

1.1 Introduction

In order to provide an environment under which the development of youth soccer players is maximized, a Regional Club League (hereafter known as the RCL) has been formed for qualified Clubs with youth academies and teams in ages U10 through U18. It is administered by the Regional Club Subcommittee of Washington Youth Soccer.

- (a) The Washington Youth Soccer Bylaws and authorized documents from the Soccer Operations Committee are the governing documents. Modifications to the **Competition – Operating Document** and **Rules of Competition – Internal Procedures** have been made expressly for RCL competition.
- (b) The RCL shall be for chartered Regional Clubs qualified by the specified criterion of fielding 80% of possible teams in ages U12 through U18 in the RCL and comprised of properly registered youth players affiliated with Washington Youth Soccer Member Associations, provided such Clubs and Associations entering their teams and academies are in good standing with Washington Youth Soccer and that the team is in compliance with and has not violated any of the rules of Washington Youth Soccer.
- (c) The RCL integrated divisions shall be for affiliated Club Select and Non-Regional Clubs qualified by the specified criterion (see the **Regional Club Measurements** document) and comprised of properly registered youth players affiliated with Washington Youth Soccer Member Associations, provided such Clubs and Associations entering their teams and academies are in good standing with Washington Youth Soccer and that the team is in compliance with and has not violated any of the rules of Washington Youth Soccer.

1.2 Administration

- (a) The Regional Club Subcommittee has been established by Washington Youth Soccer. This committee manages soccer operations of the Regional Club League and issues directly related to the Regional level of play as specified in the Regional Club Subcommittee Charter.
- (b) The Coaching Directors of Regional Clubs may create subcommittees to formulate best league structures and best developmental practices to maximize the potential of youth development on a player by player basis.

1.3 Placement Meeting

In June prior to each Seasonal Year, and in December of each seasonal year, the Directors of Coaching are required to attend the placement meeting for league play.

- (a) Agenda will be: review of automatic movement, 7v2 matches, and exceptional team qualifiers, affirming teams that are currently rostered to the Regional Club minimum and fielded requests for team placement where applicable.
- (b) Agenda that will be determined by results after this meeting but prior to the schedules posting: all U11, U10 and younger teams.
- (c) All teams folding after the scheduled deadline from the Regional Club administrator will be subject to a fine.

1.41 Team Eligibility

- (a) Teams must be current with all Club, League, Association, and District fees and fines from the prior season before their participation will be allowed.
- (b) Teams must carry the minimum number of players required to fulfill all positions allowed on the field (e.g. 11 for 11-aside, 9 for 9-aside).
- (c) All team seeding in the league must meet the following “team roster” criterion for returning players: eight returning players from the prior season’s final league roster with the exception that –

- (1) Clubs may provide data towards the league criterion based on the last full seasonal year, state cup play, and Open Cup play for established teams not meeting the roster requirement.

1.42 Staff Eligibility

Membership in the league requires adherence to the highest ethical standards of competition. Coaches, administrators and Association or club officials that demonstrate a lack of integrity or consistent inappropriate behavior will be removed from participation for a period of time as decided by the Committee, not to exceed State or USSF limitations on suspensions.

1.43 WA Youth Soccer State Cup Tournament Eligibility

The top 10 finishing teams in the RCL may only compete in the US Youth Soccer Washington State Championships. The next 14 highest finishing teams in the RCL are may only compete in the Washington Youth Soccer President's Cup Division 1 or US Youth Soccer Washington State Championships. The remaining teams in the RCL may compete in the Washington Youth Soccer President's Cup Division 2 or higher.

1.5 Fee and Fine Structure

Per the RCL Procedures and Policies document, fines may be issued for incomplete or late match reporting.

- (a) All league fees for the RCL will be determined by management need as assessed by the RCS.
- (b) Any team submitted for placement in the RCL that withdraws after scheduling will be subject to a \$500 fine.
- (c) During league play, any team having an unexcused forfeiture, as determined by the RCS will be fined \$1000 for the first occurrence. A second unexcused forfeiture will constitute a withdrawal from the RCL, and the team's Member Association will be fined an additional \$500.
- (d) During league and State Cup Tournament play of a seasonal year, any coach receiving a red card removal from the match will be fined \$200 for the first offense, \$500 for the second offense and a Disciplinary Committee review, and a suspension from league operations for a third offense.

