



HFA Rules of Play

These Rules of Play apply to ALL HFA Competitions, including but not limited to the Regular Season, O30, O40, and Hotter Than Hell Competitions. They apply equally to all Competitions, except where stated.

ARTICLE 1 – PLAYER ELIGIBILITY, GENERALLY

1.01 **Player Application.** An applicant player seeking to play in any HFA Competition must first:

- Complete on-line registration as directed by HFA, and
- Submit a copy of his government-issued photo ID to the League Administrator.

Generally, HFA keeps copies of government-issued photo ID on file for three years, so, in instances where the player has played in HFA in the last three years, re-submission of government-issued photo ID may not be necessary. Please confirm with the League Administrator.

1.02 **HFA Confirmation.** An applicant player is not eligible to play in any HFA Competition until he has been approved by HFA. Generally, eligibility is confirmed in writing through HFA's registration website and the applicant's team's gameday roster. In addition, the League Administrator has discretion to confirm, via e-mail, that an applicant player is eligible to play.

1.03 **Timely Application.** Although the League Administrator has discretion to process player applications on shorter notice, processing is not guaranteed unless all required materials and information are submitted at least seven (7) days prior to the applicant's team's next scheduled HFA game.

1.04 **One Team Per Competition.** Any player registered with HFA as a member of one team shall not play for any other team within the same Competition (*e.g.*, a player may play on one team within the Regular Season Competition, one team within the O30 Competition, and one team within the O40 Competition, but may not play for multiple teams within any one of those Competitions.)

1.05 **Releases and Transfers.** During the official playing season, a player shall not sign for another Member team within the same Competition until his current team has released him. Requests for release should not be unreasonably withheld. If the Member team refuses to release the player, the player seeking transfer may bring the matter to the attention of the Board of Directors, with reasons stated to allow the transfer.

1.06 **Transfer Deadline.** For the Regular Season and the O30 & O40 Season Competitions, no transfer or registration of players shall be permitted to or from any Member team with less than five (5) regular season games remaining, whether scheduled or rescheduled.

- a. **Goalkeeper Exception.** No transfer or registration of Goalkeepers shall be permitted to or from any Member team with less than three (3) regular season games remaining; in such instances, the transferring player may play only as a Goalkeeper.
- b. **Summer League Exception.** For the Hotter Than Hell competitions, no transfer or registration of players shall be permitted to or from any Member team with less than two (2) regular season games remaining, whether scheduled or rescheduled.

- 1.07 **Lateral and Downward Transfer Delay.** A player transferring from team to team within a division or transferring to a lower division must sit out the first game with the new team. Players transferring upwards are available immediately once HFA has approved the transfer.

