

Florida Suncoast Soccer League, Inc.

Articles of the Constitution

Article I - Name

The name of the League shall be Florida Suncoast Soccer League, Inc. The League's initials shall be FSSL.

Article II - Purpose

To promote soccer in Florida's Suncoast area, including league cup and other tournaments; to resolve questions and controversies not adjustable under the rules of existing teams and other soccer organizations within the area; to promote good will through physical fitness.

Article III - Location

The headquarters of the FSSL shall be centrally located in the Suncoast area, which denotes the counties of Sarasota, Manatee, Pinellas, Pasco, Hillsborough and Polk. Regular meetings of the FSSL may be held in a central location to be designated by the FSSL Executive Board. The jurisdiction of the FSSL will, from time to time, be expanded so as to accommodate new areas of soccer interest. Any area not under jurisdiction of any other recognized body, into which the FSSL, Inc. shall expand, shall come under the auspices of the FSSL, Inc. Any team not within the boundaries of the FSSL that wishes to apply for membership within the FSSL may do so, but membership will be reviewed on a yearly basis by the Executive Board.

Article V - Colors

Representative colors of this League shall be green, orange and white.

Article VI - Affiliation

This League shall be affiliated with the Florida State Soccer Association (FSSA), shall be all integral unit of that Association and shall at all times recognize the authority, rulings and laws of the body.

Article VII - Qualification of Membership

Every team in good standing with Florida State Soccer Association with headquarters within the territory above defined shall be eligible for membership in this League and every team with headquarters within the territory above defined not becoming a member of the League shall be deemed outlaw organizations. Teams from vessels touching at a point within the limits of the territory, all school and college teams and teams of the United States Armed Forces shall be entitled to play against teams that are members of this League upon permission being requested and granted.

A team loses its membership by:

- a) having been separated from organized soccer by the FSSA
- b) having been expelled from this League by the mandatory two-thirds (2/3) vote
- c) failing to have competition in the current fiscal year unless it has been granted a waiver by the General Council, in which case two (2) such waivers shall not be granted to the same team consecutively.

Article VIII - Officers and Directors

The Board of Directors of this League shall be composed of the following officers: President, Executive Vice President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Third Vice President, Fourth Vice President, Fifth Vice President, Sixth Vice President and Seventh Vice President. Junior Vice Presidents shall be assigned by the

President of the FSSL, Inc. for each section of each division. They shall have no vote on the Executive Board but will enjoy all voting privileges within their respective divisions. The Executive Board shall select a person or persons to be employed to maintain a League Office, whose duties shall be that of the Secretary, Treasurer, Games Chairman and Registrar. This person or persons shall have no vote but will be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees within the League.

Meetings of the Board of Directors are subject to call by the President at any time for any purpose he may deem expedient or by call of a majority of the Directors so requested in writing. A quorum shall be the majority of the Directors present. All decisions of the directors shall be conferred to the General Committee for ratification.

Article IX - General Meetings

The business of this League shall be transacted by the General Committee composed of the board of Directors and one representative from each affiliated team. Each team in the Legislative Council shall have one vote, the President voting only in the case of a tie. The General Committee shall meet at least twice yearly, and their decisions shall be final, subject to appeal to the FSSA. The order of business of the Annual General Meeting shall be as follows:

1. Roll call and voting strength
2. Reading of minutes of last Annual Meeting
3. Communications
4. Unfinished business
5. Report of Auditing Committee
6. Report of Officers
7. Amendments of Constitution Rules and Regulations and By-laws
8. New business
9. Election of officers
10. Adjournment

Article X - Definition of A Team

A team shall be a body of registered players of the specified number. A team shall have two (2) registered delegates to the FSSL and shall have one vote at the meetings of the FSSL.

Article XI - Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws

Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws of the FSSL can be made at meetings of the Legislative Council or at the Annual General Meeting. Amendments must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the member teams. Each affiliated team shall be given fourteen (14) days' notice in writing of proposed amendments, unless all member teams are present and vote unanimously in favor of such amendments.

