



**Rules and Regulations
Fall 2006**

D.C. STODDERT SOCCER LEAGUE

WWW.STODDERT.COM



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. LEAGUE PURPOSE, ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE	1
II. PLAYING FIELDS	3
III. REGISTRATION, UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT — RECREATIONAL DIVISION.....	4
IV. AGE GROUPS, COACHES AND REFEREES	5
V. OFFICIAL RECREATIONAL LEAGUE RULES.....	10
VI. DEVELOPMENTAL AND TRAVEL SOCCER	22
VII. DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS	23
VIII. COACHES CODE OF ETHICS	25
IX. KIDSAFE PROGRAM	26

D.C. STODDERT SOCCER LEAGUE HANDBOOK FOR RECREATIONAL DIVISIONS

I. LEAGUE PURPOSE, ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE

D.C. Stoddert Soccer League, Inc. (DCSSL) is a non-profit youth soccer organization with almost 5,000 participants between the ages of 4-1/2 and 19. DCSSL was founded in 1977 as a neighborhood soccer club using the field at the Stoddert Recreation Center. As interest in soccer as a recreational activity has grown, the league has expanded to other fields throughout DC and the nearby Maryland suburbs.

DCSSL stresses participation, sportsmanship, skills and enjoyment as its primary goals, and offers playing opportunities at two levels. DCSSL recreational soccer is open to all children, regardless of skills or athletic ability. This is referred to as the “Open” or “Recreational” Division. Recreational games — which constitute the vast majority of Stoddert’s games — are played on Saturdays within the city or nearby suburbs. Developmental or “Travel” soccer is for players who want to pursue further development and a more competitive environment. Travel teams are selected based on tryouts, practice more frequently, and are coached by professionals. Travel teams play games throughout the region and typically play on Sundays.

Teams in both the Recreational and Developmental/Travel programs play about nine games a season, depending upon the weather. There are two seasons each year: Spring and Fall.

DCSSL works closely with the D.C. Department of Recreation to obtain field permits for team practices and weekend games. DCSSL is also closely associated with the Jelleff Branch of the Metropolitan D.C. Boys and Girls Club. Participation in the DCSSL results in automatic membership of registered players in the Jelleff Boys and Girls Club without additional cost. DCSSL is also associated with FIFA through the United States Soccer Federation (USSF) and the Virginia Youth Soccer Association (VYSA). In addition, DCSSL maintains a cooperative relationship with Soccer on the Hill (SOH) and the Washington Soccer Club (WSC).

DCSSL is directed by a volunteer Board of Directors, in accordance with a set of approved by-laws. The Board of Directors consists of individuals serving as officers with various responsibilities, Recreational division representatives (usually the age group Commissioners), and other interested persons. Under current practice, the Board of Directors appoints each year committees focused on particular subjects, such as Finance & Management, Training & Development, Open, Travel, Fields, and Scholarships.

Many day-to-day decisions are made by an Executive Committee of the Board of Directors, based on input from the other committees. The Executive Committee ordinarily consists of the Chairperson, a Vice Chair and/or Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, a

Treasurer, a Secretary, the Chair of the Open Committee and one or two additional representatives of the Open Committee (with at least one Open Committee representative from a coed division and one from a girls' division), the Chair of the Fields Committee, and the Coed and Girls Travel Commissioners. More important issues involving league policy, rules, or finances are reserved to the Board of Directors.

DCSSL also maintains a small administrative staff, headed by the League Administrator.

The DCSSL office is located at Jelleff Boys and Girls Club:

3265 S St., NW
Washington, DC 20007

Office hours are Monday to Friday, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Additional weekend office hours are ordinarily established during peak registration periods for walk-in registrations.

DCSSL remains primarily a volunteer program. Volunteers serve on the Board of Directors, as commissioners of the Recreational age-group divisions, and as coaches and managers. These volunteers take care of many of the administrative matters that are involved in running the organization and its programs, including allocating fields, administering equipment, setting up team rosters, preparing division schedules, lining fields on Saturday and Sunday mornings, running team practices, managing travel teams, and coaching games.

DCSSL holds an Annual Meeting of its membership, usually in December (or the following January). The Annual Meeting is open to all members of DCSSL as well as others from the soccer community. All parents or guardians of registered players, and all coaches, assistants, commissioners or others engaged in DCSSL activities, are automatically members of the organization. A new Board of Directors is elected each year at the Annual Meeting. The Executive Committee and other committees are also appointed at that time.

Board of Directors meetings and other committee meetings are held periodically during the year, usually at the Jelleff Boys and Girls Club. For further information, contact any Board member or the League Administrator. The DCSSL by-laws and information on financial procedures and the budget are also available to members of DCSSL from the appropriate Board member or League Administrator.

Additional information on DCSSL, its programs, and schedule of events is available at the DCSSL web site:

www.stoddert.com.

II. PLAYING FIELDS

The following is a list of playing fields used by DCSSL. Field availability and use are subject to change.

Carter Barron 16th and Morrow, N.W.	Palisades Recreation Center Dana and Sherier Place, N.W.
Deal Junior High School Nebraska Ave. and Fort Drive, N.W.	Shepherd Recreational Center Jonquil St. N.W. between 16th and 14th
Fort Reno 40th and Chesapeake, N.W.	Wilson H.S. 40 th and Chesapeake, N.W.
Fort Stevens Recreational Center, 13th and Van Buren, N.W.	Stoddert Recreation Center 39th and Calvert, N.W.
Francis Field 25 th and N, N.W.	Takoma Recreational Center 3rd and Rittenhouse, N.W.
Hamilton Playground Hamilton St. N.W. between 13th and 14th	Meadowbrook 7902 Meadowbrook Ln. Chevy Chase, MD
Hardy Recreation Center 45 th and Q, N.W.	Turkey Thickett 10 th and Michigan, N.E.
Hearst Recreation Center 37 th and Tilden, N.W.	Horace Mann 44 th and Newark, N.W.
Janney School Albemarle and Wisconsin, N.W.	Rudolph 2 nd and Hamilton, N.W.
Jelleff Boys & Girls Club 3265 S Street, N.W.	Sligo Creek Rt 29 at Forest Glen Rd Four Corners, MD
North Chevy Chase Elementary School Connecticut Ave. at Jones Bridge Road, MD	

III. REGISTRATION, UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT — RECREATIONAL DIVISION

A. REGISTRATION

The Registrar, as designated by the League Administrator, conducts the registration of players for all DCSSL Recreational teams. Most registration is conducted on-line, at www.stoddert.com. All registrations must be complete, with the appropriate fee paid by the deadline date established by the Board of Directors. The fees for the Recreational Division, including any late registration fees, are determined by the Board of Directors. Fees for Travel and Developmental teams are determined by the Board of Directors and collected separately. A player on a Travel or Developmental team must submit a separate registration form for the Recreational team and the Travel team. A late fee is ordinarily assessed for all late applications (except for newly formed divisions).

