

Metro Senior Women's Soccer League



Senior A Rules and Regulations March 2023

Preamble

The expressed league philosophy is that the League is dedicated to promoting women's soccer at a level that balances sporting behaviour with healthy competition. The league encourages and expects all members to support this philosophy through their interactions with opponents, coaches, officials, and all other members of the league. One of the express purposes of the league is to select teams to represent the league at the annual Soccer Nova Scotia Senior A provincial championships.

1. Registration – Players and Team Officials

1. All players and officials of teams participating in the League shall register each year with Soccer Nova Scotia.
2. No player shall be deemed registered for participation nor shall she compete in any game of the League unless her name and current year Soccer Nova Scotia registration number has been acknowledged as received by the league
 - i. no later than 5:00 p.m. on the day immediately preceding the day of participation, or
 - ii. where the day immediately preceding the day of participation falls on a Saturday, Sunday or holiday, no later than 5:00 p.m. on the last business day immediately preceding the day of participation.
3. Players, once registered with the League Registrar, may not be de-registered nor deleted from the roster of the participating team after the first league game or June 1, whichever comes first. (See Rule 2.3.)
4. Each team participating in the League must register not less than 14 players and no more than 27 players.
5. All players who register through a team or club participating in the League are bound to that team or club, unless transferred or released, until the end of the League's current playing season.

2. Team Registration

1. All teams applying for membership to the League must submit annually \$100.00, no later than March 1 with the prescribed application document for team registration. This fee is non-refundable and shall be applied to each team's registration fees. Failure to comply with this rule will cause the team to forfeit their spot in the league and the team will be required to apply for membership in similar fashion as a new team the following year.
2. New teams can apply for membership (in accordance with Rule 2.1) which shall be granted upon approval and acceptance of the application for team registration by the League's existing membership. New teams, when applying for membership, must submit a list of 14 names of players that will be on that team, their birth dates and the team they played on in the prior season.
3. For the purposes of this Rule, a team is a returning team (not a new team) if the team has at least 9 returning players. If a returning team does not have the minimum number of players returning, they may apply for an exception to the rule which will be decided by a vote of the membership at the March League meeting.
4. For the purpose of this Rule, a returning player for a team is a player who was either
 - i. registered with the team the previous season; or
 - ii. registered with the team in another season and has not registered with any other League team in the interim.

5. If a team registered in the previous season splits and both teams re-apply for membership, and meet the criteria for a returning team, the returning team will be placed in the division where the pre-split team competed. The returning team is the team with:
 - i. The most returning players from the previous season; failing which
 - ii. The most returning players from players who have previously registered with the team; failing which
 - iii. The most returning players who have been with the team the longest.
6. Participating teams must submit to the League Registrar a minimum of 14 registered players' names and include the balance of league fees, no later than April 15 of the playing season. The list of names must identify whether the players are returning players (as defined in this Rule).
7. Any player who is 17 years of age before January 1 of the playing season is eligible to register on a team participating in the League. A team may register a maximum of 3 underage players provided they were 15 years of age before January 1 of the playing season.
8. Teams may apply for 1 weekend off by submitting their request in writing to the League executive by April 1 of the playing year. The Executive will make all effort to ensure that requests are accommodated as field availability and scheduling constraints permit.
9. The League will cap the number of participating teams at 30, with opportunity review this number on an annual basis at the March League meeting.

