

# Newfoundland and Labrador Soccer Association

## 2024 Premier League Rules



# 1. GENERAL RULES OF COMPETITION

## 1.1. OVERVIEW

- 1.1.1. The rules in Section 1 apply to all Provincial Competitions managed by the Newfoundland and Labrador Soccer Association (NLSA). Specific rules governing individual competitions managed by the NLSA are outlined in separate manuals and can be found online at [www.nlsa.ca](http://www.nlsa.ca).

## 1.2. GENERAL

- 1.2.1. The NLSA Competitions Committee is responsible for the management and control of all competitions.
- 1.2.2. The NLSA Competitions Committee is responsible for maintaining these rules.
- 1.2.3. These rules are subject to all NLSA Policies and Bylaws; in any conflict the NLSA Policies and Bylaws take precedence.
- 1.2.4. The NLSA Competitions Committee may make such temporary rules governing specific situations, not otherwise provided for, as are necessary to achieve the objectives of the NLSA.
- 1.2.5. Failure to comply with any of the requirements within these rules shall render any organization or individual subject to discipline.

## 1.3. ADMINISTRATION OF COMPETITIONS

- 1.3.1. Team Expectations
  - 1.3.1.1. Situations involving infractions requiring disciplinary sanctions occurring while participating in any NLSA competition will be dealt with by the NLSA Competitions Committee and the individual involved. Disciplinary sanctions shall be in accordance with the NLSA Disciplinary Code.
  - 1.3.1.2. All incidents of property damage must be communicated to the NLSA League Administrator for the competition, verbally within one hour after damage is discovered, and followed up in writing within 24 hours.
  - 1.3.1.3. Damage by a team to any property, other than his/her (their) own shall be the financial responsibility of and dealt with by the club.
  - 1.3.1.4. All youth age players participating at any Youth or Senior Competition must be appropriately supervised by the team staff in accordance with the guidelines set down by the NLSA. Clubs may add to this policy as needed. **The NLSA Supervision Policy can be found online in the Risk Management Policy at [www.nlsa.ca](http://www.nlsa.ca).**
  - 1.3.1.5. Any player aged 10 or over whose last registration was outside the jurisdiction of Canada Soccer must request

that the NLSA, through Canada Soccer, obtain the necessary International Transfer Certificate (ITC). Without this certificate, the player is ineligible to play soccer in Canada. The fee per ITC is set by Canada Soccer and must be paid accordingly. Exchange students are eligible for International Transfers but may take longer.

- 1.3.1.6. For the purpose of these rules, a youth is any person under the age of 18 before January 1<sup>st</sup> of the current year of competition, participating in an NLSA youth or senior competition.

#### **1.4. NLSA League Administrator**

- 1.4.1. The Chair of the Competitions Committee will appoint an NLSA League Administrator for all leagues.
- 1.4.2. The NLSA League Administrator will convene a meeting, if deemed necessary, of team representatives immediately prior to the competition.
- 1.4.3. The NLSA League Administrator will be responsible for the competition plaque or trophy and any medals or awards supplied by the NLSA. At the end of the competition they are responsible for returning unused medals to the NLSA office.
- 1.4.4. The NLSA League Administrator shall investigate any general complaint prior to laying any charges of misconduct with the exception of anything arising from a referee's report on a game sheet.
- 1.4.5. The NLSA League Administrator will keep track of scores and standings.
- 1.4.6. The NLSA League Administrator will present or arrange for the presentation of the competition plaque or trophy, and any medals supplied by the NLSA.
- 1.4.7. The NLSA League Administrator will ensure that any NLSA Board Members who are present and all NLSA sponsors are recognized during all ceremonies and awards presentations.
- 1.4.8. The NLSA League Administrator will be the final authority on all procedural matters not covered in these Rules.

#### **1.5. NLSA OFFICE**

- 1.5.1. The NLSA office will be responsible for providing medals and a championship plaque or trophy for each competition as required.

#### **1.6. NLSA POLICIES**

- 1.6.1. **Code of Conduct and Ethics**
  - 1.6.1.1. The NLSA has a Code of Conduct and Ethics which must be adhered to by all members of the Association.

