



2026 Spring Season (updated)

Charles County

Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism

Adult Soccer Guidelines

I. THE LEAGUE:

- A. **Mission:** To enhance the quality of life of our residents and visitors by providing well rounded recreational and competitive sports programs focusing on building a sense of community and improving the overall quality of life for current and future generations.
- B. **Philosophy** - The Charles County Adult Soccer Leagues are first and foremost a recreational sports league. The purpose of these leagues is to provide the opportunity for Charles County residents to participate in an organized sanctioned soccer league.-
- C. **Administration** - The leagues will operate under the jurisdiction of Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Office. (All guidelines are subject to review and changes may be made at the discretion of the League Coordinator). Items not specifically listed in these guidelines will be decided upon by the League Coordinator, and any questions or discrepancies should be brought to, Rachel Halmon the League Coordinator's attention; halmonr@charlescountymd.gov, 240-349-3049.
- D. **League Format** – The league will be open to one or more divisions of competition. There must be at least four teams to constitute a division. A Women's 18+ 7 vs 7 (Sunday), Men's 35+ 11 vs 11 (Wednesday) and Men's 18+ 11 vs 11 (Monday). A single-elimination tournament for a minimum of the top four (4) teams of each division will be held at the conclusion of the regular season.

II. COACHES AND MANAGERS:

- A. Each team must have a designated coach or manager who will be the team representative and will be responsible for the following:
 - 1. Be the liaison between League Coordinator and team.
 - 2. Attend all coaches/managers meetings. Ensure that phone numbers and addresses are current and valid at all times.
 - 3. Inform team members about all information about the league (rules, regulations, schedule, etc.)
 - 4. The conduct of players and team spectators.
 - 5. Obtain and return on time to the office of League Coordinator all league information required such as franchise fees, registration, rosters, etc.
 - 6. Reinforce the recreation philosophy to all players.
 - 7. Responsible for keeping team bench and surrounding area free of trash resulting from team

members and team spectators (see Park Rules).

8. Responsible for reporting scores to the Facilities Attendant on site. If a staff member is not present, scores can be sent via email to: halmonr@charlescountymd.gov

III. TEAM MEMBERSHIP:

- A. A 20% administration fee is deducted for all refund requests 4 weeks prior to the league starting; a 50% refund if withdrawal requested 2 weeks prior to the league starting; no refund will be given inside of two weeks.

- B. Each team roster shall be limited:

1. 7 V 7 - minimum of ten (10) players and a maximum of fifteen (15) players. (Women's League)
2. 11 V 11 - minimum of fourteen (14) players and a maximum of twenty (20) players. (Men's League)

NOTE: Rosters will not be accepted with less than the minimum number of players.

C. All rostered players must be 35+. (35+ Men's League)

- D. Players can only play for one team during the season in the same league.

- E. Additions and/or deletions to the roster must be in writing and submitted to the League Coordinator before player(s) are eligible to play in any game. Last day to add/drop is by the third week of the season.

1. Adding or dropping players must be done by using the current add/drop form. **A verbal addition will not be accepted, nor will it be accepted at the game site.**
2. Teams needing to add players (after last day to add/drop) may do so with the permission of the League Coordinator, but such teams are not eligible for regular season awards or tournament play.
3. Teams may not hold players on their team past the add/drop date to avoid elimination in the program.
4. **Add/Drops must be received by the League Coordinator before the start of the game by 5:00 p.m. (weekday), by 11am (weekend).**
5. Completed team rosters (with names, addresses, phone numbers, etc.) must be submitted online to the League Coordinator before their team's first game.

- F. Team members on a particular team may not be held on a roster past the add/drop date to purposely eliminate their participation in the program. Note: Players may switch teams in the same division, only if they have not played in any games and it is before the add/drop deadline; players that have played in games before the add/drop deadline can only switch teams if the new team is in a different division.

