

Soccer Association for Youth ORGANIZATIONAL RULES

SAY NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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SAY NATIONAL REFEREE AND RULES COMMITTEE

RULE CHANGES

Text highlighted in **grey** indicates the new changes or clarifications that are effective at the beginning of the 2019-2020 seasons.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROCEDURE

When a player is bleeding, or has an open wound, or has an **excessive** amount of blood on the uniform, the player must immediately leave the game. The bleeding must be stopped, the wound cleaned and covered, and the bloody uniform changed (or adequately cleaned or covered) before the player may return to the game.

LIGHTNING POLICY

The safety of players and participants is of utmost importance. Soccer fields can be a dangerous place during severe weather.

- You are in danger if you can see lightning.
- You are in danger from lightning if you can hear thunder.
- Lightning often travels sideways as far as 10 miles and can strike away from any rainfall even when skies are blue.

In event of a storm, games and/or practices must be stopped and suspended until the danger has passed using the following **minimum** criteria:

- (1) The sighting of a lightning flash or the hearing of the sound of thunder shall be reason enough to immediately stop and suspend a game and/or a practice session.
 - Do not wait until it rains.
 - Do not try to reach the end of a period or the end of a game.
- (2) Coaches shall take their players to a safe location upon suspension of a game and/or a practice session.
- (3) Following suspension of a game, the referees shall promptly leave the field to a safe location.
- (4) Play and/or practice shall not be resumed prior to 30-minutes after the last sighting of lightning or the last sound of thunder heard.

MEDICAL JEWELRY POLICY

Any piece of clothing or jewelry that is clearly a medical-alert item **must** be allowed to be worn and **must** be secured so as not to be dangerous to other players. Refer to **SAY PLAYING RULES, LAW 4, Section 7-A-Notes**.

“TIMES TWO” POLICY

All SAYAreas will require no less than two adults (suggested as unrelated), per team, to be present at all team functions such as games, practices, picnics, etc. No Exceptions!

NOTES:

1. The adults assigned can be a combination of coaches, parents, board members, etc.
2. While the focus of this policy is the child, it also provides protection for the volunteers in case of misunderstandings.
3. It is important that each SAYArea reviews their policy on car-pooling. SAY National has for a long time recommended that volunteers not provide transportation for non-family members. This was more of an insurance issue, but now has implications with regards to the intent of the "Times Two" policy.

IMPORTANT! Failure to implement the "Times Two" policy may adversely impact a SAYArea's liability insurance coverage.

NO-HEADING POLICY

In order to promote a safer playing environment, all players in the 12-U (Striker) and younger age divisions are prohibited from deliberately striking a soccer ball with any portion of their head (a.k.a. heading) in both games and practices.

- A. It is the responsibility of the coaches to restrict any heading activity during practice sessions and to support this no heading policy at all other times.
- B. If a player in a 12-U (Striker) or younger division game deliberately heads the ball, the Referee is to stop the game and award an indirect free kick (IFK) to the opposing team in accordance with the **SAY PLAYING RULES, LAW 12, Section 3-B.**

In the 14-U (Kickers) age division, coaches should limit deliberate heading in practice sessions to a maximum of 15-20 headers and a maximum of 30 minutes total during any 7-day period. There are no limits or restrictions on heading in practices or in games for players in the older age divisions. Coaches should always instruct, teach, and emphasize the importance of player techniques for the heading of soccer balls.

Heading of the ball is allowed in 14-U (Kickers) and older age divisions without limitations.

CONCUSSION POLICY

As outlined in the SAY National Concussion Policy posted on **www.saysoccer.org**, ALL coaches and officials regardless of their age and/or status will be required to complete a concussion training course every three (3) years. This training **MUST** be completed prior to being able to participate in any SAY activity, whether it be a practice or a game situation.

The policy outlines the “Removal-From” and “Return-to-Play” procedure. Namely, any athlete that exhibits signs and symptoms of concussion either during a practice or during a game **MUST** be immediately removed. This athlete **MAY NOT** return to play nor participate in any SAY activity on the same day that they have been removed (even if a written medical clearance is provided).

In addition, the athlete is not permitted to return to play or participate in any SAY activity until they have been assessed and received written clearance by a physician or by another licensed health care provider.

All SAY Areas (and Districts) are responsible for:

- 1) developing and distributing the specific criteria, which referees and coaches must follow, and
- 2) monitoring and tracking their referees and coaches with regard to their individual compliance with this policy.

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SAY ORGANIZATIONAL RULES

SAY RECREATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

1. The Soccer Association for Youth (SAY) was formed to provide an organization within which children could learn and play soccer, the world's most popular sport. The fact that any size player can be successful at the game and the modest expense required to field a team make it possible for many children to participate in organized competition. These factors, plus the enthusiasm of the children once they have played the game, have resulted in a rapid growth of the SAY Program.
2. It is the function of SAY
 - A. to provide
 - (1) guidance and instructions for new participants,
 - (2) an organizational structure to form leagues and schedule games, and
 - B. to prescribe rules and regulations which will promote safe, enjoyable and fair competition.
3. A youth recreational program should be, as its name implies, a program for the kids. To win at any cost may be the proper attitude for the highly skilled professional, but it is contradictory to the basic objectives of the Soccer Association for Youth. Stacking teams, tryout camps, all-star powerhouses, etc., may produce a climate of excellence for a talented few, but will not in the long run be beneficial to the vast majority of young people involved.
4. Several of the SAY regulations presented in this document have been written specifically to implement this aforementioned philosophy, as far as practicable. The overall objective of SAY is maximum participation within a balanced level of competition at the various age divisions.
5. Formation of teams shall be done by assignment of players in a manner that provides no intentional advantage to any one team over another. Teams shall not be formed by the use of competitive tryouts. All children will be given an equal opportunity to participate.
6. It is the intent of the SAY recreational program to assure that every player is allowed maximum participation. In that regard every player, at the very least, shall be given the opportunity to play the equivalent of one-half of every game.

