

# Merced United League Rules

## **MISSION STATEMENT:**

To promote and encourage adult soccer participation in a friendly, positive, safe, and family-oriented environment, while supporting the growth and sustainability of youth soccer programs through volunteer service and financial contributions.

## **MODIFICATIONS TO LAWS OF THE GAME:**

*The most current Laws of the Game apply as stated by The International Football Association Board (IFAB) on **THEIFAB.COM**, except for the modifications listed below: **Additional Co-Ed Modifications Listed in Red***

### Law 01 - The Field of Play:

Games will be played on a USSF u12 field; however, local conditions may mandate use of non- standard or sub-optimal fields.

### Law 02 - The Ball:

The home team is responsible for providing a minimum of three (3) regulation size 5 game balls for each match. All game balls must be available and match-ready at kickoff.

A match may begin with fewer than three (3) game balls with the consent of both teams and the referee.

If, at any time, no playable game ball is available due to loss or damage, the home team shall have two (2) minutes, as determined by the referee, to place a replacement ball into play.

If a replacement ball is not provided within the two-minute window, or if repeat violations occur, the match shall be terminated and recorded as a 5-0 loss to the home team, unless the score differential at the time the match is called is greater, in which case the existing score shall stand.

### Law 03 - The Players:

A match will consist of a maximum of eight (8) players per team. The match will not start or continue if either team has fewer than 5 players.

- Maximum five (5) male/female players
- Minimum one (1) male/female player.

Rosters may consist of an infinite number of players, but must have no fewer than ten (10) players per team. Unlimited Substitution are allowed.

### Law 05:

Dual system of referees will be used for all league competition matches. Three-person system of referees may be used in semi-finals and/or finals.

### Law 07 – The Duration of a Match:

Games will consist of two (2) twenty-five (25) minute halves. Due to the tight scheduling of matches, referees are instructed to start the first half exactly at game time and start the second half exactly five (5) minutes after the end of the first half. Stoppage time will only be added to the end of a half for extenuating circumstances.

### Law 10 – Determining the Outcome of a Match:

Semi-final matches will go directly to penalties after a drawn match. Championship matches will proceed with two (2) five (5) minute periods of extra time before going to penalties after a drawn match.

**Female goals scored into the opponent's goal will count as two (2) points. All "Own goals" will count as 1 point.**  
**Penalty kicks scored during a game by a female will count as two points, but not during Penalty Kicks during Semi-Finals or Finals after a Tied Game. (Note: Unintentional deflections are not considered own goals, this includes a ball deflected by a female defender)**

## Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct:

Sliding will result in a yellow card to the penalized player and an indirect free kick to the opposing team if no contact is made with the opposing player. A direct free kick will be awarded (as well as a yellow/red card) if contact is made with an opponent. Preventing a goal while sliding will be considered Denying an Obvious Goal Scoring Opportunity and will result in a red card and a direct kick.

If any player while in his/her own penalty area, kicks/throws the ball into their attacking half without first making contact with his/her own half's ground or another player, the referee will award an indirect free kick to the opposing team at the mark closest to where the ball crossed the center line.

- Male players may not challenge, obstruct, shadow, or otherwise apply pressure to female players in possession of the ball outside of either penalty area. A minimum ten (10) yard radius shall be maintained at all times.
- For purposes of enforcement, a violation occurs when a male player intentionally closes space, mirrors movement, applies pressure, or impedes the progress of a female player in possession within the ten (10) yard radius. Incidental proximity without active pressure does not constitute a violation.
- Referees shall use their judgment to determine intent and effect and may issue verbal warnings, award an indirect free kick, and/or apply disciplinary sanctions for repeated or deliberate violations.

## SEASONS:

Merced United League will run as many seasons as possible per year, with playoffs and finals at the end of each season.

## LEAGUES:

Merced United League intends to offer the following leagues: 8v8 & 11v11 for men and women, 35+ Men's, and coed. Other leagues may be established upon verified interest and field availability

## FEES:

Fees shall be \$80.00 per player and can be paid in two equal weekly increments. On week five the fee shall be \$50. After week five, any new player is to pay only \$40.00 upon signing up. Depending on the number of teams that sign up, teams will play six to seven games during the regular season.

