**League Regulations**

An ADULT soccer year consists of seasons:

*Winter 2* • *Spring* • *Summer*• *Fall 1* • *Winter 1*

A ***season*** is generally an eight week period of league competition in which 8 games are played.

These playing rules and regulations apply in full for the “indoor” portion of the playing year, which includes all seasons except summer.

***League/Division Structure***

Leagues are formed based on the following groups.

***Gender***

• *Co-Ed (Male and Female players on the same team)*

***Competition Level***

• *Recreational (Div 4)* • *Intermediate (Div 2 and/or 3)* • *Competitive (Div 1)*

***Division by Skill/Ability Level***

Each league will contain teams of varying levels of skill and experience; therefore,

Divisions may be formed to group teams by estimated playing ability.

***Gender***

Co-ed (Male/Female) teams are recommended to include a minimum of women (3) women

on their roster. Coed teams must have **at least two women** on the field. If only one

Woman is present at game time she cannot be replaced by a male player.

**Adult Coed Roster Guidelines**

*The purpose of the coed roster guidelines is to fairly and more accurately gauge the skill*

*levels of the various coed divisions (1-4). In the spirit of these guidelines, team managers*

*should do their best to register and roster their teams, per game, according to the*

*following guidelines. The EPIC Coed Director reserves the right to move teams up or down divisions*

*based upon team performance and our best judgment of a team’s skill level and overall mentality.*

**Division Guidelines:**

**Division 1** (Competitive/Elite) – This division is open to all players. This division is geared towards the college and high school players, but welcomes those who want to play at a more competitive pace and against very good competition . Players & teams possessing this similar mindset are encouraged to play in this division. This division plays with **3 male & 2 female field players** plus a goalkeeper. This division plays on Tuesday evening at the Family First Sports Park Field House and will have one (1) Referee per game.  Each team is responsible for paying $12 cash to one of the Referees prior to kick-off.

**Division 1 Player Eligibility** - A team's roster is compiled of: any player at least 16 years of age, male or female, that wishes to compete at the highest skill level possible.

**Division 2** (Intermediate) - This Division is much more competitive than either the CoEd Rec or CoEd Modified Divisions, but the overall team skill level is not at the point to compete with teams in the CoEd Elite Division. The ideal player is adequately skilled to above-average skill and wants to play at a more competitive pace than the CoEd Modified Division offers. This Division will also be a good place for those who used to play at a high level, but haven't played in a few years and want to ease back into the game and for those who are coming off injury and are not yet able to play at the level they played before injury. This division plays with **3 male & 2 female field players** plus a goalkeeper. This division plays on Tuesday evenings at the Family First Sports Park Field House and will have **one referee** per game.  Each team is responsible for paying one of the referee $12 cash prior to kick-off.

**Division 2 Player Eligibility** - A team's roster is compiled of: players at least 18 years of age, **no more than** **two (2) Division 1 male players and two (2) Division 1 female players**. The goalkeeper may have played at any divisional level. **Players over the age of thirty (30) are exempt from rostering eligibility** (these players do not count against the division 1 or 2 player count).

**Division 3** (Modified) – This Division is a slight step up from the CoEd Rec Division. This league is designed to be competitive in nature without losing the recreational aspect of the game. The ideal player is minimally skilled to adequate skill and has a desire to play competitive and with better players. Teams in this division will ideally have better teamwork ability than those in the CoEd Rec Division, but their skill level is not at the point to compete with teams in the CoEd Intermediate Division. This division plays with 3 male & 2 female field players plus a goalkeeper. This division plays on Tuesday evenings at the Family First Sports Park Field House and will have one (1) Referee per game.  Referee fees of $12 payable in cash are due prior to kickoff of the game.

**Division 3 Player Eligibility** - A team's roster is compiled of: players at least 18 years of age **no more than one (1) Division 1 male player and two (2) Division 1 females.** The goalkeeper may have played at any divisional level.  Players 30 years of age and older are exempt from divisional eligibility guidelines.

**Division 4** (Recreational) – This division is recreational and is ideally an entry level to organized soccer or for those who haven't played in years and want to restart without having to go "full speed". The ideal player is inexperienced but has at least a basic understanding of the game or has some experience and wants to play for fun, rather than competition. Players who are more skilled in nature that have the mentality of using team play to help elevate the play of others are also welcome in this division. Players and teams in this Division should have the mindset of playing for fun, playing at a low-competition level and with low aggression. Players with the "just win" mindset, or those who are going to challenge the referee's every call, will not be a good fit in this Division (See Modified Division). This division plays with 3 male & 2 female field players plus a goalkeeper. This division plays on Tuesday evenings at the Family First Sports Park Field House and will have one (1) Referee per game.  Referee fees of $12 per game (cash) are to be paid to the referee prior to kickoff of each game.