RULE 1 – PLAYER AGE CLASSIFICATIONS

1. Age divisions are broken down as follows:

CLASS	DIVISION	AGE (at beginning of year)
ST	4-U (Starters)	2, 3, & 4
I	6-U (Instructional)	4 & 5
P	8-U (Passers)	6 & 7
W	10-U (Wings)	8 & 9
S	12-U (Strikers)	10 & 11
K	14-U (Kickers)	12 & 13
M	16-U (Minors)	14 & 15
SR	19-U (Seniors)	16, 17 & 18

2. **CLASS ST (Starters) and I (Instructional)**

- A. Children under six (6) years of age may participate in programs administered by a SAYArea (or District).
- B. For Spring season play, players who turn three (3) years old prior to March 31 may participate in these SAY programs.
- C. Three (3), four (4) and five (5) year olds are not permitted on regular SAY teams *[except for (5) five-year olds who will become six (6) in August or September and who will be entering first grade]*.
- D. Because these programs do not keep score or stress winning, SAY player draw rules do not apply.

3. **ALL CLASSES**

- A. The lower age must be reached and the higher age not exceeded prior to first date of the current “playing year”. “Playing year”, as it is defined here will:
 - 1) for the “USSoccer Standard” (calendar year) commence on January 1 and conclude on December 31.
 - 2) for the “SAY Alternate Standard” (school year) commence on August 1 and conclude on July 31.
- B. The SAYArea (or District) is responsible for verification of the age of players and their appropriate placement on teams. The Head Coach shall **NOT** be responsible for age verification of the players on the team roster.
- C. If the age of a player is challenged, the Head Coach must submit the player’s birth certificate or equivalent proof of age to the appropriate SAYArea (or District) Representative, the SAYArea Tournament Director or the designated tournament representative/officer.
- D. The intent of establishing these age classifications is to make competition as even as possible.

- E. Most SAYAreas (or Districts) have sufficient players to make up teams with two (2)-year age divisions.
- F. In SAYAreas where there are not sufficient players to make up teams with two (2)-year age divisions, it is acceptable to use three (3)-year age groups in a division, provided the SAYArea has applied for a variance and attained approval from National SAY.
 - (1) These wider differences do place a burden upon the younger children and should not be used unless it is absolutely necessary.
 - (2) If such teams play against standard two (2)-year age division teams, they are classified according to the oldest age on the team.
- G. A player may play in the next older Age-Division, if and only if:
 - (1) A Parent requests, in writing, prior to the player draw proceedings, that their child play in the next older Age-Division, AND
 - (2) such a player assignment is made with the written approval of the SAYArea Representative.
- H. A player with a disability or a development problem may be assigned and play in the next younger Age-Division, but only if approved by the SAYArea and only if the following criteria are met:
 - (1) The request is initiated by a parent, in writing, prior to the player draw proceedings, AND
 - (2) The request is accompanied by a written document from a doctor attesting that the child's developmental problems would best be served by playing in a younger Age-Division, AND
 - (3) Such a player assignment is approved, in writing, by the SAYArea Representative.
 - (4) Upon approval by the SAYArea and the assignment of the player to a team, there shall be no limitation on the participation of that team with other SAYAreas (or Districts).
- H. Players do not have to be in school to play in SAY.

PUNISHMENT: Forfeiture of any game in which an ineligible player participates.

RULE 2 – OFFICIAL SEASONS

1. The official SAY season of a given SAYArea will be specified by the SAYArea’s governing body, or by agreement among SAYAreas, if there are two or more SAYAreas playing together.
2. **Spring Season:**
Any playing season beginning between January 1 and June 30 will be officially considered a “spring” season.
3. **Fall Season:**
Any playing season beginning between July 1 and December 31 will be officially considered a “fall” season.
4. **Primary and Secondary Seasons:**
Each SAYArea shall designate an official “Primary” playing season, i.e. either the “Fall” or “Spring” season. If a SAYArea also plays a second season that season will be considered their “Secondary” playing season.
 - A. For the purposes of the assignment of players the “Secondary” season shall be considered as a separate playing season and shall not be a continuation of the “Primary” season.
 - B. Teams may carry over from Primary to Primary seasons and from Secondary to Secondary seasons with regard to player draw regulations and player assignments, but not from Primary to Secondary seasons or from Secondary to Primary seasons.**Exception:** Any SAYArea may choose to apply for and receive a variance to this section of **ORGANIZATIONAL RULE 2**, but in doing so any team from that SAYArea would be ineligible to compete against teams from other SAYAreas that are in compliance with **ORGANIZATIONAL RULE 2, Section 4**, unless both SAYAreas approve of the inter-play.

