

FLORIDA STATE SOCCER ASSOCIATION

Affiliated to USASA, USSF, FIFA

SUBJECT: Guide for the Publication of League Constitutions, Rules, Bylaws

PREAMBLE: This document is published in order to assist all constituents in the preparation of subject directives. It has been prepared by Mack Alarcon, Rules Committee member, under the direction of Rules Committee Chair, Guy Harris and FSSA president Rob LaVielle. One of the duties of the committee is to examine league documents and recommend to the Board of Directors of FSSA whether or not the documents are acceptable. The intent here is to ensure that all necessary information is included.

HISTORY: In 1980 I had written a similar guide for Florida Youth Soccer Association and FSSA. In October 1984 The US Youth Soccer Association Rules and Revisions Committee, under Chairman Richard C. Frost published a more complete a serious guide designed for state youth associations to follow. What you have here is a combination of both guides. I adopted it for FSSA league use.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. If you are already an affiliate, copies of your constitution, bylaws and rules of play are already on file at FSSA unless you were directed to amend, add or revoke certain portions.
2. When you apply for membership, you are required to send copies of subject documents along with your request for acceptance. In both cases listed above, this guide should be used as a checklist.
3. You will note that each item on the checklist is preceded by a letter:

“**M**” Means that the item is **MANDATORY**. To omit this item or if it is not clearly written or if it does not comply with FSSA or higher directives, it may cause for rejection.

“**O**” Means that the item is **OPTIONAL**. However we encourage including it in your document. It encourages better understanding and it makes it administrative complete. If too many of these items are omitted, may by cause for rejection.

3. We invite your comments and constructive criticism. Your ideas for a better guide are welcome.

CONSTITUTIONS.

These should be compact and to the point. They should be hard to change. And should contain the following as a minimum:

- M.....**NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION, CLUB OR LEAGUE.** How the organization is to be recognized. Include acronym. Try to stay away from names that include “Association” and “Federation” since these are reserved for the State and National entities. Ex: Homestead Soccer League (HSL).
- M.....**PURPOSE.** Self explanatory. You may wish to add words such as “to provide non-profit public educational soccer” in order to qualify for IRS tax exception.
- O.....**BOUNDARIES.** The territory served.
- M.....**LOCATION OF HEADQUARTERS OR PRINCIPAL OFFICE.** Self explanatory.
- O.....**COLORS.** Official colors of the organization.
- M.....**LEGAL MATTER.** A statement that the organization shall operate pursuant to the laws of the State of Florida and the United States of America.

- M.....AFFILIATION. A statement indicating that the organization shall be affiliated to FSSA and shall comply with the authority of FSSA, USASA (United States Adult Soccer Association), USSF (United States Soccer Federation) and FIFA.
- M.....ADMINISTRATION. Several items here:
 - M.....Name of the governing body such as Board of Directors, Trustees (if applicable) etc. Indicate their right to conduct business on behalf of the organization.
 - M.....List the members of the governing body by title such as President/chairman, Vice-President, etc. and the fact that they have the authority as determined by the bylaws.
 - O.....Designate meeting times and designate the right of the members to attend.
 - M.....Establish the date for the Annual General Meeting. Include a requirement to publish advance notice to the members. Usually 30 days. State what constitutes a quorum.
- M.....ORDER OF BUSINESS AT THE AGM. Outline an agenda containing as a minimum: Roll call, credentials, minutes of previous meeting, report of officers and committee chairs, correspondence, unfinished business, constitution, bylaw and rule changes, new business and elections. Close with For the Good of the game.
- M.....Should also contain parliamentary procedure such as the use of Robert's Rules, etc.
- O.....DISSOLUTION. Upon this event, for any reason or merger to another organization, something must happen with its assets.
- M.....AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION. All members should be given at least 30 days notice of proposed amendments. ¾ affirmative votes normally required from attending eligible members. No quorum, no changes. Changes should become effective at the completion of the AGM or at the beginning of the next season. This must be clearly stated.
- M.....DISCRIMINATION. The constitution should include a statement such as "The BOD, other officers and committee members shall be elected or appointed without regard to race, color, religion or national origin or gender.
- M.....RATIFICATION. Every constitution should be formally ratified. Signatures of the current BODs, date and signatures of witnesses. Names should be typed. Signatures over the typed portion.
- O.....REPRESENTATIVE(S). Who represents the organization at FSSA and other meetings?

BYLAWS.

Bylaws define your organization, how it operates, who its directors are and their duties. Bylaws should not be too easy to change. In the beginning stages, no doubt there will be many amendments, corrections and additions that need to be made as your organization grows.

M.....MEMBERSHIP.

- M.....Types of membership. Divisions, male and female, senior, coed, voting privileges at AGM and other meetings, provisional membership, etc. Define qualifications needed for each group.
- M.....Describe how may a member be removed. (% of votes needed by BOD or general council.)

M.....DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS.

- M.....Define the number, authority, power and tenure of each.
- M.....Describe how a vacancy may be filled.

M.....MEETINGS.

- M.....Indicate the types of meetings such as general, regular, special, emergency, committees, etc. and how they are called.

- M.....Define a quorum for each meeting. Describe the agenda (Order of Business)
- O.....Name a parliamentarian for each meeting.