- 1.6.1.2. All complaints received from members of the NLSA under this Code should be sent to the NLSA Judicial Body [ethics@nlsa.ca](mailto:ethics@nlsa.ca) for resolution.
- 1.6.1.3. The NLSA Code of Conduct and Ethics can be found online at [www.nlsa.ca](http://www.nlsa.ca).
- 1.6.2. **Volunteer Screening**
  - 1.6.2.1. The NLSA has a formal policy in regards to Volunteer Screening.
  - 1.6.2.2. The NLSA requires that any team official listed on any team staff participating in any Provincial Youth Competition or in any Senior Competition when youth are members of the team or in any Competition leading to a National to have an Enhanced Police Information Check (E-PIC) or a PRC with Vulnerable Sector. **For this purpose, an E-PIC or PRC clearance is valid for a maximum of 12 months.**
  - 1.6.2.3. The Association requires that any team official listed on any team staff in any Provincial Youth Competition or in any Senior Competition when youth are members of the team or in any competition leading to a National to have completed Respect in Sport for Activity Leaders. For the purpose of these rules Respect in Sport is valid for a period of 5 years. **The link for Respect in Sport is available on the NLSA website at [www.nlsa.ca](http://www.nlsa.ca).**
  - 1.6.2.4. The NLSA Volunteer Screening Policy can be found online at [www.nlsa.ca](http://www.nlsa.ca).
- 1.6.3. **Alcohol, Banned and Illegal Drugs**
  - 1.6.3.1. The NLSA has zero tolerance in regards to the acquiring, possessing, purchasing or consumption of alcohol and banned, illegal and recreational drugs for all players under the age of 19 playing in any NLSA sanctioned event. Such matters will be forwarded to the NLSA Judicial Body and may result in sanctions.
  - 1.6.3.2. The NLSA has zero tolerance in regards to the acquiring, possessing, purchasing or consumption of banned and illegal drugs for all senior players and team staffs participating in any NLSA sanctioned event.
  - 1.6.3.3. A list of banned drugs can be found on the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sports (CCES) website.

## 1.7. DISCIPLINE

- 1.7.1. General
  - 1.7.1.1. Discipline at all NLSA sanctioned events will be dealt with under the NLSA Disciplinary Code which is available at [www.nlsa.ca](http://www.nlsa.ca).

## **1.8. AFFILIATION**

- 1.8.1.1. All players, team staff and officials on any Premier League roster must be registered to a team in the NLSA database at least five business days before the first game of the league entered.
- 1.8.2. Players and team staff added to any team after the team's initial registration must be registered in the NLSA database by the respective club at least 24 hours prior to the player's first game.

## **2. ELIGIBILITY**

### **2.1. Teams**

- 2.1.1. All teams must register with their recognized Club in order to affiliate with the NLSA.
- 2.1.2. By registering in any Premier League a team is committing to attend the National Club Competition for the equivalent age group if they win the right to do so.
- 2.1.3. Only teams affiliated with and in good standing with their clubs will be eligible to participate in any competition under the jurisdiction of the NLSA.
- 2.1.4. Premier League Competitions will be held for each of the following categories:
  - 2.1.4.1. Challenge Cup (Men's Senior) – Open Age
  - 2.1.4.2. Jubilee Trophy (Women's Senior) – Open Age
  - 2.1.4.3. U17 – Male and Female – All players under 17 years of age before January 1 of the current year.
  - 2.1.4.4. U15 – Male and Female – All players under 15 years of age before January 1 of the current year.
  - 2.1.4.5. U13 – Male and Female – All players under 13 years of age before January 1 of the current year.
- 2.1.5. To be eligible to participate in an NLSA Premier League Final Weekend (U15-Senior) a team must have a minimum of seventeen (17) registered players who are eligible.
  - 2.1.5.1. For clubs with teams in both the Premier and Championship Leagues in the same age division with a minimum of 30 players, the Chair of the Competitions Committee will have the authority to permit teams to select players from the Championship League team to the Premier League team, to meet the requirement of a minimum of 17 players.
- 2.1.6. Teams must be able to field a minimum of fifteen (15) players to participate in a National Championship. Teams who fail to meet this minimum standard will be subject to sanction by Canada Soccer.

