



1.5.26

2026 Men's Over 35 Soccer Official Rules

Objectives

To provide competitive and recreational soccer leagues in a family environment.

The CSL will play all games according to the official FIFA laws with the following amendments:

Eligibility

1. All teams must complete an official roster prior to the start of the season.
2. All teams must have all League fees paid prior to the start of each season (\$300).
3. All teams must post a \$100.00 refundable performance bond prior to the start of each season, which is returned at the end of the season, upon compliance with the below bylaws.
4. All players must join US Soccer through SCASA (**\$25 annual fee plus \$15 City of Charleston fee per season**).
5. A player may **NOT** play on two teams.
6. All players must be 35 years old or older. 1 player 30 or older may be rostered.
7. All players must pay for their red card fee and serve their respective suspensions. Suspended players are not allowed to be at the games.
8. A team must be in good standing, with no outstanding financial debts or other obligations from prior seasons to the CSL and SCASA before they are admitted as members for the upcoming season.
9. A Certified Affinity roster with pictures must be presented to the league official/referee at check-in. NO ROSTER NO PLAY.
10. This is an amateur league; professional players cannot be on the roster.

*Team fees, player fees, and bonds will be set on a season-by-season basis

~Only players listed on the Certified SCASA Roster are eligible to play.~

Players

Each team will consist of Seven (7) field players and one (1) goalkeeper. Teams must have a minimum of (5) players to begin a match.

If an ineligible player participates, all games they were a part of will be forfeited and will be charged \$25 per game. In addition, the captain or player who completed the check-in process will also be suspended from the next two (2) games **and will lose their performance bond**. If an ineligible player is caught attempting to check in for a game, the team they were trying to play for will forfeit the game. Ineligible participation during the post-season will expel the entire team from further play.

The illegal player will be suspended from the league for 1 year.

Roster

A team may carry a maximum of 20 eligible players on the official roster. Official rosters are frozen as of March 1st, 2026. Only players listed on the official roster may sit on the team bench.

Uniform Policy

All teams are required to be in complete matching uniforms (shirts, shorts, socks) with numbers. Teams should add player numbers to the roster through the SCASA website. Teams must meet all uniform requirements to play.

- Numbers must be at least four (4) inches tall and professionally applied to the shirt (no tape, magic marker, etc.)
- The goalkeeper must wear a different color uniform than the rest of his/her team and the opposing team.
- All players **MUST** wear manufactured soccer shin guards. **Any player attempting to play with anything other than manufactured shin guards will be issued a straight red card.** Shin guards must be worn under the socks.
- If the primary jersey colors are similar, the home team must change (#'s not required on backup jerseys).
- NO JEWELRY.
 - If you are caught with jewelry, you will be removed from the field of play and will not be permitted back on until the jewelry has been properly removed or covered within safety regulations.
- No shoes with front cleats may be worn (i.e., no baseball or football shoes). Shoes with soles containing aluminum, leather, rubber, nylon, or plastic cleats, studs, or bars, whether molded as part of the sole or detachable are allowed.

Equipment

The Home Team must provide (2) size 5 game balls. The required game ball must meet FIFA guidelines. If the home team does not provide two regulation-sized balls, then the visiting team automatically gets to determine whether they kick off or which end of the field to attack.

Schedule Changes

Schedule changes shall not be permitted once the schedule is distributed unless under extraordinary circumstances and must be approved by the league.

- The league shall make reasonable efforts to accommodate special scheduling requests but this may not be possible. Requests must be sent to the coordinator with a reasonable time to review.
- Under certain circumstances, changes to the venue and/or game start time may have to be made with relatively short notice. Thus, the league reserves the right to move a match to a different venue and/or time slot within a reasonable time period as a result of weather cancellations at any one field. This may be used in very limited situations and all efforts will be made to accommodate the teams involved.

Coaches/Team Captains

The coach or team captain:

- Is the official representative of their team and the liaison to League officials.
- Is responsible for ensuring that the team complies with all League bylaws.
- Is responsible for team's conduct before, during, and after a game while at any CSL game facility, owned or leased by the City of Charleston. This includes each team's fans.
- Is responsible for ensuring that all players on the official roster are eligible to play in the league/post-season tournament. Captains will be suspended for two (2) games if they attempt/play with an ineligible player and will lose their performance bond.
- Is responsible for turning in the game day roster to the league official/referee 10 minutes before each game.
- Is the only team member who may initiate the protest of a game.

