**RULES OF THE GAME**

Updated Fall 2012 for The M-League

**Rule 1: Familiarization with FIFA Laws of the Game.**

**1. Responsibility of Team Officials.**

1. All Team's managers, Coaches, Assistant Coaches and Team's Captains are to be familiar with current FIFA Laws of the Game. [*http://www.fifa.com/worldfootball/lawsofthegame.html*](http://www.fifa.com/worldfootball/lawsofthegame.html)*.*

**2. Abiding FIFA Laws of the Game.**

1. All FIFA Laws of the Game will be followed with the exception of the changes listed in these rules.

**Rule 2: The Ball.**

1. The game ball, size 5, will be supplied by the *NMIFA* but other balls may be used during games if agreed upon by both teams and the referee.

**Rule 3: The Number of Players.**

**1. Number of Players.**

1. Each team is allowed to register a maximum of twenty five players. Each player's name, NMIFA ID card number, tournament's jersey number and date of birth should be properly included in the team roster during the team registration.
2. Eligible players can be added anytime to a team by submitting all the required data to the NMIFA office in order for the new name to be added to the official team roster.

**2. Substitutions.**

1. At the discretion of the center referee, teams will be allowed multiple substitutions opportunities during stoppage of play during a game.
2. Each team is allowed to have a maximum of seven substitute players during the game, resulting in maximum of 18 suited players per team.
3. FOR 1st DIVISION GAMES; Players can be substituted once each game. Substituted players cannot go back in during the same game. FOR 2nd DIVISION GAMES; Players can be substituted once each period. Substituted players cannotgo ba ck in during the same period.

**3. Technical Areas - Team's Bench.**

1. Only three non-players are allowed in the technical area during the game.
2. The names of the non-players must be listed on the team roster before the start of the game as Team Manager, Coach and Assistant Coach.
3. The technical area for the team will be in the same side of the field from the main spectator area.

**Rule 4: The Players' Equipment.**

**1. Uniforms.**

1. All members of the same team will play with jerseys of identical color and design.
2. Shorts and socks should be of the color indicated in the Team's Registration Form or as close as possible. Drastic deviation of the color will not be allowed and matching kits will be required beginning in 2013.
3. Each team member shall have a unique team jersey number that will identify the player during the tournament. Numbers on jerseys should match the player indicated on the Team Roster.
4. A goalkeeper that substitutes a field player must use a player's jersey with a number other that the keeper's jersey and different from the other players' numbers.
5. A field player that substitutes a goalkeeper must use a keeper's jersey with a number other that the field player's jersey and different from the other goalkeepers' number.
6. In the event of a uniform color conflict, the *Home Team* is required to change jersey color. Mesh style vests/bibs, could be used transparent enough to show the player number underneath, and may be worn over the original jersey as an alternative.
7. M-League patches will be required for all players. The times and details of this requirement will be provided by the NMIFA.

**2. Hair Control.**

1. 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.
2. Baseball caps may only be worn by goalkeepers.

**3. Casts and Splints.**

1. No player will be allowed to participate in the match if he is wearing a hard (unyielding) cast or splint, even if covered with padding.

**Rule 5: Fouls and Misconduct.**

**1. Foul or Abusive Language.**

1. Derogatory language directed toward opponents or teammates during the match will be considered as *Foul or Abusive Language.*
2. Vulgar, obscene or foul language will not be tolerate on the pitch or technical area.
3. Taunting an opponent is considered as Foul or Abusive Language.
4. Coaches, Managers and Players in the Technical Area are accountable to be above rules.
5. Violators of the above rules will be ejected from the technical area (see *Cautions and Ejections*).

**2. Dissension.**

1. While in the technical area, no player, coach, manager, 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.**

1. An ejected player must immediately leave the technical area, and may not be within 30 yards of any part of the field during the remainder of the match.
2. An ejected player shall not play in the next scheduled match.
3. An ejected player must abide by the decisions of the *NMIFA DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE* concerning further sanctions.

