

# NorCal Premier League

Team Handbook – 2016/17 Season



*A US Club Soccer Sanctioned League*



The goal of this handbook is to provide assistance to clubs, coaches and managers to ensure the NorCal Premier Soccer League (“NorCal”) operates smoothly and is a positive experience for all involved – players, coaches, managers, club officials, referees, and parents.

When competing in NorCal Programs, the club is responsible for overseeing their coaches, players, parents and club personnel – administratively, on and around the field. Each club is responsible for ensuring all club members understand and meet the following requirements and follow NorCal Rules and Code of Ethics.

**Quality** – Clubs and their teams must be committed to striving for excellence with respect to play, sportsmanship, fields, referees and the total soccer experience.

**Director of Coaching** – Clubs must have a named Director of Coaching listed on the NorCal website with a working email address. The Director must be familiar with each team in their club and the team’s involvement in the NorCal Programs.

**Fields** – Clubs should have at least one high quality field (5 time slots) per eight teams. Teams traveling long distances deserve to play on decent fields! Teams may ask that they play all away games.

**Referees** – Clubs must have a current USSF certified Referee Assignor and enough current year USSF licensed referees available to cover all their teams entered in competition.

**Administrator** – Clubs must have an administrator responsible for helping teams maintain their club and team information on the NorCal website. This person should have a working email address and be available to assist team managers with all administrative tasks.

**Good Standing** – Clubs must be in good standing with NorCal.

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## **Letter from the President**

Hello NorCal Premier Soccer Members,

During the past decade, massive changes have occurred in the national soccer landscape.

On the youth side, we have seen the accelerated development of club soccer, providing more opportunities for children to play the sport more seriously, as well as the US Soccer Federation's entry into running their own league programs with the development of the US Soccer Development Academy Leagues.

On the adult soccer side, we have seen tremendous growth of professional and amateur soccer clubs of all levels from the professional MLS, USL Pro and NASL to the amateur, PDL and NPSL. This explosion of growth has signaled soccer is here to stay as a professional sport; gone are the days of wondering if the MLS will survive. The massive crowds attending PDL and NPSL amateur games tells us the appetite for soccer is huge.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we have seen a long needed update to the US Soccer Coaching Education Programs, including the huge step of bringing the state level education under their staff rather than farming it out to their USYSA state organizations. Another simple step of allowing a coach to take courses focusing on adult soccer or youth soccer shows the US Soccer Education Department is finally becoming serious about developing coaches. The final necessary step is to develop the staff to handle the number of coaches wanting their education (the line is currently long).

Over the past year, the NorCal Board of Directors and key staff spent a large amount of time focused on revisiting our purpose within this ever changing environment. We began this examination with our organization's mission and then moved on to examine our core values and our position within the US Soccer Landscape. As we enter the 2016 Fall Season, we are excited to share with you our vision, mission and core values.

Thank you,

Benjamin Ziemer

NorCal Premier President

## **NorCal Premier Mission**

We elevate soccer by developing players, clubs, coaches and referees.

## **NorCal Premier Core Values**

### ***Collaboration***

We collaborate with our soccer community to make wise decisions

### ***Joy***

We celebrate soccer and take fun seriously!

### ***Impact***

We make a meaningful difference

### ***Agility***

We do the right thing, and we move quickly

### ***Competition***

We believe that healthy competition is essential to progress

### ***Education***

We are committed to learning and development

**NorCal Premier League General Rules and Regulations**  
Applies to all State and Regional Leagues and Cups



## **Section 1: Administration/ Management**

### **1.1 – NorCal Premier League**

The NorCal Premier League, run by NorCal Premier Soccer, is a US Club Soccer sanctioned league and member of the United States Soccer Federation.

### **1.2 – Governance**

All NorCal competitions are governed by regulations approved by the League Office and written in this handbook. The League Office shall rule on all disputes and issues pertaining to NorCal competitions that are not covered in the Code of Ethics. The League Office may overrule rules in this handbook if it is determined to be for the good of the game.

### **1.3 – Club Definition**

In order for a club to be considered a member of NorCal Premier, the following conditions must be satisfied:

1. All teams participating in NorCal events must belong to a single legal entity, with a single leadership structure, single financial structure and a single governance structure.
2. All teams participating in NorCal events must have a common Club name, logo and uniforms.
3. All teams participating in NorCal events must operate under a single technical structure/ plan and report to a single Technical Director, Director of Coaching or Executive Director.
4. All players participating in NorCal events must be registered under a single US Club ID.

### **1.4 - Club Pass Rule**

Each US Club Soccer Player Pass can be used for any age appropriate team in the issuing club. Thus, players have the ability to move up and down within their club, giving individual teams the ability to make changes game to game due to illness, injury, vacation or other conflicts. It is considered unethical for teams to move players down within a club for the purpose of creating a competitive advantage.

### **1.5 - Team Management**

Each team must have a team manager that handles the following responsibilities: scheduling games, referee payments, travel cooperation, reporting of scores and communication with appropriate league officials. All team managers must have access to email that is checked on a daily basis and a telephone number connected to a 24-hour answering system during the season.

### **1.6 - Division Formations**

Competitive divisions will be structured according to the playing level of teams as determined by the NorCal League Office, which has final authority on all placement issues. Should NorCal determine there is an insufficient number of teams to constitute an age group division, the teams affected may be allowed to temporarily or partially

compete in a different division of play.

### **1.7 - League Standings**

Official standings of teams, the keeping of which is the responsibility of the League Office, are tabulated on a regular basis and displayed on the NorCal website.

### **1.8 – Play Up Request Guidelines**

For teams who wish to request to play up an age group, the NorCal League Office will use the following criteria to determine if a team needs to play up for their development:

1. Team is current State Cup Champion or Finalist within their own age group, AND
2. Team has proven in previous seasons to be a very dominant team within their own age group, OR
3. Team does not have appropriate competition locally and needs to travel significantly in order to find competition within their own age group

Play up requests must be submitted to the League Office. The NorCal League Office has final say on all Play Up decisions.

### **1.9 – Teams Requesting to Play Outside their Region**

For teams who wish to request to play outside of their region, the NorCal League Office will use the following criteria to determine if a team needs to play in a different region:

1. Availability of competitive divisions within the Region

## **Section 2: Scheduling and Communication**

### **2.1 – Required Club Contacts**

Each club's GotSoccer account needs to be kept up to date with the proper contact information. Please keep in mind that this is the primary method by which NorCal communicates with your club. Failing to have the proper contact information may result in your club missing vital league communication. Each club shall maintain the following club contacts:

- DOC
- President
- Registrar
- Referee Assignor

### **2.2 - Communication Policy**

Communication between teams is vitally important for all NorCal events. Each team must have at least 2 different contacts listed on your team's GotSoccer page and ensure that **both contacts have an email and phone number listed**. All team scheduling communication should be done through the GotSoccer chat system so that there is proper record of the communication. Team contacts must respond to communication within 48 hours. Listing the wrong email or phone number will not be a valid excuse for not responding to communication.



