



Metropolitan Senior Women's Soccer League Code of Conduct and Discipline Code

(As passed November 2018)

Part I: Team Code of Conduct

To ensure that the objectives of the MSWSL are upheld, the League has developed the following Code of Conduct for players, coaches, managers and any other team officials to abide by. Each team's coach, manager, team captain and League representative is responsible for ensuring that their team understands and agrees to abide by this Code. This Code of Conduct applies to behaviour at any time before, during or after a game that the team member is acting or can be construed to be acting as a member of their team, regardless of whether the conduct is sanctioned by a referee.

1. **FIFA Laws:** Players must abide by the laws of soccer as stated in the official FIFA Laws of the Game.
2. **Fighting:** Fighting is strictly prohibited. If a player attempts to injure an opposing player deliberately, the player will be disciplined.
3. **Foul language on field:** Foul language on the field is unacceptable; it ignites tempers and leads to conflict.
4. **Unacceptable behaviour off field:** Foul language and threatening or unsporting behaviour at or from the sidelines is unacceptable. The coach, manager, team captain and League representative will be held accountable for the actions and words of team members on the bench and for any of the team's fans who demonstrate unacceptable behaviour before, during, and after a game.
5. **Team captain:** The team captain must identify herself to the referee at the coin toss. The team captain must be respected and should assert her position within the team and, subject to the laws of the game and the discretion of the referee, only she will approach the referee and request explanations of unclear decisions.
6. **Defusing situations:** A team's coach, manager, team captain and League representative must take all precautions necessary to defuse heated situations involving their players, team officials or spectators and prevent any violence from occurring.
7. **Respect for officials:** Player's must demonstrate restraint and respect the decisions of the referees, whether they agree with the decisions or not. The referees are in control of the game play.
8. **Complaints about refereeing:** Any complaints about a referee must be put in writing to the Executive of the MSWSL. Do not harass referees during or after a game, even if you believe your complaint to be legitimate.
9. **Sporting behaviour:** Fair play and sporting behaviour are principal objectives underlying the MSWSL. Persistent unsporting behaviour can result in a team or a player being ejected from the League.
10. **Fair treatment:** Treat all players as you would like to be treated. Do not interfere with, bully or take advantage of another player.
11. **Cooperation:** Players must cooperate with League officials, coaches, team-mates and opponents. Without them, there would be no MSWSL.

If this Code of Conduct is violated by any coach, manager, league representative or player, a complaint may be sent in writing to the MSWSL executive within 48 hours of the incident. (See Section E of the Discipline Code.)

Part II: MSWSL Discipline Code

A. Purpose of Code

This Code describes and categorizes infractions by degrees of severity and outlines the penalties for these infractions. The purpose of this Code is to ensure consistency in the administration of discipline in the MSWSL. **This Code supplements Soccer Nova Scotia's standard penalties for misconduct and FIFA's red and yellow card system. If there is a discrepancy between this Code and the penalties set by SNS or FIFA, the higher penalty applies.**

B. Application of Code

This Code applies to team officials and players. An individual or team may be disciplined under more than one Section of this Code at any one time.

C. Code sets minimum penalties

The penalties listed in this Code are the MSWSL's minimum for the infraction. In many instances they are higher than the standard set by Soccer Nova Scotia. More severe penalties may be also applied, taking into account the circumstances of the offence, an individual's or team's past record, any apparent pattern of behaviour, the seriousness of any resulting or potentially resulting injuries, whether the conduct was malicious or represented a wilful disregard for the safety of others, the attitude of the team or individual during the disciplinary procedure, and any verbal or other abuse of discipline committee members or the League Executive.

D. Penalties summarily imposed

Any of the penalties set in this Code may be summarily imposed by the League Executive or as specified in this Code, and the person who is the subject of the penalty must be notified of the sanctions by e-mail sent to the team's coach or other team contact provided to the League. Any individual or team who wishes to respond to a penalty summarily imposed under this Code may request a hearing with a discipline committee within 3 days of the penalty being imposed. A hearing with a discipline committee will be conducted in accordance with Rule 6.

E. Misconduct against game officials

Incidents of misconduct directed against GAME OFFICIALS falls within the exclusive jurisdiction of Soccer Nova Scotia and are dealt with by Soccer Nova Scotia. Any incident being dealt with by Soccer Nova Scotia results in an automatic suspension of ALL soccer activities. Contact the League President to find out the status of an infraction.

F. Further penalties

A player or team official who fails to immediately leave the field area after being ejected, will incur further penalties.

G. Penalties into next season

A suspension carries over from one season to the next season. Yellow cards accumulated in a single season are nullified and do not carry over to the next season.

