



To Be Used for the 21-22 Season

MISSISSIPPI SOCCER ASSOCIATION 2020-21 COMPETITIVE LEAGUE OPERATING PROCEDURES

(as of September 8, 2020)

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the US Youth Soccer National League Rules (10.06) these MSA Competitive League (MCSL) Operating Procedures shall be an extension of the National League Rules. When National League Rules are referenced or summarized in these Operating Procedures, they are meant to mirror the National League Rules in every respect. These Operating Procedures are specific to the MSA Competitive League.

SECTION 1. TEAM APPLICATION

1.01 Team Eligibility

Any team applying for entry into the MCSL must meet the eligibility requirements in accordance with the National League Rules.

1.02 Registration System / Application Process

GotSport shall be the official team application/registration system of the MCSL. Any eligible team must apply their team into the League using GotSport. No applications will be received or accepted in any other system.

Eligible teams must have a GotSport account in order to apply into the MCSL. Team accounts must have accurate information regarding the coach and manager at the time of submission. In completing any application into the MCSL teams are required to submit accurate information on team accomplishments. Misrepresentation of team accomplishments may result in the team being disqualified from conference participation.

1.03 Application Deadlines

13U: MCSL Application Deadline: ~~August 1, 2020~~. **August 27, 2021**

14U-19U: MCSL Application Deadline: ~~September 15, 2020~~. **August 27, 2021**

1.04 Application Agreement

Any team applying to play in the MCSL agrees to accept, abide by, and comply with all policies, rules, and decisions of the League and further agrees to pay all fees that are due to the MCSL for participation in the MCSL by the applicable deadlines.

1.05 State Association Registration

To be eligible for participation in the MCSL, a team must be properly registered with their respective member Club Association prior to acceptance into the League.

1.06 Fees and Other Expenses

The Team Entry Fee to participate in the MCSL is \$200 per team and is non-refundable if a team is accepted into the League and later drops out. The Team Fee does not include Referee Fees, which will be paid in accordance with Section 8 (Referees) of this document. The Team Entry Fee must be paid directly to MSA following acceptance into the League.

SECTION 2. MCSL – LEAGUE STRUCTURE AND QUALIFICATION

2.01 Structure

The 2020-21 MCSL will include the following Boys and Girls age groups:

- 13 and Under (13U) – for players born on January 1, 2008 or later
- 14 and Under (14U) – for players born on January 1, 2007 or later
- 15 and Under (15U) – for players born on January 1, 2006 or later
- 16 and Under (16U) – for players born on January 1, 2005 or later
- 17 and Under (17U) – for players born on January 1, 2004 or later
- 18 and Under (18U) – for players born on January 1, 2003 or later
- 19/20 and Under (19/20U) – for players born on January 1, 2001 or later

Within the MCSL there will be a single tier of competition. Teams will play a single round-robin within each gender age group unless otherwise directed to meet USYS Qualifications.

2.02 Qualification for 2021-22 Mid-South Conference

MSA will qualify teams into the Mid-South Conference for the 2021-22 Conference season using the following criteria:

- The highest finishing team in each 13U-18U gender age group, according to the final standings of the 2020-21 MSA Premier Cup shall automatically qualify for their rising gender age group in the 2021-22 Mid South Conference.
- Remaining slots will be filled by Open Team Application, with review by the MCSL Committee and acceptance by the Mid South Conference Team Selection Committee. The Team Selection Committee shall have the final determination of acceptance and volume of teams in the Conference.
- The 13U gender age group will be filled by Open Team Application, with review and acceptance by the Mid South Conference Team Selection Committee. The Team Selection Committee shall have the final determination of acceptance and volume of teams in the Conference.

In situations whereby a team does not apply for participation for a season where such team had previously qualified for the Mid-South Conference slot, such slot may be filled at the discretion of the Conference Team Selection Committee.

2.03 MCSL Qualifications

The League Manager, in consultation with the Club Director or Director of Coaching from member clubs, shall determine the number of teams in each gender age group.