No Recreational player may be required to pay any fees to the player's team or division other than those established by the Board of Directors.

The Registrar submits to the Commissioners of each age division a list of all players registered in their respective divisions in order to permit Commissioners to place players on teams.

Players who register late are assigned to teams on a first-come, first-served basis if there is sufficient space, at the sole discretion of the Commissioner.

Unregistered players are not permitted to play, receive uniforms, or receive participation awards. Coaches must assure that all of their players are registered.

B. SCHOLARSHIPS

The mission of DCSSL is to provide a high quality athletic program that is open to every child that wishes to play. The present Recreational fee is affordable to most families and an extensive scholarship program is available for others. Stoddert spends roughly \$40,000 per year to ensure that every interested child can play. The league is open to players of all backgrounds and can serve to unite our community by a shared interest in the "world's game." Indeed, as Stoddert has grown from its origins as a neighborhood organization, the city itself has become Stoddert's neighborhood.

Contributions to the scholarship fund are accounted for separately from other DCSSL funds. On request, DCSSL will provide scholarships to both Recreational and Travel players on the basis of financial need and availability of funds. For Recreational players, the scholarship generally consists of the registration fee. For Travel players, the scholarship usually consists of a portion of the DCSSL fee. A limited number of full and partial scholarships are also available for summer soccer camps.

For Travel soccer, applicants for scholarships must fill out an application form and submit it to the Scholarship Committee (at the Stoddert office address) and include required documentation. The required documentation is one of the following:

- U.S. Federal Tax Return (Form 1040) 1st page only — most recent year;
- W-2 Wage and Tax Form — most recent year; or
- Proof of eligibility for federal school lunch or food stamp programs.

The Scholarship Committee of the Board of Directors will rule on requests for scholarships. Decisions of the Scholarship Committee may be appealed to the full Board of Directors.

C. UNIFORMS and EQUIPMENT

DCSSL provides to each registered Recreational player a uniform with the DCSSL logo imprinted on the shirt each year (at the beginning of the Fall season) and a participation award at the end of each season. Uniforms are intended to be worn for two seasons.

Each player must wear the DCSSL issued shirt for League games. In accordance with FIFA rules and for the safety of the players, all players must wear shin-guards, and may not wear anything that may potentially injure themselves or any other player.

Every player is encouraged to bring a soccer ball to practice and games. It is required that each player wears shin-guards in games and practices.

IV. AGE GROUPS, COACHES AND REFEREES

A. RECREATIONAL AGE GROUPS

During each Fall season, DCSSL has the following age group divisions:

- Open (Coed): U-6, U-7, U-8, U-9, U-10, U-11, U-12, U-13 and divisions grouped in larger age brackets as necessary for older players through high school (U-19).
- Girls: U-8, U-9, U-10, U-11, U-12, and divisions grouped in larger age brackets as necessary for older players through high school (U-19). These divisions may be referred to as GU-8, GU-9, GU-10, GU-11, GU-12, and so on.

In the Spring season, there is also an Open (Coed) U-5 Division.

A soccer year starts on August 1 of a given year and ends on July 31 of the following year. A player's age appropriate division is determined by his or her age at midnight on July 31. For example, a player is a U-6 (under-6) player for the upcoming year if he or

she has not yet turned 6 by midnight of July 31 of that year, but will turn 6 before midnight of the subsequent July 31.

In larger divisions, the Commissioner, in consultation with the coaches, may divide the division into subdivisions to facilitate play. These subdivisions may be organized based on past team performance.

B. PLACEMENT OF PLAYERS AND TEAM ROSTERS

Division Commissioners shall be solely responsible for the placement of players on teams. Coaches and parents may submit entire new teams to established divisions and may assemble complete teams for new divisions, subject to the prohibitions against recruiting and use of selective processes and subject also to the Commissioner's discretion to restructure teams to achieve the goal of parity.

Players who played on a team in the previous season and who register on time shall be entitled to return to that team, subject only to Subsection F of this Section. New players and players returning after one or more seasons of not playing in the division shall be placed by the Commissioner, who shall take into account (1) the goal of achieving parity among teams in a division or subdivision consistent with SubSection F of this Section and (2) the legitimate wishes of coaches and parents for the placement of players.

Coaches shall be entitled to have their own children placed on their team, and siblings shall be entitled to be placed on the same team, subject to the applicable age requirements and waiver procedures.

A player may play on a maximum of two DCSSL Recreational teams in a single season. This is permitted under the following conditions:

- 1) the player must be age appropriate for both divisions (may not be overage for either division);
- 2) the player must have advance permission from both team coaches and division Commissioners;
- 3) each Commissioner shall assign the player to a team that he/she decides is appropriate;
- 4) the two teams must be in different divisions (different subdivisions do not qualify);
- 5) if the player is playing on a travel or developmental team competing in the open division, then that player is limited to playing on one other team in a different division;
- 6) the player must pay the appropriate fee for each team.

A player playing on either one or two Recreational teams may also play on either a DCSSL Travel team not playing in a Recreational Division or a DCSSL Developmental team not playing in a Recreational Division.

