



THE MISSISSIPPI SOCCER ASSOCIATION, INC. POLICY MANUAL

(As Revised and Amended, Effective February 3, 2024)

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PART I - GENERAL

Rule 101: ESTABLISHMENT

Section 1. The following Policies are the standing rules of the Mississippi Soccer Association (“MSA”). MSA is a member of the United States Youth Soccer Association, Inc. (“USYSA”) and the United States Adult Soccer Association, Inc. (“USASA”), which are both members of the United States Soccer Federation (“Federation”). The Federation is the national association member for the United States of the international organization FIFA and the USOPC.

Section 2. In the event of a conflict between the articles of incorporation and bylaws of MSA and the articles of incorporation, bylaws, policies, and requirements of the Federation, USYSA, or USASA, the articles, bylaws, policies, and requirements of the Federation govern with priority, followed by the articles, bylaws, policies, and requirements of USYSA and USASA.

Rule 102: AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Section 1. The policies, rules, and regulations of MSA as now established and as amended may be altered, repealed, or new policies, rules, and regulations may be adopted by a majority of the council then in office and present at the meeting of the council.

Section 2. Authority to establish policies, rules, regulations, and procedures by MSA for its members to ensure compliance with all requirements for membership shall be herein established.

Section 3. The policies, rules, and regulations of MSA shall take precedence over the rules and procedures of members when there is conflict or in the absence of such rules.

Section 4. Compliance with the MSA Code of Ethics for players, coaches, parents, and spectators, incorporated herein by reference, is the responsibility of all members.

Rule 103: MEMBER’S ESTABLISHMENT OF POLICIES, RULES, AND REGULATIONS

Members may enact policies, rules, and regulations more stringent than those included herein, but in no case may those policies, rules, and regulations be less stringent. However, no member organization may limit those privileges granted to players by the Federation, USYSA, USASA, or MSA.

Rule 104: PLEAS OF IGNORANCE

A plea of ignorance to the bylaws and these policies, rules, and regulations is not sufficient, and violators shall expect appropriate action by the council.

44 **Rule 105: MATTERS NOT PROVIDED FOR**

45

46 **Section 1.** Any matters not provided for in these policies, rules, and regulations shall be
47 determined, in its sole discretion, by the council.

48

49 **Section 2.** Any such decisions may be subject to the requirements of the MSA Bylaws or
50 approval of the members at the AGM or at a special meeting.

51

52

PART II - ADMINISTRATION

53

54 **Rule 201: COUNCIL OPERATIONS**

55

56 **Section 1.** The officers and directors of MSA shall not be compensated for the performance of
57 services as an employee for MSA but may be reimbursed for expenses incurred on behalf of the
58 MSA, including but not limited to expenses for attendance at meetings of the council.

59

60 **Section 2.** The council shall establish and disseminate all policies, rules, and regulations
61 regarding its obligation in Article VIII(2)(G) to establish district geographies, which shall include,
62 but not be limited to, boundaries, representation and elections, communications, and
63 oversight.

64

65 **Section 3.** The council may establish other administrative positions by contract if there is
66 remuneration or by appointment for positions without remuneration. All positions shall have
67 written statements of duties and responsibilities. Contracts shall also specify the duration of
68 such commitments and remuneration as agreed.

69

70 **Rule 202: BUDGET**

71

72 **Section 1.** Budgets, income, and expenses shall be established annually as necessary for the
73 operation of MSA.

74

75 **Section 2.** An annual review by a certified public accountant shall be authorized of all MSA
76 funds, which shall be a full audit on even years and an audit review on odd years.

77

78 **Section 3.** Accountability and fiscal responsibility shall be demonstrated by MSA in the use of
79 all funds under its authority and to assure that adequate resources are available to attain its
80 goals to promote, support, and educate for the advancement of MSA. All persons with
81 budgetary authority shall be accountable for the expenditures of funds budgeted to their office
82 or program.

83

84 **Section 4.** Final approval of requests for budget funding shall be as established by MSA,
85 approved by the council, and the annual budget subject to approval by the membership.

86

87 **Rule 203: FEES AND FINES**

88

89 **Section 1.** The council, subject to the approval of the membership at an AGM or a special
90 meeting, may assess fees or require bonds for administrative functions undertaken on behalf of
91 its members or fines in specific disciplinary actions may be levied.

92

93 **Section 2.** Fees shall be established, scheduled, and disseminated by MSA to provide
94 sufficient income to support its programs and services to players, coaches, and to support the
95 administration of MSA. Fines and penalties may also be levied.

96

97 **Section 3.** Registration fees are required for every player and coach that registers to participate
98 in any MSA-sanctioned event or competition.

99

100 **Section 4.** Members will complete and submit the online MSA Invoice forms for all monies
101 submitted to MSA. All financial instruments shall be made payable to MSA and submitted as
102 directed by MSA.

- 103 A. All fees, including those for registration, must be submitted via the MSA online system
104 within fifteen (15) days of the start of organization competition.
- 105 B. Cities and municipalities must present payment within 30 days after presentation to the
106 required city officials (any delay must be noted to MSA). These mailings will include an
107 itemized accounting of player registrations by playing level using the Invoice form within
108 the MSA Online Registration System.
- 109 C. Monthly, registrars shall generate an invoice for any registration fees accumulated and
110 submit appropriate fees to MSA.