SECTION 3. TEAM ROSTERS

3.01 Team Rosters

The official Team Roster for the MCSL shall be in GotSport. Teams are responsible for ensuring that their GotSport MCSL Roster is identical to their Official State Association Roster. The GotSport roster must be accurate by 72 hours prior to a team's first match of the season. Additions to the Team Roster, subject to the requirements of a team's State Association, must be updated in the GotSport roster no later than 48 hours prior to a League match.

MCSL teams may create a Club Pass Roster in GotSport, which is the pool of Club Pass players designated for use by a specific team. Any club pass player must be added to the Club Pass Roster and Match Card no later than 48 hours prior the Conference match in which the club pass players will participate. Any club pass player, once added to a team's Club Pass Roster, cannot be removed until the completion of the League season.

3.02 Player Eligibility and Limitations

All players must be current US Youth Soccer members and have member passes that have been approved by MSA.

A player in the MCSL may only play for one (1) team in an age group. For example, if a club has two (2) teams in one age group, primary and club pass players may only play on one (1) of those teams during the MCSL season, not both.

A player may play for only one (1) MCSL team during any single day. Once a player is on the roster of a team in the MCSL in a gender age group and such team has played one (1) match in League competition, such player may not appear on another team's roster in such gender age group during the remainder of the League season.

The MCSL does not allow Goalkeepers to play for more than one (1) team per day.

3.03 Team Match Day Line-Ups

Up to eighteen (18) players (inclusive of both primary players and club pass players) are eligible to play in each League match. Eligible players must be listed on the GotSport Match Card. The GotSport Match Card will be the used as the official Team Line-Up prior to each match, and the official Match Report following each League match. The process, timing, and verification of the Team Line-Up and Match Card must be done in accordance with Section 9 (Match Day Procedures) of this document.

Players on the team roster who are not eligible/participating in a League match are allowed in the team bench area, **but must not be in uniform.**

3.04 Playing of Ineligible Player

In accordance with National League Rules, a team that plays an ineligible player may be subject to disciplinary action including but not limited to: (a) forfeiture of the match; and (b) suspension of the team's coach from Conference competition. Additional disciplinary action could include (a) expulsion of the team from the Conference; and/or (b) any further action(s) as determined by the League Manager.

Accusations from teams of an ineligible player must be extensively substantiated and is incumbent on the accuser to provide concrete evidence of ineligibility.

3.05 Player Information

The MCSL may require participating teams to provide information on players for use in promoting the League and/or its teams and players. Upon request, teams are required to submit information regarding personal player history, competition history, roster history, and any other information that may help promote the league, player, or team.

SECTION 4. SCHEDULING AND MATCH MANAGEMENT

4.01 Number of Matches

Each team will be scheduled to play a minimum of four (4) matches in a season. Most gender age groups in the MCSL will play between five (5) – seven (7) matches in a single round-robin format. The final match count will be determined by the number of accepted teams.

4.02 League Match Types

There are two (2) types of matches within the MCSL.

- a) **Event Matches** are those matches scheduled and played in an event format. These matches primarily include teams from two different clubs. The scheduling of these matches will be done solely at the discretion of the League Manager.
- b) **Self-Schedule Matches** are those matches which are the responsibility of the teams, clubs, and/or state association to schedule/manage. Self-Schedule Matches typically include two teams from the same club, but in certain situations may include teams from different clubs.

4.03 Location of Event Matches

The location of event matches will be determined by League Manager, in coordination with the respective hosting Member Association.

