

**GRAND VALLEY SOCCER ASSOCIATION
(GVSA)
RULES AND REGULATIONS
June 24, 2011**

SECTION A PURPOSE AND GENERAL STRUCTURE

The Association intends to provide a competitive experience for those players whose skills, playing abilities and interests qualify them to participate. The Association is viewed as an experience for continuing the development of highly skilled players. Secondly, the Association hopes to provide a framework for competitive soccer in the Grand Rapids and Northwestern region of the Lower Peninsula.

1. The Board of Directors is the primary governing body of the Soccer Association of West Michigan (hereafter referred to as **GVSA**). The Board consists of five (5) elected directors, and up to two (2) appointed directors, who are the voting members. The Board shall also appoint nonvoting members who will function as the coordinators of coaching, officiating and the League's Premier Teams. The GVSA shall sponsor fall and spring seasons.
2. The GVSA is affiliated with the Michigan State Youth Soccer Association (**MSYSA**) and complies with all rules and regulations of the United States Youth Soccer Association (**USYSA**) and the United States Soccer Federation (**USSF**). The GVSA, through its affiliation with the MSYSA, shall provide insurance as part of player registration. The GVSA shall also sponsor teams for play in the Michigan State Premier Soccer program (MSPSP), as defined below.
3. The GVSA, upon request, will provide copies of the Association's Constitutions and Bylaws to all first time participants.
4. Clubs may enter teams in the GVSA according to the following criteria:
 - a. Any participating club that submits registrations for four (4) or more teams in a season, in any age groups, will automatically have all such teams entered, provided:
 - i. The club is good standing with the GVSA.
 - ii. All players and coaches are in good standing with the GVSA, and meet all league requirements for the group into which they are entered (age, sex, licensing requirements for coaches)
 - iii. All such teams are deemed to be competitive by the Board
 - iv. In the event that there are insufficient teams at a given age group to form a division, the Board may, at their discretion, return any such registrations, or register the team(s) involved in the next older available age group.
 - b. Clubs submitting registrations for less than four (4) teams in a season may apply to the Board for entry of such teams.
 - c. New clubs may apply for admission to GVSA subject to the following procedures
 - i. A letter of application must be submitted stating the club's name, how it is organized, goals and purpose. All applications shall include the Club's Bylaws and/or Articles of Incorporation, Rules and a list of, at minimum three (3) Officers, including contact information.
 - ii. All applications must be received 90 days prior to the Club holding tryouts for any team that
 - iii. The Board of Directors must approve all applications. However, approval may not be withheld on the grounds that there are existing clubs in the same area as the applicant's club.
 - iv. All new clubs will automatically be subject to the same procedures as

- other clubs, as listed in Sections A.4.a and A.4.b above.
- d. GVSA recognizes a class of teams designated as Associated Teams. Associated Teams may be entered into the league, but are subject to additional conditions, as enumerated below. An Associated Team is any team whose home area falls outside of the GVSA geographical boundaries as defined in the Bylaws. Any club participating in GVSA that is composed entirely of Associated Teams shall have no voting rights within GVSA, nor any other rights of GVSA member clubs. Such teams are subject to the following additional conditions, in addition to all other conditions required of all GVSA teams:
 - i. Acceptance of Associated Teams is strictly at the discretion of the Board of Directors on a year-to-year basis.
 - ii. GVSA may, at its discretion, require such teams to play all of their home games at a field within the GVSA geographical boundaries.
 - iii. Associated Teams will not be offered sponsorship as Premier teams into the MSPSP under any circumstances.
 - iv. Associated Teams do not count towards team totals for voting purposes within GVSA.
 - v. Any other conditions that the GVSA Board wishes to impose.
5. The GVSA requires that open tryouts be held to select all member teams every year; all players must have an opportunity to try out for a team:
- a. Players are urged to try out for clubs with which they have a natural affiliation (community or school related). Clubs may place restrictions (e.g. geographic area served) on who may try out for their teams, provided these are consistent with the purposes stated by the club when applying for admission into the GVSA. No player meeting a club's try out criteria may be excluded from trying out for that club's teams.
 - b. Clubs may not actively solicit participation at their tryouts from players who played the previous season on a GVSA team, or a GVSA sponsored MSPSP team belonging to a different GVSA club, unless at least one of the following conditions is true:
 - i. The club in question has ceased to function, or no longer belongs to the GVSA.
 - ii. The player has moved, or no longer meets the criteria for membership in his club.
 - iii. The player's club has scheduled no tryouts for the player's age group.
 - iv. The player's club has never fielded a team in the player's age group.
 - v. The player has a signed waiver from his club. Such waivers may not limit a player's ability to try out for another club in any way, including his/her present club.
 - vi. The player was not chosen at his/her club's tryouts for his/her age group. Note that any player may try out for any club, of his/her own volition. Publicly advertising a tryout is not "active solicitation".
 - vii. Clubs may actively solicit players who played or are playing in all other leagues. If the other league is affiliated with the MSYSA such solicitation is subject to the rules of the MSYSA and/or the MSPSP.
 - c. Age group tryouts are to be performed in a fair and equitable manner.
 - d. Players who are not chosen should be informed of the reasons for their not being selected. Clubs must notify players promptly as to whether they have been accepted for a team or not. In the event that such notification is not made within fourteen (14) days from the end of the club's tryouts for an age group, the player may consider that he/she has not been selected.
 - e. No summer tryout shall be held before the last regularly scheduled game of the spring season, unless the age group(s) in question is/are not currently playing in the Spring Season. No fall tryout shall be held before the last regularly scheduled game of the fall season, unless the age group(s) in question is/are not currently playing in the fall season. All tryouts are subject to MSYSA rules, which do not allow tryouts prior to the