G. If a player is on two (2) separate rosters and plays in a game, the team which the player first played for shall be their team for the remainder of the season.

H. Out of County Players:

1. Non-residents are welcome to participate, however, in the circumstance where a division has reached a full capacity of teams, rosters with Charles County residents will be given priority.

I. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

Players must be at least 18 years of age and not eligible to participate at the high school level.

EXCEPTION: a player who is 17 years old graduates during the current season can be listed on the team roster; however, that player is not eligible to play for his/her team until after graduation date.

- A. Any team that knowingly or unknowingly plays a non-roster or illegal player will automatically forfeit all games in which the illegal player participated.
- B. A player may only play in one league or division per season sponsored by the Department of Recreation, Parks & Tourism. If it's determined that the player played in two different leagues, he can be suspended up to four games.
- C. **Each team is required to have every player on their roster show a picture ID before playing in games.** At any time during the season, the Department of Recreation, Parks & Tourism reserves the right to ID any player whose eligibility comes into questions.
- D. The League Coordinator will provide the Facility Attendant with copies of team rosters for their onsite use. However, any administrative changes to rosters will only be conducted through the main office. Players are responsible for providing proof of identification to determine player eligibility to the Facility Attendant or officials (if not, he or she will immediately be declared ineligible).
- E. Smoking and/or the possession and consumption of alcoholic beverages are strictly prohibited at Charles County Recreational Parks. Any player, coach, or spectator who violates the Parks Rules and Regulations regarding smoking and the possession and consumption of alcoholic beverages on Park Property will be subject to a thirty (30) day suspension and possible removal from the program. Any period of the suspension not served during the current season will be carried over to the next.
- F. Player participation in multiple leagues:
 1. Men can participate on one 18+ Monday league team and one 35+ Wednesday League Team.

IV. EJECTIONS AND SUSPENSIONS:

- a. Consequences for suspensions/ejections will be decided by the Recreation, Parks, and Tourism office based upon a 3 Tier system. Any player, parent, coach, or spectator who is suspended may not attend any game or practice sites until their suspension has been fulfilled. If games are postponed or rescheduled, suspensions are indefinite until games are played.

1. Tier One: 1-game Suspension

- a) A tier one offense may be issued to any player, parent, coach, or spectator based on the following criteria, which includes but is not limited to:
 1. Is ejected from a game or asked to leave a game or practice site by an official or Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism staff member for harassment, obscene gestures or language, or any other unsportsmanlike behavior. The result of these actions will result in a 1-game suspension, effective immediately, starting with your team's next scheduled game.
- b) Any further ejections may result in suspension from the league.

2. Tier Two: Suspension for remainder of season

- a) Anyone may be suspended from the league and all Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism programs for the remainder of the season.
- b) A tier two offense may be issued, at the discretion of the League Director to any player, coach, or spectator based on the following criteria, which includes but is not limited to:
 1. Committing multiple tier one offenses within the same season.
 2. Strike, shove, bump, trip, or threaten an official, player, coach, spectator, Recreation, Parks, and Tourism staff member or league official during or after a game, on Charles County Community Center, Public School, or Park property.

3. Tier Three: 2 Year Suspension

- a) Anyone involved in a tier 3 offense may be suspended from the league and all Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism programs for a minimum of two years.
- b) A tier three offense may be issued, with discretion from the League Director to any player, parent, coach, or spectator based on the following criteria, which includes but is not limited to:
 1. Committing multiple tier one or tier two offenses within a year of previous offenses.
 2. Is involved in a severe incident that displays excessive, relentless, or malicious disobedience of our mission, including but not limited to; harassment, fighting, or conduct with intent to harm an official, player, coach, spectator, Recreation, Parks, and Tourism staff member or league official during or after a game, on Charles County Community Center, Public School, or Park Property.