1.51 Disciplinary (see also 2.18)

Per the RCL Procedures and Policies document and the WA Youth Soccer Disciplinary rules (see the documents Disciplinary Process, Request for a Disciplinary Hearing, Judicial – Internal Process, and Judicial – Operating Documents on the WA Youth Soccer website):

- (a) Yellow and Red Cards are issued to both players and coaches
- (b) Coaches are still warned before receiving a card but must receive a red card to be sent off by the Referee
- (c) All Cards issued **must be noted** on the match report copies by the referee for both teams
- (d) All Cards issued on the match report must be listed by the team managers in Affinity within 24 hours of the match
- (e) The managers may notify the RCL Disciplinary Committee of its *intent to request a hearing* on all Disciplinary cards issued within 48 hours of the match. This does not constitute a Match protest, which is a separate procedure (see 1.52).
- (f) For all reports listed for the first of two double header matches in a weekend, the Director of Coaching for the Club may ask for an accelerated hearing for the cards issued so that the hearing may be resolved before the next played match

1.52 Match Protest

Per the RCL Procedures and Policies document and the WA Youth Soccer Disciplinary rules (see the documents Disciplinary Process, Request for a Disciplinary Hearing, Judicial – Internal Process, and Judicial – Operating Documents on the WA Youth Soccer website):

- (a) All Match protests must be filed with the Referee at the end of the match and noted on the match report copies
- (b) All Match protests must list the FIFA/RCL rule violated by the referee
- (c) All Match protests must be filed within 48 hours of the match's conclusion, with the appropriate fee and paperwork

1.6 League Standings/Tie Breaker

- (a) If any ties of two or more teams exist in Division standings, the following criteria will be used for ranking those ties (except as qualified elsewhere in this document):
 - (1) Head to Head (wins, ties and losses)
 - (a) With more than two teams, the head to head performance is measured by the team records within the pool of tied teams. Highest performing records are organized in order of finish, and if the tie(s) is/are not resolved the rest of the tiebreakers are followed below.
 - (2) Best Goal Differential between tied teams
 - (3) Best Goal Differential in division play
 - (4) Fewest Goals allowed
 - (5) Coin Flip

1.7 Recognition Awards

Recognition of winning teams will be reviewed on an annual basis by the RCS. Winning teams for each division are noted in the Washington Youth Soccer Annual Report.

1.8 Rules of Play

- (a) All league play, tournaments, and special competition under the jurisdiction of the RCS shall be conducted in accordance with current Washington Youth Soccer Rules of Competition, except as modified herein.
 - (1) A **Club-Player Pass** shall be executed for Regional clubs in all league play to facilitate the development of players without enacting transfers. Details of that roster procedure are formulated and refined by the Regional Club Subcommittee with review provided by the Soccer Operations Committee.
 - (2) An **Association-Player Pass** shall be executed for Regional clubs and participating select clubs in all league play to facilitate the development of players without enacting permanent transfers. Details of that roster procedure are formulated at the Association level pending RCS approval for league play.
- (b) Field of Play - If a field is not properly marked, equipped and netted, the referee will have the option to NOT allow the game to be played. Coaches have the right to protest a match if the field of play is not properly marked.

1.9 Player's Equipment

Each player shall have a number on the player's jersey. The number shall be affixed to the back of the jersey, clearly visible and a minimum of six (6) inches high. Each player on a team must wear a number different from the number of every other player on the team. Numbered jerseys for goalkeepers are optional. Home team must change if colors conflict with visiting team.

2.0 League Structure

The league shall be a promotion/relegation league from U12 through U18 and a placement league from U11 and below. Divisions will be formed in eight-team divisions until the final division, in which there may be more than 8 teams listed. Exceptions may be granted to create a bracket of 9 teams on a Director of Coaching vote in the placement meeting and approved by the RCS. Players are expected to be played up on teams within the RCL before a team wins the right to play up.

