

SANTA MONICA UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB, INC. POLICIES, RULES AND REGULATIONS

Section 1. Philosophy of the Game

Santa Monica United will not sacrifice development of its players for winning games. Although the Club is a competitive organization playing in a competitive environment, development of our players is the first priority. While everyone would rather win games than lose, winning *must* be a byproduct of training, development, and a strong work ethic. Each player's passion for the game should also develop over time, in addition to technical and tactical abilities.

Santa Monica United believes that its teams should play a game of soccer involving *possession* of the ball and quality passing, with appropriate emphasis on individual skills and technique. The Club does not want its teams to resort to chronically kicking long balls, the kick and rush style of play seen so often displayed by many teams. Short cuts to winning at the expense of development will eventually lead a team to hit a ceiling, inhibiting its ability to compete with other teams that have spent the time necessary to develop technically and tactically.

Winning is subject to many variables beyond the control of the players, coaches or parents. It is not possible to control the quality or strength of the opponent, the weather, injury, illness, schedules, officiating, or bad luck. The only elements within a player's control are his or her effort, focus, and determination. Coaches, parents and players must understand this truth about competitive sports, and they should also appreciate the fact that individual and team success are achieved when athletes can walk off the field knowing they have given their best effort possible, win, lose or draw.

Section 2. Playing Time and Positions

All decisions regarding playing time and positions on the field are the responsibility and prerogative of the head coach. In the absence of the head coach, the decisions regarding playing time and positions belong to the assistant coach. Parents, players and others must respect the decisions of the coaching staff in these regards.

There is no guaranteed amount of playing time and many factors can affect the playing time of any particular player. Playing time is earned based on a number of variables. Some of the factors include: Ability; athleticism; timeliness and attendance at practices and games; work ethic; competitive desire; concentration and focus; and attitude.

If there are any questions about positions and playing time, please talk with the coach at an appropriate time, and never during practice or before, during or just following games.

Section 3. Attendance

Attendance at practices and games is mandatory. Club soccer is not a recreational experience where players and families can come and go as they please. Unlike recreational leagues, registration is not open to anyone interested. Playing with Santa Monica United is a privilege.

Attendance at practices and games should not be lower than ninety percent (90%). Attendance is mandatory at all games during the league season, League Cup, and State or National Cup, and for tournaments in preparation for these important competitions.

Academics are obviously a priority over Club soccer. That being said, however, students must learn to plan their activities so that none of them interfere with each other. Good planning at school and at home is something that all young people should learn, and it will help them reduce conflicts between their academic responsibilities and their other activities, including Club soccer and other sports. Occasionally, school projects and unusual amounts of homework or test preparation will require players to miss sporting activities, but these demands should not become a chronic excuse for absences.

Section 4. Seasonal Club Activities

Activities for the Club season begin at Santa Monica United between the last week of July and the first week of August. All teams must begin training during this time period. The Club has a mandatory conditioning camp usually held during the last week of July.

All teams are encouraged, though not required, to participate in at least two preseason tournaments to prepare for league play in the fall. Experience has proven that participation in a conditioning camp and in at least two pre-season tournaments is the best means of assuring that a team will have a successful and productive league season. The process of preparing for league takes approximately six weeks; any less time and a team will likely face obstacles to reaching its fullest potential.

The length of the season and the number of tournaments attended by any given team will vary with the individual teams. Younger players should be afforded more and longer breaks than older players. Most teams will take a four to six week break beginning sometime in early June and continuing into July. Most teams will also take some time off over the winter holidays.

Section 5. Parent Conduct, Sideline Behavior and Decorum

Parent and spectator behavior often arises as problem for youth athletic programs, regardless of the sport, and soccer is no exception. Parent expectations must be managed and kept within reason. There is simply no excuse for inappropriate and negative behavior by adults involved with the Club, a nonprofit youth athletic organization.

Parents should act reasonably, maturely, and with restraint at all times during practices, games, and other Club events.

There will be absolutely no coaching by parents. This includes shouting instructions to any player on the team, including Go or Shoot! Players are given one set of instructions by one voice before, during, and after practices and games. For this reason, the Club insists the coach be the only voice at all games and practices. Only those listed on the official game roster may sit on or near the team bench before and during games.

The area near the team bench is also known as the "Technical Area" and refers to the space 10 yards either side of the center line. Parents and spectators should remain outside of the Technical Area.