I. Introduction

1. All teams under the jurisdiction of this League shall play under FIFA rules as set forth by the United States Soccer Federation (USSF), Amateur Division.
2. All affiliated teams shall be required to keep an accurate record of all receipts and expenditures and file a copy with the Administrator of this League upon request.
3. In the event of any organization, team, player, official member, referee or spectator being proven guilty of any violation of the Laws of the Game, Rules, Regulations or Bylaws of this League, or of the USSF or any misconduct, the General Committee shall have the power to order the offending party to be removed from this League, suspended for a stated period or dealt with in such manner as the General Committee may deem proper.
Any organization, team or player playing with or against the offending team, or player, shall also be dealt with as the General Committee may deem proper.
4. The player assumes all risks, responsibility and liability for loss, damage or injury to himself while engaged as a player for the team or in using the property and facilities of the team, whether such loss, damage or injury be occasioned by the team, its agents, employees or otherwise. This League waives any and all claims for damages and costs arising out of such loss, damage or injury.
5. The league will endeavor through the USSF to provide limited medical coverage. If such insurance is available, a player is only covered upon signing the official League registration form and payment of the appropriate fee to FSSL.

6. Every team is responsible to the General Committee of this League for the conduct of its players, officials and spectators and as such, is required to take all precautions necessary to prevent spectators from threatening or assaulting officials and players before, during or after the conclusion of games.
7. It shall be compulsory for any referee, player, team or League official to report cases of misconduct in writing. Such cases shall be investigated by the General Committee and punished as may be deemed proper by this League.
8. Players, officials and spectators are only allowed to take part in or attend games on condition that they observe the Rules, Regulations and Bylaws of this League. Every affiliated team is required to observe and enforce such Rules, Regulations and Bylaws.
9. This League shall be entitled to publish in the press or in any other manner it may see fit, reports of its proceedings, acts and resolutions, whether the same shall or shall not reflect on the character or conduct of any team, player or spectator, which shall be deemed to have assented to such publications.
10. In cases of charges pressed against an affiliated team, official or individual, this League shall have the power to call upon parties involved to produce any book, letter or document and/or any other evidence the General Committee may require.

II. Games

1. The home team shall be ready to play at game time. The visiting team shall have 20 minutes from the scheduled game time if they have problems finding the fields. If both teams have at least 7 players, the game shall begin on schedule.

The home team shall be allowed a reasonable time period to correct any damage done to their field by outside persons or the elements, if damage was beyond their control.
2. No scheduled games shall be postponed or rescheduled without the consent of the Administrator and both teams. The Administrator will reschedule the game if the need arises.
3. When jersey colors of the competing teams are the same, the home team must change or provide satisfactory identifying marks.

A team that changes its colors during the season must notify the league AND all their opponents of the change. Failure to give proper notification may result in forfeiture of the game.
4. A team must have a minimum of seven (7) players on the field at all times during FSSL games.
5. Coed teams may have a maximum of 5 men (excluding the goalkeeper) on the field at any given time.
6. An official of each team shall be present at all FSSL games. In the absence of the Manager/Coach the team Captain shall be the "official."
7. The referee shall have the right to call off the game due to adverse weather. In that event the home team shall pay each official ten (\$10.00) dollars to cover travel expenses.
8. Player substitutions shall be permitted in the following circumstances:
 - a. Either or both teams may substitute when the ball goes over the end line during a game.
 - b. The team in possession of the ball may substitute on their own throw in.
 - c. A team may substitute a yellow carded player immediately after receiving his yellow card.

A player who has been substituted may be allowed to return. No substitution shall be allowed for a player ordered off the field.
9. No reschedules will be allowed during the season. A team must field a minimum of 7 players or forfeit their match. Forfeits must be advised 72 hours prior to the scheduled match time. Any team calling off the game within the seventy-two (72) hour time limit will be fined fifty (\$50.00) dollars and any official's fees (\$170.00) incurred. A second offense during the same seasonal year shall result in a one hundred (\$100.00) dollars fine plus any official's fees (\$170.00) incurred. A third offense will result in suspension of the team and all registered players for the balance of the season and all cup games as well as a one hundred fifty (\$150.00) dollars fine and any official's fees (\$170.00) incurred. A team suspended under this provision shall play under a one (1) year probation and shall be required to post a five hundred (\$500.00) dollars bond, to be returned at the end of the probationary period if there are no further infractions under this rule.
 - a. Season game schedule will be published with new season registration. Teams must submit a maximum of 3 black out dates with their registration.

If field problems are not under the control of the team – for example lights do not come on as scheduled, sprinklers come on or the field has been double booked AND the home team has proof of a contract with field management for that game time, the home team will pay each referee ten dollars (\$10.00) in travel costs. The game will be rescheduled.

10. If the appointed referee fails to appear the game will be postponed to a later date unless a registered, uniformed official is available.

11. If a team does not complete all its scheduled league games the team will be fined three hundred dollars (\$300.00). If a team forfeits one of its last two scheduled games the board may issue an additional fine at their discretion.

