



7 v 7 Soccer Rules & Handbook©

April 1, 2024

Introduction

Rainbow Sports League was founded with the philosophy that all people are welcome to participate in a safe, social, and inclusive environment. The purpose of RSL is to engage members of the LGBTQ+ community, friends, and allies in healthy, active sports and activities by creating and managing structured games, leagues and tournaments in a safe, consistent, and organized fashion.

Rainbow Sports League follows these principals in order and in precedence. At no time shall any higher ranked principal be compromised for the sake of another by any official, team, or player.

- 1) **Safety:** All measures will be taken so that any and all activities rank safety as the league's number one priority.
- 2) **Participation / Inclusion:** All people are welcome in RSL games and activities, and participation is fundamental to all involved.
- 3) **Respect:** All people affiliated with RSL, its teams or its events shall treat each other with dignity and respect at all times, both on and off the field.
- 4) **Fun:** The purpose of RSL in its core, is to foster a fun, philanthropic, social environment.
- 5) **Honesty / Fair Play:** It is expected that all players, teams and officials shall adhere to a strict honor code at all times.
- 6) **Competition:** While RSL games and activities keep score and award champions, at no time shall any player, team, or official allow the competitive nature inherent in sports take precedence over any of the above founding principles.

Table of Contents

League Principals.....	1	Forfeits & Late Penalty.....	5.10
Sportsmanship	1.1	In-Game Subs.....	5.11
Agreement	1.2	Game Play.....	6
Drug, Alcohol & Weapons Policy ...	1.3	Goalie Rules	6.1
Weather	1.4	Game Starts	6.2
Field / Venue Rules	1.5	Out of Play & Throw Ins	6.3
Discrimination	1.6	Fouls & Misconduct Free Kicks.....	6.4
Bullying & Taunting	1.7	Indirect Free Kicks.....	6.5
Disciplinary Policies	1.8	Penalty Kicks.....	6.6
Injury Polices	1.9	Goals.....	6.7
Field & Equipment	2	Time Outs & Challenges	7
Field Specifications.....	2.1	Team Captains	7.1
Equipment & Uniforms	2.2	One Per Game	7.2
Players	3	Time Stop	7.3
Number of Players	3.1	Rules Questions & Clarifications ...	7.4
Player Eligibility	3.2	Intentional Delay of Game	7.5
Team Captain	3.3	Time Outs	7.6
All Players Participate.....	3.4	Tournament Details	8
No Show Policy	3.5	Timing	8.1
Absenteeism Policy	3.6	Rules	8.2
Injury	3.7	Eligibility	8.3
Substitutions	3.8	Seeding	8.4
Teams	4	Game Tie Breakers	8.5
Team Names	4.1	Tournament Brackets.....	8.6
Team Events	4.2		
Fundamental Rules	5		
Divisions.....	5.1		
Game Time.....	5.2		
Wins / Losses.....	5.3		
Shortened Games.....	5.4		
Tie Games	5.5		
Warm-Ups	5.6		
Season Standings.....	5.7		
Home & Visitor Assignments	5.8		
Referees.....	5.9		

Section I - Conduct

1. **League Principles**

1.1 **Sportsmanship**

Officials, players and their guests shall conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner at all times, including both on and off the field. RSL expects the highest level of respect from anyone affiliated or attending our events and conduct unbecoming will not be tolerated at any time.

1.2 **Agreement:** By participating in an RSL event or activity, each competitor agrees

- a) To be governed by the rules as presented by RSL, both as written and in the spirit and intent of said rules.
- b) To accept any decisions or penalties imposed by said rules.
- c) To respect all aspects of the league's priorities.
- d) To treat all materials, equipment, and venues with great care including the environment in which we are playing. This includes, but is not limited to, garbage, foul language, smoking, illegal substance, weapons, and alcohol policies and damage to property.

1.3 **Drug & Weapons Policy:** Rainbow Sports League is a drug and weapon-free zone, and any use or distribution of any illegal substances or the possession of any weapons of any kind while attending or engaging in any RSL sponsored events is strictly prohibited.

- a) **Alcohol:** While may or may not be regulated by venue restrictions, any public intoxication will not be tolerated and is subject to disciplinary actions, including ejection from venue for the remainder of the day.