### **2.3 - Policy for Scheduling Matches**

The NorCal League Office will provide dates for all matches along with scheduling deadlines. *Teams are expected to be available to play any time on the game dates provided.* Home teams should take travel time into consideration. Please do not schedule games before 10 AM if a team is required to travel more than one hour. Please do not schedule games for older ages (U15 and up) before 3pm on SAT/ACT test dates. All games must be scheduled (time and location) by the deadline provided by the NorCal League Office. After the deadline passes, the schedules are locked and games can only be rescheduled if both teams agree. Teams un-willing or unable to attend games will forfeit the game. Any un-played games will be documented by league officials and may result in a club being removed from NorCal.

*Please Note* - If the NorCal Premier League Office feels that a club is responsible for the game not being scheduled or communication from the away team is not responded to in a timely manner, teams may lose home field advantage but still pay for referees and field costs.

### **2.4 – Re-Scheduling Games**

Once a game has been agreed on in writing, both teams must agree on any scheduling change. After the scheduling deadline passes, a date must be set before any change is made to the schedule. *i.e. If a team would like to reschedule a game following the scheduling deadline, a specific reschedule date must be set before the game can be changed.*

### **2.5 – Rain Outs**

In the event of a forced reschedule (i.e. rainout), it is the home team's responsibility to reschedule the match. All rain outs must be rescheduled within 1 week of the original match date.

### **2.6 - Cancellation/Forfeit Policy**

Teams must give their opponent a 96-hour warning if forfeiting any match or they will be required to pay field and referee costs. Please remember that this is a club competition and not an individual team competition. The following is a list of common excuses teams cite for wanting to reschedule or cancel a game. We recommend the following solutions to frequently posed problems:

- Too many players missing (sick, testing, etc.) - Remember that any player from your club is available to participate with your team as long as they are of correct age. In league matches please use lower team players or players from younger teams within your club to fill out your roster.
- Missing Coach - Any coach with a valid pass for your club is able to coach any team in that club. If your coach has several commitments then it is recommended that teams have an assistant coach or another coach from the club available to cover games.

- No Fields Available - It is expected that if your team is playing in NorCal, you have access to quality fields. This excuse will not be acceptable for cancellation of a match.
- Tournaments/other games - NorCal understands that teams will possibly play in a tournament during the league. This will be an acceptable excuse to ask to reschedule a game, but it must be rescheduled by NorCal scheduling deadlines. Please plan your schedule well in advance so your schedule does not become so full that you are unable to fulfill your league commitment.

## **Section 3: Match Officials**

### **3.1 - Match Officials**

Match officials must be current year USSF licensed referees. The match officials shall consist of the referee and two assistant referees except 7v7/ 9v9 formats of play may be played with one referee and two club linesman. No match officials, other than club linesmen, may have family members in the game they are working. Club linesmen may only signal when the ball has left the field of play, they may not call off-sides or fouls.

### **3.2 - Assignment of Match Officials**

Match officials shall be assigned and paid by the home club for each match. Each club is required to have a current year certified USSF Referee Assignor listed in their GotSoccer account.

## **Section 4: League Discipline**

### **4.1 - Violating League Rules**

The NorCal Premier PAD Committee and the NorCal League Office shall have the authority to suspend, fine, disqualify or otherwise impose sanctions on, players, team officials or competing clubs for violating league rules, the NorCal Code of Ethics or for any action or conduct not in the best interest of soccer or the NorCal Premier League.

### **4.2 - Disciplinary Issues**

Any breach of NorCal Rules outlined in this Handbook should be reported to the appropriate Event Coordinator, who will then refer it to the League Office. Any incidents or breach of the NorCal Code of Ethics should be reported through the PAD Incident Report system. All reports of rule violations or breaches of the NorCal Code of Ethics may only be reported by a club's DOC or President.

### **4.3 - Red Cards**

If a Red Card is shown, it will result in a minimum of a one (1) game suspension. This includes a Red Card as the result of two cautions. If a player is sent off during the weekend, they may not play the remainder of the weekend, regardless of which event the Red Card is issued in. Games sat out that weekend will count against the suspension, as long as noted on the roster and/or Referee Game Report as such. Any player used during a suspension will be considered an illegal player and the team, coach and club will be punished accordingly.

#### **4.4 - Red Card Procedure**

In any game where a Red Card is issued, the referee must notify the NorCal League Office within 24 hours and the home team must fill out a Send Off Report at <http://www.norcalpremier.com>. The player card can be returned to the team as long as the Referee Send Off Report shows the infraction, the player's name and number. In addition to the send off report, teams must send in the verification form confirming that suspensions have been served. All reports and forms should be sent to [pad@norcalpremier.com](mailto:pad@norcalpremier.com).

#### **4.5 - Suspensions**

It is the teams' and/or clubs' responsibility to ensure their Red Carded player/coach serves the minimum 1 game suspension. It is also their responsibility to ensure that their player/coach serves any additional suspension determined by the NorCal PAD committee. There shall be two types of suspensions:

1. Minor Offenses – These include send offs for normal soccer actions, 2<sup>nd</sup> yellow cards, etc. Minor offenses will be given suspensions for a number of games within the competition that the red card was received in.
2. Major Offenses – These include send offs for violent actions. Major offenses will incur suspensions for an amount of time and will rule players or coaches out across all NorCal competitions.

The only exception is that a suspension may be postponed – at the discretion of the NorCal League Office – if it would prevent the player from playing in College Showcase Events.

### **Section 5: Equipment**

#### **5.1 - Safety**

A player must not use equipment or wear anything which is dangerous to themselves or another player (including all jewelry).

#### **5.2 - Casts**

No orthopedic (hard) casts, air splints or metal splints may be worn. Players will be allowed to play in a soft cast at the discretion of the Referee.

#### **5.3 - Jewelry**

Absolutely no jewelry, including rings, chains, watches, jewelry, hair clips, bobby pins, earrings, bracelets, rubber bracelets, or abnormally long fingernails may be worn while participating in any NorCal games. Only Medical Alert Warning Bracelets may be worn, and shall be taped to secure them to the player's body. Earrings and other piercings cannot be taped, and must be removed.

