



2026/2027
Winter Season Handbook

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Other Applicable Rules & Regulations:

- [Soccer Nova Scotia Policies & Procedures](#)
- [Soccer Nova Scotia Discipline Policy](#)
- [Soccer Nova Scotia Schedule of Penalties and Sanctions](#)
- [“Indoor Soccer: Laws of the Game” \(Soccer Nova Scotia, Revised October 2025\)](#)
- [Soccer Nova Scotia Concussion Substitution Policy](#)
- [Season Schedule of Dates](#)
- [2026 Skill Centre Winter Guide](#)
- [Inclement Weather Policy](#)
- [IFAB Laws of the Game](#)

1. Game Laws

All NSSL games will be played under the current “Indoor Soccer: Laws of the Game” (Soccer Nova Scotia, Revised October 2026) document. Except that 15AAA and 17AAA divisions will be played under the IFAB Laws of the Game, as set out in Section 16. Adaptations to those Laws for NSSL competition are set out in this Handbook.

Where this Handbook sets out an adaptation on a matter of competition format or league administration, that adaptation governs. This Handbook does not modify the Laws governing player safety, fouls and misconduct, or the authority of the match official, which apply in full.

2. Soccer Nova Scotia Policies & Procedures

All matters not included in these rules and regulations shall be dealt with in accordance with the Soccer Nova Scotia Policies and Operational Procedures, or any other Soccer Nova Scotia documents that govern the sport of Soccer.

Where this Handbook and the Soccer Nova Scotia Policies and Procedures both address a matter and conflict: the Policies and Procedures govern on matters of competition format and league administration; and where the Policies and Procedures delegate a matter to the league, this Handbook governs that matter.

3. League Structure

3.1 Start Date: The start date for each division is published in the [Season Schedule of Dates].

3.2 End Date: The end date for each division is published in the [Season Schedule of Dates].

3.3 Game Days: Each division is assigned game days as published in the [Season Schedule of Dates]. The NSSL may schedule games outside a division's assigned game days where operational circumstances require.

3.4 Game Times: Games will be scheduled between 7:00 AM and best efforts will be made to run through until 8:00 PM (games may be scheduled later pending available field time) teams should expect their games to be scheduled at any time between these times on the days of the week listed for their division.

3.5 Division Formation.

3.5.1 Divisions at U15 and above, in the AA, A, and B tiers are formed through a seeding phase. The season opens with a seeding phase of three (3) games, after which teams are placed into divisions for the remainder of the season.

3.5.2 After placement, the remaining-season schedule is released with divisions named (see 4.1).

3.5.3 Divisions are formed to enable appropriate competition. The NSSL aims to place between six (6) and ten (10) teams in each division. This is a placement objective, not a guarantee of any division size, and no club is entitled to placement in a division of a particular size.

3.5.4 Placement Methodology. Placement under this section, and rebalancing under 4.2, are determined using;

- a) results from the seeding or pre-rebalancing games, which are recorded for placement purposes only, are not published as standings, and do not count towards finals-weekend qualification;

- b) assessments and feedback provided by clubs;

- c) the judgement of the NSSL. The NSSL retains final discretion to place a team in the division its assessment warrants, regardless of results.

3.5.5 Seeding games are full competition games. All NSSL rules apply, including discipline, cards, and suspensions. The seeding games for discipline purposes will be determined as the same competition as the regular winter season.

3.6 AAA Divisions. The U15AAA and U17AAA divisions are not subject to a seeding phase. Their full-season schedule is released before the start of the season (see 4.1). These divisions play 11-a-side under Section 16.

3.7 Play-offs:

3.7.1 Play-offs are held at the end of the season for divisions U15 and above that keep standings. There are no play-offs for 15AAA or 17AAA divisions (see Section 16).

3.7.2 The top four (4) teams in each division's final standings qualify for that division's play-offs.

3.7.3 Play-offs are single-elimination. Teams are seeded by final standings: first place plays fourth, second plays third, and the winners contest the division final. Final standings and tie-breakers are determined under Section 6.

3.7.4 A play-off game tied at the end of regulation is decided by sudden-death penalty kicks from the mark.

3.7.4.1 Sudden-death penalty kicks are described as: Each round consists of one kick per team; a winner is only declared when both teams have taken an equal number of sudden-death kicks and one is ahead. If both score or both miss, the next round continues.

