



# NMIFA Youth Football League

## Rules for **Competitive** Youth Leagues

### **Fall 2016**

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## LAWS OF THE GAME

All coaches, assistant coaches, team managers and team captains are to be familiar with current **FIFA Laws of the Game**. <http://www.fifa.com/worldfootball/lawsofthegame.html>. All FIFA Laws of the Game will be followed with the exception of the specific youth rules listed in these Laws.

### PLAYER ELIGIBILITY FOR THE COMPETITIVE YOUTH LEAGUES

Age Division	Eligibility - Birth Year
U17 Boys	1999, 2000 and 2001
U14 Boys	2002 and 2003
U15 Girls	2001, 2002 and 2003 with overage players born in 2000 allowed**
U12 Coed	2004 and 2005

1. Only eligible players may play in the NMIFA Youth League.
2. Eligibility is defined as a player who is properly registered with Northern Mariana Islands Football Association (NMIFA) through a NMIFA Member organization, team or school during the current playing season and without active NMIFA player discipline sanctions.
3. All players must have a current year NMIFA player identification card to be presented during the referee inspection prior to the match and also be listed on the official NMIFA match report to be eligible to play in matches. Exceptions to this rule include duly registered and paid members where NMIFA is not able to produce a card in time for a match and lists the player on the team roster with written confirmation that he/she is a bona fide member.
4. Eligible players must register to play for only one club during the season.
5. New players may register with a club/team throughout the playing season. The player must register with NMIFA at least 24 hours prior to the first match that he/she will play.
6. Player may be dropped from a team roster before the end of the playing season. That player may not register to play for another team/club until the following playing season/tournament.
7. Player transfers during the playing season are not allowed.
8. Players may “play up” but not “play-down” an age division below their appropriate age group or same as their appropriate age group (in the case of competitive U-12 Coed, players may not concurrently play on a U-12 non-competitive team). Play-up is allowed pursuant to the **COMPETITIVE LEAGUE ‘PLAY-UP’ RULE** (refer to **ADDITIONAL LEAGUE RULES** below).
9. \*\*In spring 2016 and as part of the new youth development plan, teams may include “over-age” players born in 2000 on the official roster. Up to a maximum of one (1) over-age player may be on the pitch during play. This exception is being included for purposes of women’s football development at the competitive youth ages and in line with the mission and goals of the AFC Women’s Assistance Program strategic plan.

### LAW 1 - THE FIELD OF PLAY

1. **Pitch Dimensions:** A rectangular field shall be no more than:

Age Division	Minimum Pitch Size
U17 Boys	Full size: 115 yards x 75 yards
U14 Boys	Half size: 75 yards x 50 yards
U15 Girls	Half size: 60 yards x 40 yards

U12 Coed	Quarter size: 45 yards x 30 yards
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**2. Goal size: A rectangular goal measuring:**

Age Division	Goal Size
U17 Boys	Large size: 8 feet high by 24 feet wide
U14 Boys	Medium size: 6.5feet high by 18 feet wide
U15 Girls	Medium size: 6.5 feet high by 18 feet wide
U12 Coed	Futsal size: 6 feet high by 12.5 feet wide

**LAW 2 - THE BALL**

A **SIZE 5** ball will be used for the matches, except that competitive U-12 Coed will use a SIZE 4 ball. The match ball will be supplied by the *Home Team*. If the *Home Team's* game ball is not acceptable to the center referee, an adequate ball from another source may be used.

**LAW 3 - THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS**

Age Division	Player Format	Minimum # of Players to Start	Maximum Roster Size
U17 Boys	11 v 11	7	20
U14 Boys	8 v 8	6	20
U15 Girls	8 v 8	6	20
U12 Coed	5 v 5	5	20-

**1. Substitutions**

For U14 and U17:

Number of substitutions is unlimited and at the referee's discretion. Substitutions are to be allowed when the team has ball possession or when the opposing team is substituting players.

For U12 competitive:

- a. Number of substitutions is unlimited and will be a running substitution made at any time, whether the ball is in play or not. To replace a player with a substitute, the following conditions must be observed:
  - i. The PLAYER leaves the pitch via his/her own team's substitution zone.
  - ii. The SUBSTITUTE only enters the pitch after the player being replaced has left and in his/her own team's substitution zone.
  - iii. All substitutes are subject to the authority and jurisdiction of the referees, whether called upon to play or not.
  - iv. If a period is extended to allow a penalty kick, a kick from the second penalty mark or a direct free kick without a wall to be taken, only the goalkeeper of the defending team may be substituted.
  