- 2.1.7. No player will be permitted to participate in two (2) tournaments leading to a National Competition.
- 2.1.8. No team qualifying for a National Club competition shall register previously unregistered players after the Provincial Tournament.
- 2.1.9. The decision to allow exhibition teams in any Premier League will be at the discretion of the Competitions Committee in consultation with the NLSA technical staff. In cases where exhibition teams are entered, points will count for both teams.

## **2.2. Players**

- 2.2.1. Only players registered with a Club shall be eligible to compete in any Premier League.
- 2.2.2. In order to participate in any Premier League leading to a National Club Competition each player must be:
  - 2.2.2.1. a Canadian citizen; or
  - 2.2.2.2. a Permanent Resident as defined by the Government of Canada; or
  - 2.2.2.3. a Protected Person as defined by the Government; or
  - 2.2.2.4. a legal resident of Canada valid to the end of the National Club Competition (more specifically, must have an International Transfer (if necessary), possess a work or student visa valid until after the National Competition and have an exemption from Canada Soccer as per exemptions.
  - 2.2.2.5. In order to participate in an U13 Premier League, each player must have met all requirements for registration with the NLSA to be a registered member of the club they are representing.
- 2.2.3. In order to participate in any Final Weekend leading to a National Club Competition, a player must be eligible to participate in the National Club Competition. Any exemption must be obtained from Canada Soccer a minimum of seven (7) days before the start of the Final Weekend.
- 2.2.4. A player or team staff may not register for more than one team in the same Premier League in the same year.
- 2.2.5. Once a player has officially registered with a club or appeared on a game sheet for a Premier League team, they are cup-tied to that team. They shall not be allowed to play for any other team in that league in the current year.
- 2.2.6. Players from U15 and lower are not permitted to be called up to play in the Senior Premier League.
- 2.2.7. Call-ups in all Premier Leagues must be identified with the notation AP on the game sheet. Failure to comply will result in an incomplete game sheet and will be subject to fines.

- 2.2.8. Youth players from a lower level of competition (the Championship League or a lower age group in the Premier League) may be called up for a maximum of 7 games to any youth team. The first call up renders the player cup-tied to that team.
- 2.2.9. In Youth U15 and U17 Premier Leagues, AP players are only permitted if the number of players available for the game is less than 15. In the case where 15 outfield players are available but no keeper is available, a request may be made to the League Administrator to call up a keeper.
- 2.2.10. Senior players may register with a Recreational and Premier League team.
- 2.2.11. It is the coaches'/manager's responsibility to keep track of how many games an AP player plays. Sanctions may apply if a player is called up for more than 7 games.
- 2.2.12. Youth players playing at the Senior level must play a minimum of 50% of their youth league games to be eligible to play in the Youth Final Weekend.
- 2.2.13. In order for a player to be eligible to compete in a Senior Final Weekend in the Premier League that player must appear on a game sheet at least 33% of their team's regular season games. Medical exemptions will be dealt with on an individual basis. Supporting documentation must be provided.
- 2.2.14. A youth player may play for both a youth and a senior team only if they have first registered with the youth team. A youth player who registers first with a senior team is considered a senior player and is not eligible for any youth competitions.
- 2.2.15. The final deadline for player registration and inter-provincial transfers is July 31<sup>st</sup> of the current year of competition. To be eligible for National competition all players must be registered with a Premier League team in the NLSA database by July 31<sup>st</sup> of the current year.
- 2.2.16. No transfers are permitted between teams in any Premier League.
- 2.2.17. No person may participate as an official and a player in the same league. Once a person plays in a league, they are tied as a player. Once a person officiates in a league, they are tied as an official. Whichever comes first will dictate their role for the remainder of the season.
- 2.2.18. Clubs at the U13 Level may request permission to use underage or overage players when a club's technical director has deemed it is in the player's best interest to play at a higher or lower level than their age group. This could be appropriate based on the player's date of birth, physical size, technical ability, etc. Application must be made to the NLSA Technical Department.

