



USL PRE-PROFESSIONAL

2026 || REFEREE HANDBOOK

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USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE Staff Contacts

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For game day issues, weather, field conditions, player eligibility, rules of play, standards, and emergencies, please contact the USL Pre- Pro Hotlines (USL2: 813-804-3255) (USLW: 813-804-3254). A league staff member is always monitoring this phone. For MOD11 roster issues on game day, please contact the appropriate league hotline.

For MOD11 issues prior to game day, or Ref Insight payment issues, please contact Chance Mannix or Chadwick Flanders. Only requests submitted with the Match ID and Match Date will be accommodated in a timely manner.

USL Discriminatory Behavior and Language (Pre-Professional) – In Game Procedure

The following processes are meant to outline the procedures of the match officials, including direction to the match officials in handling claims of Offensive, Insulting, or abusive language and/or action(s), in match. Additionally, this document is meant to outline the procedures of all parties involved to bring these matters to resolution on game day. Please note that following the match the League will conduct a thorough investigation of these allegations.

Summary of Processes and Procedures for Match Officials/Club(s)/League:

1. Once informed of an allegation, relay the information to all members of the officiating crew. The Referee will record all incident information in the MOD11 match report immediately following the match so that League staff can be made aware of the incident. After the match, there should also be a follow-up email sent to that respective league's points of contact (listed on the previous page).
2. Ensure that the participant who is making the allegation is given time and space to fully explain what he/she is alleging. If the match official(s) is not familiar with the word or action used, ask for clarification. It is not up to the match official(s) to determine if the word or action is discriminatory in nature. If the player states that it is discriminatory, it must be treated as discriminatory behavior. It is extremely likely that he/she will be in an emotional state, and it may take time to fully make sense as to what the person is reporting. Be empathetic and supportive. Use a teammate/colleague of the reporting participant to facilitate communication, if necessary. A second match official should be present during this conversation for purposes of corroboration. Don't rush this step. Gain as much detail as possible from the person reporting the conduct, such as when and where it happened, who was responsible for the conduct, what the exact words used were, and behavior demonstrated. Make notes, if necessary, to aid recollection later.
3. Communicate with your officiating colleagues to establish whether they have witnessed the alleged conduct. If so, take appropriate action as per the Laws of the Game.
4. The Referee should speak with the alleged offender and make him/her aware of the allegation that is being made. A second match official should be present during this conversation for purposes of corroboration. Referees are encouraged to use the team captain, or another teammate of the alleged offender, to facilitate communication. If the alleged offender admits the alleged offense, the Referee should take the appropriate action as per the Laws of the Game. In any case, any responses made by that individual should be noted in writing for later reference.
5. The Referee should speak with both captains to explain the reason why there is a delay to the game. Speaking with both captains at the same time should be considered best practice, in the absence of any specific reason why the Referee does not feel this would be conducive to effective communication.
6. The Referee should speak with both head coaches to share the reason for the delay and the information which has been presented. No specific requests should be made by the Referee to the head coaches (e.g., regarding the need to substitute players, etc.). The role of the Referee is to share the information which has been presented to him/her, including the specific word(s) or action(s) reported. Any decisions taken at that stage by the head coaches are matters for them and not for the officiating crew.

7. The game should only be re-started once the above steps have been taken. Ensure no other circumstances exist to warrant further delay.
8. On re-starting the game, the match officials should be aware of the impact the allegation will have had on the emotions of all participants, and the high likelihood that the game's temperature will have risen. The match officials should remain extremely vigilant throughout the remainder of the game and use their management skills to maintain firm control.
9. Post-game, the Referee should provide early notification of the incident to a USL representative by immediately calling the USL League hotline. This gives notice for League staff to review the incident in further detail.
10. The match official report on MOD 11 should include a detailed account of the full circumstances, including actual words used in the initial reporting of the incident to the Referee, and any responses from the alleged offender. During the reporting process, reference should be made to any notes taken at the time of the incident, including time of the incident during the match. Such notes should be retained, as production of these may be required at a later time.

It is mandatory that any instances of DBL are reported to the league before the match can continue. For issues on game-day please contact the USL Pre-Pro Hotlines (USL2: 813-804-3255) (USLW: 813-804-3254). A league staff member is always monitoring this phone.

Rules of Competition

The following information provides a basic overview of the rules of competition for regular and post-season play in USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE.

Playing Rules

Each USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE game shall be played in accordance with the most recent edition of the FIFA Laws of the Game, and any rules of competition established by USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE and approved by the appropriate National Federations.

Match Officials

Match Officials for each USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE games shall consist of the Referee, Assistant Referee One, Assistant Referee Two and a Fourth Official. A Fourth Official shall be assigned for all matches, but if a scenario should arise where there is no fourth official then the match may be played. The League shall notify teams of the Match Officials.

Officials are required to wear Official Sports (OSI) uniforms. Officials will bring multiple colors to coordinate with the teams and goalkeepers. All personal equipment including communications devices, disappearing spray, flags, whistles, watches, etc. must be provided by the Officials themselves. Communication headsets are permitted if all members of the referee crew are certified to use them.

Training for using electronic communication devices comes when Grassroot Referees upgrade to Regional Referee. Grassroots Referees are not permitted to use electronic headsets until they have received their Regional Referee License. There have been numerous instances in youth and adult competitions where the use of electronic headsets, by unqualified officials, has contributed to an incorrect decision on the field of play. If there is a split crew of Regional and Grassroot Referees, headsets are *not* to be used during that game.

Referee

The Referee shall have general oversight and control of the game and shall exercise the powers granted to them by the FIFA Laws of the Game. The Referee's duties to start the game are outlined later in this Manual.

Assistant Referees

Two (2) Assistant Referees shall assist the Referee in controlling the game. Upon their arrival at the stadium, the Assistant Referees shall report to the Referee. The Assistant Referees are defined as the Assistant Referee One (bench side) or AR1 and Assistant Referee Two or AR2 (spectator side).

Fourth Official

The Fourth Official shall assist with administrative duties, procedures for substitutions and, if necessary, be responsible for the replacement of the game ball to eliminate unnecessary delays in the game. The Fourth Official shall be situated at a table at midfield on the team bench side of the field, between the two team benches, approximately EIGHT (8) to TEN (10) feet outside the touchline.

Stadium and Playing Field

Seating Capacity

Each stadium must have a minimum seating capacity of 1,000 persons.

Lighting

Each stadium must have floodlights with minimum 40-foot candles for night play.

Dressing Rooms

Each stadium must have dressing rooms for the home team, visiting team and referees with working showers that have hot water and towels.

Scoreboard

Each stadium must have a working electronic scoreboard that displays home team / visiting team scores, half, and a 45-minute time clock that counts up from 0:00.

Playing Surface

Each stadium must have a playing surface that consists of natural grass or FIFA approved synthetic turf and must be in good playing condition. The grass length on game day shall not exceed one and one-half (1-1/2) inches.

Field Dimensions

The minimum playing surface dimensions are 110 yards x 68 yards, unless otherwise approved by USL League Two or W League staff.

Field Markings

The dimensions and markings of the field shall be measured according to standard FIFA specifications. This includes clear, distinct field markings that are five inches wide on a field that remains a constant size during the season. Goal nets and corner flags should be free of advertising.

USL League Two and USL W League require that signage representing the respective League sponsors be displayed at field level facing the main grandstand. To facilitate the correct placement of League sponsor signage, the League will provide layouts or diagrams. Placement of League sponsor advertising signage is mandated by USL League Two and USL W League and takes precedent over local sponsors.

Bench & Technical Area

Per the FIFA Laws of the Game, the technical area relates to matches played in stadiums with a designated seated area for technical staff and substitutes. Both the home and visiting team's benches shall be placed on the same side of the field on the side designated by the stadium field plan. The home team shall designate the bench locations at the start of the season and shall not change these locations during the season. The bench area shall be marked according to FIFA's technical area markings, and the bench should accommodate no more than fourteen (14) persons per team.

Penalty Area

At each end of the field, a line perpendicular to the goal line shall be drawn parallel to each side of the goal and eighteen (18) yards from each goalpost. This line shall extend for eighteen (18) yards into the field of play from the goal line. A line running parallel to the goal line shall be drawn to connect the two perpendicular lines, which shall form the "penalty area." Within each penalty area a penalty mark is made twelve (12) yards from the midpoint between the goalposts and equidistant to them. An arc of a circle with a radius of ten (10) yards from each penalty mark is drawn outside the penalty area.