111

112 **Rule 204: INSURANCE**

113

114 **Section 1. Program.**

- 115 A. This program exists to provide accidental medical coverage and liability coverage for
116 individuals serving in various capacities. The accidental medical insurance provides
117 secondary medical coverage only unless the injured individual is not covered by any
118 other medical insurance. In that case, the policy provides primary coverage. In either
119 case, the coverage is subject to the policy limitations. The liability insurance provides
120 primary coverage subject only to the policy limitations.
- 121 B. These policies are designed to provide sound administration and management of this
122 vital MSA Program.
- 123 C. The term of such insurance policies shall be generally briefly outlined with the complete
124 provisions in the policies on file at MSA. In the event of any conflict, the policy contracts
125 will govern.

126

127 **Section 2. Accidental Medical Insurance.**

- 128 A. Accidental medical coverage is maintained by MSA, which provides coverage to
129 registered players, registered coaches, and volunteers participating in MSA-sanctioned
130 activities at the team, club, league, and state levels, including MSA-sanctioned
131 tournaments and cups.

- 132 B. Coverage is afforded to all members who are properly registered as required by MSA.
133 C. The Accidental Medical Insurance Policy term shall be September 1 through August 31
134 annually.
135 D. Coverage is secondary coverage benefits, which are payable in excess of all other valid
136 and collectible insurance and requires a deductible.
137 E. Claim Procedure:
138 1. Claims may be denied if the listed procedures are not followed and in no case
139 shall a claim be paid if the participant is not properly registered to MSA.
140 2. No accident insurance claim will be honored unless it is first reviewed and
141 approved by MSA.
142 3. Completed claim forms, available on the MSA website, should be sent to MSA
143 within 20 days. Bills for expenses incurred must be submitted within 90 days of
144 treatment.
145 4. The attending physician or dentist shall complete the appropriate sections on the
146 back of the form, or the standard forms from the physician or dentist may be
147 substituted.
148 5. Attach all itemized bills.
149 6. Mail any additional bills directly to the Insurance Company.
150 7. Notice of claim and initial treatment shall be submitted by claimant to the MSA
151 carrier within 180 days of the injury.
152

153 **Section 3. General Liability Insurance.**

- 154 A. Comprehensive general liability coverage shall be maintained for MSA and all members.
155 B. The named insureds for MSA coverage shall include each of its officers, directors,
156 employees, committee members, and other persons as specified by the council.
157 C. Member coverage includes member officers, volunteers, players, coaches, assistant
158 coaches, and spectators.
159 D. The policy term shall be from September 1 through August 31 annually unless otherwise
160 determined by the council.
161

162 **Rule 205: RISK MANAGEMENT**

163
164 **Section 1.** The Risk Management Program shall encompass and govern the administration and
165 implementation of MSA's risk management program to be consistent with Federation Bylaw
166 212(1)(7) and (3)(a)(7), its Safe Soccer program including Federation Policy 212-3, in
167 compliance with USYSA Bylaw Article VI. Section 2, and the USYSA Risk Management Policy as
168 of February 16, 2019.
169

170 **Section 2.** The requirements for the implementation of a risk management program are
171 described in the Federation's Safe Soccer program and the USYSA Risk Management Policy,
172 which MSA has adopted in compliance with the requirements of membership.
173

174 **Section 3.** The responsibility for the oversight and administration of the Risk Management
175 Program shall be the council, which may be delegated.
176

177 **Section 4.** As required by Federation Policy 531-1.5 and the USYSA Risk Management Policy, all
178 referees participating with MSA shall “agree to participate in, and comply with, the risk
179 management program” and to be subject to background checks.
180

181 **Section 5.** Each member organization shall annually inspect all practice and game field goals.
182 An affidavit shall be submitted to the MSA State Office online through the E-Org system before
183 play may begin. The inspection criteria shall be as provided by the Consumer Product Safety
184 Commission (CPSC).
185

186 **Rule 206: GAME PLAY WITH NON-MEMBERS AND EXTRA TERRITORIAL AFFILIATIONS**

187
188 **Section 1.** Any member team or member, which plays games or otherwise does business with
189 an organization not affiliated with the Federation, USYSA, or USASA, shall face disciplinary
190 action up to and including suspension as determined by the council. MSA will not join any
191 organization that has requirements that conflict with the Federation’s bylaws, policies, and
192 requirements.
193

194 **Section 2.** Teams near the territorial limits of MSA may, if the board of directors consents,
195 member with other recognized State Associations, but thereafter may not change affiliations
196 without the consent of the council. A team may not change member organizations without the
197 written agreement of both member organizations and the written approval of the council.
198

199 **Rule 207: TOURNAMENT GAMES, ALL-STAR GAMES, AND INTERNATIONAL GAMES**

200
201 The authority for approval, operational control, or both, including dates and times of games
202 that are to be played for these competitions, when played or sponsored by any member team(s)
203 or member(s), shall be vested with the council.
204

205 **Rule 208: PERMISSION TO TRAVEL**

206
207 Teams that wish to travel out of Mississippi to play games must notify MSA in accordance with
208 procedures as defined. The council may establish additional requirements and fees.
209