3. Transfer/Movement of Players

1. The League must be notified of any transfer of a player to a team in the League, including a transfer between teams in the League, no later than 48 hours before the player plays with the team they are transferred to.
2. Transfers will not be permitted after the date set by Soccer Nova Scotia.
3. Any player registered with any club or team which ceases to operate and which has been declared defunct by the League shall be deemed released by that team or club and may transfer to any other team or club willing to accept her, prior to the deadlines set for Soccer Nova Scotia.
4. Teams are permitted to call up players who are at least 17 years old from U17 A or B, U21, U35 (7 a-side) and Senior B teams - i.e. teams for which Senior A is a higher level, as defined in the Soccer Nova Scotia Competitions Handbook with the exception that team registered in the Jones Division may call up from U17AAA teams. Players called up are permitted to play an unrestricted number of League games with a team from the same club in the League or five (5) games with a team from a different club. Once a player has played up to a team, they are tied to that team and may not be called up to any other team in the League. A player is deemed to have played in the game if her name is recorded on the game sheet, unless it is also noted that she is listed for suspension purposes only.
5. For greater certainty, guest players (between teams of the same playing level/age) as permitted under Soccer Nova Scotia policies and procedures are only permitted for Fair Play Cup games.
6. Any registered player who plays in a League game for a team other than the one registered without a temporary permit, as required by Soccer Nova Scotia, shall be deemed an ineligible player and the team using such a player and each game the player participates in will be recorded as a 0-0 loss.
7. Players are permitted to be called up for regular league games and Fair Play Cup games only, not play-off or crossover games.
8. The League will immediately suspend, for the duration of the applicable playing season:
 - i. any player found guilty of contravening the player registration rules as set out in Rules 1, 2 and 3. Any games that the offending player has participated in, and her

- team has won, will be recorded as a 0 - 0 loss.
 - ii. the coach and manager of the team who are found guilty of playing players not properly registered in this league as set out in Rules 1, 2 and 3.
9. Any team that has had a player, coach or manager suspended under Rule 3.8 forfeits their spot in the league and the team will be required to apply for membership in the League in a similar fashion as a new team and outline why they should be readmitted to the League.

4. Uniforms

1. Each team participating in the League shall have two sets of uniforms (jerseys and socks) in two distinct combinations of colours. One combination of colours shall be designated "home" colours.
2. In the event of a clash in colours, the away team shall change into its alternate colour.
3. All players on a team, with the exception of the goalkeeper, shall wear the same colour jersey, shorts and socks. Each jersey shall have a different number on the back. Pinnies are not acceptable.

5. Games

1. Each team shall complete their portion of the League game sheet for each game. Only players whose names appear on the game sheet may take part in the game. Names may not be added to the game sheet after the game sheet has been handed to the referee.
2. Game sheets must be given to the referee by or at half time.
3. Five (5) minutes before the commencement of kick-off, the home team shall provide the referee with a suitable game ball.
4. Substitutions may be made freely throughout the game at the referee's discretion. The player entering the field of play may not enter until a player on her team has exited the field of play entirely. Substitutions must be made at the centre stripe and are limited to a maximum of five (5) players at a time.
5. Each game shall consist of two (2) halves of 45 minutes each.
6. Each team may dress a maximum of 27 players per game.
7. Adequate corner poles and flags shall be provided, and be in place, by the home team prior to the commencement of the game. Each team is responsible for putting up one net. The referee shall determine the fitness of the field of play. Protests regarding the fitness of the field of play will not be heard.

6. Protests

1. All protests shall be dealt with by the League Discipline Committee.
2. All protests shall be submitted in writing to the League office no later than twenty-four (24) hours after the end of a game being protested, Sunday and legal holidays excepted.
3. Protests must be accompanied by a protest fee of \$100.00. In the event that the protest is upheld, the protest fee shall be refunded.
4. Upon receipt of a protest, the League office shall within twenty-four (24) hours send a copy of the protest to the party protested against, via email and confirm receipt of the protest to the protesting party. Both parties shall have the right to attend a hearing, either may waive the right in writing, in which case the protest will be dealt with in their absence.
5. Any team directly involved in a protest who is not satisfied with the decision may appeal to the Soccer Nova Scotia Discipline and Appeals Committee.
6. Where a team has been found, as a result of a protest, to have played an ineligible player,

the game shall be awarded to their opponents with a score of 0–0.