- b. Any of the substitutes may change places with the goalkeeper without informing the referees or waiting for a stoppage in the match.
  - i. Any player may change places with the goalkeeper and must do so during a stoppage in the match and inform the referees before the change is made.

ii. A player or substitute replacing the goalkeeper must wear a goalkeeper's jersey with his number on the back.

## **2. Number of Players**

- a. A match is played by two (2) teams, each consisting of not more than the number of players based on age division (refer to chart above), one of whom is the goalkeeper.
- b. For the allowed number of players per team roster under each age division, please refer to the chart above.
- c. A match may not start if either team consists of fewer than the minimum number of players based on age division.
- d. One team can field the minimum players while the opposing team is allowed to play the maximum number of players.
- e. A (5) five-minute grace period will be allowed to start match with minimum number of players.
- f. A team that fails to field the minimum players by the end of the grace period will forfeit the game. Following a forfeit, if coaches and referee agree, players can be borrowed to play a friendly match/scrimmage.
- g. A team using ineligible players during a game will receive a forfeit for that game. The General Secretary will determine eligibility in questioned cases with concurrence from the Youth Committee.
- h. If a team makes it a habit of forfeiting games, the club or team may be subject to a fine of \$25.00 per forfeit after the first forfeited match. After two forfeits within the same league season, the matter will be submitted to the Disciplinary Committee for further sanctions and penalties.
- i. Coaches should consider opportunity for all players to have at least 15 minutes of playing time.

## **3. Abandonment**

If a team withdraws at any time during the match for reasons other than safety, lack of daylight where sufficient lighting is not available or other reasons determined by the officiating referee, the team will be subject to a \$50 fine. For repeated violations, the team will be referred to the Disciplinary Committee via youth committee for further review and sanctions.

## **LAW 4 - THE PLAYERS' EQUIPMENT**

### **1. Uniforms**

- a. Shin guards are mandatory and must be worn inside socks.
- b. All members of the same team will play in jerseys of identical color. Teams are required to have full uniform kits (jersey, shorts, and socks) of identical color. Deviation of the color will not be allowed, except as provided for in 1.e., 1.f. and 1.g. below.
- c. Jerseys must be numbered. Duplicate numbers are not allowed.
- d. Shirts tails of all players must be tucked into the shorts before the opening and halftime kickoffs.
- e. In the event of a uniform color conflict, the Home Team is required to change jersey color. Any vest/bibs of identical color may be worn over the original jersey as an alternative. If vests/bibs are numbered, the coach of the Home Team is required to update the match report before the game.
- f. In the event that a team learns that it will not be able to conform to the NMIFA Uniform Policy based on a documentable issue, it may, in writing, request a variance of waiver from the NMIFA Youth Committee from this Policy requirement at least 5 days prior to the affected match until fully conforming or replacement uniforms are secured.
- g. Goal Keeper

- i. Goal Keeper will use a different color jersey from that of his/her team and the opposing team.
- ii. The Goal Keeper's jersey must be numbered.
- iii. A different color training vest/pinnie from that of his/her team and that of the opposing team may be used in the event of a Goal Keeper substitution. In this case, the training vests/pinnies too must be either (a) numbered or (b) unnumbered if the Goal Keeper's underlying jersey number can be clearly seen through the training vests/pinnies.

## 2. Other Player Equipment

- a. Headbands and bandanas may be worn for hair control. The headband must be of a continuous band with no knots or ties in the front. No metal or plastic hairclips (bobby pins, barrettes).
- b. Baseball caps may only be worn by goalkeepers.
- c. Jewelry is not allowed (except for Medical alert necklaces/bracelets taped to the skin).
- d. The length of a player's fingernails should not extend past the tip of the finger.
- e. Players will not be allowed to participate in the match if he/she is wearing a hard (unyielding) cast or splint, even if covered with padding.

### LAW 7 - DURATION OF THE MATCH

Age Division	Duration of Match	Half Time
U17 Boys	Two 40 minute periods (total 80 minutes)	10 minutes
U14 Boys	Two 35 minute periods (total 70 minutes)	10 minutes
U15 Girls	Two 35 minute periods (total 70 minutes)	10 minutes
U12 Coed	Two 30 minute periods (total 60 minutes)	5 minutes

1. The match will consist of two playing periods based on age division (refer to chart above) unless otherwise agreed between the referee and the two team coaches. If a game starts late and/or light is a factor, the referee will play the entire first half and then shorten the second half to coincide with the schedule.
2. Half time will be based on age division (refer to chart above), or if light is a factor to finishing the game, a shorter half time is acceptable at the discretion of the referee.
3. If the entire first half is played, then the game counts as being fully played to qualify for the League Point System and team standings.
4. Each match will open and end with a handshaking ceremony that includes the referees and starting 11 players (New provision Fall 2015).