If an objection is raised with respect to the placement of a player on a particular team within a division, the matter is to be referred promptly to the Open Committee of the Board of Directors. All such objections must be raised with the Open Committee before the third game of the season. The decision of the Open Committee is binding unless and until it is overruled by the Board of Directors at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

Any player who wishes to change teams must so request in writing to the Commissioner. The request shall specifically identify the player's reasons for requesting a change. The Commissioner shall grant such a request only when he or she is satisfied that such a change will not adversely affect the competitive strength of the team losing the player or the team gaining the player.

Official team rosters, which include only players properly registered and assigned, shall be maintained by DCSSL and distributed to coaches through the division Commissioner. Only players on the official team roster shall be permitted to play (subject only to the conditions contained within Section V.D.4 below).

C. DETERMINATION OF A PLAYER'S AGE

As explained in Section IV.A above, players whose birthdays fall between August 1 and the following July 31 are grouped together under FIFA rules.

"Playing up": Age waivers which allow a child to play with older children will be granted only by the division Commissioner for the division in which the child would play. For the youngest age division in DCSSL, no player more than five months younger than the youngest age allowed in that division will be permitted to play.

"Playing down": Age waivers which allow a child to play with younger children will be granted only by the division Commissioner for the division in which the child would play. Parents are encouraged not to ask for an age waiver for their child to play with younger children. These age waivers shall only be granted in the event of exceptional circumstances, and only then after written application of the parent or guardian.

In determining whether to grant an age waiver, the Commissioner shall consider the following factors:

- DCSSL's strong policy not to allow overage players;
- The reasons given in the written request for an age waiver;
- The opinions of the coaches within the division concerning over-age players.
- Any information regarding the skills and size of the requesting player.

The standard for such a determination shall be whether the benefit to be gained by the player outweighs DCSSL's interests in fostering competition among same aged players and in player safety.

Once a child has been granted an age waiver in accordance with the applicable DCSSL Rules, the Commissioner will renew that child's waiver automatically for each subsequent season unless the child has turned 15, a coach in the age division files a protest against the waiver, or the Commissioner reconsiders the waiver on his or her own initiative. For a player who is 15 years old or older, the Commissioner must reconsider an overage waiver every season. In every case of reconsideration, the Commissioner shall make a determination taking into account the current standards used in determining the age waiver.

A Commissioner's ruling on an age waiver will be presumed correct, but any divisional coach or the child's parent or guardian may ask for review of that decision by the Open Committee, which will promptly hold a meeting to consider the age waiver request. The Open Committee shall make a determination taking into account the same standards considered by the Commissioner. The decision of the Open Committee is binding unless and until it is overruled by the Board of Directors at a regularly scheduled meeting. The Board of Directors shall make a determination taking into account the same standards considered by the Commissioner.

Any falsification of a player's birth year on a registration form will result in severe disciplinary action. Where there is reason to believe that a player's birth year has been falsified, at a minimum, the player's parents will be notified that the registration application has been rejected and may only be resubmitted with proof of the player's birth date. The Open Committee may determine any further discipline in accordance with Section VII with respect to anyone determined to be involved in such falsification. Players found to have had their age falsified may be immediately placed in the correct age division, or if the player is too young or old, may be prohibited from playing. The Commissioner may not grant an age exemption to a player who had his or her age falsified. If the falsification is discovered during a playing season, the team for which the over-aged player was playing at the time of discovery shall automatically forfeit all games played that season until the removal of the over-age player.

D. COACHES AND COMMISSIONERS

Each soccer team will have a coach appointed by the Commissioner of the division. The Commissioner may consult with parents of players of that team. If there is a dispute regarding the appointment of a coach, the decision of the Commissioner may be appealed to the Open Committee.

All coaches for the U-5 through U-9 divisions must complete the training course for a USSF "F" license or equivalent, before serving a second season as coach. All coaches for divisions U-10 and older must complete the training course for a USSF "E" license or equivalent. Information on the coach training program and schedule is available from the DCSSL office or web site.

The coach may appoint assistants as he or she deems appropriate. Under no circumstances may a coach or a responsible designated assistant, i.e., with full

authority to conduct practice or coach games, be under the age of 18. A team may never be left under the sole supervision of a minor.

The Commissioner of a division has broad responsibility for the operation and administration of the division. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to, appointment of coaches, assignment of players and practice times, creation of a division game schedule, preparation of division playing fields, and settlement of intra-divisional issues.

The Commissioner shall conduct a meeting of all coaches in the division prior to each season to conduct division business.

The Commission shall also serve as the Board representative, unless the majority of the teams in the division vote for a different Board representative from that division.

Additional information on the responsibilities of coaches and Commissioners is provided in Appendices A and B to this Handbook.

E. PROHIBITION AGAINST RECRUITING

No coach, assistant coach, manager, player, parent or guardian of a player or any individual acting on behalf of these individuals may approach any player, parent or guardian of a player who is on another DCSSL team or was on a team at the end of the prior season, for the purpose of recruiting such a player to switch to a specific team, unless the player's prior team has disbanded or left DCSSL.

Any coach or Commissioner may bring an instance of alleged recruiting to the attention of the Open Committee. The Open Committee will proceed in accordance with its procedures in Section VII. If the Open Committee finds that there was a violation of the rule prohibiting recruiting, the Committee shall issue a warning to the violator for the first instance of recruiting. Any subsequent recruiting violation shall result in the violators being barred from participation in DCSSL for a period of one year.

F. PARITY

If, in the opinion of the Commissioner, a team has been dominant (e.g. being undefeated and winning most games by 3 or more goals) in a division or subdivision for two successive seasons, then prior to the commencement of the third season the Commissioner will speak to the coach of that team to try to identify ways to achieve parity. The Commissioner may recommend to the coach that, among other things, one or more players from the team be placed on another team; the team is split into two teams; or the team moves to the next older division. If the coach does not agree with any of the Commissioner's recommendations, the Commissioner may request the Open Committee to make a determination. After affording the coach an opportunity to present his or her position and after considering the views of the Commissioners involved, the Open Committee will make a final determination.

G. REFEREES

Recreational games in the younger divisions may be refereed by a junior referee. These referees are usually a minimum of 12-13 years old and have received appropriate instruction. Referee assignments will be made with due regard to the age division of the game and the age and experience of the junior referee.