**Rule 6: Walk Ins.**

1. It is mandatory for the referees to perform the proper walk in before every game with the eleven starting players.
2. The match participating teams should properly align its starting players before the walk in in order to facilitate inspection and ID checks.

**Rule 7: Third Caution Accumulation Rule.**

1. Any player accumulating three cautions (yellow cards), in separate matches during the season or cup, will not play in the match that immediately follows.
2. An ejection for two cautions in the same match will not be counted as two cautions for the Third Caution Accumulation Rule.
3. A Player accumulating three cautions during the tournament must abide by decisions of the *NMIFA DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE* concerning further sanctions.

**Rule 8: Eligibility And Transfers.**

**1. Player Eligibility.**

1. Only eligible players may play in the tournament. Eligible player is defined as being registered in the NMIFA, being issued an NMIFA ID card, and without an active NMIFA player discipline sanction.
2. Eligible players must be registered to play only for one team during the tournament or season.

**2. Players Dropped, or Added to a Roster.**

1. A player's name may be dropped from a team roster before the end of a tournament in order to make room for another player. The dropped player is not eligible to play for another team until the following tournament or playing season. The dropped player can play again for the same team that dropped him if he is properly added to the team roster.
2. New players may register throughout the tournament or playing season as long as teams do not exceed the cap of twenty five players per team.

**3. Player Cards.**

1. The Team Manager, Coaches and or the Captain must assure the game officials that all the players are properly register and make available all the team's Player Cards before the match.

**4. Consequences of Playing Ineligible Players.**

1. Teams using ineligible players during the game will receive a forfeit for that game.
2. Coaches and Managers that use ineligible players in a match will be properly warned the first offence; on the second offence they will not be permitted in the technical area during the next scheduled match. On the third offense they will be referred to the *NMIFA DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE* for additional sanctions.

**Rule 9: Team No Show - Forfeiting Games.**

**1. Team Check In.**

1. Team officials must check in their teams no later than 10 minutes prior to the game. At check in and for every game team officials must have their team roster and the players NMIFA ID card.

**2. Minimum Players.**

1. A team that fails to field a minimum of seven (7) registered players by the scheduled kickoff time will forfeit the game and receive a recorded score of 0-3 loss. Under the referee's criteria there could be a five minute grace period, before declaring the walk over.
2. In the event that both teams failed to field enough players, both teams forfeit the game and both teams will receive a recorded loss with three goals against.

**3. Sanctions and Fines.**

1. The forfeiting team will receive a fine of $25.00 the first time and a $50.00 fine for the second offense plus additional sanctions, to be determine by the *NMIFA DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE.*
2. Sanction fees and fines must be paid first, prior for the forfeiting team attempts to participate in the next scheduled tournament game. Payments have to be made at the NMIFA's office from Monday to Friday 09:00 am to 05:00 pm. Failure to pay the fines before the next scheduled match will result in another forfeiture.

**Rule 10: Game Rescheduling Rule.**

**1. Emergency, Force Majeure and Field Integrity.**

1. No published official game will be rescheduled unless there is an emergency, act of god or force majeure that affects a team's ability to play on the scheduled time.
2. Maintaining the integrity of the pitch is also a consideration that could result in a rescheduled match. Playing during extreme weather can damage the pitch resulting in extended periods of required maintenance. The NMIFA and/or the Mens Committee will make an official announcement about cancellations either before or at half time of a given match.
3. The rescheduling of a match must not affect other matches or involve any other teams that the ones being rescheduled.

**2. Game Reschedule Application.**

1. Team wishing to reschedule an official game must complete the NMIFA GAME RESCHEDULE APPLICATION and submitted for review two weeks in advance.
2. The NMIFA GAME RESCHEDULE APPLICATION must include the following: Acceptance of the opposing team to reschedule; secure the acceptance and participation of the referees to official the rescheduled game; reserve the field where the match is going to take place and pay for the field and power if needed.
3. The application must only involve the applying team and its opponent, no additional changes to the schedule or the involvement of other teams are permitted.
4. After all the criteria have been met on the form, the game will be rescheduled with the consent of the Mens Committee.