There will be absolutely no yelling or complaining to referees or officials during or after games. In youth sports today, referees are under enormous pressure and criticism from spectators. As difficult as it may be at times, parents must exercise restraint and accept the officiating in a game. Parents should not even ask what might seem to be innocent or friendly questions of the officials either during or after a game. Referees have often mistaken the intent of such innocuous inquiries and seen them to be hostile advances. In worst case scenarios, abuse – or perceived abuse – of referees can be brought to the attention of Coast Soccer League and California Youth Soccer Association – South. We do not want to jeopardize the very strong reputation that our

Club has earned with these entities over more than thirty years of providing youth soccer to the community. Moreover, even minor criticisms of the officials can hurt your team by leading to judgment calls that can and will be made against your players.

Moreover, parents will now be subject to being carded by the officials, with the team being assessed disciplinary points for those cards: 1 point for a yellow, 2 for a double yellow, and 3 for a straight red card.

Parents must respect all of the players on a team and maintain a positive attitude and demonstrate the same when others are present. Parents and spectators must not criticize when mistakes are made; players are well aware of their mistakes and are learning to handle them. There will be zero tolerance for criticism and verbal or physical abuse of players, even one's own son or daughter. Parents must not make critical remarks to others about players on a team, or about the coach or coaching decisions. Club, team and player development will sometimes be given a greater priority than winning, especially in the younger years prior to high school. Parents must understand this and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with this philosophy in order to maintain a healthy team environment.

Your vocal support and encouragement are welcome and necessary. The players and teams need to be cheered and supported, and they need to know that their efforts are appreciated. In doing so, spectators simply need to be positive and exercise common sense.

Santa Monica United teaches players the benefit of having mental toughness to guide their intense focus on the game of soccer. The Club will instruct the players to ignore adverse conditions such as name calling, foul language, rough play, cheating, poor weather, questionable officiating, or negative behavior by parents. Parents (as well as coaches) are expected to have this same mental toughness.

Section 6. Conduct of Players

Players are expected to be responsible for their own conduct and behavior. Honesty and reliability will be expected at all times. The Club expects its players to work their hardest to be the best they can possibly be and to achieve their full potential as a soccer player, whatever that potential may be.

Players should: (1) Show respect for teammates, opponents, officials and coaches; (2) Exhibit fair play, sportsmanship, and proper conduct on and off the playing field; (3) Refrain from the use of profanity, vulgarity, and other offensive language and gestures; (4) Adhere to established rules and standards of the game; and (5) Win with character, lose with dignity.

Section 7. Discipline

The Club may suspend or terminate any member for disciplinary reasons involving any infraction of its Bylaws, Policies, Rules or Regulations, or for other good and valid reason as the Board of Directors shall determine.

Members subject to suspension or termination from the Club for disciplinary reasons will be given written notice of (1) the nature of the charges or grounds for the action to be taken, and (2) the time and place of the hearing to be conducted by the Board of Directors to consider such charges or grounds. The member shall be given the opportunity to appear before the Board of Directors and to be heard concerning the charges, grounds, or other reasons given for any punitive action that is contemplated. If termination or expulsion is contemplated, the member will be given fifteen (15) days written notice of the proposed action, the reasons therefore, and the time and place of the hearing.

The Club president may temporarily suspend any person for a period of up to fifteen (15) days or until a decision is made by the Board of Directors concerning expulsion or suspension, provided that such suspension shall not exceed thirty (30) days.

With respect to player-members, the following also applies, subject to the rules and regulations of California Youth Soccer Association – South (CYSA-S):

1. The Team Coach and/or Directors of Coaching will discuss the problem directly and privately with the player, with the assumption the problem will be corrected immediately.
2. If the problem persists, the Team Coach and/or Directors of Coaching will communicate with the player's parents to discuss the problem and lack of response on the part of the player. Parents will have the opportunity to be involved with correction of the problem at this time.
3. If the problem still continues, the Directors of Coaching and/or Team Coach may temporarily suspend the player from training. If the situation warrants, the Directors of Coaching may recommend to the Board that the player be removed from the Club. The Directors of Coaching will notify the parents of the recommendation.
4. The parents of any player recommended for removal from the Club may request to meet with the Board and the Directors of Coaching.

The decision of the Board of Directors concerning any suspension or termination is final; there is no appeal from the Board's decision.