1.4 **Weather:** Outdoor activities may be cancelled or delayed under these guidelines.

- a) Lightning within a 30-mile radius, postpones activities for 30 minutes.
- b) Heavy rain of any kind postpones games for one hour following the conclusion of rain.
- c) If similar conditions return within the postponement periods, activities will then be cancelled for the day and re-scheduled according to the rain date calendar.
- d) Games will be cancelled following a 1-hour continual period of heavy rain.
- e) Activities may proceed if the rain is considered light and variable, and the field conditions are safe.
- f) Should any venue or facility be closed or restricted in use, RSL will advise through e-mail and social media communications as soon as possible.
- g) Canceled days will push the entire schedule back one week (including playoffs), up to a maximum of two weeks. If playoffs cannot be held within 2wks of original date, the winners will be determined by regular season records. Individual game cancellations may be made up by adding additional games to a regular season date.

1.5 **Field / Venue Rules:** All rules and policies put in place by the venue must be respected and will be strictly enforced. (Such as, no pets, no smoking, no loud music, no alcohol, etc.)

- 1.6 **Discrimination:** RSL has a strict no-discrimination policy. If anyone feels they have been discriminated against for any reason they are to report it to league management immediately. Any person affiliated with an RSL event making racial, ethnic, religious, or sexual orientation slurs or actions are subject to disciplinary proceedings up to and including dismissal from the league.
- 1.7 **Bullying & Taunting:** Teasing, shouting, arguing, cheering against, complaining, name-calling, excessive swearing, verbally or physically abusing or intimidating players or game officials in any way (even if intended as a joke, but not received in that manner) will not be tolerating under any circumstances, regardless if it occurs in person, off venue, or on-line.
- a) Umpires shall be responsible for monitoring on field and sideline behavior and can issue warnings and make recommendations to the Game Referee for any disciplinary actions.
 - b) Game Referee may issue individual warnings / cards and if deemed that it is caused by multiple players on a team, he may provide a “team warnings”, followed by a forfeit on the current or future games upon the second occurrence.
 - c) Off the field behavior, including at social events, public spaces, or even on social media that project any players, teams or league officials in an aggressive or highly negative light will be considered the same as behavior on the field, and is subject to the same disciplinary policies and procedures.

1.8 **Disciplinary Policies:** Apply to any infraction listed or unlisted that is deemed unsportsmanlike or is contrary to the RSL core philosophy and principals.

- a) Game Referee, staff, or league officials may issue warnings.
- b) Only Game Referees and league officials can issue Disciplinary Cards at any time.
- c) **SOCCKER SPECIFIC:** Referee's may issue Blue Cards (for a 5 minute maximum temporary "cooling off period" sideline penalty), or an official Yellow Card depending on the level of infraction at their discretion.
- d) **SOCCKER SPECIFIC:** A second Yellow Card received in a single game constitutes an automatic Red Card, and the player is ejected from any further play that game-day. (Including any additional games, if scheduled, for the same day.)
- e) **SOCCKER SPECIFIC:** Four Yellow Cards received in a season will result in a one game-day suspension. The suspension will be immediately implemented on the next scheduled game-day. Should the suspension fall on a playoff game-day, then the player is suspended from playing for the remainder of the day, and any further playoff games for that season.
- f) Off-Field Red Cards may ALSO be issued for more serious violations and are not required to follow Yellow Cards nor be specific to on-field violations. (Example: Sideline or parking lot conduct violations)
- g) Off-Field Red Card "Levels" will be dependent on the severity of the violation as determined by league officials in consultation with Game and Head Referee.
 - Level 1 Violation: Removed from field of play for the day
 - Level 2 Violation: Removed from field of play for the day and suspended for the next two game days.
 - Level 3 Violation: Removed from field of play, suspended for the remainder of the season, including playoffs, and suspended from all RSL activities for 6 months.
 - Level 4 Violation: Removed from field of play and banned from all RSL activities indefinitely, including the remainder of the season and playoffs.
- h) After an Off-Field Red Card has been issued, any additional infraction within its 6-month window will constitute a charge of gross misconduct and will be subject to long-term suspension or permanent ejection from the league as determined by the GM and League Officials.
- i) Players receiving Off-Field Red Card suspensions or ejections may apply, in writing, for re-instatement following a 6-month waiting period.