Forfeits

1. After 5 minutes past the original game time, the in compliant team must forfeit.
2. The clock starts at game time.
3. At least 5 eligible players must be ready at game time to avoid forfeit. This includes being in uniform on the field.

Teams must be completely ready to play at game time; properly dressed/equipped, with proper uniforms, ref fees paid, and a Certified Roster given to the league official/referee. If a team is not ready at game time for 2 instances, the team is automatically withdrawn from playoff contention.

1st forfeit = lose half of your performance bond.

2nd forfeit = lose the entirety of your performance bond and eliminated from post-season. After the second forfeit team must repost the full bond (\$80) or will be removed from the remainder of the schedule.

Inclement Weather

If the CSL office has NOT contacted your team by 4:00 pm for weeknight games and 11:30 am for Sunday games, then your team is required to show up at their scheduled field at the scheduled time. Failure to do so will result in a forfeit. Referees, City Officials, and CSL staff may determine the fields unplayable at any time.

Lightning/Thunder: If lightning is seen or thunder is heard during a game, play is stopped and can resume after 30 minutes have passed. If play is stopped, everyone **MUST** get off the fields and proceed to a vehicle or shelter. Should a match's progress be terminated due to weather conditions after one half has been completed, the match will be considered official and the score at the time will stand. During the regular season and playoff games, if an abandonment occurs during the first half, the balance of the game shall be rescheduled and the remaining time played. The rescheduled game shall commence at the time when the game was abandoned. (e.g. the 16th minute) with the score as it stood at the time of abandonment (e.g. 3-1)

Please join Rainedout.com for alerts on weather cancellations. Text **ASMENS** to **84483** to receive **AS Men's Soccer** alerts from the **City of Charleston Recreation**.

Match Termination

A match is considered official if one-half has been completed. Should a match be terminated for any reason other than inclement weather or poor field conditions, the CSL Coordinator will review the referee's report and any other information available in order to render a decision. If a game is terminated due to a team's misconduct, that team will forfeit a minimum of half their bond and be subjected to further discipline up to and including removal from the league. No refund of either the fee or bond will be given if removed from the league.

Playoffs / Awards

The final regular season standings will determine regular season champions and seeding for the playoffs. The top four (4) teams in each division will make the postseason.

Tie Breaker

- 1) head-to-head play
- 2) goal differential
- 3) fewest goals allowed
- 4) coin toss

Awards: Champion shirts will go to the winners of the playoffs.

Point System

- Win = 3 points
- Tie = 1 point
- Loss = 0 points

Player Code of Conduct

The CSL Coordinator shall have full authority to take any action necessary for player or team misconduct. If more than the minimum CSL punishment is being considered, all players/teams have the right to a hearing concerning misconduct. Any appeal of the decision of the CSL Coordinator will be heard by the Athletic Superintendent.

Ejection and suspensions will be given as stated below:

- Any player who receives a yellow card must substitute for another player for 4 minutes. If there are no substitutions, the team will have to play down for the 4-minute cool down period.
- Any player ejected from a game (receives a Red Card) must pay a minimum \$25.00 Red card fine and serve a (minimum) one-game suspension before they are allowed to play their next game. While serving the suspension, the player may not be present at the field or premises.
- Players who receive a red card for violent conduct of any type or verbal assault towards referees and/or other players must pay a \$50.00 red card fine.
 - The fee will be tiered where minor language, double yellow cards, and other “soft” red cards will be the minimum \$25 and one game suspension. All other red cards are subject to the decisions of the CSL Coordinator. The CSL Coordinator shall determine “soft” red cards vs. all other red cards.
- Any player receiving two (2) straight red cards will be suspended for the rest of the season. Players who receive three (3) red cards within the same season will be suspended for the rest of the season or until they attend the next available entry-level referee clinic. In addition, they will be placed on a 1-year probation period.
- If a game is terminated due to a team’s misconduct, that team will be responsible for paying the referee fees for the entire match and will lose half of their bond and be subjected to further discipline up to and including removal from the league. No refund of either the fee or bond will be given if removed from the league.
- If a player receives a red card and plays in more than one league, they will not be able to participate in either league until the suspension is fulfilled. While serving the suspension, the player may not be present at any field or premises.