(a) Procedures:

- a. All first place teams in a division promote
- b. All last place teams in a division relegate
- c. For all high school aged teams (U15 and above) and Fall teams U12-U14, the second place team in a lower division has a playoff against the 7th place team in the next division above to determine which team promotes or relegates. That match is played in the last week of the season and noted in the schedule release.
- d. If a Division has more than 8 teams and there is a division below it, at least 2 teams will relegate automatically from that division and every division below it.
- e. If a team wins its Fall division in league play, and wins the State Cup in its age, it has demonstrated that it is an exceptional team. That team then may choose to move up in age for the following season (permanently).
- f. If a team folds or withdraws from league play, the 'last team down' that relegated to the division below that one will have the first opportunity to promote back up.
- g. Fall divisions of 9 teams or larger at U11-U14 will be split into smaller divisions for Winter play.

2.10 Game Sheets and Club/Player Passes

- (a) Prior to a league game, coaches must provide the referee with a roster/game sheet from Affinity and valid Membership Passes for all players. A valid Membership Pass is a US Youth Soccer / Washington Youth Soccer, Affinity-generated, Korrio-generated, or Bonzi-generated card for the player's current team that is signed by the player, has a recent identifiable photo of the player, and is laminated. Players must be listed on the official match sheet from Affinity (not handwritten) and have a valid Membership Pass to be eligible to play in the game.
- (b) Teams that routinely appear at matches with incomplete sets of player cards or rosters that are not complete will put their Club at risk of disciplinary sanctions.
- (c) All misconduct incident reports must be reported to the RCS Disciplinary Committee through the Affinity and Arbiter websites.
- (d) Players using the Club-Player Pass for development must be noted on the team roster only using the Affinity system.

2.11 Coaching/Sideline Conduct

- (a) Coaching from the sidelines – giving direction to one's own team on points of strategy and position – is permitted, provided:
 - (1) Neither mechanical nor electronic devices are used;
 - (2) The tone of voice is informative and not a harangue.
- (b) All coaches, substitute players and other bench personnel are to remain within the "coaching area" (two yards behind the touch line and not within eighteen yards of the goal line).
- (c) No player, coach, substitute player or other bench personnel are to make derogatory remarks or gestures to the referees, other players, substitutes, or spectators.
- (d) No player, coach, substitute player or other bench person is to use profanity.

- (e) No player, coach, substitute player or other bench person is to incite, in any manner, or engage in any kind of disruptive behavior.
- (f) If the above rules are violated, the referee shall ask the offending party for compliance with the rules. The referee may file a written incident report to the WA Youth Soccer office, attn: League Disciplinary Committee.
- (g) In the event that compliance is not received from the offending party, the referee shall issue a red card and ask the offending party to leave the playing area: this is a send-off. The referee must properly note the issued card on the game roster as returned to the team managers and file a written incident report to the League Disciplinary Committee.
- (h) If the offending party refuses to leave the playing area, or returns after leaving, the referee shall abandon the match and file a written incident report of the game abandonment with the League Disciplinary Committee
- (i) It shall be the responsibility of each team to maintain proper spectator conduct. Each coach, manager and team, club, or league official shall be held primarily accountable for the conduct of the spectators for or from their respective teams. At no time shall foul or abusive language be permitted at any field.

