

Houston Club Sports Conference Rules & Regulations for Soccer

Article I. Name

Section 1. The name of the organization is the Houston Club Sports Conference (HCSC).

Section 2. The web site address is www.uhd.edu/sports&fitness/hcsc/soccer.

Article II. Purpose

Section 1. To serve students by providing opportunities for them to participate in competitive sports at the collegiate club sport level.

Section 2. To promote student engagement, leadership and success. And also friendship and personal growth through friendly, collegial competition.

Section 3. To promote participation and administer a Houston, Texas area sports conference that would make it convenient, relatively inexpensive and rewarding for college students to participate.

Section 4. To enable teams to be play several times at home in front of their student body, family and friends and to help raise awareness of their sport and their team on campus.

Article III. Conference Membership and Team Eligibility

Section 1. Membership in the HCSC is restricted to accredited two-year or four-year degree granting colleges and universities located within or near the Houston, Texas metropolitan area.

Section 2. New college or university teams must apply the HCSC Commissioner for conference membership. The HCSC Commissioner may elect to put a membership request to a vote of current HCSC membership.

Section 3. A team must be a "club" soccer team and be recognized and be under the jurisdiction as such by their university or college. "Varsity" teams are not eligible for membership.

Section 4. There will be separate men's and women's divisions.

Section 5. No women are allowed to compete on a men's team and no men are allowed to compete on a women's team.

Section 6. A team is limited to three (3) eligible former college varsity players. (See Article X Sections 6 and 7 for further eligibility details).

Section 7. Teams that are found to be operating in violation of conference rules, their institution rules, or in an unethical manner that is contrary to the spirit of the game are subject to probation, suspension and expulsion.

Article IV. Conference Affiliations

Section 1. HCSC Soccer is affiliated with the National Intramural Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA) and its sports tournament arm, the NIRSA Championship Series.

Section 2. HCSC Soccer is affiliated with NIRSA Region IV soccer tournament which serves as a qualifier for the NIRSA Championship Series National Championships. The HCSC is awarded two automatic bids each year to the NIRSA Region IV soccer tournament; one each for the HCSC men's and the women's champion.

Article V. Conference Administration

Section 1. The HCSC Commissioner serves as the official representative in all matters concerning the conference. The commissioner's duties will include:

Section 2. Serving as the conference liaison with the National Intramural Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA) and other pertinent organizations.

Section 3. Consulting all member schools for matters concerning the conference.

Section 4. Responsibility for recruitment of area universities and college club teams.

Section 5. Responsibility for collection of conference dues.

Section 6. Being responsible for maintaining conference administrative, financial and match records.

Section 7. Being responsible for providing timely and detailed conference administrative, financial and match reports.

Section 8. Responsibility for scheduling conference regular season matches and conference tournament matches, if any, between member schools.

Section 9. Responsibility for making arrangements with the local U.S. Soccer Federation (USSF) and/or National Intercollegiate Soccer Officials Association (NISOA) chapters to assign USSF or NISOA certified officials for each match.

Section 10. Maintaining a conference web site that contains timely pertinent HCSC information.

Section 11. The investigation of violations of conference rules brought to his/her attention and applying the appropriate sanctions.

Section 12. Making decisions on issues not necessarily listed here that are in the best interest of the HCSC.

Article VI. Conference Dues

Section 1. Conference dues will be set by the commissioner and will be listed on the HCSC Team Entry Form.

Section 2. Conference dues will cover the costs of all referees for HCSC sanctioned season matches, conference team champion awards, NIRSA Region IV tournament entry fees for the conference men's and women's champions and conference administrative fees.

Article VII. Team Responsibilities

Section 1. Each club team is responsible for the completion and submittal of all required HCSC paperwork to the commissioner in a timely manner. Each club shall also:

Section 2. Strive to maintain the highest level of ethical conduct, complying with the conference rules and regulations and adhering to the rules and standards established by their respective institutions.

Section 3. Pay any applicable conference fees to the commissioner in a timely manner.

Section 4. Provide game balls and other items according to FIFA and conference rules when serving as the home team. (See Article XII Sections 2-4)

Section 5. Provide clear address and directions if needed to the HCSC Commissioner to their home match sites from major freeways in a timely manner.

Article VIII. Conference Schedule

Section 1. Regular season. The conference schedule will consist of a regular season. If time and conditions permit, each team will play one match against every other team in the conference. Otherwise, teams may be divided into divisions for intra-divisional play.

Section 2. Schedule changes. Changes to the final schedule should be a very rare occurrence and should happen only in an emergency or an extreme situation. A change to a scheduled match must be made at least 7 days prior to the scheduled date. Both teams must agree to the new date and time. The team requesting the change must then contact the commissioner in order to reschedule officials. If both teams do not agree, the match stays scheduled as is. Schedule changes are not final until approved by the commissioner.

Section 3. Standings. The regular season standings (or table) will be kept according to FIFA rules and posted on the conference website by the commissioner. The teams will be ranked weekly in descending order by the points that they have earned.

Section 3.1. A regular season match win is worth three (3) points.

Section 3.2. A regular season match tie is worth one (1) point.

Section 3.3. A regular season match loss is worth zero (0) points.

Section 3.4. A maximum of a five (5) goal differential will be counted for each win.

Section 4. Conference Champion. During the course of the regular season, the teams will be ranked in descending order of the total points earned for the season. The conference champion will be determined by whichever team has earned the most points at the conclusion of the regular season or if time and conditions permit, a post-season championship tournament using

single elimination or other format may be used to determine the conference champion. If the teams are in a division, only points, goal differential, goals, etc., earned in divisional matches will count towards divisional ranking and seeding. The HCSC Commissioner may use overall HCSC regular season points (HCSC divisional and any intra-divisional match points, goal differential, etc., if any) or some other method to determine the overall top seed in a post-season championship tournament final. This is only used to determine the home team/uniform color in the final.

Section 5. Tie-breakers. If there is a tie in the number of points between two or more teams, the following tie-breaking method will be used to determine ranking/seeding and advancement. If the teams are in a *division*, these tie-breakers apply only to points, goals, etc., earned in *divisional* matches.

Section 5.1 First tie-breaker. A forfeit of any regular season match by a team shall automatically place that team at the bottom of qualifying or seeding tie-breakers.

Section 5.2. Second tie-breaker. The greater number of points in all the regular season matches played.

Section 5.3 Third tie-breaker. The greater goal differential in all the regular season matches played.

Section 5.4 Fourth tie-breaker. The greater number of goals scored in all the season matches played.

Section 5.5. Fifth tie-breaker. The greater number of points in the matches played between the teams that are tied.

Section 5.6 Sixth tie-breaker. The greater goal differential in the matches played between the teams that are tied.

Section 5.7 Seventh tie-breaker. The greater number of goals scored in the matches played between the teams that are tied.

Section 5.7 Eighth tie-breaker. The team with the greater number of accumulated red cards gets ranked lower.

Section 5.8. Final tie-breaker. A coin-flip will be used to determine *seeding* only. To determine which team advances to the HCSC championship tournament, a match will be scheduled as soon as possible by the HCSC Commissioner. If a team cannot agree to the scheduled match, they will forfeit the match and their opportunity to advance.

Section 6. The conference champion shall receive a team championship trophy and have their entry fee to the NIRSA Region IV soccer tournament paid by the HCSC provided the team has met all HCSC and NIRSA tournament eligibility and entry requirements and all HCSC financial obligations.

Article IX. Team Roster

Section 1. Each team is required to submit a HCSC Team Roster and Player Verification Form to the commissioner that has been verified and stamped as approved by the school's registrar's office or the by the deadline set by the HCSC.

Section 2. A HCSC team roster is limited to twenty five (25) players and three (3) coaches maximum.

Section 3. A HCSC team roster must be submitted with complete names, student ID numbers and corresponding jersey numbers. Players must wear the jersey number assigned to them on the conference approved HCSC Team Roster.

Section 4. Team roster changes may be made by the Tuesday following the team's second match and as long as they do not exceed the roster maximum of twenty five (25) players. Rosters will be frozen after that date. No players can be added to a team roster after this point.

Section 5. Any roster changes require that the team submits a HCSC Team Roster Change Form to the commissioner that has been verified and stamped as approved by the school's registrar's office or the by the deadline set by the HCSC.

Article X. Player Eligibility

HCSC member teams, coaches and recreational sports professionals are expected to be committed to the academic success and progress of their students as well as upholding the academic mission and integrity of the institution they represent. Their actions reflect on the HCSC.

Student players must meet the following criteria in order to play in the HCSC:

Section 1. Must have never played soccer professionally at any time.

Section 2. Must be a currently enrolled student of the school he/she plays for.

Section 3. Must be enrolled and must maintain a minimum of ½ full-time status for undergraduate students (generally 6 credits) and a minimum of 6 credit hours for graduate students. The student must maintain the minimum hours throughout the semester at the school the student plays for.

Section 3.1 Graduating Student Exception – Graduating students are any undergraduate or graduate students who are graduating immediately at the conclusion of the semester of that current season. Such students may be enrolled in any number of credits required to graduate. The graduating student must complete a HCSC Graduating Student Verification Form and have it submitted to the HCSC by the student player's recreational sports director or equivalent along with the HCSC Team Roster and Player Verification Form. An individual is only permitted to receive a Graduating Senior Exception one time at each academic level (Ex: A player may only receive a Graduating Senior Exception one time for their undergraduate studies, one time for their graduate studies, etc.

Section 4. Must have and must maintain a minimum 2.0 cumulative G.P.A. at the school the student plays for. The student must maintain the minimum G.P.A. throughout the semester at the school the student plays for.

Section 5. May only play for one team in the conference.

Section 6. Cannot be a current member of a school's intercollegiate varsity soccer team. This includes red shirts and non-qualifiers.

Section 7. Student players are limited to six consecutive academic years of eligibility in the HCSC. The clock begins on their eligibility when their name first appears on a HCSC, NIRSA or an intercollegiate varsity roster. NIRSA soccer eligibility rules are available online at www.nirsa.org.

Section 8. Must be listed on the HCSC Team Roster and Player Verification Form on the HCSC website prior to playing in a conference match. A player is not eligible to dress out and play in a HCSC match until they are listed on the HCSC Team Roster and Player Verification Form on the HCSC website.

Section 9. A player may play for another school within the *same* school system provided his/her "home" school does not already field a collegiate club team and provided the player has the permission by the appropriate college administrator of the HCSC school's team. The HCSC school's administrator must verify the eligibility of the player. The player must present a college ID from the school he/she purportedly attends in order to play in a league match.

Section 10. Post-Season Tournament Player Eligibility. A player must play in at least 50% of HCSC regular season matches to be eligible for any HCSC post-season tournament or any tournament such as the NIRSA regional in which HCSC fees are used.

Section 11. Ineligible players. The use of ineligible players is strictly prohibited. If a team is discovered to have used an ineligible player in an HCSC match, that team will be subject to forfeit any matches that an ineligible player participated in. The team may also be subject to immediate suspension from the HCSC for the remainder of that season. A team suspended for the remainder of a season shall be on probation status for the following HCSC season.

Additional sanctions may also be applied. (See Article XIII Sections 3-5)

Section 12. Players receiving a red card in their previous HCSC match are considered ineligible for their next HCSC match. (See Article XII Sections 11-15)

Article XI. Coaches

All coaches must be authorized by the school to coach during HCSC matches. This is in order for the schools and the HCSC to be made aware of the individuals who are representing their schools and interacting with students, coaches and referees at HCSC matches.

Section 1. All coaches must be named and approved by the school on the HCSC Coach Registration Form in order to serve as such during all HCSC matches.

Section 2. All coaches must be listed on the HCSC Team Roster and Player Verification Form on the HCSC website prior to coaching in a conference match. Individuals not listed as coaches on the form may be asked to leave the team bench area by the match referees.

Article XII. Conference Match Rules

All matches will be played under the current FIFA Laws of the Game unless otherwise indicated here. Current rules are available online at www.fifa.com.

Section 1. Referees. The conference, through the commissioner, will be responsible for providing USSF, NISOA or appropriately certified referees for each match. If only one official is present, the match may be played with a second uncertified official provided both teams agree. If no certified officials are present, the match may be played with uncertified officials provided both teams agree. The commissioner should also be contacted immediately when no referees or only one referee shows up.

Section 2. Pre-Match. The home team should have the goal nets and field ready for warm-ups at least 30 minutes prior to scheduled match time.

Section 3. Game Ball. The official game ball will be a ball bearing the "FIFA Approved" or "FIFA Inspected" logo on it provided by the home team. In order to limit game delay due to the game ball going out of play, it is recommended that the home team provide at least three FIFA approved game balls. If a FIFA approved ball is unavailable, both teams will agree on a comparable substitute.

Section 4. Uniforms. Teams must have at least two different color sets of game jerseys, one light colored (white or light yellow/gold with dark numerals) to wear as the home team and one dark colored set with white or light colored numerals to wear as the away team. All the players on a team must wear the same set (color and style) of uniforms with the only exception being the goalie who must wear a contrasting color from both teams. The player jerseys must have clearly visible numbers on at least the back. Numbers must be a minimum of 8 inches on the back.

Section 5. A team wearing the incorrect jersey color will be subject to forfeiting that match.

Section 6. Player Verification & Team Roster. Players must have their college/university student photo ID card or photo driver's license card or an official government photo ID card ready to present before the game. Photo IDs on digital devices or paper copies are not acceptable. The referees will be responsible for verifying the players' photo IDs and jersey numbers against their team's league approved HCSC Team Roster and signing their initials by each player's name. The referees will have the conference approved HCSC Team Roster.

Names cannot be added to a roster at game time. Players arriving after the pre-match photo ID check must be verified before they are permitted into the game. Players without their photo ID will not be permitted to play. Players must wear the jersey number assigned to them on the conference approved HCSC Team Roster.

Section 7. Score Sheet. The HCSC Score Sheet is the official record of the game. The referee will record the referee names, player scores, time of score, total scores, yellow cards, red cards and any additional comments on the HCSC Score Sheet.

Section 8. Incomplete team. A team must have a minimum of seven (7) eligible players to play an official match. If one or both teams have less than the minimum number of eligible players, a forfeit will be declared. The referee will make the decision at the field.

Section 9. Start of the Match. Match time is forfeit time, there is no “grace period”. All matches must start when scheduled. Teams not ready to play will have a forfeit assessed against them.

Section 10. Unlimited Re-entry Substitution. Players may enter and leave the match an unlimited amount of times when they are acknowledged by the referee.

Section 11. Any player or coach ejected (red carded) from a conference match will be suspended for their team’s next HCSC match.

Section 12. A player or coach receiving a second red card in a conference match during the season will be suspended for the next two HCSC matches.

Section 13. A player or coach receiving a third red card in a conference match during the season will be suspended for the remainder of the HCSC season.

Section 14. If the season ends before the player’s or coach’s suspension is completed, the suspension will carry over to the next HCSC season.

Section 15. Individuals who have committed serious violations or consistently display extremely poor conduct may be suspended from the HCSC indefinitely.

Section 16. A player who accumulates three yellow cards during the season will be suspended for their team’s next HCSC match. The student player’s slate of yellow cards is clean after the player serves the one game suspension. If the season ends before the player’s suspension is completed, the suspension will carry over to the next HCSC season.

Section 17. The HCSC commissioner may impose sanctions and penalties against an offending student player or team including suspension from the conference for conduct detrimental to the HCSC.

Article XIII. Match Team Forfeits, Probation and Suspension

Teams should recognize the time, money, and effort invested in the scheduling of a match by the conference, by the officials and, of course, by the teams themselves. The two teams should make every effort to contact each other well before the match and keep in constant communication. Teams should be responsible and have their players leave as early as possible for their match. Heavy traffic, construction, or getting lost are not valid enough reasons to be late for a match and to avoid a team forfeit.

Section 1. A match that is forfeited will be recorded as 5-0 score for the winning team.

Section 2. A team that forfeits two matches will be dropped from conference play for the remainder of that season with no refund.

Section 3. A school team that is dropped from conference play due to forfeited matches will be placed on a probation status for the following HCSC season and will be so notified by the conference commissioner. The team must pay a probation fee of \$200.00 in addition to the regular entry fee by the entry deadline if they choose to enter the following season. The school team must complete their season on probation clear of forfeited matches to be removed from probation for the following season. A team on probation status that forfeits one match will be dropped from conference play for the remainder of that season with no refund.

Section 4. If a school team is dropped from season play while on probation status due to forfeited matches that school team will be placed on suspension for at least the following HCSC season and will be notified by the conference commissioner.

Section 5. A school team on suspension wishing to re-enter the conference must petition the conference commissioner for reinstatement to the HCSC after serving at least a one year (season) suspension and do so by at least April 15 prior to the upcoming season. The commissioner may call a vote of HCSC members to reinstate a school team on suspension. The school team on suspension may be asked to provide a detailed course of action of how their team will correct the actions that led to the team’s suspension and how they operate their team in a manner that is acceptable within the rules of the HCSC. If the request is denied, the school team must wait until the conclusion of that season to request reinstatement and do so by at least April 15 prior to the upcoming season.

Article XIV. Post-Match Referee Responsibilities

Section 1. One referee is responsible for faxing or emailing the conference commissioner the three match sheets within two (2) days of the match; each team's HCSC Team Roster and Player Verification Form and the HCSC Score Sheet. The fax number is 713-223-7472.

Section 2. The commissioner will be responsible for providing league members updated results and league standings based on the timeliness of the receiving the score sheets.

Article XV. Conduct at Matches

HCSC member teams and recreational sports professionals assume an obligation to conduct themselves in manner compatible with the college/university's function as an educational institution. All student players, coaches, recreational sports professionals and spectators are expected to conduct themselves with good morals and display good sportsmanship before, during and after matches. Teams are responsible for the conduct and behavior of their student players, coaches, employees and spectators. The HCSC Commissioner may impose further sanctions and penalties against the offending team including suspension of the team from the HCSC.

Section 1. The referee may take action against individuals and teams including suspension of the match if in his/her opinion they are engaging in conduct that is detrimental to the game. Referees will report any such conduct and action immediately or as soon as possible to the HCSC Commissioner.

Section 2. The consumption of alcohol or use of drugs for non-medicinal purposes or being under the influence of such is prohibited at HCSC matches. They are also prohibited when traveling to HCSC matches.

Section 3. Individuals at HCSC matches shall not use verbal or non-verbal profanities, obscene gestures or behavior or abusive language of any kind.

Section 4. Individuals at HCSC matches shall not engage in disrespectful language of others' race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation and physical appearance.

Section 5. Individuals at HCSC matches shall not engage in homophobic or transphobic expressions of any kind.

Section 6. Individuals at HCSC matches shall not engage in challenging others to violence, engaging in violence themselves or inciting others to engage in abusive or violent conduct.

Article XVI. Inclement Weather

Every reasonable effort should be made to play a match even with inclement weather. Teams should *never* assume that because it is raining, their match is automatically postponed. A team may be subject to a forfeit if they do not show up for a match even if there is inclement weather. Teams should prepare as though the match will be played as normal.

Section 1. Home teams with their own fields should check the condition of their field as early as possible on the day of the match to ensure that the field is playable. The game referees will have the final decision in determining if the field is playable.

Section 2. Home teams that use fields that are not their own should also check the condition of their field as early as possible on the day of the match to ensure that the field is playable. If applicable, home teams should be in constant communication with their field operator. Most times the field operators make the final determination if their field is playable. If not, the game referees will make the final decision.

Section 3. There will be a two (2) hour cut-off time before the scheduled match time before the referees may be contacted to postpone the match due to an unplayable field. If the match is not postponed before the (2) hour cut-off time, then the HCSC will be responsible for paying the officials regardless if the match is played or not. The official referee contact number is **832-640-1735**. The HCSC Commissioner should also be contacted at **832-754-3033**.

Section 4. Once the match starts, the referee will stop the game if the field is unsafe or if there is clear evidence that a thunderstorm is going to be around for hours.

Section 5. If lightning is seen and within thirty (30) seconds thunder is heard in the area, then

Section 5.1. The referee must stop the game for a minimum of 30 minutes. No one is allowed on the field during that 30-minute span. Participants must move to adequate shelter or their vehicles. Trees are not shelter!

Section 5.2. Each flash of lightning in the area restarts the 30-minute clock.

Section 5.3. Once it is evident that the match will not be started (or restarted) within one hour (i.e. the delay lasts more than an hour), the match is postponed.

Section 5.4. If the match is postponed after the second half of play has begun, then the match is considered completed, the score and match records stand.

Section 5.5. If the match is postponed before the second half starts, then the match will be rescheduled and it will be replayed in its entirety. None of the statistics from the cancelled match will count.

Section 5.6. If at any time the referee deems that the field is unsafe, Article XVI

Section 5.4 and Section 5.5 also go into effect.