#### **5.4 - Shin guards**

All players are required to use shin guards at all times. They must be worn properly and be professionally manufactured and unaltered. Socks must completely cover shin guards.

### **5.5 - Braces**

It is strongly recommended for the safety of the player, that a player does not wear a brace during NorCal games. Braces are allowed as long as the referee decides that the brace will not or cannot hurt the player wearing the brace or any other player. All metal, metal-like, or plastic brace supports are to be properly covered for the duration of the match. Elastic-type supports without any metal, carbon fiber, hard plastic or like devices are permitted provided the referee does not deem the support to be potentially harmful to other players.

### **5.6 - Eyeglasses**

Players who must wear eyeglasses are encouraged to wear sports goggles. Lenses must be unbreakable and frames must be unbreakable plastic or sturdy metal.

### **5.7 – Player Uniforms**

The two teams must wear colors that distinguish them from each other and also the referee and the assistant referees. *It is recommended that the home team wear dark uniforms while the away team wears light uniforms.* Each goalkeeper must wear colors that distinguish them from the other players, the referee, and the assistant referees. All players on a team except the goalkeeper shall wear identical uniforms (shirts, shorts, and socks).

If there is a conflict in uniform color, the home team shall change uniforms to colors.

### **5.8 - Player Numbers**

Player numbers must be affixed to the back of the uniform shirt. Each player within a team shall wear a unique number.

### **5.9 – Undergarments**

If undershirts or shorts are worn they must match the main color of the jersey or short. If tape, or other material is applied externally to the socks it must be the same color as the part of the sock to which it is applied.

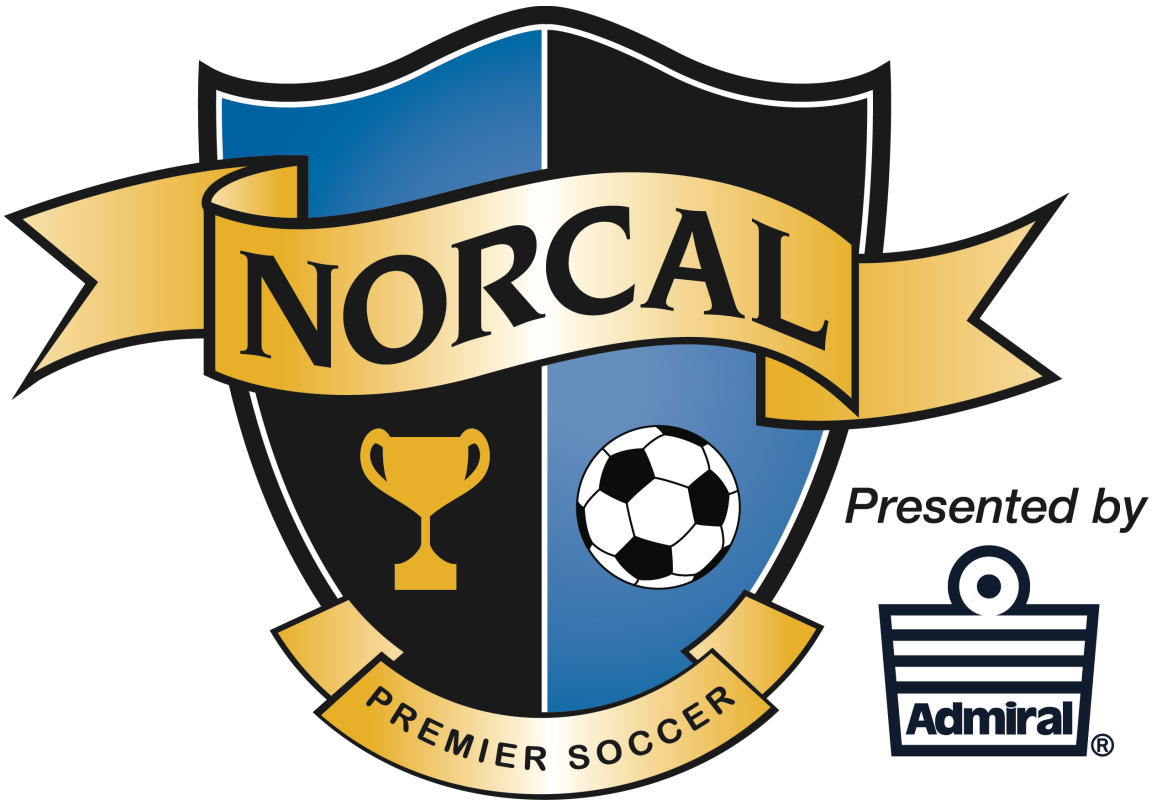
### **5.10 - Home Team**

The home team is the team listed first on the official schedule. The home team will furnish the game balls.

### **5.13 - Technical Area**

NorCal encourages both team benches to be on the same side of the field.

**NorCal Premier League Rules and Regulations**  
Applies to all Youth Premier Leagues and Regional Leagues



## Section 1: Competition Rules

### 1.1 - Playing Rules

All games under league jurisdiction shall be played according to the rules and regulations recognized by the NorCal Premier League which shall be the same rules set by FIFA/ U.S. Soccer (USSF) except for those exceptions authorized by FIFA or USSF.

### 1.2 - Point System

All NorCal Premier Leagues shall operate under a point system. The point system shall award three points for a win, one point for a tie and no points for a loss.

### 1.3 - Tie Breakers

In case of a tie in the standings within a league, the following will be used as tiebreakers:

1. "Head to head" points (win/lose/ draw) between teams
2. "Head to head" Goal Differential between teams
3. Overall Goal Differential (up to 4)
4. Goals for (up to 4)
5. Goals against (up to 4)
6. Most points against highest non-tied team in group
7. Best goal differential against highest non-tied team in group
8. Most shutouts
9. Least red cards
10. Coin toss

### 1.4 - Game Details

Age	Game Length	# of Players	Roster Size	Field Length	Field Width	Ball Size	# of Referees
U8**	4x10 min 5 min half	4v4	12	*Min 30 Max 40	*Min 20 Max 30	3	0
U9-U10	2x25 min 5 min half	7v7 (min = 5)	14	*Min 47 yrd Max 60 yrd	*Min 30 yrd Max 40 yrd	4	1
U11-U12	2x30 min 5 min half	9v9 (min = 6)	16	*Min 70 yrd Max 80 yrd	*Min 40 yrd Max 50 yrd	4	1
U13	2x35 min 10 min half	11v11 (min = 7)	18	Min 100 yrd Max 120 yrd	Min 55 yrd Max 80 yrd	5	3
U14-U16	2x40 min 10 min half	11v11 (min = 7)	18	Min 100 yrd Max 120 yrd	Min 55 yrd Max 80 yrd	5	3
U17-Adult	2x45 min 10 min half	11v11 (min = 7)	18	Min 100 yrd Max 120 yrd	Min 55 yrd Max 80 yrd	5	3

\*Use of cones for lines allowed

\*\* U8 – Game length is recommended but each RAC can decide the best format, each team will play 2 games on each game date (thus the large roster size), there is no offside rule for 4v4 formats.