4.04 Event Match Schedules

The League Manager will have sole discretion in scheduling event matches. The intention of the League is to publish the schedule approximately one (1) month prior to the first event match weekend. The event match schedules will take into account the following situations:

- a) Head Coaches of multiple teams. Every attempt will be made to de-conflict coaches of two (2) teams within the MCSL. Head coaches of three (3) or more teams cannot be guaranteed. The Head Coach of a team must be accurately listed in GotSport prior to the schedule being published in order to be considered for de-conflicting.
- b) ACT / SAT dates. Should a League date fall on a SAT or ACT test date, the older age groups will be scheduled as late in the day as possible (i.e. 2pm or later) so that, at a minimum, a player can take the test in the same area as the inter-state match and participate in their scheduled match.
- c) Distance of Travel. Every attempt will be made so that teams traveling a greater distance will play later on Saturday and earlier on Sunday.

4.06 Self-Schedule Match Schedules

The Team Managers shall coordinate and confirm most self-schedule matches. The Team Managers may or may not schedule self-schedule matches in an event format, but the self-schedule match details should be confirmed early in the season. For 2020-21, self-schedule matches may be played in the fall or spring, but must be completed by March 15, 2021. Any self-schedule matches not played prior to the deadline will be not be scored and will be considered as a “no contest”.

Self-Schedule matches that are between teams from the same club must be played during the first half of each team’s season or the match will be considered as a “no contest”, subject to the final determination by the League Manager.

4.07 Match Schedule and Rest Periods

It is the intent of the league to play only one (1) match per day; however, when circumstances dictate, no more than two (2) matches a day may be scheduled. Every effort will be made to provide for a minimum of three (3) hours rest between matches.

4.08 Inclement Weather and Unplayable Field Conditions Prior to Match

The Host Complex / Club is responsible for notifying the League Manager as soon as possible if matches on scheduled fields are unable to be played due to field closings or inclement weather. The League Manager, in consultation with the host complex, will make every effort to determine the status of inter-state matches by the Wednesday prior to the inter-state weekend of play (Saturday and Sunday). Rescheduling of inter-state matches is done in accordance with League Rescheduling Policy.

4.09 Rescheduling Policy

Once the MCSL event and self-schedule match details are published the schedule will be considered official. Changes are permitted at the discretion of the League Manager due to transcription errors, inaccurate information provided to the MCSL or other errors as determined by the League Manager. All other changes to the schedule shall be made in accordance with the below parameters. Any reschedule situation not included here-in will be determined at the sole discretion of the League Manager.

- (a) Should the hosting complex change fields numbers or field availability prior to an event weekend, the League Manager will update the schedule as necessary. Every attempt will be made to have as little impact on the schedule as possible, however, some match start times may have to be updated.
- (b) Should an event match or matches be cancelled due to rain or inclement weather, it shall be rescheduled on a date/time/location as determined by the League Manager. Following a rain-out, the rescheduled match shall be published no later than ten (10) days after the originally scheduled match. The rescheduled match may be scheduled as the second match on a day when both teams are at the same League event. Once the reschedule is published, it shall be considered official.
- (c) In situations where multiple event matches are being played on an event weekend, and matches are postponed during the first day of competition (i.e. Saturday), the postponed match is to be scheduled for the following day (i.e. Sunday) if possible with such determination made solely by the League Manager. The League Manager may determine to shorten match lengths of any scheduled or rescheduled match in order to play as many postponed matches as possible.
- (d) Requests to reschedule an event match due to a team, player(s), or coach conflict will not be considered unless there are extraordinary circumstances as determined by the League Manager. Most reschedule requests due to travel, time preference, or player/coach availability will not be considered. In the rare case of granting a reschedule request, the requesting team will be invoiced for any non-refundable expenses related to the scheduling of the match at its original date, time and location.
- (e) Self-Schedule matches that are cancelled due to rain or inclement weather will be rescheduled with the approval of the teams' respective manager.
- (f) Self-Schedule matches not scheduled by the League may be rescheduled should both teams agree to do so at least 10 days prior to the originally scheduled match, with the approval of their Team Manager. A rescheduled date/time/location must be agreed to prior to receiving approval by the League Manager.

4.11 Referee Jurisdiction

Once the referee has jurisdiction of a match, the match may be stopped, suspended, or terminated as provided in the "IFAB Laws of the Game."