H. Suspended players/officials

Any player or team official who is serving a suspension for a game must not be involved in the game in any way and may not sit on the bench. For a player to serve a game suspension, the player's team must actually play a League game (does not include a forfeited or rained out game) and put the suspended player's name on the game sheet noting the suspension.

I. Teams responsible for fines levied against League

If a fine or other penalty is imposed on the League as the result of a team's actions or failure to act as required, then that team must pay to the League an amount not less than the amount paid by the League, as determined by the Executive.

J. Fines and bonds

All financial sanctions MUST be paid before reinstatement. A team that fails to pay a fee, a fine or post any bonds levied against them is not in good standing with the League and will not be permitted to return to the League until all accounts are paid in full. For any deadline that is missed, or payment that is late, a team will be charged a \$100 fine – or such amount agreed to under the circumstances by the League membership, plus an identical amount added on for each further week that non-compliance continues.

K. Revocation of penalty

A discipline committee has the authority to suspend any portion of a suspension or bond at their discretion, as long as the suspension served does not fall below the minimum as set in this Code.

L. Appeals

Appeals from hearings with a discipline committee are as set out in Rules 6 and 7 of the MSWSL Rules and Regulations. Appeals from any decision made by an MSWSL discipline committee to Soccer Nova Scotia cannot challenge the jurisdiction of the League to impose penalties under this Code, as it is a condition of membership in the League to abide by the Code; therefore appeals may be requested on issues of interpretation and application of SNS rules and the rules of the game only.

M. Definitions

In this Code, the following definitions apply:

1. "player" means all individuals listed on the official team roster as registered with Soccer Nova Scotia and the MSWSL, and includes an individual who is called up to play on a team and is listed on the game sheet for a game
2. "team official" means a team's coach, manager, League representative, or any other person who holds a position of authority with the team and includes a club official if the club official is acting on behalf of the team
3. "unsporting behaviour" occurs when the game or League is brought into disrepute by unexpected or unprecedented behaviour that offends against the spirit of the game or the

League, and can be directed against opponents, colleagues, officials, or spectators, and includes, but is not limited to, any of the following:

deliberate handball:

- to prevent a goal being scored
- to prevent an attack from developing

delaying tactics:

- delay taking a free kick, goal kick, etc.
- goalkeeper refraining from putting the ball into play
- goalkeeper lying on the ball
- wasting time to gain an advantage (kicking, throwing, or carrying the ball away)
- defenders not retreating 10 yards at free kicks before the ball is played
- standing on the ball at free kicks
- defenders rushing forward, with ten (10) yards, at free kicks before the signal
- after asking for 10 yards, attacker kicking the ball before the signal
- continuing to play the ball after hearing the referee blow the whistle
- taking a free kick well away from the place of the infringement
- taking throw-in deliberately from the wrong place

harassment:

- distracting opponents by dancing about, gesticulating, shouting
- jumping in front of a player taking a corner kick, free kick, or throw in
- adopting a threatening or aggressive attitude
- making any reference to religion, colour, morals, or physical attributes of an individual
- arguing with a referee or showing lack of respect for game officials or opponents
- taunting or rude gestures

injury:

faking injury

4. "serious foul play" is defined in the FIFA Laws of the Game as conduct using excessive force or brutality when challenging for the ball in a manner that endangers the safety of the opponent and for the purpose of this Code includes, but is not limited to, any of the following:

- 5. - charging or tackling opponent in a reckless or dangerous manner
- slide tackling an opponent in a reckless or dangerous manner

6. "violent conduct" is defined in the FIFA Laws of the Game as conduct using excessive force or brutality when not challenging for the ball and for the purpose of this Code includes, but is not limited to, any of the following:

7. Category (a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● attempting, intending, or threatening to fight ● punching ● kicking, slapping or tripping ● throwing or kicking object at person
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8. Category (b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● serious indecent gestures or harrassment ● continued foul and/or abusive language after being ejected from a game fighting ● repeated punching ● repeated kicking, slapping or tripping ● spitting ● headbutting
9. Category (c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● uncontrollable rage (requiring physical restraint) ● leaving bench for on-field altercation ● leaving field for altercation ● violent altercation, fighting or brawl after a game

10.

Section A – Cumulative Yellow Cards

- 1) A player who receives 3 yellow cards in a season will receive a 2 game suspension.
- 2) A player who receives 6 yellow cards in a season will receive a further 3 game suspension.
- 3) A player who receives 7 or more yellow cards in a season will receive a further 4 game suspension.
- 4) A player who has already received 3 or more yellow cards in a season who receives 2 more yellow cards in one game will receive a 2 game suspension in addition to any suspension under 1), 2) or 3).
- 5) A player who receives 2 yellow cards in one game for the 2nd time in a season will receive a 2 game suspension in addition to any suspension under 1), 2) or 3).
- 6) A player who receives 2 yellow cards in one game for the 3rd time in a season will receive a 3 game suspension in addition to any suspension under 1), 2) or 3).

