

FIRST FLIGHT LEAGUE

Handbook & Rules and Regulations

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1. LAWS OF THE GAME

1.1 All FFL games shall be played according to the current FIFA Laws of the Game except for any exception that may be listed in these rules.

1.2 All FFL games shall be officiated by currently registered USASA and/or FIFA Referees and Assistant Referees who shall be assigned by a registered National Referee Assignor.

1.3 Substitutions shall be allowed up to a maximum of seven (7) players per team during all FFL games; however, no re-entry shall be allowed.

1.4 No club shall be allowed to play any FFL game without nine (9) players available to start or continue the match. If that happens before or during the match, the game shall be stopped, and the Referee shall include that in his/her referee report. The club with less than the minimum number of players shall forfeit the game and one goal to the opposing team.

2. DEFINITION OF THE SEASON

2.1 All playing seasons shall be the period within which all FFL games are to be played. All FFL clubs shall be notified about the start of the season at least three weeks in advance to enable clubs to prepare their teams in time.

2.2 Clubs shall be informed about the last date of the season at the beginning of the season to enable them to make off-season/post-season arrangements.

2.3 The FFL season is a three (3) month season. The league runs from March to May and August to October.

3. ANNUAL DUES AND ENTRIES

3.1 All clubs shall pay an annual due agreed upon by the FFL and communicated with all teams. Season Dues are a \$1000.00 membership fee. Season Dues are to be in full one month in advance of the start of the season.

4. LEAGUE COMPOSITION AND STRUCTURE

4.1 Composition

4.1.1 The League shall be split into Conferences, if needed.

4.2 League Structure

4.2.1 All clubs within a Conference shall play a minimum of then (10) league games on a home and away basis if possible. All clubs shall play games out of their Conference either home or away as needed. A club shall play a minimum of twenty (20) games across the Spring and Fall seasons.

4.2.2 Three (3) points being awarded for a win, one (1) for a draw, none (0) for a loss.

4.2.3 For all Conferences, the club which has accumulated the highest amount of points at the end of the regular season shall be declared the Champions of that Conference. Prizes will be awarded for the first club in each Conference.

4.2.4 If two or more clubs obtain the same number of points at the end of the regular season, their rankings shall be determined as follows in the stated order:

4.2.4.1 Total goal difference

4.2.4.2 Total goals scored

4.2.4.3 Head-to-head points

4.2.4.4 Head-to-head goal difference

4.2.4.5 Greatest away goal in head-to-head

4.2.5 At the end of every season the conference champions will play a single match to determine the season champion. If after ninety (90) minutes the score is equal the match will be determined by penalties.

4.3 League Champion

4.3.1 After the conclusion of the fall season there will be a match held between the spring champion and the fall champion to determine the overall league champion.

4.3.2 Each Conference table determines the club qualifying for the season championship

4.3.3 Trophies and Cash prizes shall be presented for the regular season winners, season champions, and league champion.

5. TROPHIES AND AWARDS

5.1 Cash Prizes that amount shall be determined by the League Board and all clubs shall be informed about the amount before registering for each season. The current projected cash prize for 2022 is:

5.1.1 Conference Champion: \$1,000

5.1.2 Regular Season Champion: \$1,000

5.1.3 League Champion: \$2,000

5.1.4 League Runner-Up: \$1,000

6. DATES, POSTPONEMENT, WITHDRAWAL, REFUSAL TO PLAY, FORFEITURE

6.1 Dates and Times of Matches

6.1.1 30 Days prior to commencement of the league a schedule will be released to all participating clubs, Clubs will then have one week to review and contact the League of any issues.

6.1.2 Games will not be scheduled on Sundays no earlier than 1:00 PM unless the FFL approves and must be under extreme circumstances.

6.1.3 All FFL games shall commence on the dates, times, and venues as stated on the released fixture, except otherwise decided by the FFL based on uncontrollable circumstances.

6.2 Postponement of Matches

6.2.1 The FFL Rules Committee Board has the right to postpone any league game in the event of unforeseen circumstances.

6.2.2 If a game is called off by the Referee due to lightning or any other unforeseeable circumstances, the following rules shall apply:

6.2.2.1 - 1 - 45 minutes played = Replayed from start.

6.2.2.2 - 46 - 69 minutes played = Replayed second half with the same scoreline when the game was called off.

6.2.2.3 - 70 minutes or more = Game considered official.

6.2.3 Where the FFL sanctions the postponement of a game for a club engaged in the Lamar Hunt US Open Cup or State Cup, the postponed match must be played within two weeks after the said cup match on a date to be determined by the Rules Committee.