**Division 4 Player Eligibility** - A team's roster is compiled of: players at least **18 years of age**, NO Division 1 male players or goalkeepers may participate in this league.  Each team may have no more than one (1) Division 2 female player & 1 Division 2 male player.  Each team's roster may contain no more than two (2) division 3 players.  There is no age exemption for division 1 & 2 player counts.  This is intended to be a recreational level league.

**Eligibility Note** – Eligibility is determined by the highest league the rostered player participates in. For example, if a player participates in a division 2 team and a division 3 team, they are considered a “division 2 player”.

If a division states both “teams may contain no more than x Division 2 players and Y Division 3 players, the team may add x+y and roster that many players from the lower divisional classification. Specifically speaking, if a division 4 team’s roster contains no division two players (they are permitted one male and one female division 2 player, they may choose to roster up to four division 3 players.

If a division contains an “age exemption”, the player who falls under such an exemption does not count towards the divisional eligibility rules.

***Rosters/Waivers and Player Eligibility Information***

Team Managers must complete their team’s roster by having each player on their team complete the online membership via League Apps, and roster onto their respective team of each participating season. The League Apps roster will be synched with the official USASA roster by the League Admin. The USASA roster serves as the official roster for playing purposes. All players must be rostered on their registered team **before** they can step on the field of play.

In order to appear on the official USASA roster, the player must provide photo identification and a $25 registration fee. This registration is valid for the entire calendar year.

We emphasize the importance of planning ahead by making sure your roster contains enough players to cover for injuries, vacations, etc. Teams are permitted up to 15 players on the roster. Teams are encouraged to sign up possible emergency substitutes who might be able play if problems arise, even if they don’t plan on playing.

The use of any ineligible or undocumented players in a match will result in the forfeiture of the match, and possibly the suspension of up to one year to the coach and/or Team Manager responsible, and a suspension of up to one year to the offending player. Similar penalties apply to any situation in which a player or coach is found to have supplied the EPIC Coed staff with fraudulent or incorrect information, or has failed to provide EPIC with proper documentation.

Please understand that the burden of ensuring teams are not playing undocumented or illegal players falls solely on the team captain/manager as defined in League Apps. If there is an undocumented or illegal player fielded, the team manager will be responsible for any fines or sanctions levied upon their team.

An adult player may NOT be registered on more than one team in the same division. Players may not register with more than three teams per season on a given playing night.

Players who are banned or placed in “bad standing” with the Erie Soccer League or any USASA competition are not eligible for this league.

***Eligibility Protests and Inquiries***

Protests regarding the eligibility of an opposing team’s players must be presented to the EPIC League staff before the end of the match. Play will not be stopped in order to deal with the protest. It will be handled either before the match, during halftime, or after the match.

League staff will then investigate the protest and determine the appropriate action. In an adult match, league staff may ask the player in question to present valid picture identification. If the player fails to demonstrate (to the satisfaction of league staff) that he/she is documented on the team’s official roster, the referee shall note this on their match report and the player is expelled from the match. The EPIC disciplinary board will determine the appropriate disciplinary sanction on the player and the team. Team managers are responsible for ensuring that all their players are both eligible for the division and documented (registered).

Teams found to field an ineligible player will be fined a minimum of $25. The team is also expected to pay for the player’s USASA registration ($25). Payment of the fine and registration is expected before the team will be permitted to take the field for their next scheduled game.

***Match Results***

Points for match results are awarded as follows:

*• 3 points for a victory*

*• 1 point for a draw*

*• 0 points for a loss*

*• $60 fine is assessed for forfeits in which an opponent does not show up to a game, or fails to provide at least 48 hours’ notice of forfeiture to the EPIC Coed Division Director. Teams that forfeit/no-show are automatically ineligible to win their respective division.*

***Forfeits***

If a team cannot field the minimum number of players (indicated in Rule 3), after 6 minutes past the start of the clock, the match is declared a ”no-show” forfeit (3-nil result). If both teams “no show,” the official result shall be 0-0. In the event of a “no-show” forfeit, players from teams scheduled for that timeslot may scrimmage or practice for the remainder of the scheduled time. The referees will be excused from the match.

If a match is abandoned or terminated due to any reason, including a team having fallen below the minimum number of required players, use of illegal players, or misconduct associated with a team, EPIC may, at its discretion, declare the match a forfeit and penalize the guilty team accordingly.

If a team forfeits, a $60 fine is assessed to the team managers Registration Account. The $60 fine must be paid before the team will be permitted to play their next match and shall be distributed as follows:

* $30 will go to the team who showed up for the match with the required number of players. This reimburses them for their portion of the field rental fee for that match.
* $24 goes to the referee to compensate them for the referee fees they are entitled to for showing up for their assigned match.
* $6 goes into the league’s general prize fund.

**Determination of League/Division Winner**

In the event that teams in the same league/division finish the season tied on points, their places will be determined by statistical superiority in the following criteria, in this order:

**If the playing division is on a “balanced” schedule:**

1. Goal Differential (PSD),
2. Goals scored (PS),
3. Goals conceded,
4. Head to head (aggregate head to head score if teams have played each other more than once),
5. If in a playoff division – two five minute halves will be played to break a tie, followed by 3v3 run up penalty kicks, followed by 1v1 until tie is broken.