### 1.5 - Fields

The playing field used by each team must be lined according to USSF standards with goals (U8 recommended goal size is 4'x6', U9 –U12 recommended goal size is 6.5'x18.5' but game can be played as long as both goals are the same size), nets and

flags. The goal of each club shall be to provide an enjoyable experience for the fans, players, officials and everyone involved with the staging of a soccer game.

In all small sided formats (4v4, 7v7 and 9v9), the use of cones is permitted for the formation of the field lines. In addition, there shall be no “build out line” in the 7v7 format in NorCal Premier events.

### **1.6 – Heading Game Rule**

For U11 and below (2006 birth year), when a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If the deliberate header occurs within the goal area (6 yard box), the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred. If a player does not deliberately head the ball, then play should continue.

*This rule shall apply to the age groups of U11 and below. Players who are playing up will play according to the rules of the age group in which they are playing. It is the club’s responsibility to understand the effects of this rule on players playing up.*

### **1.7 – No Re-Entry Protocol**

In accordance with the US Soccer return to play guidelines, any player removed from the field for a suspected head injury will not be allowed to return to the field of play unless cleared by a Healthcare Professional.

### **1.8 – Health Care Professional**

A health care professional is defined as “a licensed health care professional such as an athletic trainer certified (ATC), or a physician (MD/DO), with a skill set in emergency care and sports medicine injuries and with knowledge and experience related to concussion evaluation and management.” It will be up to each club to decide whether they will provide a health care professional at their matches, and to ensure that their health care professional has the correct certification to be evaluating players for head trauma. If a club plans to use a health care professional to evaluate suspected head injuries during a NorCal match, the health care professional must be presented to the referee prior to the start of the match. Referees will not allow the re-entry of players removed from the field of play for suspected head injuries unless they are informed of the presence of, and meet with, a health care professional prior to the start of the match.

### **1.9 - Substitutions**

Substitutions are at the referee’s discretion. A substitution can take place for either team at the following times:

1. Prior to a kick-off
2. A goal kick
3. A throw-in by either team
4. After the referee stops play for an injury or yellow card or red card

*Unlimited substitutions are allowed but NorCal Premier Soccer reminds all coaches to handle substitutions in a professional manner so as not to detract from the game.*

### **1.10 – Ties in League Play**

If a League game is tied after regulation, the tie stands and will be posted as a tie.

### **1.11 - Playoffs for League**

For matches that need a winner, the team with the most goals after regulation time will be the winner. If the match is tied after regulation for U9-U19 teams, two golden goal 5 minute periods will be played. Teams will have a 5-minute break before the first overtime. After 5 minutes, teams will change sides, with no break, and play the remaining 5 minutes. If the game is still tied after the two overtime periods, then kicks from the mark per FIFA will determine the winner.

*Please make sure you arrive for your game knowing if the game can end in a draw or if a winning team is required.*

### **1.12 - Incomplete games**

In the event that a game cannot be completed, the game will stand if half or more of the game was played; provided, however that if any team is directly responsible for the termination of the game, no matter how much of the match remains, due to poor sportsmanship towards a referee, opposing fans, or opposing players, the team will be required to forfeit the match. This could also lead to other sanctions set forth by the NorCal League Office or NorCal PAD Committee. If there is no result, and the match is suspended prior to the expiration of one half, the game shall be replayed at a time agreed upon by the competing teams in consultation with the NorCal League Office. **Referees are required to submit a incident report for all matches that are ended early.**

### **1.13 - No-Shows**

A no-show occurs when a team willfully does not show up to a game agreed to by the teams. The penalty for a no-show shall be a forfeit to the opposing team and the loss of an additional three league points, as well as a \$300 fine imposed on the club. One no-show *may* result in the offending team being terminated from the league. Two no-shows in a single season shall result in the offending team's termination from the league.

### **1.14 - Forfeits**

A forfeit occurs when a team is unable to attend a scheduled game and the teams are unable to come to terms on a time to reschedule (after the scheduling deadline has passed). A forfeit will result in a 3-0 win to the team not at fault. The forfeiting club will be fined \$300 to cover all referee and field costs if they inform the opponent less than 96 hours before the scheduled game time. A team unable to attend a scheduled game because of an accident, weather or act of god should immediately notify the opponent and the League Office. In these circumstances, the League Office will review and rule on the situation.

### **1.15 - Protests**

Protests regarding the match conditions (i.e. field condition, etc.) must be made prior to the start of the match and be clearly written on the official game card. Protests regarding the use of illegal players may be made prior to or following the match and be clearly



written on the game card. Specific referee decisions cannot be protested. No match condition protests will be allowed at NorCal hosted events. All protested games should be sent to the appropriate event coordinator, who will forward to the League Office for a ruling.

### **1.16 – Fines**

The NorCal League Office may impose the following fines:

- Team drops out of the league after final brackets are posted: \$250
- Team drops out of the league after 1<sup>st</sup> game is played: \$100/ per game missed
- No-show/ Forfeit within 96 hours to a scheduled game: \$300

## **Section 2: Rosters**

### **2.1 - Player Registration**

Players shall be registered according to US Club Soccer rules.

### **2.2 - Game Roster**

Each team must create an official NorCal roster in their GotSoccer account. Only players who are listed on the official Game Card will be eligible to play in NorCal Premier League matches. *Player's names may not be handwritten on the NorCal Game Card.* If any player is not listed on the NorCal Game Card, he/she must be added electronically to the roster before the player is eligible to play. Team rosters may contain up to 26 players, and there is no limit to the number of changes that can be made to the roster, provided the players are active in the team's club and are not on another club's US Club Roster.

*Players may not play for 2 teams in the same division of play* (a division of play is a combination of age group and level, ie: two teams from the same club may not share players if their playing in the same set of division standings). No matter how many players are listed on a team's roster, only 18 players for U13 and up, 16 players for U11-U12 and 14 players for U9-U10 may be used for NorCal Premier League matches.