- 210 - Competitive level teams are not required to notify MSA of travel unless required by the
- 211 Tournament/Event they are attending.
- 212 - Recreational teams traveling out of state must always notify MSA.
- 213 - Notifications of Travel submitted within 36 hours of the event will incur a processing fee.
214

215 **Rule 209: PERMISSION TO HOST FOREIGN AND INTERSTATE TEAMS**

216
217 Teams that wish to host teams from another state or another country must request permission
218 from MSA in accordance with procedures detailed by the Federation and in the USYSA Travel
219 and Tournament Manual. The council may establish additional requirements and fees.
220

221 **Rule 210: PERMISSION TO HOST A TOURNAMENT**

222
223 **Section 1.** Member organizations that wish to host an MSA sanctioned tournament must
224 request permission from the MSA in accordance with the policies and procedures established
225 by MSA, USYSA, USASA, and the Federation. The council may establish additional
226 requirements. Member organizations that wish to host a sanctioned tournament shall be
227 insured against general liability claims by MSA's insurance carrier for MSA sanctioned activities.
228 The council may establish additional requirements and fees.

229
230 **Section 2.** MSA may host a tournament in accordance with the policies and procedures
231 established by USYSA, USASA, and the Federation. The council may establish rules and
232 additional requirements and fees.

233
234 **Rule 211: OLYMPIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (ODP)**

235
236 MSA shall participate in the Federation and USYSA Olympic Development Program through the
237 Mississippi State Select Program. Any player domiciled in the State of Mississippi shall be
238 eligible to try out for ODP pursuant to requirements and procedures that will be published
239 annually by MSA, USYSA, and the Federation.

240
241 **Rule 212: COACHING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

242
243 **Section 1.** Subject to the policies and procedures established by the Federation, MSA shall
244 establish, manage, and operate coaching development programs. The council may establish
245 additional requirements to those provided by or not covered by the Federation as may be
246 provided in this rule.

247
248 **Section 2.** State level coaching development is designed to provide instruction in soccer
249 coaching for any individual regardless of coaching or playing background. The philosophy is to
250 expose the beginner or novice to coaching and teaching methods which are economical and
251 efficient.

252
253 **Section 3.** Procedures for hosting courses shall be published and posted by MSA. The
254 procedures shall provide the process for scheduling courses, course curriculum, the fee
255 schedule, time requirements, and any other directions necessary for obtaining an MSA
256 coaching license. The hosting procedures shall be binding on all members and participants.

257
258 **Section 4.** Program administration shall be overseen by the council and the executive director.
259 The Director of Coaching, as applicable, shall be responsible for all operational matters and
260 correspondence with any member requesting a course, including but not limited to,
261 curriculum, instructional staff, certification, and schedule.

262
263 **Rule 213: MEMBER INFORMATION**

265 **Section 1.** The information collected online by national entities is stored indefinitely at a
266 national background checks processing company and is used for assuring the safety of our
267 membership as outlined in the risk management policies.
268

269 **Section 2.** Local organizations, members, and officers do not have access to any background
270 check information. The members' officers with access to the password-protected MSA
271 database systems may see if the individual has completed and passed a successful
272 background check. Individuals noted as N/A, Pending, or Denied may not participate with the
273 organization. Other than name, address, and contact information, no other personal
274 information is displayed.
275

276 **Section 3.** Information in the risk management database is not used for mailings, list rental, or
277 any other form of sale.
278

279 **Section 4.** MSA reserves the right to disclose personal information if required to do so by law,
280 by the request or demand from Safe Sport or the Federation, or in the good faith belief that such
281 action is reasonably necessary to comply with legal process, respond to claims, or protect the
282 rights, property, or safety of the organization, employees, members, or the public.
283

284 **Section 5.** When adverse information is received, the individual is contacted directly by MSA to
285 obtain information to clear the adverse information. If the information is found to be correct,
286 the MSA Criminal Conviction Matrix is used to determine eligibility and when the individual
287 would become eligible. The local member president would be advised that the individual was
288 ineligible for participation in MSA. The individual may appeal the loss of eligibility in accordance
289 with MSA Bylaws and policy. The member is required to enforce the eligibility decision of the
290 person involved, unless otherwise advised by the MSA.
291

292 **Rule 214: MISCELLANEOUS**

293

294 **Section 1.** Except for employees or authorized contractors and subcontractors, no private
295 individual, corporation, contributor, or member of MSA may be granted or paid any income or
296 interest from the assets or funds of MSA.
297

298 **Section 2.** No part of the activities, assets, or funds of MSA shall be committed to the
299 dissemination of propaganda or the attempting to influence legislation or other political action.
300 MSA shall not participate or intervene in any political campaign or publish or distribute any
301 statement or spend any funds on behalf of any candidate for public office.
302

303 **Section 3.** The accomplishment of its purpose and exercise of its powers by MSA shall be in
304 conformity with the requirements of the Mississippi Not for Profit Corporation Act.
305

306 **Section 4.** MSA shall maintain its tax-exempt status under the Internal Revenue Code.
307

PART III – REGISTRATION AND PARTICIPATION

Rule 301: DEFINITIONS

Section 1. By reference, all definitions included in the USYSA Policies on Players and Playing Rules, Rule 101. Sections (1) and (2) and the USASA Player Registration Policy apply.

