

**US YOUTH SOCCER REGION IV
FAR WEST REGIONAL LEAGUE RULES**

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SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

1.01 Name of League

The name of the League shall be the "Far West Regional League" (FWRL).

1.02 Mission

To provide the highest standard of competitive play for youth teams in US Youth Soccer Region IV (the Far West Region) and assure the continued growth and development of elite level players.

1.03 League Status

The Far West Regional League is created and established by the State Associations that are members of USYS Region IV. The league is operated by Region IV on behalf of and as a trustee of the State Associations. Affiliation with USYS and State Association membership in USYS Region IV is a requirement for participation in the league.

1.04 Management of League

The FWRL shall be managed and supervised by the Far West Regional League Committee (FWRL Committee). Members of the eight-person FWRL Committee shall include: (a) the Committee Chairperson who shall also be the US Youth Soccer Region IV Director; (b) three (3) Region IV member State Association Directors of Coaching; (c) three (3) Trustees Representing Player Interests; and (d) the League Commissioner. Appointment and terms are noted in the Far West Regional League Committee Charter.

1.05 Rules, Policies and Procedures

All league rules, policies, and procedures shall be reviewed and approved by the Regional Council.

1.06 Matter Not Provided For

The Regional Council shall have final authority over all matters relating to the Far West Regional League and the FWRL Committee.

1.07 Age Group Management

Each age group will be managed and supervised by the FWRL Committee, which will be responsible for, but not limited to, the following:

- (a) Securing venues
- (b) Creating match schedules
- (c) Serving as the liaison with the Regional Referee Administrator, and SYRA or their State Referee Assignors to ensure that match officials are assigned.
- (d) Collecting approved FWRL team rosters
- (e) Recording and posting of scores and standings
- (f) Ensuring communication of age group news and information is shared with teams

1.08 FWRL State Association Representative

Each Region IV State Association shall appoint a FWRL State Association Representative who shall provide his or her State Association with all information relevant to the FWRL. The representative shall be subject to the jurisdiction of and answer to the State Association. The representative's duties include serving as a liaison between the FWRL and teams from the State Association and insuring that State Association approvals and requirements are fully met.

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1.09 Site Coordinators

The FWRL Commissioner shall approve all Site Coordinators. In cases where participating FWRL is hosting multiple games at a local site, the host FWRL team must provide a Site Coordinator for the FWRL event.

1.10 Site Coordinators Duties and Responsibilities

The Site Coordinator's duties and responsibilities under the jurisdiction of the FWRL Committee shall include but not be limited to:

- (a) Serving as a liaison between the FWRL and participating teams on site;
- (b) Establishing a central location for site headquarters;
- (c) Ensuring that the game fields are ready for play;
- (d) Collecting and distributing Referee Game Reports;
- (e) Collecting, recording and distributing appropriate Referee Game Fees;
- (f) Forwarding Referee Game Reports to the FWRL at the conclusion of the event;
- (g) Completing any other duties as assigned by the FWRL Committee.

1.11 Playing Seasons

The FWRL shall operate two separate playing seasons. The Fall season will be played between August 1 and December 31 pursuant to schedules approved by the Regional Council; the Spring Season will be played between January 1 and July 31 pursuant to schedules approved by the Regional Council.

1.12 Precedence of Games

US Youth Soccer National Championship Series competition will have priority over FWRL matches.

1.13 Team Rights and Privileges

Any team in the FWRL shall have the same rights and privileges those accorded to any team playing in a league within their respective US Youth Soccer state association. Team participation in the FWRL during the Fall and/or Spring sessions will meet the requirements of the US Youth Soccer National Championship Series.

1.14 Contact Information and Communication

All member teams of the FWRL shall have contact information on file with the FWRL, including, but not limited to (a) the Team Manager's Name, Address, Phone Numbers and valid e-mail address and (b) the Team Coach's Name, Address, Phone Numbers and valid e-mail address. E-mail will be the primary means of communication within the FWRL. It is the responsibility of each team to ensure that accurate contact information is on file with the FWRL.