## 2.3. Coaching Staff

- 2.3.1. The minimum coaching requirements for any NLSA Premier League are the minimum coaching requirements set by Canada Soccer for the National Club Championships.
- 2.3.2. All staff persons listed on a team roster in any Premier League must be E-Pic or CPIC with Vulnerable Sector cleared (valid for 12 months) and have completed Respect in Sport for Activity Leaders.
- 2.3.3. Head coaches must also have the following:
  - i) NCCP Make Ethical Decisions module and/or Online Education
  - ii) NCCP Making Headway Module
  - iii) NCCP Emergency Action Planning Module
  - iv) NCCP Rule of Two Module
- 2.3.4. A team's staff should consist of a **minimum** of a coach, an assistant coach and a manager, one of whom must be the same gender as the Premier League team – this may not be a player.
- 2.3.5. Teams must have a minimum of 2 staff in the technical area at all times and may have a maximum of 5.

## 2.4. Exemptions

- 2.4.1. A youth player playing soccer with a given club may play senior soccer with a different club only when the higher level of competition is not available in their own club and the approval of the Competitions Committee has been given.
- 2.4.2. In order for an International player to be eligible for national Club Competitions they must have an International Transfer, a valid work or student visa valid until the conclusion of the National Competitions. Application for permission to play in Nationals must be sent via the NLSA and received by Canada Soccer a minimum of 7 days before the start of the Final Weekend of the league.
- 2.4.3. On behalf of teams qualifying for National club competitions, where exceptional circumstances exist, the NLSA may request, in writing to the Canada Soccer Events Coordinator for National Championships, special permission to allow players to participate who might not otherwise be eligible.
- 2.4.4. Any player in a club without a Premier League team for his/her age group may register in another club for Premier League and may apply to the Chair of the Competitions Committee for an exemption to return to their club to play for a Senior Premier League team. The decision of the NLSA is final and not appealable.



### **3. ADMINISTRATION**

#### **3.1. Documentation**

- 3.1.1. Teams in the Premier League must complete the registration by March 14<sup>th</sup> of the current year.
- 3.1.2. All teams in the Premier Leagues must have a start-up roster registered in the NLSA database 5 business days prior to the start of the first game of the appropriate league. **Note: this may be before the team's first game of the season. Players added after the first game must be registered by the club 24 hours before they can play a game.**
- 3.1.3. The club is responsible for making changes to a team's online roster.
- 3.1.4. All teams entering the Premier Leagues must provide names, cell phone numbers and email addresses of all team staff in the registration platform 5 business days prior to the start of the season. Clubs are required to ensure all fields are filled in.
- 3.1.5. The 20 players that are listed on the first game sheet on Final Weekend are the 20 players for the complete weekend.

#### **3.2. Travel and Hotels**

- 3.2.1. All teams must make their own arrangements for travel and accommodations.

#### **3.3. Attendance at Meetings**

- 3.3.1. All clubs must have a minimum of one representative per team at any meeting (in person or virtual) called by the Competitions Committee for the league in which they are participating. Failure to do so will result in a fine. In the case of special circumstances, exemptions may apply, provided approval has been given prior to the meeting. Team coaches and club Technical Directors will be notified of the time and location of the meeting.

#### **3.4. Awards**

- 3.4.1. The NLSA will ensure that a championship plaque or trophy is provided for each competition level.
- 3.4.2. Gold medals will be provided for the first place team at the Senior Leagues.
- 3.4.3. Gold, silver and bronze medals will be provided at each age group in Youth Leagues
- 3.4.4. In the Senior Men's League, the team that finishes first in regular season play will be awarded the "Bobby Breen Memorial Trophy". The Senior Women's League first place finishers will receive the "Jean Thompson Award".
- 3.4.5. Youth players competing in Senior Leagues are not eligible to receive individual awards (except the Golden Boot) or All-Star selections as may be presented for league play. Players in

Senior Premier Leagues must participate in a minimum of 50% of their team's scheduled games to be considered for All-Star or individual awards.