### **2.3 - US Club Soccer Player Pass**

All players and coaches must present their US Club Soccer player pass to the referee prior to the match. If the individual picture is not on the ID card and the card is not laminated, the individual will not be eligible for the match.

### **2.4 - Forgotten US Club Player Credentials**

If a team forgets their US Club player passes for a NorCal Premier League game the game should be played under protest. Any players that wish to play must have a picture taken prior to the game and submitted to the League Office to verify that the players were eligible to participate. If this is a continuous issue with a team or club, the League Office may remove that team from the league.

### **2.5 - Guest Players**

No guest players are allowed in the NorCal Premier League.

## **2.6 - Illegal Players**

Any player who does not appear on the official NorCal game card or have a valid US Club Soccer Player Pass issued by the same club at the time of the match shall be considered an illegal player. Any team using an illegal player shall forfeit the game, the coach of the team using the illegal player will be suspended from all NorCal competitions for one year, and the Club of the illegal player will incur a \$500 fine.

## **Section 3: Game Day Procedures**

### **3.1 - Pre-Game Procedures**

#### Home Team Responsibilities

- Schedule and post agreed game time in GotSoccer
- Provide properly lined field
- Provide and pay current year licensed USSF referees
- Provide NorCal Game Card (with both team rosters) to center referee
- Provide referee with current year US Club Soccer player passes for each player and team official.

#### Visiting team responsibilities:

- Provide referee US Club Soccer player passes for each player and team official
- Have a copy of official NorCal Game Card if needed by center referee

### **3.2 - Game Day Procedures**

Each manager should have the following at every game

- NorCal Game Card
- US Club Medical Release forms
- US Club Soccer roster of team
- US Club Soccer passes for its players and team officials

### **3.3 - Post-Game Procedure**

#### Home team Responsibilities:

- Coach or manager sign the Game Card following the game
- If no red card is given, the home team holds onto the Game Card until the end of the season
- If a red card is given, see red card procedure above – this requires immediate action from the center referee and manager
- Post score within 24 hours
- Game Report

#### Visiting team responsibilities:

- Coach or manager must sign the Game Card following the game

### **3.4 - Personnel on the bench**

A maximum of 3 team officials are allowed in each team's technical area. Team officials must have a US Club pass in order to sit in the technical area. It is highly recommended

that teams have several credentialed coaches or managers with passes for the team just in case something happens to the head coach. A US Club pass makes a person eligible to coach any team in the club for which that coach or manager is credentialed.

### **3.5 - Score reports**

The home team will post the score in GotSoccer within 24 hours of the game. The home team will keep and file the Game Card for possible future reference.

### **3.6 - Game Card**

Both teams must have a copy of the NorCal Game Card. The home team will supply the Game Card to the match officials before the match. The away team should have a copy of the Game Card in case it is needed. Following the match, the Officials and each coach need to sign the Game Card. The home team will keep and file the Game Card for future reference.

### **3.7 – Jersey Conflict**

If there is a conflict in jersey colors, it is the home team's responsibility to change colors. NorCal encourages home teams to wear their dark colors, while away teams wear light colors.

### **3.8 – Additional Instructions for Nickel Divisions**

1. All players playing in the Nickel Division should be registered with US Club via the Super Rec Registration form. The cost is \$10 per player and \$5 per coach.
2. You will not need player passes for the games.
3. All teams will bring a laminated roster from their home club registration system. This is the roster the referee will use to check in players. There will be no passes so this will be on the honor system.
4. Managers or coaches will be able to login to the team account and print a Game Card directly from the schedule. The home team and away team should each bring a copy of the Game Card for the referee.
5. Once a game is complete, coaches are responsible to report the score of the match. Both coaches should record the score and both coaches should keep a copy of the Game Card for their records in case there is any question about the final score of the game.

## NorCal National Premier League (NPL) Rules and Regulations



*The NorCal NPL serves as the National Premier Leagues (NPL) Division of the NorCal Premier League. The NorCal NPL Division is one of 19 leagues across the United States that are part of the NPL, which has been created to provide a national developmental platform with the highest level of competition in given geographic areas, and to elevate and change the competitive youth soccer landscape based upon fundamental principles in US Club Soccer's 10-year vision. The champions of each NPL (including the NorCal NPL) are awarded a spot in the US Club National Premier League Champions Cup.*

## **Section 1: Competition Rules**

### **1.1 - Playing Rules**

All games under league jurisdiction shall be played according to the rules and regulations recognized by the NorCal NPL which shall be the same rules set by FIFA/ U.S. Soccer (USSF) except for those exceptions authorized by FIFA or USSF.

### **1.2 - Point System**

The NorCal NPL shall operate under a point system. The point system shall award three points for a win, one point for a tie and no points for a loss.

### **1.3 - Tie Breakers**

In case of a tie in the standings within a league, the following will be used as tie breakers:

1. "Head to head" points (win/loose/ draw) between teams
2. "Head to head" Goal Differential between teams
3. Overall Goal Differential
4. Goals for
5. Goals against
6. Most points against highest non-tied team in group
7. Best goal differential against highest non-tied team in group
8. Most shutouts
9. Least red cards
10. Coin toss

### **1.4 – Ties in NPL**

If an NPL game is tied after regulation, the tie stands and will be posted as a tie.

### **1.5 - Game Lengths**

All NPL matches will be played in full. All games will be played 11v11 with a size five ball. The following is the list of game lengths for each age group:

- U14 – play 2x40 minutes; 10 minute half time
- U15 – play 2x40 minutes; 10 minute half time
- U16 – play 2x40 minutes; 10 minute half time
- U17 – play 2x45 minutes; 10 minute half time
- U18 – play 2x45 minutes; 10 minute half time

### **1.6 - Fields**

It is expected that all Club Fields be of the highest quality for NPL competition. It is expected that fields are properly lined, mowed, and have nets and corner flags. In case the above conditions are not met, the game will be played under protest (view section on protests). If NorCal finds that a field is not to the standards of the NorCal NPL, clubs may be asked to move their matches to another field.

Expected field dimensions for NorCal NPL matches:

- U14 – Maximum 120 yards x 80 yards; Minimum 100 yards x 55 yards
- U15-U19 – Maximum 120 yards x 80 yards; Minimum 105 yards x 60 yards

All goals are expected to be regulation size 8' height x 24' width.

### **1.7 – No Re-Entry Protocol**

In accordance with the US Soccer return to play guidelines, any player removed from the field for a suspected head injury will not be allowed to return to the field of play unless cleared by a Health Care Professional.