M.....COMMITTEES.

- O.....Describe all committees and their function. Games committee, scheduling committee, referee assigning committee, (The referee assignor must be a graduate of the assignors course and must be registered.). Also: Referee committee, coaching, fields, cups, rules, protests, appeals, membership, player registrar, finance (usually the treasurer) etc. etc.
- O.....Describe tenure and how or when they are dissolved or terminated or relieved.

M.....RECORDS AND REPORTS.

- M.....Where they are kept and who keeps them. Who inspects them.
- M.....How contracts are executed. How are funds disbursed. Who can sign drafts, checks and other expenditures. Define a fiscal year. (Sep 1 to 31 Aug the following year)
- M.....Provide for an annual fiscal report (usually by the treasurer)
- O.....Describe the corporate seal if there is one.

M.....AMENDMENT AND RATIFICATION OF BYLAWS. See Amendments and Ratification of Constitution above.

RULES AND REGULATIONS.

These should be easy to change to allow flexibility to a growing league or club. They affect the day to day operation. Nevertheless, they must comply with FSSA, USASA, USSF and FIFA directives. The following is not a complete list. Our FSSA rules committee allows flexibility to some degree here.

M.....RULES OF THE COMPETITION.

- M.....Shall be as promulgated by USSF, USASA, USSF and FIFA in the current “Laws of the Game” book.
- M.....Define seasonal year for each division. (FSSA defines a seasonal year beginning September 1 and ending August 31 the following calendar year)
- M.....Define length of the game for each division and when can a post game “tie breaker” may be used as outlined in FIFA’s Law Book.
- M.....Accountability. Define who is responsible for the conduct of players, coaches, fans, etc.
- M.....A statement that only properly, currently FSSA registered players may participate. (Registrar’s duty) Players must present current photographed player pass or will not be allowed to play.
- M.....Only current, properly FSSA registered referees may work a league game. (Assignor’s duty)
- M.....Procedures in the event of “referee no show”
- M.....Grace time allowed a team to show up after scheduled time (usually 15 minutes)
- O.....Consequences for no show team in addition to loss of points. Other forfeitures.
- M.....Games played under protest.
- M.....Point system to be used. (Recommend the universal 3 for win, 0 for loss, and 1 for tie)
- M.....Minimum number players required to start a game (7 is universal by FIFA)
- M.....Maximum number of players registered to a team: 22 by FSSA
- M.....Maximum number of players on Game Roster: 18 by FSSA
- M.....Describe Player release and transfer procedures.
- M.....Establish substitution procedures for each division. Recommend: “as per FIFA”

- M.....Conditions of the playing field. The referee has the authority to render a field unusable. League rules may also allow the games chairman to have this authority. Keep in mind player safety.
- M.....Who has the authority to cancel/postpone a game due to weather conditions? If the game has started, it is the referee's responsibility to stop it until it is safe to continue.
- O.....Team uniforms. Each team declares home and away uniforms. In any event, the referee determines if there is a problem. Which team changes in case both show up with similar attire.
- M.....Who is responsible for field availability. The league?, the home team? the Games Committee? State who is responsible for the marking of the field?, corner flags, goal nets, substitute benches, etc.
- M.....Who pays for the fields? Teams? 50/50? Who pays the referees and when?
- O.....Coaching from the touchlines. Do not confuse coaching Vs. complaining or abuse.
- M.....Game report form. Where does it go and when.
- M.....Consequences for yellow and red cards. Suspensions for referee abuse or assault. Suspensions for violent conduct, fighting. (See FSSA bylaws for further guide)
- M.....Playing with professional players. There is a procedure to be followed. (See FSSA bylaws)
- M.....Playing with youth players. (See procedures at FSSA and FYSA bylaws)
- M.....Playing with unaffiliated teams. FSSA, USASA, USSF and FIFA forbid playing with them.
- M.....FSSA will provide insurance only if injury was sustained in a legitimate game. State this in the rules of the competition.
- M.....State that Alcoholic beverages will not be allowed to be consumed during your games. (FSSA has lost soccer fields because of violation of this rule. Normally parks and recreation will not allow this.
- M.....Outline protest and appeals procedures. This should be in detail for clear understanding . Chain of flow should be clear. Deadlines stated. Method of appeals clearly stated.
- M.....How many and who may be at a hearing for protest and for appeals? Deadlines?
- O.....Select team(s) representing the organization. How are they selected. Priority over league games?
- O.....Team travel procedures. Who can approve team travel.
- M.....Cover FSSA cups. Private tournaments and cups and permission to participate and travel.
- O.....Cover indoor soccer, six a side and other forms of soccer if applicable.
- O.....State: that these rules will be binding. In case of conflict, the rules of FSSA and higher will take precedence.
- M.....State that the rules of the competition may only be changed with ample prior notice. State who and how these rules may be changed.
- O.....The secretary should certify that the rules are binding and sign and date the document before issuing to the membership.

One other way to assist you: You may visit www.fssa.org and review FSSA's constitution and bylaws to get further ideas. You may adopt some of its contents that apply to your documents. (Make it fit)

We hope that this guide and outline helps your organization in the preparation of your directives.

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September 12, 2008