7. Discipline

1. Any inquiries or requests for information made by a member of a discipline committee or the Executive into a matter under the rules or the Code must be responded to within 48 hours.
2. Each discipline hearing held by the League shall be held in accordance with the following.
 - i. A Discipline Committee, which shall consist of at least three (3) members, one of whom shall be Chairman, and one of whom shall act as Recording Secretary, shall hear all charges at a properly convened discipline hearing.
 - ii. Those that are required to attend a discipline hearing shall include: the accused person or club, or that person or club's representative.
 - iii. All those accused of an offence which will require their presence at a discipline hearing shall be given three (3) days' notice, in writing, Saturday, Sunday and legal holidays excepted, of the place, time and date of the hearing.
 - iv. All requests for the postponement of a hearing must be submitted in writing to the League and must be received by the League no later than forty-eight (48) hours prior to the date of that hearing stating the reason for requesting the postponement.
 - v. Failure to appear at a discipline hearing following notification as required by Rule 7.2(d) shall result in the suspension of the accused until such time as she requests, in writing, another hearing, and appears at the subsequent hearing.
 - vi. Those who request another hearing in accordance with Rule 7.2(e) shall remit, together with the request, a fee of \$100.00 in the form of a certified cheque or money order made payable to the League. This fee is non-refundable.
3. A discipline committee hearing will be conducted in accordance with the procedure for discipline as set out in the Soccer Nova Scotia Policies and Procedures.
4. The League will publish a Code of Conduct and Discipline Code with minimum penalties to be imposed upon any person, club or team official who has been found guilty of an offence by the Discipline Committee.
5. All players, coaches, managers, other team officials, clubs and spectators must abide by the League's Code of Conduct and Discipline Code.
6. The terms of any suspension imposed by the Discipline Committee shall be made at the discretion of the Committee.
7. Any suspensions imposed shall be served continuously from the date of imposition, which shall be stated, until an expiry date, which shall also be stated.
8. The Discipline Committee may, at its discretion, take action against any club whose players, officials or spectators have been found guilty of misconduct and/or violence toward anyone present at a game.
9. Appeals from any decision made by the Discipline Committee may be made to the Discipline and Appeals Committee of Soccer Nova Scotia, pursuant to the procedure as established by Soccer Nova Scotia for its Discipline and Appeals Committed.

8. League Standings

1. For all divisions, a team's standing within a division shall be determined by a points system based on three (3) points for a win, one (1) for a draw and zero (0) points for a loss.

2. Where two or more teams are tied in the standings of a division at the conclusion of the season, the higher standing shall be awarded to:
 - i. The team with the best winning record of the games between the tied teams; failing which
 - ii. The team with the overall best goal differential (by deducting goals against from goals for) shall be awarded the higher standing; failing which
 - iii. The team with the overall most goals for; failing which
 - iv. The teams with the overall least goals allowed; failing which
- v. The team with the best goal difference in games involving the tied teams; failing which
- vi. The team with the most goals for in games involving the tied teams.
3. A minimum of four teams must be registered in a division in any year in order for the League to operate that division.
4. The winning team, or in the event of a tie the home team, must submit game score to the League by entering the score online in addition to any discipline applied (i.e.: yellow and red cards AND must e-mail or deliver the game sheet and any other applicable documentation required by the League to the League by 5 pm on the third day after the day the game was played. Failure to adhere to this rule will result in a \$50 fine after the 5 pm deadline and forfeiture to the other team in that game if the game sheet is not received within 1 week from the date of the game. No goals will be assigned for any forfeiture, winning points will be applied only.

9. Game Officials

1. All games shall have scheduled a referee and two (2) assistant referees who shall be appointed by the League's referee assigner and who shall be registered with Soccer Nova Scotia.
2. Referees shall use the yellow and red card system to caution or dismiss players or team officials from the game. The yellow or red card system shall be supplemented by the Soccer Nova Scotia automatic discipline system which shall also govern cautions and ejections during League games.
3. The balance of suspensions partially served during the current playing season shall be served at the start of the following playing season. For greater certainty in the application of this Rule, "playing season" is defined to include all League games.
4. Referee's fees for all non-regular season games (Fair Play Cup games, Divisional Crossover games, Provincial playoff and league semi finals and Championship game) will be cost shared equally between the two teams involved in that particular game.

10. Administrative Procedures

1. Minutes shall be kept of all meetings of the League and its Committees and they shall be submitted for ratification to the next relevant meeting.
2. Copies of minutes of each committee meeting shall be submitted promptly to that committee's members and to the Board of Directors.
3. Copies of minutes of Board of Directors meetings shall be submitted to Soccer Nova Scotia.
4. All persons appointed to represent the League shall be entitled to claim expenses incurred in their duties, at rates established from time to time by the League.
5. Members of the Board and staff shall be entitled to a refund of all expenses incurred during the performance of their duties.