**If the playing division is on an “unbalanced schedule”:**

1. Head to Head (unless greater than two teams are tied in the standings)
2. Goal Differential (PSD)
3. Goals Scored (PS)
4. Goals conceded
5. Aggregate score amongst all tied teams (at the top of the table in the standings)

***Protests of Match Results***

Protests of a match result based on technical issues or on matters of rules and regulations must be reported by the team’s coach to the EPIC Coed Director.

This protest must be submitted by email within 24 hours after the conclusion of the match.

Referee decisions will not be a valid basis on which to protest match results.

***Complaints***

**The team’s captain is the only individual authorized to submit complaints to EPIC staff on behalf of a team regarding the decisions of the match referee or the conduct of the opposing team or facility staff.**

Any questions or complaints must be presented **in writing** by the team’s captain to EPIC staff no later than 48 hours after the conclusion of the match.

If anyone other than the coach (including players, coaches, family or friends of players, and other associated spectators) approaches management with complaints will be directed to submit the complaint through their team’s captain.

Absolutely no complaints *by any individual* may be directed toward referees or staff; such activity may be penalized by expulsion from the facility or league and further disciplinary sanctions to the associated team.

**Rules of Play**

**Laws of the Game**

EPIC coed league’s rules of play for indoor soccer are based on FIFA’s Laws of the Game, which apply except where otherwise stated in the Rules of Play.

References to Laws (i.e., Law 15) refer to the corresponding item in the Laws of the Game. References to Rules (i.e., Rule 15) refer to the corresponding item in the EPIC Rules of Play.

Certain relevant sections of the Laws, as well as the United States Soccer Federation’s Advice to Referees on the Laws of the Game, have been cited herein for clarification or instructional purposes. The remaining text of the Laws has been omitted for the sake of brevity.

Additional information on the Laws of the Game and U.S. referee procedures are available at http://www.ussoccer.com

Note: Wherever an asterisk (\*) is seen, this represents the following qualification:

“Unless covered by the special circumstances mentioned in Rule 8 - The Start and Restart of Play.”

**1 - The Field of Play**

The field of play is marked with lines, which belong to the areas of which they are boundaries.



**2 - The Ball**

The EPIC Soccer League will provide each field with one match ball of appropriate quality, material, size and pressure for the given competition.

The choice of ball and any adjustment to its pressure is subject to the discretion of the referee.

The referee shall secure the match ball upon conclusion of the match. Likewise, the referee shall present the match ball prior to kickoff.

In the event the league has not furnished a suitable match ball, the home team shall be responsible for providing a match ball.

**3 - The Number of Players**

A match may not begin or continue if either team consists of fewer than the minimum number of players.

A team will be penalized for allowing more than the maximum number of players on the field at one time. The maximum number of players is 6 (five field players – of which a minimum of two players must be of the female gender plus a gender-neutral goalkeeper). The minimum number of players is three field players (of which, at least one field player must be female) plus a gender neutral goalkeeper. Teams may not field more than three male field players at any point in time.

***Unlimited Substitution***

There is no limit to the number of times a player may enter and exit the match.

Substitutions may be made at any time, except:

*When play has been stopped by the referee to sanction misconduct*

*At the taking of a penalty kick*

*At any other time when so instructed by the referee*

***Substitution Procedure***

To replace a player with a substitute, the following conditions must be observed:

**The substitute enters the field of play:**

Only after the player being replaced has entered the “white line area” near the bench from within his own bench area

Through the doors, and not by leaping over the dasher boards

All substitutes are subject to the authority and jurisdiction of the referee, whether called upon to play or not.

***Use of Doors during Substitutions***

The doors may be opened only at times when doing so does not endanger players or interfere with active play.

If any likelihood exists of active play moving toward the general area of the door, players and team personnel must refrain from opening it.

Jumping over the boards is not permitted.

***Changing Goalkeepers***

**To change goalkeepers, the following conditions must be observed:**

Substituting the goalkeeper may be done “on the fly” just as any other player enters the field of play. Players do not have to notify the official of a goalie change.

***Infringements***

A direct free kick from the point where the ball is located when play is stopped is awarded when a team is guilty of allowing more than the maximum number of players onto the field, or for any other violations of Law 3.

Interference in play caused by incorrect use of the doors may be punished as dangerous play at the spot of the interference.

**4 - The Player’s Equipment**

***Safety***

Players may not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous to himself or another player, with the exception of medical alert tags, fit bits, and any jewellery that is deemed unsafe in the opinion of the referee.

**Any type of hard or plaster cast, or rigid medical implement** such as a metal knee brace**, must be brought to the attention of the referee before the match** begins and be approved before the player can participate. Players wearing casts or splints of any kind must display to the referee the written consent of a doctor to play.