1.9 Injury Policies: Safety is and will always be the number one priority for Rainbow Sports League and the following polices are in place for everyone's well-being.

- a) Injured players may be replaced or can exit a game at any time without penalties.
- b) Any injury that incapacitates a player, even if momentarily, will stop active play immediately at the Game Referee's discretion.
- c) Any injury to the head that causes any dizziness or unconsciousness must be reported immediately to the attending league officials who shall stop game play to assess the situation. Emergency medical officials will be called for any head related injuries.
- d) Any injured player that is actively bleeding must exit the field of play and cannot return until the bleeding has stopped or has been treated and covered.
- e) The RSL will have, on hand, at least one First Aid kit at every venue for use by its players and officials as needed.
- f) Injured players that required immediate medical attention must provide a doctor's note verifying that they are recovered and physically capable prior to returning to active play.

Section II – 7 v 7 Soccer Basics

(League may be split into two divisions, Competitive & Recreational – all rules apply to both divisions)

Part 2: Field & Equipment

2.1 **Field** - RSL is responsible for establishing a safe playing field under the following guidelines.

- a) **Terrain:** Natural or artificial turf.
- b) **Field size:** Standard “Half / width wide” Field, approximately 85’ x 40 yards. Fields are subject to availability and may be adjusted or substituted as necessary.
- c) **Markers:** Where possible, lines and/or markers will be placed surrounding the field in order to determine in / out of bounds and off-side lines.
- d) **Game Referee:** May stop play to correct any improper field set-up and at their discretion may reverse a call or institute a replay.
- e) **Protests:** Any protests regarding improper court set up will not be accepted.

2.2 **Equipment**

- a) **Goals:** Will be approximately 11’ x 6’, however are subject to availability and may be adjusted or substituted as necessary.
- b) **Ball:** Either official RSL provided soccer balls or similar shall be used in all games. They shall be a standard #5 size and weight inflated to 5.5 psi. All balls shall be checked by the referees and captains prior to the start of the game. Balls may be substituted by the referee, as necessary should balls leave the field of play.
- c) **Uniforms:** Teams shall wear a uniform, specified color, or bibs to distinguish themselves from the opposing team. In addition, goalies shall wear a unique shirt or uniform to distinguish themselves from their teammates. Players must have a visible number on the back of their jersey that corresponds to the printed sign in sheet and referee score cards.
- d) **Shoes:** Athletic shoes are required at all times. Only plastic cleats shall be permitted.
- e) **Shin Guards:** Mandatory at all times while playing.
- f) **Jewelry:** No jewelry, specifically including hoop or dangle earrings, necklaces, watches, and bracelets will be permitted. Only exception will be players wearing medical bracelets.

Part 3: Players

3.1 **Number of Players:** Seven (7) total players (6 plus goalie), per team, on the field at one time, maximum. Five (5) players minimum to avoid forfeit. One designated goalie, per team, is required at all times. Maximum Roster is 14 players per team.

3.2 **Player Eligibility:** All players must meet the following criteria:

- a) Must be 21 years or older
- b) Must have signed liability and conduct forms.
- c) Must have paid registration (or substitution) fees.
- d) All players must have a valid photo ID with them on game days, and are subject to verification at any time. Any player without an ID, shall be removed from the game.

- 3.3 **Team Captain:** Each team shall have one official “Captain” representing their team. This “Captain” may be substituted should the registered captain be absent and will be visually identified by an arm band or similar. Captain may not necessarily play, but must be registered with the team.
- 3.4 **All Players Participate:** Each player attending a game shall play. (no sit-outs) However, rotating in / substitutions are permitted.
- 3.5 **No Show:** Players who no-show, with no warning or contact, twice during a regular season are subject to removal and replacement by the team captain. Players removed from a roster for this reason are not eligible for refunds.
- 3.6 **Absenteeism:** Players who miss three or more regular season game days, regardless of the reason, are subject to removal and replacement by the team captain. Players removed from a roster for this reason are not eligible for refunds.
- 3.7 **Injury:** Players no longer able to play due to injury may apply for a pro-rated credit.
- 3.8 **Substitute “Guest” Players:** May play on any team under these restrictions:
- Regular season games only (not tournaments).
 - They must not be a registered member of any team in the league.
 - They must sign a waiver and pay a “per game” fee prior to playing.
 - The team has less than 14 players in attendance (Maximum full roster)
 - Each team may only have a maximum of two “guests” during any regular season game.
 - Any scores or games may be forfeited should a sub take the field prior to registering