12. Standings shall be determined by awarding three (3) points for a win, one (1) point for a tie, and zero (0) points for a loss. All forfeits will result in a 3-0 score. Teams are ranked on total number of points earned. In case of an equal number of points all places in the standings shall be determined in the following order: head to head, goal difference, goals against, goals scored.

All protests which arise from infringements of the rules are subject to a protest fee. Protests and any supporting materials shall be presented in writing to the FSSL Appeals Committee within three (3) days after the game, accompanied by a fee of fifty (\$50.00) dollars. Any grounds for protest, which should arise before the start of a game, shall be immediately submitted to the referee and the opposing team in writing.

No protest will be accepted for the accumulation of yellow cards. All players receiving a red card will serve a minimum of one game's suspension.

The Appeals Committee will consist of 5 people to be determined each year at the AGM. They will be volunteer representatives from the various divisions. A minimum of 3 committee members will be required to determine the outcome of any appeal.

13. If a game is not completed due to weather, field conditions or other reasons beyond the control of the competing teams, the game shall be replayed if the first half is not completed. If the first half was completed, the score at the time the game was suspended shall be final. This rule does not apply if the game was abandoned due to player, team or spectator misconduct. League and division cup final games must be played in their entirety. For reasons other than abandonment due to misconduct a final game not completed must be replayed.

14. If the non-completion of a game results from misconduct clearly traceable to one or the other of the contending teams, its management, or its supporters, as determined by the FSSL board, the board shall decide on the disposition of the game. Non-completion due to misconduct may result in dismissal of the offending team or teams from further participation in the league.

III. Cups and Exhibitions

1. In the event that the League shall conduct a cup competition, it shall be open to all teams within the League. The League will adopt rules, regulations and by-laws governing cup competitions which are satisfactory to the USSF. League and Division Cups will have their own specific rules to be determined by the board of directors and submitted to all participating teams.

In single elimination cup competitions, in the event of a tie at the end of the second half, there will be two complete overtime periods of 15 minutes each. If neither team scores during the 2 overtime periods, the winner will then be determined by FIFA kicks from the penalty mark.

2. Teams affiliated with the League intending to arrange exhibition games against teams of another League or State Association must notify the League in writing of their intention and receive proper permission. FSSA has adopted these financial responsibility rules:

a. The visiting team must produce written permission from its competent authority to play the team in the FSSA.

b. The team under the jurisdiction of the FSSA must have written permission from its League and the FSSA.

c. Financial responsibility must be approved by the Games Committee.

1. Local sponsors must provide a copy of all contractual arrangements to the Games Committee.

2. Enforcement of the financial responsibility will be as follows:

a. A cash deposit in escrow in an independent bank.

b. Satisfactory written guarantee from a responsible person or entity.

c. Visiting team's written statement of their own financial responsibility; plus, a guarantee or escrow to cover home team's expenses.

3. Teams, players and officials subject to the jurisdiction of this League shall not be associated with or play against any team that is not a member of this League, the FSSA or the USSF. This rule does not apply to teams under exemption as specified by the USSF.

4. This league may participate in Interstate games and with the consent of the USSF against foreign teams. It shall be entitled to use any regularly registered player from an affiliated team.
5. Teams affiliated with this League, intending to arrange exhibition games against teams of a foreign association shall comply with rules of the USSF. A copy of this rule shall be given to any member team upon request.
6. Yellow cards accumulated during regular season games will not count during FSSL cup play.

IV. Player Registration

1. Players and teams under the jurisdiction of this League and the USSF, amateur division, may be either professionals or amateurs. No more than two (2) professionals may register on one team. All pro players must be registered properly through the USSF pro registration process (different from the regular amateur process).
 - a. An application for reinstatement of professional players to amateur status must be made to the USSF. A professional player signing an amateur form without being reinstated shall be reported to the USSF. A team using such a player in a league game will forfeit this game.
2. A player may play for any team of his choice. A player shall neither sign with nor play for any team other than that for which they are registered (refer to Club rules).
3. The maximum number of players registered on a team at any one time shall be thirty (30). Maximum number of players dressed for a game is 18.
4. Every amateur player shall be registered using the USASA Online Registration system and submit a liability waiver in order to receive a player's pass.
5. Any player under the age of eighteen (18) must submit a notarized liability waiver signed by both the player and a parent.
6. A registered player may only play in one League game per day with the exception of players registered to an O50 or O60 team. Players registered to an O50/O60 team may participate in two games per day.