Metal braces, such as those worn on the knee, must be covered with a purpose manufactured sleeve or other material that offers adequate protection against cuts or other injuries that may occur due to contact with it.

**No headwear, caps, or metal clips or other dangerous hair-control implements** may be worn unless medically required and approved in advance by league management.

Players with open wounds or visible blood on their body or uniform will not be permitted to participate until the wound is properly covered and/or treated and the uniform changed to the satisfaction of the referee.

***Basic Equipment***

The basic compulsory equipment of a player is:

Shirt of a color that matches their teammates,

Shirt of alternate color to be worn in case of color conflicts with opponent,

Shorts,

Stockings,

Shin guards (must provide a reasonable degree of protection),

Shoes (flat soled or turf shoes…NO cleats or turf shoes with long studs).

***4.1 - Color***

The shirt’s **color** must match that of all his teammates, except for that of the goalkeeper. If a team’s color is “blue”, the players must all wear blue. Teams may not pass off “black” or “red” for blue. Players may be asked to leave the field of play to don a shirt of their team’s color before they are permitted to return to the field.

The goalkeeper must wear colors that distinguish him from the other players and the

Referee.

***4.2 -Numbers***

Jersey numbers are not required. However, the team captain is responsible for providing the game official the first and last name of any teammate that receives a yellow or red card. This information shall be provided at the end of the match (or upon the referee’s request). Failure to provide accurate information will result in forfeiture and/or suspension from league play.

In the event the team captain is not present for the match, the team shall designate and identify a team captain prior to the start of the match.

**4.3 – Alternate-Color Shirt**

In the event of a color conflict between opponents, and before the match begins, the home team is responsible for changing into their alternate shirts.

**4.4 – Shorts**

Long pants are permitted as long as shin guards are worn.

**4.5 – Stockings**

Must be long enough to cover the shin guards entirely.

**4.6 – Shin Guards**

Must be covered entirely by the stockings.

Must be purpose-manufactured of a suitable material (rubber, plastic, etc.)

Must, in the opinion of the referee, provide a reasonable degree of protection.

**4.7 – shoes**

Shoes must be field appropriate. Shoes with hard plastic or metal cleats are not permitted. Shoes, with multiple small rubber nubs (turf shoes) are acceptable. Flat bottom shoes are acceptable. Turf shoes with “long studs” or “cleats” are not permitted.

**5 – The Referee**

**The Authority of the referee**

Each match is controlled by one or two referees who have the full authority to enforce league rules, regulations, and policies in connection with the match to which they have been appointed.

Amongst other duties, the referee will:

Ensure that no unauthorized persons enter the field of play,

Take action against players, team officials, or associated individuals (i.e. spectators) who fail to conduct themselves in a responsible manner; and may, at his or her discretion, expel them from the field of play, the bench area, the stands, or the property from which league play is conducted.

**The number of referees**

For the purposes of simplification, all mention of referees herein shall assume a single referee, although the statements shall apply equally to both referees if a 2-referee crew is present.

**Decisions of the referee**

The referee does not stop play for doubtful or trifling offences.

The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play are final. The referee may change a decision, though, upon realizing that it is incorrect, providing that he has not already restarted play.

The referee’s record of the score and time – not the scoreboard – is official.

**Application of the “Advantage Clause”**

The referee shall refrain from penalizing offences when doing so would result in an advantage being gained by the offending team. **There is, however, no advantage when Serious Foul Play has occurred**.

**7 – Duration of the Match**

Entering the bench area and field of play

Incoming teams may not enter the bench area before a match until the outgoing teams have been permitted two full minutes to vacate the same areas after their match has ended. Outgoing teams should exit down the side-lines and behind the East goals. Incoming teams should enter through the doors located in the middle of the facility.

**Periods of play**

The match lasts two equal periods of 24 minutes. At the scheduled start time and at halftime, the referee shall set the clock to 26 minutes. Teams are expected to be ready to kick off by the 24 minute mark.

There is no allowance for added time. However, time will be extended at the end of a half to permit the taking of a penalty kick or free kick.

**Extra Time**

“Regular season” matches are permitted to end in a draw.

Playoffs and finals may not end in a draw.

At the end of regular time, if a playoff or final ends in a draw the clock will be immediately set to 7 minutes. Teams will have two minutes of rest and play begins at the five minute mark. Play will continue for the duration of 5 minutes. There is no “golden goal”.

If at the end of five minutes there is not a winner, a best of three shootout will take place in the following format:

1. Both teams will gather at midfield.
2. Each team will identify three shooters – no less than one of the three shooters will be a female player
3. Shooters will stand separate from their respective teams.
4. One by one, shooters come to the center mark. Upon referee signal, the shooter begins dribbling from the center mark towards goal. The shooter must provide continuous momentum forward (towards the goal he/she is attacking).
5. The ball is considered dead if the shooter ceases in forward momentum, if a goal is scored, if the keeper saves the shot (and kills the momentum of the ball), or if the ball hits any of the walls.