RULE 3 – SAYAREAS AND DISTRICTS

1. The SAY program shall consist of entities known as SAYAreas, which must be individually approved and accepted into the program by the SAY National Board of Directors (NBOD).
 - A. SAYAreas must submit their governing constitution, bylaws and member list of their Board of Directors as one of requirements for acceptance into SAY by the NBOD.
 - B. The SAYArea shall serve as the governing body directly responsible to National SAY.
2. Larger SAYAreas may be divided up into Districts, and all such these established Districts are subject to the overriding policies of the SAYArea’s governing body. Districts may be organized and designated by the SAYArea as either:
 - A. a “Residential District” is defined by geographic boundaries, which are recognized and approved by the SAYArea’s governing body, with residence within that area establishing eligibility for membership on SAY teams, or
 - B. an “Organizational District” is defined as being administered by a local club, a local recreational organization or any other local group recognized and approved by the SAYArea’s governing body, with membership in that organization establishing eligibility for membership on SAY teams.
3. A Representative shall be elected or appointed by each District who will be responsible for administering the SAY rules within that District.
4. The District Representative may serve as that District’s member on the SAYArea’s governing body.
5. Boundaries of contiguous “Residential Districts” within a SAYArea shall be established by that SAYArea’s governing body.
6. For local organizations recognized as “Organizational Districts” by a particular SAYArea, but who draw members from more than one “Residential District” within that SAYArea, or from other SAYAreas, any local member of that organization may also declare to be a member of that “Organizational District”.
7. **Player’s Options:**
 - A. Players may elect to play either:
 - (1) for the “Residential District” in which they reside, or
 - (2) as a member of the local “Organizational District” to which they belong.
 - B. Once a player’s choice has been made, it may not be changed without the approval of that District’s Representative.
 - C. Players may not elect to play, without the written approval of the District Representative of the “Residential District” in which they reside,
 - (1) for any “Residential” District in which they do not reside, nor

- (2) for any “Organizational District” of which they are not members or to which they do not belong.
8. However, each District Representative or Team Committee person (as defined in **ORGANIZATIONAL RULE 8, Section 5-A**) has the prerogative and responsibility to move players to other Districts within its SAYArea with mutual agreement, if this is the only way to put all or most registrants on teams.
 9. If a player who has signed an agreement to play in one District moves to another District within the same SAYArea, that player may:
 - A. continue to play for the original District for the remainder of that season only, or
 - B. request assignment to an open team position in the new District by its District Representative and notify, in writing, the District Representative of the original District of the change.
 10. Except as noted above, allowing players to play wherever they wish can lead to abuses that are contrary to the SAY philosophy, and is not permitted.
 11. Each District of a SAYArea should establish their own set of rules, along with an independent Board, that are not in conflict with the rules set forth by their governing SAYArea. Districts should use the chain of command concept and communicate with National SAY via their SAYArea’s governing body.

RULE 4 – LEAGUES

1. Leagues with a small number of teams may not provide an interesting playing season. If a District cannot field four or more teams:
 - A. The teams that can be formed should be combined with those of one or more other Districts, so that each team will have an opportunity to meet a good variety of opponents.
 - B. Such combining will be done by the SAYArea's governing body with due consideration for:
 - (1) travel distance between Districts,
 - (2) availability of fields, and
 - (3) other variables that might be pertinent.
2. In some (but not all) age divisions, a SAYArea or SAYAreas might have to combine teams with another SAYArea or SAYAreas to form leagues. Supervision of any such league should be decided by mutual agreement among the involved SAYAreas.
3. For 16-U (Minors) and 19-U (Seniors) teams, see **ORGANIZATIONAL RULE 13**.

RULE 5 – LEAGUE STANDINGS

1. If league standings are kept, the following criteria should be used:
 - A. A win equals three (3) points, unless, prior to the season, the SAYArea's governing body decides to award two (2) points. Once established, no change may be made during a playing season.
 - B. A tie equals one (1) point, and
 - C. A loss equals zero (0) points.
2. League standings are determined by point totals at the end of the season.
3. If teams with an equal number of games played tie for a position in the standings that would be a qualification requirement for tournament play, it is recommended that this tie should be broken by a play-off game. Other types of tie-breakers are permitted, but they usually are not as well accepted by the participants. In any case such tie-breaker situations shall be determined as per the SAYArea's rules.

RULE 6 – PLAYER AGREEMENTS

1. A player must be under agreement before playing in a regular season game. The agreement stipulates that the player:
 - A. will participate on only one specific **Primary SAY** team for one entire season, and
 - B. will be provided with the opportunity to participate in the games within **these SAY ORGANIZATIONAL RULES**.
2. To assure that only properly assigned players are on a team, the Head Coach of each team shall send both:
 - A. the team roster, and
 - B. copy B of each player agreement (or acceptable substitutes) to the District Representative as soon as the team is organized, and in no case later than the day before the team's first scheduled game.
PUNISHMENT: Forfeiture of any game in which an ineligible player participates.
3. A player, who may also be a participant in a "Rec-Plus" program, shall be subject to the criteria contained in **ORGANIZATIONAL RULE 15**.

RULE 7 – COACHES

1. A maximum of three (3) coaches will be recognized as official for each team; A Head Coach and two Assistant Coaches, whose names shall appear on the team roster, and where at least one of whom must be present during team practices and games. This does not preclude the use of many more coaching assistants at practices. The Head Coach must be at least eighteen years of age.
2. The SAYArea, or its District, is responsible for the correctness of the player's age and address, as shown on each player's agreement.

PUNISHMENT: Forfeiture of any game in which an ineligible player participates.

3. At each game,
 - A. The Head Coach for each team will have a copy of the team roster, which may be examined by the opposing Head Coach only if this request is made before the start of the game (i.e. not during the game, not at half-time, nor after the match has been completed).
 - B. The Referee may examine either team's roster at any time before, during, or immediately after a match, but in doing so the Referee must also check the roster of the opposing team.
 - C. In the event that the Coach does not have a copy of the team roster at a game, the Referee shall permit the game to proceed, but the incident must be reported to the SAYArea (or District) Representative.

4. It is desired that all Head Coaches:

A. be certified by the NSCAA, or

B. be licensed by USSF, or

C. have received training as approved by the SAY Training and Education Committee (SAYTEC).

5. It is recommended that the coaching staff:
 - A. have in their possession medical release consent slips for each rostered player at all practices, games and other team functions for emergency use;
 - B. use only positive reinforcement and encouragement with players during all practices and games; and
 - C. refrain from negative remarks during practices and games.