Goals & Goal Area

At each end of the field, a line perpendicular to the goal line shall be drawn parallel on each side of the goal and six (6) yards from each goalpost. This line shall extend six (6) yards into the field of play from the goal line. A line running parallel to the goal line shall be drawn to connect the two perpendicular lines, forming the "goal area." Each goal shall be centered on the goal line and equal distance on each side from the corner flags. Game day goals shall be the size approved by FIFA.

Halfway Mark & Center Circle

A halfway line shall be marked across the center of the field. The center of the field shall be so marked and have a circle, which has a ten (10) yard radius, drawn around it.

Corner Area & Flags

At each of the four corners of the field measuring from the corner flags post, a quarter circle of a radius of one (1) yard shall be drawn inside the field of play. Corner flags shall be on posts not less than five (5) feet high with non-pointed tops.

Uniforms

Player Uniforms

All players shall wear identical uniforms as provided by the official uniform supplier. The goalkeeper's uniform shall be different colors than the team uniform and shall conform to FIFA and USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE guidelines. Slide pants or compression shorts may be worn under uniform shorts and make reasonable efforts to match the predominant color of the uniform shorts.

The Referee shall enforce all FIFA equipment rules and any equipment deemed dangerous shall be removed.

USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE Logo

The USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE logo must be permanently affixed to the left sleeve of the jersey.

Team Logo

The team's name and/or team logo must be present on the front of the game jerseys.

Uniform Numbers

Each uniform must contain numbers on the back. The size of the number must be a minimum of eight (8) inches on the back of the jersey. It is mandatory that the referee crew ensures that all players' kit numbers match the roster submitted by each club. This will ensure accuracy in the stream/broadcast, as well as maintaining accurate match stats (goals, assists, minutes, discipline, etc.). It is possible that a player will change numbers from one game to the next, but it is both the club's responsibility to ensure this is up to date on the DMR, as well as the referee's responsibility to ensure that no player is allowed to play with a kit number that does not match the DMR.

Uniform Selection

The home team has the right to select the color of its home uniform and must inform the visiting team of its choice via the Home Team Travel Information Form. Visiting teams must wear a contrasting uniform. In case of a conflict, the visiting team is required to change. The League Hotline should be notified in instances where the visiting team is unable to accommodate. The referee has the authority to resolve the conflict if the League Hotline is unavailable, but only after a good faith effort to contact the League.

Order of Preference:

1. Home Team Field Players
2. Away Team Field Players
3. Home Team Goalkeeper
4. Away Team Goalkeeper
5. Referee Crew (Will adjust based off Home and Away Clubs)

Goalkeeper Jersey

The goalkeeper jersey must be distinct from both the home team and the visiting team. The referee has the authority to require a goalkeeper jersey change.

Warm-ups

All team warm-ups should be identical for all players and should tie in with the color scheme of the uniforms.

Referee Uniform

All referees are required to supply their own uniform. USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE competitions require the use of approved uniforms by the appropriate National Federations. All Referees should coordinate with the Home/Away clubs for their jersey color and should look to adjust based off the home/away team colors.

Game Preparation & Presentation

Game day presentations for all USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE matches should be professional and consistent. This shall be accomplished by adhering to all USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE Regulations

and Standards. The following guidelines shall apply to all USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE games, including, but not limited to, all regular season, exhibition, playoff, Final, and/or international games in which any USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE teams participate other than unadvertised scrimmages or practice games at which no admission is charged, or monies collected.

Game Ball

USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE will provide official League game balls to be used for all regular season and playoff matches. No other ball is to be used by member clubs. A minimum of eight (8) official USL branded game balls must be available throughout the game.

Game Video

It is mandatory for all USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE teams to live stream all their home matches to the league streaming/video sharing platform. Pre-match, we encourage the Referee to ask the home team if the match is being streamed live on SE Play. This is important for referees to know, as well as the league. Not only is this a mandated League Standard, but this can also affect any potential video assessments taking place on behalf of the Referee. Please reach out to the League Hotline if you do not see the game on the league streaming/video sharing platform within 48hrs post-match. Matches that are not streamed live will take considerably longer to become publicly available.

Complimentary Tickets

The home team must provide 2 complimentary tickets per referee crew member upon request, no later than 48 hours in advance of the match day.

For playoff matches, 2 complimentary tickets per referee crew member must be set aside. Referees must claim them within 48 hours after referee assignment. Referees must reach out to the appropriate league hotline to request tickets for any match.

Arrival to Stadium

Each member of the referee crew must arrive at the stadium at least 60 minutes prior to the scheduled kickoff. The home team and visiting team must arrive at the stadium at least 60 minutes prior to the scheduled kickoff.

Referee Liaison

The home team must appoint a Referee Liaison solely dedicated to meeting the needs of the officials on game day. The Referee Liaison shall assist the officials with pre-game, halftime, and post-game requests and needs. The Liaison should provide hospitality and help to ensure that all routine and administrative duties of the referees are completed with as little difficulty as possible. Ideally, the Referee Liaison will have some knowledge of refereeing and the challenges facing soccer referees and can help in the following areas: referee transportation, properly equipped dressing rooms (water, towels, soap, etc.), answering questions, and facilitating the filing of game report forms following the game. If the referee crew is not greeted upon arrival, please make note of this in the post-match survey.

Certified Athletic Trainer

The home team must provide a certified athletic trainer that is available to both the home and visiting teams before, during, and directly after the game to treat injuries and tape players. **Referees must introduce themselves to the Athletic Trainer, check them in on the Match Day Roster and confirm their on-field positioning (ideally between both benches). Athletic Trainers will not count towards the number of non-playing staff permitted on a team's Match Day Roster.** All athletic trainers must also have knowledge of the facilities EAP and location of AED. **Under no circumstances can a match be played without a certified athletic**

trainer present. For a match to potentially move forward, the league office must be contacted, and, at minimum, there must be medical personnel certified to conduct a SCAT5 test on individual suspected of a concussion must be present. The match will result in a forfeit by fault of the home team should no athletic trainer or medical personnel be present.

Visiting teams are encouraged to travel with their own team trainer. If not traveling with a trainer, the visiting team should communicate the need to use the home team's trainer via phone or email communication at least two weeks in advance. The trainer should be available for the visiting team at a pre-arranged time to tape players prior to the game. Additionally, it is suggested that the home team verbally confirm receipt and understanding of their request by the visiting team. It is recommended for clubs to have a certified athletic trainer on site during all team activities (i.e., training sessions, gym workouts, and exhibition games). At minimum during club activities outside of official League matches, clubs must have at least one (1) member of their technical staff who is first aid, CPR, and AED certified if a certified athletic trainer is not present.

Game Day Timeline

Home team must give the visiting team and referee crew a copy of the Game Day Timeline immediately upon their arrivals to the stadium. A copy of the Game Day Timeline must also be displayed in the visiting team and referee dressing rooms. The Game Day Timeline provides a detailed minute-by-minute breakdown of game day, specifically including the two (2) hours preceding kick-off, how and where to line up for introductions, pre-game ceremonies and additional instructions that assist all parties in the game day operation. This timeline shall be strictly adhered to unless previous arrangements have been made with the home team.

Field Evaluation

The home team must meet with the Referee around (60) minutes prior to the kickoff to assure the field is properly marked, the goals are in place and secure, the nets are properly fastened, the corner and midfield flags are proper and in place, and the balls are properly inflated. Anything deemed insufficient by the referee must be immediately corrected by the home team. Any delay to the kickoff time, because of adjustments being made to the field, needs to be communicated to the League immediately via the appropriate League hotline.

National Flag

The home team must display the national flag representing the country of the home team and the visiting team at all home games. In the event the opponent is from a foreign country, that country's flag shall also be displayed. Color guards are acceptable. Flags must be of equal size and displayed at the same height.

Scorekeeper / Fourth Official's Table

The home team must provide a table at midfield with chairs and communication to the press box and clock operator for the scorekeeper and the Fourth Official.

Benches

The home team must provide benches / seating to accommodate no more than fourteen (14) persons.

Ice and Water

All referees, as best practice, should look to bring their own hydration in a personal non-sharable container. The home team must provide refills from a cooler.