**Clarification**: The ball is considered dead and thus “no goal” if the ball is shot wide, banking off the wall, into the goalkeeper, and into the back of the net. However, if the ball hits the “frame” of the goal, deflects outward, into the goalkeeper, and into the back of the net – this would be considered a goal. The referee shall determine whether the ball strikes the wall or the frame of the goal and shall have final say regarding whether the goal has been scored or not in such instances.

1. If after three shooters the score is still tied, each team shall declare a new shooter one by one until a tie is broken at the end of the shooting round.
2. A female shooter shall be required to take a minimum of one out of every three shots per team. The original shooters may not shoot again until four additional players have shot. Once seven players have shot, the order of shooters will restart and the score will be evaluated at the end of each round until there is a winner.

8 – The start and Restart of Play

**Kickoff**

The visiting team takes the kick-off to start the match.

The following procedure is to be observed:

All players are in their own half of the field.

The opponents of the team taking the kick-off are outside of the center circle until the ball is in play,

The ball is stationary on the center mark,

The referee gives a signal to start play,

The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves in any direction,

A goal is scored directly from the kick-off.

If a team is not ready to begin the match or cannot field the minimum number of required players after six minutes have passed since the scheduled kickoff time of the match, the team forfeits the match (see league regulations).

**Measurements / Distances**

Opponents must be at least 3 yards away from the ball at the taking of free kicks, kick-ins, goal kicks, corner kicks, and kick-offs \*

**\*Special Circumstances**

A free kick awarded to the defending team inside its own penalty area is taken from any point within the penalty area.

An indirect-offence committed by the defending team inside its penalty area results in a direct free kick to the attacking team taken from the point on the penalty arc that is furthest from the goal (the “top” of the penalty arc).

If play is temporarily stopped while the ball is within the penalty area, play shall be restarted with a dropped ball at the nearest point outside the penalty area from where the ball was when play was stopped.

9 – Ball in and out of play

The ball is out of play when:

Play has been stopped by the referee,

The entire width of the ball has crossed the entire width of the goal line whether in the ground or in the air,

The ball has struck the netting

The ball has touched the ceiling netting

The ball has left the field of play

**Ball played into the ceiling net**

It is an offence to play the ball directly into the ceiling net.

Play is restarted with a direct free kick for the opponent from the restart mark on the side of the field from which the ball was last played.

At no time will play be restarted using the center spot when dealing with ceiling balls.

10 – Method of scoring

A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the entire width of the goal line, between the goal posts and under the crossbar; providing that there was no infringement of the rules previously committed by the team scoring the goal.

A goal may be scored via the goalkeeper throwing the ball directly into the opponent’s goal.

11 – Offside

Law 11 is not applied.

12 – Fouls and Misconduct

**Direct Offences (Direct Free Kick)\***

A direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following direct-offences in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless, or using excessive force:

Pushes an opponent

Charges an opponent

Jumps at an opponent

Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent

Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent

Trips or attempts to trip an opponent

Endangers an opponent who is outside the white lines on the field or in the corner of the fields by attempting to challenge aggressively or competitively for the ball.

**A direct free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following direct-offences:**

Tackles an opponent to gain possession of the ball, making contact with the opponent before touching the ball

Causes an opponent to collide with the dasher boards,

Holds an opponent with any part of his body,

Holds an opponent against the dasher boards in any manner,

Spits in any manner,

Handles the ball deliberately (except for the goalkeeper within his own penalty area)

Places hands on opponent in an attempt to win the ball while opponent is facing dasher boards outside the white lines

**Indirect Offences (Direct Free Kick)\***

**A direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player, in the opinion of the referee, commits any of the following indirect offences:**

Deliberately impedes the progress of an opponent (while not attempting to play ball or not being within playing distance of the ball)

Prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands,

Plays in a dangerous manner,

**Attempts** a sliding tackle in the presence of an opponent.

The goalkeeper is permitted, when within his own penalty area, to slide with his body sideways or diagonally in the presence of an opponent, but only as necessary to play the ball with his hands. He may not slide-tackle feet-first for the ball. He is permitted to attempt to save the ball with his feet when his body is already on the ground, if presented with a fast-moving shot.

**A direct free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper, inside his own penalty area, commits any of the following indirect offences**

Takes longer than six seconds to release the ball from his hands after gaining possession of it,

Touches the ball again with his hands after it has been released from his possession and has not touched any other player,

Touches the ball with his hands after it has been intentionally kicked to him by a teammate.

A direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team if, in the opinion of the referee a substitute:

Interferes with play by leaning with their arms or body over the dasher boards,

Touches a ball before it has completely crossed out of the field of play,

Interferes with play or endangers players by opening a door on the dasher boards when active play is moving towards or is likely to move towards that area.