RULE 8 – LEGAL TEAM

1. General Provisions

- A. Team Size: (11 v. 11)
 - (1) As a general rule, a team must have no fewer than eleven (11) players.
 - (2) There should be an adequate number of substitutes so that players can be rested, but not so many that players cannot get a significant amount of playing time.
 - (3) The optimum maximum team size is fifteen (15) or sixteen (16) players.
 - (4) Teams with more than sixteen (16) players are acceptable in order to enable all of the children to play:
 - (a) if there is a shortage of coaches, or
 - (b) if not enough players sign up to form two teams.
 - (5) No SAY 11v11 team may have more than twenty-two (22) players. (If there are more than 22 players, it will be impossible to comply with the SAY rule requiring that each player play not less than approximately one-half of every game).
- B. For age divisions playing small-sided games [i.e. 12-U (Strikers) 9v9, 10-U (Wings) 7v7, and 8-U (Passers) 7v7] the provisions for the number of players assigned to the teams, as outlined in **ORGANIZATIONAL RULE 8, Section 1-A** above, should be modified accordingly to provide for maximum player participation. The maximum number of players on a team's roster must not exceed two (2) times the number of players allowed in the short-sided competition division, e.g. in a 7v7 division the maximum roster size would be fourteen (14) players, where a more manageable roster size would consist of ten (10) or eleven (11) players.
- C. Players may be added to a team's roster no later than thirteen (13) days after the day of that team's first game.
- D. A rostered player lost to a team for the remainder of the season may be replaced at any time during league play, but only if the number of rostered players remaining on the team do not exceed the maximum number of players allowed to play in a league game plus five (5). These replacements should be done under the direct supervision of the SAYArea (or District) Representative and/or Team Committee person. (There may be late sign-ups who would be available to fill these openings).
- E. Players may not be added to a team's roster after league play has ended.
- F. No player listed on a Primary SAY roster may play on any other Primary SAY team during the same SAY season.

G. No player who has played as a member of a college team, regardless of age, may play on a SAY team.

PUNISHMENT: Forfeiture of any game in which an ineligible player participates.

2. **Authority to Form Teams**

- A. Each SAYArea (or District) is authorized to form teams and make team assignments within its own geographic boundaries or for its own membership in accordance with these **ORGANIZATIONAL RULES**.
- B. Every child either residing within the boundaries of a “Residential District” or who is a member of a “Organizational District” must be given an equal opportunity to play on a SAY Soccer team for which the child is eligible.
- C. Notice of registration for teams must be given in like manner to all the children who:
 - (1) reside within the boundaries of that “Residential District”, or
 - (2) are members of that “Organizational District.”
- D. Under no circumstances may tryouts or any other similar selection process be used to determine if a child may play SAY soccer.

3. **Player Draw**

- A. Players shall be assigned to teams in a manner that provides no intentional advantage to any one team over another.
- B. Assignment of new players and those who have moved up from a lower age division shall be by blind draw, or some other method that results in teams being balanced in ability level. This is one of the most basic rules in SAY and must be enforced by each SAYArea (or District). Any random choice method is acceptable. For example:
 - (1) Each team picks from sign-up cards that have been placed face down on a table.
 - (2) Numbers are assigned to player sign-up cards and team assignments are made based upon the numbers, as they are randomly drawn.
- C. Each team within an age division must have the same number of players of each age group (e.g. 9, 9, 9, 8, and 8, but not 9, 9, 9, 9, and 7 nor 10, 9, 8, 8 and 8) as other teams within that same age division (within one player). For example:
 - (1) If there are four 10-U (Wings) teams and a total of 26 nine-year-old players within the League, teams may have 7, 7, 6, and 6, but not 8, 6, 6, and 6 nine-year-old players.
 - (2) If there are five 12-U (Strikers) teams and a total of 43 ten-year-old players within the District, teams may have no more than nine (9) nor no less than eight (8) ten-year-old players.

- D. Teams with fewer players in an age group must be allowed more draws from that age group, to equalize the age distribution to the extent practicable.
- E. Where an imbalance cannot be corrected by draw assignments of new players and those who have moved up from a lower age division, players must be randomly transferred at the time of the draw from existing teams to correct the imbalance.
- F. Any imbalance which occurs subsequently because of the loss of players:
 - (1) need not be corrected by player transfer, but
 - (2) should be corrected by assignment of unassigned players who have signed up late or who have been placed on waiting lists.
- G. When a SAYArea (or District) fields only one team in an age division, that team may have no more than nine (9) players in the oldest age group. An exception may be granted only
 - (1) by the governing body of the SAYArea, and then only
 - (2) after all other means of moving the oldest excess players have been exhausted. This includes the formation of another team or allowing the older players (who desire or are willing to do so) to “play up” in the next older age division.
- H. When new teams are formed, it is recommended that all players (including returning players) be randomly assigned to all teams. Where this is not either practicable or desirable:
 - (1) newly formed teams should be assigned experienced players (who are moving up or transferring) first; and
 - (2) teams with returning players should be assigned experienced players (who are moving up or transferring) last.
- I. A player (or the player’s parent) may choose to have the player not play on a particular team or for a particular coach within the player’s “Residential” or “Organizational” District, provided that such a preference is made prior to the player draw.
 - (1) The player’s right should be communicated to the player at the time of registration – perhaps by a block on the sign-up sheet that asks one or all of the following:
 - (a) “Does the player prefer not to return to the same team? – Yes or No,” and/or
 - (b) “Does the player prefer not to be coached by coach _____? Yes or No.” and/or
 - (c) “Does a player prefer to be re-assigned to another team during the player draw? Yes or No.”
 - (2) Should such a player be randomly assigned to that team or coach, the player must be immediately re-entered into the draw and another player assigned.
 - (3) Where there are only two teams, and a requested preference to not play on one team assures assignment to the other, any re-

assignment should be made only where there is sufficient reason to justify allowing the requested preference.

