

ALLIANCE PREMIER LEAGUE

PART I

GOVERNANCE

101: Name

The name of this LEAGUE shall be the Alliance Premier league. It will be referred to as the “APL”.

102: Compliance

This league shall comply with the authority of the participating US Youth Soccer State Associations, and those regional, national and international organizations of which the State Associations are affiliated.

103: Boundaries

The boundaries of the APL shall be limited to the boundaries of the participating US Youth Soccer State Associations. This is a restricted league; only Clubs/Teams of US Youth Soccer State Associations can participate.

104: Laws of the Game

Section 1: The “Laws of the Game” as authorized by FIFA, and modified for youth play by the USSF, US Youth Soccer, or the APL, apply to all youth soccer matches sanctioned by the APL.

105: Seasonal Year

The seasonal year of the APL will begin on August 1 of one calendar year and end on July 31 of the following calendar year.

106: Use of Name and Logo

No one may use the name or initials of the APL, any of its trade names including Alliance Premier League and APL or its logo, except as provided under these Rules or except with the express written consent of the Governing Board.

107: Authorities

This league shall be governed by its rules and policies as presently constituted except in those matters reserved by the participating State Associations.

Section 1: This league shall be governed by the Governing Board. The Governing Board shall consist of the Executive Directors and Directors of Coaching from the participating State Associations represented in the APL

Section 2: The league shall be administered by a League Director appointed by the participating State Association’s Executive Directors.

Section 3: When a vacancy in the League Director's position occurs, all League Director Responsibilities will be the domain of the participating States Executive Directors, who may appoint a temporary League Director until the position is filled.

108: Dissolution

If this league dissolves for any reason, its property and assets shall inure to the participating US Youth State Associations in proportion to satisfy all accounts outstanding and the remainder will remain with the Alliance Management Group, LLC.

109: Fiscal Year Budget

The League Director shall prepare a budget for the APL for the next fiscal year.

110: Accounts, Books and Records

Section 1: The APL financial records shall be kept by the Nebraska Executive Director in accordance with Nebraska accounting standards.

Section 2: All books and records, including copies of governing documents shall be open to inspection by the Governing Board.

111: Disclaimer

The APL shall not assume, nor be liable for, the debts and/or financial responsibilities either implied or incurred, of any player, head coach, assistant coach, trainer, manager, team official, club official or referee from any member team, affiliate or other organization.

112: Amendments

Section 1: The Governing Board may vote to amend APL Rules and Policies at any time.

Section 2: Any rule or policy change that passes a majority vote of the Governing Board will become effective immediately unless stated otherwise.

PART II

MEMBERSHIP

201: Eligibility

Section 1: Membership in the APL is invitation to soccer clubs, teams, players, coaches, trainers, managers, administrators and officials within the participating US Youth Soccer State Associations that are affiliated with and in good standing with the participating US Youth Soccer State Associations.

Section 2: Only clubs, teams, players and coaches registered to US Youth Soccer in their respective state associations are eligible to participate in the APL.

202: General Responsibilities

In addition to the requirements of these rules and policies:

1. Falsification of records shall be grounds for removal from future participation and/or membership in this league.
2. A plea of ignorance to the rules, policies and procedures of this league is not sufficient and violators may expect appropriate action by the League Director and/or Governing Board.
3. Any person found guilty of violating the rules, policies and procedures of this league may be asked to appear before the League Director in order to explain his/her actions.

203: Fees

Section 1: Each Team Member's Club shall pay to the APL fees in an amount determined by the Governing Board. A fee schedule and due dates will be provided prior to the first day of registration.

Section 2: The team fee to be collected will include the following:

- League Director Fee
- League Administrative Fee (Office fees)
- Referee Assignor Fee
- Field Fees
- Referee Fees

Section 3: All fees must be paid on or before the dates set by the League Director.

Section 4: Reconciliation with each club will be done reflecting actual costs plus administrative fees.