4.12 Emergency Match Management Procedures

On an emergency basis, the League Manager reserves the right to impose emergency Match Management Procedures. These procedures shall be limited to those items that are necessary, in the sole opinion of the League Manager, in order for a match to be played. Such procedures could include, but are not limited to, the following.

- (a) Shortening match lengths or half time due to inclement weather, lack of light, or other extraordinary circumstances.
- (b) Moving a match to earlier or later in a day.
- (c) Establishing additional match day(s) due to excessive rain-outs.
- (d) Approving the use of less than a 3-man referee crew or approving use of a "club" linesman.
- (e) Approving an alternate method to validate eligible players.

SECTION 5. STANDINGS

5.01 Earning Points in Matches

Points earned in the MCSL will be in accordance with National League Rules. The standings of teams within the MCSL will be based upon the number of points earned from each match. Teams earn points as follows: 3 points for a win; 1 point for a tie; and no points for a loss.

5.02 Forfeits

A forfeited match will be scored as a 1-0 win for the opponent. A team forfeiting any match shall be dropped from the MCSL at the discretion of the League Manager following a review of the incident resulting in any Forfeits. Should a team be dropped, all scores for that team in the seasonal year schedule shall be recorded as a 1-0 win for the opponent. In addition, a team that forfeits one or more matches may be subject to further sanctioning including but not limited to a fine, become ineligible to advance to MSA Premier Cup, Regionals, or be suspended from the MCSL. The League Manager of the MCSL, after consultation of the MCSL Committee, shall determine any additional sanctioning.

SECTION 6. NATIONAL/REGIONAL COMPETITIONS

6.01 Qualification to US Youth Soccer Southern Championships

The top team in the MSA Premier Cup of each 13U-19U gender age group will qualify for 2021 Southern Regional Championships that same seasonal year as the MSA State representative. Should a team qualify for the Southern Regional Championships through both the Mid South Conference and Premier Cup competition, the team will qualify to Southern Regional Championships as the Mid South Conference representative. The Finalist of the MSA Premier Cup will then be offered the slot as State Champion for Southern Regional Championships.

6.02 Qualification to US Youth Soccer Regional Presidents Cup

The Finalist in each 13U-18U gender age group, by points/tiebreakers shall be required to attend the US Youth Soccer Regional Presidents Cup. Failure to attend this event by the qualified team will result in a fine assessed to the team's Home Association by the League. Should the Finalist of the MSA Premier Cup be offered a berth to the US Youth Southern Regional Championships based on Rule 6.01, the team offered is not **required** to attend the US Youth Regional Presidents Cup event.

SECTION 7. RULES OF PLAY

7.01 Applicable Rules and Laws of the Game

Matches will be played under the applicable policies and rules of National League and US Youth Soccer. Teams are responsible for obtaining and abiding by the IFAB Laws of the Game as they govern play subject to the modifications noted the National League Rules.

7.02 Substitutions

Matches in the 15U, 16U, 17U, 18U and 19U age groups will operate under the FIFA-7 players "per half" substitution system (limited substitution). Once replaced, players cannot re-enter the game during that half of

play. Substitutions may be made at any stoppage of play with the approval of the referee. If a player is removed from the match and no substitute enters the match for the player (team plays short), the original player may reenter the match. Reentry shall be at a normal substitution point (with approval of the referee) or at any point during the match if the referee signals for the player's reentry. Matches in the 13U and 14U age groups shall have unlimited substitutions.

7.03 Match Length

Each League match length will be in accordance with National League Rules. The League Manager will have discretion to shorten match lengths in cases of extraordinary circumstances.

7.04 Team Uniforms

Team Uniforms must be in accordance with National League Rules. Every team in the MCSL must have two (2) sets of jersey's and socks. The expectation is for the team listed first in the schedule to wear their lighter/white colored jersey and socks, while the team listed second in the schedule to wear their darker colored jersey and socks. If, in the opinion of the Referee, a team color conflict exists, the team listed second in the schedule should change.