third Saturday in June. GVSA may choose to use a later date, at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

- f. Tryouts should include assessments of individual skills and performance in game simulations.
 - g. Clubs may add individual players to existing teams after tryouts have been held. Such players may be added by invitation or an informal tryout process (e.g. participation as a guest player, participation at a practice or indoor soccer game).
 - h. The GVSA will recommend tryout dates for GVSA club teams and set a date annually on which players may be signed to play on GVSA teams
 - i. No club shall charge a fee of any sort for players to try out. This is an MSYSA Rule.
6. The GVSA will sponsor Premier teams affiliated with GVSA member clubs, subject to the following criteria:
- i. Any such team must be sponsored by a GVSA member club, who shall be responsible for any fees and fines set by the MSPSP.
 - ii. All Head Coaches must have a USSF "D" Coaching License. To prevent abuses a coach may not be listed as a Head or Assistant Coach for more than two teams.
 - iii. Any Premier Teams must be in good standing with the MSPSP, and is responsible for following their Rules and Procedures. The Sponsoring Club shall be responsible for registering the team with the MSPSP, and providing GVSA with a copy of the team's roster, a copy of all individual player registrations and proof of identity/birth for all players
 - iv. No player or team official in bad standing with GVSA may participate.
 - v. All Premier Teams shall respect GVSA's rules regarding player solicitation, even for teams that are playing in other USSF leagues (e.g. MCL and SYL).
 - vi. The GVSA Board of Directors may revoke a Premier Team's status, place it on a probationary status, or set conditions to be met for violation of these rules and standards. A Premier Team may apply for an extension or waiver of any of these standards provided it shows a plan for remediation of the shortcoming(s).
7. The GVSA will organize the Leagues into appropriate age and gender groups. In as much as possible, they will follow USSF age groupings whenever possible. However, the GVSA may choose to organize the age divisions differently in order to group them more efficiently for league play. In particular, one year age groupings (e.g. Under 10, Under 11, Under 12, etc.) will be utilized whenever it is feasible to do so.
When there are more than 8 teams in an age group, the League may divide the teams into two or more different divisions. Teams may apply for any division. The League will assign each team to a division based upon: The team's previous year's record, the team's player roster, and The club's performance history.
8. When feasible, a minimum of eight (8) games will be scheduled for teams in the spring and fall Leagues
9. All member clubs are responsible for the identification of playing sites in their communities where GVSA games will be played. Addresses and the names of the field(s)' owners for these sites, as well as other sites used for practices, shall be forwarded to the Association's Administrator. This is required for insurance provided through the MSYSA to be in effect at these fields. All decisions regarding insurance coverage shall be made by the MSYSA. The Association will then prepare a master list of all playing fields and publish this on the league's website.