Section 8. Parent Concerns

Parents should feel free to communicate and ask questions.

Should any issue or concern arise regarding the Club experience, parents are encouraged to first address the coach of the team at an appropriate time, and never just before, during, or immediately after a game. At these times, the coach's attention is completely preoccupied with the team's needs. Moreover, following games, emotions can be high and it is often best to speak to the coach the following day at the earliest. Parents should feel free to contact their coach by telephone or e-mail.

If a matter is related to soccer – as opposed to a Club or administrative issue – and it not fully resolved following discussions with the team's coach, parents are encouraged to address any remaining issue with the Director of Coaching for Boys or Girls, as the case may be. If the matter is still not resolved following discussions with the Director of Coaching, parents should then contact the Club's Technical Director. Any decision by the Technical Director will be final and not subject to further review.

If a concern or matter is not directly related to soccer, but to the general Club experience or administrative issues, parents should discuss their questions or concerns with the Team Administrator. Any remaining issue should then be brought to the attention of the Club President or another officer or Director.

Parents should never hesitate to contact the Club president at any time with any comments, questions, suggestions, or concerns, whether positive or negative.

Section 9. Sports Outside of Club Soccer

The Club allows its players to participate in other sports, but the Club soccer team must be given priority. Especially at the younger ages, it is beneficial to be involved in other sports and activities. However, if a player is frequently absent or physically unable to train and play with the Club team due to other athletic commitments, the family should reconsider participation in club soccer. In addition, players who are concurrently involved in too many sports seriously increase the risk of early chronic injuries and fatigue.

With the Club team given priority, missing Club soccer games to play other sports is not allowed. Furthermore, playing another sport on the same day prior to a Club game is not allowed, nor even necessarily safe.

Organized recreational soccer outside of the Club is a separate matter, and it is not allowed depending upon the player's age. After committing to the competitive experience of playing club soccer, players should not be dividing their time, attention, and especially training between a recreational league and the Club commitment. With the exception of U9 and U10 players, members of the Club are not allowed to participate in organized recreational soccer leagues. For younger players transitioning from recreational to competitive soccer, there are potential benefits in allowing participation in both, as they graduate from one level to another. Thus, although it is not necessarily recommended, U9 and U10 players may participate in recreational soccer leagues; the Club team still has priority, practices cannot be missed, and participation recreational games before games for the Club is not permitted.

Older players (U11 and above) must focus on training and playing at a competitive level that becomes increasingly demanding with each passing season. Therefore, players in U11 divisions and above are not allowed to participate in recreational soccer leagues. Participation with Middle School and High School teams is allowed, understanding again that if it is not on hiatus, the Club team takes priority.

Section 10. Coaches

Coaches at the Club are not permitted to hold the position of Head Coach for more than two teams. This two-team limit is to assure that a coach's time and attention are not so divided as to be detrimental to the overall quality and experience of any team.

All coaches must acquire a "D" license within one year of obtaining their "E" license, and they are encouraged to eventually obtain a "C" within a reasonable period of time.

Selection and retention of coaches will be made either by or with the approval of the Technical Director, in consultation with the Directors of Coaching for Boys and Girls. The Club will make every effort to secure a coach that fits within the chemistry of the team's players, always seeking the right fit with the team's personnel and needs. The Club will be receptive to and consider the wishes of the parents on any team affected by a coaching change. The final decision, however, will be made by the Club through its Technical Director.

As with parents and spectators, coaches are also expected to act reasonably, maturely, and with restraint at all times during practices, games, and other Club events. As leaders of teams within the Club, they should always set an example for all others to follow.

Parents should not expect perfection from coaches, but rather the best effort to do the best possible job that they can, given all of the numerous and diverse challenges and circumstances surrounding each individual team and its coach.

Section 11. Formation of Teams

Santa Monica United believes that the best model for forming teams is through open tryouts. Consequently, entire AYSO all-star teams will not be accepted into the Club without a process by which open tryouts are held and players are selected based on decisions of the coaching staff.

Section 12. Player Releases (Cuts)

As a competitive program, players can be released (cut) from a team based on the decision of the coach, at his professional discretion, if he or she believes it will benefit the overall welfare of the team, subject to the rules and regulations of CYSA-S.