Captains' Meeting

The captains' meeting will take place at least fifty-five (55) minutes prior to the kickoff of the match. It is the responsibility of the home team to notify the referees if this will be different for that match. The match officials, captains of both teams and an administrative or technical staff member of the home and away team will meet. During this meeting teams will conduct the following items:

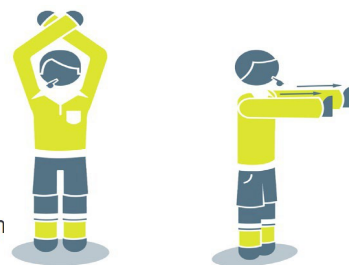
- Show Colors (Home and Away Field and Goalkeeper jersey, shorts and socks) by showing Jersey Colors.
- Identify the Athletic Trainer
 - Please confirm their certification and where they will be stationed during the match.

Referees must take a moment to speak to the leaders of each club before the match takes place regarding relevant topics that are pertinent to the match, such as, but not limited to, the following:

IFAB has implemented a protocol called the “[Captain-Only Zone](#)”. This has been implemented to improve player behavior and respect toward match officials. When activated by the referee—using the agreed signal (see below)—only the team captain (wearing a captain's armband) is permitted to approach the referee. To prevent mobbing and physical advances towards referees, a 4-meter radius must be adhered to by all other players. Any non-captain who enters this zone will be cautioned for dissent.

Referees are expected to enforce this consistently and include all implementations and violations of this law, and their minutes, in their match report. Coaches should reinforce this behavior to promote a more respectful match environment. **Prior to the match, referees should inform both team captains and coaches of the protocol and emphasize that captains are responsible for ensuring teammates remain outside the zone.**

- The referee can initiate the 'only the captain' protocol at any stage, but it is most likely to be used following major decisions and to prevent major confrontations
- The referee will blow the whistle and initiate the 'only the captain' protocol by using the following new signal:
 - Raising both arms above their head and crossing them at the wrists
 - Uncrossing their arms and moving them in front of their body with their palms open in a forward pushing motion to indicate that the players must not approach



Exchange of Official Match Day Rosters

The Official Match Day Roster may include up to 20 eligible players from the Master Roster. Teams will submit their Official Match Day Roster via the Digital Match Roster, or DMR, in MOD11. The home team and visiting team must submit the DMR no later than fifty-five (55) minutes prior to the start of the match. The home team must deliver copies of the home team's and visiting team's Match Day Roster to the PA announcer and media via print or by providing a link to the match page.

Once the Match Day Rosters (DMR) of both teams have been submitted to the referees, they may only be changed if a player is subsequently deemed “unable to compete.” Should this occur, the unfit player must be completely removed from the Match Day Roster (DMR) and may not be listed as a substitute. The player may be replaced either with one of the nine listed substitutes or by another Eligible Player from the Master Roster that is not already on the Match Day Roster (DMR) without this counting as one of the team's seven player substitutions. If the unfit player is replaced by one of the nine listed substitutes, a new Eligible Player from the Master Roster may not be added to the Match Day Roster (DMR) to bring the roster back to 20 players. Any adjustments to the Match Day Roster (DMR) made after the time they were originally submitted to the referees

must be communicated to and approved by the center referee and must be immediately communicated to the opponent's head coach.

Official Match Day Roster

This Official Match Day Roster contains all active and approved players from USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE. It is both teams' responsibility to identify their starting 11 players and the 20-man selectable roster through the Digital Match Roster in MOD11. It is the responsibility of the Fourth official to review this in MOD11 for the home/away teams prior to the match. There may be instances where a club may submit a Match Day Roster in MOD 11 (DMR) that is not complete. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Selecting all players as "Reserve players."
- Selecting less than 11 players in their starting lineup
- Failing to properly input all kit numbers (There should be NO duplicates)
- Players wearing kit numbers that do not match the Match Day Roster,

At no point should any official ever accept an incomplete Match Day Roster in MOD11. Clubs experiencing technical problems with their rosters should contact their league's hotline. Should a match be played with incomplete Match Day Rosters (DMR), and the officials are found to have not done their due diligence, then payment cannot be made until this is rectified.

Over-Age Players

Each team is permitted to have a maximum of ten (10) Over-Age Players on their Match Day Roster that were born on or before December 31st, 2002. In the event a team has greater than ten (10) Over-Age players on their Match Day Roster they shall be classified and treated as Ineligible Players.

Team Warm-up Period

Each team shall be entitled to a concurrent minimum warm-up period of twenty (20) minutes which shall end pursuant to the Match Day Timeline. Following the pre-game warm-up period, the home team staff shall order the players and coaching staff to the locker rooms.

Coaches and Reserve Players Entry

Prior to the team and referee introductions, the coaches and reserve players shall enter the field and walk along the sidelines to their team benches. Reserve players should wear identical equipment that distinguishes them from starting players.

Team and Referee Introductions

The home team, visiting team, and referees must be introduced prior to the start of the game. Each starting player shall be dressed in their designated team jersey, shorts, and socks for pre-game introductions and the match.

Introduction of Match Officials, Coaches, and Players

The Match Officials, coaching staff, and players shall comply with the introduction procedures designated in the Game Day Information sheet.

- At a time designated on the Game Day Timeline and in the manner set forth in the game day information, the referees shall be introduced first, starting with the referee, assistant referee one, assistant referee two and the fourth official (if applicable).
- The visiting team's starting lineup shall be introduced after the Match Officials and in the order listed on the starting lineup.

- The head coach and assistant coach(es) shall remain on the sideline but shall be introduced after the visiting team.
- The home team's starting lineup shall be introduced according to team preference.
- The head coach, assistant coach(es), trainer, and team physician shall remain on the sideline but shall be introduced after the home team.
- Athletic Trainers must be checked in on the Match Day Roster. We ask that referees please introduce themselves to the AT pre-match.
- The home team shall script the introductions for the PA Announcer.

Public Address Announcer

Teams may utilize music, sounds effects, or public address announcements/Emcee during natural stoppages in the match to incite specific, positive fan reactions. The natural stoppages include goals, goal kicks, corner kicks, free kicks, injury stoppages, and substitutions. Penalty kicks and throw-ins are excluded. All sounds must fade out immediately after play is restarted. Teams may not use music or sound effects during the run of play and may not use PA to provide commentary during the match except those essential to alert the crowd of serious incidents. Using music, sound effects, or PA announcements to demean the opposing team and officials, or to distract from the competition is strictly prohibited.

National Anthem(s)

This rule is deferred to the home club selection. National Anthems are not required for any given match.

Bench Personnel

It is the responsibility of the Fourth Official to ensure a maximum of fourteen (14) individuals is permitted in the technical area – limited to substitutes, coaches, trainers, or physicians. A maximum of five (5) non-playing personnel is allowed on each team bench. This must not be exceeded. Please note that Athletic Trainers will not count toward this total of five (5) non-playing bench personnel. These non-playing personnel can either be coaches or additional staff (names must be submitted to USL League Two and W League prior to season, to be present on Match Day Rosters). Team owners, general managers, and other executives are not permitted to sit on the bench unless they are on the Match Day Roster. No player shall sit on the bench in street clothes, nor should any players not on the Match Day Roster be in the technical area.

Official Time

Official time will be kept on the field by the referee. The amount of extra time in each half will be conveyed by the Referee to the Fourth Official or Assistant Referee. The Fourth Official/Assistant Referee will then display the appropriate time left in the match. The PA Announcer should then announce how much time is left in the match.

Substitutions

Substitution Limits

Each team is permitted (7) substitutes across (3) moments with no re-entry once a player has been substituted. Moments are defined as a stoppage of play during the game that allows for a substitution to occur. For example, halftime does not count as a moment. However, hydration breaks, injury stoppages, and stoppages of play for fouls or out of bounds do count as a moment.

Stoppages are not limited to those listed here:

- Ex. The referee stops play for an injury to the leg. During the stoppage, a team with (3) moments remaining substitutes

- (2) players. This uses (1) of their moments, leaving them with (2) remaining moments.
- Ex. The referee stops play for half time. During the stoppage, a team with (6) unused substitutes and (2) moments remaining substitutes (4) players. This does not use any moments. The team has (2) unused substitutes and (2) moments remaining.
- Ex. The referee stops play for a Hydration Break. Both teams have used all (7) substitutes and (3) moments. During the Hydration Break, both teams request to make substitutions. Neither team can make a substitution because they do not have any unused substitutes or moments remaining.

Exceptions to substitution limits for non-league games are:

- Scrimmage Games (non-paid gate): Unlimited substitutions and moments
- Exhibition Games (paid gate): Up to unlimited substitutions and moments, as long as both teams agree prior to the start of the match and inform the referees of their decision.

Concussion Substitution Protocol

Each team is permitted (2) “Concussion Substitutions” to use during the game, should a head injury occur.