SECTION B COACHES, REFEREES AND MANAGERS

1. Member clubs will be responsible for selecting coaches for their own teams. All head coaches are required to possess a minimum of a USSF "E" License or its equivalent. Coaches who have not yet received an "E" License are expected to complete their certification by the end of the first season in which they coach, in order to continue to participate as head coaches for GVSA teams. Exceptions to this must be approved by the GVSA Board.
2. The GVSA asks its member clubs, when selecting a coach, to give attention to four broad areas of coaching qualifications. These are: soccer background; formal soccer coach training; suitability to work with the age group; and communications/teaching ability. All clubs should annually evaluate their coaches.
3. Coaches are responsible for their team's conduct at practices and games. Coaches who do not adhere to the GVSA Code of Conduct may be suspended by the Board after investigation by the Disciplinary Council. Coaches dismissed by the Association may not serve in any official capacity with any team in the Association or in any other capacity with the Association until the term of the suspension is completed. If the dismissal is permanent, the individual is permanently banned from participation in the Association. Coaches are also expected to help the referees discipline unruly fans: Parents and others are not allowed to coach or make derogatory remarks to players or referees.
4. Member clubs must have one procured the services of a USSF certified Referee Assignor. The GVSA may appoint a Referee Assignor to assign officials for any new club joining GVSA.

SECTION C PLAYERS, REGISTRATION, TRAVEL

1. All Association players must register with the MSYSA (USYSA). Registration information must be submitted to the GVSA registrar. The deadlines for registration are dictated by the Association and the MSYSA. These are:

	Commitment Fee	Initial Players	Final Player Registration
Fall	2 nd Friday in July	4 th Friday in July	Last game of the Fall Season
Spring	2 nd Friday in January	4 th Friday in January	Last game of the Spring Season

The deadline for the commitment fee is important for a timely game schedule. The Commitment Fee shall be:

U8, U9 and U10 Teams	\$220
U11 and U12 Teams	\$280
U13 and older Teams	\$380

The fee shall be the same regardless of whether a team plays in the Fall or Spring seasons. **Teams playing both seasons shall pay an additional \$25 for the Spring season**, due by the Spring commitment date. The fee includes the cost of registering all players with the MSYSA and is non-refundable. The fee is determined by the Age Group level at which the team plays.

The league may also charge additional fees for late player registrations, player transfers, dropping players and lost pass cards.

2. All players, upon registering for the first time with the GVSA, must furnish the Association with a legal proof of identity and age (e.g. birth certificate copy) to be retained by the Association Registrar. All players must also fill out a GVSA registration form, every year they play. All players will get a USYSA identification card that belongs to the player, but

must be made available to the coach or team manager prior to all GVSA games.

3. Age is defined by a player's age on July 31 (e.g. a player who is under 14 years of age on July 31 may play on a U-14 team that fall and the following spring). Players in the U6 and younger age groups may not register for any team in GVSA. Players in the U7 age group may only play on a U8 Age Group Team.
4. ID cards shall be checked by the referee before every League game. Unregistered players may not play. Players with a missing pass card may not play.
5. If an ineligible player plays, or if a coach knowingly permits an ineligible player to participate in a GVSA sanctioned game, the player and/or coach will be suspended for a period to be determined by the Board. Players are ineligible if they are serving a suspension, if they are not registered, or if they were illegally registered (age or gender violation).
6. Players may be on only one GVSA roster; but players are permitted and encouraged to play in other developmental soccer programs and teams in their communities.
7. Players who are selected due to their ability and skills may perform with a team in an older age group. Players may not under any circumstances, play for teams in younger age groups, with the following exception:
 - a. In the Fall Season only, a U14 Boys team may roster up to three (3) U15 players, subject to the following conditions:
 - i. The players are in 8th grade or below or have no High School soccer team available (e.g. school has no soccer program, or player is home-schooled
 - ii. The club rostering the player provides documentation of this.
 - iii. The player will automatically be removed from the U14 team upon conclusion of the fall season, and is free to move to any age eligible team within GVSA for the spring season without penalty.
 - b. In the spring season only, a U14 Girls team may roster up to three (3) U15 players, subject to the same conditions as in Section C.7.a
8. Players who wish to play for both a GVSA team and a MSPSP or MRL team must submit the MSYSA form requesting dual participation. The form must be signed by both coaches. Players must name the MSPSP or MRL team as their team of first priority. As dual participation is intended to provide a transition to a premier team, players may not apply for dual participation two years in a row.
9. Players who wish to transfer to a different GVSA team during the Seasonal Year may do so with the approval of both clubs. However, if the transfer involves an entire team, it must have GVSA Board approval. In the event that the original club objects to the transfer for any reason, a Player Transfer may be initiated and granted only with GVSA Board approval.
The player must follow the MSYSA Player Drop and Transfer procedures when changing Clubs.