Releases are not a preferred means of improving the overall quality of a team. As a Club, we believe that every player should have the opportunity to develop as an athlete and soccer player, and, given time, be able to make a meaningful contribution to the team on the field. The Club believes in the development of players as a priority. Players will not be signed unless the coach believes that they will be able contribute to the team and the quality of its overall experience, or, given a reasonable period of time, will learn and develop into contributing member of the team. Nonetheless, under some circumstances, a coach may conclude that cuts are necessary for the welfare the team; it is never an easy decision.

A player may also be cut from a team for disciplinary reasons or for failure to pay dues or tuition, subject to the rules and regulations of CYSA-S.

While the coach has the final authority to release a player, the decision will be made after due deliberation and consultation with the Technical Director, or, in the absence of a Technical Director, with either the Director of Coaching for Boys or Girls, as the case may be.

Section 13. Tryouts

Open tryouts will be held by each team on an annual basis, following either State Cup or National Cup, as the case may be. All current players on a given team must attend the tryouts scheduled by their coach if they intend to return for the following season.

Players will be evaluated based upon six separate factors, outlined in detail in the Santa Monica United Handbook. Evaluation will take place throughout the year and at specified tryouts. Players may be asked to stay with their current team, to move up or down between teams in an age bracket, to play up a year, or they may not be invited back. These decisions are at the sole discretion of the Team Coach and the Directors of Coaching.

Open tryouts are considered the best means of strengthening teams through the addition of new and motivated players, while also helping to diminish any a sense of entitlement (complacency) amongst current players in good standing.

Section 14. Dues

Club dues shall be payable at such times and in such amounts as may from time to time be fixed by the Board of Directors.

Section 15. Registration Procedures

Players must use their full first and last name on all registration materials. Three copies of the appropriate registration form must be submitted with two current photographs.

New players must submit proof of age by means of a valid passport, a certified copy of a birth certificate, an alien registration card issued by the United States government, or a valid driver's license.

The Club may request proof of age at any time to verify the birth date of any player.

Each team official (Coach, Assistant Coach, Administrator, etc.) must complete the appropriate registration forms and submit them to the Club Registrar with three current photographs. The Identification Card issued shall be kept with the player identification cards for the team.

No player may sign for one team and play for a second team without first securing a Release and Transfer, nor may any player be registered for more than one team at the same time, subject to the rules and regulations of CYSA-S.

Each team shall be responsible for assuring proper and timely registration of its players.

Section 16. Age Divisions and Limits

The term "youth" as applied to this youth athletic organization shall mean an amateur player who has not attained his or her nineteenth (19th) birthday before the first day of August of the seasonal year.

The Club follows the age limit definitions as dictated by CYSA-S, United States Youth Soccer, United States Soccer Federation, and Federation Internationale de Football Association.

The Club may have teams in the following age divisions for players who are, before the first day of August:

- Under 19 years of age
- Under 18 years of age
- Under 17 years of age
- Under 16 years of age
- Under 15 years of age
- Under 14 years of age
- Under 13 years of age
- Under 12 years of age
- Under 11 years of age
- Under 10 years of age
- Under 9 years of age

Players attaining the limiting age for any age group on or after August 1st of the current seasonal year shall be eligible to play for the remainder of that seasonal year with and in the age group which the player was registered for the current seasonal year.

The seasonal year for the purposes of defining the limiting age for any age group shall begin on September 1st and end on August 31st of the following year.

Section 17. Risk Management

To provide an environment that fosters the wellbeing and safety of its players, the Club is required to comply with the Risk Management program administered by CYSA-S.

All program administrators must comply with the requirements of the Risk Management program. Programs administrators are defined as anyone who has an official capacity in the soccer program, including, but not limited to, league or Club officers, directors, team managers, coaches, and assistant coaches. Program administrators are subject to all Risk Management procedures, including background checks, finger printing, and payment of all proscribed fees.

Risk Management registration is available on a year-round basis through CYSA-S designated Live Scan Vendors or authorized California Department of Justice Live Scan vendors. The CYSA-S corporate office maintains all such vendor information.

All Program Administrators must have a valid CYSA-S identification card in their possession whenever involved in league or Club activities.

Program Administrators agree to abide by league, Club, CYSA-S, US Youth Soccer, USSF, and FIFA bylaws, rules, regulations, policies, and procedures. They further agree that they are accountable for knowing, understanding, and following the same bylaws, rules, regulations, policies, and procedures.