age.
  - 1.1.4. Proof-of-age documentation must be provided if requested. Use of an ineligible player will result in a forfeit.
  - 1.1.5.
- 1.2.** HCRP offers 5 separate Leagues (Co-Rec Tues, Co-Rec Thurs, Men's Friday, Men's Sunday, Women's Sunday). Players may only play for one team within a specific League. Players are welcome to play in multiple Leagues.

**2. ROSTERS**

- 2.1.** Every player or substitute **MUST** be on the Official Team Roster before stepping onto the field for play. Unrostered players or unrostered substitutes are not permitted. Any team found to be playing with an unrostered player or unrostered substitute will forfeit the game.
- 2.2.** The online roster will remain open throughout the season.
- 2.3.** Initial rosters must be submitted by your first game. Failure to submit a roster before the first game will result in forfeiture of every game until the roster is on file with the League. Officials will not be assigned to any game in which a team does not have a roster on file with the League office.
- 2.4.** Rosters are to be submitted on the official roster form through SportsEngine.
- 2.5.** A player can only be on the roster of one team per night. Players cannot change to a different team at any point during the season. Teams cannot add players after the third game of the season.
- 2.6.** Teams using ineligible players shall forfeit each game in which the individual played. Further infractions will be subject to disciplinary actions as deemed necessary by the League Commissioner.
- 2.7.** Any team using a suspended player or player under an assumed name, shall be dropped from the League; all games played using that player plus all remaining scheduled games shall be forfeited and no refund provided.
- 2.8.** Players must carry photo identification to each game and shall produce it upon request of the official.
- 2.9.** Protests concerning an ineligible player must be submitted in writing by the Team Manager to the League Commissioner within 48 hours of the game; no protest fee is required.
- 2.10.** Only rostered players and team manager may sit on the bench. All spectators must remain in the stands and off the field.

**3. PLAYING RULES**

- 3.1.** Unless modified by this set of rules or the HCRP Standard Rules for Adult Sport Leagues, all games shall be played in accordance to FIFA rules. (HCRP encourages all teams/players to visit [www.fifa.com](http://www.fifa.com) and review and/or print a copy of the FIFA Rules.
- 3.2.** If any cards are issued in the game; the Official will inform the League Commissioner. Cards will be kept on file at the League Office. **See Disciplinary Cards section below.**
- 3.3.** The team on the field shall consist of eleven (11) players. The minimum number of players to start and continue a game is seven (7) players. Once the game begins, if a team falls below 7 players, the game will be considered a forfeit.
- 3.4.** **If a team cannot field the required 7 players**, upon agreement from the opposing manager, they may borrow players from other teams to create a field of up to 11 players. The team not borrowing players will receive 3 points in the standings while the team borrowing players will receive zero points.
- 3.5.** **Weekday** (Tues/Thurs/Fri) games shall consist of two (2) forty (40) minute halves with a five (5) minute rest period between halves.  
**Weekend** (Sun) games shall be two (2) forty-five (45) minute halves with a five (5) minute rest between halves.
- 3.6.** Game time is forfeit time. There will be no grace period for any games. The Official will give reasonable warning to let teams know when he/she will be starting the game clock after conducting the coin toss. All games must start at the scheduled time. After 15 minutes of game time, should seven (7) players do not show for a team, forfeiture occurs.
- 3.7.** For more information on forfeits, please see section 13.
- 3.8.** A player who is bleeding or who has blood on his/her uniform shall be prohibited from participating further in the game until appropriate treatment can be administered. An athlete shall not continue competition unless the bleeding is controlled and the wound is covered.

#### **4. TEAM AND PLAYER UNIFORM / EQUIPMENT**

- 4.1.** Players of a team are required to wear same color jerseys.
- 4.2.** If by chance two teams jersey colors are alike or similar, it is the responsibility of the **HOME TEAM** (listed first on the game schedule) to switch colors/jerseys.
- 4.3.** Appropriate soccer footwear or flat soled shoes must be worn. Metal spikes are prohibited.
- 4.4.** Shin guards must be worn properly by all players and covered appropriately.
- 4.5.** No jewelry or watches shall be worn by players on the field.

#### **5. CO-REC LEAGUE PLAYING EXCEPTIONS**

- 5.1.** A Maximum of six (6) of one gender on the field at any time. (Either 6 women OR 6 men).
- 5.2.** Substitutions shall be unrestricted by gender as long as the team does not violate rule.
- 5.3.** If a man or woman is ejected that gender must play shorthanded. (Example: If a male is ejected, the team is now limited to a maximum of 5 males/5 females or 6 females/ 4 males on the field).

#### **6. WOMEN'S LEAGUE PLAYING EXCEPTION – No slide tackles**

- 6.1.** Slide tackling, as defined by FIFA rules, is not permitted in the Women's League (all Divisions) and is a yellow card offense.