6.2.4 Clubs seeking approval for a fixture change must submit a written request for the fixture change to the FFL ten (10) days prior to the match in question accompanied by all supporting documents required. The FFL has the discretion to grant or deny the request. All requests must be done via email to yacoubaide@icloud.com.

6.3 Withdrawal of Clubs from Matches

6.3.1 It shall be an offense for any FFL registered club to withdraw from the league once placed on the league fixture. No return or refund of any funds paid. Once a membership is paid, no refund will be issued under any circumstances.

6.3.2 Any club failing to honor a game without justifiable reason except in a case of certain circumstances determined by the FFL shall forfeit the match 1-0, be fined and three (3) points deducted from its standings.

6.3.3 Any club failing to honor three (3) league games during the season shall constitute a withdrawal.

6.3.4 If a club withdraws, and/or is banned or expelled from the League, the following rules shall take effect:

6.3.4.1 If at least half of the games on the schedule has been played, all scores from those games remain valid and remaining scheduled games shall be credited to the opponents as a 1-0 win.

6.3.4.2 If less than half of the games on schedule has been played, all the played and scheduled games of that club shall be canceled.

6.4 Refusal to Play

6.4.1 Any club refusing to continue a game for a period of up to ten (10) minutes, walks off the field or engage in tactics to abort the game shall forfeit the match to its opponent 1-0, and have three (3) points deducted from its standings.

6.5 Forfeiture of Matches

6.5.1 A club shall be punished with the forfeiture of a game when:

6.5.1.1 The club walks off the field of play.

6.5.1.2 The player/club initiates an act responsible for the abrupt end of the game.

6.5.1.3 When a club plays a game which has been declared non-competitive or the results has been found to be pre-determined or fixed.

6.5.1.4 A club is fifteen (15) minutes late for a scheduled game.

6.5.2 In respect to Section 6.5.1.1-3, no matter the scores shall be at the time of the offense or the end of the game, the offending club shall forfeit and three (3) points with one goal shall be awarded to the offended club, unless the offended club is leading by more than a three-goal margin at the time of the offense, in which case the score will stand. Three (3) points will also be deducted from the standings of the offending club.

6.5.3 Any Club which fails to honor, appear, or play a league game without prior excuse from the FFL Board shall forfeit.

6.5.4 Any Home Club forfeiting a game shall be charged with all expenses incurred by the Visiting Club in preparation for the game. (No more than \$500.00)

6.5.5 All referee fees shall be paid by the Club forfeiting if the forfeit is called less than thirty-six (36) hours of the scheduled game.

6.5.6 All fines and fees must be paid within seven (7) days or before the Club's next match, whichever comes first.

7. TEAM ARRIVAL, MATCH DURATION, TEAM SHEETS

7.1 Arrival at the Venue

7.1.1 All Clubs are requested to report to the match officials at least one (1) hour prior to kick-off for pre-match formalities. Breakdown of vehicles and traffic shall not be considered as unforeseeable circumstances.

7.1.2 Inspection of players will commence thirty (30) minutes before kick-off.

7.1.3 Club which reports fifteen (15) minutes after kick-off shall forfeit said match in question.

7.1.4 On the day of its game, a Club shall be allowed into the stadium and the perimeter of the field with a maximum delegation of twenty-seven (27) persons which include eighteen- (22) players and five (5) technical officials.

7.2 Duration of Matches

7.2.1 Each game shall last for ninety (90) minutes with two (2) periods of forty-five (45) minutes each plus the referee's optional time. Interval between periods shall not be more than 15 minutes.

7.2.2 During any championship matches if the score is tied at the end of regulation the game shall be decided via the penalty kicks.

7.3 Game day Rosters

7.3.1 Clubs will submit duly completed game roster to the referee at least forty-five (45) minutes prior to the start of the match.

7.3.2 The Game Rosters will record the following information: full names of the eleven starters, substitutes and team Officials. Game day roster must also include the players jersey numbers and each player's photo.

7.3.3 No Player may be added to the Game Roster that was not listed on the team roster that was submitted.

7.4 Substitutions

7.4.1 Each team is allowed a total of seven (7) substitutions per game.

7.4.2 Any player substituted may not re-enter.

7.4.3 If a player re-enters after being substituted, he could be considered an illegal player and the game will result in a forfeit.

8. REFEREES, REFEREE FEES, REFEREE ASSIGNORS

8.1.1 The National Referee Assignor shall assign ALL Match Officials for Conference and/or Division matches.

8.2.1 All Match Officials (Referees, Assistant Referees, and or Fourth Officials) shall be USASA or FIFA-certified Referees.