12.1 – Disciplinary Sanctions

**Cautionable Offences (Yellow Card)**

**A player is shown the yellow card and cautioned, and must leave the field to serve a two minute timed penalty if he commits any of the following offences:**

1. Unsporting behaviour,
2. Shows dissent to the referee by word or action,
3. Persistently infringes EPIC rules,
4. Delays the restart of play,
5. Fails to respect the required distance when play is restarted with a corner kick or free kick,
6. Enters or re-enters the field of play incorrectly, or without the referee’s permission when serving a time-penalty,
7. Deliberately leaves the field of play in order to avoid punishment,
8. Deliberately and purposely causes an opponent to collide with the dasher boards,
9. Attempts to damage or deface EPIC property (including the field and property that EPIC leases)
10. Deliberately makes a sliding challenge on a player with the ball.

**A player is shown the red card and expelled from the match if he commits any of the following offences (in the opinion of the referee):**

1. Is guilty of serious foul play
2. Is guilty of violent conduct,
3. Spits at an opponent or any other person
4. Denies an opponent a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity \* by deliberately handling the ball (this does not apply to a goalkeeper within his own penalty area)
5. Denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity \* to an opponent moving towards the player’s goal by an offence punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick,
6. Uses offensive, insulting, or abusive language or gestures,
7. Receives a second caution in the same match,
8. Leaves the bench area to get involved in a fight or altercation on the field or in the opposing team’s bench area
9. Deliberately damages property for which EPIC is responsible.

An adult player or team official who has been expelled must leave the bench area before the match may continue. The expelled player may not remain behind the goal nor may he be permitted to go into the stands nor may he stand at the entryway to the field.

Delay will result in the issuance of a two minute bench penalty for delaying restart of play. If the player being sent off is on the team who is winning the game, the clock will be stopped if the player is deemed to take an excessive amount of time in exiting the field. If the player sent off is on the team that is losing, the clock will continue to run. Team managers should encourage the ejected player to leave promptly and without incident.

If a league official is called on to assist an ejected player to leave promptly and without incident, a fine may be issued by the league in addition to any other sanctions that may be appropriate.

**12.2 – Time Penalties**

**Yellow Card**

A player must leave the field of play upon receipt of a yellow card. Said player is not eligible to return to the field of play for a period of two minutes, as timed by the referee. The referee will indicate to the player that he is eligible to return.

During this two minute period, the team that received the yellow card must play one player short. They may return to “full strength” in the event that the entire two minute penalty has been served or in the event that the opposing team scores a goal against the carded and shorthanded team.

**Procedure:**

The player provides his first and last name to the referee, as they appear on the roster.

The player is shown the appropriate card(s) by the referee.

The referee notifies the player and his team of the time-penalty issued.

The player leaves the field\*

The penalty time begins upon restart of play,

The team plays for two minutes with one player fewer than the number present on the field at the time when the offense occurred.

The player does not return to the field until two minutes of playing time have elapsed or a goal is scored against the team serving the penalty, and a signal has been given by the referee.

The referee gives a signal when the penalty time has expired.

\*A male teammate may serve a time penalty in place of a cautioned goalkeeper.

**4 Minute Penalty for Expulsion Offence (Red Card)**

An expulsion (red card) offence is punished by the issuance of a 4 minute timed penalty. The commission of a second cautionable offence is punished with a 2 minute penalty (not the 4 minute penalty compulsory for other expulsion offences unless simultaneous bookable offences occur (see “Accumulated Bookable Offences” below)

**Procedure:**

The player provides his first and last name as shown on the team’s roster,

The player is shown the appropriate card(s) by the referee,

The referee notifies the player and his team of the time penalty issued,

The player leaves the field and the property,

The player’s team must play for four minutes with one player fewer than the number present on the field at the time when the offence occurred.

The penalty time begins when play is restarted

The referee gives a signal when the penalty time has expired.

**Accumulated Bookable Offences**

If a player commits a second cautionable offence, he shall be shown the yellow card, then shown the red card and expelled from the match. His team must serve a two minute time penalty.

**12.3 – Blue Card**

The blue card is reserved for misconduct in indoor soccer. In the hierarchy of cards, it is the lowest level of punishment in the book. Yellow card is the next escalation and a red card is the ultimate ejection from the game. There are a number of offenses that can warrant a blue card, but it is ultimately a two minute penalty timeout that allows the player’s team who it is issued to the ability not to have to play a player down for a period of two minutes, or until a goal has been scored, whichever comes first.

Offenses can include:

Spitting on the indoor turf

Persistent infringement

Dissent by word or action

Encroachment

Too many players on the field, or illegal substitution

Minor physical foul that the referee must punish to control the game

Referees in indoor soccer have discretion to determine where misconduct falls between a blue or yellow card.