NOTE: There are NO “temporary substitutions” as part of the following protocol. All substitutions are FINAL. A player leaving the field may not return (unless outlined explicitly below as part of the Concussion/Additional Substitution protocol).

- Normal Substitution moments allow for as many players to enter as are eligible.
- Concussion and Additional Substitution moments only allow for one player to be substituted.
- Concussion Substitutions:
 - Concussion Substitutions do not count as a moment and can be made regardless of the number of remaining substitutions the team has.
 - Ex. A team has made (5) substitutions across (2) moments and has (2) players yet to see the field of play when a player is injured and cannot return. The team may play one of the (2) players that have not played yet and will still have (1) eligible substitute and (1) moment available.
 - Ex. A team has made (4) substitutions across (3) moments and has (3) players yet to see the field of play when a player is injured and cannot return. The team may play one of the (3) players that have not played yet and will still have (0) moments available.
 - Concussion Substitutes may be a re-entering player only if all other available substitutes on the bench have been played, including goalkeeper substitutes.
 - Ex. A team has made (7) substitutions across (3) moments when a player is injured and cannot return. The team may make the Concussion Substitution using any of the (7) players on the bench, as there are no players that have not played to select from.
 - Ex. A team has made (7) substitutions across (3) moments when a player is injured and cannot return. The team may make the Concussion Substitution using any of the (2) players on the bench who have not yet played but may not select from the (7) players who have already played.
 - If a team substitutes a “normal” substitute at the same time as their Concussion Substitute, the moment will be counted, as the Concussion Substitution is valid only for the player taking the place of the injured player.
 - Ex. A team makes a Concussion Substitution for an injured player, while also making a second substitution for another player who is not injured. This will count as a moment and may only occur if the team has eligible bench players who have not played and at least (1) moment remaining.

When a Concussion Substitute is made, the opposing team receives an “Additional Substitution”.

- Additional Substitutions:
 - Additional Substitutions do not count as a moment and can be made regardless of the number of remaining substitutions the team has, with limitations as outlined below.
 - Ex. A team has made (5) substitutions across (2) moments and has (4) players on the bench who have not played yet when an opponent uses a Concussion Substitution. The team may make their Additional Substitution, sending on one of the players that has not yet played. The team now has (3) eligible substitutes remaining and (1) moment remaining.
 - If a team substitutes a “normal” substitute at the same time as their Additional Substitute, the moment will be counted as the Additional Substitution is valid only for one player. The team must have an eligible bench player and enough moments.
 - Ex. A team has made (6) substitutions across (2) moments and has (3) players on the bench, who have not played yet, when an opponent uses a Concussion Substitution. The team may make their Additional Substitution, sending on one of the players that has not yet played. The team also chooses to send on both remaining bench players who have not yet played. The team now has (0) moments remaining.
 - Ex. A team has made (6) substitutions across (3) moments and has (3) players on the bench who have not played yet when an opponent uses a Concussion Substitution. The team may make their Additional Substitution, sending on one of the players that has not yet played, but they may not send on a second substitute as part of the same stoppage, as they have (0) moments remaining.
 - Additional Substitutions can be a re-entering player only if all other available substitutes on the bench have played, including goalkeeper substitutes.
 - Ex. A team has made (7) substitutions across (2) moments and has an Additional Substitution that they are able to use. They may use it and send on one of the (7) players from their bench, as they do not have any players who have not played yet.
 - Ex. A team has made (6) substitutions across (3) moments and has a goalkeeper substitute on the bench that has not played yet. They have an Additional Substitution that they can use. They may use it and send on the goalkeeper substitute, as they are the only player who has not yet played.
 - Additional Substitutions do not count as a moment, but must only be used under the following circumstances:
 - Concurrently with the Concussion Substitution of the opposing team
 - Ex. Home team has an injured player and makes a Concussion Substitution. The Away team can send on one player at the same stoppage as the Additional Substitute without it counting as a moment.
 - After all other normal moments or substitutions are made (whichever comes first)
 - Ex. A team has an Additional Substitution that they have not used. They have already made (7) substitutions across (2) moments. They may now use the Additional Substitution to send one player back onto the field. This is only if a club has 7 or fewer substitutes available on the Match Day Roster. (Maximum of 9 substitutes are allowed).
 - Ex. A team has an Additional Substitution that they have not used. They have made (5) substitutions across (2) moments and have (4) players on the bench that have not been played yet. The team cannot make their Additional Substitution, as they have one moment remaining that must be used first.

Protocol for making a Concussion or Additional Substitution:

- A Concussion Substitution may be made:

- immediately after a concussion occurs or is suspected; or
 - after an initial three-minute on-field assessment, and/or after an off-field assessment; or
 - at any other time when a concussion occurs or is suspected (including when a player has previously been assessed and has returned to the field of play)
- If a team decides to make a Concussion Substitution, the referee is informed, ideally by using a substitution card/form of a different color. In USL, this card is pink.
 - The injured player is not permitted to take any further part in the match (including kicks from the penalty mark) and should, where possible, be escorted to the changing room and/or a medical facility.
 - The opposing team has been informed by the referee that it now has the option of using an Additional Substitute that they may use in accordance with the rules outlined above.
 - When a team makes an Additional Substitution, the referee is informed, ideally by using a substitution card/form of a different color. In USL, this card is blue.

On-field Assessment

At least one (preferably two) medical staff members should be available to assess the player on-field for a potential concussion. In the interest of clarity, those two individuals can be the Team's ATC and/or the on-site physician. On-field medical staff must have the ability to communicate back to the bench (i.e. radio communication). Referees are to provide the medical personnel with all the required time needed to evaluate the individual. A Coach cannot act as both Coach and Athletic Trainer. A coach can only qualify as their team's Athletic trainer if there is a second coach both present at the game and on the Match Day Roster. In this event, that coach will act solely as the Athletic Trainer (once their certification has been confirmed), and not as a Coach. This allows the Certified Athletic Trainer to focus solely on their medical duties.

Substitution Passes

All substitution passes shall be verified by the referee with the Official Match Day Roster prior to the player entering the match. Teams may use normal substitution passes, concussion substitution passes, and additional substitution passes. Each team is responsible for bringing their own passes.

Putting a New Ball into Play

When the ball goes out of play beyond the sideline or over the goal line, the nearest ball retrievers shall make sure that the player putting the ball back into play has a ball for the restart as quickly as possible.

Halftime Activities

Halftime shall officially begin as soon as the referee blows the whistle signifying the end of the first half. The duration of halftime for all games shall be fifteen (15) minutes unless otherwise authorized by USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE.

Second Half Preparation

Five (5) minutes before the start of the second half, each team shall be notified by the team liaisons. No later than three (3) minutes before the start of the second half, each team shall exit the locker rooms for the field. The Team Liaisons shall ensure teams are notified of the three-minute warning.

Approaching Match Officials

USL follows the [USSF Referee Abuse Prevention Policy](#). No player, coach or team staff member shall threaten Match Officials either verbally or physically nor make contact in any manner either before, during, or after the match. Coaches and team staff shall not approach Match Officials prior to the game, at the end of the half, on the way to or from the locker room to lobby for a certain call, discuss the approach to the game, or to criticize a

game official's performance. No one may enter the referees' dressing room without permission. It is strongly recommended that someone stand at the officials' dressing room door as security. The Referee shall report all such incidents in the Referee Game Report, and offending individuals shall be subject to a League fine and/or suspension. The **Coach's Evaluation of Referees**, through FairWhistle, is the proper vehicle to express opinions on a game official's performance. The league identifies a **ZERO TOLERANCE** policy for approaching referees in a threatening and/or physical way. Social distance should be maintained at all controlled times, pre-, during and post-match. Instances of this should be reported to the League by phone immediately.

For issues on game-day please contact the USL Pre-Pro Hotlines (USL2: 813-804-3255) (USLW: 813-804-3254). A league staff member is always monitoring this phone.

Entering the Field

A Player, Coach or other Team Staff member entering the playing field during a USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE game when not authorized to do so shall be fined and / or suspended by the League.

*Note: Security personnel should only enter the field at the Referee's request.

End of the Game

Two (2) minutes before the end of the game, security personnel shall position themselves between the field perimeter and the locker rooms. All spectators shall always remain outside of the locker rooms.

Overtime

There will be no overtime during the regular season. For Playoffs, USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE will have the discretion to adjust the playoff overtime format annually. Please refer to the supplemental playoff document for more details on playoff overtime procedures for each league.