### **1.8 – Health Care Professional**

A health care professional is defined as “a licensed health care professional such as an athletic trainer certified (ATC), or a physician (MD/DO), with a skill set in emergency care and sports medicine injuries and with knowledge and experience related to concussion evaluation and management.” It will be up to each club to decide whether they will provide a health care professional at their matches, and to ensure that their health care professional has the correct certification to be evaluating players for head trauma. If a club plans to use a health care professional to evaluate suspected head injuries during a NorCal match, the health care professional must be presented to the referee prior to the start of the match. Referees will not allow the re-entry of players removed from the field of play for suspected head injuries unless they are informed of the presence of, and meet with a health care professional prior to the start of the match.

### **1.9 - Substitutions**

Substitutions are allowed at the referee’s discretion. A substitution can take place for either team at the following times:

1. Prior to a kick-off
2. A goal kick
3. A throw-in
4. After the referee stops play for an injury or yellow card

Substitutions are permitted as follows:

- First Half - No Re-Entry
- Second Half – One (1) Re-Entry

There will be 1 re-entry per half for an injured GK (no field player re-entry).

In accordance with the new USSF Head Injury guidelines, a substitution for a suspected head injury will not count against re-entry rules.

### **1.10 - Incomplete Games**

In the event that a game cannot be completed, the game counts if half or more of the game was played; provided, however that any team directly responsible for the termination of the game due to poor sportsmanship towards a referee, opposing fans, or opposing players will result in that team forfeiting the match. This could also lead to other possible penalties set by the NorCal League Office and the NorCal PAD Committee. If there is no result, and the match is suspended prior to the expiration of one half, the game shall be repeated at a time agreed upon by the competing teams in consultation with the NorCal NPL Committee.

### **1.11 No-Shows/Forfeits**

A no-show occurs when a team willfully does not show up to a game agreed to by the teams. Penalties for no-shows are as follows:

- A forfeit to the opposing team – 0-3 loss
- See fines for additional repercussions

A team unable to attend a scheduled game because of an accident, weather, or act of god should immediately notify the opponent and the League Office. Each situation shall be reviewed by the NorCal League Office, which shall make a final decision.

### **1.12 Protests**

Protests will be allowed prior to the start of a match. A protest must be clearly written on the official Game Card prior to the match in regards to field quality and any other issues in regards to match conditions not being of the highest quality. Protests in regards to eligible players or the playing of illegal players may be made prior to or following the match. Protests must be sent to the League Office for review. Specific referee decisions shall not be protested.

No Protests will be allowed at NorCal hosted matches except in regards to the possibility of playing illegal players.

### **1.13 - U19 Spring Opt Out**

Due to scheduling issues for some U19 teams in the past, the NorCal NPL will allow U19 teams to “opt out” of NPL Spring League play. Teams must “opt-out” by February 15<sup>th</sup>.

## **Section 2: Rosters**

### **2.1 - Personnel on the Bench**

A maximum of 3 non-playing personnel are allowed in each team’s technical area.

### **2.2 - Game Roster**

Create your official NPL roster online on your team’s GotSoccer team account. Players’ names may not be hand written onto the NorCal Game Card. Only players listed on the official Game Card will be eligible to play in NPL matches. Exceptions during the first weekend of the season may apply – players must have a pass issued by the same club as the team (s)he is playing for.

### **2.3 - Eligibility**

All players and coaches must present their US Club Player Pass to the referee prior to the match. If the individual picture is not on the ID card and the card is not laminated, the individual will not be eligible for the match. All players must be named on the Game Card presented to the referee at beginning of each game. Players may only play for one club, their club, during any NPL match. All players from a club are eligible to participate in NPL matches within the age eligibility limits. **No players may play for more than one team within a level of play in the NPL.** (a division of play is a combination of age group and level)

Only 18 players may be dressed for a match. The 18 players must be on the official

Game Card given to the match official and opposing team before the start of the game. Any players listed on the roster that will not play must have a line through their name on the Game Card.

#### **2.4 - Guest Players**

No Guest Players will be allowed.

#### **2.5 - Illegal Players**

Any player who does not appear on the NorCal Game Card or have a valid US Club Soccer player pass issued by the same club shall be considered an illegal player. Any team using an illegal player shall forfeit the game. In addition, the coach of the team using the illegal player will be suspended from all NorCal Premier League competitions for one year. It will also result in a \$500 club fine.

#### **2.6 - In Season Transfers**

Players may only play for one club during a NorCal NPL season, unless the NorCal League Office grants a transfer. The NPL Season is defined as the start of the fall season through the final NPL weekend in the spring. Once a transfer request is granted, a transferred player must sit out five (5) games before being eligible to play for his/ her new team. Any player not sitting out will be considered an illegal player. The NorCal League Office has final say on all transfers.

### **Section 3: Game Day Procedures**

#### **3.1 - Pre-Game Procedures**

Home Team Responsibilities:

- Schedule and post game time/location on website
- Provide quality field equipped with goals, nets, flags and proper lines
- Assign qualified current year licensed referees

Visiting Team Responsibilities:

- Respond to any communication requests from the home team in regards to match within 24 hours

#### **3.2 - Game Day Procedures**

At each NPL match both teams must to have possession of:

- Game Card - home team provides a copy for the center referee
- US Club Soccer player passes for each player and non-player in the technical area

#### *Required Pre-Game Procedure*

Approximately five minutes prior to each NPL match, it is recommended that teams conduct an International “Walkout.” Following the Walkout the teams shall shake hands with the referees and the opposing players. It is our hope to foster camaraderie and respect between the teams and referees prior to the start of the match. In case of a highly impacted game schedule the Walkout can be waved in order to help games start on time. In that case teams shall still shake hands with the opposing players and the referees. In addition, each game should have the following:



- Benches for both teams
- Easy-up or bench cover set up for both Home and Away team
- Water for both teams and referees

#### *Other Pre-Game Possibilities*

Some clubs have the ability to go above and beyond. If possible clubs may provide the following:

- Play music prior to the match or at halftime.
- Play the National Anthem prior to the match after the team's Walkout and before they shake the referee and opponents hands.