3.7.5 Player movement is not permitted in Play-off games in accordance with Section 8.9.4. Only players rostered to that team are deemed eligible.

3.8 U13 End-of-Season Festival:

3.8.1 An end-of-season festival is held for U13 divisions on the date published in the [Season Schedule of Dates].

3.8.2 Entry is by separate registration. Teams are not required to enter, and entry closes on the date published in the [Season Schedule of Dates].

3.8.3 Festival divisions are arranged by the NSSL from the teams entered, using Placement Methodology in 3.5.4, and are published no later than the date published in the [Season Schedule of Dates]. Festival divisions may differ from regular-season divisions.

3.8.4 Teams are drawn into groups of three (3) or four (4). Group games are played on Saturday. Knockout games are played on Sunday.

3.8.5 Each team is guaranteed a minimum of two (2) games across the weekend.

3.8.6 Game length will be 2x 20 minutes.



3.8.7 Standings and scores are kept and published for the festival only. This is an exception to 6.1.

3.8.8 Group games tied after regulation remain tied. Knockout games are decided by sudden-death penalty kicks.

4.Schedules

4.1 Schedule Release.

4.1.1 U13 and below. The first half schedule, to the December break, is released before the start of the season on the date published in the [Season Schedule of Dates]. The rebalanced second-half schedule is released after the completion of the first-half schedule per 4.2.

4.1.2 U15 - U18 (AA to B). The seeding-phase schedule is released before the start of the season. The remaining-season schedule is released after placement, on the date published in the [Season Schedule of Dates].

4.1.3 U15AAA and U17AAA. The full-season schedule is released before the start of the season on the date published in the [Season Schedule of Dates].

4.1.4 Senior. The full-season schedule is released before the start of the season on the date published in the [Season Schedule of Dates].

4.2 In-Season Rebalancing (U13 and below).

4.2.1 U13 divisions and below play their released schedule to the December break. Following the completion of the first-half schedule, divisions are rebalanced for the second half of the season.

4.2.2 Rebalancing is determined using the Placement Methodology in 3.5.4. Assessment is ongoing through the first half of the season.

4.2.3 The rebalanced second-half schedule is released on the date published in the [Season Schedule of Dates].

4.3 Black-out Dates. Black-out date requests are not accepted for the Winter Indoor season.

4.4 All games are to be played as scheduled.

4.5 In cases of inclement weather, the [Indoor Season Inclement Weather Policy] applies. Games are cancelled where the facility closes. Weather-cancelled games are not rescheduled.

5. Rescheduling

5.1 Rescheduling is not permitted during the indoor season.

6. Standings

6.1 Standings will be used for all divisions aged 15 and above. For all U13 and below divisions no scores or standings will be published in accordance with Canada Soccer Grassroots Standards.

6.2 Point System: Three (3) Points awarded for a win, one (1) point awarded for a draw/tie, and zero (0) points awarded for a loss.

6.3 Determination of Standings: standings will be determined by the following criteria in the order listed:

6.3.1 - Most Points

6.3.2 - Head-to-Head Record (Not applicable in a 3 or more team tie)

6.3.2.1 - Match results between teams tied

6.3.2.2 - Goal Difference in games between teams tied (A max goal differential of 5 goals per match will be used)

6.3.3 - Goal Difference in all games (A max goal differential of 5 goals per match will be used)

6.3.4 - Fewest Goals Against in all games (A max goal differential of 5 goals per match will be used)

6.3.5 - Fair Play Record (the team with the better fair play point record as defined by 6.6)

6.3.6 - Coin Toss

6.4 In cases where more than 2 teams are tied, once a team is eliminated from the tie, the remaining teams shall restart the tie-breaking process beginning with 6.3.1

6.5 In cases where not all teams in the division have played an equal number of games, final standings will be calculated using Pts. % (total pts/games played)

6.5.1 In the event that a team changes divisions part way through the season, only games that took place within the division are considered in the determination of standings

6.5.2 Where a seeding stage is used, results from seeding games are recorded to determine division placement only. Seeding results do not carry into division standings, and division standings begin at zero once teams are placed.

6.6 Fair Play Record - teams will be deducted points from their fair play record based on misconduct committed during league play, this may result in negative fair play point totals.