8.3.1 The Referee shall have the authority to call decisions pertaining to game. He/she shall follow FIFA Laws of the Game except where there have been modifications made by the FFL in these Rules and Regulations.

8.4.1 The Referee shall inspect the playing pitch before the commencement of the match. If he/she decides that a field is unsafe for the players, the game shall be abandoned and both teams notified.

8.5.1 The Match Officials fees shall be set between the National Referee Assignor and the FFL Board yearly and communicated with the clubs during the registration period of the season. The Referees fees for our 2021 League shall be: two-hundred and fifty dollars (\$250) per game which fees are to be paid to the referee ahead of game day via Venmo. All transactions are to be handled and carried out with a representative of each club present. Transactions should not be performed in front of spectators or media to avoid concerns of match fixing.

8.6.1 A Club may request that a referee shouldn't be assigned to its games; however, must provide written reason and the National Referee Assignor shall make the final decision as to assigning referees to all games.

9. PLAYERS REGISTRATION, ELIGIBILITY, TRANSFERS

9.1 All players must be properly registered and have a valid Player registration to be eligible to participate in the league.

9.2 There's no limit on the number of players a Club can register. However the max game day roster is 30. Player Registration costs twenty dollars (\$35.00) each which covers USASA's Secondary player's insurance.

9.3 A Player may be registered with a maximum of two (2) FFL clubs during the calendar year, provided he/she is properly transferred and approved by the League.

9.4 A Player shall not be allowed to register with another club within the same Conference without being properly released from his/her former team. Nothing is done without league approval.

9.5 FFL Clubs are not allowed to approach a player who is registered with another FFL club without the other club's consent. If a player contacts a club from another FFL club, kindly inform said player to speak with his/her current club president or director for a release or transfer. All transfers must be approved before a player is even released from their present club.

9.6 For any transfer to be official, the new club must pay twenty dollars (\$20.00) to the former club as well as any applicable USASA transfer fees. The player's former club president must notify the League of the transfer. Once a player transfer has been approved by the League the player must wait seven (7) days before they can play a league match for their new club.

9.7 Clubs have the authority to terminate the Player's registration at any time for any reason, provided the player is duly informed. A player voluntarily released by a club shall be free to register with any club within the FFL. A Player has the right to leave any team and any time. However, they will not be allowed to re-register with another FFL team until after the present season ends. No exceptions to this rule.

9.8 Registration of all new players is frozen three (3) weeks before the end of the regular season.

9.9 A Club which fields an illegal player who is not properly registered, transferred or suspended in a game shall forfeit the game in which the player participated and all previous games by three (3) points and one (1) goal. The club shall also be fined one-hundred dollars (\$100.00) for each game. In the event the losing club is found to have fielded an ineligible player, said club shall be deducted three (3) points from the standings and fined one-hundred dollars (\$100.00).

10. DISCIPLINARY MATTERS

10.1 Dismissals

10.1.1 A Player or Club Official sent off by the referee must leave the stadium immediately and may not return.

10.1.2 A Player dismissed by the referee (i.e. "red carded" or sent off, including dismissal because of two (2) yellow cards given in the same game) shall be suspended from the club's next match. If the official report states a reason other than the double caution will be evaluated and a suspension report will be sent to the team.

10.1.3 Any period of suspension or part thereof which remains outstanding at the end of a Season must be served at the commencement of the next Season.

10.1.4 Any dismissal that occurs during a game stopped or abandoned before the end of regular time will be maintained.

10.1.5 Where a Player or Club Official transfers to a new Club during a period of suspension the suspension will transfer to the new Club.

10.1.6 A Club may request a review in writing on the grounds of mistaken identity only. The review will be sent to the FFL Referees' Review Committee.

10.1.7 Any player shown a Red Card for the following offenses shall be suspended for a minimum of three (3) games and fined as follows

10.2 Cautions

10.2.1 The following suspension shall be imposed on a player for multiple cautions (i.e. yellow cards) received during the season:

10.2.1.1 - Three (3) cautions = one (1) game suspension.

10.2.1.2 - Six (6) cautions = two (2) games suspension.

10.2.1.3 - Nine (9) cautions = three (3) games suspension.

10.2.2 The following punishments shall be imposed on a player for red card received during the season

10.2.2.1 - Serious Foul Play 3 Games

10.2.2.2 - Violent Conduct 3 to 6 Games - Pending degree of the violent conduct

10.2.2.3 - Spitting 6 Games \$200.00

10.2.2.4 - Offensive Language 3 Games - Subject to the kind of language used

10.3 Misconduct

10.3.1 Any club official who shall insult/abuse or castigate a match official before, during and/or after the game shall be suspended for six (6) months for the first offense, one (1) year for the second offense, two (2) years for the third offense and banned from all FFL activities for any further offense.