#### **7. Penalty Kicks**

#### **8. DISCIPLINARY CARDS**

- 8.1.** Upon receiving a yellow card the player must be substituted and sit the next 10 minutes.
- 8.2.** A red card equals an ejection for the current game and the next game.
- 8.3.** Two yellow cards in the same game equal a red card.
- 8.4.** Five (5) accumulated yellow cards in one-season equal a one game suspension.

#### **9. FOULS, MISCONDUCT, DISCIPLINARY ACTION AND PROTEST**

- 9.1.** League suspensions, probations and all disciplinary actions can be implemented by the League Commissioner as necessary to maintain proper conduct and instill League integrity.
- 9.2.** League Commissioner has the authority to apply the HCRP Standard Rules for all Adult Sports per his/her discretion (see below).
- 9.3.** All suspensions, ejections and other disciplinary actions are taken without the possibility of a refund.
- 9.4.** Per the request of the Official(s), players and/or managers are required to provide name(s) and/or team information so that an official game report can be submitted to the League. Failure to cooperate with the Official(s) request may result in suspension or dismissal from the League.

#### **10. SCORE REPORTING and STANDINGS**

- 10.1.** Both teams are responsible for reporting scores.
- 10.2.** The League website will provide the current standings throughout each Season.
- 10.3.** Standings will be calculated as follows: (Scores not reported will be an official 0-0 tie)
  - 10.3.1.** Points: 3pts for a Win, 1 pt for a tie, 0 pts for a loss, -2 points for no-show
  - 10.3.2.** Win percentage. (Total recorded wins + (.5 x number of ties) / Total Games)
- 10.4.** Tie breakers will be calculated in the following order:
  - 10.4.1.** Points
  - 10.4.2.** Head to Head
  - 10.4.3.** Goal Difference
  - 10.4.4.** Goals Conceded
  - 10.4.5.** Goals Scored
  - 10.4.6.** Official Tie

#### **11. GAME POSTPONEMENT AND RESCHEDULING**

- 11.1.** Teams are permitted to request a postponement/re-scheduling of a game 48 hours prior to the scheduled game.
- 11.2.** Once the game has been re-scheduled, both teams are obligated to play and failure to do so will result in a forfeit.
- 11.3.** If the game cannot be re-schedule due to field limitations or scheduling conflicts, the Team that did not request the original postponed will receive 3 points while the requestor will receive zero points.
- 11.4.** When rescheduling a make-up game, the League Coordinator will make every effort to first schedule games on the same playing day. If that is not possible then the League Coordinator reserves the right to reschedule games on any day in order to complete League play.

#### **12. OFFICIALS PAYMENT**

- 12.1.** At or prior to the start of the game, each team manager is responsible for the official cash fee per game (on-site). The official fee **MUST** be paid prior to the start of the game otherwise it is considered a forfeit and the game will be canceled.
- 12.1.1. \$60
- 12.1.2. \$65
- 12.2.** Once the game has started, the official fees are non-refundable regardless of how many minutes have been played.
- 12.3.** In the event only one official is on the field, then each team manager is responsible for the \$37.50 ( 80-Minute games), \$42.50 (90-minute games), or \$40 for women's games, in cash for the referee fee per game (on-site).

### **13. FORFEITS**

- 13.1.** Games rescheduled by the Department must be played as rescheduled or forfeited.
- 13.2.** A forfeit is considered a game. Forfeited games will not be rescheduled. A 15-0 win will be given to the team that did not forfeit.
- 13.3.** Teams that forfeit are responsible for all officials' fees for the forfeited game. Forfeiting teams will not receive a refund. The fee will be based on the per game fee the game officials are paid. Two forfeits in a given season may result in being dropped from the league without the possibility of a refund. Forfeit Penalty is \$130 per game forfeited.
- 13.4.** Forfeiting teams must call 410-313-7275 to pay the forfeit fee by (Office hours Monday-Friday 8AM-4:30PM) before their next scheduled game. If you fail to do so you will be removed from the league without refund. A forfeit invoice will then be mailed to the team manager for payment. If payment is not remitted, further action will be taken.
- 13.5.** Forfeit with notice – if a team knows that it will not have enough players for a future game, the team manager shall contact the League Commissioner at least 36 hours prior to the said game to be forfeited. In doing so, the game will still result in a 15-0 forfeit loss, but your team will not be charged the \$130 forfeit fee as the League Commissioner will have time to notify the opposing team and referees.

### **14. INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**

- 14.1.** All Adult Soccer League games will be played on turf fields. HCRP will only cancel games in advance per extreme/severe weather conditions (Winter League may have closed fields due to snow/ice).
- 14.2.** In case of inclement weather, the officials or the league commissioner will have discretion to shorten, reschedule or cancel games.
- 14.3.** The officials will make an on-field decision at game time if inclement weather happens during game time.
- 14.4.** If both managers agree to start the game, the Officials will be paid. Once the whistle blows to start the game the Official fees are non-refundable and the game is considered official, regardless of how many minutes are played.
- 14.5.** If team managers choose to delay the start of the game, the clock will still start at the scheduled game time. However, the Officials will not be paid until the managers decide to start playing the game.
- 14.6.** During the course of the game if the Official deems the weather conditions unsafe, the officials have the right to stop the game from continuing for player safety and the Official fees will not be refunded.