Unsporting behaviour is sanctioned by game officials with yellow cards. Any conduct that is construed as being unsporting behaviour must be disciplined in accordance with the minimums set in this Section.

Section B – Cumulative Red Cards

- 1) A player who receives 1 red card for foul or abusive language will receive a 2-game suspension.
- 2) A player who receives 1 red card for serious foul play in a season will receive a 4 game suspension.
- 3) A player who receives 2 red cards for serious foul play in a season will receive an 8 game suspension.
- 4) A player who receives 3 red cards for serious foul play in a season will receive a 12 game suspension.
- 5) A player who receives 1 red card for violent conduct (category a) in a season will receive a 4 game suspension.

- 6) A player who receives 2 red cards for violent conduct (category a) in a season will receive an 8 game suspension.
- 7) A player who receives 3 red cards for violent conduct (category a) in a season will receive a 12 game suspension.
- 8) A player who receives 1 red card for violent conduct (category b) in a season will receive a 4 game suspension.
- 9) A player who receives 2 red cards for violent conduct (category b) in a season will receive an 8 game suspension.
- 10) A player who receives 3 red cards for violent conduct (category b) in a season will receive a 12 game suspension.
- 11) A player who receives 1 red card for violent conduct (category c) in a season will receive a 24 game suspension.
- 12) A player who receives 2 red cards for violent conduct (category c) in a season will receive a 48 game suspension.
- 13) A player who receives a 2nd red card for anything other than as listed in 2) to 12) will receive a 4 game suspension.
- 14) A player who receives a 3rd red card for anything other than as listed in 2) to 12) will receive a 6 game suspension.
- 15) A player called up to play in the MSWSL who receives 1 red card in a season will be banned from playing in the MSWSL for 3 weeks for every game suspension that would otherwise have been imposed under this Section.
- 16) A player who is called up to play in the MSWSL who receives a second red card in a season will be banned from playing in the League for the remainder of the season.

When a player receives a red card for violent conduct (category c) or 3 red cards in a season, their continued participation in the League must be reviewed by a hearing of the discipline committee, and if the committee allows the player to remain in the League, the committee may place whatever conditions it considers necessary on the player's continued participation, including requiring a \$500 performance bond to be posted before the player returns to playing in the League.

Violent conduct is sanctioned by game officials with red cards. Any conduct that is construed as being violent conduct must be disciplined in accordance with the minimums set in this Section.

Section C – Offences under MSWSL Rules and Regulations

C.1 - Ineligible players:

For the purpose of this Section, an ineligible player is defined as follows:

- a) an underage player, in contravention of the Rules
- b) a player registered with another team in the same or higher (Tier 1 or Senior A) Tier level
- c) an unregistered player
- d) a suspended player

- e) a player who is playing under an assumed name
- f) **A player who is in any way improperly transferred, called up etc.**

- 1) A player, other than an underage player, who plays as an ineligible player is suspended for 12 months.
- 2) A Team who plays an ineligible player will forfeit any game in which the player played and pay any referee fees for the game.
- 3) A team who plays a second ineligible player or the same ineligible player twice will be fined \$200 and the team must submit to a review by a discipline committee which may, in addition to the penalty imposed under 1) and 2), impose any sanctions up to and including expulsion from the League.

Team officials are responsible for ascertaining the status of any player playing with their team and must verify the status of their players with their club registrar. In accordance with the MSWSL Rules and Regulations, a player is deemed to have played in a game if the player's name is on a game sheet for the game.

C.2 - Failing to play scheduled game:

- 1) A team who fails to appear for a scheduled game but who gives the League and the opposing team 48 hours notice will forfeit the game and pay any referee fees for the game.
- 2) A team who does any of the following will forfeit the game and must pay a fine of \$50 and pay any referee fees for the game,
 - (a) fails to appear for a scheduled game without 48 hours notice to the League and the opposing team
 - (b) fails to have the minimum number of players dressed and ready within the time allowable for a kick-off thereby causing the cancellation of a game.
- 3) A team that fails to play a scheduled game under 1) or 2) for a second time must post a \$100 performance bond in addition to the penalties under 1) and 2).
- 4) A team that fails to play a scheduled game under 1) or 2) for a third time must submit to a review by a discipline committee which may, in addition to the penalties imposed under 1) and 2), impose any sanctions up to and including expulsion from the League, and any future participation in the League in the following season must be reviewed by the League membership, which may place whatever conditions it considers necessary on the team's future participation, including requiring a \$500 performance bond to be posted.
- 5) A Team that causes a game to be abandoned by leaving the field of play without the referee's permission must submit to a discipline committee hearing on the matter.