SECTION II. TEAM APPLICATION AND ADMISSION

2.01 Team Eligibility

Any team affiliated with a Region IV State Association may request approval from its State Association to apply to the FWRL pursuant to section 2.02.

2.02 State Association Approval

State Associations must approve in writing all applications for participation in the FWRL for each season. Applications by teams to participate in the FWRL shall be to the FWRL through the State Associations. Teams may not apply directly to the FWRL.

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2.03 Structure

The FWRL will offer competition for Boys and Girls in five Age Groups, beginning with U-14 and concluding with U-18. Each Age Group and gender will include Premier and First Divisions, whenever numbers allow. The FWRL Committee will determine the configuration of divisions.

Section 2.04 Premier Division

Priority for participation in the Premier Division will be given to State Cup finalists.

Section 2.05 First Division

Priority for participation in the First Division will be given to State Cup finalists.

2.06 Boys Divisions

The Boys Premier Divisions may be balanced into sub-divisions, as necessary, based on the number of approved teams and quality of such teams. The Boys First Division will be constructed on a sub-regional basis, based on the number of approved teams.

2.07 Girls Divisions

The Girls Premier Divisions may be balanced into sub-divisions, as necessary, based on the number of approved teams and quality of such teams. The Girls First Division will be constructed on a sub-regional basis, based on the number of approved teams.

2.08 Good Standing

All teams must be properly registered competitive teams that meet the requirements for participation and are in good standing with their respective member State Association.

2.09 Application Deadlines

All applications for participation in the FWRL must be received by the deadline established by the FWRL Committee for each playing season.

2.10 Application Process

Team Applications to participate in the FWRL must be completed on-line at www.regioniv.com or by application form mailed to the league commissioner.

2.11 Acceptance of Teams

The FWRL Committee will determine what teams from those authorized to apply by their State Association will be accepted in to the league. The committee will make the acceptance decision for entry into the league based on availability of positions, configuration of teams in each division, availability of resources, and regional distribution.

2.12 Refusal to Admit Teams

The FWRL after consultation with State Associations shall have the final authority and right to refuse admittance of any team based upon the team's prior performance in the FWRL. These factors include, but are not limited to: failure to play FWRL matches as scheduled; failure to comply with FWRL rules; failure to pay FWRL referees; and/or failure to pay assessed FWRL fees or fines on time.

2.13 Fees and Other Expenses

Each team participating in the FWRL will pay the fees established by the Regional Council. The amount of fees imposed shall be based on costs incurred and estimated to be incurred in connection with the operation of the league. Each team shall be responsible for all costs

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incurred in connection with its participation in the FWRL, including without limitation travel, housing, and uniforms.

2.14 Acceptance of FWRL Rules

Any team applying to play in the FWRL, agrees to accept, abide by and comply with all rules, policies, and decisions by the FWRL and further agrees to pay all fees that are due to the FWRL for participation in the FWRL.

2.15 Return of FWRL Fees

The FWRL shall return all fees paid for any team that is not accepted to play in the FWRL. If a team withdraws from the FWRL before the FWRL schedules are published, one-hundred dollars (\$100) will be withheld from the fees paid. If a team withdraws from the FWRL after the publication of schedules, the entire entry fee will be retained and an additional fine or other penalties will be assessed.

SECTION III. TEAM ROSTERS

3.01 Team Rosters

All teams must submit an official FWRL Team Roster of players no later than seven (7) days prior to the team's scheduled first game. An authorized official from the Team's respective home State Association must authenticate the validity of the rostered players. No addition to team rosters is permitted after submission to the league. However guest players will be allowed per FWRL Guest Policy.

3.02 Player Eligibility

Player eligibility is governed by the US Youth Soccer National Championship Series rules. A player may not be on the roster of more than one FWRL team; provided, however, that a State Association registered player with the approval of his or her State Association may play as a "guest player" for a second team from within the same US Youth Soccer affiliated club. No player may play for more than one FWRL team in one day. No player may play for more than one FWRL team in the same age/gender group in the same seasonal year.