Escorting Officials off the Field

Security officers must be present, when necessary, to escort officials to and from the field. They are to meet officials on the field and escort them to the door of their locker room. Security officers shall be prepared, when indicated, to provide an escort to the officials' respective vehicles.

*Note: Security personnel should only enter the field at the Referee's request.

Post-Game Reporting

Game reports are compulsory for officials. These reports allow USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE to properly adjudicate player discipline as well as maintain USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE regulations and standards compliance. Post-game reports include MOD11 statistics and the League Regulations and Standards Compliance Form. Failure to complete the required post-game reporting will result in a delay of payment until resolved.

Official Score Sheet

The home team must provide a copy of the completed Official Score Sheet for the referees at the end of the match, for the referees to verify the statistics for the match report. This can be a photo or printed copy of the score sheet. The referee does not need to take this sheet with them because the club must submit a copy of this score sheet to the League. This is the official statistical sheet for the game, and includes the following required information:

- Teams
- Scoring summary
- Team's Match Day Rosters

- Official statistics (shots, fouls, corners, saves, etc.)
- Caution & Send-off summary

All sections must be completed and legible. At the game's conclusion, the home team coach and visiting team coach must initial the score sheet while the referee must verify the cautions, send-offs, and goals / assists by also signing the score sheet. The referee will then upload the statistics to the League through MOD11.

MOD11 Game Statistics

The Match Report in MOD11 must be completed by the referee crew immediately following the game, no later than midnight on the day of the match. Each member of the referee crew has the same access to the Match Report, and anyone can start or complete it. You may begin the Match Report at any time and "Save" it for later (such as during halftime), but once you press "Submit Final Report" the stats will not be editable without league office approval. Officials will input goals, substitutions, and misconduct at a minimum. If shots, saves, and fouls are provided by the clubs, those stats must be entered as well. Incident Reports/Supplemental Reports should be entered in the MOD11 Match Report Notes Section and should be filled out for any serious incidents below:

- Ejections (Player and Staff) (Check the box for "Disciplinary Issues")
- Serious Injuries
- Head Injuries (regardless of whether they return to play)
- Issues with Spectators (Check the box for "Disciplinary Issues")
- Game Delays and Postponements
- Issues with Field Conditions
- Other events Officials deemed noteworthy

Officials do not need to submit a separate match report in Ref Insight, nor do they need to submit a USSF Supplemental Report, provided all the information is written in the Notes section.

If you accidentally "Submit Final Report" before completing the entire report, please contact chance.mannix@uslsoccer.com or chadwick.flanders@uslsoccer.com with your Match Number, which Match Details are missing, and a request to unlock the report.

League Regulations and Standards Compliance Form

Upon arrival at the venue, the home team shall provide the referees with a Minimum Standards Checklist. This form contains a QR code to complete the form digitally. Referees are required to complete the League Regulations and Standards Compliance Form within 48 hours following the completion of each match. The League Regulations and Standards Compliance Form is the platform to note any observed violation of USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE Regulations & Standards and to report comments of a positive or negative nature regarding a game or the conduct of either team.

[USL League Two Minimum Standards Survey](#)

[USL W League Minimum Standards Survey](#)

USSF Supplemental Report

Officials do not need to submit a separate match report on Ref Insight, nor do they need to submit a USSF Supplemental Report, provided all the information is written in the Notes section. If the Official wishes to submit a USSF Supplemental Report, please email the report to chance.mannix@uslsoccer.com or chadwick.flanders@uslsoccer.com with the subject line: "Supplemental Report // Match [MOD11 Game Number]".

Game Delays and Postponements

In the event of a game delay, the referees should ensure that the Home Team immediately communicates the delay, via phone call, to their League Official. The League Official shall distribute the On-Call Operations Hotline number to all teams prior to the start of the season. It is imperative that the rules and procedures of this section are explicitly followed in determining whether to delay, postpone, or cancel a game.

- USL League Two: 813-804-3255
- USL W League: 813-804-3254

Canceling / Postponing a Game Prior to Start

A game may be canceled / postponed no earlier than two (2) hours prior to kick off because of inclement weather or situations considered Acts of God, unless agreed to by both teams and the League Office. Exception: In a case where a third party (stadium owner) closes a stadium, a game may be canceled more than two (2) hours prior to kickoff, provided the League and both teams are notified in writing by the stadium owner / managing authority.

Authority to Delay or Postpone a Game

If kickoff is delayed due to either team arriving late, the teams, in consultation with the League, referees, and facility, shall determine the start time for any delays in excess of twenty (20) minutes. Once in progress, a USL League Two and USL W League match may only be delayed or postponed due to unfavorable weather or other adverse conditions beyond the control of the participating teams, which would make the playing of the game impractical or dangerous. Only USL League Two and USL W League representatives have the final authority to delay or postpone a scheduled USL League Two and USL W League match. If a League representative is unable to be reached, after a good faith effort by both the referee crew and home/away clubs, the Referee will have the final authority on delays due to weather or other adverse conditions beyond the control of the participating teams, which would make the playing of the game impractical or dangerous.

Grace Period Before Abandoning a Game

The Home Team, in the presence of Referees, must immediately contact a League Representative once a game has been delayed. Teams must continue to check-in with the League Representative on an hourly basis for the duration of the delay. The grace period can be extended for a maximum of three (3) hours from the time the match is delayed. Unless both teams, the Referees, and a League Representative agree to an alternate plan proposed during a check-in call, the League Representative will have the final say on the length of the grace period due to weather. Given the difficulty and cost of rescheduling, every attempt should be made to continue the game. **A match cannot be abandoned before the League Representative is contacted. The home team is responsible for contacting a League Representative. Failure to contact the league office may result in a forfeit. In addition, if any member of the referee crew leaves the field before the grace period is over, they will forfeit their right to receive payment for that match.** If the League Representative or another USL League Two and USL W League official is unavailable after a good faith effort to contact them, the Referee shall be the final authority. **The league often experiences many calls at any one time, and it may take up to 30 minutes to return your call.** Please continue to call every ten minutes until you can reach someone. If the first game of a doubleheader has been delayed, the feasibility of completing the second game will be considered when determining an extended grace period.

USL Pre Professional Standard Lightning Policy:

If a lightning strike occurs within ten (10) miles radius of an official league competition, play must pause for at least thirty (30) minutes until the lightning has passed and all clear has been given. The thirty (30) minutes waiting period resets after every new strike within the ten (10) mile radius. Once play has been paused players,

coaches, referees, staff, and fans must clear the field and seek shelter for the duration of the lightning delay. During the delay the League must be notified by a designated staff member of the home club, who will be responsible for monitoring lightning in the area. If a venue has a Thor-Guard system, this is an appropriate tool for lightning detection. This will take precedence over all other forms of detection. If a paid lightning detection app/system is unavailable, the League's recommended free lightning detection app is WeatherBug. If play can be resumed, that match will begin from the minute in which it was paused. No match can be cancelled or postponed without confirmation from a League representative. If there is any discrepancy between any weather detection systems, the decision will ultimately be rendered by the League.

Game Cancellation / Postponement Criteria

USL Pre Professional Standard Air Quality Policy:

In the event the air quality is poor leading up to a match, please contact the League office to determine if the match will be played. In these instances, we will defer to US Soccer guidelines in making an appropriate decision. If the AQI is 100-150, one hydration break per half must be added at the 30th and 75th minute. If the AQI is 150-180 both teams must agree to play and water breaks must be added at 15', 30', 60' and 75'. If the AQI is 150-180 consideration for postponing and rescheduling the match with on ground assessment with the athletic trainers or a move to an indoor facility will be determined with the League.

The following information is guidance from US Soccer (USSF) surrounding Air Quality guidelines and monitoring of the Air Quality index (AQI). Clubs should take these guidelines into account for both training and match play and should be followed for the safety of all people involved (Players, Fans, etc.) If teams are aware of a potential air quality issue in their home market in advance of hosting a match, they must notify the league as soon as they become aware of the issue. Teams are to use www.AIRNOW.gov to determine AQI in the local market.

AQI: 100-150

- Add one hydration break per half to be taken at the 30' and 75' or at a natural break close to the times.
- Players with underlying health conditions should use caution and communication with team staff as well as a Certified Athletic Trainer to make decisions in the best interest of the player.

AQI: >150

- Four hydration breaks will be taken at the 15', 30', 60' and 75' or at a natural break close to the times
- Oxygen behind the benches MUST be supplied by teams with at least 2 canisters available ([example canister](#))
- Certified Athletic Trainers should start communicating regarding any at-risk players and how to best continue forward for the health of the players

AQI: 180-200

- Consideration for postponing or cancelling with on-the-ground assessment with the medical team.
- Should coordinate with local public health officials and be in line with local and/or regional restrictions, if in place – this should take both players and spectators into consideration.