2.12 Player Release and Transfer/Player Identification

- (a) All teams participating in RCL competition are eligible in US Youth Soccer-sponsored events. Therefore, the player release and transfer rules applicable to US Youth Soccer competition shall prevail with the exceptions noted below:
 - 1) Players with outstanding club balances will not be allowed to move between clubs, nor return to competition until all balances are resolved. Proof of resolution must be provided for the Committee to review on request in case of dispute between clubs.
 - 2) Clubs may not add fees to the players balance after the player submits to leave the club.
 - 3) **A reasonable refund policy for players withdrawing from the club during the course of the current playing year must be established by each Club and clearly communicated to parents and players at the time of tryouts and club sign up.**
 - 4) Club/Player Passes utilized for player development cannot violate the WA Youth Soccer roster limits for team play.
- (b) Both US Youth Soccer and WA Youth Soccer have a seasonal year defined as September 1st through August 31st. The RCS reserves the right to adjust league play according to the needs of the players.
- (c) Roster limits for minimum and maximum players will adhere to WA Youth Soccer guidelines. U16 and older teams may roster 22 players, with 18 only eligible on game day, on approval of their Association and District (District is not required if the structure does not exist). Please see the Soccer Operations Committee-approved rule for expanded rosters at www.WashingtonYouthSoccer.org.
- (d) A team shall be limited to a total of three (3) players from outside the Club received by transfer per seasonal year in league play.
- (e) Team rosters are frozen for State Cup Tournament play in accord with WA Youth Soccer regulations prior to any competitive State Cup Tournament format. No additions or transfers, except for utilization of the Club Pass during league play, will be allowed after the WA Youth Soccer mandated cutoff date.
- (f) Players being transferred or added to a team **may not play** until they have a Membership Pass for their new team. The completed transfer or add form is not a replacement for the Membership Pass.

2.13 Scheduling of Games

The Regional Club Subcommittee is responsible for assigning league administration, jurisdiction and fines associated with violations of Regional Club League policy. Scheduled league matches that are threatened by inclement weather fall under the **WA Youth Soccer Travel Policy** (available at www.washingtonyouthsoccer.org)

- (a) Regularly scheduled league games shall have priority over any and all competition entered into by Regional Club teams.
- (c) The Home team determines field location, sideline policy, and kick-off time. Teams must provide their Member Association Representatives with home game and requested kick-off time information:
 - (1) League games should be scheduled to begin no earlier than 9:00 AM and no later than 6:00 PM, unless agreed to by the visiting team in writing (includes fax and E-mail) at least two (2) weeks prior to the game.
 - (2) Double-header weekends for teams travelling across the State: Saturday games should not be scheduled to start before 2:00 PM and Sunday games should start no later than noon, unless agreed to by the visiting team in writing (including E-mail) at least two (2) weeks prior to the game.
 - (3) For all matches that are not double-header weekend matches, the **shortest mapped travel time between the visiting team's Club address and the home team's field address via Google Maps** shall be used to determine game start times for travelling teams, plus 30 minutes for warm-up. Game start times may not create a travel start time earlier than 7 am, or travel end time later than 10 pm without approval from the opposition. The Club address of the traveling team to the scheduled game field determines travel time.
 - (i) For example, a team leaving Yakima to travel to Bellingham would travel 3.4 hours. Including warm-up, the match should not be scheduled to start before 12 p.m.
 - (ii) For example, a team leaving Bothell to travel to Silverdale would travel 1.5 hours. Including warm-up, the match should not be scheduled to start before 10 a.m.
 - (4) Failure to schedule game start times within the prescribed guidelines may result in a mandatory game reschedule at the discretion of the League Administrator.
 - (a) A schedule change request must be agreed to by both teams and must be cleared in Affinity prior to the scheduled game date. The home team is responsible for scheduling the field and the officials. A team that fails to show for the match on the agreed upon schedule date and time, within a 30 minute grace period, that team will receive a loss for that game. If both teams fail to show, the match resolves as un-played and both teams may be fined.
 - (b) If a referee declares a field unplayable at kick-off time or the field is closed by the field administrator, both coaches must report the postponement to the League Administrator. The home team is responsible for rescheduling the game at a point midway between the clubs, with the approval of the visiting team. If the teams cannot agree on a reschedule date or location, the League Administrator will determine the reschedule date and location. The designated home team will be responsible for any field rental and referee expenses. If a team fails to show, on this date, that team will receive a loss for that game. If both teams fail to show, the match will be registered as un-played and both teams may be fined.
 - (c) If a game is not played because there was no referee and a substitute could not be agreed upon, the visiting team may have the choice of rematch date and location. If there is no referee at the rescheduled game and a substitute cannot be agreed upon, the League Administrator will reschedule the game at the expense of both teams.