**** Any player or coach/captain recorded or ejected from a game due to any type of violent conduct will be suspended for the remainder of the season. There will be zero tolerance for violent conduct of any type including but not limited to, fighting, punching, threatening, verbal assault, and physical assault. In addition, the player will be placed on a 1-year probation. ****

Any player or coach/captain ejected for any reason must leave the property immediately. Play will not restart until the player has left the facility. Any ejected participant who refuses to leave will cause a forfeit for his team and will be suspended for an additional two (2) games. If a player leaves and returns later will be suspended for an additional two (2) games.

Any team that clears the benches for a fight, argument, or brawl, will immediately be suspended from further play, and playoff eligibility and be placed on probation. In addition, the CSL Coordinator will determine if the team meets the terms for team suspension. The terms depend on the severity of the misconduct and could result in suspension from the CSL, probation, and/or team disbandment.

The CSL staff and employees of the Recreation Department reserve the right to ask any spectator(s) to leave the facility and property.

Suspensions will carry over to any post-season play. If suspension occurs during the team's last post-season game, the suspension will carry over to the next season the player participates in. **If a player plays a game without completing their suspension AND paying the \$25 reinstatement fee, that player is ineligible until both provisions have been completed, and all games in which the player participated will be forfeited. In addition, the captain will have to serve a suspension and the team will lose half of their bond.**

For a suspension to be considered as 'served' the game must take place.

Foul language (to include derogatory, racial, sexist, and bigoted statements and name-calling), badgering, threats, or any other abusive actions towards referees, league officials, or any other players will not be tolerated.

- Players ejected for *foul, abusive & insulting language*, specifically the "F-word" and derogatory, racial, sexist, and bigoted remarks, will be suspended for a minimum of two (2) games with the possibility of additional games upon review of incident and will be placed on a one (1) year probation period.
- Players who use foul, abusive, or insulting language or any other abusive actions towards staff, refs, or other players AFTER an ejection will be suspended for an ADDITIONAL two (2) games.
- Players ejected for *foul, abusive & insulting language*, specifically the "F-word" or/and derogatory, racial, sexist, and bigoted remarks directed towards an official will be suspended for the remainder of the season and placed on a one (1) year probation period.
 - If this takes place in the last game of the season they will be suspended for a minimum of three (3) games while being placed on a one (1) year probation period.
- Players ejected for referee physical assault will be suspended for the remainder of the season and will be suspended for the next season that takes place. In addition, they will be placed on a two (2) year probation period once they return. Additional suspensions and actions may be taken by SCASA for state sanctions.
 - This includes pushing, grabbing, pulling, squeezing, pinching, lightly slapping, use of an object in a nonstriking manner, or physical property damage.
- Players ejected for referee physical assault including hitting, punching, elbowing, kicking, biting, spitting, choking, tackling, throwing, or using of object or any part of the body (forearm, knee, head) in a striking manner will be suspended for a minimum one (1) year with the potential for lifetime suspension. In addition, suspensions and actions may be taken by SCASA for state sanctions.

The CSL wants all foul and abusive language eliminated. This rule intends to keep our League a family-oriented League. The rule is not to penalize a player for swearing quietly or under his breath (unless directed at an opponent or referee) but to keep the fans from vulgarity and increase the value of the League's reputation.

****Team Rep/Captains will be responsible for relaying this information to their teams.****

Appeals

Appeals must be made through the team captain/coach. Appeals will go through the CSL Superintendent for review. A \$25 fee shall be assessed for every appeal made. If the ruling is in favor of the appeal, the \$25 shall be returned.

Appeals will be considered after a review of reports from the team captains, CSL staff present, referees, and other witnesses.

All appeals must be made within 24 hours of the suspension notice provided from the CSL Coordinator.