6.6.1 Teams will be deducted one (1) point from their fair play record for each yellow card its players or team officials are shown

6.6.2 Teams will be deducted three (3) points from their fair play record for each red card it's players or team officials are shown

6.6.3 If a player or team official is dismissed as a result of being shown two yellow cards, three (3) points are deducted for the dismissal, none for the initial yellow card.

6.6.4 If a player or team official is dismissed having received a yellow card and a direct red card, points are deducted from their fair play record for both (1 + 3)

7. Registration

7.1 Club Registration

7.1.1 In order for clubs to register teams and players in the NSSL they must:

7.1.1.1 be registered and in good standing with Soccer Nova Scotia and their respective district association

7.1.1.2 meet the club licensing requirements as defined by Soccer Nova Scotia Policies and Procedures.

7.2 Team Registration

7.2.1 Teams must be registered by the declaration date as published in the [Season Schedule of Dates]

7.2.2 By the declaration date, the club's declaration form must be complete and the team synced to the NSSL season structure within the Soccer Nova Scotia Registration System. .

7.2.3 A minimum of 2 team contacts must registered and assigned to the team at this time

7.2.3.1 Each team contact must provide full contact information, including a phone number and email address.

7.3 Player Registration



7.3.1 Teams must have their rosters set in the Soccer Nova Scotia Registration System by the roster deadline published in the [Season Schedule of Dates]

7.3.2 No player shall be deemed registered for participation nor shall a player compete in the NSSL, unless they are registered with Soccer Nova Scotia and rostered to a team within their club. A player must be registered and rostered in the Soccer Nova Scotia Registration System no later than twenty-four (24) hours prior to play.

7.3.3 Rosters shall become locked on January 10 at 11:59 PM as published in the [Season Schedule of Dates]. After this time no players may be added to the team's roster.

7.3.3.1 This does not apply to U8, U9, U10, U11, U12 divisions.

7.3.4 To be eligible to register in the Senior AAA division the player must have turned 17 on or before December 31st of the current year.

7.4 Roster Compliance

7.4.1 Roster sizes for the Winter Season (indoor) must fall within the minimum and maximum noted below;

Format	Minimum # of Players	Maximum # of Players
5-a-side	8	15
7-a-side	10	19
11-a-side	17	30*

*For the 2026/2027 the Maximum # of Players will be expanded to 30 temporarily for the Indoor Winter season.

7.4.2 A team's roster must comply with the age-group majority requirement by the published roster lock date published in the Seasons Schedule of Dates.

7.4.2.1 Age-group majority requirement: More than half of a team's rostered players must be born within the birth year or years assigned to the team's registered age group, as defined in the Soccer Nova Scotia Policies and Procedures. A single-year age group comprises one birth year; a dual-year age group comprises two birth years.

7.4.2.2 Example below;

6 players for a total roster of 10 or 11 players;
7 players for a total roster of 12 or 13 players;
8 players for a total roster of 14 or 15 players;
9 players for a total roster of 16 or 17 players;
10 players for a total roster of 18 or 19 players; and
11 players for a total roster of 20+ players.

If a larger roster is permitted, the minimum will increase as necessary to maintain more than half of the roster.

7.4.3 A club facing placement difficulty may apply to the NSSL for an age-group majority compliance exemption. The NSSL may grant an exemption at its discretion after considering the club's registration numbers, available age groups, competition structure, player development and competitive balance.

7.4.4 Compliance will be assessed at the initial roster deadline published in the Season Schedule of Dates. A team that is not compliant on the roster lock date will be removed from the schedule and required to be re-banded to the correct age group, unless an exemption has been granted under section 7.4.3.

7.4.5 The NSSL may conduct compliance spot checks during the season. If a team is not compliant during the season, the team will be removed from all remaining games on the schedule, subject to any applicable review or appeal rights.

7.5 Coach and Manager Registration

7.5.1 All team coaches and managers participating in the league shall register with Soccer Nova Scotia and shall be subject to all rules and disciplinary procedures of Soccer Nova Scotia.

7.5.2 In any AAA division, a coach shall not be registered to more than one club within a division.

7.5.3 Coaches. All coaches shall be fully Safe Sport compliant in accordance with the Soccer Nova Scotia Policies and Procedures, at the level applicable to the age and competition tier of the team they coach.

7.5.4 Team Managers. All team managers shall hold a valid Criminal Record Check. Team managers are recommended to complete the Understanding the Rule of Two Module.