6. Committee chairman and committee members shall be entitled to a refund of all expenses incurred as members of a committee when those expenses have been incurred directly as a result of committee work.
7. Claims for reimbursement shall be submitted promptly on forms supplied by the League.
8. All expenses must be supported by appropriate receipts.

11. League Communications

1. All correspondence and communications made with respect to League matters will be made through the office of the appropriate officer of the League. It is expressly recognized that communications between Soccer Nova Scotia and members of the League concerning League matters will be made through the League's Executive Committee.

12. Reschedules

1. Only regular League games may be rescheduled.
2. Teams may be permitted to reschedule games if all of the following conditions are met:
 - i. the non-requesting team agrees to the reschedule;
 - ii. the requesting team pays any required rescheduling fee;
 - iii. the League schedulers are able to find an alternate date, time and field for the game;
 - iv. Both teams agree to a date, time and field from the available options provided by the League schedulers.
2. Any reschedule must take place within 2 weeks of the originally scheduled game, and if it cannot be rescheduled in this time-period, the requesting team must either:
 - i. play the game as originally scheduled; or
 - ii. accept a forfeit of the game.
3. Once a game is rescheduled, it is considered to be part of the League's schedule and may only be rescheduled in accordance with this rule, except that the 2-week deadline from the original game still applies.

13. Adoption of rule changes

1. Any amendment or changes to the FIFA Laws of the Game are adopted by Metropolitan Senior Women's Soccer League.

14. Playing Divisions

1. To establish the playing divisions, the league set up will be comprised of three divisions: Jones Division; DeWolfe Division; Ritchie Division, based on the standings of the previous season (including relegation) for returning teams.
2. New teams accepted to the league will enter the Ritchie Division; however, a new team may apply for an exception to this rule and enter at a higher division (DeWolfe or Jones) upon approval of the membership.
3. If the number of teams admitted for the season is not divisible by 3, then the Jones Division carries the highest number of teams and then the DeWolfe Division, unless otherwise voted on by the League membership to accommodate an exceptional circumstance.

15. Relegation

1. At the end of the playing season, teams will move up and down as follows:
 - a. the last place team in the Jones Division will move down to the DeWolfe Division, and the first-place team in the DeWolfe Division will move up to the Jones Division

- b. the last place team in the DeWolfe Division will move down to the Ritchie Division and the first-place team in the Ritchie Division will move up to the DeWolfe Division.
 - c. For the purpose of the standings under 13.1, last place teams that move down under 13.2 will be ranked above the remaining teams in the Division they move to and first place teams that move up will be ranked below the remaining teams in the division they move to.
2. A promoted / relegated team may request an exception to rule 13.4(a) and 13.4(b) to remain in their current division for the following playing season. The exception will be voted on by the membership at the March League meeting.

16. Divisional Championship play-offs

1. Each division will have a final divisional play-off from among the top 4 teams in the division, as determined by the final divisional standings under Rule 8, as follows:
 - i. Game 1: 1st place vs 4th place
 - ii. Game 2: 2nd place vs 3rd place
 - iii. Final: winner of game 1 vs winner of game 2
2. All divisional playoff games are played to a winner. If, at the end of regulation time, a game is tied, there shall be a 10-minute overtime (2 five-minute halves - substitutions only at the end of the first overtime half). If at the end of overtime, the game remains tied then FIFA penalty shot rules will determine the winner.
3. The divisional championship finals will be played at a time and date when no other league teams are playing games.