### **3.3 - Post-Game Procedures**

Home Team Responsibilities:

- Coach or manager signs the NorCal Game Card
- Post score within 24 hours (failure to post scores within 24 hours may result in a fine)
- Report goals and assists for home team scorers
- Coach or DOC fills out the NorCal NPL Online Game Report
- Report any red card (home or away) to the NorCal League Office within 24 hours

Visiting Team Responsibilities:

- Coach or manager signs the NorCal Game Card
- If Home team does not post the score within 24 hours, Away team should post the score and inform the NPL Coordinator
- Report goals and assists for visiting team scorers
- Fill out NorCal NPL Online Game Report

### **3.4 – Jersey Conflict**

If there is a conflict in jersey colors, it is the home team's responsibility to change colors. **NorCal encourages the home team to wear their dark uniform color, and the away team to wear their light uniform color.**

## **Section 4: Club Bond, Fines, and Penalties**

### **4.1 - Fines**

1. Team dropping from league after NPL acceptance - \$350 per team
2. Forfeits, no-shows or Cancellations with less than 96 hours notice - \$300 (used for field and referees)
3. Forfeits, no-shows or Cancellations with 96 hours notice - \$100 per game
4. Playing illegal players - \$500.00 per instance
5. Failure to schedule matches by the league scheduled deadline - \$50 per game
6. Failure to reschedule a cancelled match within 48 hours - \$50 per game
7. Home team failure to report score within 24 hours - \$20 per game (each club will receive a warning before being fined for score reporting)
8. Failure to Provide three current year licensed referees - \$50 per missing referee

9. Failure to provide shade/ tents for both teams - \$50 per occurrence
10. Failure to provide water for both teams - \$50 per occurrence
11. Failure to provide benches for both team - \$50 per occurrence

#### **4.2 - Other Penalties**

Accumulation of two no-shows for a club in NPL shall result in the Club's termination from NPL.

**NorCal State Cup Rules and Regulations**



## Section 1: Competition Rules

### 1.1 – Playing Rules

All NorCal State Cup games shall be played according to the rules and regulations recognized by NorCal Premier League which shall be the same rules set by FIFA/USSF except for those exceptions authorized by FIFA or USSF.

### 1.2 – Point System

The NorCal State Cup shall operate under a point system. The point system shall award three points for a win, one point for a tie and no points for a loss.

### 1.3 – Tie Breakers

In case of a tie in the standings within a flight the following will be used as tiebreakers:

1. “Head to Head” points between teams
2. “Head to Head” Goal Differential (up to 4) between teams
3. Overall Goal Differential (up to 4)
4. Goals for (up to 4)
5. Goals against (up to 4)
6. Most points against highest non-tied team in group (i.e. if the 2<sup>nd</sup> place and 3<sup>rd</sup> place team are tied best record vs. 1<sup>st</sup> place team would win tiebreaker)
7. Best Goal Differential against highest non-tied team in group
8. Most Shutouts
9. Least Red Cards
10. Coin Toss

If more than two teams are tied, the tie-breaking process will be used until a winner is determined. The tie-breaking procedure does not revert to previous criteria if one team is eliminated.

### 1.4 – Game Details

Age	Game Length	# of Players	Roster Size	Field Length	Field Width	Ball Size	# of Referees
U9-U10	2x25 min 5 min half	7v7 (min = 5)	14	*Min 47 yrd Max 60 yrd	*Min 30 yrd Max 40 yrd	4	1
U11-U12	2x30 min 5 min half	9v9 (min = 6)	16	*Min 70 yrd Max 80 yrd	*Min 40 yrd Max 50 yrd	4	1
U13	2x35 min 10 min half	11v11 (min = 7)	18	Min 100 yrd Max 120 yrd	Min 55 yrd Max 80 yrd	5	3
U14-U16	2x40 min 10 min half	11v11 (min = 7)	18	Min 100 yrd Max 120 yrd	Min 55 yrd Max 80 yrd	5	3
U17-U19	2x45 min 10 min half	11v11 (min = 7)	18	Min 100 yrd Max 120 yrd	Min 55 yrd Max 80 yrd	5	3
Adult	2x45 min 10 min half	11v11 (min = 7)	18	Min 100 yrd Max 120 yrd	Min 55 yrd Max 80 yrd	5	3

\*Use of cones for lines allowed

### **1.5 – Fields**

The goal of each club shall be to provide an enjoyable experience for the fans, players, officials and everyone involved with the staging of a soccer game. With that in mind it is expected that all club hosted fields be of the highest possible quality for NorCal State Cup competition. The playing field used by each team must be lined according to FIFA standards with goals, nets and flags. If you feel a field is not of proper quality, please play the match under protest and submit the protest to the League Office (view section on protests).

All goals are expected to be regulation size 8' height x 24' width.  
U9 –U12 recommended goal size is 6.5'x18.5' but game can be played as long as both goals are the same size.

### **1.6 – Heading Game Rule**

For U11 and below (2006 birth year), when a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If the deliberate header occurs within the goal area (6 yard box), the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred. If a player does not deliberately head the ball, then play should continue.

### **1.7 – No Re-Entry Protocol**

In accordance with the US Soccer return to play guidelines, any player removed from the field for a suspected head injury will not be allowed to return to the field of play unless cleared by a Health Care Professional.

### **1.8 – Health Care Professional**

A health care professional is defined as “a licensed health care professional such as an athletic trainer certified (ATC), or a physician (MD/DO), with a skill set in emergency care and sports medicine injuries and with knowledge and experience related to concussion evaluation and management.” It will be up to each club to decide whether they will provide a health care professional at their matches, and to ensure that their health care professional has the correct certification to be evaluating players for head trauma. If a club plans to use a health care professional to evaluate suspected head injuries during a NorCal match, the health care professional must be presented to the referee prior to the start of the match. Referees will not allow the re-entry of players removed from the field of play for suspected head injuries unless they are informed of the presence of, and meet with a health care professional prior to the start of the match.

### **1.9 – Substitutions**

Substitutions are at the referee's discretion. A substitution can take place for either team at the following times:

1. Prior to a kick-off
2. A goal kick
3. A throw-in by either team

4. After the referee stops play for an injury or yellow card or red card

*Unlimited substitutions are allowed but NorCal reminds all coaches to handle substitutions in a professional manner so as not to detract from the game.*

### **1.10 - Ties in Group Round**

If a NorCal State Cup Group Stage (U14-U19) or First/ Second Round (U9-U13) match is tied after regulation, the tie stands and will be posted as a tie.

### **1.11 - Matches Needing a Winner**

For matches that need a winner, the team with the most goals after regulation time will be the winner. If the match is tied after regulation, two full-time 5-minute overtime periods will be played, for final games two full-time 10-min overtime periods will be played (U15-U19 only). If the game is still tied after the two overtime periods, then kicks from the mark per FIFA will determine the winner.