3.03 Guest Player Rosters

Subject to section 3.02, in the under 14 and 15 age groups with a maximum roster size of eighteen (18), up to seven (7) guest players are allowed per game. Subject to section 3.02, in the under 16, 17 and 18 age groups with a maximum roster of twenty two (22), up to three (3) guest players are allowed per game. Subject to section 3.02, for teams from state associations with a maximum roster limit of eighteen (18) for the under 16 and under 17 age group, up to seven (7) guest players are allowed per game. In no event, may the total number of players exceed twenty five (25).

3.04 Member Passes

Valid US Youth Soccer member passes will be used for FWRL play. All US Youth Soccer member passes must be valid for the current season, have a current player photo and be laminated.

SECTION IV. FORMATION OF DIVISIONS

4.01 Seeding and Placement of Teams

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The FWRL committee is responsible for the placement of teams based the team's performance in the FWRL, their State Association's state cup, Far West Regionals, the USYS National Championship, and regional representation.

4.02 Promotion and Relegation

Teams placed in the Premier Division during or following their U-14 season will remain in that division until they are relegated. Teams may also be removed from the Premier Division -- or the FWRL -- for disciplinary reasons, or if the composition of the team has changed significantly from season to season and the team is no longer competitive.

4.03 Relegation from the Premier Division

The bottom team in the Premier Division will automatically be relegated to the First Division. Teams relegated from the Premier Division will be scheduled to play in the First Division. The number of teams relegated from each Premier Division and, by extension, promoted from the corresponding First Division will be reviewed on a seasonal basis by the FWRL on a division-by-division basis. In addition, promotion/relegation will also be based on the "Concept of Competitive Distance."

4.04 Concept of Competitive Distance

Along with the bottom placed team in the Premier Division, one or more additional teams may also be relegated if their point total for the season is not greater than 33% (one third) of the total accumulated by the Premier Division champion in their division or sub-division. For example, if the first place team has 18 points, the teams at the bottom of the table above the relegated team must secure at least six (6) points in order to retain their Premier Division status for the next season.

4.05 Promotion from the First Division

Teams that win their respective First Divisions will be automatically promoted to the Premier Division. Additional First Division teams may also be promoted to the Premier Division, provided that:

(a) Additional Premier Division teams are eligible for relegation based on the Concept of Competitive Distance, and

(b) The corresponding First Division teams have earned greater than 67% (two-thirds) of the total points accumulated by the First Division champion in their division or sub-division. For example, if the first place team has 18 points, any team(s) considered for promotion must have earned at least twelve (12) points.

4.06 Removal from the First Division

First Division teams that do not qualify for their State Association State Cup semi-final round will be re-evaluated for future FWRL play by their home State Association and the FWRL Committee.

4.07 New Teams

New teams are defined as those teams that did not play in the FWRL during the immediately preceding season. No team is entitled to continue participation in the FWRL without the approval of its State Association and each team must apply pursuant to sections 2.01 and 2.02 for each season. Each State Association may nominate any number of teams to compete in the FWRL; provided, however, that only four teams per State Association will be guaranteed participation in an age and gender group.

4.08 Scoring Method

The standings of teams within divisions/sub-divisions are based upon the number of points earned. Teams earn points as follows:

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Three (3) points for a win
One (1) point for a tie
No (0) points for a loss
Minus two (-2) points for a forfeit

4.09 Forfeits

In the event of a forfeit, the team that forfeits the match will have two (2) points deducted, and the match score will be recorded as 0-2. The opponent will be awarded three (3) points and a 2-0 win.

4.10 Uneven Number of Games

In the event that the teams in a Division/Sub-Division do not play the same number of games due to unforeseen circumstances but, not including games that teams refuse to play (i.e. forfeits), the Final Standings may be determined by using the percentage of points earned versus the maximum points the team could have earned. The FWRL Committee will also determine any tie-breaking procedures that may need to be applied.