### LAW 12: FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

All players, coaches, managers, parents and spectators should respect the referee calls. For the Good of the Game, always observe the FIFA canons of Fairplay. Players, coaches, managers and non-players in the Technical Area are accountable to these rules. Any sanctions under this law may be subject to further disciplinary action including a fine(s). A separate NMIFA Parent Code of Conduct implemented during Fall 2014 must also be abided by parents/guardians at all times.

#### 1. Foul or Abusive Language

- a. Derogatory language directed towards opponents or teammates during a match will be considered as foul or abusive language.

- b. Vulgar, obscene or foul language will not be tolerated on the pitch or technical area.
- c. Taunting an opponent is considered as foul or abusive language.
- d. Violators of the above rules will be ejected from the technical area (see *Cautions and Ejections below*).

## 2. Dissension

While in the technical area, no player, coach, or non-player may show dissent to, or verbally abuse, an opponent, coach, spectator, or referee. Dissension includes any complaints or derogatory comments made directly, or indirectly.

## 3. Cautions and Ejections

- a. Cautions: Yellow cards will be given. Receipt of two (2) yellow cards in one (1) match will result in a one (1) game suspension.
- b. Cumulative Cautions: The following received during one (1) season will result in the following game suspensions:  
 Receipt of five (5) yellow cards → one (1) game suspension  
 Receipt of ten (10) yellow cards → two (2) game suspension  
 Receipt of fifteen (15) yellow cards → three (3) game suspension
- c. Sending Off: Red card will result in at least one game suspension.
- d. An ejected player must immediately leave the team’s technical area, and may not be within 30 yards of any part of the field during the remainder of the match.
- e. An ejected player may not play in the next scheduled match.
- f. An ejected player must abide by the decisions of the NMIFA Disciplinary Committee concerning further sanctions.
- g. Any cards or disciplinary action for a player sanction will be served in that respective league and applicable age division only. Game suspensions will carry over to the next youth league season if the game suspension is effective in the last game of the season and will not apply to other youth or adult tournaments.

## 4. Interference

Participating team’s/club’s actions/efforts to interfere and influence the match (i.e. match fixing, communicating/influencing/bribing of Referee Committee members, Referees and/or League Commissioner (if Commissioner is appointed), communicating/influencing/threatening/bribing of players, or any other action that can be deemed in favor of one team) will not be tolerated. Youth Committee has the right to review any violation of this rule. If the committee deems a violation of this rule has been committed, the team/club in question would be subject to a \$100.00 fine.

## 5. Slide-tackling

Slide-tackling is permitted for all age divisions except competitive U12-Coed.

## 6. Corner Kicks, Free Kicks and Penalty Kicks

<b>Competitive Age Division</b>	<b>Corner Kicks Players distance from corner arc</b>	<b>Free Kicks Players distance from ball</b>	<b>Penalty Kicks Players distance from penalty mark</b>
U17 Boys	10 yards	10 yards	10 yards
U14 Boys	8 yards	8 yards	8 yards
U14 Girls	8 yards	8 yards	8 yards

U12 Coed	6 yards	6 yards	6 yards
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## LAW 15: KICK-IN

For U14 and U17: Throw-ins will apply.

For U-12 Competitive: “Throw-in” will be replaced by a “Kick-In” with the new youth program format launched in Spring of 2016 and is a method of restarting play. For the “kick-in,” the ball must be on the line or outside the line and must be stationary before kicking.

## **ADDITIONAL LEAGUE RULES – COMPETITIVE AGE DIVISIONS**

### **I. PROCEDURES TO DETERMINE LEAGUE CHAMPIONS**

1. Standings will be recorded.
2. A champion will be crowned based on the highest accumulated points earned during the playing season.
3. League Point System per match will be maintained for all competitive age divisions to determine the standings:
 