7.5.5 Technical area. No person shall be in a team's technical area (team bench area) during a game unless they are registered to that team with Soccer Nova Scotia, hold a valid Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Screen, and are listed on the electronic game sheet for that game.

7.5.5.1 Where a person is in a team's technical area in breach of 7.5.5, that person shall be removed from the technical area immediately, and the game shall not start or resume until the breach is corrected. The team is subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Soccer Nova Scotia Discipline Policy.

8. Competition Rules

8.1 Game Durations

Game Duration	Divisions
25 Minutes	U8 U9
2x 25 Minutes	U10 U11 U12 U13 U15AA - B U18 SR
50 Minutes	U15AAA U17AAA

In divisions where half time occurs. The half time length will be three (3) minutes.

8.1.1 Teams in all divisions may be scheduled to play two (2) games on the same day. Each game is played at the full duration and halftime as listed above in 8.1, and counts as a separate game for results, standings, substitution stoppages and game sheets.

8.1.2 Skill Centre age groups (U8, U9, U10 and U11) follow the game format set out in the Skill Centre Guide.

8.2 Delayed Kick-off

All games must begin no later than five (5) minutes after the scheduled kick-off time.

8.3 Extra Time

8.3.1 There shall be no extra time in regular season play.

8.3.2 Regular season games ending in a tie will remain tied.

8.3.3 Play-off games and End-of-season festival games that are knockout games ending in a tie shall be decided by sudden-death penalty kicks from the mark, in accordance with the [Indoor Laws of the Game]

8.4 Ball Size

Ball Size	Applicable Divisions
Size 4	U8 U9 U10 U11 U12
Size 5	U13 U15 U17 U18 SR

8.5 Slide-Tackling

8.5.1 Slide-tackling is not permitted in indoor competitions, in accordance with the Indoor Laws of the Game. This does not apply to U15AAA and U17AAA 11-a-side competitions (see Section 16).

8.6 Retreat Line

8.6.1 The retreat line applies to divisions as set out in the Canada Soccer Grassroots Standards, as listed below;

U8 | U9 - at halfway line

U10 | U11 - at $\frac{1}{3}$ of the field.

8.7 Substitutions

8.7.1 For All indoor competitions, unlimited substitutions are permitted.

8.7.2 Re-entry is permitted

Note: Substitution rules for U15AAA & U17AAA 11-a-side competition are set out in Section 16.

8.8 Roster

8.8.1 Teams may dress up to a total of three (3) more players than the number registered on their roster, up to the maximum roster size.

8.8.2 Only players listed on the team's game sheet are permitted to participate in a game.

8.8.2.1 The only players that may be added to the roster at game time are call-up players. These must be added to the game sheet as a call-up player.

8.8.3 Only team staff meeting the requirements of Section 7.5 may be in the technical area during a game.

8.8.4 Teams that do not have the minimum number of players listed on their roster as of the roster deadline published in the Seasons Schedule of Dates may be removed from the schedule.

8.8.5 A player may only appear on one roster.

8.8.6 Roster Lock (U13 and above). Team rosters for all divisions U13 and above are locked as of the Roster Lock date, January 10th. Only players listed on a team's roster as of that date are eligible to participate in that team's finals weekend.

8.9 Call-ups/Player Movement

8.9.1 Call-up players may be used by any team as set out in section 12 of the Soccer Nova Scotia Policies and Procedures.

8.9.2 Call-Up Chart

Division	Can Call Up From
U15 B	U13 B
U15 A	U15 B U13 A U13 B
U15 AA	U15 A U15 B U13 AA U13 A U13 B
U15 AAA	U15 AA U15 A U15 B U13AA U13 A U13 B
U17 AAA	U18 AA* U18 A* U15 AAA U15 AA U15 A U15 B
U18 B	U15 A U15 B
U18 A	U18 B U15 A U15 B
U18 AA	U18 A U18 B U15 AA U15 A U15 B
SR AA	U18 AA** U18 A** U18 B** U17 AAA**
SR AAA	SR. AA U18 AA** U18 A** U18 B** U17 AAA**

*The player being called up must meet the age requirements of the division to which they are being called up.

** Players 15 years of age and younger are not permitted to be called up to the senior age division. Players aged 16 years at the date of the game, can be called up to senior, with the permission of the technical director of the club the team and player are registered with.