Section 2. The following definitions also apply to this part:

- A. **Club Pass Play:** The act of participating with an MSA team in an MSA or USYSA-sanctioned event by an age-eligible player rostered to another team in the same member.
- B. **Dual Rostering:** The action of being rostered to more than one team simultaneously. See Rule 303, Section 6.
- C. **Event Roster:** A roster created for an event, such as a league or tournament, that is used only in that event and has been created from the team's official state roster and approved guest player forms.
- D. **Guest Playing:** The act of participating in an MSA-sanctioned event when the player appears on the official roster of another team.
- E. **Official Roster:** The computer-generated roster from the MSA secure site in printout form.
- F. **Registration:** Shall be defined as the act of registering a player or coach with MSA.
- G. **Release:**
 - 1. **Voluntary Release:** The process of removing a player or coach from a team roster at the written request of the player or coach.
 - 2. **Involuntary Release:** The process of removing a player or coach without written permission of the player or coach.
 - 3. Any released player may not be assigned to another team for the remainder of the seasonal year.
- H. **Rostering:** Shall be defined as the act of placing a registered player or coach on a team roster as may be defined by the rules of competition for an MSA-sanctioned competition or event.
- I. **Transfer:** Shall be defined as the release and removal of a player's primary roster with the intention of being added to another member and the roster of another team on acceptance of the request by MSA.

Rule 302: PLAYER REGISTRATION

Section 1. A player is obligated to their member organization for the seasonal year from the time they are registered in the MSA electronic registration system until the end of the current seasonal year unless otherwise provided.

Section 2. Registration Procedure.

- 350 A. Eligible individuals must register through a member organization, be domiciled in the
351 State of Mississippi, and meet the established age requirements for program
352 participation.
- 353 B. Member organizations are required to verify the birth date of each player via birth
354 certificate, passport, driver's license documents, or any other document accepted by
355 USYS/USSF. Verification of birth dates should be noted within the MSA online
356 registration software.
- 357 C. Registration of players, coaches, and team officials is required for any MSA-sanctioned
358 or sponsored event. All registered players, coaches, and team officials must comply
359 with applicable rules, policies, and procedures to be eligible to compete.
- 360 D. Members shall register all players, coaches, and team/club officials **prior** to any
361 participation in the game of soccer, including but not limited to practice, scrimmages,
362 and all competitions in which the player or coach participates except for properly
363 announced tryouts. The registration requirement shall in no way be construed as an
364 extension to or a waiver to the submission deadlines as required by the rules of specific
365 competitions.
- 366 E. Registration fees must be submitted in a timely fashion according to MSA rules. Due
367 dates will be noted on any player fee invoice generated by MSA.
- 368 F. An eligible youth player may register with MSA for: (1) the sole purpose of allowing the
369 player to participate on an Adult level team without losing their youth eligibility, (2)
370 participation in the Mississippi State Select Program (ODP) without participating on a
371 member organization's team, (3) playing occasionally as a guest player with existing
372 member teams without being obligated to an organization. Player(s) must pay the
373 applicable registration fee for the highest level in which they wish to play.
374

375 **Section 3. Tryouts and Advertising**

- 376 A. Member organizations in good standing may begin conducting player trials (tryouts) for
377 the next seasonal year on the Monday following the originally scheduled date of the
378 completion of the MSA State Cup Tournament.
- 379 B. Member organizations in good standing may advertise their tryout schedules in the
380 media of their choice at any point throughout the seasonal year unless otherwise
381 provided.
 - 382 1. The announcement/advertisement must be limited to the following: tryouts
383 must be open to all players, the name of the club/organization must be clearly
384 stated; its business address, and telephone number, complete dates, times,
385 places and coaches for tryout sessions may be included if available.
 - 386 2. No language can be incorporated which would deny the right or ability of any
387 player of the correct age to participate; nor can the advertisement serve in any
388 way, directly or indirectly, to coerce or threaten players to try out for a
389 particular member organization team versus another.
390

391 **Section 4. Recruitment**

- 392 A. Prior to the Monday following the originally scheduled date of the completion of the MSA
393 State Cup Tournament, no person may directly or indirectly induce or attempt to induce

394 a player to leave the member organization for which he/she has registered without an
395 approved transfer on file in the MSA electronic registration system.

396 B. Prior to the Monday following the originally scheduled date of the completion of the MSA
397 State Cup Tournament, no registered player may directly or indirectly contact any other
398 member organization during the current seasonal year without an approved transfer on
399 file in the MSA electronic registration system.

400 C. Recruitment Sanctions: If a coach, team official, player, parent of a player, or anybody
401 acting on behalf of the team is found guilty of unauthorized recruiting, the sanctions
402 may include, but are not limited to the following: warning, coach suspension,
403 tournament play restrictions, team advancement restrictions, coach expulsion, and
404 team suspension.

405
406 **Section 5.** Proof of registration in the form of a current laminated pass recognized by MSA or an
407 official MSA generated roster shall be required for any MSA-sanctioned out-of-region play,
408 tournament, or Cup play including all non-league games.