Every player on the field must have a unique number (from the rest of the team) affixed on the back of their jersey, with the exception of goalkeepers. Goalkeeper jersey numbers are optional, but if a number is affixed, it must be a unique number (from the rest of the team). Taped numbers will not be allowed.

US Youth Soccer, National League, or other US Youth Soccer related logos/patches are allowed on uniforms, in addition to the team name, team sponsor, or shirt manufacturer. No other patches/logos are permitted without the written approval of the League Manager.

7.05 Protocol for Send Offs and Dismissals

Protocols for send offs and dismissals shall be in accordance with National League Rules. In the MCSL, should a player be sent off from a League match, the designated area for the ejected player shall be the Team Bench Area and will remain there under the supervision of the player's Coach. If the sent off player cannot be controlled by the Coach, the Referee may require the removal of the player from the entire field area. If such player is removed from the field area, the Coach must designate a parent or Team Official to supervise the player away from the field area.

7.06 Team Coaches

Coaches of teams within the MCSL should have obtained a US Soccer National D License or the United Soccer Coaches equivalent (National Diploma) level of coaching education. All coaches and team officials in the Team Bench Area must have proper credentials issued by MSA.

SECTION 8. REFEREES

8.01 Three Person System

Matches shall be officiated in accordance with National League Rules.

8.02 Referee Assignor

The League Manager, in consultation with the State Referee Administrator, will determine which referee assignor will assign each League game. Referee assignors must be a certified US Soccer assignor. The referee assignor shall be paid according to US Youth Soccer Policy (via the Expensify App) unless the host organization agrees to pay the referees.

8.03 Payment of Referees

Referee and Assistant Referees will be paid at the fields, prior to the start of each match. Each team involved in a League match will be responsible for paying half of the total cost for the Referee and Assistant Referees. The Referee and Assistant Referees will be made in accordance with the below totals and breakdown of denominations.

- 13U-14U: \$115.00 (Center \$45, AR1 \$35, AR2 \$35)
- 15U-16U: \$135.00 (Center \$55, AR1 \$40, AR2 \$40)
- 17U-19U: \$150.00 (Center \$60, AR1 \$45, AR2 \$45)

8.05 Filing of Referee Match Report

Prior to each League match, each team shall present a GotSport "Match Card" to the Referee, which shall serve as the Official Team Line-Up prior to the game and the official Match Report following the completion of the game. The Referee shall select one of the Match Cards and use it to check-in the players from both teams. The selected Match Card will become the official Match Report.

Following the completion of each League Match, the Referee shall accurately report all scores and cards issued onto the selected Match Card (now the official Match Report). Once the scores and cards issued are written on the Match Report, it should be presented to both coaches for their signature. It is recommended that each team take a picture of the final Match Report for their own records. The Home team shall retain possession of the Match Report and submit the score within 24 hours of completion of the League game.

If a player is sent off for Violent Conduct, Spitting, or Abusive Language, a US Soccer Supplemental Report must be filled out and submitted to the on-site League Official or referee assignor with the Match Report. Additionally, a US Soccer Supplemental Report must be filled out and submitted to the on-site League Official or referee assignor for situations involving Referee Abuse or Referee Assault. The on-site League Official or referee assignor shall submit all Match Reports and US Soccer Supplemental Reports to the League Manager.

SECTION 9. MATCH DAY PROCEDURES

9.01 Match Day Procedures

The MCSL Match Day Procedures apply to all matches played in the MCSL, unless otherwise instructed by the League Manager.

9.02 Team Line-Up

The GotSport generated Match Card shall be the official Team Line-Up for the MCSL. The Match Card for each League match should be printed no earlier than 24 hours prior to the scheduled start of that match. This timing will ensure the most accurate information for each Team Line-Up. The eighteen (18) eligible players (inclusive of both primary, club pass players or players serving suspensions) should be listed on the Match Card no later than 24 hours prior to a League match.