- 3.4.6. MVP medals will be presented to each team after the championship game in Youth Leagues.

## 4. TECHNICAL

### 4.1. Administration

- 4.1.1. Only team staff and players listed on the game sheets and registered to the team in the NLSA database shall be permitted to sit in the Technical area.
- 4.1.2. Any team that submits an incomplete game sheet will be subject to disciplinary sanctions. See fines.
- 4.1.3. Any team that makes changes after the match to the game sheet may be subject to disciplinary sanctions.
- 4.1.4. Maximum number of players registered per team

League	Maximum Number Registered	Maximum Number on any Game Sheet
Senior	25	20
Youth	20	20

- 4.1.4.1. Senior teams may have a maximum of 25 individual senior players on their roster. However, teams can call up youth players for an unlimited number of games in the regular season.
- 4.1.4.2. Duration of Play for Regular season games:

League	Regular Time	Extra Time	Ball Size
Senior	2 x 45 min. halves	None	5
U17	2 x 45 min. halves	None	5
U15	2 x 40 min. halves	None	5
U13	2 x 35 min. halves	None	4

4.1.5. Duration of Senior Play-off Games and Youth Medal Games

League	Regular Time	Extra Time	Ball Size
Senior	2 x 45 min. halves	2 x 15 min. halves	5
U17	2 x 45 min. halves	2 x 15 min. halves	5
U15	2 x 40 min. halves	2 x 10 min. halves	5
U13	2 x 35 min. halves	2 x 10 min. halves	4

4.1.6. On Final Weekend, in all Senior games and in all Youth medal games, when the score is tied at the end of regulation time, extra time shall be played as noted in 4.1.5. If the score is still tied at the end of extra time, the winner shall be decided by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with FIFA Laws of the Game

**4.2. Field Size for U13 Premier League**

	Minimum	Maximum
Width	42 meters	55 meters
Length	60 meters	75 meters

**4.3. Team Uniforms**

- 4.3.1. All players on the same team, except the goalkeeper, must have the same colour and style of numbered shirt, shorts and socks. Any player not properly dressed shall not be allowed to play in the game.
- 4.3.2. All teams must have two (2) sets of numbered playing uniforms (one light and one dark). A player must be identified by the same number on both sets of uniforms.
- 4.3.3. Goalkeepers must wear colors (jersey and socks) that plainly distinguish them from all other players and game officials. Each team goalkeeper must have 3 sets of separate and different colour socks. Both the goalkeeper and the substitute goalkeeper must wear the same colour jersey and socks.
- 4.3.4. All players, including called up players (AP), must wear a uniquely numbered uniform. **No two players can wear the same jersey number in any given game.**
- 4.3.5. Goalkeepers who are outfield players must dress the same as their team's players but still wear the same number as on the team roster.

- 4.3.6. If a team has only 1 keeper the team must bring an additional goalkeeper jersey with a number that is not allocated to any player in the event that an out-field player has to go in net.
- 4.3.7. All teams must bring an additional light/dark jersey that has no number or a number not assigned to another player in case blood cannot be removed from a jersey.
- 4.3.8. All teams in Premier Leagues must play in their assigned colors. Failure to do so may result in sanctions and/or fines.
- 4.3.9. Players are not permitted to wear anything that is dangerous to themselves or other players. **NO jewelry:** that includes rings, bracelets (except medic alert bracelets that must be either made of Velcro or similar material or covered with a sweatband), earrings, necklaces, other visible body piercing, etc. The practice of taping jewelry is not acceptable.
- 4.3.10. Undershirts must be the same colour of the main colour of the shirtsleeve; undershorts/tights must be the same colour as the main colour of the shorts or the lowest part of the shorts – players of the same team must wear the same colour. Players not complying will not be allowed to enter the field until the match officials are satisfied that the equipment conforms to the Laws of the Game.
- 4.3.11. Where tape or similar material is applied externally to a sock it shall be clear or the same colour as the part of the sock to which it is applied.
- 4.3.12. The wearing of appropriate shin guards is mandatory for all players in all competitions governed by NLSA.
- 4.3.13. Appropriate soccer socks, which completely cover the shin guards, must be worn.
- 4.3.14. All shirts must have sleeves.
- 4.3.15. At the referee's discretion, goalkeepers are permitted to wear baseball caps if the sun is directly in the keeper's eyes.
- 4.3.16. No player will be permitted to play while wearing a hard, plastic or fiberglass cast. Soft casts (gel or sponge) will be permitted provided the cast is properly and adequately padded and referee approval is obtained.
- 4.3.17. In all league games, all splints, braces, etc. must be checked by the head official in attendance. Canada Soccer Guidelines will be used in determining the acceptance or rejection of the equipment. It is the responsibility of the coach to ensure that all equipment is properly inspected.