V. MATCH RULES:

- A. All matches will be played using F.I.F.A. rules with the following modifications:
 - 1. Women games will be played seven-a-side (7 vs 7).
 - i. Games will be played on intermediate-size soccer fields (120' x 90').
 - 2. Men's games will be played eleven-a-side (11 vs 11)
 - i. Games will be played on regulation-size soccer fields (300'X170')
 - 3. Substitutions may be made, with the approval of the referee, and at the following times:
 - i. Prior to a goal kick by either team.
 - ii. After a goal by either team.
 - iii. After an injury, by either team, when the referee stops play.
 - iv. At half-time.
 - v. The official must be notified only when substituting for the goalkeeper.
- B. All substitutes must enter the field of play from the vicinity of the mid-field line. Players may leave the field from any point.
- C. No substitute for a disqualified player.
- D. Penalty kicks will be taken from the penalty mark on each field.
- E. Slide tackles are always prohibited during play.
- F. Goalkeepers can play the ball anywhere on the field of play. Goalkeepers may not touch the ball with their hands when they are outside the penalty box. Goalkeepers are permitted to score.
- G. A one (1) referee system will be used to officiate all games (Women's League).
- H. A two-referee system will be used to officiate all games (Men's League).
- I. Games will consist of two (2) 35-minute running-time halves.
- J. Halftime will be five (5) minutes.
- K. Teams will be permitted two (2) timeouts per game. Timeouts will last one (1) minute.
- L. Penalty accumulations: A player receiving a red card will be ejected from the game and cannot be substituted.
- M. Minimum number of players to start a game:
 - a. 7 vs 7 - five (5) players are needed to start the game. The team playing short-handed (with 5 players) can add the 6th and 7th player upon their arrival at the game site.
 - b. 11 vs 11 – nine (9) players are needed to start the game. The team playing short-handed (with 9 players) can add the 10th and 11th player upon their arrival at the game site.f
- N. The second team listed on schedule is home team.

VI. EQUIPMENT:

- A. All teams must wear (IDENTICAL) numbered jerseys (front or back) of the same color, rubber soled shoes or approved cleated shoes. Shin guards must be worn at all times.
- B. The home team will be responsible for supplying the game ball (#5). Any questions regarding playing equipment shall be determined by the League Coordinator and/or referee at the game site.

- A. **Jewelry:** Exposed jewelry, which is judged by the umpire to be dangerous, must be removed and may not be worn during the game.
- B. Religious and medical-alert medals are not considered jewelry. A religious medal shall be taped and worn under the uniform. A medical-alert medal shall be taped and may be visible.
- C. Due to safety concerns, Charles County Recreation, Parks, & Tourism does not recommend wearing beads in the hair, however, if beads are to be worn, at the discretion of the referee, Department of Recreation, Parks, & Tourism staff, or league representative they must be securely fastened close to the head and covered with a soft covering so as to not increase the risk to athletes, teammates or opponents.
- D. Sweat bands for wrist and head are allowed if worn appropriately.
- E. Items worn for religious reasons must be brought to the attention of the Facility Attendant.
- F. No metal belt buckles allowed.
- G. Eyeglasses should be secured with a strap.
- H. Casts of any kind, even if padded, are not allowed.

VII. LEAGUE REGULATIONS:

A. Forfeiture:

1. Teams who fail to field a team two consecutive games may be suspended from the league and no refund will be allowed (determined by the League Director).
2. Any team using an ineligible player or using a player under an assumed name will automatically forfeit all games in which the illegal player participated. Any player guilty of this infraction will be suspended.
3. Any repeat infraction of the above rule will result in that team being dropped from the league and all scheduled games not played will be forfeited to the opponents.
4. **Tournament Play:** Any team using an ineligible player will be disqualified immediately. ID's will be checked before tournament games.
5. Any repeat infraction of the above rule will result in that team being dropped from the league and all scheduled games not played shall be forfeited to the opponents.
6. When a team forfeits a game, the opposing team may use the field for practice or scrimmage (except the last scheduled game, the field will be closed upon forfeit). Teams must vacate the field five minutes prior to the scheduled start of the next game.
7. Teams that forfeit games before game day will not be allowed to make up games if regularly scheduled date is rained out.