Games in the older divisions will ordinarily be officiated by USSF certified (or "FIFA-certified") referees. These referees are required to pass a referee certification course and to be re-certified annually. Certified referees supplied by DCSSL are preferably a minimum of 14 years old during the calendar year in which they begin refereeing.

Referees are not assigned to small-sided games in the U-5 through U-7 divisions. Referees are assigned to small-sided games in the U-8 division on an "as available" basis.

H. TRAVEL, DEVELOPMENTAL AND TOURNAMENT TEAM FORMATION

Travel and Developmental soccer is discussed in Section VI. All teams formed to play Travel and Developmental soccer shall be formed following the guidelines and rules of the Travel Committee. Tryouts for U-9, U-10, and U-11 teams are conducted in May and announced to all age and gender appropriate players on the DCSSL mailing list. Tryouts for older teams are set by the coaches and announced on the Stoddert website and on Travel league websites.

Tournament teams formed with the purpose of offering players who are not currently on a Travel team the opportunity to compete in a USSF-sanctioned tournament or similar events may be selected in a manner acceptable to the Commissioner of the Recreational division(s) from which they are formed. Teams formed in this manner must be reformed for each tournament or event and are not permitted to play in regular recreational divisional play.

No teams formed through any selective process other than those described above may play in DCSSL or characterize themselves as a DCSSL team.

V. OFFICIAL RECREATIONAL LEAGUE RULES

A. FIFA RULES

All games shall be played in accordance with the current edition, "FIFA - Laws of the Game and Universal Guide for Referees," except as otherwise provided in this Handbook. A summary of DCSSL game rules and modifications to FIFA rules is provided in Appendix C to this Handbook.

B. RULE CHANGE PROCEDURE

Any variations from the FIFA rules, as modified by this Handbook, must be approved by the DCSSL Board of Directors. The process for a change in the rules is as follows:

- The Open Committee may, at any meeting of more than one-half of the members of that Committee, vote by simple majority to adopt any change to the rules in this Handbook, provided all members of the Committee are notified by phone, fax, mail, or e-mail of the meeting and the substance of the proposed rule change at least seven (7) days in advance of the meeting. Any rule change so adopted shall be presented to the Board of Directors at the next regularly scheduled meeting and shall become effective if approved by simple majority of Directors in attendance at said Board meeting.
- A division may propose a change to the Game Rules that govern that division's play only. These specific divisional rule proposals must first be approved by a vote of the coaches in that division at any coaches meeting of which all coaches in that division are notified by phone, fax, mail or e-mail. These proposed divisional rules must then be reported to the Open Committee and the League Administrator (for notification of referees). Divisions are discouraged from proposing such changes unless there is a compelling reason for the change. Any proposed rule change must be approved by the division and sent to the Open Committee and League Administrator no less than 30 days prior to the commencement of the upcoming season. Rules shall not be changed in mid-season.
- The Open Committee shall review proposed divisional changes to Game Rules at either regular or special meetings. If the Open Committee approves the proposed change, it shall take effect at the beginning of the next season.
- If the Division in question disagrees with the Open Committee, it may appeal to the Board of Directors, which will make the final determination concerning rules.
- In considering rule changes that do not affect all divisions, the Open Committee and the Board of Directors shall give special consideration to the age of the players and the size of the field on which they play. After a rule change has been approved by the Board, it shall remain in effect for that age division for such time as the players currently in that age division remain in that age division, and shall cease to be effective when the players advance to the next age level.

C. SIDELINE BEHAVIOR

Coaches must set an example of good behavior on the sideline. The DCSSL "Code of Ethics" for coaches is discussed further in Section VIII below.

Parents and spectators also should set an example of good behavior. DCSSL's "Sideline Ethics" for parents is included as Appendix D to this Handbook.

Coaches are specifically responsible for ensuring that all players, parents, and spectators refrain from engaging in unsporting conduct which includes, but is not limited to: prolonged yelling, abusive or derisive language, and taunting or speaking in an intimidating or disrespectful manner to referees, coaches, players or spectators from either team. The Commissioner and Open Committee, under the procedures set forth in Section VII, are authorized to enforce this policy. In addition, FIFA rules grant the referee broad power to control the game and sidelines. The powers granted the referee include: stopping, suspending or terminating the game, showing cards consistent with Section V.D.6, and/or expelling players or coaches.

Players, parents and other spectators are also prohibited from engaging in unsporting conduct, as described in the preceding paragraph. Violations of these rules of behavior may subject the offending party to discipline in accordance with Section VII of this Rulebook.

D. GENERAL GAME RULES

Unless specifically noted, all rules in this Handbook apply the same to both Open (Coed) and Girls Recreational divisions. All References to a U-x division include the corresponding GU-x division.

1. Start of Game

Games should begin within five minutes of the scheduled time. Coaches must make every effort to start games on time. Teams without an adequate number of players present to field a full team five minutes after the scheduled time shall commence play with fewer than the regulation number of players so that the game may start on time, subject to the requirements of Specific Rule 5, in Section E. A team that does not field the minimum number of players required by these rules within 10 minutes after the scheduled game time loses by forfeit by a score of 1-0.

2. Half-Game Rule

All team members in good standing have the right to play one-half of a game, unless removed for disciplinary reasons by the coach or referee. Good standing means that players attend practice regularly, arrive 15 minutes prior to commencement of the game, and are cooperative with the coach and teammates. Violations of this rule shall be referred to the Commissioner for action in accordance with Section VII. Persistent violation of this rule may result in forfeiture of games.

No player shall play goalkeeper for more than one-half of any game, absent extenuating circumstances previously approved by the division Commissioner. Notwithstanding the preceding sentence, teams in the U-13 and older divisions may use a single player as

goalkeeper for more than half of each game, provided the player is expressly informed that he or she does not have to play a second half in goal and is entitled to play in the field if he or she so chooses.

3. Referee's Signals

Referees shall use standard referee signals to indicate the nature of penalties and which team has possession.