10.3.2 Any player or club official who shall assault a match official before, during and/or after the match shall face the following:

10.3.3 In case of a player(s), he/she shall be suspended for one (1) year for the first offense and eighteen (18) months for the second offense. Said player shall pay all medical expenses incurred by the match official.

10.3.4 In case of a club official, he/she shall be suspended for eighteen (18) months and pay all expenses incurred by the match official for the first offense, two (2) years for the second offense, three (3) years for the third offense and banned from all FFL football activities for any further occurrence.

10.3.5 Any Player or club official who shall physically touch an official in a moment of argument during and / or after the match shall face permanent ban from the league. Physical abuse will not be tolerated by the league and no appeals will be applied.

10.3.6 Misconduct towards a match official away from the field of play where that misconduct can be related or traced to a game, shall be dealt with as if it has been committed on the field of play.

10.3.7 The FFL shall hold clubs responsible for the misconduct of their players, fans, supporters, sympathizers and followers, etc. before, during and after a game.

10.3.8 The FFL shall uphold disciplinary action on any player(s) and club official(s) suspended by USASA, USSF, and/or FIFA.

10.4 Qualifying Games for Serving Suspension

10.4.1 Only games actually played count towards execution of a suspension. If a game is abandoned, canceled or forfeited, the suspension will apply, and the player / team official must serve the time during the next game scheduled and is played. Canceled or forfeited games will not count towards the suspension.

11. PROTESTS, APPEALS, DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE

11.1 Protests

11.1.1 Protests emanating from a game must be registered on the referee's game report, before, during and immediately after the game in question and followed by a formal letter within thirty-six (36) hours to the FFL Board (excluding the day of the game itself, Saturdays, Sundays or public holidays). 11.1.2 The formal protest must be accompanied by a twenty dollar (\$20.00) filing fee (paid through Venmo) which is refundable if the club wins the protest.

11.1.2 The formal protest must set out the reasons for the protest including the facts on which it is based and must refer to the Article or Rule allegedly contravened by the alleged offender.

11.1.3 The onus is on the protesting Club to ensure that the provisions of this Rule are complied with, failing which the protest will not be entertained by the FFL.

11.1.4 A protest will not be entertained if it relates to a decision of the referee or assistant referee made during the match as these decisions are final.

11.1.5 Protest and or appeals will not be accepted for claims of bad calls. Disagreement with referee calls is not a reason to protest a game or file an appeal.

11.2 Appeals

11.2.1 A Club wishing to appeal any player or club official suspension must submit the Appeal to the FFL Committee along with a \$20.00 filing fee (paid through PayPal) which is refundable if the club wins the appeal.

11.3 Disciplinary Committee

11.3.1 The Disciplinary Committee shall deal with all cases of alleged misconduct, protests and appeals.

11.3.2 The decision of the Disciplinary Committee shall be based from the written reports of the Referees and other evidence provided by the parties concerned.

12. MINIMUM STANDARDS

12.1 Contact Person

12.1.1 Club must provide the League the name, mailing address, email address, and phone number of at least one person to serve at its Point of Contact.

12.2 League Payment

12.2.1 Clubs are required to pay all league registration fees and fines, if any.

12.3 Venue of Matches

12.3.1 Only League-approved venues shall be used to play official FFL games.

12.3.2 The FFL reserves the right to deny any club from using a specific stadium if the League deems it unfit to host games.

12.3.3 Clubs requesting to use a home venue must meet the following criteria:

12.3.4 Home stadium must have a playing surface of 65 yds x 110 yds, goal nets in good condition, and four corner flags. No exceptions. If the field is deemed unplayable by the referees the Home Club shall forfeit the match.

12.3.5 Home stadium must have 2 benches for each team to accommodate both clubs.

12.3.6 Home team must provide water and ice for the visiting club.

12.4 Schedule

12.4.1 Clubs are required to honor all games already scheduled. All clubs are required some travel to participate in the FFL. Travel will be determined by the schedule and conferences.

Travel is required to compete at a higher level of competition and to increase the level of the league and the players.

12.5 Roster

12.5.1 Roster shall be frozen three (3) weeks before playoffs.

12.5.2 All clubs must carry a roster of no less than twenty (20) registered players throughout the season.

12.5.3 All clubs must have a game day roster of no less than nine (9) players. FFL requires a full game day roster of 18 players, but a game can be played with as little as nine (9) players or the game shall be called a forfeit.