4.11 Tiebreakers—Two Teams are Tied

If two teams are tied on the basis of points earned, the team's placement will be determined in accordance with the following sequential criteria:

- (a) Winner of head to head competition
- (b) Winner of most games.
- (c) Goal Differential (goals scored minus goals against max four (4) per game)
- (d) Fewest goals allowed.
- (e) Playoff Game (if calendar allows)
- (f) Fewest disciplinary points (yellows and reds earn caution and ejection points)
- (g) Coin toss

4.12 Tiebreakers—Three or More Teams That Are Tied

If three or more teams are tied on the basis of points earned, the final rankings will be determined in accordance with the following sequential criteria. When a team ranks last on any criteria, they will be eliminated from consideration and the sequence will begin again for the remaining teams.

- (a) Points earned in head to head competition among the teams
- (b) Winner of most games.
- (c) Goal Differential (goals scored minus goals against max four (4) per game).
- (d) Fewest goals allowed.
- (e) Drawing of lots.

4.13 Subdivision Composition

Teams may be assigned to subdivisions on the basis of balanced quality with consideration given to travel costs.

4.14 Boys First Division Sub-Division Composition

In the Boys First Divisions, the geographic dispersion of teams may be considered when constructing Sub-Divisions to help minimize costs and travel time. When Sub-Divisions are constructed in the Boys First Divisions, a play-off may be required to determine promoted teams.

4.15 Girls First Division Sub-Division Composition

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In the Girls First Divisions, the geographic dispersion of teams may be considered when constructing Sub-Divisions to help minimize costs and travel time. When Sub-Divisions are constructed in the Girls First Divisions, a play-off may be required to determine promoted teams.

4.16 US Youth Soccer Region IV Championships Wild Cards

In each age group, two Wild Card slots to the US Youth Soccer Region IV Championships may be awarded to FWRL Premier Division teams. In order to be eligible for a Wild Card slot, the following conditions must be met:

- (a) The team must participate in their State Association State Cup competition for the US Youth Soccer National Championship Series during the current seasonal year
- (b) The team must meet all current eligibility requirements for the US Youth Soccer National Championship Series.

- (c) A team's roster is frozen for FWRL play when it is frozen for purposes of state cup participation under the team's State Association rules.
- (d) The team may not have forfeited a game in the FWRL or in their State competition.

	Boys and Girls	
	Fall	Spring
U-14	1	1
U-15	1	1
U-16	1	1
U-17	1	1
U-18	1	1

4.17 Selection of Wild Cards IV Championships

Card qualifiers for the US Youth Championships is adopted.

for US Youth Soccer Region IV
The following system of Wild Soccer Region IV

- (a.) All Age Groups: Two (2) teams from each Premier Division Age Group (1 Fall and 1 Spring) will earn the right to represent the FWRL as wild card teams in the National Championship Series at the Far West Regionals.

In situations where there is a single Premier Division in an Age Group, the top teams in that Age Group (Fall and Spring) will be awarded the NCS Wild Card slots, providing all eligibility requirements are met by each individual team, and each team is not a State Cup Champion.

In situations where the Premier Division in an Age Group has subdivisions, the FWRL Committee shall determine the playoff format to determine the Wild Card slot.

The Process for determining the Wild Card representatives is as follows:

1. Determine final standings for each division/subdivision based on 4.08 through 4.12.
2. After all applicable State Championships have been determined; eliminate those teams that will represent their State Association as either the State Champion or as a State Wild Card.

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3. After all State Champions/Wild Cards have been eliminated, the highest-ranking team of those remaining, based on the original determination of standings, will be awarded the FWRL Wild Card slot.

SECTION V. OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

5.01 Reporting of Scores

Site Coordinators shall report game scores in a manner as determined by the FWRL Commissioner. In situations where single games are played (i.e. Self Scheduled Games), both teams are required to report the scores in a manner as determined by the FWRL Commissioner.

5.02 Lineup Game Cards

Each team must complete and provide a lineup game card on the form approved by the FWRL committee and a copy of the team roster, including guest players if applicable, to the referee at least thirty (30) minutes before the game. No more than 18 players from a team may be in uniform or play in a single game. Any team that plays an ineligible player in a game forfeits that game.