- J. Except as described in this **ORGANIZATIONAL RULE 8, Sections 3E, 3G and 3I**, players who remain on a team roster from the previous year may not be transferred to another team, unless all teams in that age division are being completely redrawn.
- K. The following players, who would otherwise be subject to the draw, may be exempt from the draw.
 - (1) The child or children of the Head Coach of the team.
 - (2) The child or children of one assistant coach of the team – provided such assistant coach was assigned to the team prior to the draw.

Exception: If a child of an assistant coach or a former assistant coach from the prior season(s) is already on the team prior to the draw, then no child of an additional assistant coach is exempt from the draw.
 - (3) Any otherwise eligible younger brother or sister of any player who is:
 - (a) already playing on the team or
 - (b) assigned by random draw to play on the team.
- L. A person with a conflict of interest should neither participate in conducting a player draw, nor with the assignment of players to teams.
- M. Head Coaches should be notified of the player draw for their age division and be allowed, wherever practicable, to attend.
- N. All team drawings must take place in the presence of a representative of the SAYArea Team Committee (as defined in **ORGANIZATIONAL RULE 8, Section 5**) – either a member of, or a person chosen by, that committee.
- O. A record of the results of the draw shall be:
 - (1) submitted to the SAYArea Team Committee, as soon as practicable after completion of the draw, and
 - (2) kept by the SAYArea (or District) Representative.
- P. A team in violation of **ORGANIZATIONAL RULE, Sections 2 or 3** will not be allowed to participate in the SAY program, if the SAYArea (or District) determines that this has been the result of a deliberate attempt at “stacking the team”. If it is determined that the variation is the result of ignorance or an error of “good faith”, the ruling body of the SAYArea (or District) will declare the team to be “not-at-fault” and correct the situation in a manner that causes the least harm to the players and/or team.

4. **Post-draw Assignments**

- A. Players signing up after team draws are completed will be assigned to teams by the SAYArea (or District) Representative in such a manner so as to balance, as far as possible, the distribution of age groups.
 - (1) Post-draw assignments to teams that have been formed by Residential Districts shall be made by that District's Representative.
 - (2) Post-draw assignments to teams that have been formed by an Organizational District, shall be made by the Organization's District Representative.
- B. Where more than one team has an opening for a late registrant or registrants, assignments to teams will be done on a random basis and in such a manner as to assure balance among the teams.
- C. In no instance will a player be removed from a team as a result of an assignment of a later registrant.
- D. Late sign-ups should not be assigned to teams one at a time as soon as they sign-up.
 - (1) This method could result in excellent or unscrupulous players deliberately not signing up until they know that the team they want to play on is next in line for a player assignment.
 - (2) It is better to accumulate several late sign-ups and then assign all of them together using a blind draw procedure (i.e. on a random basis and in such a manner to assure balance among the teams).

5. **SAYArea Team Committee**

- A. The governing body of each SAYArea will select a Team Committee, the chairman of which shall be a member of the SAYArea's governing body. Other members of the Team Committee could be the District Representatives, or others who represent the total geographic area of the SAYArea.
- B. The SAYArea Team Committee will:
 - (1) supervise within the SAYArea:
 - (a) registration of players,
 - (b) formation of teams,
 - (c) formation of leagues; and
 - (2) receive, investigate, and report their findings to the governing body of the SAYArea for action when any challenge of the eligibility of any team or player is made at any time, and
 - (3) perform any other duties that may be assigned to it from time to time by the governing body of the SAYArea.

6. **Illegal Team and Ineligible Player Protests**

- A. A protest concerning an illegal team or ineligible player:
 - (1) May be made at any time, by any person, and
 - (2) Does not require the payment of an official protest fee noted in **ORGANIZATIONAL RULE 9.**
- B. If it is determined that an illegal team, or that an ineligible or illegal player has participated in a game, that game shall be declared a forfeit.
Exception: Teams declared “not-at-fault” in accordance with **ORGANIZATIONAL RULE 8, Section 3-P.**
- C. The forfeit penalty will apply not only to the game that originated the protest, but also to all games in which the illegal team or ineligible/illegal player participated.

RULE 9 – OFFICIAL PROTESTS

1. Judgment calls by the Referee(s) may not be protested. For example, no official protest may be made concerning the referee's judgment as to:
 - A. who committed the foul, or whether a foul was intentional or even committed,
 - B. whether a goal was or was not scored,
 - C. which team should be awarded the ball when the ball goes out of play over the goal-lines or the touch-lines,
 - D. allowing or failing to allow an "advantage", etc.
2. An official protest concerning a particular game and any incidents which occurred during that game may be lodged only by the Head Coach, or their assistant when the Head Coach is not present. The protest may ONLY be filed if it is alleged that a SAY PLAYING RULES LAW was incorrectly applied or enforced by the Referee - for example:
 - A. awarding a penalty kick for a dangerous play or unsporting behavior,
 - B. allowing a team to play with a full complement of players (i.e. eleven (11) players in an 11v11 game or a lesser number for small-sided games) after a player has been ejected (red carded) during the course of the game, etc.
3. Official Protest Procedure:
 - A. An informal, but official, verbal protest must be made to the Referee(s) by the Head Coach, or their assistant when the Head Coach is not present, at (preferably) or close to, the time of the incident; but in all cases, it must be made before the Referee(s) have left the playing area.
 - B. A simple or vague complaint about a call or calls will not suffice – the words "official protest" must be used, and the reason for the protest must be made clear. (If this is done at the time of the incident, a mistake by a referee can often be easily rectified without the need for any further action.) Any coach, who has made an official verbal protest, may withdraw that protest at any time.
 - C. The opposing Head Coach must be notified of the protest by the Referee.
 - D. The informal verbal protest must be followed by submission of a formal, written official protest,
 - (1) Delivered to the District Representative or the appropriate SAYArea designee,
 - (2) By midnight of the following day,
 - (3) Accompanied by a fee, as designated by the SAYArea, which will be refunded if the official protest is allowed; and retained by the District (or SAYArea) if the official protest is disallowed.