B. Protests:

1. Rule interpretations and player eligibility are the only grounds for protest and must be protested at the time of the incident, and before the next play resumes. If the referee's decision is not accepted, the coach must immediately notify the Facility Attendant of their intention to protest. The protest

will be logged in the official score book.

2. If by chance a situation cannot be clarified by the Facility Attendant, a written protest may be made. **IF THE COACH HAS NOT ADDRESSED THE FACILITY ATTENDANT FOR AN ON THE SPOT CLARIFICATION, THE LEAGUE COORDINATOR WILL NOT ACCEPT A PROTEST ON THE MATTER.**

1. Formal protests (including player eligibility) must be submitted in writing to the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Office within two working days of the incident. A \$100 fee will be applied.

- C. No verbal complaints concerning umpires, other teams, etc., will be addressed --- all complaints must be made in writing and submitted to the League Director.

D. Tie Break Procedures:

The tie break procedures will only be used if teams are tied in regular season standings, and will be as follows:

1. Win/Loss record in head-to-head competition.
 2. Points allowed in head-to-head competition.
 3. Points allowed against the entire league.
 4. If necessary, a coin flip will take place.
- * *If three or more teams are tied, prior to #2 Win/Loss record in head-to-head competition between all tied teams will be used. If teams are still tied, total points allowed in head-to-head competition between all tied teams will be used prior to number 2.

- K. Games won by forfeit will not be included in head-to-head competition (tie break procedures).

- L. If teams are tied at the end of the regular season and one of the teams has won one (1) or more games by forfeit:

- a. Game(s) which were won by forfeit will not be included in the head-to-head competition (tie break procedures).
- b. The game in which each opponent played against the team which forfeited, will be eliminated from the head-to-head competition.
- c. Example: Team A and B have identical won/lost records at the conclusion of the regular season. Team C has a forfeit to team A but won or lost to Team B by playing a game and not forfeiting. Because of the forfeit of Team C to Team A, the game with Team C and B will also be recognized as a forfeit and both games with Team C will not be included in the head-to-head competition (tie break procedures). This rule may duplicate as often as necessary.

- A. **Awards: Awards:** If a post season tournament is held, the tournament champion and runner up will receive a sponsor trophy.

1. The regular season championship may pick one of three awards options:

1. Sponsor trophy or medals for players.
2. Championship shirts w/numbers and names on the back.
3. \$150 discount off the next league the team registers for.

Choice of awards must be made immediately following the final game. Player name verification is required immediately following the game for all awards. Shirt sizes and numbers are required if the shirt option is selected.

VIII. BLOOD RULE

- A. A player, coach or umpire who is bleeding or who has transferrable blood on his uniform shall be prohibited from participating further in the game until appropriate treatment can be administered. If medical care or treatment is administered in a reasonable length of time, the individual will not have to leave the game. The length of time considered reasonable is left to the umpire's judgment. Uniform rule violations will not be enforced if a uniform change is required. The umpire shall:
1. Stop the game and allow treatment if the injured person would affect the continuation of the game.
 2. Immediately call a coach, trainer or other authorized person to the injured player.
 3. Apply the rules of the game regarding substitutions, re-entry and shorthanded player if necessary.
 4. Coaches should have first aid supplies and extra uniforms available for every game.