PART III

ORGANIZATION

301: Divisions

The age brackets of teams within the APL will be in the U13, U14, U15, U16, U18 (U17-U18 combined) age groups.

302: Team Rosters

Section 1: The maximum roster size is 22.

Section 2: State Certified Rosters or an APL Roster approved by State Association will be the rosters used for the league. The APL Roster can include Club Pass players and will be a form that can be processed from the league website and submitted to the State Association for approval.

Section 3: Players may only play for one club in the APL

Section 4: In situations where multiple teams from the same club are participating in the APL, including multiple teams within the same age group:

1. At no time shall a player play for more than one APL team in any one day.
2. At no time shall a player play for more than one team within the same age group.

Section 5: A team must demonstrate continuity of rosters by maintaining a minimum of nine players common to the roster of the team at every league match.

303: Match Rosters

Prior to each match, a copy of the participating team's approved State Certified Roster or APL Roster approved by their state association, must be presented to the referee officiating the match, along with the coach/player passes. The Match Roster must identify the 18 players for the match and the jersey number for each player. The jersey number can be written on the rosters. Referees will collect the player passes for players participating in the match and the Match Roster. The player's passes and Match Roster will be returned after the match.

304: Registration

Section 1: Each State Association will notify the APL of the teams that will be invited to participate in the League. State Associations will use results from the prior year APL and US Youth State Cup.

Section 2: For the U13 age group that will play in the spring - Each State Association will determine a qualifying format that will determine representatives from their state. The format can include a placement festival in the fall, league results from the fall or some type of competition in the fall. Four representatives from each state will be selected.

Section 3: Invited teams must submit an application to the APL on or before the published sign up date.

Section 4: When an invited team does not accept their invitation, the participating State Association can determine an alternate team to participate in the league.

305: Relegation

Section 1: Teams finishing in the top four places of the APL cannot be relegated the following season irrespective of their state cup finish.

Section 4: The Governing Board reserves the right to accept or refuse any team from participating in the APL.

PART IV

PLAYING RULES

401: Laws of the Game

Section 1: The "Laws of the Game" as authorized by FIFA, and modified for youth play by the USSF, US Youth Soccer, or the participating State Associations, apply to all youth soccer matches sanctioned by the APL.

Section 2: It is the responsibility of each team to comply with rules and regulations outside the boundaries of the APL rules and policies.

402: Number of Players:

Section 1: No team shall play an APL match with less than seven (7) players, and no team may play or suit up more than 18 players in any APL match.

Section 2: A TEN (10) minute GRACE-PERIOD shall be granted to any team that does not have the minimum seven players by match time. If the team has seven, the match shall start on time. Any team failing to field seven players after the grace-period shall FORFEIT the match.

403: Players/Coach Passes

Section 1: All teams are required to present a valid US Youth Soccer player/coach pass for each player, head coach, assistant coach, trainer and/or manager that will be on the member team's sideline. Passes must be complete with pictures and laminated on both sides. Player, head coach, assistant coaches, trainers and/or managers will not be allowed to participate or be on the sideline without a pass.

Section 2: A maximum number of 4 coaches, including trainers, may be on the team sideline.

Section 3: If by send off or emergency, a team does not have a coach, manager, or team official to supervise the APL team during the match, the match shall be forfeited.

404: Substitutions & Player Passes

Section 1: In the U-18, U-16 and U-15 age groups the APL will operate under the Seven (7) "per half" substitution system. Once replaced, players cannot re-enter the match during that half of play. Each player shall present their player pass to the referee upon entering the field of play. Passes will be returned to the players at the end of the half. Players will present passes upon entering the match during the second half. Substitutions may be made during any stoppage in play at the discretion of the referee.

Section 2: In the U-13 and U-14 age groups, unlimited substitutions will be permitted. Referees will collect all the player passes at the start of the match and return them after the match is complete. Substitutions may be made during any stoppage in play at the discretion of the referee.