4. Team Rosters

A team may play only with those players listed on its official team roster. Any violation of this rule will result in an automatic forfeiture of the game being played and may subject the coach and the offending player to Disciplinary Action in accordance with Section VII. With prior consent of the division Commissioner, a team that would otherwise not have an adequate number of players for a particular game may, on a single game basis, use guest players who are age appropriate for the team and registered with DCSSL.

5. Uniforms

All players on a team, except the goalkeeper, must wear DCSSL issued jerseys. Each team is responsible for providing its goalkeeper with a jersey sufficiently distinctive in the judgment of the referee to enable the goalkeeper to be identified from all the other players. Shin guards covered by socks and appropriate footwear are required. All FIFA equipment rules apply.

6. Red Cards

In the U-10 and older divisions, referees shall issue yellow and red cards in accordance with FIFA rules. Cards may be issued to coaches. Coaches are responsible for conduct on their sidelines. (See Section V.C.)

In the U-9 and younger divisions, cards may not be shown to players, but where appropriate based upon their conduct, such U-9 and younger players may be disciplined by the referee as if they have received a card (e.g., be expelled for violent play).

Whenever a referee issues a red card or disciplines a player as if he or she received a red card, that referee must submit a brief report of the incident to the League Administrator and Open Committee chair (e.g., by e-mail). A coach is also obligated to report to the division Commissioner any red card (or similar discipline) issued to his team or the opposing team. A player or a coach who is sent off (receives a red card or is expelled) from a game shall not be permitted to stay on or near the field for the remainder of the game. In addition, the red-carded player (or player treated as if he or she received a red card) or coach shall be suspended from the next game unless he or she successfully petitions the Open Committee for a waiver of this penalty. *A red card and the one game suspension are not appealable.* An individual who receives more

than one red card in a season may be subject to imposition of additional sanctions in accordance with Section VII.

7. Opposite Sides of Field

Coaches are required to keep their teams, supporters and the parents of their players on opposite sides of the field. Coaches are responsible for ensuring that all spectators and players refrain from engaging in unsporting conduct which includes, but is not limited to: prolonged yelling, abusive or derisive language, and taunting or speaking in an intimidating or disrespectful manner to referees, coaches, players or spectators from either team.

8. Dangerous Situations and Protection of Fields

In all cases, the rule and presumption is that referees will suspend play in dangerous situations. However, recognizing the different responsibilities inherent in the role of the coach in children's soccer, the coach may suspend play in situations that endanger the health and well being of players. Examples of such situations are a serious injury ignored or not observed by the referee, heavy rain, or a thunderstorm.

Rain by itself does not constitute a cause for suspension of play under this rule. However, DCSSL has a strong policy to protect the fields and assure that they remain playable after the completion of a game. Therefore, the Commissioner, referee, or both coaches by mutual agreement, may cancel scheduled games or suspend play in order to protect the fields.

Players with casts or other physical protective devices that could pose a dangerous situation to other players will be allowed to play only at the discretion of the referees and coaches consistent with this rule.

9. Coaching Behind Goal

Coaches, players, spectators and parents of players may not stand anywhere along either goal line during a game.

10. Running up the Score

If a team gets a 3-goal lead, it should not press for more goals as long as the 3-goal lead exists. Coaches should place their best offensive players on defense, play with fewer players, or use a combination of these and other techniques (e.g., not shooting) to keep the lead down. Violations of this provision may subject the coach of offending team to discipline in accordance with Section VII, and may result in forfeiture of the game.

11. Coaches on Field

Coaches are not allowed on the field at any time, except in the case of injury, and even then they must first get the referee's permission.

12. Standings

DCSSL prohibits divisions from publishing standings in U-9 or younger divisions. If a U-10 or older division (or subdivision) maintains standings, the following rules shall apply for determining standings. A division may modify these rules prior to seasonal play only in accordance with Section V. B.

Standings will be determined based on three points for a victory, one point for a tie, and zero points for a loss. Forfeits shall be considered 1-0. The teams shall be ranked by the number of points earned. In the event teams have played different numbers of games, the teams shall be ranked by the average number of points earned per game.

In the event these standings result in a tie, the Commissioner may let the tie stand. However if the tie needs to be broken, the following tiebreakers shall be used in the order given:

1. Head-to-head competition.
2. Goals for minus goals against. However, no more than three goals may be earned for any single game under this rule.
3. Number of goals. However, no more than three goals may be earned for any single game under this rule.
4. Fewest goals allowed.
5. Coin-toss.

13. Number of Players on the Field

Games in the U-5, U-6, U-7 and U-8 divisions shall be played in a 4 v 4 format with no goalkeepers. Two 4 v 4 sub games for each team occur simultaneously on adjoining fields. In the U-8 division the Commissioners have the option each season to add goalkeepers (total 5 v 5), provided the Commissioner notifies the League Administrator and Fields Committee chair of that decision prior to the season.

Games in the U-9, U-10, U-11, and U-12 divisions shall be played in a 7 v 7 format, with goalkeepers. The Commissioner in the U-12 division, in consultation with the coaches in the division, may decide prior to the season to play in an 8 v 8 or 9 v 9 format for that season, provided the Commissioner then notifies the League Administrator and the Open Committee of the decision prior to the season.

Games in the U-13 and older divisions shall be played in either a 9 v 9 or 11 v 11 format. The Commissioners in these divisions will have discretion, in consultation with the coaches in the division, to adopt the format at the beginning of each season that is

appropriate based on the size of team rosters in the division. The Commissioners must notify the League Administrator and the Open Committee of the decision prior to the season.

E. U-9 THROUGH U-19 GAME RULES

The following specific rules apply to all games in the U-9 and older divisions.

1. Game Ball

Games in the U-9 to U-12 divisions shall be played with a FIFA #4 ball. All games in older divisions shall be played with FIFA #5 ball.

2. Length of Game

Games in the U-9 through U-12 divisions shall consist of two equal halves of 25 minutes each. Games in the U-13 and U-14 divisions shall consist of two equal halves of 30 minutes each. Games in all older divisions shall consist of two equal halves of 35 minutes each.