5.03 Forfeited Matches—Premier Division

A Premier Division team that forfeits a game by failing to appear shall 1) be subject to a fine assessed against its club and collected before any team from that club can be admitted to a subsequent FWRL season, 2) become ineligible for a Wild Card slot in the US Youth Soccer National Championship Series Far West Regionals, and 3) be demoted to the First Division, for the next fall/spring season of participation. The amount of the fine shall be determined each season by the FWRL Trustees.

5.04 Forfeited Matches—First Division

A First Division team that forfeits a game by failing to appear shall be subject to a fine assessed against its club and collected before any team from that club can be admitted to a subsequent FWRL season, and may be expelled from the FWRL, for the next 2 seasons of participation.

5.05 Uniforms

Teams playing in the FWRL are only permitted to wear the following on their game uniforms:

- (a) US Youth Soccer logo
- (b) The logo of the team's State Association or the logo of any State Association sponsor
- (c) Their individual club and/or team logo and team sponsor logo
- (d) Manufacturer of uniform logo
- (e) Name and number of player

No other patches or logos are permitted unless written permission is granted by the FWRL Committee.

SECTION VI. MATCHES

6.01 Number of Games

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Each team will be scheduled to play a minimum of four (4) games in a season. The scheduled number of games shall be determined by the FWRL Committee based on the number of teams in a division and any play-off process.

6.02 Scheduling of FWRL Games

The FWRL will schedule all FWRL games. Once the FWRL publishes the season schedule, no game can be rescheduled without the prior written permission of the FWRL Commissioner. In the event that games are postponed by the FWRL, the FWRL Commissioner will reschedule the games at the earliest possible reasonable date.

6.03 Travel/Hosting

For the purpose of FWRL competition, Permission to Host/Travel Forms is not required. Permission to host/travel is granted when a team's respective State Association approves the team's application into the FWRL.

6.04 Match Schedule and Rest Periods

All matches will be played as scheduled, unless weather conditions dictate. It is the intent of the league to play only one match per day; however, when circumstances dictate, no more than two matches a day will be scheduled and no more than three matches per Saturday/Sunday weekend. Every effort will be made to provide for a minimum of three hours rest between matches.

6.05 Inclement Weather

The Host Club/State Association is responsible for notifying the FWRL Commissioner as soon as possible if the scheduled fields are unavailable due to inclement weather. The FWRL Commissioner will be responsible for notifying all teams regarding game postponement due to inclement weather. All reasonable efforts must be made to complete the match on the scheduled dates.

SECTION VII. RULES OF PLAY

7.01 Laws of the Game

Except as expressly modified in these rules, US Youth Soccer Rules of Play apply to all FWRL games.

7.02 Substitutions

Unlimited substitutions will be permitted at any stoppage of play with the consent of the match referee.

7.03 Match Length and Ball Size

	Length of Half	Ball Size
U-17 and U-18	45 min.	5
U-15 and U-16	40 min.	5
U-14	35 min.	5

7.04 Field Size

The FWRL recommended field size is 110 yards by 70 yards.

7.05 Official Match

A match shall be considered official after one full half of play is completed (the second half does

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not have to start). If less than one half is completed and the match is abandoned, the entire match must be replayed, subject to review by the FWRL Committee. If a match is abandoned in the second half of play due to inclement weather, the final score will be the score at the time the match is abandoned. If a match is abandoned due to gross misconduct, the FWRL Commissioner will decide the disposition of the match score following review of all information available including but not limited to Referee Game Reports, reports for FWRL staff, etc.

7.06 Forfeits-Lack of Appearance

A one-hour delay in the start of a game due to a team's lack of appearance is permitted for scheduled matches before the game is abandoned. Failure to appear for a scheduled match will result in a forfeit.

7.07 Anchored Goals

The coaches and match referee should inspect the integrity of the goals to ensure they are secure and suitable for play. Matches shall not begin until both goals have been firmly secured.