a. WIN	=	Three (3) points
b. DRAW/TIE	=	One (1) point
c. LOSS	=	Zero (0) points
4. Forfeits are an automatic loss for the forfeiting team and an automatic win for the opposing team with three (3) points earned.
5. Make-up Games and Rescheduled Games: In the event that any scheduled match is not played or cannot be played by one or both teams, a make-up game may be scheduled by mutual agreement between NMIFA and the home/away team coaches at least one week in advance of the scheduled match (including the youth and referee chairmen) in a time frame not later than one week following the last scheduled match of the season for that age division or equally reasonable time approved by the NMIFA youth and referee committees. It is the responsibility of NMIFA to initiate the request for make-up or rescheduled match discussions. (A) If the match is not scheduled due to the lack of one team's response within 48 hours from NMIFA's request, the team that does not respond will receive a forfeit. (B) If the match does not take place on the mutually agreed make-up/rescheduled date, the team that doesn't field the required minimum number of players to start the match will receive a forfeit. In the event that both teams do not meet either of these (A) or (B) requirements, both teams will receive a forfeit for that match.
6. If there is a tie at end of season, to break a tie the following will apply in the order listed:
  - a. Head-to-head results between the tied teams;
  - b. A full tiebreak regulation match to be scheduled with two 7.5 minute overtime halves with a 5 minute break between halves. If the match is still tied after overtime, penalty kicks will ensue to determine a winner;
  - c. If teams are not available to conclude a tiebreak regulation match, then a designated NMIFA official will perform a coin flip.

### **II. PLAY UP RULE**



## **OBJECTIVE**

One of NMIFA's primary objectives is to promote the development of football and to compete at the highest international level. To meet this end, during NMIFA's initial 10-year development period from its August 2005 inception, NMIFA must focus on youth development to build an adequate pool of players and be flexible and reasonable in its development approach given the limited number of players and skill level as a new sport in the CNMI during its first 10-years. In 2016 a new plan is being implemented to help further refine the skills in youth age groups. First and foremost, it is the responsibility of NMIFA's member clubs and youth coaches to develop their original team of "age-appropriate" players and assess the need and fit for skilled younger players to play up.

**# of Players:** During each youth league season, each *competitive* youth league team will be allowed to have any number of players "play-up" to an appropriate age level on a youth league team. It will be the responsibility of the clubs and their coaches to manage their teams of "age-appropriate" and "play-up" players in line with the above objective. The combined number of "play-up" players and age appropriate players are subject to the maximum roster size for all competitive teams except U12 teams who are allowed an unlimited roster size.

### **Eligibility of Players**

Clubs and their team coaches will be responsible to identify which players will be allowed to "play-up" after taking into consideration safety, physical and mental readiness and skill and tactical abilities of the player. An example of a "play-up" candidate may be those players who have been previously selected and competed on a NMIFA national team at the international level and/or a national/elite program such as the National Elite Academy or Goal Keeper Development Program and/or advanced/higher skilled players from the clubs or schools.

### **Player requirements**

A youth player is only allowed to "play up" with the same club that he/she is from. A youth player approved by his/her club to "play up" may also consider playing in the appropriate age division that he/she is eligible, however if there are match conflicts between the two age divisions, the Youth Committee will not accept requests by the clubs to reschedule any matches. This rule will apply to all teams in the *competitive age-groups* of the NMIFA Youth League and also the players who are approved by their respective club to "play-up" to the competitive age group (for example a U10 player could play up to U12 non-competitive or U12 competitive team (not both), depending on the player characteristics from club determination. But a U10 player may not play up to U15). Additional "play-up" players can be added to the team at anytime during the season subject to proper registration requirements with NMIFA and the maximum roster requirements noted below. This "play-up" requirement applies only to NMIFA youth divisions and does not pertain to youth who "play-up" to the adult divisions.

### **Procedures**

The following procedures must be adhered to in order for players to be allowed to "play-up":

**(a)Registration:** Clubs must register their "Play-Up" players in the same procedure as standard team and player roster registrations within the NMIFA designated timeframes. Clubs must clearly identify all "play-up" players on the team rosters. Clubs may drop players and add players at any time during



the season subject to the Maximum roster size listed in Law 3, this section and the Player Eligibility rules on page 2 above. Additionally, an updated roster with an official effective date should be submitted to NMIFA deleting and/or adding players. These updates should be submitted at least 24 hours prior to the next match that a new player will play and new players should have ID card issued to present at the match.(b)Supplemental waiver form: An age division “play-up” liability and authorization form is suggested and to be maintained at the clubs for each player who “plays up” with a copy submitted to NMIFA.