A team shall have at least ten players fully paid as of week five. If ten players are not paid fully as of week five, then on week six the total fee difference shall be paid before any wristbands are distributed to any player on that team.

## ROSTER:

Active rosters will be kept on the fields. All players are required to fill out an Adult Player Registration Form once, and present a valid government issued ID before every game. Players not registered, and those that have not checked in, that are found to be playing will be the cause of forfeit for the team in question.

## PLAYERS, TEAMS, & TRANSFERS:

Players, upon registration, are tied to the team they first played on for the entire season. Players cannot play on multiple teams within the same league. Players are allowed to play in different leagues during the same season, provided they meet the age requirements and complete payments for each league. For example, players may participate in a Men's League and a Co-Ed League and/or Men's 35+, but not on two teams within the same league.

Players may transfer once per season from their current team to another team on or before the 4th weekend of play, subject to a \$20 transfer fee. Only one transfer from a team and only one to a team is allowed.

Players found to be playing on multiple teams in the same league without an approved transfer will result in a forfeit for the second team that the player played for.

## YELLOW & RED CARDS:

A sent off player is immediately ejected from the field and technical area and is to not be on the field or technical area until the suspension is served. Red cards will carry a minimum one (1) game suspension. A \$50.00 mandatory administrative fine to Merced United will be levied for all red card violations and must be paid before the player may play again. All game suspension and/or league expulsion decisions are final.

Any Red Card suspension received in any league is also carried over to any other league the player may be concurrently rostered in. A player will miss a minimum of one game in each league.

Two red cards in one season may result in permanent disqualification from playing in Merced United League.

At the moment a red card is issued, the number of players left must remain for the totality of the game. (Example: there are seven players in the game and one gets a red card, that team will then have a maximum of six players for the rest of the game, regardless if more players show up after the red card is issued.)

The following are the minimum game suspensions for Send Offs:

SFP	Serious Foul Play	2 Game minimum, possible lifetime ban
VC	Violent Conduct	2 Game minimum, possible lifetime ban
S	Spitting or Biting	2 Game minimum, possible lifetime ban
DOGSO	Denying Obvious Goal Scoring Opportunity	1 game minimum
AL	Offensive, Insulting, or Abusive Language / Gestures	1 game minimum, possible lifetime ban
2CT	Receiving a Second Caution	1 game minimum

**Yellow Cards:** A player who receives a yellow card must immediately leave the field of play. The team will play a player short for 4 minutes. If subsequent players receive a yellow card before any previously yellow carded player(s) has come back on the field, the team continues to play down that amount of players.

At the moment a yellow card is issued, the number of players left must remain until the yellow carded player serves his/her 4 minutes. Example: There are seven players in the game and one gets a yellow card, that team will then have a maximum of six players until the yellow carded player serves his/her 4 minutes. Regardless if more players show up after the yellow card is issued.

If a team reaches a total of less than five players, the game will result in a win for the opposing team with the score being the score when the game ended, or 5-0, whichever goal difference is greater.

#### **TEAM LEAGUE DIVISION PLACEMENT:**

The Merced United League will utilize promotion/relegation. The Champion and Finalist of the lower league divisions will be promoted to the next league division, and the bottom two teams in the standings in any league division will be relegated to the next lower league division. Teams cannot refuse promotion or relegation. Merced United League reserves the right to change, alter, or combine league divisions at any time for scheduling or competitive purposes.

New teams are placed in the lowest league division, unless there is clear evidence that the team is strong to start at a higher league division.

#### **SCHEDULE CHANGES:**

Once a season schedule is published, no changes will be made unless an unexpected logistical problem arises, or Acts of God. If this is the case, all managers will be notified of the change(s). Weather and field availability permitting, all teams will play their full season of games, plus playoffs.