AQI: Over 200

- Cancel or postpone

USL Pre Professional Standard Heat Policy:

In the event of extreme heat teams should be prepared to take additional safety measures. USL League Two and USL W League shall follow the heat-related guidelines set forth by US Soccer that are attached as an addendum to this document.

Game Cancellation / Postponement Criteria

Unless otherwise approved by USL, game cancellations/postponements should only occur in the most serious circumstances; however, the personal safety of participants, personnel, and spectators shall always be highest priority. Factors that shall be considered include current and forecasted weather conditions, travel conditions, and the current whereabouts of teams and officials.

Referees shall not receive any payment for a match, which they were originally scheduled for, that are subsequently rescheduled or cancelled due to Acts of God, or other uncontrollable circumstances, unless otherwise stated by USL.

Before Officials Arrive at Venue

In the event a match is to be terminated less than 12 hours prior to kick off due to unforeseen circumstances, the home team shall immediately contact the League Office to expedite the communication process to assigned referees. The League office will then notify the designated official at the National Federation, who will in turn make every effort to notify the referees of the change. It is imperative that all contact numbers for referees be available to the National Federation for such situations.

Referee “No Show”

In the event the assigned referee crew does not arrive at least one (1) hour before the scheduled kickoff time, the Home Team should immediately contact their League Representative. **If the appropriate League Office does not immediately respond, the home team should attempt to contact another USL League Two and/or USL W League representative until contact is made.** Should none of the assigned referees be present at the official kickoff time, the teams must wait a minimum of one (1) hour before the possibility of postponement is considered. Again, no game may be abandoned or postponed due to lack of referees until at least one (1) hour has passed since kickoff. After one (1) hour from the original kickoff time has elapsed, the League Representative will decide as to whether the match should be postponed and rescheduled, or further time should be allowed (only in the event of referees on their way to the venue). Active and certified Federation referees must be used as replacements in order for the match to be deemed official. Prior to sending replacements, USL League Two and USL W League and the respective Federation will determine on a case-by-case basis whether the substitute referees are of sufficient experience and ability to handle the match. Under no circumstances will the replacement referees have less than State or Provincial certification.

If referees leave a match prior to its completion and before the match has been called or otherwise postponed by USL League Two and USL W League, participating teams must contact the League immediately. If either team/both team(s) leave the field due to referee abandonment prior to speaking with the League, it will be considered a forfeit and any and all appropriate fines will be levied.

Incomplete Game

In the event a game cannot be completed, the game counts if the entire 1st half was completed. If any match is suspended prior to the completion of the 1st half due to inclement weather or extenuating circumstances, it will resume at a date/time agreed to by the competing teams in consultation with USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE and will start at the same minute in which the match was suspended. Every effort must be made to resume the match within the next twenty-four (24) hours. If the game is resumed after the 24-hour period has passed, either team may have a maximum of three (3) changes to their Official Match Day Roster. Any changes to the lineup on the field, after any of the three (3) changes to the Official Match Day Roster are made, count towards the substitution allotment. USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE reserves the right to declare a full replay at its discretion to protect the integrity of the competition.

Termination Procedures for Single-Match Playoff Series

If the match is tied, the first half completed, the one hour waiting period is fulfilled, and there must be a winner to advance, then the following will occur:

- Regulation: If terminated during regulation, the match will be resumed at the next possible opportunity and played to completion beginning when the play was stopped and will conclude at either ninety (90) minutes or within overtime, followed by Kicks from the Mark.
- Overtime: If terminated during Overtime, the match will resume at the minute that the match was terminated, followed by Kicks from the Mark, if necessary.
- Back-to-back: If the teams are scheduled to play the following day, then the match will resume the next morning, starting with the overtime period, followed by Kicks from the Mark, if necessary.

*USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to continue any playoff match starting immediately with overtime and kicks from the penalty mark, considering travel and field situations as well as any other pertinent logistical information. Every attempt will be made to decide the result on the field of play in the most reasonable fashion.

Rescheduling a Postponed Game

Any postponed game must be rescheduled within seventy-two (72) hours of the original date of the game and must be replayed no later than the second to last weekend of the regular season.

Rescheduling Considerations

USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE Management shall have the authority to review all the facts, (including fault on the part of either team, unavoidable conditions, expense for both teams, and requests by a team to take a particular action in the best interests of USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE and its teams) in determining whether and when a game shall be rescheduled, who should bear the financial burden as a result of cancellation or rescheduling, whether the game should be forfeited or cancelled permanently, and whether other fines should be levied. The integrity of the League and the Home Team schedule shall be given considerable weight in the resolution of these matters. Unless the sanction or remedy is set forth specifically in any USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE rules or regulations, USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE Management shall decide what action to take, and its decision shall be final.

Stadium Clearances are Final

Once a team has approved its individual schedule and the League Schedules are officially released, the League will not automatically accept a postponement or cancellation of a game because a stadium is no longer available. It is the Home Team's responsibility to find a league-acceptable alternate venue, if necessary, on the originally scheduled date.

USL Double Header Policy

A USL double header is defined as two or more games that are taking place on the same date and location. The league suggests that when scheduling double headers that a minimum of 1-2 hours be placed between matches to allow for locker room reset, field maintenance and unforeseen delays. All previous rules for game delays and postponements apply, but will be superseded by the order of preference and the following situations:

Order of Preference

1. USL Senior Professional Teams (USL Championship, USL League One, and Gainbridge Super League)
2. USL Senior Pre-Professional Teams (USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE)
3. USL Academy Teams

Delays Involving USL Academy and Senior Pre-Professional Teams

In the case where a USL Academy game is delayed or postponed that would cause a Pre-Professional Team to delay the start of their match more than one (1) hour from the original start time, the USL Academy will be forced to postpone to another date. If a USL Academy match has been delayed after the match has already begun, the previous rule still applies. If the game should reach half-time the score line will be upheld. If the game has not reached half-time the game will be played on another date in accordance with the match postponement policy.

Delays Involving Senior Pre-Professional Teams

In the case where a delay occurs with two Senior Pre-Professional teams, the match that is scheduled to play at an earlier time will be classified as game “A” with the later game scheduled classified as game “B”. If game “A” is delayed prior to start, the maximum time allotted to wait is One (1) hour before the game will be postponed to another date. Match “B” will then be scheduled to start at its original time with match postponement criteria in place. The league director reserves the right to evaluate extenuating circumstances involving travel and competition implications.

Delays Involving USL Academy/USL Senior Pre-Professional and Senior Professional Teams

In no circumstance can a USL Academy or USL Senior Pre-Professional game delay cause a delay to a USL Senior Professional match.

Lightning and Severe Weather

Lightning Policy

Given the likelihood of lightning during the USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE season and the potential for personal injury and structural damages lightning can cause, each home team shall have a detailed thunderstorm delay plan that includes the following:

1. Immediate Contact with the League Office
2. Specific persons in charge of decision-making, in this order
 - a. League Office
 - b. Referee
 - c. Home team senior executive and
 - d. Visiting team coach/administrator
3. Updates to spectators and media via PA Announcements
4. "Standing Orders" (procedures) published and posted to accomplish the above

Hydration Breaks

The match referee reserves the right to implement hydration breaks during matches to allow players to hydrate during extremely hot or humid weather conditions. Each team must use the WeatherBug (powered by Earth Networks) App, which must be used to determine whether hydration breaks are to be implemented. It is the fourth official's responsibility to be informed during the game at the fourth official's table. The following shall be the process used to determine whether hydration breaks should be implemented by the match referee.