- (d) If both teams have been notified of the game location and kick-off time, and one team fails to show up for the game, following a thirty (30) minute grace period, the game will be forfeited to the showing team with a score of 1-0.
- (e) If both teams have been notified of the game location and kick-off time, and both teams fail to show up for the game, the match resolves as un-played and both teams may be fined.
- (f) All league games must be played by the final weekend of the league season unless approved in advance by the League Administrator.

2.14 Responsibilities of Coaches/Managers

Please see the RCL Procedures and Policies document for more information on best practices.

- (a) The following are the responsibilities of the assigned “home team”:
 - (1) Marking the field-of play;
 - (2) Providing a proper game ball;
 - (3) Providing nets;
 - (4) Providing corner flags when applicable;
 - (5) Providing adequate directions to the opposing team to the home team's venue as soon as game time and location are scheduled by the local scheduler, and at least ninety-six (96) hours prior to the game.
 - (6) Communicating the sideline policy to the opposing team, and the match referees.
- (b) Visiting teams must confirm receipt of the above directions by no later than 72 hours prior to the game.
- (c) Failure of the home team to properly notify the visiting team of game time and location or failure of the visiting team to acknowledge receipt of the game time and location information will result in a fine of \$100 and a forfeiture for the match.
- (d) Weather conditions and field closures are the exception to the aforementioned game notification and confirmation rules.
- (e) Any coach, assistant coach, team manager, or other party having direct contact with players or acting in the official capacity of the Club must be in compliance with Washington Youth Soccer's Risk Management Policy.

2.15 Reporting Scores

The Coach or Manager of both teams (regardless of win, loss, or tie) must report the final game score in Affinity within twenty-four (24) hours of the match conclusion. Teams that do not report their score in Affinity may be fined \$25 for each occurrence.

- (a) Teams must report the game score, players scoring, and cards issued in the Affinity system.
- (b) If a game was not played as scheduled for any reason, this information must be reported via email to your club representative as described by Club policies, or the League Administrator (ToddL@washingtonyouthsoccer.org) if no such Club policy exists.
- (c) If a game was abandoned, this information must be reported via email to your club representative as described by Club policies, or the League Administrator (ToddL@washingtonyouthsoccer.org) if no such Club policy exists.

2.16 Officiating

A referee shall be assigned to officiate each game with the authority assigned as specified in the “Laws of the Game” (FIFA).

- (a) If possible, the Referee Assignor will be responsible for scheduling properly registered and qualified referees and assistant referees.
- (b) If assistant referees cannot be scheduled, each team must provide one (1) person to act as club linemen, if the referee wishes.

- (c) Referees who are also coaches, team managers, or relatives of players-of-record in a given age group of the RCL shall not be assigned matches in that age and gender group. Other individuals should disqualify themselves if there is a conflict of interest in that age and gender group.
- (d) Failure of a referee to show up within thirty (30) minutes of a scheduled game time will constitute grounds for a rematch. A substitute official may be chosen upon agreement by both coaches and the substitute's decisions will be final.
- (e) Coaches may file a letter of concern on a referee to the Washington Youth Soccer Director of Referee Development.
- (f) It is the responsibility of the Member Association or Club to send a complete RCL game schedule to the Referee Coordinator responsible for scheduling referees for their RCL games at the earliest opportunity.
- (g) Before the start of each game, the referee will ensure the home team's sideline policy is followed.
- (h) If any player has been sent off the field of play by the referee for violating the "Laws of the game", the referee must file a written report following the completion of the game to the Regional Club Disciplinary Committee. (Contact information will be available on www.WashingtonYouthSoccer.org under the Leagues tab)
- (i) Before the start of each game, the referee will obtain an official game sheet and collect the Membership Passes from each team. Players may not be handwritten on the official game sheet. **Players not listed on the official game sheet and not possessing a valid Membership Pass will not be allowed to participate in the game.** At the end of the game, the referee will note on the game sheet: the final score, misconducts issued, goals scored, and any other information deemed appropriate. The referee will return one completed copy of each game sheet to each team.
- (j) Membership passes are to be surrendered to the referee prior to each game. The referee will return ALL passes to the coach at the conclusion of the game. The passes will be used to copy accurate information to the referee's misconduct report.