Penalty Points

The CSL uses a penalty point system for player and team misconduct. Player points accumulate as both player *and* team penalty points. It shall be as follows:

Player Points:

Yellow Card = 4 points. Once a player reaches 12 points (3 yellow cards), he is suspended for the next match.

There is no fine.

Red Card = 12 points. Once a player receives 36 points, he is suspended for the season.

Protests

The referees present on the field shall handle grievances. Protests of decisions by referees are to be made in typed format only. The protest must be filed within 24 hours of the game in question ending. A protest can only be made by the team's captain listed on the official roster. Referees must be notified prior to the end of the game that the game will be played under protest and shall be accompanied by a \$50.00 protest fee. The \$50.00 protest fee must be a certified check or money order. Teams may not appeal any judgment call, only rule interpretation or player eligibility. If the protest is upheld, the protest fee will be returned.

Officials

There will be one (1) referee for each regular season game and playoff game. The CSL reserves the right to add a second official as needed. Referee's match fee is \$50 per match. Each team is responsible for paying the referees ½ of the match fee (\$25) prior to the start of the game. Cash only.

Match Reports

The referee must fill out an Official USSF Referee Report on SCREFEREE.ORG if there are any red cards given during the game. If there are any unusual incidents (team A was late, lights on pole #1 out, injuries etc.), these will be added to the comments in Arbiter. Referees are required by SCASA policy to report any player who does not have a valid player pass.

If there is a Red Card in the match, the referee will notify the Assignor and CSL Commissioner the next day via referee report.

Players may also complete a referee report which provides feedback to the CSL and referee assignor. A copy of this report will be provided to captains at the beginning of the season. Only captains can submit a report to the CSL Coordinator. This report is intended to provide perspective from the player's standpoint on how the referees handled a match. Good and bad feedback is encouraged.

Length of Games

(2) Thirty-minute (30) minute halves and a (5) minute halftime.

No overtime in the regular season games.

Playoff Overtime

Two 5-minute golden goal periods. If the game is still tied, then penalty kicks from the mark shall determine the winner.

Three-line Violation

A player is guilty of a three-line violation when they pass the ball across three lines in the air towards the opponent's goal line, without it touching or having been played by another player.

- Penalty: IFK from the point where the ball crossed the first line.

Fouls/Free Kicks

All direct and indirect fouls apply. Opposing players must be at least 5 yards from the ball. Once the ball is stationary, the kicker will have 5 seconds to play the ball after being signaled to do so by the referee.

- Penalty: IFK

Penalty Kick

A PK shall be taken from the penalty mark [24 feet (8 yards) from the goal line]. All players except the kicker and opposing goalkeeper must be outside the penalty area, at least 5 yards from and behind the ball.

Throw-In

The 5-second rule and the 3-line violations also apply to throw-ins. The opposing team will regain possession of the ball after a 5-second infraction.

Goal Kick

Same as full-sided matches and: the 5-second rule DOES NOT apply, while the 3-line violation is in effect.

Corner Kick

Same as full-sided matches and the 5-second rule applies. Opposing players must be at least 5 yards from the ball.

Goal Keeper Restrictions

All FIFA Laws will apply with the following exceptions:

- 1) Once the GK has possession of the ball, he has 5 seconds in which to put the ball back into play.
 - Penalty: IFK.
- 2) The GK may not throw, punt or drop kick the ball on the fly over 3 lines.

Substitutions

Substitutions can occur at any stoppage with the referee's permission. Individual players MAY be substituted upon receiving a caution. During an injury, the injured player may be substituted for, or the team can play down a man until the player is ready to continue. Any substitutions for either team may enter the game at an injury timeout if they reported at midfield prior to the injury occurring.

Misc. Rules

- Teams and spectators must be on opposite sides of the field and spectators must always remain four feet away from the sideline. No spectators standing behind goals. Referees will enforce this policy and have the ability to abandon a game if fans do not abide.
- Park in designated parking areas only.
- DO NOT park along the fence at West Ashley Park.
- Dogs are NOT allowed on the fields
- Both teams' benches must be on the same side of the field.