409
410 **Section 6.** Players or teams who participate with unregistered players or engage in
411 unsanctioned play shall have no benefits of membership with MSA including, but not limited to,
412 risk management, disciplinary, or insurance protection while playing with unregistered players
413 or in unsanctioned play.

414
415 **Section 7.** MSA applies Federation Policy 601-6 and the USYSA Policies on Players and Playing
416 Rules, Rule 207 regarding foreign and out-of-state players.

417 A. MSA exceptions for out-of-state players:

- 418 1. A resident of another state who attends a boarding school, college, or university
419 located in Mississippi may register with the appropriate member organization, as
420 determined by MSA policies for the appropriate playing level and age group.
- 421 2. A resident of another state may register with an MSA member organization if they
422 receive written permission from the USYS State Association in which they are
423 domiciled. These permissions must be obtained and approved by both parties
424 prior to player registration with the MSA member. Permission is obtained by
425 completing the MSA Request for Interstate Transfer.

426
427 **Section 8.** Specific procedures may be revised, published as necessary, and shall be
428 communicated to members as appropriate.

429
430 **Section 9.** MSA may permit variances to these requirements as provided by USYSA Policy on
431 Players and Playing Rules, Rule 105, specifically as it applies to players with special needs.

432 **Rule 303: ROSTERING**

433
434
435 **Section 1.** All players must be rostered to a team in order to compete in MSA-sanctioned
436 activities. Any player participating in any competition shall be considered immediately rostered
437 to that team.

439 **Section 2.** A player is rostered to a team when the rostering process is completed or as defined
440 by MSA. All matters of dispute shall be governed by the **Official Roster**. A copy of the Official
441 Roster is valid for all events requiring a roster.
442

443 **Section 3.** A coach is rostered to a team when the rostering process below is complete.

- 444 A. Properly registered within member organization
- 445 B. Current photo in profile account of registration software
- 446 C. Kidsafe affidavit submitted and approved
- 447 D. SafeSport training completed and/or renewed
- 448 E. Heads Up Concussion Awareness training completed
- 449 F. Licensed properly in accordance with MSA guidelines

451 **Section 4.** MSA-sanctioned competitions (state league play and Competitive tournaments)
452 may adopt rules to allow the use of Club Pass players up to the maximum roster size:

- 453 A. U13 – U19 Competitive teams: Total roster size, including club pass players, is limited to
454 twenty-two (22) players. Teams shall name eighteen (18) eligible players for each game.
- 455 B. U11 – U12 Competitive teams: Total roster size, including club pass players, is limited to
456 fourteen (14) players.
- 457 C. A club pass player may only participate with one (1) team per event.
- 458 D. Recreational players may club pass to a Competitive team but not to another
459 Recreational team.

461 **Section 5.** Leagues and tournaments may create event rosters for internal use allowing
462 properly registered players to participate within their rules of competition without changing the
463 Official Roster.
464

465 **Section 6.** Event Rosters must list the player's full name, pass number, rostered team, date of
466 birth, and birth verification status. Prior to the use of these rosters for inter-club games,
467 leagues, and tournaments, the member must have on file the team's official roster with
468 appropriate guest player forms or an Event Roster, as verification of players' credentials and
469 that guest players have proper permission to participate.
470

471 **Section 7.** Dual Rostering is permitted, and a player may be rostered to multiple teams at one
472 time during a seasonal year with the applicable conditions:

- 473 A. A player is eligible for State Cup as subject to the USYSA NCS rules.
- 474 B. The team schedule on which the player is officially rostered takes precedence in all
475 issues or conflicts.
- 476 C. No player may play on two (2) teams during the same event.

477 **Section 8.** Event rosters for all competitions shall be the official roster unless otherwise
478 specified.
479

480 **Section 9.** Simultaneous rostering for MSA-sanctioned competitions is not permitted unless
481 otherwise specified.
482
483

484 **Rule 304: ELIGIBILITY, TRANSFERS, AND RELEASES**

485
486 **Section 1. Player eligibility to compete shall be determined as follows:**

- 487 A. Registration with MSA has been completed and is accurate.
488 B. Proper birth documentation has been submitted and verified.
489 C. Player is properly rostered (as per the rules of competition) to the team with which they
490 intend to compete.
491 D. Member requirements for registration comply.
492 E. Remains on the team, or with the member, to which they are registered and rostered for
493 the seasonal year unless properly released or transferred.

494
495 **Section 2. Team eligibility to compete is determined as follows:**

- 496 A. All players properly registered with MSA.
497 B. All players are properly rostered to the team as may be defined by the rules of
498 competition.
499 C. Coaches and Team Officials properly registered with MSA and rostered to the team as
500 may be defined by the rules of competition.
501 D. Associated with a Member and must continue for the seasonal year, including that no
502 team in its entirety or majority may move to another Member during the seasonal year.
503 E. Participating in a qualified age group.
504 F. Recreational teams must be properly age-balanced. The composition of recreational
505 teams each seasonal year must be adjusted to ensure a competitive balance between
506 all teams routinely playing against each other in a member's recreational program.