- E. Intra-district protests may be decided by the District Representative, or the SAYArea Protest Committee, or they may be forwarded to the SAYArea's governing body for a decision.
 - F. Inter-district protests must be decided by the SAYArea Protest Committee or the governing body of the SAYArea.
 - G. A decision regarding an official written protest must be rendered within seventy-two (72) hours of its reception and the decision must be transmitted in writing to both coaches in a timely manner.
 - H. Official protest decisions may be appealed to the governing body of the SAYArea, but any such appeal decisions are FINAL and may not be further appealed to National SAY.
 - I. A report of each official protest should be submitted to the SAY National Office within 30 days.
4. If an official protest is allowed, the ruling body shall determine the corrective action required with the understanding that in most situations the game shall be replayed from the time of the incident.

RULE 10 – MINIMUM TEAM FORFEITS

1. Teams from within the same District must field no fewer than the legally required minimum number of players as stated in the **SAY PLAYING RULES, LAW 3** (i.e. seven (7) players for an 11v11 game and a lesser number for small-sided games) at the scheduled starting time.
2. Teams from out-of-District are allowed a 20-minute grace period, and must by then field at least the legally required minimum number of players as stated in the **SAY PLAYING RULES, LAW 3** (i.e. seven (7) players for an 11v11 game and a lesser number for small-sided games).
3. If the above requirements are not met by one team, the game is to be recorded as a forfeit to the other team.
4. If neither team meets the requirements, it is “no contest” and the game should be rescheduled.
5. If a forfeiting team presents evidence of extenuating circumstances acceptable to the SAYArea’s governing body, the forfeit may be rescinded and the game rescheduled.

RULE 11 – SUPERVISION

1. Subject to these **SAY ORGANIZATIONAL RULES**, each SAYArea's governing body is authorized to allow its Districts to:
 - A. Schedule games,
 - B. Supervise the assignment of players to teams,
 - C. Form teams and leagues and assign coaches,
 - D. Decide protests, and
 - E. Otherwise regulate activities pertaining to the SAY program within that District.
2. A District is also ultimately subject to the specific rules of the SAYArea for which it is a part.

RULE 12 – PLAYER PARTICIPATION

1. It is the intent of this rule to assure that every player is allowed maximum participation. Every player must *** be allowed to play *** or *** given the opportunity to play *** at least the equivalent of approximately one-half of every game, as closely as possible.
2. Every player present at the start of the game shall play at least the equivalent of approximately one-half of the regulation game (i.e. this is not intended to apply to any overtime portion of an extended game) – unless:
 - A. A player is injured prior to the start of the game, and
 - B. Notification of the injury is given to the Referee and the opposing Coach before the start of the game.
3. Any player arriving after the start of the game must be allowed to play not less than one-half of the game (or the remainder of the game if less than one-half remains). However, if the coach feels that disciplinary action is necessary; the playing time may be reduced by any amount – up to the remainder of the game in its entirety. It is the intent of this section of the rule to still assure every player maximum participation, and one-half of every game should be approximated as closely as possible, when applicable.
4. Should a coach feel that it is in the best interest of the player to discipline that player by denying the player participation in a game, permission shall be given by the SAYArea (or District) Representative provided that all of the following four (4) criteria are met:
 - A. The Coach must submit a written request to their SAYArea (or District) Representative for permission to withhold the player from a game.
 - B. A separate request must be made for each player and for each game stating:
 - (1) the reason such action is desired, and
 - (2) how such action will be beneficial to the player.
 - C. The SAYArea (or District) Representative agrees with the Coach and gives written permission to withhold the player from the next scheduled game.
 - D. The letter granting permission is presented by the requesting Coach to the Referee and the opposing Coach prior to the start of the game.

Note: Once the letter is presented to the Referee, the player may not participate in that game under any circumstances.
5. The SAYArea (or District) Representative or a designee appointed by the SAYArea’s governing body should investigate all allegations of violation of **ORGANIZATIONAL RULE 12**.
PUNISHMENT: Forfeiture of any game where a violation of **ORGANIZATIONAL RULE 12** occurs – BUT ONLY if the violation can be confirmed by an impartial observer, such as the District Representative or someone assigned by the District Representative or the SAYArea’s governing body.

RULE 13 – 16-U (MINORS) & 19-U (SENIORS) DIVISIONS

1. Assignment of players to 16-U (Minors) teams and to 19-U (Seniors) teams shall be subject to all of the **SAY ORGANIZATIONAL RULES**.
2. 16-U (Minors) teams and/or 19-U (Seniors) teams shall register through the District Representative, or through the SAYArea's governing body, if it is necessary to draw players from more than one District (or SAYArea) to form a team or teams.
3. A 16-U (Minors) Commissioner will be appointed by mutual agreement of the governing bodies of each of the involved SAYAreas to schedule and administer the 16-U (Minors) League.
4. A 19-U (Seniors) Commissioner will be appointed by mutual agreement of the governing bodies of each of the involved SAYAreas to schedule and administer the 19-U (Seniors) League.
5. The 16-U (Minors) Commissioner and the 19-U (Seniors) Commissioner shall each have all the status and authority of a District Representative to review and to administer appropriate sanctions towards players, coaches and teams in accordance with these **SAY ORGANIZATIONAL RULES**.