Referees should start games on time and must shorten games if necessary to allow the next game to start on time.

3. Game Schedule

All games shall start within five minutes of the scheduled time. Each game must be concluded so as not to delay the following game. There shall be a 5-minute break between two equal halves. Games that start late must conclude on time, unless no one is waiting to use the field.

4. Field and Goal Size (Approximate)

Games shall be played on fields and with goals of the following approximate sizes:

	Field	Goals
U-9	50 yards x 35 yards	7 feet x 12 feet
U-10	60 yards x 40 yards	7 feet x 18 feet
U-11	70 yards x 45 yards	7 feet x 24 feet
U-12	75 yards x 50 yards	7 feet x 24 feet
U-13+	regulation	regulation

Goal sizes may need to vary at certain fields (e.g., due to fixed goals), in the sole discretion of the Fields Committee.

5. Number of Players

See Section V.D.13 above.

6. Playing Down

In the U-12 and younger divisions, if one team has one or more players less than the maximum number of players allowed for that division, the opposing coach must play with one less than the maximum.

This rule shall not apply in the U-13 and older divisions.

If a team becomes short-handed because one of its players has been sent off due to a red card, the opposing team is not required to play a corresponding player down.

7. Additional Players

When a team is playing short-handed and additional players become available, the additional players may be added up to the maximum as they become available, with permission of the referee. If both teams are playing down under Section V.E.6, players may be added on a one-to-one basis.

8. Substitutions

In all divisions, substitutions are permitted on a team's own throw-in, all goal kicks, or after a goal has been scored. If a team makes a substitution on its own throw-in, the other team is then also permitted to substitute.

All substitutions require the permission of the referee. Players who have been substituted out may re-enter the game. If a player is injured and a substitution is made, the opposing team can substitute one-for-one.

9. Six Second Rule for Goalkeepers

In the U-9 and U-10 Divisions, this rule will not be applied. The goalkeeper may go to the end of the penalty box before distributing the ball.

In the U-11 and older divisions the standard FIFA rule shall apply (i.e., unlimited steps, but the goalkeeper must release the ball within six seconds).

10. Passback to the Goalkeeper

In the U-9 and U-10 divisions, there is no penalty for a goalkeeper's playing the ball with his/her hands after a teammate intentionally plays the ball to his/her own goalkeeper. In all older divisions, the standard FIFA rule shall apply.

11. Challenging the Goalkeeper

The standard FIFA rule shall apply. This means that no offensive player may physically challenge a goalkeeper if the goalkeeper has the ball within his/her control. "Control" means touching the ball with any part of the hand or arms.

12. Goalkeeper Playing Time

Playing time for each goalkeeper shall be limited to 1/2 of the game, except as provided in Section V.D.2 above.

13. Throw-Ins

In the U-9 and U-10 divisions, if a ball is improperly thrown in, the referee will instruct the player as to the proper method of throwing the ball in and allow a second throw-in. If the second throw-in is improper, the opposing team takes the throw-in. In the U-11 and older divisions the standard FIFA rule will apply.

14. Goal Kicks

In the U-9 and U-10 divisions, a goal kick shall be taken from the edge of the penalty area. In U-11 and older divisions, the standard FIFA rule shall apply.

The six-yard goal box does not need to be painted on the field for divisions younger than U-11.

15. Offside

In the U-9 and U-10 divisions, the standard FIFA rule shall apply, except that the rule will only be enforced by the referee if, in his or her judgment, a player is clearly in an offside position and there is a clear and unfair offensive advantage. (Note: This rule is intended to require coaches to teach the offside rule. However, it reflects the difficulty involved for a single junior referee in enforcing the rule. The rule is intended to be more stringent than a "no cherry picking rule.")

In U-11 and all older divisions, the standard FIFA rule shall apply and shall be enforced.

16. Handball

In all divisions, the standard FIFA handball rule will apply; i.e., a handball must be "intentional" to be called.

17. Free Kicks

In the U-9 and U-10 divisions, there will be no direct free kicks. All fouls result in indirect free kicks. In the U-11 and older divisions, the standard FIFA rules apply.

18. Penalties in the Penalty Area

In the U-9 and U-10 divisions, there will be no penalty kicks. If a defensive foul occurs in the penalty area, the ball will be placed on the front line of the penalty area at the point nearest to the point of the foul. The offended team will then be awarded an indirect free kick at this point.

In the U-11 and older divisions, the standard FIFA rule shall apply.

F. U-5, U-6, U-7 and U-8 SMALL-SIDED SOCCER GAME RULES

The primary objective of small-sided soccer is to provide players with a safe, enjoyable soccer learning experience with many touches on the ball. Scrimmages and games shall be played 4 v 4 with no goalkeeper. Coaches are discouraged from keeping score, as this can interfere with player development and having fun.

Rules for the U-5, U-6, U-7 and U-8 Divisions shall be interpreted in such a way as to assure equal playing time for all players and to ensure that each player has fun learning to play soccer.

1. Field Size and Layout

Small-sided soccer fields shall be in accordance with the table below. On all fields a line is placed parallel to the goal line the specified distance from the goal line, joining each sideline. This area is called the penalty area. A quarter circle of 1 yard marks each corner. A centerline divides the field in two halves. A combination of marker cones and corner flags may be used to mark the field of play.

Age	Size	Penalty Area
U-5	15 by 25 yards	NA
U-6	20 by 30 yards	NA
U-7	25 by 35 yards	NA
U-8	30 by 40 yards	10 yards

2. Number of Players/Substitutes

The team will be divided in half in order to participate in two simultaneous games on adjacent fields.

In the U-5 through U-7 Divisions, the game is played with 4 players of each team on the field. There are no goalkeepers. No player may use his or her hands, and coaches should discourage players from remaining in front of the goal as a *de facto* goalkeeper.

In the U-8 Division, the Commissioner has the option each season to add goalkeepers and play 5 v. 5, provided the Commissioner then notifies the League Administrator and Fields Committee chair of the decision prior to the season.

Substitutes may be used liberally in the U-5 through Fall U-7 Divisions. For Spring U-7, and in the U-8 Division, substitutions may be made only on a team's own throw-in or re-start, or after any goal.