507 **Player age variance on each team is required:**

- 508 1. The assignment distribution from the upper half of the age/gender group should
509 not exceed the organization's total distribution of the upper-half age group
510 players by more than fifteen (15) percent.
511 2. The only acceptable exception is during spring registration for those members
512 with fall and spring seasons. If age-balanced teams cannot be attained due to
513 players not returning and the addition of new players during spring registration,
514 the member registrar must notify the MSA State Registrar prior to making changes
515 to fall rosters.
516 G. Improper registration of any team member shall result in the team forfeiting all games
517 the improperly registered player or players participated. An improperly registered player
518 includes a player who is over-age, not registered to MSA, improperly entered on the team
519 roster, or all of these.

520
521 **Section 3. Releases and Transfers.**

- 522 A. A player under the age of 18 may request, in writing, to be released from a team roster or
523 from a member with the approval of a parent or guardian. The member may grant the
524 request. Upon release, the player is ineligible for the remainder of the seasonal year.
525 B. Permanent internal movement (within a member organization) of a rostered player to
526 another team requires a Request for Transfer, submitted by a parent or guardian, with
527 club approval.

- 528 C. A player transferring in any MSA playing level must receive MSA approval at least
529 fourteen (14) days prior to the first date of player participation on the new team for MSA
530 Sponsored Tournaments or MSA League Play. The player may play within their own
531 league for the purposes of their own intra-league play after seven (7) days.
532 D. Previously rostered players on a Competitive team may not participate in league games
533 within fourteen (14) days of being transferred onto the team.
534 E. Recreational or previously non-rostered players added to a Competitive team may
535 participate in league play irrespective of the 14-day wait period.
536 F. The only exception to this will be a legitimate Hardship Transfer request for Recreation,
537 approved by MSA, in the MSA Recreation Cup Championship Rounds.
538 G. Recreational teams participating in the MSA District and/or Recreational State Cup are
539 limited to transfers as follows prior to District Tournament roster freeze date:
540 1. 7v7 format: maximum of 3 transfers
541 2. 9v9 format: maximum of 4 transfers
542 3. 11v11 format: maximum of 5 transfers
543 H. For the MSA Elite Cup: Based on the format of play, the maximum of properly executed
544 transfers allowed prior to the roster freeze date established is no more than 50% +1 of
545 the maximum roster size.
546 1. Any team executing more than 5 transfers during a seasonal year will
547 automatically be placed in the Gold Division of the Elite Cup, where applicable.
548 I. Competitive Premier teams participating in the USYS leagues, MSA State League, and/or
549 MSA Premier Cup shall be limited to a total of five (5) transferred players per seasonal
550 year. All transfers must be prior to the Premier Cup roster freeze date.
551 J. A player shall always be limited to a total of one (1) transfer per seasonal year.
552 K. Player Transfers are permanent for the seasonal year. The player also becomes the
553 permanent player resource for the gaining team's member until the transferred player
554 decides to discontinue play with the controlling member.
555 L. The Controlling Organization's policy controls the permissibility of eligible player
556 transfers from a lower age group to a higher age group. MSA controls the permissibility of
557 eligible player transfers from a higher age group to a lower age group.
558 M. Any Registered and Rostered Player, who fails to receive a response to the request for
559 transfer from their current organization within seventy-two (72) hours of their
560 documented request, shall be transferred directly by MSA according to MSA policy.
561

562 **Rule 305: AGE AND PLAYER CLASSES**

563

564 **Section 1.** Age groups and all requirements shall be established by MSA as per Federation,
565 USYSA, and USASA requirements for all levels of play.
566

567 **Section 2.** A player must have attained their third (3rd) birthday.
568

569 **Section 3.** Players attaining the limited age for any age group on or after January 1 will be
570 eligible to play for the full seasonal year.
571

572 **Section 4.** Proof of age, per USYSA requirements, shall consist of a birth certificate, passport,
573 driver's license, board of health records, certificate of naturalization, or alien registration card
574 shall be sufficient for proof of age, except in those competitions which specifically state
575 otherwise.

576
577 **Section 5.** A player may play in an older age group, subject to competition rules, if that player is
578 capable both physically and developmentally and subject to any other requirements.

579
580 **Section 6. Player Classes.**

- 581 A. A Competitive player shall be defined as a player who has been selected, registered,
582 and rostered to a Competitive team and will receive a USYSA pass when verified. All
583 players will be considered competitive unless otherwise provided.
- 584 B. A recreational player shall be defined as a player who is registered and rostered to a
585 recreation team as defined by USYSA and MSA and participating in an in-house or MSA-
586 approved recreational league as defined.
- 587 C. A Rec-Plus player shall be defined as a recreational player who is registered and
588 rostered to a recreation team as defined by USYS and MSA and selected to participate
589 on a Rec-Plus team for the controlling organization. All Rec-Plus players must have a
590 USYSA pass prior to competing in any USYSA/MSA-sanctioned event.
- 591 D. TOPSoccer Programs
- 592 1. MSA will sanction and register those players in the TOPSoccer Program or other
593 programs of this nature as designated by the council.

594
595 **Rule 306: ADULT AND AMATEUR GAMES**

596
597 **Section 1.** MSA encourages players to seek all opportunities for development including adult
598 and amateur games.