ARTICLE 2 – GAME DOCUMENTATION

- 2.01 **Roster Form.** Prior to the start of each game, each team shall provide the referee with a paper copy of the official gameday roster, printed from the HFA-designated on-line resource (for the 2023-2024 Season, this is SportsConnect).
- 2.02 **Check-In.** Each player shall sign his name and list his unique, identifiable jersey number on the printed gameday roster. The referee crew will review the submitted roster to ensure that only eligible players are playing and to satisfy themselves that the players are who they claim to be. In the event of last-minute changes not captured in the printout, eligible players may be written onto the roster, subject to the other procedures set forth in Article 2. [NOTE: 22 players, which is more than the 19 players that are allowed to be checked in to a match can be printed on the gameday roster, and then crossed-through before kickoff].
- 2.03 **Proof of Eligibility.** At every game, Member teams must have proof of their players' registration and eligibility for the game in question. Typically, this information is captured in the printed gameday roster. In the event of discrepancies, the referee should review a team's on-line roster (*i.e.*, the full roster of eligible players, not the gameday roster) and a photo ID for the player in question (*e.g.*, driver's license or passport) to satisfy himself that the player is eligible and is who he says he is. In such instances, the referee will take a picture of the player, a picture of the presented photo ID, and will require the player's signature on the gameday roster.
- 2.04 **Roster Size.** A maximum of nineteen (19) players will be allowed to "dress" for each game. A player shall be considered "dressed" for a game when, in the opinion of the referee, he (i) satisfies all eligibility requirements, (ii) wears the official team uniform, and (iii) otherwise wears appropriate soccer clothing and protective gear.
- 2.05 **Fielding Ineligible Players.** Managers should note that suspended players should not appear on the gameday roster. A Manager should not attempt to bypass this safeguard by using the procedures discussed in Article 2.03 to convince the referee to allow a suspended or unregistered player to play. Fielding an unregistered or otherwise ineligible player is a *serious* infraction and will result in forfeiture of any games played by the ineligible player. In addition, the Member team and its Manager of Record may be subject to further sanctions, which may include fines, point deductions, suspension, and/or expulsion, as permitted by the HFA By-Laws.
- 2.06 **Match Reporting. Each Member team must deliver or e-mail the completed report from each game to HFA's Administrative Staff within 24 hours of the game (e-mail: hfaregistrar@gmail.com).** The referee shall report the results of the game, cards awarded, and the goalscorers to HFA by making notations on the official gameday roster and signing it. In addition, the referee must report any violations of rules and regulations by either team or their team officials, and should make any other noteworthy observations. After completing the report, the referee is to return the annotated gameday rosters to the teams' Manager/Acting Managers for submission to HFA. Failure of any team to provide the Administrative Staff with the gameday roster within 5 business days will result in a fine of \$40. No points shall be awarded for any played game, and no postponed game will be rescheduled, unless at least one of the official gameday rosters provided and signed by the referee is received by the Administrative Staff.

Referees may submit supplemental match reports if the situation warrants. In such instances, the referee shall submit the supplement promptly (*i.e.*, within 24 hours of the game) to the League

Administrator, who will promptly forward the supplemental report to the teams (and to the Disciplinary Committee or Board of Directors, if the situation warrants).

ARTICLE 3 – PLAY OF THE GAME

The latest International Football Association Board *Laws of the Game* (i.e., FIFA rules) govern HFA games, with the following exceptions and clarifications:

3.01 **Uniforms Required.** Players of the same team must have substantially identical jerseys (*not* pinnies), shorts, and socks, and each player must display a unique permanent number on his jersey. A player not wearing a proper uniform will not be allowed to play in the game.

3.02 **Color Conflict Resolution.** When the colors of the competing teams are similar, the **HOME TEAM** must change. Failure to change uniforms will result in a forfeit.

3.03 **Referee Fee.** Each team is responsible for paying the referee crew \$85.00 at each game.

3.04 **Game Time Is Forfeit Time.** A game's scheduled start time is binding. For the Regular Season Competition, a team that does not pay the referee fee and have nine (9) eligible players in uniform and signed-in at the scheduled start time forfeits the game. For the O30, O40, and Hotter Than Hell Competitions, the same requirements apply, but with a minimum of seven (7) players. To expedite matters the referee may, at his or her discretion, confirm the count of signed-in players before kickoff, but fully check-in the players (including additional late-arriving players) and collect referee fees at halftime; any team fielding ineligible players bears the risks and responsibilities discussed in Article 2.

- **Exceptions.** If a game is delayed due to referee tardiness, weather, locked field gates, or similar circumstances exceptions shall be made if possible. If a disagreement exists, the teams should lean towards playing the game and reporting the unusual circumstances to HFA for potential resolution. The decision of rescheduling a game to another date based on unusual weather conditions or proof of extenuating circumstances will be made under a reviewing procedure established by the Board of Directors. Note: In case of O30 & O40 evening games, lights are on a timer that is not controlled by HFA; as such games cannot go past the scheduled time.
- **Permissible Grace Period.** An opposing manager is not required to do so, but, in the interest of sportsmanship and in consideration of exigent circumstances, may consent to a grace period of up to 15 minutes to allow an opposing team to avoid a forfeit. Because such manager is allowing a departure from the rules and from his right to accept the forfeit, he may also withdraw his consent to the grace period at any time prior to kickoff.