8.9.3 'Playing Across' as defined in Section 12.2.3.3 from the SNS Policies and Procedures is permissible in all divisions within the NSSL for teams playing 7-a-side. Teams may call players across from teams in the same division, registered with the same club.

8.9.3.1 Teams registered to play in an 11-a-side competition may not play across

8.9.4 Player Movement (Playing up and/or playing across), defined by section 12 of the Soccer Nova Scotia Policies and Procedures, is not permitted in any play-off matches.

8.9.5 As per section 8.8.6 no playing across will be allowed in divisions U15 and above after January 10th. Only playing up in accordance with the Call-up chart in section 8.9.2 will be allowed after this date.

8.9.6 For U13 and below, players may move between teams within their own club - across, up, or down in competition level within that age group.

8.9.6.1 Once a player is registered at an age group they may not play down an age group, only competition level within the registered age group.

8.9.7 Movement between clubs remains subject to the guest-player and Temporary Registration Permit provisions.

8.9.8 Youth AAA Call-Up Limit - all relevant sections below are in relation to U15AAA and U17AAA divisions only.

8.9.8.1 A player rostered to one team may be called up to play for a higher team in accordance with the call-up chart in Section 8.9.2, up to a maximum of 50% of that higher team's scheduled games in the competition that allows call-ups.

8.9.8.1.1 Example: in a competition of 16 scheduled games, a called-up player may be on the gamesheet a maximum of 8 games for that team.

8.9.8.1.2 Where the number of scheduled games is odd, the maximum is rounded down to the nearest whole game, so it never exceeds 50% (e.g., 15 games = 7).

8.9.8.2 A call-up is temporary; it does not make the player a transfer or consume a roster cap slot.

8.9.8.3 A player appearing on the gamesheet for a higher team beyond the maximum permitted under 8.9.8.1 is an ineligible player, and the higher team's match is subject to forfeiture in accordance with Section 13.

8.9.8.4 A player who has reached the call-up limit may still be rostered to the higher team as a permanent move where otherwise eligible (a transfer under Section 17.4 if to another club; not a transfer within the player's own club). The limit restricts call-ups, not permanent roster movement.

8.9.8.5 Call-ups are upward only. Movement to another club in the same age group and division is a transfer, not a call-up.

9. Team Responsibilities

9.1 Every youth team shall have present in its technical area, for the duration of each game, at least one adult team official of the same gender as its players. This official must meet the technical-area requirements of 7.5.5.

9.2 The home team is required to provide two (2) quality match game balls to the match official.

9.3 Both teams are required to check off all players and team staff present during the game in the GameSheet App. The game sheet is the league's record of roster compliance and discipline, and is relied upon for insurance and injury reporting in the event of an injury. Complete and accurate check-off is the responsibility of each team.

9.3.1 Check-off shall be completed before kick-off. Where it is not complete by the start of the second half, play shall not resume until both teams have completed it.

9.3.2 The number recorded for each player on the game sheet must accurately reflect the number worn by that player.

10. Game Reporting

10.1 Game reporting shall be completed by the match official. The official's report is the league's official record of the completion, result, and disciplinary record for the game. The match official must complete this within 24 hours of the completion of the game.

10.2 Where a team believes the completion, result, or disciplinary record is inaccurate, it must submit a dispute using the NSSL Game Report Dispute Form. The dispute must state the game number and the specific inaccuracy alleged.

10.2.1 Only the completion, result, and disciplinary record may be disputed. Goalscorer and other team-recorded information is not subject to dispute

10.2.2 A dispute must be raised within seven (7) days of the game.

10.2.3 Disputes submitted after the applicable deadline, or without the required information, will not be considered.

10.2.4 The League Operations Manager will review and determine each dispute.

10.3 Teams may record and update goalscorer information for their own players. This information is maintained by the teams and is subject to the dispute process in 10.2.

10.3.1 Goalscorer information must be reconciled to the result recorded by the match official under 10.1. Teams may attribute goals among their players but may not alter the recorded score.

10.3.2 Goalscorer information may be updated until the applicable dispute deadline for the game.

11. Defaults

11.1 A team is deemed to have forfeited a game where it:

- Fails to appear for a scheduled game (no-show);
- Cancels a scheduled game (Section 15.2);
- Fails to field the minimum number of players within the grace period (11.3);
- Fields a player who is ineligible to play in that game;
- Otherwise defaults for any reason.