12.5.4 Home Club is required to send travel information if requested no later than Tuesday at 5 PM before the upcoming weekend game.

12.6 Registered Colors and Numbering System

12.6.1 Each club shall register a Home and Away color when completing their membership with the league.

12.6.2 In the event of a clash of colors between the visiting club's jerseys and the home club's jersey, the visiting club shall change to its alternative colors. Every away club shall carry in addition to its away colors, its registered home colors. Where also the clash of colors affects the goalkeeper colors, the goalkeeper shall change to an alternative color.

12.6.3 All jerseys and shorts must be numbered 1 to 99 with the name or logo of the Club printed on the jersey and the logo of the FFL on the left sleeves.

12.7 Score Reporting

12.7.1 It is the home club's responsibility to report the final results of a match within forty-five (45) minutes after the home match. A match report must include: the final score, a list of all goal scorers, and a list of all individuals who received yellow and red cards. Report matches using WhatsApp Club Rep group chat. Scores will be updated to the website by the league.

13. ADHERENCE

13.1 The FFL Board in its quest to improving the league will review all club's performance regarding how they have supported the League, and if they have abided by the rules of the League and completing all obligations (i.e. fielding competitive teams for all games, maintaining discipline over players, club officials and supporters, and including financial commitments). The league has the right to refuse any club from participation in the league who has had a history of improper conduct or misdoings throughout the year.

14. CLUBS NOT IN GOOD STANDING

14.1 Any club that is not in good standings with the league at any time, gives up its membership to the FFL. Note: Teams put in bad standings with the league could affect their eligibility to participate in the US Open Cup and other NCASA leagues.

14.2 Any club suspended from the league will have its roster released to allow players to pursue other clubs unless the suspension involves the players and they could be suspended as well.

15. REVIEW, VARIATION, AMENDMENT AND/OR CHANGE

15.1 These FFL Rules and Regulations may be reviewed, varied, amended and/or changed by the FFL Board from time to time either to change existing Rules and Regulations, or to add new ones or to incorporate changes ordered by FIFA, USSF and/or USASA.

15.2 Any changes, variations and/or amendments made shall take immediate effect notwithstanding that they have not yet been incorporated into these FFL Rules and Regulations provided that the change, variation and/or amendment shall have been adequately communicated to all FFL clubs.

APPENDIX I: CODE OF CONDUCT

The following are principles of ethical behavior for the First Flight League (FFL) internal and individual team media to be applied to Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Mycujoo, YouTube, TikTok or any other print, on-air or online platform. Based on the Code of Ethics of the Society of Professional Journalists.

Applies to all source of media, Social media, written media (publications) and visuals. Violation will be dealt with swiftly and harshly.

PROMOTE & REPORT THE TRUTH

- Do not lie and do not make assumptions.
- Identify and cite sources.
- Avoid profanity, the morose and/or inflaming emotions over controversial issues.
- Label opinions and personal interpretations as such.
- Label advertising clearly.

MINIMIZE HARM

- Be transparent and honest with the public.
- Act honorably and ethically in dealing with sources, the public and colleagues.
- Do not expose the private life of any FFL-affiliated personnel without permission.
- Do not abuse referees and respect the rights of all persons involved.
- Observe common standards of decency, and treat people with dignity,
- respect and compassion.

BE ACCOUNTABLE

- Avoid conflicts of interest by refusing to accept outside gifts, favors or other benefits.
- Avoid being influenced by advertisers on the content of your reporting.
- Do not give favorable rates to one advertiser and not others.
- Do not seek autographs or other memorabilia from FFL personnel
- Be accountable to your sources and the public for the fairness and accuracy
- of your work
- Be accountable for how you behave and collect news.
- Obey the state and local laws and the standards of ethical behavior.

In any social media format or broadcasting media and or any written matter, one shall avoid any kind of inflammatory statements (i.e. speech or writing arousing or intended to arouse angry or violent feelings).

"inflammatory slogans"

synonyms: provocative, incendiary, inflaming, inciting, agitating, stirring, rousing, provoking, fomenting, rabble-rousing, seditious, subversive, mutinous, fiery, passionate; controversial, contentious.

APPENDIX II: FAILURE TO COMPLY

Through the Disciplinary framework players, club officials & clubs are required to Make payments by specific dates, as outlined in these Rules and Regulations; please make all efforts to meet the required deadlines.

APPENDIX III: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

At least one representative from each club is required to attend the FFL Annual General Meeting / Summit at the beginning of every year. A date for the meeting will be provided to all clubs 60-90 days in advance to ensure there is enough time for everyone's attendance. Clubs unable to attend are required to notify the League in writing prior to the AGM.