V. Manager's Responsibilities

1. The FSSL on-line player registration shall be the only bona fide player registration recognized by affiliates of this organization. The official game roster must be handed to the referee prior to the beginning of any game or at the time a player becomes a substitute in a game under the jurisdiction of the League.

NO REGISTRATION, NO PLAY

2. Each home team manager shall post the result on the schedule software by 8:00am on the day following the game. Failure to do so shall result in a fine of \$5.00 for each day late.
3. All players participating in games under the jurisdiction of this League shall wear numbers on the back of their uniforms. Numbers must be at least eight inches in height. Player jersey numbers and player pass numbers must be listed on the FSSL roster form given to the referee. Players listed on the roster forms will be the only players to play for that game. Any other player playing in that game will cause a forfeit for that team.
4. At pre-game check in each manager must turn into the referee a copy of the team's official FSSL game day roster. The referee will keep one copy of each team's roster to submit to the league office within 24 hours of the completion of the game.
5. Any player participating on an age group team must be the appropriate age within the current calendar year. (example: Over 40 players can be 39 if turning 40 in 2019) (example 2: Over 50 players turning 50 in 2020 can start playing in O50 division January 2020)
6. Team managers and/or players for all age group teams are required to have an original or a copy of each player's government issued photo ID showing birth date at ALL games so that player age can be verified if there is a question (qualifying documents include driver's license, passport, resident card, etc.). If the ID is not available showing proof of age and there is a question at the game that player will not be allowed to play.

VI. Player Release

1. Players for a team which disbands will automatically be released unless the team or player is under suspension or owes fees to FSSL.
2. Players are automatically released at the end of their team's season if they are in good standing.
3. A player in good standing may be released or request to be released. Requests must be made to their current manager, who in turn will notify the league office to release the player. The player can then register to their new team.

VII. Transfers

1. In cases where a deliberate attempt is made to induce a player to change teams during the playing season, a fifty (\$50.00) dollar fine will result.
2. Players may only transfer teams prior to the final two (2) scheduled league games. Any player released from a Premier Division team must sit out a minimum of seven (7) days before transferring to a lower division team.

VIII. Promotion and Relegation

1. The first-place team(s) in each division shall be promoted, the last place team(s) shall be relegated. This rule does not apply to the Premier Division or the first-place team(s) in the first divisions. Premier Division and additional promotion and relegation are at the discretion of the FSSL Board of Directors.
2. If a team, eligible to move to a higher division refuses, then it shall be disbanded and no more than four (4) players from the team's final roster will be allowed to resign on the team should it reform.

IX. Fines and Suspensions

1. If a team is negligent in furnishing the referee with proper protection in case of assault, the home team can be fined and/or suspended.
2. Teams which are not represented at the Annual General Meeting shall be fined fifty (\$50.00) dollars.
3. Teams leaving during a meeting will be fined twenty-five (\$25.00) dollars.
4. Fines are payable within ten (10) days after the date of issue. Appeals of fines must be submitted in writing to the League Office with a check for twenty-five (\$25.00) dollars (appeals fee).
5. Bond due to a no show or not enough players to start a game:

If team has not posted a season bond: payment must be paid by midnight Wednesday following a Sunday missed game and Saturday following a Wednesday missed game. The team must also post \$200 bond by midnight Wednesday or Saturday as appropriate following the game or the team's next game will be cancelled and the team suspended until paid. Games missed will go in as a forfeit. All other fines are to be repaid within a 10-day period or the team is suspended until paid. Games missed will go in as a forfeit.

If team has posted a season bond: the original bond will be forfeited, and the team must post a new/additional \$200 bond by midnight Wednesday following the game or the team's next game will be cancelled and the team suspended until paid. Games missed will go in as a forfeit. All other fines are to be repaid within a 10-day period or the team is suspended until paid. Games missed will go in as a forfeit. If not, further issues arise the new \$200 bond will be returned when all requirements are met.