11.2 A forfeited game is recorded as a 3-0 loss to the forfeiting team and a 3-0 win to the opposing team. A forfeit is a recorded result only: no cards, goalscorers, or game sheet are recorded, as the game is not played.

11.3 Minimum players to start.

11.3.1 For all 7-a-side games, teams must have five (5) players ready and available to play within five (5) minutes of the scheduled start time. A team that cannot do so forfeits the game.

11.3.2 For all 11-a-side games, teams must have seven (7) players ready and available to play within five (5) minutes of the scheduled start time. A team that cannot do so forfeits the game.

11.4 A fine applies to a forfeiting team per Section 15.

11.5 Where a team fails to complete a game outside its district/region, whether by cancellation or no-show and regardless of notice given, the game is recorded as a forfeit under 11.1 and the defaulting team is deducted three (3) points. A fine also applies under Section 15.

11.5.1 For the purposes of 11.5, Halifax, Harbour East and Suburban Districts are considered the same district/region.

12. Uniforms and Equipment

12.1 Player equipment shall comply with the equipment provisions of the applicable Laws of the Game: the SNS Indoor Laws of the Game for indoor competition, and the IFAB Laws of the Game for 11-a-side competition.

12.1.1 Shin guards must be worn by all players at all games and must be covered by the socks.

12.1.2 All jerseys must be clearly numbered, and the number worn must correspond to the number listed for that player on the game sheet.

12.1.3 Goalkeepers shall wear colours that plainly distinguish them from all other players and the match officials.

12.1.4 Team uniforms must be consistent with the club the team is registered with.

12.1.5 The wearing of casts, insulin pumps and other medical devices, and head coverings is permitted only as reflected in the applicable Canada Soccer and Soccer Nova Scotia Policies. These policies are listed here;

[IFAB Head Scarves](#)

[Player Cast Policy](#)

[Insulin Pump Policy](#)

12.2 The match official may require players to remove equipment and jewelry that in their judgement can be dangerous to another player. If a player fails to carry out the referee's instruction, the player shall not take part in the match.

12.2.1 Prescription or protective eyewear may be worn, subject to 12.2

12.3 All AAA teams must declare its primary and alternate colours before the season, by the date published in the [Season Schedule of Dates]

12.3.1 Where the colours of competing teams are similar, the away team shall wear its alternate colours or numbered pinnies, at the discretion of the match official.

12.3.2 Teams that do not have an alternate kit must bring a numbered set of pinnies to all games.

12.4 Before the date published in the [Season Schedule of Dates], each U15AAA and U17AAA team shall declare its primary, alternate and goalkeeper kits using the [League Kit Declaration Form].

12.4.1 For each game, the NSSL will assign the kit each team is to wear from its declared kits, and will notify both teams no later than four (4) days before the game.

12.4.2 Teams shall wear the assigned kit. Where no assignment has been issued for a game, the colour-clash provisions of 12.3 apply.

12.4.3 Each U15AAA and U17AAA team must be internally uniform; all players on a team wear matching kit

12.5 Where a club cannot meet its declared or assigned kit due to a genuine ordering or supply issue, it may seek written approval from the NSSL to wear an alternative. Any such approval is temporary and applies only until the issue is resolved.

13. Discipline

13.1 The League Operations Manager shall be responsible for all league discipline matters and will administer discipline according to the Soccer Nova Scotia Discipline Policy and the Schedule of Proposed Penalties and Sanctions.

14. Appeals & Protests

14.1 Appeals and protests can be made in accordance with the Soccer Nova Scotia Discipline and Appeals Policy. Section 10 of the Soccer Nova Scotia Discipline and Appeals Policy governs the appeals process.

15. Fines

15.1 The fines in this section apply to all NSSL games. Outstanding fines must be cleared before a team is eligible for finals-weekend competitions. A club with outstanding fines from a prior season may be refused entry until the balance is cleared.

15.2 Cancellations and No-Shows.

15.2.1 A cancellation is a team notifying the NSSL in advance that it cannot fulfil a scheduled game. A no-show is a failure to complete a scheduled game without notice. A cancellation is recorded as a forfeit in relevant divisions under Section 11.

15.2.2 Cancellations must be submitted using the NSSL Game Cancellation Form. The applicable fee is determined by the timestamp of the submitted form. A cancellation not submitted through the form is treated as a no-show.