## **ADULT SPORTS LEAGUES STANDARD RULES**

### **Player Eligibility**

Rosters are to be submitted on the official online roster form through SportsEngine by the league deadline. Players listed without electronic signature and age are ineligible.

Managers of adult teams submitting rosters have the freedom to include any eligible 18 or older male or female adult that they have determined has the skills, knowledge and abilities to play at the level of their assigned division. Some sports leagues have age exceptions. Please check the league specific rules for details.

Any individual who has been subject to disciplinary action(s) by the Department may be placed on the Suspension List maintained by the Department of Recreation and Parks. The list shall include the name of the individual suspended and the release date. The League Commissioner will notify team managers if any of their rostered players are on the Suspension List. Any individual on this list will be ineligible to play.

Any team using an ineligible player shall automatically forfeit each game in which the player participated. If a team uses a suspended player or a player under an assumed name, that team shall automatically be dropped from the league without refund and/or be subject to disciplinary actions as deemed necessary by the Department. Each game played with that player and all scheduled games not played shall be forfeited to the opponents.

Protests as to the use of an ineligible player must be made within 48 hours of game time and no protest fee is required. The protest must be submitted in writing to the Department by the team manager.

## **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

The Department has the authority to impose sanctions on a team, team members or spectators for inappropriate and/or unsportsmanlike behavior and/or non-compliance with Department policies/guidelines, code of conduct, league rules and standard adult sports leagues rules.

When deemed necessary, the Department will ascertain the pertinent facts and take suitable disciplinary action regarding incidents of unsportsmanlike behavior or violations of Department policies/guidelines, code of conduct, league rules or standard adult sports leagues rules.

Game officials and Department staff shall penalize players, coaches or spectators for unsportsmanlike conduct and/or non-compliance with Department policies/guidelines, code of conduct, league rules or standard adult sports leagues rules.

Game officials and Department staff may suspend play or forfeit a game when, in their judgment, conditions justify such actions. Flagrant or repeated misconduct may result in permanent suspension. Team suspensions can be imposed.

In the event that an incident may require more serious disciplinary action, a Disciplinary Committee of persons will be appointed by the Adult Leagues Manager to determine the length of suspension. Serious disciplinary actions include, but not limited to physical altercations, verbal threats, intimidating behavior towards the other team, fellow team member, officials, or Department staff, etc. Extended suspensions or disciplinary sanctions should be determined within five (5) business days.

A team member who is ejected from a game by an official shall be suspended from any participation for at least 1 game (not including the game from which they were ejected). Any further ejections during the current season shall be dealt with more severely by the League Commissioner.

Anyone who strikes, shoves, pushes, bumps or otherwise physically or verbally threatens an official, a member of their team, any other team, Department staff, or spectators shall automatically be suspended from all Department-sponsored activities for at least 1 year from the date of the incident.

A team member found conducting unsportsmanlike behavior before, during or after the game could result in suspension or other disciplinary sanctions (listed below).

Any misconduct or inappropriate behavior on Howard County property could result in suspension or other disciplinary sanctions (listed below).

Suspensions carry over into the next season.

The use of vulgar or profane language may result in the ejection of that team member from the game.

The team manager is responsible for the conduct of their team and spectators.

A team member and/or spectator may be removed from the immediate field/court area when deemed necessary by the game official or Department staff. Failure to leave the area when requested may result in immediate forfeiture of the game.

The Howard County Employee Manual requires the Department to take action against anyone who harasses any Department of Recreation and Parks staff.

Substance abuse by a team member during the game shall be subject to ejection by game officials and/or disciplinary action to be taken by the League Commissioner.

Any team member suspended from play from another program shall also be suspended from participation in any program operated by the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks.

Team or team member probation may be used as a disciplinary sanction if multiple violations have occurred during the league season or if reoccurring violations happen from previous seasons.

Team members who receive disciplinary action from the Howard County Department of Recreation & Parks may request a review of the decision for appealable disciplinary sanctions (listed below). All requests for reviews must be made within 48 hours of the decision. Any such request should be made in writing to the League Commissioner. Individual player protest can only be received

through the team manager. All team or individual disciplinary actions are communicated to the team manager. It is the team manager's responsibility to notify their team/player of disciplinary action taken by the Department.

#### **MISCELLANEOUS**

Substances such as tobacco, marijuana, and ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES ARE PROHIBITED IN THE PARKS & FACILITIES. Spectators under the influence of these substances are also not permitted in parks and facilities. Action will be taken against any individual or team in violation of this policy.

No music is allowed during game play. Officials and players need to be able to hear the game calls.

No smoking or the use of Tobacco products is allowed on the playing field or in the facility.