599
600 **Section 2.** An eligible youth player may register with MSA for the sole purpose of allowing the
601 player to participate on an Adult Level team without losing their youth eligibility or participating
602 in the Mississippi State Select Program (ODP) without participating on a member organization's
603 team. A player who does not wish to be obligated to an organization may register directly with
604 MSA for the purposes of playing occasionally as a guest with existing MSA teams. This player
605 must pay the applicable registration fees for the highest level of play.

606
607 **PART IV: DISCIPLINE**

608
609 **Rule 401: DEFINITIONS**

610
611 **Section 1.** By reference, all definitions included in Federation Bylaw 701 and Policy 701-1 apply.

612
613 **Section 2.** The following definitions also apply to this part:

- 614 A. **Appeal:** A formal method of requesting a reversal of a decision or ruling made by an
615 authority within MSA. It may be filed by any individual, club, league, officer,

- 616 administrator, or member who has been directly affected by that ruling and which
617 person affected and filed by the person against whom a decision has been made.
- 618 B. **Charge:** A formal method of filing a claim against an individual, Member, or member of
619 MSA regarding the violation of any Federation, USYSA, or MSA requirement.
- 620 C. **Due Process:** All procedures contained within this section and shall guarantee any
621 individual, Member, player, coach, official or administrator of MSA or any Member the
622 right to exercise these procedures including the right to know what charges have been
623 made against a person and the right to a hearing before the imposition of any sanction
624 whatsoever, including suspension, for any period of time, unless otherwise provided by
625 the Federation, USYSA, or MSA.
- 626 D. **Grievance:** Disputes between two or more members of MSA as provided in Article XI of
627 the MSA Bylaws.
- 628 E. **Protest:** A formal method that challenges the results of an event and is subject to the
629 rules of a competition.
630

631 **Rule 402: RESPONSIBILITY FOR DISCIPLINE**

632

633 **Section 1.** In general, the members shall be responsible for governing those participants who
634 are part of the organization and shall establish procedures to that effect. A member may adopt
635 more stringent penalties, which shall prevail, but in no event may penalties be less. However, it
636 is the duty of all members, their leaders, coaches, referees, and assistant referees to report
637 immediately any infraction of “Misconduct Toward Game Officials” and “Misconduct of Game
638 Officials” as required by Federation Policy 531-9 and 531-10.
639

640 **Section 2.** All members shall provide procedures for discipline, protest, and appeals for their
641 members. All grievances involving the right to participate and compete in activities sponsored
642 by the Federation and MSA and its members may be appealed to the Federation’s appeal
643 committee that shall have jurisdiction to approve, modify, or reverse a decision. All hearings
644 shall comply with Federation Bylaw 701 and Policy 701-1.
645

646 **Section 3.** Should any person, team, or member want to appeal any decision, the line of
647 authority shall be from the member to MSA and then to the line of authority as specified by
648 United States Soccer Federation.
649

650 **Rule 403: DISCIPLINE AND APPEAL FILING PROCEDURE**

651

652 **Section 1.** The MSA Disciplinary and Appeals Committee shall only hear appeals from
653 decisions of lower authority, cases concerning referee abuse or assault, or matters referred by
654 the council.
655

656 **Section 2.** The line of authority for an appeal is as follows:

- 657 A. Member.
658 B. MSA Disciplinary and Appeals Committee.
659 C. The authority as specified by the Federation.
660

661 **Section 3.** Appeals must be in writing, either on forms specified by the MSA or providing the
662 information requested on such forms and described in detail the grounds for the appeal.

663
664 **Section 4.** The written appeal must be mailed within ten (10) days of the receipt of a written
665 decision from a lower authority and must be accompanied by all supporting documents and by
666 a fee as prescribed by the council.

667
668 **Section 5.** The appeal fee paid by the prevailing party will be returned; however, the fee shall
669 not be returned if the appeal is denied.

670
671 **Section 6.** The party responsible for hearing appeals may decline a hearing as follows:
672 A. The appeal does not pertain to the original protest or the decision of a lower authority.
673 B. The appeal is filed by a party other than the original parties to the appeal or protest.

674
675 **Section 7.** At all levels of the appeals process, if a decision is not reached within thirty (30)
676 days of receipt of the written appeal, the party filing the appeal may submit the appeal to the
677 next higher level and the appeal fee submitted will be applied to the next level.

678
679 **Section 8.** All decisions at all levels of the appeal process shall stand and be in full force and
680 effect until and unless modified by a higher authority.

681
682 **Section 9.** Decisions of the MSA Disciplinary and Appeals Committee shall be binding unless a
683 decision is overturned by a higher authority. Failure to abide by decisions of the committee
684 shall be grounds for further disciplinary action by the MSA council.

685 686 **PART V: DEFINITIONS**

687 688 **The following definitions also apply to MSA Programs:**

689 **Appeal:** A formal method of requesting a reversal of any decision or ruling made by an authority
690 within MSA.

691
692 **Birth Verification:** Proper birth documentation for the player has been submitted to MSA.

693
694 **Competition:** Any competition which has league or tournament standings that can be affected
695 by both a player's primary and secondary registered teams.

696
697 **Council:** Shall be as provided in Article VIII of the MSA Bylaws.

698
699 **Cups:** Any MSA and USYSA sponsored tournaments.