15.2.3 In-region cancellation and no-show fees apply based on the notice given:

- 7 or more days before the game - \$50
- Between 7 days and 24 hours before the game - \$75
- Between 24 hours and 6 hours before the game - \$150
- Less than 6 hours before the game, or no notice given - \$250

15.2.4 These fees apply to in-region games. Out-of-region cancellations and no-shows are governed by 15.3 and are not additionally subject to the fees in this section.

15.2.5 A cancellation is a forfeit regardless of the notice given; notice affects only the fee, not the result. The opposing team is notified of the cancellation by the NSSL.

15.2.6 These fees are cumulative across a season. A team's second cancellation or no-show is charged at twice (2x) the applicable fee, and the third is tripled (3x), regardless of the tiers of the earlier occurrences.

15.2.7 Subject to 15.2 where a team is removed from the league all games played up to the date of the removal will be erased from league standings

15.3 Out-of-Region Cancellation or No-Shows. Where a team fails to complete a game outside its district/region, whether by cancellation or no-show and regardless of notice given, a flat fine of \$500 applies. A point deduction also applies under Section 11.

15.4 Roster Compliance

15.4.1 A team that does not meet the minimum roster requirements of Section 7.4 by the initial roster date is subject to a \$50 administrative fee. The fee is doubled if the team remains non-compliant after 30 days. A team that remains below the roster requirement by the roster lock date is removed from the schedule (Section 7.4 / 8.8).

15.4.2 Failure to meet the age-group majority requirement (Section 7.4.2) is not subject to a fine; the team will be removed from the schedule and re-banding, as set out in Section 7.4.2.

15.5 Uniform Compliance

15.5.1 A team not wearing the correct, declared, or assigned kit is subject to a \$25 fine per occurrence, doubled for a second occurrence and tripled (3x) for a third.

15.6 Game Sheet Completion

15.6.1 Failure to complete game sheet requirements (Section 9) is subject to a \$25 fine per occurrence, doubled for a second occurrence and tripled (3x) for a third.

15.7 Team Withdrawal

15.7.1 A club that removes a team after the declaration date is subject to a \$250 fine per team removed.

15.7.2 A club that removes a team after the first game of the schedule has been posted is subject to a \$500 fine per team removed, plus any additional facility costs incurred as a result of the removal.

15.8 Club Forfeit Escalation



15.8.1 Forfeits are recorded at the club level, across all of a club's teams.

15.8.2 Where a club accumulates five (5) forfeits in a season, the club is required to attend a meeting with the League to review the pattern and agree a corrective action plan. The meeting is documented as a formal warning.

15.8.3 Where a club accumulates eight (8) forfeits in a season, following the meeting and warning under 15.8.2, the League will submit a formal letter to Soccer Nova Scotia identifying the club's forfeit record and the corrective action plan previously agreed and not achieved. The league may place the club on probation for the following season.

15.8.4 Where a club continues to accumulate forfeits during a probationary period, the NSSL may review the club's continued participation, resulting in suspension or expulsion from the League.

15.9 On any day the NSSL has declared that the [Indoor Season Inclement Weather Policy] is in effect, that policy governs the cancellation of games and any resulting forfeits, fines and point deductions.

15.10 All surplus fines are donated to Nova Scotia KidSport.

16. Youth AAA - Winter Season

16.1 For the 2026/2027 Winter Season, the U15AAA and U17AAA divisions will play 11-a-side competition under the IFAB Laws of the Game, as modified in this section. League standings are kept for these divisions; however, no champion, medals, or other awards are conferred, and these divisions do not participate in playoffs or a finals weekend.

16.2 Format.

16.2.1 Games are a single fifty (50) minute period with no half-time.

16.2.2 Teams play 11-a-side.

16.2.3 Each team may make substitutions at up to three (3) stoppages of play per game. Each team's stoppages are counted separately. An unlimited number of players may be substituted at each stoppage, and re-entry is permitted.

16.2.3.1 If both teams substitute at the same stoppage, that stoppage counts as one (1) of the three (3) stoppages for each team.

16.2.3.2 Where a player is injured after a team has used all three (3) substitution stoppages, that team may replace the injured player during the stoppage for

the injury. This replacement does not count as an additional substitution stoppage and is limited to the injured player.