IX. INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

- A. In case of inclement weather, each park field will be evaluated individually as to playing conditions. Please remember that our parks are in different areas of the county and that cancellation at one park does not necessarily mean that we are cancelling elsewhere. All coaches will be notified of any cancellations via email. Notices will also be posted on our website.
- B. For information **after 4:00 p.m.**, you can still call the park where your game is scheduled directly. A recording will announce which fields are canceled. White Plains Park office number is 301-645-2617 and Laurel Springs Park office number is 301-934-2541.
- C. Cancellations at the last minute or at game time will be handled by staff at the field.
- D. All games to be rescheduled will be done by the League Director and may be scheduled on various nights. Schedules will remain the same, only rainouts will be rescheduled. Coaches are responsible for checking the Department of Recreation, Parks & Tourism website at www.charlescountyparks.com (Sports/Adult Soccer) for all rescheduled game dates.
- E. Lighting: Criteria for suspension and resumption of play:
- i. **Thunder and Lightning** - If thunder and/or lightning can be seen or heard, participants, spectators and staff are in danger. The contest must be stopped, and protective shelter sought

immediately. If either situation should occur, 30 minutes will be allowed to pass after the last sound of thunder and/or lightning (before the contest may resume).

- ii. The 30-minute delay due to thunder and lightning will restart after each instance. If thunder or lightening is heard or seen any time after the first 15 minutes of the delay, the match will be considered cancelled.
- iii. If weather conditions change while a game is in progress, or the field is in unsafe playing condition--the referee and sport attendant will make the decision to cancel games at the game site. Note: the cancelation of 7:00pm game doesn't automatically cancel the 8:30pm game.

CONCUSSION FACT SHEET

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is an injury that changes how the cells in the brain normally work. A concussion is caused by a blow to the head or body that causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull. Even a “ding”, “getting your bell rung”, or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

Concussions can also result from a or from players colliding with each other or with obstacles, such as a goalpost, even if they do not directly hit their head.

The potential for concussions is the greatest in athletic environments where collisions are common.

Concussions can occur, however, in any organized or unorganized sport or recreational activity. As many as 3.8 million sports and recreation-related concussions occur in the United States each year.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?

If you have experienced a bump or blow to the head during a game or practice, look for any of the following signs and symptoms of a concussion:

Signs Observed by Others:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Cannot recall events prior to hit or
- Cannot recall events after hit or

Symptoms Reported by Athlete

- Headache or “pressure” in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not “feel right”

HOW CAN YOU HELP PREVENT A CONCUSSION?

Every sport is different, but there are steps you can take to protect yourself from a concussion

- Follow your coach’s rules for safety and the rules of the sport
- Practice good sportsmanship at all times
- Wear the right protective equipment for the activity. Protective equipment should fit properly, be well maintained, and be worn consistently and correctly
- Learn the signs and symptoms of concussion.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE A CONCUSSION?

- **Seek medical attention right away**
 - A health care professional will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe to return to sports
- **Keep yourself out of play**
 - Concussions take time to heal. Don’t return to play until a health care professional says it’s ok. Players who return to play too soon – while the brain is still healing – risk a greater chance of having a second concussion. Second or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting you for a lifetime.
- **Tell your coach about any recent concussion**
 - Coaches should know if you have had a recent concussion in ANY sport. Your coach may not know about a concussion you received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.

Remember, you can’t always see a concussion and some athletes may not experience and/or report symptoms until hours or days after the injury. It’s better to miss one game than the whole season.

For more detailed information on concussion and traumatic brain injury, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/injury>

Definition: Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) is a potentially fatal condition in which the heart suddenly and unexpectedly stops beating. When this happens, blood stops flowing to the brain and other vital organs. SCA in student athletes is rare; the chance of SCA occurring to any individual student athlete is about one in 100,000. However, student athletes' risk of SCA is nearly four times that of non-athletes due to the increased demands on the heart during exercise.

Causes: SCA is caused by several structural and electrical diseases of the heart. These conditions predispose an individual to have an abnormal rhythm that can be fatal if not treated within a few minutes. Most conditions responsible for SCA in children are inherited, which means the tendency to have these conditions is passed from parents to children through the genes. Other possible causes of SCA are a sudden blunt non-penetrating blow to the chest and the use of recreational or performance-enhancing drugs and/or energy drinks.