Section 3: The Referee Assignors will insure that all referees assigned to officiate any APL matches are aware of this rule.

405: Match Time and Ball Size:

Section 1: U-13/14, Two 35-minute halves
U-15/16, Two 40-minute halves
U-17/18, Two 45-minute halves

Section 2: The home team will provide an acceptable size 5 ball to the referee for the match.

Section 3: Any intra-state match played short after the second half kickoff will be considered complete.

406: Player Equipment:

Section 1: Player equipment includes a jersey or shirt, shorts, socks, shin guards, and appropriate footwear. All players must have the same complete uniform, each with a number. No duplicate numbers will be allowed. Goalkeepers will have a shirt that distinguishes him/her from the other players and the referee, but do not need a number on their goalkeeper jersey.

Section 2: A player with blood on his/her body, clothing, and/or other equipment must exit the field immediately as directed by the referee. Once the situation is cleaned/repared the player may return to the match at the discretion of the referee.

Section 3: Teams playing in the APL are only permitted to wear the following on their match uniforms:

1. US Youth Soccer Logo
2. Their individual club and/or team sponsor logo
3. Manufacturer of uniform logo
4. APL logo
5. State Association logo
6. Name and number of player

Section 4: When there is a conflict in uniform color, the home team must change their uniform color, subject to the match referee's decision.

Section 5: Players on the bench will wear matching pennies.

407: Field of Play

Section 1: Fields for all age groups must meet FIFA requirements for proper dimensions. It is the responsibility of the League Director to communicate the minimum field size to all field managers.

Section 2: The coaches and match referee should inspect the integrity of the goals and ensure they are anchored and suitable for play. Matches shall not begin until both goals have been firmly anchored.

409: Inclement Weather

The Host team is responsible for notifying the League Director as soon as possible if matches on scheduled fields are unable to be played due to field closings or inclement weather. Rescheduling of matches is decided by League Director.

410: Referees

Section 1: The Referee Assignors will ensure that all referees assigned APL matches are certified as required by the USSF.

Section 2: It is the responsibility of the Referee Assignors to ensure that only referees of the highest caliber are assigned matches played in the APL.

Section 3: If the League Director receives a report of inappropriate behavior by a referee, they will meet with the Referee Assignor to investigate the report. The League Director and Referee Assignor will determine actions from the report.

Section 4: The referees will officiate all matches in accordance with the FIFA Laws of the game and modifications by the league.

Section 5: The Referee Assignors will communicate with the League Director 120 days prior to the start of the seasonal year to determine the fees to be paid to referees.

Section 6: The League Director will assure that all teams pay an equal fee for referees within an age division.

Section 7: All discipline involving an ejection of any head coach, assistant coach, trainer and/or spectator shall be forwarded to the League Director before 10:00pm the day of the match by the head referee. It is the responsibility of the referee to provide a written report, with supporting reports from the assistant referees within 48 hours of the incident.

Section 8: Referees may terminate matches for lack of crowd control, poor team behavior or other unsportsmanlike circumstances. The Referee will report the termination of any match to the League Director within 24 hours. The League Director shall ascertain the facts and determine appropriate disciplinary action that may include:

1. Reprimand
2. Forfeiture of match as appropriate
3. Suspension from future APL matches until a hearing is conducted

Section 9: If play is stopped at any time due to one of the teams (by action of players, coaches, administrators, spectators) judged to be at fault, it shall be at the discretion of the League Director whether match is to be replayed or declared a forfeit.

Section 10: Matches should be officiated by the three-person FIFA/USSF Referee system. In the event the assigned officials fail to appear (within 10 minutes of match time) an attempt to secure certified officials should be made. In the event certified USSF referees are not available, the referee may appoint a Club Assistant Referee. Club Assistant Referee's shall be limited to decisions only on touchlines and possession as specified by FIFA/USSF Referee Guidelines.