Part 4: Teams

- 4.1 **Team Names & Colors:** While may be suggestive or double entendre may not be deemed offensive or disrespectful in any way. Team Colors will be referenced on all player and score cards. In order to preserve visual identification, teams should confirm team colors with RSL prior to ordering custom jerseys. Should two teams play with similar color jerseys, pinneys/bibs may be required at the discretion of the game referee and will be assigned through coin toss or similar random selection process.
- 4.2 **Team Events:** May organize chat rooms, social media accounts, practices, or events, however, the Rainbow Sports League code of conduct extends to those locations as well and must be followed in the same manner.

Section III Soccer Game Play

Part 5: Fundamental Rules

NOTE: Any rules not directly included herein, Referee shall follow FIFA Rules

- 5.1 **Divisions:** There may be two divisions, Competitive & Recreational, depending on entered teams. This is determined at the sole discretion of RSL Managers.
- 5.2 **Game Time:** Games shall be timed as two twenty-five minute halves, with a 5-minute half-time break. Games start at the scheduled time. Teams need to be ready to take the field at the refs whistle 5 mins PRIOR TO the scheduled game time. Time clock starts PROMPTLY AT GAME TIME, regardless of when play commences. The Referee shall attempt to provide 5 minute and 2 minute “warnings” ahead of the end of the half and the end of the game, but failure to do so shall not be cause for redress.
- 5.3 **Wins / Losses:** At the end of the time limit, the game in progress ends and the team with the highest score is awarded the win.
- 5.4 **Shortened Games:** Should a game be abandoned as per weather guidelines, or shortened for any other unforeseen circumstances, it shall be counted as a completed game once past the completion of the first 25-minute half. The highest score at that point is awarded the win. Otherwise, the game is abandoned and must be re-scheduled, to start over with no-scores held over.
- 5.5 **Tie Games:** There shall be tie games during regular season play.
- 5.6 **Warm-Ups:** Each team is entitled to a 5-min. warm-up PRIOR TO the scheduled game time.
- 5.7 **Season Standings:** Determined by W/L/T record. In case of a tie, it is broken by head-to-head records. In case of a further tie, it is broken by team with the higher points scored differential (among all teams). If still tied, it shall be broken by team with the less points scored against them (among all teams).
- 5.8 **Home & Visitor Assignments:** Will be determined by a coin toss, Rock-Paper-Scissors shoot out, or other random method provided by the Referee. Sides are switched after half-time.
- 5.9 **Referees:** Games will be officiated by one authorized individual, the Game Referee.
 - a) This Game Referee may be a professional or volunteer.
 - b.) Game Referee has jurisdiction of all calls, including game cancelation and final rulings are not subject to protest. All Game Referees are under the jurisdiction of the RSL Head Referee that has final authority over any rule discrepancies or decisions.

5.10 Forfeits & Late Penalty: (All times taken, or grace periods, count toward the first half-time)

- a) Clock will start at SCHEDULED TIME regardless of the actual game start.
- b) At the :05 TIME, if one team is “ready”, (as defined by having a minimum of 5 players in position on the field), and the other team is not “ready” (as defined above), the Referee may, at their discretion, implement a 1 goal late penalty against the “not ready” team.
- c) No late penalties shall be applied if both teams are not ready (as defined above) at or after the :05 clock time.
- d) At the :10 min mark, any team that is not in attendance or not ready (as defined above) shall forfeit the game. The winning team will receive a WIN and the forfeiting will receive a LOSS within LeagueApps – This equates to the winning team receiving 2 points and the losing (forfeiting) team having 1 point deducted for that game. The added or subtracted points count only towards that team’s Point Differential within LeagueApps.
- e) Should neither team be ready at the :10 min mark, then both teams shall forfeit and will each receive a 1-point deduction for that game.