#### **START TIMES:**

If a team does not have the minimum number of players on the field ready to play at the 5 minute mark of the scheduled match time, the score is an automatic 1-0 score for the team that is on the field and has the minimum number of players. The team on the field will get a 5-0 forfeit win at the 15 minute mark if the other team does not field a team with the minimum number of players.

A match is considered official once the 1st half has been completed. If play must be halted due to Acts of God after the start of play, but before the first half is complete, the scheduler will make every attempt to reschedule the shortened game. However, if field, weather, or other situations preclude timely rescheduling, the game may not be replayed. If this occurs, the score at the time the game was stopped will be used as the final score of the game.

#### **FORFEITS:**

All forfeits will result in a \$100 mandatory administrative fine to Merced United. Of this amount, \$50.00 will go to the team that did not forfeit. If the forfeit was deliberate to affect the score/outcome of standings, Merced United and/or its representative(s) will deal with the situation for a common sense decision. At the second forfeit of the season, the team may be removed from league play. The forfeiting team will also be assessed a one (1) point deduction in the standings.

#### **PLAYER CONDUCT:**

Players are responsible for fair, sportsmanlike and polite behavior at all times. No fighting will be tolerated. Foul, vile or vulgar language will not be used on the field either toward other players, referees, or fans. Referees are instructed to card offenders. Any fight will result in an immediate Red Card and its repercussions, to include suspensions and fines. All other individuals who get involved in a mass confrontation will be also penalized and suspended and/or fined. Games will be terminated if any non-team members enter the field at any time, with the team the non-team member(s) is/are part of losing the game as a forfeit.

Referee abuse will not be tolerated. Abuse includes the following acts committed upon a referee: hitting, kicking, punching, kicking/throwing object(s), choking, spitting at, or on, grabbing, stepping on, running into a referee, and damaging the referee's uniform or personal property. Referee abuse is also defined as a verbal attack or physical approach that implies or threatens physical harm to a referee or the referee's property or equipment. Verbal threats are remarks that carry the implied

or direct threat of physical harm. Threats such as: "I'll get you after the game" or "You won't get out of here in one piece" shall be deemed referee abuse. Commission of any of the preceding acts will carry a 6 month to lifetime ban, with all decisions being final.

**REFEREES:**

All game decisions made by the referees are final. No appeals will be accepted pertaining to decisions by the referee.

**REFUNDS:**

There shall be no refunds once paid. The exception to refunds (full or partial) shall be if a league does not start and/or dissolves.

**CHECK-IN PROCEDURE:**

All players are to check in 30 minutes before their game with a picture government ID before every game to be provided a game bracelet. Teams will have different colored bracelets. Players cannot play without wearing an assigned colored bracelet.

**UNDERAGE PLAYERS:**

Teams are permitted a maximum of two underage male players on their roster, but the players must:

- a. Be 17 at the time of play.
- b. Have parent/guardian sign waiver on the registration form in the presence of a league representative.

Coed teams are permitted a maximum of five underage female players on their roster, but the players must meet the standards above 1 a. & b.

**UNIFORMS:**

All teams are required to wear matching uniforms in order to play. Shorts and socks do not necessarily need to be of the same brand name or style but have to be of the same color (or very similar). Matching pinnies are acceptable while uniforms come in for a team. A referee shall not allow any player from the field of play until the player is wearing team matching colors. If player refuses to change, then that player shall not be allowed to play.

**SCORING/ POINT CALCULATIONS:**

Games played will be awarded points based on the following system:

Win	-	3 points for winning team
Tie	-	1 point for both teams
Loss	-	0 points to the losing team

**POINT TIE-BREAKERS:**

In case of point ties at the end of the season, the tie will be broken in this order:

1. Goal Differential
2. Head to Head winner
3. Most Goals For
4. Least Goals Against
5. Least amount of red-cards received during the season
6. Coin toss

If there is any disagreement with regards to the above rules, it will be the Merced United League representatives that shall have the final word and responsibility to interpret such rules to the parties affected. **The decision is final.**