SECTION D TEAM & ROSTER LIMITS

1. Team rosters will consist of a maximum of twenty-two (22) players for U17 and older age groups, eighteen (18) players for U13-U16 age groups, fourteen (14) for U11 and U12 teams, and eleven (11) for U10 and younger teams) and no fewer than thirteen (13) (ten (10) for U-11 and U-12 teams, eight (8) for U10 and younger teams) players. If the permanent roster size of a team falls below the player minimum, the team will be required to bring the roster size up to the minimum by adding qualified players. Any team losing a player for the season for any reason must notify the League Registrar as soon as possible.

The minimum roster size is exclusive of any players registered for Dual Participation: they do not count towards the minimum roster size. Additionally, no GVSA team may have more than two (2) players on their roster at any times that are registered for Dual Participation.

2. Players may be registered for tournament play after the spring season (see Section C). These players can only play in tournaments. The GVSA may also register Tournament Only teams that do not play in GVSA, at the league's sole discretion and subject to any rules of the MSYSA.

SECTION E RULES, GAME PROCEDURES

1. All GVSA games will be played according to the FIFA "Laws of the Game", as modified by the USSF for youth players. USSF referees and (to all but the youngest divisions) linesmen will be assigned, using the diagonal system of control. The dual system is not permitted – there is only one Referee and only the Referee shall use a whistle
2. Before every game, both coaches will provide the referee with a *GVSA Official Game Report* and ID cards for all players and coaches. The home team coach will also provide a stamped envelope addressed to the GVSA statistician. Referees will return the cards of all players to the coach or team manager after check and prior to the start of the game; they will send the game report to the league statistician within 48 hours of the finish of the game. A maximum of three (3) coaches and assistant coaches may be on the team side of the field during a game. All must possess valid pass cards and MSYSA Risk Management Cards.
3. Referees and linesmen must be paid by the home team, before the start of the game, according to the fee schedule set by the Association.
4. All players are entitled to a minimum amount of playing time for each regularly scheduled GVSA, as follows:
 - i. U10 and younger aged players are entitled to play a minimum of one-half (1/2) of each game.
 - ii. U11 and U12 players are entitled to play one-third (1/3) of each game.
 - iii. The only exceptions to this rule are for players serving league suspensions, injuries and players subject to reasonable team discipline, which the coach shall note on the game report prior to the start of the game. Reasonable team discipline includes missed practices.
 - iv. Coaches may not shorten a player's playing time in one game, and make it up in another.
 - v. This policy applies to all players, including goal keepers.
 - vi. It is not the job of the Referee or GVSA to enforce this rule. Breaches of the rule shall be addressed initially to the player's club. Trifling breaches of the rules are not cause for complaint, unless they occur on a regular basis.

SECTION F DISCIPLINE (CAUTIONS AND SEND-OFFS)

The GVSA expects its players and coaches to conduct themselves within the rules of the Association, the principles of fair play, and good sportsmanship. In accordance with the MSYSA Rules and Regulations:

1. Players, coaches or managers being sent off (red card) in a GVSA sanctioned game will be suspended for his/her team's next scheduled game, if the red card was for two cautions or denying an obvious scoring opportunity by handling the ball. For serious foul play, violent conduct or abusive/foul language, the suspension shall be for two games. Violent conduct before or after the game (no red card shown) will also result in a two game suspension.
2. Players threatening, by word or sign, another player, coach, spectator, referee, team or league official shall be suspended for one game. The penalty for coaches is a two game

suspension; repeat offenders are suspended for at least four games and must appear before the GVSA Board.

3. Players pushing or striking a coach or manager shall be suspended a minimum of one year. The penalty for coaches, managers and other team officials is a minimum suspension of one year and an appearance before the GVSA Disciplinary Committee. All abuse and assault of referees shall be referred to the Michigan Referee Committee for disciplinary action.
4. Fans and others, who may reasonably be construed to be associated with a team, shall also be subject to the jurisdiction of the GVSA. Coaches and team officials are responsible for those who, in the opinion of the disciplinary authority, are team supporters.
5. Players, coaches, managers or team officials who alter a roster, falsify a birth date or affix a wrong photo to an ID card shall receive a seven year suspension.
6. Players, coaches, managers or team officials receiving three cautions during a playing season shall be suspended for one game. Anyone sent off twice during a season must appear before the GVSA Disciplinary Committee before he/she can play again. The hearing must be requested by the offender.
7. The coach of any team receiving 3 red cards in one game, or 5 red cards in a season, or 5 cards (red or yellow) in one game, or 10 cards (red or yellow) in a season, must appear before the GVSA Disciplinary Committee. Until the hearing, the team shall play under probation.
8. Any coach allowing a suspended player to play, shall be suspended for two games. The team using the suspended player shall forfeit the game.