3. Goals

In the U-5 through U-7 Divisions, goals are Pugg pop-up goals. They are placed on the center of each goal line. Goals can also consist of cones with flagstaff and pennants.

In the U - 8 Division, where a goalkeeper is added, goals of approximately 7 feet by 12 feet will be used.

4. Game Ball

The soccer ball shall be a FIFA #3.

5. Offside

There is no offside in small-sided soccer. However, coaches may not instruct a player to stay in a clear offside position (*i.e.*, "cherry picking) to facilitate goal scoring.

6. Out-of-Bounds/Throw-Ins

In the U-5, U-6, and Fall U-7 Divisions, out-of-bounds balls will be gently rolled back on the field by parents on the sidelines. There are no throw-ins.

Throw-ins are introduced in the Spring U-7 season and played in the U-8 Division. When the ball goes out of play, the game is restarted by a throw-in taken by a player of the team opposing the player who last touched the ball while still in play. Liberal instruction on proper throw-in form should be allowed. All opposing players must remain at least 5 yards from the player who is doing the throw-in.

7. Goal Kick

In the U-5 through U-7 Divisions, there are no goal kicks. Balls rolling over the goal line are treated as any other out-of-bounds ball, as described above.

In the U - 8 Division, a goal kick is awarded to the defending side when the ball passes over the defending goal line, having last been played by an attacking player. The goal kick should be taken from the edge of the penalty area and kicked directly into play beyond the penalty area. All opposing players must remain at least 5 yards from the player who is taking the goal kick.

8. Corner Kick

In the U-5 through U-7 Divisions, there are no corner kicks. Balls rolling over the goal line are treated as any other out-of-bounds ball, as described above.

In the U - 8 Division, a corner kick is awarded to the attacking team when the whole of the ball passes over the defending goal line, having last been played by a defending player. The corner kick is taken from inside the quarter circle on the side of the goal the ball passes over the goal line. All opponents must be at least 5 yards from the ball until it is kicked. The player taking the corner kick cannot play the ball a second time until another player has made contact with it. If this happens, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opponents from the spot where the second kick occurred.

9. Time Considerations

For U-5 and Fall U-6 Divisions there is a 30-minute practice session before each game. The game consists of two 12-minute halves with a 6-minute half time. Time-outs may be called every 3 minutes. For the Spring U-6, U-7, and U-8 Divisions the game consists of two 20-minute halves with a 6-minute halftime.

10. Practice

For Spring U-6, U-7 and U-8 teams there is a weekly practice scheduled by the coach.

11. Fouls

Fouls (infractions of the rules of play) include:

- Tripping;
- Violent play (striking, kicking, pushing and abusive language);
- Handling (use of hands or arms up to shoulders to deliberately attempt to control the ball); and,
- Unsporting conduct (failure to retreat 5 yards from a free-kick, failure to stay outside goal box at a goal kick by the opposing team, deliberate time wasting).

In the U-5 through U-7 Divisions, fouls are not punished. The coach of the offending player will gently inform the offending player (and others) of what was impermissible. The opposing coach should not take it upon him or herself to correct the player but, if need be, should alert the player's coach in a tactful manner of the inappropriate play.

In the U-8 Division, fouls are punished by an indirect free kick together with an explanation of why the free kick is awarded. Penalties or misconduct that occur within the penalty area will result in an indirect free kick from the edge of the penalty area.

Penalty-kicks are not awarded in small-sided soccer.

12. Goal

A goal is scored when the ball completely crosses the goal line between the goal posts and below the crossbar connecting the top of the posts. The decision of the referee (coach) that a goal has been scored is final. Goals may not be scored directly from a kick off, an indirect free kick (such as a goal kick, a corner kick or a kick awarded for a foul), or a throw-in. No record of scoring shall be maintained.

13. Equipment

Players must wear team jerseys, shorts, shin guards fully covered by stockings and recommended footwear. Opposing teams should wear different colored jerseys.

14. Referees

In the U-5 through U-7 Divisions, there are no referees. The coaches will loosely "referee" the game from the sideline, applying the rules but also a general philosophy of letting the players dictate the game.

In the U-8 Division, junior referees will be assigned by DCSSL on an "as available" basis. If no referee is assign or shows for the game, the opposing coaches shall confer and agree to either play without a referee or have a volunteer adult serve as the referee.

15. Coaches on Field

Soccer is a players' game. Coaches should not be on the field at any time, except in the case of injury. On-field instruction is not necessary.

VI. DEVELOPMENTAL AND TRAVEL SOCCER

DCSSL supports a "Developmental" and "Travel" team program, beginning at U-9 for both boys and girls. Travel teams are all competitively selected (therefore "select") and travel to games throughout the metro region. Travel soccer is for players who desire a more competitive environment and have the requisite skills and commitment. The program provides a training and playing opportunity under knowledgeable and skilled professional coaches.

DCSSL Travel teams participate in the National Capital Soccer League (NCSL), the Washington Area Girls Soccer League (WAGS), the Olney Bethesda Soccer League (OBSL), MSI Classic, and the Old Dominion Soccer League (ODSL). These leagues have their own rules and procedures governing team formation, organization, and play. However, unless the travel league (or related tournament) rules directly conflict with DCSSL rules and procedures, DCSSL rules and procedures will apply to all persons who are participating in travel soccer league games or programs in connection with teams that represent DCSSL. In addition, regardless of any other applicable rules or procedures, DCSSL rules on Disciplinary Action, KidsSafe Program, and Coaches Code of Ethics continue to apply to all persons who are participating in soccer-related games or programs in connection with teams that represent DCSSL.

To make Travel team opportunities available as widely as possible, the program's costs are reasonable, while providing the highest quality team experience for our youth. Scholarships are also available.

DCSSL requires each Travel team competing at levels U-9, U-10, U-11 and U-12 season to hold annual tryouts after the Spring season. Teams U-13 and older may hold open tryouts at their discretion or at the direction of the Travel Director. All tryouts at all ages must be posted on the Stoddert web site and publicized.