#### **4.4. Substitutions**

- 4.4.1. All games and tournaments leading to a National Club Competition shall have substitutions as listed in the chart below. This shall include regular and extra time periods; however, unlimited substitutions will be permitted at half time

and at the end of regulation time prior to extra time. Players who are substituted out are permitted to re-enter. No substitutions between the end of extra time and kicks from the penalty mark are permitted.

League	Regulation and Extra time Substitutions	At half time	Before Extra Time
Senior	5	Unlimited	Unlimited
U17	5	Unlimited	Unlimited
U15	5	Unlimited	Unlimited
U13	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited

4.4.2. No substitutions will be allowed for a player who has been ordered from the field for misconduct.

#### 4.5. Discipline

4.5.1. All Discipline will be governed by the NLSA Disciplinary Code available online at [www.nlsa.ca](http://www.nlsa.ca).

#### 4.6. Format

4.6.1. The format for all Premier Leagues will be a round robin. The number of teams entered in the league will determine the number of games played.

4.6.2. Seedings for teams in the Final Weekend of the Premier Leagues shall be based on the standings at the end of regular season play.

4.6.3. Final Weekend Formats for all Premier Leagues are as follows:

Number of Teams	Format
2	Best of 4 out of 7 games to be completed by July 31 <sup>st</sup> of the year of competition.
3	Game 1 – 2 <sup>nd</sup> vs 3 <sup>rd</sup>
	Game 2 – 1 <sup>st</sup> vs Winner of Game 1 {Gold Medal}
4 or more	Game 1 – 1 <sup>st</sup> vs 4 <sup>th</sup>
	Game 2 – 2 <sup>nd</sup> vs 3 <sup>rd</sup>
	Game 3 – Loser Game 1 vs Loser Game 2 (Bronze Medal)
	Game 4 – Winner Game 1 vs Winner Game 2 (Gold Medal)

#### 4.7. Tie Breaking Procedure

4.7.1. In regular league play all games shall be played to regulation time only.

4.7.2. Three points shall be awarded for a win and one point for a tie.

- 4.7.3. The following criteria shall be used to determine final standings:
  - 4.7.3.1. Most points in all group matches.
- 4.7.4. If two (2) teams are tied in points in all group matches:
  - 4.7.4.1. Greater number of points in matches between the teams concerned (head to head competition);
  - 4.7.4.2. Greater goal difference in all group matches;
  - 4.7.4.3. Greater number of goals scored in all group matches;
  - 4.7.4.4. Kicks from the penalty mark as per the Laws of the Game, at a time and place decided by the Competitions Committee.
  - 4.7.4.5. Where kicks from the penalty mark are used for tie breaking, players under suspension are not eligible to participate; however, this does not constitute the serving of any disciplinary suspension already awarded.
- 4.7.5. If three (3) or more teams are tied in points in all group matches the following are the only criteria to break the tie:
  - 4.7.5.1. Greater goal difference in matches between the teams concerned (head to head competition);
  - 4.7.5.2. Greater number of goals scored in all matches between the teams concerned;
  - 4.7.5.3. Greater goal difference in all group matches;
  - 4.7.5.4. Greater number of goals scored in all group matches;
  - 4.7.5.5. Drawing of lots to determine ranking at a time and place determined by the Competitions Committee;
  - 4.7.5.6. In each situation above, the decision of the Competitions Committee is final and binding