5.11 In-Game Substitutions / Rotate outs: No Limit. Permitted for field players who can enter and leave as they please – but must inform game referee; however, goalkeeper substitutions can only be made when the ball is out of play and with a referee’s consent. Late Roster players may join the team on the side-line and sub in while game is in-play up. Guest players cannot join once play begins.

Part 6: Game Play**6.1 Goalie Rules:**

- a) Goalie cannot pick ball up from a teammate’s pass from their foot. (Violation of this rule results in an indirect from the spot of the foul)
- b) Goal kick is on the ground anywhere in penalty box.
- c) Goalie can kick or throw a ball past the mid-field line and kicks (only) CAN score.
- ~~d) No Punting or dropkicks. (Violation of this rule results in an indirect kick from mid-field)~~
- e) Goal keepers are restricted to using their hands only inside the penalty box.

6.2 Game & Play Start:

- a) The first whistle starts the game clock, and the game ending whistle stops the game clock. Time is taken by the referee on each field and is solely responsible for game times.
- b) Teams must be ready to enter the field at least 5 mins prior to game time.
- c) Opposing team waits outside center circle or 8 yards away
- d) Ball deemed in play once it has traveled the distance of its own circumference
- ~~e) Kicker shall not touch ball again before someone else touches it~~
- f) Ensuing kick-offs taken after goals scored and at start of second half.
- g) The kick-off does not need to travel forward first. It may be kicked in any direction.
- h) You CAN score directly from a kick-off.
- i) Ball must be 100% over the line before it will be considered an offensive kick.
- j) All balls can pass mid-field regardless of how it is done. There are no mid-field restrictions.

6.3 Ball In & Out of Play: Ball is out of play when it is fully outside of the field lines.

Throw-In Rules:

1. A kick-in can NOT be taken in place of a throw-in.
2. The ball is placed at the point it left the field or where the infraction occurred.
3. The throw-in must be taken within 6 seconds after a referee has placed it; if it is not, the throw-in is given to the opposing team.
4. The thrower cannot play the ball a second time until it has been played by another player; infringement of this rule entails an indirect free kick to the opposing team from the point of infringement.
5. Players on opposing team must be at least 10ft away from point of throw-in.
6. Cannot score directly from a throw-in.

6.4 Fouls and Misconduct free kicks: All at the game Referee's discretion. Awarded when a player intentionally commits any of the following offenses (penalty kicks awarded when infringement takes place in penalty area or at the discretion of the referee) Additional penalties, such as yellow or red cards may also be issued:

1. Kicking or attempting to kick an opponent
2. Tripping an opponent
3. Jumping on an opponent
4. Charging an opponent from behind, or in a violent or dangerous manner
5. Holding an opponent
6. Pushing an opponent
7. Excessive charging an opponent with shoulder while playing the ball (i.e., shoulder charge)
8. Sliding at an opponent (i.e., sliding tackles are not permitted). Sliding to save a ball, with no opponent playing the ball or in the immediate vicinity, is permitted.
9. Hands / Handling the ball (except goalkeeper, while in the goalie box)

6.5 Indirect free kicks: Awarded when any of the following offenses is committed:

1. Dangerous play (e.g. attempting to kick ball held by goalkeeper)
2. Obstruction
3. Charging the goalkeeper in the penalty area (i.e., goalkeeper charge)
4. Goalkeeper picks up or touches with his hands a kick-in or pass from a teammate.

6.6 Penalty Kicks: Shall be awarded if, in the referee's opinion, a scoring opportunity was nullified by an infraction. (The infraction does not automatically trigger a yellow or red card.)

1. Penalty kicks are DIRECT kicks taken from the point of designation.
2. The kicker is to aim at goal, with the intention of scoring.
3. All players (except goalkeeper and kicker) must be at least 5 yards behind the kicking player.

4. The kicker shall not play the ball a second time until it has been touched by another player. (If the goalkeeper touches or saves the ball then the kicker may attempt the rebound as long as keeper does not have ball in his/her possession)

6.7 Goals:

1. A goal is awarded when the ball, in its entirety, crosses the plane of the inside edge of the goal frame and goal line. If the goal has moved out of place, the goal determinant will be the goal line solely.
2. You CAN score a goal from behind the opposing side.
3. A goal CAN be scored at kick-off to start a game or half.