Most facilities outline mandatory reasons for misconduct, which are sometimes referred to as timed penalties. A blue card is a two minute minor penalty where the offender sits out and their team can still play full sided, or until a goal is scored against them, or the penalty time runs out. Yellow cards are considered a double minor with a two minute timed penalty. If a goal is scored after two minutes, the penalty is cancelled, otherwise the entire two minutes is to be served. Red cards usually require the player to leave the match area and a timed five minute penalty is served in full by a team member.

The blue card is not intended to punish physical board checking, profanity, or assault. These are critical events to eliminate from the sport and punish with an ejection.

**Procedure for blue card penalty:**

The player provides his first and last name as shown on the team’s roster,

The player is shown the appropriate (blue) card(s) by the referee,

The referee notifies the player and the team that the player is to sit out for two minutes.

The penalty time begins upon restart of play.

The timed penalty is cleared by a goal.

The team is not required to play with one fewer player than when the offence occurred.

13 – Free Kicks

All opponents must be at least three (3) yards away from the ball until it is kicked. Failure to yield the required distance is a cautionable offence.

All free kicks inside the attacking team’s white line and on the restart mark shall be taken by a female player.

14 – Penalty Kick

At the taking of a penalty kick, all players except for the goalkeeper and kicker must stand “behind” the white line that contains the “restart mark”.

Additional time is allowed for a penalty kick to be taken at the end of each half or at the end of periods of extra time in competitions when extra time is played.

Penalty kicks may be taken by either a male or female player.

15 – Kick-In

A kick in is taken, instead of a throw in, to restart a match after the ball has touched the netting above the dasher boards or left the field of play.

A goal may be scored directly from a kick-in.

**Procedure:**

 The ball is placed no further than the white lines perpendicular to the dasher boards in line with the spot where the ball went out of play.

All opponents must remain at least 3 yards away from the ball until it is kicked.

The ball is kicked.

The kicker may not touch the ball again until it has touched another player.

In all other aspects, the kick-in functions in the same manner as the throw-in described in Law 15.

**16 – Goal Kick**

A goal kick may be taken from any point inside the penalty area.

The ball is in play once it is kicked and is outside of the penalty area.

A goal may be scored directly from a goal kick, but not into the kicker’s own goal.

A goalkeeper may touch the ball to the ground and throw the ball in lieu of a goal kick

17 – Corner Kick

All opponents must be at least three (3) yards away from the ball until it is kicked. Failure to yield the required distance is a cautionable offence.

**Rule Clarifications**

**5 – The referee**

When a crew of two referees work a match, both referees shall function as a team with equal authority shared between the two. The referees shall take up opposite positions at halftime.

**Decisions of the referee**

**Doubtful** means there is doubt as to whether or not an offence has occurred. In this situation, the referee errs in favour of allowing play to continue rather than stopping play.

**Trifling** means that an offence did occur but has had an insignificant effect on the balance of play or the safety of players. For example, a player might deliberately attempt to handle the ball, but in doing so, touch it only so slightly with the tip of his finger that the ball’s path is not changed. In this situation, the referee allows play to continue and does not penalize the offence, because doing so would introduce an unnecessary stoppage in play.

**Application of the “Advantage” Clause**

The referee shall make such decisions within the context of the match, considering such factors as the experience level of the players, and not apply the “advantage” clause blindly in situations when play is becoming violent or reckless, or when doing so might confuse novice players unfamiliar with the concept of “advantage”.

**11 – Fouls and Misconduct**

Tackling

The fact the player has played the ball in the course of a tackle is irrelevant if the player has carelessly, recklessly, or with excessive force, committed any prohibited actions in the course of his challenge.

It is entirely possible for a player to be guilty of a foul even though he made contact with the ball before making contact with the opponent if the player’s challenge was unfair or dangerous in nature.

Example – A player tackles the ball away from an opponent from behind. His foot first touches the ball, but then follows through after touching the ball by kicking into the ankles of the opponent. The player may be judged as guilty of a foul because his challenge was careless or reckless, even though he “got the ball”.

**Goalkeeper Possession**

The goalkeeper is considered to be in possession of the ball by **controlling** it with **any part** of his hands or arms. Bouncing the ball is not considered release of possession.

Due to the nature of indoor soccer and the high frequency of shots in close proximity to goalkeepers, officials will err on the side of caution when enforcing goalkeeper possession rules.

**Challenges against a goalkeeper**

It is not an offence in and of itself to challenge for the ball when the goalkeeper is attempting to handle it unless the player carelessly, recklessly, or with excessive force commits any of the prohibited actions. For example, the referee may permit a controlled poke at the ball with the foot but will not tolerate a reckless attempt to kick it with power at the same time that the goalkeeper is reaching for it. The latter shall be sanctioned as either dangerous play or kicking an opponent.

**Dangerous Play**

Dangerous play occurs when a player commits an act that either puts an opponent or himself in unfair danger, or when a player unfairly denies the opponent a chance to play the ball by putting himself in a dangerous situation. Some acts, such as attempting a high kick or playing the ball while on the ground are not in and of themselves illegal. These acts are considered dangerous play only when, in the opinion of the referee, they cause unfair danger or unfairly prevent an opponent from playing the ball.