Alcohol/Drug Policy

******NO DRUGS, ALCOHOL, OR TOBACCO PRODUCTS ARE PERMITTED AT ANY CSL MATCH******

Alcohol and drugs are strictly prohibited before, during, and after any CSL match, at any CSL field. Coaches are responsible for their players and fans. Any team (including fans) caught with alcohol or drugs on CSL property will be removed from the schedule and forfeit their remaining games and all monies paid, including the performance bond. In addition, no refunds will be given to the team or players, which violate this policy.

Tobacco and tobacco-related products are not allowed at any CSL game/ practice facility. Smoking is not permitted at any City of Charleston Facilities.

No player, coach, captain, spectator, or official under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be allowed to participate in any CSL game. The Charleston Police Department **WILL BE NOTIFIED.**

Charleston Soccer League

- CSL Contacts: Christine Swain, swainc@charleston-sc.gov or Robin Cooper, cooperr@charleston-sc.gov
- CSL Office: AWCC 265 Fishburne St, 843-724-7480
- Mailing address: 823 Meeting Street, Charleston, SC 29403 www.charleston-sc.gov/recreation



**SOUTH CAROLINA AMATEUR SOCCER ASSOCIATION (SCASA)
POLICY FOR HANDLING REFEREE ABUSE CASES**

USSF Policy 531-9, Misconduct Towards Game Officials, defines Referee Abuse under Section 3, subsection 4 as:

- 1) Referee abuse is a verbal statement or physical act not resulting in bodily contact which implies or threatens physical harm to a referee or the referee's property or equipment.
- 2) Abuse includes, but is not limited to the following acts committed upon a referee: using foul or abusive language toward a referee that implies or threatens physical harm; spewing any beverage on a referee's personal property; or spitting at (but not on) the referee.

By this USSF Policy, all Referee Abuse cases, as do all Referee Assault cases, must be handled by SCASA, not by the League in which the incident occurred. In these cases, a League may add to any penalties imposed on a player by SCASA.

This SCASA policy covers persistent statements or physical acts toward an Official (Referee, Assistant Referee, Fourth Official, or Club Linesman) before, during, or after a game, that do not constitute referee assault or referee abuse as provided under US Soccer Federation Policy 531-9, but mistreat the Official or are inappropriate or unacceptable statements or acts in the following categories:

- a) Excessive incidences of foul or abusive language at the Official;
- b) Statements that diminish the authority of the Official; and
- c) Statements or acts that serve to intimidate without threatening physical harm to the Official.

For such Referee mistreatment incidents defined in categories a), b), or c) above, SCASA directs its Member Leagues to handle such cases within 30 days of the incident according to the League's disciplinary policies. A player shall be under suspension until a final decision is reached by the League or by SCASA.

Examples of misconduct that arise under the description above include the following:

- a) Confronting the Official without physically threatening the Official;
- b) Spitting on the ground or in the air near but not at the Official;
- c) Throwing or kicking an item as a sign of dissent but without the chance of hitting the Official; and
- d) Re-entering the field to confront the Official.

The following steps must be taken by a League in handling these mistreatments towards a Referee that do not qualify under USSF Policy 531-9 as Referee Abuse (number 1 and 2 from above):

1. The League shall notify SCASA before taking any discipline actions and provide all relevant supporting documentation, including referee and witness reports and communications with the player.
2. If the player is found guilty, the League must issue a suspension of no less than 3 matches. Additional suspensions, fines, or other sanctions are at the discretion of The League. The League must notify SCASA of any penalty imposed on the player.
3. The League must provide due process to the player, including the right to appeal to SCASA.
4. If the player appeals to SCASA:
 - a) Appeals must be submitted made by electronic mail and addressed to: Chairman Discipline Committee, SCASA Email: scasaregistrar@gmail.com
 - b) Appeals to SCASA must be accompanied by a \$150.00 payment made payable to SCASA.
 - c) Upon receipt of the appeal and the accompanying payment, SCASA will notify all affected parties and will inform them of the consideration schedule.
 - d) SCASA will review the appeal and make a ruling. Before a decision is reached, SCASA may seek additional information and may convene a hearing, at which time the Member making the appeal may appear before the SCASA hearing panel appointed by the SCASA President. SCASA will hold a hearing if the accused player requests one.
 - e) If SCASA overturns the sanction issued by The League, then the \$150 appeal fee shall be reimbursed to the player.