In games that start late because a manager who is otherwise entitled to a forfeit allows a grace period, halftime shall be shortened to 5 minutes. In addition, the referee shall advise both teams, in advance of kickoff, how long each of the equal-length halves will be played (not accounting for added/stoppage time). In no event can a game begin with a plan to play less than the time required for an official game in that Competition, as described in Article 3.08. The intent of the grace period provisions is to play as much of a complete, official game as possible, with both teams and the referee knowing, in advance, the expected duration of the halves.

3.05 **Full-Duration Games.** In Regular Season Competition games will consist of two (2) 45-minute halves. For the O30, O40, and Hotter Than Hell Competitions, games will consist of two (2) 40-minute halves. In all instances, the referee has discretion to add time, as is appropriate.

- 3.06 **Game Officials.** All HFA games shall be officiated by properly registered referees, approved and appointed by HFA. **The referee shall be the sole judge on the field of play and his or her decisions shall be final.** Any complaints about any referee shall be directed in writing to the HFA Referee Liaison via the Administrative Staff. See the HFA By-Laws for further discussion of the complaint procedure.
- 3.07 **Substitutions.** In all HFA Competitions, players who have been substituted are allowed unlimited re-entry. Subject to the referee's discretion, either team may substitute an unlimited number of players at any stoppage in play.
- 3.08 **Games Not Played to Full Duration.** For the Regular Season competition, games not played to full duration due to acts of God, such as unusual weather conditions, lighting failure, etc., but that have reached at least the 75th minute of play shall be considered official and complete.

For the O30, O40, and Hotter Than Hell Competitions, games not played the full duration due to acts of God, such as unusual weather conditions, lighting failure, etc. but that have reached at least the 65th minute of play shall be considered official and complete.

When a game is not played to full duration, the referee should note this in the game report and expressly state whether the game reached the official game minimum time threshold for that Competition.

If a game is not played to full duration for any reason outside of items listed above (*e.g.*, a game abandonment), the Disciplinary Committee, subject to approval by the Board of Directors, shall have power to (i) impose a fine and/or suspension, (ii) withdraw cards issued during the game, (iii) order the game to be rescheduled and replayed, (iv) order the game to stand as played, (v) order a forfeit to be awarded, or (vi) order a double forfeit to be awarded, depending on the cause of the game not being completed.

- 3.09 **Advance Notice of Forfeits.** If the Member team knows in advance that it will be forfeiting, the forfeit fine will be once the current referee fees (*i.e.*, \$85.00) if notice is provided to the League Administrator at hfaregistrar@gmail.com by the following deadline:
- For Tuesday night games, notice by 3 pm the Friday before the game;
 - For Thursday night games, notice by 3 pm the Monday before the game;
 - For Saturday night games, notice by 3 pm the Wednesday before the game;
 - For Sunday games, notice by 3 pm the Thursday before the game.

If a team forfeits without providing notice before the applicable deadline, the fine will be twice the current referee fees (*i.e.*, \$170.00).

ARTICLE 4 – STANDINGS

- 4.01 **League and Division Structure.** Divisions will be limited to a maximum of ten (10) teams unless otherwise approved by the Board of Directors. The winner of the Premier Division shall be called HFA League Champion.
- 4.02 **Promotion/Relegation.** Progress through the league shall be by promotion and relegation based on standings. Normally within a ten- (10-) team division, the top two (2) teams of a division will move up while the bottom two (2) teams of a division will move down. The Board of Directors may provide, however, for unequal promotions or relegations between divisions at commencement of a new season.

Subject to the discretion of the Board of Directors, any team that forfeits three (3) or more games in a season, for any reason, shall be automatically ineligible for promotion and may be subject to relegation regardless of its actual points total at the end of the season.

- 4.03 **Standings.** The HFA Administrative Staff is responsible for tracking and publishing the official League Standings, broken down by division. Within each division, standings shall be figured by points. A team is awarded three (3) points for a win and one (1) point for a tie.

A forfeit is recorded as a 0 (goals-for) to 3 (goals-against) result against the forfeiting team, and the forfeiting team receives zero (0) points.

In the event of a double-forfeit, both teams receive a 0 (goals-for) to 3 (goals-against) result, and both teams receive zero (0) points.