16.2.4 Slide tackling is permitted in 15AAA and 17AAA 11-a-side competition.

16.2.5 Where a game is played in a covered facility, and the ball strikes the ceiling or any object suspended above the field, play is restarted with an indirect free kick to the team that did not last touch the ball, taken from beneath the point of contact.

16.3 These divisions follow the kit declaration and assignment provisions of Section 12. For outdoor games, under-layers may be worn but must be a continuous colour from the sleeve and consistent colour across the team.

16.4 Except as modified in this section, all NSSL rules apply to these games, including registration, roster compliance, technical-area and same gender team official requirements, discipline, and game reporting. Cards, suspensions, and injury reporting apply as in any other NSSL game.

17. Amendments to the Rules

17.1 A club seeking a structural change to these rules may submit a Request for Decision (RFD) by May 1st. Each RFD will be reviewed and proposed to the appropriate committees. The RFD may be accepted or declined, and the outcome will be communicated to the clubs. Accepted changes will be introduced in a future edition of the handbook.

17.2 The rules shall not be amended while the season is underway, except to correct a grammatical or clerical error that does not change the meaning or intent of a rule.

17.3 The League Operations Manager may amend administrative rules outside the RFD proposed changes prior to the release of the first schedule of the season, the date of which is published in the [Season Schedule of Dates].

Summary of Changes

2025/26 Winter Season new and changed rules and regulations are as follows:

- 3.3 Game Days - U8/9 SC Now on Sundays
- 3.5 Playoffs - clarification
- 3.6 End-of-Season Tournament - replaces Playoffs for U13 divisions

- 7.1 Club Registration - requirements for Clubs to participate in NSSL Winter Season
- 8.1 Game Durations - changes for U10 and U11 divisions
- 8.4 Ball Size - updated in accordance with Canada Soccer Grassroots Standards
- 8.6 Retreat line - updated in accordance with Canada Soccer Grassroots Standards
- 8.9.2 Call-up Chart - call-up chart added for clarity
- 8.9.3 Playing Across - clarification of wording
- 8.9.4 Player Movement in Playoffs - clarification of wording
- 11.4 Sanction (point deductions) for no-shows of out-of-region games
- 14.1 Appeals and Protests - defers to Soccer NS policy and procedure
- 15.2 Incomplete Gamesheet fine(s)
- Removed: Power-Play

2026/2027 Winter season updated rules and regulations;

- Other Applicable Rules & Regulations - reference list expanded
- 1 Game Laws - 15AAA/17AAA play under IFAB Laws
- 2 SNS Policies & Procedures - conflict rule added
- 3.1-3.3 Start/End Dates & Game Days - now set in the Season Schedule of Dates
- 3.5 Division Formation - new seeding phase for U15+ AA, A and B divisions
- 3.6 AAA Divisions - new; no seeding, 11-a-side
- 3.7 Play-offs - top four, single elimination
- 3.8 U13 End-of-Season Festival - replaces End-of-Season Tournament
- 4.1 Schedule Release - timing by age group
- 4.2 In-Season Rebalancing - new for U13 and below
- 4.5 Inclement Weather - sections consolidated
- 6 Standings - renumbered; seeding results excluded
- 7.2 Team Registration - 24-hour registration rule; Senior AAA minimum age
- 7.4 Roster Compliance - roster sizes by format; age-group majority rule
- 7.5 Coach & Manager Registration - Safe Sport, CRC and technical area rules
- 8.1 Game Durations - table format; Youth AAA single 50-minute period
- 8.5 Slide-Tackling - permitted in AAA 11-a-side only
- 8.6 Retreat Line - updated per Grassroots Standards
- 8.8.6 Roster Lock - applies to U13 and above
- 8.9 Call-ups/Player Movement - chart updated; playing across limited to 7-a-side, 18B can Call Up from 15A and 15B, AAA 50% call-up limit
- 9 Team Responsibilities - same-gender team official required
- 10 Game Reporting - 24-hour reporting, dispute process
- 11 Defaults - forfeits defined; minimum players for 11-a-side
- 12 Uniforms & Equipment - rewritten; AAA kit declaration
- 15 Fines - tiered cancellation fees; forfeit escalation; Inclement Weather Policy precedence
- 16 Youth AAA - new section, outlines Youth AAA 11-a-side Winter Season
- 17 Amendments - RFD process replaces committee vote