6. A team not appearing for a scheduled game will be penalized with a loss of points and fined a forfeiture fee of fifty (\$50.00) dollars plus the cost of official's fees (\$170.00).
7. The home team will be fined for the following if in neglect at game time:
 - a) No nets - fine of \$20.00
 - b) No corner flags -fine of \$10.00
 - c) No markings - fine of \$50.00
8. Once a game has started it shall under no circumstances be broken off by one of the participating teams. If a team breaks off the game without permission of the referee, the team shall be penalized with a loss of points and fined fifty (\$50.00) dollars plus the cost of full official's fees (\$170.00). Any player or official responsible for breaking off a game may be suspended.
9. A player who has been ordered off the field for infringement of the rules shall automatically stand suspended as per the rules under the Infractions, Ejections and Suspensions section.
10. A player or team official attacking or assaulting a referee or assistant referee in any game played under the jurisdiction of this League shall be suspended by the FSSA for a minimum of one (1) year from participation in all games. Such suspension shall be from the date of the offense. A player adjudged guilty shall have the right to appeal according to FSSA rules to the FSSA Board within thirty (30) days from the rendering of the decision.
11. This League shall recognize player suspensions or rulings of other state affiliated leagues of which they have been notified.
12. The FSSL Executive Board shall have the power to penalize teams or players as they deem fit due to infractions.
13. Penalties may consist of warnings, suspension, probation, fines, loss of points, expulsion from the FSSL, closing of the playing field or any combination hereof or any penalty deemed fit by the Executive Board of the FSSL.
14. Appeals of any of these decisions shall be taken to the FSSL Appeals Committee.

X. Appeals

1. An appeal to this League must be in writing and accompanied by the sum of fifty (\$50.00) dollars which shall be forfeited if the appeal is not upheld. The appeal must be brought within seven (7) days of the action and the action shall be binding pending the result of the appeal. In the event that a special meeting shall be called to hear an appeal, the League may require the appealing team, should the appeal not be upheld, to pay part or all of the expenses thereof. In the event the appeal is upheld, the expense shall be borne by the League or the team appealed against.
2. A lawyer shall not represent any team, player or official at the hearing of a dispute or claim unless he is a bona fide member of the organization concerned.
3. Appeals from decisions of this League: Any team or individual wishing to appeal the decision of this League may appeal to the FSSA. At the same time an exact copy of the appeal must be sent to the Administrator of this League. The appeal will be heard in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of the USSF.
4. Protests not filed in writing (with fee) within the required time limit shall be rejected.
5. A copy of all protests and claims will be sent to the team against which they are directed. The Administrator shall submit all evidence such as roster forms, referee's reports and any other material pertaining to the case to the FSSL Board.
6. Claims which are made on the basis of an incorrect registration of a player need not be accompanied by a fee. Such claims must be filed with the League Administrator within two (2) weeks after the game.
7. All claims for damages arising from non-appearance of a team for a scheduled league game or similar infraction are to be presented in writing to the League Administrator. These do not require a fee.

XI. Referees

1. All FSSL game officials must carry their identification card.
2. Referee fees shall be set at the Annual General Meeting. Referee fees for the current season are sixty (\$70.00) dollars for the center referee and forty (\$50.00) dollars for each assistant referee.
3. Referees must FSSL game day roster forms prior to the game. The referee is required to send in (text or email) to the FSSL Administrator not later than 24 hours after the game a completed USSF game report and a copy of each team's roster. Game score as well as other related incidents including injuries and accidents shall be reported.
4. Each new team must provide two people to be certified as officials over the first two years in the league. One of these officials must be provided in the first year. The official must commit to do at least five FSSL games and will be responsible for supplying their own uniform.

XII. Club Organization

1. A club is defined as two or more teams who play at the same complex and are registered at the start of the season as a Club Organization (Club). All players registered for a Club shall bear passes with the club name to indicate their association.
2. A maximum of 2 players per game are permitted to move to a higher or lower division team within the club organization during the league's regular season scheduled games. For exceptions see VII. Transfers. The player(s) may not play for his original team for five (5) days after playing for the higher or lower division team. The player(s) may play three (3) games in the higher or lower division, after which time he must register to play for that team. Release and registration will follow FSSL Rules and Regulations.
3. Club players may move down one division or up to any division at any time. For any such movement of players within a club outside of their division, the team manager must notify the league office via email by noon on the Monday after the game.
4. Any organization with two (2) or more teams within the same division cannot move players within that division.
5. Club transfers are not permitted between Open Divisions and Over 40/50/60 divisions. Players must be dual rostered to age division teams.

XIII. Miscellaneous

1. In case of disputes, legal proceedings cannot be taken on behalf of the League or as a representative of the League without the consent of this League.
2. In notifying teams or members of the General Committee of meetings, the Administrator shall state if the business is regular or special. If the latter, the nature of the business shall be stated. Seven (7) days' notice shall be given of General Committee Meetings.

3. Changes in these Rules and Regulations can be made at any League meeting. All proposals concerning changes of rules shall be sent in writing to all registered teams at least fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting. A copy of the approved changes must be sent to the FSSA.
4. A player may receive no more compensation than his traveling expenses from his home to the field and return.
5. League and Division Cups will have their own specific rules to be determined by the board of directors.