Pre-game Decision Making Process:

- USL mandates the use of hydration breaks if the temperature measures 82° Fahrenheit (27.78° Celsius) or higher
- Use of the “WeatherBug” App is standard (iPhone Download // Android Download)
- The “Feels Like” Temperature will supersede and be the default temperature

- The Fourth official will be responsible for reading the wet bulb globe temperature at the kickoff spot at the conclusion of pre-game warmups.
- The option to employ a hydration break should be confirmed by the referee to a member of each team's technical staff prior to kickoff
- Any onsite questions should be directed to the game day officials
- Implementation and control of the breaks will be managed solely by the referee

Implementation:

- Each break will last up to three (3) minutes in length and held approximately thirty (30) minutes into each half (around the 30th and 75th minute respectively)
- If the temperature drops by at least 10° Fahrenheit to 72° Fahrenheit (22.22° Celsius) prior to the 30th or 75th minute, the referee will have the ability to nullify the hydration break
- The Fourth official or the referee liaison will be responsible for the reading of the temperature near the 30th and 75th minute respectively
- The ball must be out of play for the break to commence
- The Referee will signal for the start of the break and inform both teams and all match officials
- The clock will continue to run, and all time allotted for the break will be added to stoppage time
- Both teams will go to their respective team bench areas
- Players must remain on the field of play
- Coaches cannot leave their respective technical areas
- Bench personnel cannot enter the field of play (excluding Medical Personnel)
- Entering the field of play is still subject to an automatic suspension

Serious Incident Protocol

Standard Incident Protocol

The Home Team shall educate key Game Day staff, both stadium and team, regarding emergency procedures, EMS vehicles, stadium evacuation, and emergency plans. In the case of a serious incident on Game Day or at other times, it is vital that the League Office is informed at the earliest possible time. Team staff shall use their best judgment on whether an incident is (or potentially is) of such magnitude. When in doubt, staff shall err on the side of caution by informing the League.

Examples of serious incidents include a death or life threatening injury to a player, staff, or spectator; severe weather (lightning storm); a serious altercation on the field (field invasion) or elsewhere at the stadium; a terrorist or unspecified threat to the safety of the event; the arrest of a player or staff member; an automobile accident or other accident; a calamity at the stadium (earthquake, fire, etc.); or a power failure at the stadium.

The protocol shall be as follows:

1. Immediately ensure the appropriate emergency procedures have been implemented. Ensure names and phone numbers of those involved and witnesses as warranted. This information shall be detailed in the Stadium Incident Report form.
2. While the situation is emerging, call the League Representative.
3. No statements shall be made to the media or others (other than law enforcement authorities) until the situation is discussed with the League. All participants shall be made aware of this policy. USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE and Team Media / Public Relations Directors shall be kept informed of the current situation. The League Office and the USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE Communications Department are authorized to speak on the League's behalf, and no other individuals shall be permitted to discuss the situation with the media until USL LEAGUE

TWO and USL W LEAGUE notification is given. As a general rule, the team General Manager and / or PR representative should be limited to releasing comments to the media. Prior to making any public statements, the situation should be discussed with the League Office so that consistent and non-conflicting information is released.

Emergency/Crisis Evacuation

The following are the basic parameters teams shall follow for an Emergency/Crisis Evacuation in the stadium:

1. The Home Team shall follow the previously developed and rehearsed emergency response procedures.
2. Such a rehearsal shall occur at each venue prior to the start of the season and should involve all game day groups (team staff, players, stadium staff, PA announcer, ushers, security, law enforcement, medical response, etc.).

Emergency / Crisis at the Local Level

1. Team Operations Director, Team General Manager, Team PR Director in conjunction with Stadium Officials and local law enforcement shall assess the situation and immediately brief USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE.
2. If the incident is isolated from the local market, Team Officials, in conjunction with the Stadium and Local Law Enforcement, shall determine response and course of action. Best judgment shall be used to determine the level of involvement requested of the League Office.
3. The response and course of action is communicated following a pre-established chain that should include the USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE Staff.

Emergency / Crisis at the National or International Level

1. USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE officials shall assess the situation and immediately consult with Team Representatives.
2. League and Team Officials will determine a response and course of action.
3. The response and course of action will be determined and communicated to Team Representatives which will in turn disseminate the pertinent information as USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE directs.

Communication Plan

For all emergency response situations, teams shall immediately contact the League Office and when the situation requires, adhere to the following emergency communication plan:

1. A conference call shall be organized for emergency response situations. When calling into a conference from a cellular phone, individuals shall have the ability to mute their phone to minimize excess sound that would otherwise disrupt the dissemination of information. The League Office shall have the responsibility of initiating this conference call and informing the appropriate individuals.
2. Teams shall not have more than three (3) individuals call into this number (e.g. General Manager, PR Director, and Director of Operations). It will then be the responsibility of the team to appropriately distribute information within the organization.

Emergency Medical and Evacuation Plans

Every team shall establish game day emergency medical and evacuation procedures. Teams shall create their emergency medical and evacuation plans at least thirty (30) days prior to the opening game and be available upon request by the League office. Teams shall also stage a pre-season rehearsal for medical and evacuation emergency plans whereby all game day staff practice and understand procedures. Above all, necessary precautions shall be taken to ensure spectator, team, and staff safety at all times. As most teams do not own their stadiums, it is imperative that security, stadium management, and team officials discuss and coordinate these procedures prior to the opening game. Knowing where and how to access an AED must be included in the EAP. If your stadium does not have an emergency action plan, contact the League Office immediately.

Medical Emergency Plan

Utilize the following basic parameters in developing team policies:

- Assign staff to report initial problems to the Field Manager; notify security and any on-site EMS agency immediately of the problem and location; and deploy a staff member to the scene.
- Once the Medical Response Team arrives and relieves the staff member, the staff member shall record initial information, including time, location, and who placed the injury call, before they leave the accident / injury area. This information shall be recorded and sent to the League office upon request.
- If the patient is transported to the hospital, the designated staff member shall record the time of departure, which hospital the patient was transported to, and who transported the patient.
- Emergency equipment on site shall be listed in the plan and its location shall be detailed.

Team Physician

In addition to the medical emergency plan, the home team shall have a qualified physician and / or certified athletic trainer available at each home game. At no time shall a player be subject to risk or aggravation of an injury by removing them from the field. Additionally, an ambulance and crew shall be on-call.

Evacuation Plan

In the event that a stadium or parts thereof need to be evacuated due to an Act of God (earthquakes, hurricanes, and floods), bomb or terrorist threats, fire and smoke, etc., each team shall develop, in conjunction with their stadium authority, a Game Day Emergency Evacuation Plan. This plan shall include at least the following specifications:

- Directions on how to safely and quickly remove all spectators, teams and staff from the affected area.
- A detailed list of on-site employees responsible for overseeing an evacuation.
- A detailed notification system for law enforcement agencies, fire, or other emergency response departments.
- Preemptive measures shall include day of game stadium inspections and advisories to security of their duties and expectations, particularly concerning fights and alcohol abuse, etc. Many municipal and established stadiums already have policies in place; teams may incorporate existing stadium plans.

Injured Player Removal Policy

Guidelines for the Referee

Because Match Officials continue to be in complete charge of game timing, as is common in international competitions, referees will not “stop the clock” for time lost through situations described in Law 7 of the FIFA

Laws of the Game (substitution, assessment, and removal from the field of injured players, wasting time, or other causes). Instead, the time lost will be managed on the field by the referee who has complete discretion regarding the exact amount of time to be recovered. The intent of Law 7 is to recover time lost due to excessive delays for injuries, substitutions, goal celebrations, and so forth.

Serious injuries, however, are likely to be the most common sort of situation for which the referee is called upon to “add time” at the end of a period of play. The time to be recovered includes the original assessment of the injury and, where necessary, the removal of the injured player from the field by medical personnel.

It is imperative that athletic trainers and other team staff cooperate with referees in the application of the following FIFA guidelines:

1. If a player is seriously injured, the referee shall stop play. In cases of head collisions, the referee is to stop play immediately.
2. After assessing the condition of the injured player, the referee shall authorize one, or, at the most, two medical staff to enter the field to ascertain the type of injury and to arrange the players safe and swift transport off the field (BUT NOT TO TREAT THE INJURY ON THE FIELD).
3. Any player suffering from an open wound is compelled to leave the field to have the wound treated.
4. To remove the player as quickly as possible, stretcher-bearers shall enter the field with a stretcher immediately upon being beckoned by the referee.
5. If the referee has determined that the player must leave the field due to injury, whether or not medical personnel has been beckoned to assist the player, the injured player is required to leave the field, either on foot or on the stretcher. If the player refuses to comply, the referee shall caution him for hindering the restart of play.
6. If a player has received permission from the referee to leave the field during play for treatment of an injury that is serious, that player must have the referee’s permission to re-enter the field. If the ball is in play, such a player may only re-enter the field across either of the touchlines. When the ball is out of play, the player may re-enter across any of the boundary lines. Only the referee is authorized to allow an injured player to re-enter the field whether the ball is in play or not.
7. If a player is bleeding, he must leave the field immediately to have the bleeding stopped and his skin and uniform cleaned as thoroughly as possible (or replace his uniform with a clean one). When the player is ready to return to the game, the referee will inspect the injured area and the uniform for blood or delegate this task to the fourth official. Once a bleeding player is ready to return to the game, he may do so with the referee’s permission at any point during play (as opposed to only at a stoppage in play).
8. If play has been stopped solely for a serious injury with no other breach of the Laws of the Game, the referee shall restart play with a dropped ball.
9. The referee shall add on time lost on account of injury (with or without medical attention on the field) in full at the end of the half (or overtime period) in question.
10. If referees feel that the player who has been injured is feigning the injury and returns to play immediately, the referee has the right to caution that player for unsporting behavior.