Section 11: In the event that a referee is not present for a match, and the coaches agree upon a mutual referee, the match score will be official, and no protests concerning that match shall be allowed.

PART V

SCHEDULES & RESULTS

501: Schedules

Section 1: All teams registered in the APL shall be required to play all of their scheduled league matches. Teams not playing a scheduled league match are subject to a \$400 fine and possible suspension from the APL.

Section 2: No match may be cancelled for any reason other than an "Act of God" Failure to adhere to this policy will render the offending team responsible for all referee fees and match expenses for the cancelled match.

Section 3: Cancelled matches will be rescheduled by the League Director. Coaches or team managers should contact each other, agree on a date to reschedule and forward the information to the League Director. All reschedules are dependent on field and referee availability. Matches not rescheduled will be posted as Not Played. Failure to adhere to this policy may render the offending team responsible for all referee fees and match expenses for the canceled match.

Section 4: The APL is a multi-state league and as such will play matches throughout multiple states.

Section 5: All APL Member Teams must be prepared to travel for league matches.

Section 6: No Member Team may reschedule a match due to traveling conflicts.

Section 7: If a Member Team must reschedule a match in accordance with the rules of this document, the rescheduled match will be played in the city it was originally scheduled for.

Section 8: All attempts will be made by the League Director to schedule two matches in one day for all teams that have to travel.

Section 9: The APL may schedule matches on weekdays or weekends for in-state matches, Inter-state games will be played Saturday or Sunday, based on field availability.

Section 10: The League Director will create a schedule of matches for all divisions.

Section 11: The League Director will send the schedule to the Web Master for posting on the league web site.

Section 12: All Member Teams will play their schedules as listed on the web site. It is the Member Team's responsibility to ensure that they have a current schedule.

Section 13: The League Director will block out certain weekends designated by the Governing Board as having conflicts with the following: Tournaments voted on by the Governing Board. Those weekends where certain Member Teams have been invited to Special Soccer related events. (i.e.; ODP)

502: Results

Section 1: It is the Referee's responsibility to ensure that the match report is accurate and maintain a match report for each match they officiate. The Center Referee must submit the report to the League Director before referee fees for the match are paid to all match referees. Reports may be submitted via the Internet.

Section 2: All league stats will be taken from the match report the Center Referee submit and no changes will be allowed once the match report has been sent to the APL, unless both coaches and the Center Referee concur that an error has been made.

Section 3: Standard points for results:
Win = 3 points, Tie = 1 point, Loss = 0 point, Forfeits = (-3 points)

Section 4: Forfeits will be scored as a 4-0 win.

Section 5: Tie Breaker(s):

1. Winner of Head to Head match
2. Winner of most matches
3. Goal Spread (goals for minus goals against; max of 4)
4. Fewest goals allowed
5. Declared co-finisher if still tied

PART VI

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

601: Send-Off within the competition

Section 1: Any send off will be served within the league, not at any other USSF match.

Section 2: Any player receiving a red card must at a minimum sit their next scheduled APL match with the team they received the red card. The player cannot play in any game with any team until their suspension is served. Depending on the infraction the League Director may add additional games to the suspension.

Section 3: The sitting player must be brought to the attention of the Center Referee and notation made on the match report to the fact that the player sat the match. The player does not have to be present at the match.

Section 4: Any coach, assistant coach, trainer or manager receiving a send-off must sit at a minimum the next scheduled APL match for the team they received the send off. The coach, assistant coach, trainer or manager cannot coach or be present at any game with **any team** until their suspension is served. Any coach, assistant coach, manager or trainer that has been sent off is to leave the facility immediately. Depending on the infraction the League Director may add additional games to the suspension.

Section 5: The designated Coach of Record will advise the Center Referee that the coach, assistant coach, manager or trainer is sitting the send-off and verify that the offender is not present at the field.

602: Suspension

Section 1: The League Director will have authority to rules on any suspension. The League Director may consult the Governing Board before making such decision.