17. Provincial Representatives Playoffs

1. Any team that wishes to participate in Provincials must notify the League Executive by July 15 of their intention to opt in to the Provincial representative playoffs and by doing so commit to participating in Provincials if they qualify. Teams that do not opt in by this deadline will not be included in the playoffs and will be excluded from the standings used to determine the "top" teams under Rule 15.2.
2. The provincial representatives from the League will be determined by a playoff between the following teams in each division, based on the final divisional standings under Rule 8, that have opted in to the playoffs under Rule 15.1: the top 5 teams from the Jones Division the top 2 teams from the DeWolfe Division the top team from the Ritchie Division.
3. If fewer than the number of teams specified in Rule 15.2 have opted in to the Provincial representative playoffs, the vacant spot will be filled by:
 - i. the next highest ranked team from the Jones Division that has opted in, and if there is no other team that has opted in from that division, then
 - ii. the next highest ranked team from the DeWolfe Division that has opted in, and if there is no other team that has opted in from that division, then
 - a. the next highest ranked team from the Ritchie Division that has opted in.
4. If fewer than a total of 8 teams have opted into the Provincial representative playoffs, the playoffs will include all teams that have opted in, and be in a format as determined by the League Executive.
5. All Provincial Representatives Play-off games are played to a winner. If, at the end of regulation time, a game is tied, there shall be a 10 minute overtime (2 five minute halves - substitutions only at the end of the first overtime half). If at the end of overtime, the game remains tied then FIFA penalty shot rules will determine the winner.

6. Provincial Representatives Playoffs – Round 1: The 8 teams qualifying for the Provincial Representative Playoffs shall be ranked from 1-8, in accordance with the final divisional standings under Rule 8, with Jones teams being ranked highest, then DeWolfe, then Ritchie. and shall play a preliminary round as follows:
 - i. Game 1) Rank 1 versus Rank 8
 - ii. Game 2) Rank 2 versus Rank 7
 - iii. Game 3) Rank 3 versus Rank 6
 - iv. Game 4) Rank 4 versus Rank 5
7. Provincial Representatives Playoffs – Round 2: Round 2 of the playoffs shall continue as follows:
 - i. Game 5) Winner Game 1 versus Winner Game 4: Winner = Metro 1
 - ii. Game 6) Winner Game 2 versus Winner Game 3: Winner = Metro 2
 - iii. Provincial Representatives Playoffs – Round 3
8. Round 3 of the playoffs shall continue as follows:
 - i. Game 7) Loser Game 5 versus Loser
 - ii. Game 6: Winner = Metro 3; Loser = Metro 4

18. Fair Play Cup

1. Any team that does not qualify for the League Championship play-offs, or the Provincial Representatives play-offs, may opt to enter into the Fair Play Cup competition and is guaranteed at least 3 games. Each team entered will play 3 games before further games are added to the schedule. A team must play a minimum of 3 games in order to be eligible to win the Cup.
2. Any team that is eliminated from the play-offs may elect to enter in the Fair Play Cup competition at any time by notifying the League and will be guaranteed at least 1 game.
3. Opponents will be randomly drawn from the total number of teams entered in the Cup. However, if after the first round a team is drawn to play against a team they have already played during Cup competition, the next team drawn that they have not yet played will be their opponents. Consideration will be given to the level of teams matched up so that there is not a large disparity in level, if possible.
4. Standings for the Fair Play Cup will be based on points, awarded in accordance with the following table, and divided by the number of games played by the team:

Action	Points
Win	2
Tie	1
Red Cards	-3
Yellow Cards	-1
Forfeit	-3
Fair Play Points (based on Fair Play criteria)	Max 5 per game
Failing to report fair play points each game	-5*
Failing to nominate fair play player each game	-5*

* Plus the team forfeits any points awarded to them by the other team.)

5. For each game in the Cup competition, each team is required to report the fair play points for their opposing team to the League, in the manner determined by the League Executive.
6. If 2 or more teams end up with the same amount of points in the standings, the higher standing will be decided:

- i. by deducting a point for every red or yellow card received during Cup competition;
 - ii. failing which, by deducting a point for any game forfeited during Cup competition and awarding a point for any game that the team stepped in as a substitute for a team that could not play as scheduled during Cup competition;
 - iii. failing which, the team with the least discipline points against it over the entire season will be highest;
 - iv. failing which, a draw from a hat will select the winner from amongst tied teams.
7. The team with the most points as determined under this Rule will be declared the MSWSL Fair Play Cup Winner.
8. Fair Play Players
 - i. For each game in the Cup competition, each team is required to nominate a player from the opposing team as the “fair player of the game”, in the manner determined by the League Executive. The player nominated should be the player who best meets the fair play criteria.
9. Fair Play Criteria
 - i. The following are the fair play criteria and some examples of how they should be judged:
 - ii. Shows respect for opponents (positive attitudes, helping injured players, no unnecessarily rough play, no rude or offensive comments or gestures)
 - iii. Shows respect for game officials (accepting decisions without protest, no arguing with officials, no back-talk)
 - iv. Shows respect for teammates (encouraging teammates, staying positive, no negative criticisms, keeping up team spirit)
 - v. Shows respect for the sport no time wasting, no play-acting, using ethical tactics, supporting the principles of fair play rather than win at all costs)
 - vi. Makes the game a positive experience (engaging in friendly chatter with opposition and game officials, attempting to defuse potential problems before they get out of hand, leading by example)