- **Points Tie-Breakers.** Ties in the standings will be broken by the following progressive criteria:
 1. Goal differential (goals-for minus goals-against);
 2. Highest goals-for;
 3. Head-to-head competition;
 4. Coin-toss to be witnessed by the teams (with the League Administrator assigning heads and tails in advance and tossing the coin).
- **Unequal Games Played.** If teams have played an unequal number of games at the time the standings are determined. The Board of Directors may:
 1. Determine the standings based on the average number of points each team has per game played; or
 2. Determine the standings on total points irrelevant of the number of games played if the Board of Directors feels it is more equitable.

- 4.04 **Excluded Teams.** If, for any reason, a team shall not have played half of its scheduled games, the games the team played shall not count for or against opposing teams.

- 4.05 **Season End.** All leagues (Regular, O30, & O40) have an official completion date of June 30. This deadline applies regardless of whether all games have been completed.

ARTICLE 5 – DISCIPLINE

- 5.01 **Notification.** Any player or team personnel reported to HFA for discipline must be informed, by the referee, of the fact of reporting. Use of a yellow or red card constitutes notification to the person and Member team, as does a notation in the official match report. Infractions other than those involving yellow or red cards require separate, express notification in the match report.

- 5.02 **Review and Further Discipline.** The official match report for each game is subject to review by the Disciplinary Committee, which has authority to discipline any participants for official cautions and ejections as permitted in the HFA By-Laws, including but not limited to the following:

- a. **Red Cards.** A minimum one- (1-) game suspension and \$50 fine applies for any red card ejection (*i.e.*, the player is ineligible to play the remainder of the game from which he was ejected, as well as the next game).

- b. **Yellow Card Cautions.** When a player accumulates five (5) yellow card cautions in a season, he must serve a one- (1-) game suspension in his next game and pay a \$25 fine.
 - c. **Fines.** The Board of Directors and the Disciplinary Committee have authority to levy additional fines as part of their disciplinary measures.
 - d. **Multi-Competition Suspension.** The Disciplinary Committee and Board of Directors retain the right to apply player suspensions across multiple HFA Competitions.
 - e. **Track Record.** The Board of Directors and the Disciplinary Committee may consider previous incidents, cards, and fines when determining appropriate discipline against a Member team, Manager of Record, or player for new infractions.
 - f. **BOD Oversight.** The Board of Directors may overrule the Disciplinary Committee as it sees fit.
- 5.03 **Failure to Leave Promptly.** Any player ejected from the field of play for any reason MUST immediately leave the facility where the game is being played. Players failing to leave the facility in a reasonable period of time, or players who leave but subsequently return immediately after game completion, will be subject to additional sanctions to be reviewed by the Disciplinary Committee or Board of Directors.
- 5.04 **Non-Player Ejections.** A manager, coach, or coaching assistant who is ordered from the area of the field by the referee shall be prohibited from attending the team's next playable scheduled game. This includes a manager, coach, or coaching assistant who has been suspended by the Disciplinary Committee, Board of Directors, or General Membership. If ordered from the area of field a second time during the same season, he will be prohibited from attending any of his team's games for the remainder of the season. Any infringement of the prohibition from attendance may result in forfeiture of the game. Those under suspension or ordered from the area of play are not allowed at the facility where the game is being played. Should a suspended manager, coach, or coaching assistant be registered as a player for another team, he may be allowed at the same facility at only the field designated on the official schedule 30 minutes prior to the scheduled game time and through the completion of the game. This player must then leave the facility immediately.
- Spectators are the responsibility of the team that they are supporting (and by default the team manager/acting manager signed in to the Match Report). Any spectator ordered by the referee to leave the facility MUST LEAVE IMMEDIATELY and the manager/acting manager must provide the referee the spectator's name to be documented on the Match Report. All instances where spectator(s) have been ejected from an HFA match will result in immediate review by the HFA Disciplinary Committee and BOD. Failure of the responsible team to cooperate in efforts to remove the offending spectator from the facility promptly or to identify the ejected spectator may result in forfeiture of the match in question, as well as any other punishment provided under HFA's Bylaws.