The referee only stops play when an offence that fits these criteria has occurred.

As a guideline – if a player plays the ball while on the ground and is within two yards of an opponent, the act will be considered dangerous and is a foul.

**Slide Tackle and Playing from the ground**

A sliding tackle is generally considered to be an attempt to play the ball that involves launching of the body forward, foot-first, and has contact with the ground or any part of the body other than the feet. Simply lunging toward the ball from a static position is not considered sliding and/or playing from the ground.

The decision of whether a situation involving a player on the ground is considered dangerous is made solely at the discretion of the referee. If a player is whistled for making a deliberate sliding challenge on a player with the ball, a yellow card (at minimum) must be awarded to the offending player. A player judged (by the referee) to have slipped in the challenge rather than purposely sliding into a challenge does not “require” a card unless the referee determines such a card is necessary and appropriate.

**Impeding the progress of an opponent (“Obstruction”)**

Impeding the progress of an opponent is the official term given to the offence formerly known as “obstruction”.

The wording for the name of this offence helps distinguish the legal act of shielding the ball from an opponent using his body, which is not an offence when a player is within playing distance of the ball, from the illegal act of using one’s body to merely block an opponent from getting to the ball without actually attempting to play or control it. Only the latter is considered to be “impeding the progress of an opponent”.

It is important for players and spectators to distinguish the difference between shield and impeding, and to understand that a player within playing distance of the ball (usually within a few yards) is permitted to shield the ball as long as he does not commit an offence (i.e. holding or pushing an opponent) in doing so.

**Amount of time permitted to restart play**

Players are expected to restart play within six seconds. The referee will begin counting and if six seconds have been reached, the referee will blow his whistle and award a free kick to the opposing team.

**Placing hands upon the dasher boards**

Merely allowing one’s hands to make contact with the dasher boards is not, in and of itself, an offence. The referee shall only consider this an offence if the player in question gains an advantage by doing so by using the arms to block the opponent from challenging for the ball, or by using the boards to gain unfair leverage against an opponent.

The declaration by a player that he was placing his hands on the boards merely in anticipation of a challenge from an opponent is irrelevant. But in situations where a player places his hands on the boards as a necessary reflex for self-protection when moving quickly towards them, the referee shall only consider this an offence if they continue to maintain contact with the boards in an unfair manner.

**Limited Contact outside white lines and corners of the field**

A “limited contact” rule is officially in place for the 2017-18 playing season for the areas of the field designated as outside of the white lines and in the corners of the field.

This is not a "no contact rule", but merely a guideline to encourage players to show caution toward their opponents near the boards and in the corners.

Officials will be asked to call a direct kick foul for any competitive or aggressive contact outside the white lines and in the corners. In some situations, officials will be allowed to stop play and warn players that play too aggressively near the boards. The proper restart for a stoppage of play where no foul occurs is a drop-ball just inside the white lines at the spot nearest to where the ball was in play prior to the stoppage of play.

**11.1 – Disciplinary Sanctions**

The two minute penalty will occur for all cautionable offences. There is no referee discretion in the application of these penalties.

By default, a red card results in missing one subsequent match for the team in which the red card was earned. In each instance, the red card will be reviewed by league staff and the league disciplinary committee to determine if additional sanctions (not limited to but including a fine, suspension, or timed ban) are appropriate. The league disciplinary board will consist of the division’s commissioner, the EPIC Director, the referee assignor, and up to three disinterested team representatives as “at large” members of the playing division (disinterested members are defined as those who play in the division but were not involved in the match as a player or match official). Any member of the disciplinary board who directly participated in the match in question shall excuse themselves from voting and participating in the hearing. The board shall use the Erie Soccer League Discipline table for suspensions, fines, and bans as a reference when determining any type of sanctions.

Players will have 48 hours in order to appeal any sanction or red card. The appeal must be completed in writing and sent by email to mike@eriesoccer.com.

**12 – Free kick**

Direct or Indirect Free Kick?

All restarts in the field house are taken as direct kicks. However, many players ask the referee whether the restart is a direct or indirect free kick.

While there are both direct and indirect offences, all restarts are direct in nature.

**The technical area**

The team’s section of the bench area is considered the technical area. Only registered players and team managers are permitted in the playing area and bench.

Team managers must inform the referee, if requested, of the first and last name of all players, and vouch for the accuracy of this information under penalty of disciplinary sanctions.

Players and team personnel in the bench area must not lean on the dasher boards during play, as this can cause doors to disengage dangerously if collided into by an active player. Players must also keep hands and arms inside the bench area and not hanging over the dasher boards where they can interfere with play.

Designated coaches or managers may not enter the field of play without permission of the referee. In cases of injuries to players, the referee will assess the situation and will only summon team personnel onto the field if, in his opinion, they are needed to provide medical treatment or to assist players in leaving the field.