Warning Signs of SCA

- SCA strikes immediately.
- SCA should be suspected in any athlete who has collapsed and is unresponsive.
- No response to tapping on shoulders
- Does nothing when asked if he/she is OK
- No pulse

Emergency Response to SCA

- Act immediately; time is most critical to increase survival rates.
- Recognize SCA.
- Call 911 immediately and activate EMS.
- Administer CPR.
- Use Automatic External Defibrillator (AED).

Warning signs of potential heart issues: The following need to be further evaluated by your primary care provider.

- Family history of heart disease/cardiac arrest
- Fainting, a seizure, or convulsions during physical activity
- Fainting or a seizure from emotional excitement, emotional distress, or being startled
- Dizziness or lightheadedness, especially during exertion
- Exercise-induced chest pain

- Palpitations: awareness of the heart beating, especially if associated with other symptoms such as dizziness
- Extreme tiredness or shortness of breath associated with exercise
- History of high blood pressure

Risk of Inaction: Ignoring such symptoms and continuing to play could be catastrophic and result in sudden cardiac death. Taking these warning symptoms seriously and seeking timely appropriate medical care can prevent serious and possibly fatal consequences.

Information used in this document was obtained from the American Heart Association (www.heart.org), Parent Heart Watch (www.parentheartwatch.org), and the Sudden Cardiac Arrest Foundation (www.sca-aware.org). Visit these sites for more information.

Frequently Asked Questions about Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA)

What are the most common causes of Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) in a student athlete?

SCA is caused by several **structural** and **electrical** diseases of the heart. These conditions predispose an individual to have an abnormal rhythm that can be fatal if not treated within a few minutes. Most conditions responsible for SCA in children are **inherited**, which means the tendency to have these conditions is passed from parents to children through the genes. Some of these conditions are listed below.

1. *Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM)*: HCM involves an abnormal thickening of the heart muscle and it is the most common cause of SCA in an athlete.
2. Coronary artery anomalies: The second most common cause is congenital (present at birth) abnormalities of coronary arteries, the blood vessels that supply blood to the heart.
3. Other possible causes of SCA are:
 - a. *Myocarditis*: an acute inflammation of the heart muscle (usually due to a virus).
 - b. Disorders of heart electrical activity such as:
 - c. *Long QT syndrome*.
 - d. *Wolff-Parkinson-White (WPW) syndrome*.
 - e. *Catecholaminergic Polymorphic Ventricular Tachycardia (CPVT)*.
 - f. *Marfan syndrome*: a condition that affects heart valves, walls of major arteries, eyes, and the skeleton.
 - g. Congenital aortic valve abnormalities.
 - h. *Comotio Cordis*: concussion of the heart from **sudden blunt non-penetrating blow** to the chest
 - h. Use of recreational, **performance-enhancing** drugs, and **energy drinks** can also bring on SCA.

How can we minimize the risk of SCA and improve outcomes?

The risk of SCA in student athletes can be minimized by providing appropriate prevention, recognition, and

treatment strategies. One important strategy is the requirement for a yearly pre-participation screening evaluation, often called a sports physical, performed by the athlete's medical provider. Since most of these conditions are inherited, **be aware of your family history**, especially if any close family member:

1. Had sudden unexplained and unexpected death before the age of 50.
2. Was diagnosed with any of the heart conditions listed above.
3. Died suddenly /unexpectedly during physical activity, during a seizure, from sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) or from drowning.

Take seriously the warning signs and symptoms of SCA

Athletes should notify their parents, coaches, or school nurses if they experience any of these warning signs or symptoms. Schools in Maryland have AED policies and emergency preparedness plans to address SCA and other emergencies in schools. Be aware of your school's various preventive measures.

If a cardiovascular disorder is suspected or diagnosed based on the comprehensive pre-participation screening evaluation, a referral to a child heart specialist or pediatric cardiologist is crucial. Such athletes will be excluded from sports pending further evaluation and clearance by their medical providers.