The U-9 and U-10 squads for both boys and girls are considered to be “developmental.” The Developmental program (or “academy”) is run by professional coaches hired by DCSSL. The squads of skilled and committed players are selected during a competitive tryout. The squads at each age level train as a unit and have an opportunity to further develop skills. The coaches will determine, as appropriate based on the pool for each age category in a given season, whether to field teams at these age levels (including some or all players from the developmental program pool) for games in the DCSSL recreational divisions (usually “playing-up” in age level), NCSL, ODSL, or OBSL. (WAGS for girls does not begin until U-11.)

For more information contact the Travel Commissioners or consult www.stoddert.com.

VII. DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

These disciplinary rules and procedures apply to players, players' parents or guardians, spectators, coaches, referees, Commissioners, and members of the DCSSL Board who are participating in soccer-related activities as a representative of or in connection with DCSSL.

Any grievance or other request for disciplinary review or action shall be made in writing to the Commissioner of the division in which the dispute has arisen. The Commissioner may take action as he or she feels appropriate including but not limited to: warnings, reprimands, game forfeitures, suspensions or expulsions. In making any determination for matters presented, the Commissioner shall consider the following Determination Factors:

- The age and skill of the player(s) involved;
- The character and severity of the alleged incident;
- The conduct of adult(s) involved;
- The opinions of members of the DCSSL community with an interest in the incident; and,
- The impact of the determination on division or league play.

If the Commissioner defers the matter for action by the Open Committee, the Commissioner shall provide the written complaint to the Chairman of the Open Committee. Any appeals from Commissioner action shall be made in writing to the Chairman of the Open Committee.

In a dispute having a direct impact on more than one division, the Open Committee shall be the tribunal of first authority. It shall make its decision after consultation with the Commissioner of the division in which the dispute arose.

If a coach desires to complain about a Commissioner and wishes action on that complaint, the complaint shall be made to the Chairman of the Open Committee and the Open Committee shall act upon that complaint.

In any of the above situations, all written submissions must be provided to all individuals involved.

If a Commissioner removes a coach from a division for disciplinary reasons, the Commissioner shall inform the Open Committee in writing of that removal. The Coach and or the parents or guardians of any of the players on the affected team may appeal to the Open Committee.

The Chairman of the Open Committee shall convene a meeting of the Open Committee (or Rules and Regulations Subcommittee) promptly after receiving a request for discipline, a coach's complaint about a Commissioner, or an appeal from a Commissioner's decision. Such a meeting may occur in person or telephonically. The Committee or Subcommittee shall meet within a week of the filing of the request, complaint or appeal, and shall make every effort to make a final decision at that meeting. It may, however, defer the decision in order to gather more information. Any member of the Open Committee or Subcommittee with a direct interest in the incident presented to it shall recuse himself or herself. The Open Committee or Subcommittee may consult with appropriate members of the DCSSL community and those familiar with the events prior to making any decision. Both the complaining party and the person against whom disciplinary action is being considered shall have the right to present his or her case, in the manner determined appropriate by the Committee or Subcommittee, which may include either oral or written presentations.

The Open Committee has the power to take any action it deems appropriate in the best interest of DCSSL, the players, players' parents, coaches, referees, Commissioners,

and members of the DCSSL. This action includes, but is not limited to: warnings, reprimands, game forfeitures, suspensions and expulsions.

In making any determination for matters presented before it, the Open Committee shall consider the previously mentioned Determination Factors.

A decision by the Open Committee may be appealed in writing to the Board of Directors within two months. All un-appealed decisions are final. The written appeal shall be filed with the Chairman of the Board, who shall bring the matter to the Board of Directors for a decision at the next regular meeting following receipt of the appeal. In making any determination for matters presented before it, the Board shall consider the previously mentioned Determination Factors.

VIII. COACHES CODE OF ETHICS

All DCSSL coaches and other adults working with our young soccer players must:

- Emphasize good sportsmanship, fair play and child development over winning.
- Respectfully shake hands with opponents at the end of each game and have all players do the same.
- Enforce a strict rule against bad language and disorderly conduct.
- Treat the referee with courtesy and respect at all times, and emphasize that the referee has the final decision in game play.
- Set a good example of behavior from the sidelines. Promptly and strongly advise all people on the sidelines to refrain from verbal abuse of players, spectators and referees.
- Ensure that team players encourage each other.
- Strictly abide by the "half-game play" rule. All team players in good standing have the right to play and must be allowed to play at least one-half of a game.
- Have the team on the field at the scheduled time and ready for play. Ensure that players wear the proper uniform and equipment.
- Substitute promptly and only at proper times during game play.
- Ensure that all players are registered and the correct age.
- Be familiar with the FIFA rules and the modifications by the DCSSL and teach players and parents the rules.
- Take the required USSF coaching courses and advance your knowledge of the game.

- Do not run up the score. When a team is winning by a lopsided score, a coach should take measures to limit the scoring such as putting his offensive players on defense, substituting for the most skillful players, or playing with fewer players.

DCSSL “Sideline Ethics” for parents are included as Appendix D to this Handbook.

IX. KIDSAFE PROGRAM

The United States Youth Soccer Association (USYSA), of which DCSSL is a member, requires all its affiliates to maintain a Kidsafe Program to help identify any person 18 years old or older who, because of his/her conduct, should not be allowed to participate in the soccer program and have contact with children. Under the Kidsafe Program, persons who hold a formal position, paid or volunteer, in DCSSL, such as a coach, assistant coach, team manager, referee, Commissioner, Board Member, etc., are required to respond to a questionnaire that asks whether he/she:

- (a) has ever been arrested or convicted of sexual abuse, physical abuse, or exploitation of a minor,
- (b) currently uses illegal drugs, or is subject to a restraining order or civil action relating to child or domestic abuse or violence.

Any person whose response indicates that he/she has been convicted of abuse or exploitation of a minor will automatically be barred from participating in the soccer program. DCSSL will consider whether to prohibit a person who answers any other part of the questionnaire affirmatively from participating in the soccer program. DCSSL has developed procedures for administration of this program.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX D