

## **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](http://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 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 enjoyable 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 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 5 and 6).

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 National Campus Championship Series (NCCS).

Section 2. HCSC Soccer is affiliated with NIRSA Region IV soccer tournament which serves as a qualifier for the NIRSA NCCS national soccer 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 pertinent league 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 in the best interest of the conference.

#### **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 good directions to the commissioner to their home match sites from major freeways.

#### **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 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.

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.

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.

Section 5.2. Second tie-breaker. The greater number of points in the matches played between the teams that are tied.

Section 5.3. Third tie-breaker. The greater goal differential in the matches played between the teams that are tied.

Section 5.4. Fourth tie-breaker. The greater number of goals scored in the matches played between the teams that are tied.

Section 5.5 Fifth tie-breaker. The greater goal differential in all the season matches played by each of the teams that are tied.

Section 5.6 Sixth tie-breaker. The greater number of goals scored in all the season matches played by each of the teams that are tied.

Section 6. The league 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 approved by the school's recreational sports director or the appropriate school official 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 approved by the school's recreational sports director or the appropriate school official.

### **Article X. Player Eligibility**

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 a minimum of ½ full-time for undergraduate students and a minimum of 6 credit hours for graduate students.

Section 4. May only play for one team in the conference.

Section 5. Cannot be a current member of a school's intercollegiate varsity soccer team. This includes red shirts and non-qualifiers.

Section 6. Players are limited to six consecutive academic years of eligibility in 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](http://www.nirsa.org).

Section 7. 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 8. A player may play for another school within the *same* school system provided his/her "home" school does not already field a 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 9. 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 10. Ineligible players. The use of ineligible players is strictly prohibited. If a team is discovered to have used an ineligible player, 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 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 XV Sections 3-5)

Section 11. Players receiving a red card in their previous HCSC match are considered ineligible for their next HCSC match. (See Article XIII Sections 3-7)

### **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](http://www.fifa.com).

Section 1. Referees. The conference, through the commissioner, will be responsible for providing USSF or NISOA 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. If in the opinion of the referee the colors of the jerseys of the two teams are too similar, the home team is required to change.

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 student ID ready to present before the game. The referees will be responsible for verifying the players' college student 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 college student ID check must be verified before they are permitted into the game. Players without their college student 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, team names, player scores, time of score, total scores, yellow cards, red cards and any additional comments on the HCSC Score Sheet.

Section 9. 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 10. 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 11. Unlimited Re-entry Substitution. Players may enter and leave the match an unlimited amount of times when they are acknowledged by the referee.

### **Article XIII. Conduct at Matches**

All players, coaches and spectators are expected to conduct themselves with good sportsmanship before, during and after matches. Teams are responsible for the conduct and behavior of their players, coaches and spectators.

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.

Section 2. Referees will report any such conduct and action to the commissioner. The commissioner may impose further sanctions and penalties against the offending team including suspension of the team from the league.

Section 3. Any player or coach ejected (red carded) from a conference match will be suspended for their team's next conference match.

Section 4. A player or coach receiving a second red card in a conference match during the season will be suspended for the next two conference matches.

Section 5. A player or coach receiving a third red card in a conference match during the season will be suspended for the remainder of the conference season.

Section 6. If the season ends before the player's or coach's suspension is completed, the suspension will carry over to the next conference season.

Section 7. Individuals who have committed serious violations or consistently display extremely poor conduct may be suspended from the conference indefinitely.

Section 8. A player who accumulates three yellow cards during the season will be suspended for their team's next conference match. The player's slate of yellow cards is clean after he/she serves the one game suspension. If the season ends before the player's suspension is completed, the suspension will carry over to the next conference season.

### **Article XIV. 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 league 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 XIV Section 5.4 and Section 5.5 also go into effect.

## **Article XV. Match 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 3-0 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 XVI. Post-Match Referee Responsibilities**

Section 1. One referee is responsible for faxing or emailing the conference commissioner three 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 713-221-8227.

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.