C.3 - Equipment failures:

- 1) A team who does any of the following will receive a \$25 fine
 - fails to provide nets and corner flags when they are the "home team"
 - fails to supply 2 suitable game balls when they are the "home team"

- fails to provide an alternate coloured uniform when they are the “away team”
 - fails to provide an official game sheet and/or properly filled out game sheet. **And any applicable permits or forms for players**
- 2) A team whose failure to provide equipment or documents under 1) results in the cancellation of a game will be sanctioned in accordance with Section C.2, with the stipulation that every effort must be made on the part of the opposing team to ensure that the game is played by providing the missing equipment.
 - 3) An opposing team who does not make every effort to ensure that a game is played under 2) will receive a \$25 fine and the game may be rescheduled at the discretion of the League Executive.

C.4 – Provincial Representatives

- 1) A team who has opted-in under Rule 15.2 and who does not fulfil their commitment to participate in Provincials will receive a fine in an amount of not less than the amount of any penalties imposed upon the League because of the team’s withdrawal, as determined by the League Executive.

Section D – Offences involving team spectators

- 1) Teams are responsible for the conduct of their spectators and must make every effort to ensure the proper conduct of their spectators. Team supporters who enter the field of play may cause the team to be suspended from further participation in League play.
- 2) Any team official or player found guilty of inviting spectators onto the field of play for the purpose of engaging members of the opposing team, will be suspended for the remainder of the season.

Section E – Ejected team officials

In addition to any sanctions imposed by Soccer Nova Scotia, any team official ejected from a game for offensive conduct will receive a suspension and penalty equivalent to the suspension and penalty set for a player under this Code for a similar infraction, including any fines or bonds.

Section F – Complaints and supplementary disciplinary action

- 1) Any team that wishes to complain about misconduct or unsporting behaviour (including bullying, belittling or disparaging comments) by a player, team official or team, whether sanctioned by game officials or not, must send a complaint, in writing, detailing the conduct complained of to the League Executive.
- 2) On receiving a complaint, or on its own initiative at any time, the League may investigate suspected misconduct or unsporting behaviour by a player, team official or team by interviewing any player, team official, game official or any other person with information relevant to the conduct or behaviour. And then move to #3– moved from 3 to 2
- 3) Upon verifying the conduct suspected or complained of, the League will

- (a) issue a written warning to any team, team official or player about their conduct and request a response within 3 days indicating how the team intends to prevent such behaviour from occurring again and may take other steps as may be appropriate in the circumstances, but not limited to suspending the team official involved or player for 1 game and may, if considered warranted, send the complaint to a discipline committee for review and further sanctions;
 - (b) for a second complaint about a team, team official or player, summarily discipline the team, official or player in accordance with the penalties set out in this Code for similar conduct, including any fines or bonds;
 - (c) for any subsequent complaint about a team, team official or player, suspend the team, team official or player until they show cause to the discipline committee as to why they should be allowed to continue to participate in the League.
- 4) Any team that is found to have made frivolous or vexatious complaints against a player or team official under this Section will be fined \$500 and any team official or player involved may be subject to further discipline by the League.

This Section may not be used to protest a game or alter a game result. Protests must be in accordance with Rule 6 of the MSWSL Rules and regulations .

Code of Conduct amendments:

April 2012:

- Fines and Bonds: addition of \$100 fine for missed deadlines or late payments, plus additional weekly fines
- Sections A & B: eliminated fines for players
- Section C.1: clarified meaning of “same or higher division”; removed 12-month suspension for underage players (not eligible to play for remainder of season anyway b/c underage)
- Section C.2: reduced requires performance bond to \$100 and \$500
- Section D: clarify duty of team to control spectators; include team officials in item 2) (oversight)
- Section E: indicate that other SNS sanctions may apply to coaches who are ejected (e.g. playing restrictions)
- Section F: clarify that complaints apply to bullying etc. and add in automatic 1-game suspension for coach if complaint verified

November 2012:

- Definition of violent conduct – deleted “foul and abusive language”
- Section D: added 2-game suspension for players who receive suspension for foul or abusive language as item 1) and renumbered items 2-15. (Further cards in the season for similar offences are then covered under items 13) and 14) of this Section.)

November 2016

- Section C-4 added to correspond with Rule change requiring teams who opt-in to commit to Provincials