SECTION G GAME PROTESTS

Protests must be submitted to the Vice President within 24 hours of the conclusion of a game and must be submitted by the team's Club. Only factual errors may be protested, not judgment calls.

SECTION H UNIFORMS

1. All players must be in full uniform: shirt, shorts, socks, shin guards and shoes. In the event of color conflicts, the home team shall wear white or other light colored jersey. The visiting team shall wear dark colored jerseys. Goalkeepers shall wear colors that distinguish them from all other players and referees. The Referee shall be the sole arbiter of what constitutes a color conflict.
2. Numerals, at least six inches in height, must be worn on the back of each player's jersey. Numbers on goalkeepers' uniforms are optional on either the front or back or both. Captains should wear arm bands.

SECTION I HOME TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The home team is responsible for securing the playing field and for assuring that it is playable and meets minimum playing dimensions (50 x 100 yards; 40 x 70 yards for U-11 and U-12; 35x60 yards for U10 and younger). If a field is not playable, the referee must issue a report to the league administrator, who then has the authority to rule if the game will be forfeited, allowed to stand as played or replayed
2. The home team must provide a ball that satisfies the laws of the game and pay the referees before the game commences.

3. The winning team, or the home team in the event of a tie, must report the score to the GVSA statistician via the internet at www.gvsoccer.org within 24 hours of the conclusion of the game.
4. The home team must have a first aid kit, or certified trainer, at the game site.

SECTION J SCHEDULES, CANCELLATIONS & FORFEITS

1. Whenever feasible, the Administrator will schedule eight games each in the fall and spring. For acceptable reasons and with permission of the Administrator, a game may be rescheduled: both teams must agree on the date and time and the home club must have permission from the Referee Assignor. The GVSA may regulate the rescheduling of games, including charging a fee for rescheduling a game, as rescheduled games are extremely disruptive. Clubs may not cancel games under any circumstance without permission from the GVSA. .
2. The GVSA requires that when lightning is observed, or thunder heard, by the referee during any game, the game must be suspended until the danger has passed for 30 minutes. Games shall not be suspended for longer than a total of 90 minutes and may not cause a succeeding game on the same field to be delayed by more than 30 minutes. The decision to suspend a game lies solely with the Referee, and teams may not decide to suspend the game and leave prematurely. If a game is terminated because of weather and one half of the game has been completed, the game will be considered complete and the score at the time of the suspension will be recorded as the final result. If a one half of the game has not been completed and the game is terminated, the game will be rescheduled and replayed. The home team must notify the Administrator of the new date, time and site.
3. If a team willingly forfeits a scheduled game, its club must post a \$250 performance bond at the beginning of the next season. If the team forfeits again during that season, it will forfeit the bond. Otherwise, the bond will be paid back to the club.
4. In the event a game is forfeited, the team's club shall be fined \$50. In the event that a game is unplayed for any other reason both clubs shall be fined \$50.
4. Teams should not play without a certified referee. In emergencies, others may referee, if both teams agree and subject to GVSA procedures

SECTION K PRACTICE AND SCRIMMAGE FREQUENCIES

Teams may practice as frequently as they wish. Teams may have as many inter-squad scrimmages as they wish. A scrimmage is defined as a game like situation for which there are no sanctioned referees and where the final score is not recorded.

SECTION L STANDINGS AND CHAMPIONSHIPS

1. A point system will be used to determine the standings of teams in each age division. A win is three (3) points, a tie is one (1) point, a loss zero (0) points. A forfeit shall result in a deduction of one point (-1) from the standings. Points may also be deducted from the Standings at the League's discretion.
2. At the conclusion of each GVSA season, the team which has accumulated the most points in each Division shall be declared the champion of its division. If two or more teams are tied on the basis of points earned the tie breakers will be as follows: head to head teams involved in the tie, goal differential (up a maximum of four goals per game), goals against, then goals for; if the teams are still tied they are co champions.
3. The GVSA does not award commemorative trophies or patches; however, individual teams

may purchase awards for their players.

SECTION M DUE PROCESS

Disciplinary action taken by the Disciplinary Committee may be appealed to the Board within 7 days of the notification of the action taken. All appeals must be made in writing.

In case of trouble with another team or club, a club may contact the Board and describe the problem. The Board will communicate its decisions via the club representatives and/or the individual coaches concerned. If the Board reprimands a team and if the problem is not corrected, the offending team may be removed from the GVSA.