RULE 14 – RULE VARIATIONS

1. Where these **SAY ORGANIZATIONAL RULES** mandate a particular procedure by use of the words “must”, “shall” or “will”, no variation shall be permitted without prior written consent of National SAY.
2. Where the **SAY ORGANIZATIONAL RULES** are presented in the form of guidelines, recommendations or suggestions, such as when the word “may” is used, the SAYArea may adopt the procedure suggested or modify it to suit its own needs or special circumstances – provided that the procedure chosen satisfies the intent and spirit of the **ORGANIZATIONAL RULE**.
3. Procedures not specifically covered by the **SAY ORGANIZATIONAL RULES** are relegated to the governing body of the SAYArea for decision.
4. If a SAYArea wishes to experiment with a variation of a mandated **SAY ORGANIZATIONAL OR PLAYING RULE** petition may be made to National SAY by the SAYArea (i.e. not a District) for a variance approval.
5. A variance request must specifically state the proposed change and which rule(s) are affected by the proposal. A separate proposal shall be submitted for each different variance being requested.
6. If a rule variance approval is granted, that variance may be used by that SAYArea for no longer than the one-year (1) period for which it was approved. For a SAYArea to continue to use an established variance, the SAY Area will be required to file for re-approval each and every year.
7. Where a District has problems assembling teams in accordance with **SAY ORGANIZATIONAL RULE 8**, the governing body of a SAYArea may permit variances, which will apply only within that District. Such teams may not interplay with another Districts, unless the District Representative of the other involved District gives their approval.
8. During interplay between a SAYArea, which may use an approved variance(s) or modification(s), and SAYAreas that do not, only the standard **SAY ORGANIZATIONAL RULES** may be used.

RULE 15 – APPROVED “REC-PLUS” VARIANCES

1. **Philosophy:** It has been a stated National SAY policy that teams consisting of “selected” players would not be to the benefit of the vast majority of the youngsters playing within a SAYArea. However, SAY does recognize that the demographics of some of its SAYAreas may be best served by allowing the implementation of a supplementary or a complimentary program, which would best serve the playing needs of all of the youngsters within the SAYArea.
2. A “Rec-Plus” program may only be implemented by a SAYArea after the SAYArea has submitted a written proposal to the SAY National Office, and the proposal has been approved by the SAY National Executive Director in writing. The approved SAYArea may operate the program in a District format or any other format as long as it is not in violation of the **SAY ORGANIZATIONAL RULES**.
3. A “Rec-Plus” SAY program shall not be in competition with the Primary SAY program within a SAYArea and may be either:
 - A. A “Supplementary” program, where “Rec-Plus” teams/leagues would be formed separately and in addition to the primary SAY teams/leagues. Such a program will only be approved in large SAYAreas where there are a sufficient number of players and facilities to support both programs without in any way adversely affecting the Primary SAY program.
 - B. A “Complimentary” program, where the “Rec-Plus” teams would be made up of players from the Primary SAY teams playing (and practicing) at different times and not in conflict with the Primary SAY program.
 - C. A “Rec-Plus” SAY program could be played entirely within a SAYArea’s “Secondary” season, as defined in **ORGANIZATIONAL RULE 2, Section 4** and not be in violation of competing with the SAYArea’s Primary SAY program.
4. Specific Rule Requirements and Permitted Variances:
 - A. All SAY Organizational Rules shall be followed except as may be mentioned in the following Sections.
 - B. **ORGANIZATIONAL RULE 1 – Age Classification**
 - (1) Teams may be broken down into 1-year or 2-year age groups only.
 - (2) Children under ten (10) years of age may not play on a “Rec-Plus” team, i.e. 10-U (Wings) division and younger teams are not eligible for “Rec-Plus” play.
 - (3) Short-Sided team format may be used for all age divisions.

- C. **ORGANIZATIONAL RULE 4** – Leagues
 An approved “Rec-Plus” SAYArea may combine teams to form leagues with another SAYArea or SAYAreas, only if all the SAYAreas involved mutually agree and that each SAYArea has been separately approved to operate a “Rec-Plus” program.
- D. **ORGANIZATIONAL RULE 6** – Player Agreements
- (1) Supplementary “Rec-Plus” Program
 There will be no variance of **ORGANIZATIONAL RULE 6** allowed, i.e., a player will participate on only one specific SAY “Rec-Plus” team for one entire season.
 - (2) Complimentary “Rec-Plus” Program
 A variance to allow a player to participate on a Complimentary “Rec-Plus” SAY team in addition to their primary SAY team may be granted only if the following conditions are met:
 - (a) There is no conflict of game schedules and/or practices with the player’s primary SAY team (i.e. the player’s first responsibility is always to the primary team).
 - (b) If a player leaves the primary SAY team then that player is no longer eligible to participate on a “Rec-Plus” SAY team.
- E. **ORGANIZATIONAL RULE 8** – Legal Team
 Even though players would be “invited or selected” to participate in a “Rec-Plus” program, the formation of teams shall still adhere to all of the requirements of **ORGANIZATIONAL RULE 8, including especially Sections 3 and 4** (i.e. players are being selected to play in the “Rec-Plus” program, they are **NOT** being selected to play by and/or for a particular team).
- F. **ORGANIZATIONAL RULE 12** – Participation
- (1) There will be NO variance of **ORGANIZATIONAL RULE 12** allowed under any circumstances. It is still the mandate of SAY that ALL players shall be allowed to play at least the equivalent of approximately one-half of every game, as closely as possible.
 - (2) All of the requirements of **ORGANIZATIONAL RULE 12** shall be enforced in a “Rec-Plus” program or approval of the program will be withdrawn by the National Board of Directors.
- G. There will be no inter-play allowed between any “Rec-Plus” SAY team and any Primary SAY team.
5. The approval by the National SAY for a SAYArea to operate a “Rec-Plus” program is limited to a one (1) year period of time. The SAYArea will be required to bear the burden of proof that it will be able to meet (or that it has met and/or it will continue to meet) all the requirements of operating a compliant “Rec-Plus” program that does not in any way adversely affect the primary SAY program within the SAYArea. For a SAYArea to continue to operate an established “Rec-Plus” program, the SAYArea will be required to file for re-approval each and every year.