2.17 Game Abandonment

- (a) If it has been determined that a league game is abandoned by the referee due to actions of the coach, players, spectators or any combination thereof, NO REPLAY WILL BE GRANTED.
- (b) Furthermore, if at the time of the abandonment:
 - (1) The opposing team is ahead, the score will be the final score.
 - (2) The team causing the abandonment is ahead, the game shall be considered forfeited and a score of 1-0 in favor of the opposing team will be awarded.
 - (3) If the score is tied, the game shall be considered forfeited and a score of 1-0 in favor of the opposing team will be awarded.
 - (4) If it has been determined that both teams caused the abandonment, the match will be considered un-played and not re-schedulable with zero points for both teams.

2.18 Disciplinary

- (a) Clubs participating in the league shall approve a Coaching Director, Administrator, or Coach who shall be eligible to form the Disciplinary Committee. This Committee shall be staffed by Coaches and Administrators from Regional Clubs.
- (b) The Disciplinary Committee will review disciplinary cards issued each week (on Tuesday or Wednesday evenings) through the Affinity system. Written supplemental reports submitted by referees into other referee reporting systems must be
 - (i) Filed (complete) within the appropriate time frame of 24 hours following the match
 - (ii) Labeled appropriately to the Regional Club League
 - (iii) It shall be the responsibility of the coach, or listed alternate, to contact their Club Disciplinary Director to obtain an appeal process or obtain notification of any action taken.

- (c) The Disciplinary Code is covered in the Washington Youth Soccer Governing Documents titled **Judicial - Operating Documents** and **Judicial – Internal Procedures**.
- (d) Players that accumulate three yellow cards during the league season will be ineligible to compete in their next scheduled league game (a required sit-out). Yellow card totals will not be carried over from the league season to other non-league events such as State Cup Tournaments.
- (e) Players receiving a red card will be ineligible to compete in their next regularly scheduled game unless a disciplinary hearing absolves the card issuance. At the next Disciplinary Committee meeting a more severe penalty may be applied by the Disciplinary Committee under established guidelines and according to the supplemental reports filed/evidence submitted.
- (f) Penalty points will be accumulated over the seasonal year. Yellow cards will be accumulated at one (1) point each and red cards at three (3) points each.
- (g) Players that accumulate seven (7) points from red and/or yellow card accumulation during the seasonal year will be suspended and be required to petition the Disciplinary Committee for reinstatement of eligibility to compete on any Washington Youth Soccer team. Upon reinstatement, the Disciplinary Committee will set the terms and conditions of probation. Failure to comply with the terms and conditions of probation may cause those player(s) to be suspended for the remainder of the seasonal year.
- (h) A coach of a team receiving a red card must notify the RCL Disciplinary Committee of his or her intent to appeal the card within 24 hours of the match. Match reports that do NOT include the red card listing for the coach will be accepted as a failure of the referee to notify the coach properly of his or her removal from the game, and the card will not be admissible.

2.19 Disputing Misconduct Reports

- (a) All protests must be handled according to the published Washington Youth Soccer Rules of Competition within the league administration.

2.21 Ethics

- (a) The purpose of this league is to set the highest standards to develop youth players to their fullest potential – both physically and emotionally. As such, participants must conduct themselves to that same highest standard. At all times, adult participants are expected to be role models for the youth involved in this league - exhibiting good sporting behavior in both victory and defeat.
- (b) All participants in the Regional Club League (RCL) are members of Washington Youth Soccer and therefore must adhere faithfully to its stated bylaws, rules and policies as well as to their intent. All coaches, managers, players and spectators will adhere to the RCL Code of Conduct and the **Ethics – Operating Documents**, and the **Code of Ethics – Ethics Internal Procedures – Operating Documents**.

Notification of Receipt of Rules

I, _____, have read completely and understand the rules of the RCL as presented and will adhere to them as instructed by the Director of Coaching.

Coach Signature: _____ Date _____

Club Director of Coaching/Technical Director Signature: _____
Date _____