**Rule 11: Players' Age.**

**1. Minimum Age.**

1. All players must be at least 15 years old by the date of the first game of the tournament.

**2. Exceptions.**

1. In certain special cases, players of fourteen years old may be allowed to play. A special request should be submitted to the *Men's Football Committee,* address to the Chairman via NMIFA General Secretary.
2. The Special Request must be reviewed by the Men's Football Committee and then forwarded to the Executive Committee for approval. The Executive Committee can ask for different opinions and request the production of any document supporting the request.

**Rule 12: Teams/Clubs Assistant Referees.**

**1. Provision**

1. Each Club or Team participating in the tournament should provide a minimum of two persons to help as linesmen or ARs during the game.
2. The list of persons submitted by the Clubs and the Teams to help as Assistant Referees should be submitted to the Referees Committee via NMIFA General Secretary.
3. The list should contain the names, phone numbers, email addresses and mailing addresses of the team's ARs.

**2. ARs Training and Disciplinary Actions**

1. If possible the Club or Team's ARs, should undergo the basic AR training provided by the Referees Committee.
2. A Club or Team that does not provide the mandatory ARs will be subject to disciplinary action and a fine.

**3. Compensation.**

1. All game officials, Central Referee, Assistant Referees and Fourth Official, are entitle to a compensation for his/her time, regardless if he/she is provided by a club or team. The amount of such payments should be in accordance with the latest fee schedule issued by the Referees Committee and approved by the NMIFA Executive Committee.
2. Assistant Referees not belonging to a participating Club or Team can also official as linesmen or ARs during any game and are entitle to compensation only if they are previously registered as such with the Referees Committee.

**Rule 13: Tournament Point Systems.**

**1. M-League Regular Season.**

1. The following point system will determine the regular tournament standings: Win = Three (3) points; Tie = One (1) point and Loss = Zero (0) points.
2. In the event of a tie, *GOAL DIFFERENTIAL* will be used to advance the teams. Goal Differential is defined as the difference of the total number of goals a team has scored, less the total goals that has been scored against.
3. If the tie persists, the team with the most number of goals scored will advance.
4. In the event that even after the last computation the teams are still tied, then the amount of goals scored when the tied teams played each other will determine the positions.

**2. The M-League Cup Tournament.**

1. Each cup game must end with a winner. If teams are tied after regulation teams will play two fifteen minute sudden death (golden goal) periods with a 5 minute break in between. If the game is still tied the winner will be decided by penalty kicks.

**Rule 14: Protest Rule.**

**1. Filing a Game Protest.**

1. The protest must be filed in writing with the *NMIFA Men's Football Committee* via General Secretary within 48 hours after the scheduled kickoff time of the particular game in question.
2. All issues must be game related only and the protesting party should include the proposed remedy.
3. 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 *Men's Football Committee* rules against the protesting team.

**2. Resolution of a Game Protest.**

1. A Game Protest will be reviewed only by the *Men's Football Committee* in the next twenty (20) calendar days after the protest as been filed.
2. If the Game Protest is not reviewed by the *Men's Football Committee* in the next twenty (20) calendar days the protest will be automatically accepted and resolved in favor of the protesting party.
3. In the event that the protest involves fines and suspension of players and/or team officials and the team is schedule to play before the protest is resolved, the players/officials involved must pay the fines before the game but they will not be sit the suspension until the Men's Football Committee reaffirms the suspension and the fine. If the resolution of the committee is in favor of the team the fine will be returned.

**Rule 15: Team Contact Representative.**

**1. The Team Manager.**

1. All teams must designate one person who will act as the *TEAM MANAGER* . This person will be contacted by the officials of the Men's Football Committee for all issues concerning tournament information and schedule changes. It will the responsibility of this individual to disseminate official information to the members of the team.
2. The *TEAM MANAGER* must provide the Men's Football Committee with the following contact information: Phone number, email address and mailing address.