700
701 **Controlling Organization:** The MSA member organization in which a player is registered and
702 rostered during the seasonal year as a result of seasonal registration or a player transfer.
703
704

705 **Disbanded Team:** A team which cannot consistently start the maximum number of field
706 players in local league play due to parental and/or player disinterest. As a result, the coach,
707 players, and local member officials mutually request MSA State Registrar along with
708 appropriate District Director for approval to disband the team for the remainder of the seasonal
709 year and to reassign any team players, desiring to continue playing soccer with other local
710 teams, in accordance with established MSA policies. Team disbanding must be finalized 60
711 days prior to the MSA sponsored District, Elite Cup, and/or Premier Cup events.

712
713 **District:** A geographical sub-division of the territory of MSA.
714

715 **Domicile Requirements:** The address of the dwelling at which the player resides shall be
716 deemed the player's domicile. P.O. Boxes may be used for mailing purposes only but will not
717 suffice as a domicile address. A player shall NOT be considered registered unless a domicile
718 address is included in the address field of the MSA registration software.
719

720 **Dummy Roster (Recreation only):** A roster for registered player(s) where roster limits have
721 been met on a team, but a second team would not meet the minimum required number of
722 players. Player(s) on a dummy roster may participate in regular season play prior to MSA roster
723 freeze dates.
724

725 **Eligibility Roster:** A roster for a non-playing team which may have as few as one (1) player for
726 the sole purpose of either an adult program participant maintaining their youth eligibility or an
727 eligible youth registering with the USYSA to participate only in its Olympic Development
728 Program.
729

730 **Eligible Youths:** Individuals who meet the established USYSA birth-date criteria for each
731 age/gender group and who either are a player resource of the member organization due to
732 previous registration or an approved player transfer.
733

734 **Exhibition Games:** Games played with visiting teams from another state or National Youth
735 Association for promotion purposes. Pick-up games are not Exhibition Games.
736

737 **Hardship Transfer (Recreation Teams only):** An MSA-approved transfer to restore a team's
738 strength back to the maximum number of players allowed on the field at one time plus two (2)
739 substitutes. The transferred player or players must be registered in the member organization.
740 The team must remain age-balanced according to MSA policy.
741

742 **Event Roster:** A roster created by an event, such as a league or tournament that is used only in
743 that event and has been created from data obtained from the team's official state roster and
744 approved guest player forms.
745

746 **FIFA:** Federation International de Football Association, the worldwide governing body of the
747 sport of soccer.
748

749 **Frozen Roster:** Any roster that is frozen mandates that there can be no movements either off of
750 or onto until either the team is eliminated from the specific competition or the completion of
751 the competition under which the roster is frozen. Season-ending injuries cannot be replaced
752 once the roster is frozen. Any changes to the roster will result in the team being disqualified
753 from the specific competition.

754
755 **Game Roster:** A list of players who will participate in a competition.

756
757 **Guest Player:** A registered player participating in a competition for a team to which the player
758 is not rostered.

759
760 **Ineligible Player:** Any youth who is unregistered, suspended, overage, or not a properly
761 rostered member of the team(s) competing.

762
763 **Involuntary Release:** The removal of a player from a team's roster at the request of team
764 authorities.

765
766 **League:** A structured group of four (4) or more teams joined for the purposes of inter-team play
767 under a common set of administrative and competitive rules.

768
769 **MSA Official:** Officers, Directors, Committee Members, or anyone authorized to represent MSA
770 in any capacity.

771
772 **Non-Player:** Coach, Assistant Coach, Manager, or any other person assisting the team; a
773 spectator.

774
775 **Player:** A youth properly registered in accordance with the rules of the Federation, USYSA,
776 USASA, and the MSA rules.

777
778 **Previously Rostered Player:** Any player who has been rostered to another team during the
779 same seasonal year in any fashion.

780
781 **Protest:** A formal method to question and request reversal of an event.

782
783 **Recreational League:** An intra-club league in which the use of try-outs, invitations, recruiting,
784 or any like process to roster players selectively to any team based on talent or ability is
785 prohibited. Accepts any and all youths (subject to reasonable registration); the system of
786 rostering players is employed for the purpose of creating a fair or balanced distribution of
787 playing teams.

788
789 **Recreational Team:** A team in which the use of try-outs, recruiting, or any like process to roster
790 players selectively on the basis of talent or ability is strictly prohibited.

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792 **Referee:** All currently registered Federation referees, assistant referees, 4th officials, or others
793 duly appointed to assist in officiating a match. Also, any non-registered person serving in an
794 emergency capacity as a referee, a club linesman.

795
796 **Registration:** The signing of an intent to play the sport of soccer and the paying of fees or
797 acceptance of a scholarship to become a member of USYSA and MSA.

798
799 **Rostering:** The assignment of a registered player to a team.

800
801 **Team Roster:** A list of registered players eligible to play for a team.

802
803
804 **Drafting Notes:**

- 805 A. Code of Conduct is recommended to be a separate document that is highlighted.
806 B. All program and event policies are recommended to exist separately for those that participate.
807 C. Deference is provided to the Council as the final authority when ambiguities of policy and rule
808 application are present.
809 D. Any time it is possible, reference and deferral are made to national organizations and the
810 Federation.
811 E. Referee abuse and assault are specific violations in the Federation policies and thus are best
812 covered by reference to those requirements.