Regardless, nothing shall be done that would potentially cause further or permanent injury to a player. In the case of on-field injuries, it is incumbent upon the referee and medical personnel to communicate with each other, and to use their best professional judgment.

Under no circumstances shall a player be removed if there is an injury to the head, neck, or back until it can be accomplished without risk of further injury or permanent injury to the player. Similar restraint shall be shown for injuries that are deemed to be potentially limb threatening; however, for the majority of less serious injuries, the athletic trainer will oversee the removal of the player from the field. The athletic trainer and the referee

shall work together to ensure the safety and well-being of the player while trying to return him to play as soon as possible.

Guidelines for the Athletic Trainer

Adhering to these guidelines, the athletic trainer shall utilize the following Universal Athletic Trainer Hand Signals to facilitate the care of an injured player.

1. Ambulance: Athletic trainer raises hand over head, extends index finger and rotates finger mimicking the lights of an ambulance siren.
2. Physician: With index finger of either hand, athletic trainer points to the corner of his/her ipsilateral eye.
3. Splints: With hands in clenched fists, athletic trainer strikes thumb side of hands together.
4. Spine Board: With hands together, palms open and pronated, athletic trainer moves hands apart as if describing a flat surface.
5. Stretcher: Universal signal employed by all FIFA officials when signaling for a stretcher.

Disciplinary Procedures

Match Misconduct

In addition to those offenses that are punished by the Officials within the Laws of the Game, major fines or suspensions, at the sole and absolute discretion of the USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE staff, shall be levied against Players (whether or not they were awarded a card by the Referee), Coaches or other Team Staff for such game conduct as fighting, provoking a fight, criticizing Match Officials with words or gestures, entering the Match Officials' locker room, physical contact with Match Officials separate from Referee Assault, using excessive force, deliberate attempts to injure, spitting, provoking crowd disorders, profane language that can be heard by the crowd or broadcast audience, obscene gestures, throwing items in the technical area, improper conduct during the national anthem, taunting, abuse of spectators and others, failure to leave the field when instructed by the Referee to do so, improper conduct following the award of a card, excessive delay tactics or excessive and obvious feigning of injuries, or other unsportsmanlike conduct detrimental to USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE. The League may levy fines and / or suspensions for such behavior whether or not it is reported in the Referee Game Report. Video review will weigh heavily in determining/confirming any disciplinary action taken.

Guidelines for Send-Off (During Match)

Players, coaches, or other staff members sent off from the field of play shall be met at the sideline at midfield by home team security and escorted to the locker room and are not permitted to watch the match. They must remain in the locker room for the remainder of the match. Additionally, coaches are not permitted to communicate with their team staff or players during the remainder of the match and are not allowed to remain in the locker room during halftime. The type of communication prohibited would include cellular, 2-way radios, electronic / digital, written or verbal. Players or coaches returning to the field of play during or directly following the match are subject to additional sanctions.

**Note:* Any athletic trainer sent off during a match should remain in the locker room area through the end of the match and may only return to the pitch at the request of the Referee in the event of an emergency.

Serving Suspensions – Players

Any player receiving a straight red card in a regular season match will be suspended for the next league regular season match. Any player receiving a second yellow card in a single match, and thus a red card, will be suspended from the next league regular season match. Clubs will not be able to select suspended players on

their Match Day Roster. However, we encourage referees, at every match, to ask each club if any players or staff are currently serving suspensions. If so, they are not permitted to be on the bench or in the technical area. No player or coach, who is not on the Match Day Roster, should be allowed to sit on the player's bench unless there has been prior communication by USL League Staff to a member of the referee crew.

Serving Suspensions – Coaches and Team Staff

Any manager, coach, assistant coach, athletic trainer, player, or other official bench personnel are prohibited from assuming any official duty at or near the team bench while serving a suspension. No coach or staff member, who is not on the Match Day Roster, should be allowed to sit on the player's bench unless there has been prior communication by USL League Staff to a member of the referee crew. Any infringement of this rule or the restrictions below may result in the forfeiture of the game and include a fine for each infraction. The following restrictions apply:

Pre-Game

Suspended personnel are allowed to communicate pre-game information to the team in the locker room prior to the match. However, they are not allowed on the field during warm-ups and may not stand or in any way be in close proximity to the field of play.

In-Game including Halftime

- Field Access – At no time during the game is the suspended person allowed on or around the field of play.
- Communication – There is to be no direct or indirect communication via written, verbal, cellular or electronic to any other coach, player, or staff member on the team bench.
- Stadium Seating – The suspended person must sit in the press box or in some location other than in the stands. The suspended person is not permitted to sit in the stands as a “spectator”. If this accommodation is not available, then the suspended person is prohibited from attending the match.
- Locker Room Access – The suspended person is not allowed to be in the locker room at any time during halftime.

Post-game

The coach / staff member may join their team in the locker room, but not on the field of play or its surrounding areas.

Sending-off/Suspensions - Athletic Trainers

Any athletic trainer sent off during a match should remain in the locker room area through the end of the match and may only return to the pitch in the event of an emergency, at the request of the Referee.

If a club's Athletic Trainer is serving a suspension, the club must find an alternative source, whether that be a third party or another certified staff member. They are prohibited from assuming any official duty at or near the team bench while serving a suspension.

Payment of Referees

The fees for officiating matches are set by USL LEAGUE TWO and USL W LEAGUE and subject to regular review. Referees are eligible to be compensated for services if they:

- Arrive 60 minutes before kickoff and perform assigned services.
- Complete relevant forms including the MOD11 Match Report and Minimum Standards Surveys ([USL League Two Minimum Standards Survey](#) or [USL W League Minimum Standards Survey](#)).
- Ensure accuracy of Match Day Rosters (including kit numbers), score, goal scorers with minutes, match statistics, and discipline.
- Arrive at the proper time, but for some reason the match has been already postponed without the referees being properly notified in advance due to an error by the league or teams.

- Arrive at the proper time and one of the competing clubs fails to appear for the match.
- Perform assigned services, but for some reason, the match is not completed.
- Travel to the field, but the match is not played.
- Depart for assigned duties but the match is postponed enroute due to inclement weather.
- Please refer to “Before Official Arrives at Venue” under the “Match Cancellations” section of this Manual for a list of the steps taken in the cancellation/postponement process.
- Complete all Ref Insight-related processes for receiving payment. Referees cannot claim payment until their account information has been verified via email.
- Game fees will be paid through Ref Insight every two weeks.

Referees shall not receive any payment for a match, which they were originally scheduled for, that are subsequently rescheduled or cancelled due to Acts of God, or other uncontrollable circumstances, unless otherwise stated by USL.

Referee Fees

Referee fees for **USL LEAGUE TWO** and **USL W LEAGUE** are identical. All game fees will be paid through US Soccer’s assigning platform, Ref Insight. Every effort will be made to provide payment on a biweekly cadence; however, **it is up to the referee to ensure their tax and bank information is current and up to date on Ref Insight**. For support on how to complete your onboarding in Ref Insight, please refer to this [link](#).

If you have not been paid for a match from the 2026 season, it is due to one of the following two reasons:

- **Failure to verify banking and tax information on Ref Insight**. Referees will have until **December 1, 2026**, to claim any outstanding payments due to not verifying their payment information.
- **Missing reporting requirements (MOD11 Match Report and/or Minimum Standards Survey)**. Referees will have **90 days** from the date of the match to collect any outstanding payments due to missing reports. After 90 days, these requirements will be considered incomplete.

Outstanding payments from past seasons will not be processed under any circumstances and will be considered forfeited.

Please review the following table:

Position	USL League Two	USL W League
Referee	\$140	\$140
AR	\$100	\$100
AR	\$100	\$100
Fourth Official	\$75	\$75

Scrimmage

A scrimmage is defined as a non-paid gate match; Fourth Officials are only assigned if requested.

Exhibition

An exhibition is defined as a paid-gate match; Fourth Officials are only assigned if requested.

Regular Season

Fourth Officials are required.

Playoffs

Fourth Officials are required.