List of Amendments:

March 2006:

- Rule 11 (summary discipline) deleted – moved to Code of Conduct.

April 2008:

- Rule 3(b) (now 3.2) amended to increase limit on call-ups from 2 games to 5.
- March 2010:
- Rule 2(f) (now 2.6) amended to increase maximum number of teams to 30.

April 2012:

- Rule 2.2A added to define returning team (vs new team)
- Rule 3.1 and 3.3 amended to reflect SNS deadlines; Rule 3.5 added to clarify that 'guest registrations' cannot be used
- Rule 5.8 amended to provide for teams setting up 1 net each at game
- Rule 7.1 deadline for responding to discipline inquiry added
- Rule 8 reference to League statistician deleted
- Rule 9 replaced "linesperson" with "assistant referee"
- Rule 11 (reschedules) added (reflects established League policy)
- Rule 12 replaced "rules of soccer" with "FIFA laws of the game"
- Rule 13 (playing divisions) amended to provide for automatic relegation, eliminates challenge games
- Rule 14 (League Championship playoffs) revised to separate out provincial representatives playoffs (new Rule 15), alter playoff format to 12 team single elimination
- Rule 15 (Provincial Representatives playoffs) added to provided 12 team playoff to determine provincial representatives
- Original Rule 16 (referee fees) – moved to Rule 9.4.
- Rule 16 (Fair Play Cup) added

November 2012:

- Rule 16.1 amended to require a minimum of 3 games for a team to be eligible to win the Cup.
- Rule 16.4 amended to allow some flexibility in scheduling if teams are drawn to play the same opponents in later rounds.
- Rule 16.5 amended to include additional points into regular computation of standings, rather than only as tie-breaker
- Rule 16.7 amended to include some additional tie-breaking criteria to replace the additional points moved to 16.5

April 2014:

- Rule 2.2A replaced with 2.2A-2.2C to clarify the rules for returning players and teams

November 2014

- Rules 3.2 and 3.3 amended to remove dates in parentheses
- Rule 3.7 amended to clarify that games played while registered Tier 1 and Senior A count toward the 3-game limit
- Rule 14.3(e) relettered as (f) and new 14.3(e) added to include a tie-breaker base on goal differential
- Rule 14.7-14.10 amended to provide for alternate 8-game playoff format if fewer than 24 teams

in the crossovers

- Rule 15.6 amended to simplify provincial rankings
- Rule 15.7 and 15.8 deleted

November 2016

- Rule 2.2A simplified to a minimum of 9 returning players.
- Rule 2.3 amended to require returning players to be identified on list of 14 players submitted to League
- Rule 2.4 amended to allow registration of unlimited players 17 years old and older and remove the 3-player restriction
- Rule 3.1 replaced to remove redundant requirement to adhere to SNS rules on transfers and add notification to League on any transferred players
- Rule 3.5 amended to clarify that players may not play for another team in the League, as this is not a call-up as set out in SNS's policies and procedures, but would be a guest player
- Rule 3.7 amended to reflect new SNS terminology for playing levels (from Tier 1/Senior A)
- Rule 15.2 amended to change to an opt-in system for Provincials. A corresponding amendment to the Code of Conduct creates a penalty for those who do not honour their commitment to play

March 2017

- Rule 3.4 updated with current youth playing levels, as determined by SNS
- Rule 14 replaced – League Championships replaced with Divisional Championships
- Rule 15 replaced – Provincial Representatives Playoffs capped at 8-team structure with some flexibility based on the number of teams from each division that have opted in
- Rule 16.5 amended to remove additional points for players recognized on the fair player team (never been applied)