9.03 Team Line-Up - Players

The Match Card must include the eighteen (18) eligible players (inclusive of both primary and club pass players) a team will use in a MCSL match. Should more than eighteen (18) players appear on the card, the Coach or Team Official must manually strike through the players that will not participate (prior to check-in by the referee) for a maximum of eighteen (18) eligible players.

9.04 Club Pass Roster

Any Club Pass Players must be listed on the Club Pass Roster (i.e. pool of club pass players) and Match Day Line-Up Card to be eligible to participate. **A Primary or Club Pass Player may only appear on one (1) MCSL Primary Roster/Club Pass Roster in a gender age group during the Conference season.** The maximum Club Pass Roster for a MCSL team is 30 minus the number of primary rostered players (i.e. a team with 18 rostered players has a Club Pass Roster maximum of 12).

9.05 Team/Player Check-In

Prior to the start of a Conference match, each team shall present the referee with the copy of the Match Card and their properly prepared US Youth Soccer Player Passes.

The Referee shall select one of the Match Cards and check-in each team's players using both the Match Card and the US Youth Soccer Player Passes. Only a maximum of eighteen (18) players may be checked in for a Conference match. Any player not present at the time of check-in may not enter the field of play until the Referee can properly check-in the player. The League Manager may designate an on-site Conference Official to perform any required check-in.

9.06 Team Bench / Spectator Areas

The teams will occupy the same side of the field, unless otherwise instructed by the League Manager. Teams are to remain on their half of the field between the halfway line and eighteen yards from their goal line. Spectators are to only occupy the opposite side of the field from the teams on the same end of the field as their team bench area, unless otherwise instructed by the League Manager. Coaches/Managers are required to maintain control of their players and their team's fans on the sideline.

9.07 Post-Match Protocol

Following the conclusion of the game, the Referee shall fill out the official Match Report, which is the selected Match Card used for player check-in. The Coach or Team Official from each team is required to sign the completed Match Report prior to leaving the field area. It is advised that each team take a picture of the Match Report for their records.

The signed Match Report will be kept by the Referee and submitted to the Referee Assignor or Conference official. In some cases primarily involving self-schedule matches, the League Manager may adjust how the Match Report is submitted to the Conference.

9.08 Reporting of Scores (GotSport)

The team listed first (home team) in the schedule is responsible for promptly and accurately reporting the score of their match in GotSport. Teams are strongly encouraged to take a picture of the completed Match Report for their records and to assist the Team Official with accurate score reporting. The reporting of a particular match score should be done within one (1) hour of the completed match.

- (a) Information needed to report a match result in GotSport: The Team Official will need Pin Number for the MCSL 2021-22 event in order to input a score. The MCSL 2021-22 GotSport Pin Number is "2022".
- (b) To report a match result in GotSport: Follow the link found on the public schedule page header labeled "Scoring Input". Enter Match Number (listed on the Match Card) and click "Search". Enter the score in the appropriate boxes and any red cards issued, then click "Save".
https://system.gotsport.com/org_event/events/9434

9.09 Protests

Protests must be made in accordance with US Youth Soccer National League Rules, Section 20. To be valid and eligible for consideration, a protest must be noted on the Match Report and orally lodged by a team official with the match referee and the opposing coach at the match site before leaving the field of play. All protests must be submitted in writing and filed by the Director of the Club or the Director of Coaching of the Club that the team is a member with the appropriate fee to the League Manager. The protest must be postmarked no later than three (3) business days after match completion in accordance with the Filing Procedures listed in National League Rule 20.06. The referee is the final authority on the field of play. All decisions of the referees with respect to matters of fact, including judgment matters, are final.

9.10 Final Authority

The League Manager shall have final authority to act in the best interest of the MCSL, which may include but not limited to adjusting Match Day Procedures for specific matches or making decisions to address situations not covered in the MCSL Operating Procedures.