Section 2: Any player, head coach, assistant coach, trainer or manager found to violate any rule or section of these rules will be immediately suspended pending a resolution by the League Director.

Section 3: The League Director will determine the punishment, which may be any of the following:

1. Verbal Warning/Written Warning.
2. Suspension.
3. Removal from the league.

Section 4: Any member club failing to pay any fee due the APL shall be provided written notice of the delinquency by the APL. If those fees are not paid within 15 days after the date of the notice of delinquency, the delinquent club and its teams shall be suspended from further league play.

Section 5: The League Director may suspend, fine or terminate or any combination thereof, the membership of any member club and/or member team of the APL if it is determined that;

1. The conduct of the member club and/or member team is adverse to the best interests of soccer, the APL, or the member State Association.
2. The Member has not complied with the requirements of its membership.

Section 6: Any member club or individual member that is placed in Bad Standing for actions relating to one team will be in Bad Standing for all teams they are associated with within the APL. Any Bad Standing will be reported to the appropriate State Association.

Section 7: Upon a determination of the League Director to Suspend, Fine or Terminate a Member the following procedure will apply:

1. The League Director will draft a letter containing the specific reasons for the suspension, fine or termination.
2. The letter will contain the infraction, cite the applicable rule(s), date the suspension or termination begins, date the suspension or termination ends, the address any appeals can be mailed to, the amount of the fine (if applicable) and the date by which time the fine must be paid and the League Director's signature.
3. The letter will then be mailed to the affected member by Email, return receipt requested.
4. Upon return of the registered mail receipt the League Director shall keep the receipt for a period of at least one-year.
5. If after a period of seven (7) days a letter of appeal has not been received the League Director will direct that a letter be prepared advising the APL that the member and/or member team have been suspended, fined or terminated.

605: Protests

Section 1: Any team wishing to protest any contest must contact the League Director by email within four (4) hours after the end of the match to be protested. The protesting team will then have twenty-four (24) hours from the time of notification to present an email with all details of the protest to the League Director. A check in the amount of \$200.00 will be mailed to the League Director.

Section 2: The League Director upon being contacted that a match is being protested and receiving the \$200 check will contact the protesting Head Coach and review all details of the protest.

Section 3: The League Director after collecting and reviewing the details will rule on the Protest. The League Director may consult the Governing Board prior to making a ruling.

Section 4: The League Director will decide to:

1. Uphold the protest.
2. Deny the protest.

Section 5: If the League Director upholds the protest they will decide when and where the match will be replayed. It is also the League Director's responsibility to advise all the teams affected of the committee decision and match reschedule.

Section 6: If the League Director upholds the protest they will return the \$200.00 protest fee check back to the protesting team. If not upheld, the fee will be forfeited to the APL.

607: Procedures for Appeal of a Suspension, Fine or Termination

Section 1: Upon receipt of a letter of Suspension, Fine or Termination the affected member or in the case of a member team the designated Head Coach, shall have seven (7) days to file a Letter of Appeal to the League Director by email.

Section 2: The Letter of Appeal will contain: Reason for the appeal.

1. A list of additional witnesses that have information to support the appeal.
2. Additional evidence and/or documents.

Section 3: After reviewing the additional information the League Director will rule on the appeal.

Section 4: After receiving the ruling on the appeal the designated Head Coach can appeal to the Governing Board.

608: Hearing Procedures

Section 1: If the Governing Board decides to hold a hearing:

1. USSF Hearing Procedures will be used.
2. The Hearing Committee may request additional information prior to the start of the hearing.
3. The Hearing Committee Members may only vote to:
 - a. Uphold the Suspension, Fine or Termination
 - b. Modify the Suspension, Fine or Termination
 - c. Overturn the Suspension, Fine or Termination
4. Within seven (7) days of the Hearing the League Director will send a letter by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the affected Member detailing the Hearing Committee decision.