RULE 16 – TOURNAMENTS

1. National SAY is not in the business to actively promote, run, administrate, or oversee tournaments, be they self-contained tournaments involving teams from a single SAYArea, or tournaments involving games being played by teams from two or more SAYAreas. This includes tournaments which may be self-designated as “state”, “regional”, or “national” tournaments.
2. Pre-season, in-season, and post-season District or SAYArea Tournaments are an accepted part of play within a SAYArea. Similar to league play, these tournaments are considered to be part of the natural play permitted within a SAYArea’s jurisdiction without requiring special considerations or approval from National SAY.
3. All other tournaments, i.e. involving teams from two or more SAYAreas, require written notification to National SAY in order to be sanctioned as a SAY approved activity. Tournaments that do not receive sanctioning by National SAY are considered to be a non-SAY activity, and as such may not use the SAY logo and are not covered by SAY’s applicable insurance.
4. Sanctioning of a tournament is merely an endorsement by National SAY that insures all participants (i.e. players, coaches, referees, etc.) that:
 - A. The tournament is a legitimate SAY activity, which is covered by SAY’s applicable insurance.
 - B. The SAYArea administering the tournament is a viable SAY entity in good standing.
 - C. Games are to be played in accordance with standard SAY Playing Rules.
 - D. Any rule variances or special tournament features (e.g. tiebreakers) have been submitted and reviewed by National SAY and are approved as being within acceptable SAY guidelines.
 - E. All participating teams, whether SAY or non-SAY affiliated, are recreational and have been formed in compliance with the organizational rules of their affiliated governing national association.
 - F. Acceptance of participating teams is in accordance with SAY and USSoccer policies.
5. Only a National SAY approved SAYArea (not an individual, not a team, not a sponsor, not a SAY District, etc.) may request that a tournament be sanctioned by National SAY. A SAYArea must fill out and submit a Tournament Sanctioning Form, which in part will require stipulating any special rules to be used along with a copy of the tournament application or acceptance form. This form must be provided to the participating teams prior to their commitment to play in the tournament.

6. The SAYArea requesting and receiving National SAY sanctioning for a tournament shall be totally and solely responsible for the operation and administration of the tournament in accordance with the **SAY ORGANIZATIONAL AND PLAYING RULES** and the provisions set forth in the sanctioning process. All decisions and subsequent actions regarding tournament play and eligibility are the domain of the SAYArea, i.e. not the sanctioning entity, National SAY.
7. Any previously approved rule variances or locally adopted variances used by a SAYArea during the playing season are not automatically approved as being acceptable for tournament play. Any such variances from the rules, as written in the SAY Rulebook, must be formally requested in writing and submitted along with the Tournament Sanctioning Form. Acceptance or denial will be a part of the sanctioning document provided by National SAY.
8. The SAY National Office will be responsible for reviewing and the sanctioning of all multi-SAYArea tournaments. If a SAYArea does not have a document from SAY, signed by the SAY National Executive Director, sanctioning the tournament, it is therefore considered to be a non-SAY activity and a “play-at-your-own-risk” activity.

RULE 17 - SYSTEMS OF OFFICIATING

1. It is the SAYArea’s responsibility to decide the system of refereeing to be used within the SAYArea and at least one referee shall be assigned to officiate each game.
2. National SAY recognizes that a one, two, or three-person system of officiating may be preferred or necessitated because of local conditions or the age of the players. However, whenever practicable, the three-person “Diagonal System of Control” is recommended.
 - A. In the One-Referee System, only the one assigned Referee shall have authority and responsibility for the calling of fouls and violations by the use of the whistle. Where club linesmen appointed by the Referee are used, their duties are to be limited to calling balls in and out of bounds.
 - B. In the Two-Referee System, both Referees shall have equal authority and responsibility for the calling of fouls and violations by the use of the whistle on any part of the field at any time, and may elect to divide or share equally the administrative responsibilities (such as timekeeping) for that game.
 - C. In the Three-Officials System, two options are available:
 - (1) The “Diagonal System of Control” is generally used throughout the world:
 - (a) Only one official shall have the authority and responsibility for the calling of fouls and violations by the use of the whistle and shall perform as the “Referee”, as described in the **SAY PLAYING RULES, LAW 5.**
 - (b) The other two officials shall perform as “Assistant Referees”, as described in the **SAY PLAYING RULES, LAW 6.**
 - (c) The Referee shall accept the calls of an Assistant Referee with regard to incidents that do not come under the personal notice of the Referee. However, at all other times, the Referee is not obligated to, and may or may not accept the calls of an Assistant Referee, in accordance with the Referee’s own judgment, even if the effect is to nullify or grant a goal.
 - (2) The “Modified Diagonal System” is where all three officials shall perform as “Referees” and shall have equal authority and responsibility for the calling of fouls and violations by the use of the whistle on any part of the field at any time, and may elect to divide or share equally the administrative responsibilities (such as timekeeping) for that game.

NOTE: Other SAY Soccer policies, guidelines and procedures can be found in the SAY Soccer Administrator’s Handbook. Copies of this Handbook are available at the District and SAYArea level or through the SAY National Office.