### **III.PROTESTS**

#### **1. Match Protests**

- a. The protest must be filed in writing with the NMIFA Youth Committee via General Secretary within twenty-four (24) hours after the scheduled kickoff time of the particular game in question.
- b. All issues must be game related only and the protesting party should include the proposed remedy.
- c. Each team will be permitted one game protest per tournament without paying a deposit. Additional Game Protests will require a \$50.00 deposit, due within 24 hours of the filing date. The \$50.00 deposit will be forfeited to the NMIFA if the Youth Committee rules against the protesting team.
- d. A Game Protest will be reviewed by the Youth Committee within the next ninety six (96) hours after the protest has been filed. The Youth Committee will consider the timing of the next scheduled match to render a decision as soon as possible. If the Game Protest is not reviewed by the Youth Committee in the next ninety-six (96) hours, the protest will be deferred to the Disciplinary Committee for further review, action and decision.
- e. In the event that the protest involves any fines and/or suspension of players and/or team officials and the team is scheduled to play before the protest is resolved, the players/officials involved must pay any applicable fees/fines before the game but they will not sit the suspension until the Youth Committee reaffirms the suspension and the fees/fines. If the resolution of the committee is in favor of the protesting team, any applicable fines will be returned.
- f. Any related matters to the match protest may be submitted to the Disciplinary Committee for further review, advice and decision.

#### **2. Other Grievances**

Any other grievances or non-match protests should be in writing to the Youth Committee via the General Secretary for review.

### **IV. TECHNICAL AREA**

1. Only 3 non-players are allowed in the technical area during the game.
2. Names of the officials/non-players (Team Manager, Coach, Assistant Coach) must be registered with NMIFA and identified before the beginning of the match. This will be evidenced by the officials listing on the team roster.
3. Coaches should remain within 20 feet of their team’s designated side of the centerline and behind the touchlines at least 10 feet. Coaches should remain in the designated technical area for the duration of the game.
4. Players in the technical and warm-up areas are required to wear pinnies of a contrasting color of the official uniform colors at all times.
5. Spectators are not to sit in technical area or to coach the team or any individual players from the sidelines.

6. Spectators will be on the opposite side of the technical area (or behind the oval track if at Oleai Sports Complex aka Ada Field) and will be at least 10 feet from the touchline. Spectators can be redirected by the referee or league commissioner to the proper areas.
7. Water bottles may be placed at the touchline.

## V. ADMINISTRATIVE

Member Clubs or teams will be responsible for the following:

1. Drafting complete initial and amended rosters for all players, including players who might play one or two games anytime during the season. The rosters are to be signed by the coach and team manager and with the initial roster due to NMIFA one week before the first match and amended rosters due at least 24 hours before the match unless otherwise directed by the NMIFA General Secretary.
2. Ensuring that all players are duly registered with NMIFA and have a valid player ID card for the applicable year.
3. In the absence of a League Commissioner, controlling and disciplining to their best of their ability non-player members and parent/family spectators at the matches who exhibit any form of coaching, poor sportsmanship, unnecessary roughness, violence or threats to any player or non-player at their respective matches, either home or away.

## VI. AWARDS

Beginning with the 2014 Spring Youth League, competitive age division teams and players will receive awards at or after the end of the respective seasons. Please refer to the Youth Awards guide – Spring 2016 Competitive Divisions.

<b>AWARD</b>	<b>U12 Coed</b>	<b>U14 Girls</b>	<b>U14 Boys</b>	<b>U17 Boys</b>
Golden Boot	1 player	1 player	1 player	1 player
Golden Glove	1 player	1 player	1 player	1 player
First Team All League	--	8 players	8 players	11 players
Honorable Mention All League	--	8 players	8 players	11 players
Most Valuable Player	--	1 player	1 player	1 player

### 1. **Golden Boot**

The Golden Boot award is given to the individual player who scores the most goals in a league or tournament.

### 2. **Golden Glove**

The Golden Glove Award goes to the goalkeeper with the lowest goals-against average in a league or tournament.

### 3. **First Team All League & Honorable Mention**

The First Team All League awards are given to the best 11 or 9 players in the league or tournament by position. The Honorable Mention awards are given to the second best 11 or 9 players in the league or tournament by position.

**4. Most Valuable Player**

The Most Valuable Player or MVP awards the best individual player in the league or tournament.

**VII. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RULES**

Club officers, coaches, team manager, and/or captains or co-captains will be required to attend a pre-season meeting to go over the rules and acknowledge receipt and understanding of these rules to be conducted at least one week prior to season kick-off. **The pre-season meeting was conducted at TSL Plaza on Friday, August 26, 2016.**

As an authorized representative of and on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ (*club name*), I confirm that the above rules for the **NMIFA Competitive Youth League, Fall 2016 edition**, have been received and reviewed by our club. We understand and accept these rules on the date set forth below and will endeavor to have all club youth coaches and players be familiar with and abide by these rules.

**For NMIFA Competitive Youth League – FALL 2016**

**CLUB NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
General Secretary  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Coach/Technical Director  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Northern Mariana Islands Football Association**

Affirmed by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Youth Committee Chairperson  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Affirmed by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Technical Director  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Accepted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
General Secretary  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_