Part 7: Time Outs & Challenges

7.1 Team Captains: Only team captains may challenge calls. Team players arguing, questioning, or challenging any call are subject to disciplinary policies.

7.2 One Per Game: Captains get one official RULES challenge per game. A captain attempting to challenge additional RULES during a game will be penalized one point per attempted challenge. No time outs will be allowed in the last five minutes of timed matches (regardless of whether the referee has given such warning.) Challenge to “calls” that are not part of a RULES clarification will not be accepted.

7.3 Play & Time Stop: Play shall be stopped for a maximum of one-minute per challenged call. However the game clock will not be stopped or paused for a challenge.

7.4 Rules Questions & Clarifications: All rules questions and challenges should be accompanied by a copy of the rule-book and the rule being in question.

7.5 Intentional Delay of Game: Not permitted under any circumstances and may be subject to game penalties or disciplinary actions.

7.6 Time Outs: Each team is permitted one “Time Out” per match lasting no longer than one minute. However, the following are also permitted.

a) **Internal teaching moments:** Captains may request a brief pause in the game to answer players’ questions, to clarify rules, or to give instruction. These shall be requested between active plays, and then approved by the Game Referee. These shall last less than 30 seconds and the game clock with not be stopped.

b) **Injury Time:** Should an injury occur; the Game Referee may pause time in order to assess the situation or allow assistance to a player.

Section IV Soccer Playoff / Tournament Regulations

Part 8: Playoff / Tournament Details: *(Tournaments may be split into two divisions, Competitive & Recreational – all rules apply to both divisions)*

8.1 **Timing:** Following each regular season, and on special occasions, The Rainbow Sports League may host a special tournament under these guidelines.

8.2 **Rules:** Tournaments shall follow the same on-field rules and regulations as the regular season. See Sections 1-3. EXCEPTION: The length of games may be shortened up to a minimum of 25 mins, at the League's discretion, in order to fit into the necessary time constraints.

8.3 **Eligibility:** To play in the tournament, or playoffs each player must qualify under these guidelines,

a) **Play on the competing team:** Either as a regular roster player, a roster replacement player, or a sub, for at least 1/3 of the regular season games.

b) **Roster:** All players must be registered and, on the team's, official roster prior to the tournament.

c) **Roster Replacement Players:** After a season begins, if a player has been removed from a team's roster either by injury or by any other reason, that player may be replaced by another player added to the roster.

D1 The player "dropping off" of the roster does not receive a refund.

D2 The replacement player must pay the full, regular rate, registration fee, minus any substitution fees paid, had they played previously on the same team during that season.

* **Tournament Guest Players (Subs):** There are no on-site / last-minute guest players / subs during the season ending playoffs or tournaments that don't fit ALL OF THE ABOVE criteria.

8.4 **Seeding:** Tournament seeds will be based on regular season (or pool play) placings. Every team makes the playoffs – single elimination standard bracket format.

Ties are broken (for seeding purposes):

A1) First by direct Game-to-Game record.

A2) Then, if the same, by greatest point differential (among all teams).

A3) Then, if the same, by smallest points scored against (among all teams).

A4) Then, if the same, by coin toss.

8.5 Game Tie Breakers: All games play until a winner is declared.

- 1) One 5-minute Golden Goal period followed by 3 PK's from the top of the Goal Box.
- 2) If still tied then sudden death PK's. (Players who were on the field shoot first then we move on to the rest of the roster. If still tied once everyone on the team has shot then players may take their 2nd shot in whatever order the captain prefers)

8.6 Tournament Bracket: Utilize standard single elimination formats as found on www.interbasket.net

- a) Highest seed plays lowest seed.
- b) Second highest plays second lowest seed.
- c) Third highest plays third lowest, etc...
- d) Bye games are assigned using the standard bracket formats
- e) Game TIMES are by league management assignments and are not determined by seeding location. IE: Higher seeded teams are not guaranteed a specific time or order in which the games are held.

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