*Make sure you arrive for your game knowing if the game can end in a draw or if a winning team is required.*

### **1.12 - Incomplete games**

In the event that a game cannot be completed, the game counts if half or more of the game was played; provided, however that any team directly responsible for the termination of the game due to poor sportsmanship towards a referee, opposing fans, or opposing players will result in that team forfeiting the match. This could also lead to other possible penalties set by the NorCal League Office and the NorCal PAD Committee. If there is no result, and the match is suspended prior to the expiration of one half, the game shall be repeated at a time agreed upon by the competing teams in consultation with the League Office.

### **1.13 - No- shows/forfeits:**

Until the Quarter-finals, all forfeit situations in the Younger Cup are handled by the League Office to make sure that the gaining or losing of points by forfeit does not elevate or lower teams into divisions that will have a harmful impact on the event.

A no-show occurs when a team willfully does not show up at a game agreed to by the teams. Penalties for no-shows are as follows:

- \$300 fine
- A “no show” from the home team will result in the rescheduling of the game and the loss of home field.
- A “no show” from the away team will result in the rescheduling of the game and the away team paying for the field and referees for the rescheduled game.
- A report regarding all no shows will be sent to the League Office for possible further action. A team unable to attend a scheduled game because of an accident, weather or “Act of God” should immediately notify the opponent and the Tournament Coordinator. Each situation will be reviewed by the League Office, which will render a decision.

### **1.14 - State Cup Championships**

Only the “NorCal State Division” Champion will be considered State Champion in each age group. All other Championship teams must affix the divisional category in front of their Championship (i.e. 2016 Gold Cup Champions)

## **Section 2: Rosters**

### **2.1 – Player Registration**

All players shall be registered according to US Club Soccer rules.

### **2.2 – NorCal State Cup Official Team Roster**

Each team must create their official NorCal State Cup Roster on their team’s GotSoccer online account. *Rosters will be capped at 26 players, and once frozen, teams may only use players off this 26-player roster. Roster freeze dates will be posted on the NorCal State Cup Calendar. For U9-U13 age groups, there will be a window from December 23<sup>rd</sup> through the first week of January during which players will be allowed to be added to the State and Premier level teams for Cup play in January and February.* These days may be adjusted due to scheduling of games so please check the State Cup website for exact dates.

### **2.3 – Game Roster**

Only players who are listed on the official Game Card will be eligible to play in NorCal State Cup matches. Player’s names may not be handwritten on the NorCal Game Card. If any player is not listed on the NorCal Game Card, he/she must be added electronically to the roster before the player is eligible to play. Only 18 players for U13 and up, 16 players for U11-U12 and 14 players for U9-U10 may be used for NorCal Premier State Cup matches.

### **2.4 – US Club Soccer Player Pass**

All players and coaches must present their US Club Player Identification Card to the referee prior to the match. If the individual picture is not on the ID card and the card is not laminated, the individual will not be eligible for the match.

### **2.5 – Guest Players**

No Guest Players will be allowed.

### **2.6 – Illegal Players**

Any player who does not appear on the official NorCal Game Card and have a valid US Club Soccer player pass issued by the same club shall be considered an illegal player. Any team using an illegal player shall forfeit the game, the coach of the team using the illegal player will be suspended from the NorCal Premier League and all of it’s events for one year, and the club of the illegal player will incur a \$500 fine.

### **2.7 – “Cup Tied”**

Players may only compete for one team per age group in the NorCal State Cup. A club may place players on more than one 26-player team roster but players may not play on

two different teams in the same age group. A player may play up in an older age group while competing in their true age group. Once a player plays for a team in a specific age group that player is “Cup Tied” to that team in that age group. The player may not play for any other team in that age group for the remainder of the NorCal State Cup.

### **2.8 – Emergency Player Rule**

Teams that drop below 12 players for U13 and up, 10 players for U11-U12 and 8 players for U9-U10 may request, from the NorCal League Office, the ability to add un cup-tied players that were registered with their club prior to the roster freeze date, but were not on the State Cup roster. This rule may also be used to add a goalkeeper.

## **Section 3: Game Day Procedures**

### **3.1 - Pre-Game Procedures**

Home Team Responsibilities

- Contact away team to ensure proposed game time works for both teams
- Schedule and post agreed game time on the NorCal website
- Provide properly lined field, properly sized goals and corner flags
- Provide and pay current year licensed USSF referees
- Provide NorCal Game Card (with both teams rosters) to center referee
- Provide referee with current year US Club Soccer player passes for each player and team official.

Visiting team responsibilities:

- Provide referee US Club Soccer player passes for each player and team official
- Have a copy of official NorCal Game Card if needed by center referee

### **3.2 - Game Day Procedures**

Each manager should have the following at every game

- NorCal Game Card
- US Club Medical Release forms
- US Club Soccer roster of team
- US Club Soccer passes for its players and team officials

### **3.3 - Post-Game Procedure**

Home team Responsibilities:

- Coach or manager sign the game sheet following the game
- If no red card is given, the home team holds onto the game report until the end of the season
- If a red card is given, see red card procedure above – this requires immediate action from the center referee and manager
- Post score within 24 hours
- Fill out NorCal Game Report online

Visiting team responsibilities:

- Coach or manager must sign the game sheet following the game
- Fill out NorCal Game Report online



### **3.4 - Personnel on the bench**

A maximum of 3 team officials are allowed in each team's technical area. Team officials must have a US Club pass in order to sit in the technical area. It is recommended that teams have several credentialed coaches or managers with passes for the team just in case something happens to the head coach. A US Club pass makes a person eligible to coach any team in the club for which that coach or manager is credentialed.

### **3.5 - Score reports**

The home team will post the score on the NorCal website within 24 hours of the game. The home team will keep and file the game card for possible future reference.

### **3.6 - Game Card**

Both teams must have a copy of the NorCal Game Card. The home team will supply the Game Card to the match officials before the match. The away team should have a copy of the Game Card in case it is needed. Following the match, the Officials and each coach need to sign the Game Card. The home team will keep and file the Game Card for future reference.

### **3.7 – Jersey Conflict**

If there is a conflict in jersey colors, it is the home team's responsibility to change colors. NorCal encourages home teams to wear their dark color uniforms and away teams to wear their light color uniforms.

## **Section 4: Fines**

### **5.1- Fines**

- Team dropping from event after schedules posted - \$250 per team. In addition, could forfeit registration fee as well.
- Forfeits, no-shows or Cancellations less than 96 hours notice - \$300
  - Game will still need to be played.

All fines are imposed and collected by NorCal Premier Soccer.