7.08 Player Passes and Rosters

Each team must bring a laminated US Youth Soccer pass for each player and team official signed by an official of their home State Association, a FWRL game card, and a copy of their official FWRL roster to every match. No player without a current, valid player pass shall be permitted to participate in any game. Game cards, rosters, and player and team official passes must be given to the referee before the start of the game.

7.09 Playing of Ineligible Player

A team that plays an ineligible shall forfeit any game in which an ineligible player played and be subject to disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension expulsion of the team and team officials from the FWRL.

7.10 Member Passes Presented to Referee

US Youth Soccer Member Passes shall be presented to the referee upon entering the field of play. Passes will be returned to the players at the end of the half. Players will present passes upon entering the match during the second half.

7.11 Team Rosters

Upon request, copies of official FWRL game rosters must be provided to the opposing team coach/manager prior to the start of each game.

7.12 Uniform Color Conflict

When there is a conflict in uniform color, the team listed first on the schedule must change their uniform color, subject to the Match Referee's decision.

7.13 Coaching from Sidelines

Limited coaching from inside the team's respective Technical Area is permitted. Coaches may not leave their team's Technical Area or enter the field of play without permission from the Referee.

SECTION VIII. MATCH CONTROL

8.01 Diagonal System of Control for Officiating

Games are to be officiated by the three-person diagonal system of control pursuant to the United States Soccer Federation Referee Administrative Handbook, Policy: Systems of Officiating Outdoor Soccer Games.

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8.02 Game Officials

Game officials will be assigned under the authority of the FWRL working with the hosting US Youth Soccer State Association SRA or SYRA.

8.03 Payment of Referees

Referees and Assistant Referees appointed under the provisions of these FWRL Rules shall be paid in accordance with acceptable state and federal guidelines as independent contractors. All referees will be required to complete the US Youth Soccer Independent Contractor form to be compensated.. Each team is responsible for payment of one half of the FWRL required fees of the match officials.

- (a) Referee fees for U-14 games shall total \$100.00 (\$50 per team).
- (b) Referee fees for U-15 and U-16 games shall total \$110.00 (\$55 per team).
- (c) Referee fees for U-17 and U-18 games shall total \$130.00 (\$65 per team).

Fees will be distributed as follows:

- a) U14
 - 1. Center Referee \$44.00
 - 2. Referee Assistant 1 \$28.00
 - 3. Referee Assistant 2 \$28.00

- b) U15 – U16
 - 1. Center Referee \$48.00
 - 2. Referee Assistant 1 \$31.00
 - 3. Referee Assistant 2 \$31.00

- c) U17 – U18
 - 1. Center Referee \$58.00
 - 2. Referee Assistant 1 \$36.00
 - 3. Referee Assistant 2 \$36.00

If the league requests a 4th official they will be paid \$25.00 by the league.

If fields are closed and/or games are cancelled and the referees are not notified prior to their arrival at the site, the officials will be paid for their first scheduled match only. The site coordinator is responsible for collecting the referee fees prior to the match, and distributing them to the officials. In the event that there is only one Assistant Referee, only one Assistant Referee payment is made. The other Assistant Referee fee may be paid to a club assistant referee, if they are a registered USSF official.

8.04 Termination of Games

Each coach is responsible for the behavior of his or her players and sidelines, including control of parents, fans, and spectators. In the event a game is terminated or abandoned by the referee, the referee will provide the FWRL Commissione4r with a written report within 48 hours. The FWRL Committee may based on the referee report and such additional information it considers appropriate immediately suspend the team, team officials, or players pending the holding of a hearing pursuant to section 10.3. All such suspensions shall remain in effect unless and until modified or reversed following a hearing or an appeal.

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SECTION IX. SEND OFFS AND DISCIPLINE

9.01 Cautions and Send Offs

Any player or team official sent off (red card) from a game for conduct other than fighting shall be suspended for at least the team's next FWRL game. Any player sent off for fighting whether on or off the field and regardless of with whom shall be suspended for at least the team's next three (3) FWRL games. The FWRL Committee may based on the referee report and such additional information it considers appropriate impose greater discipline subject to the holding of a hearing pursuant to section 10.3. All such discipline shall remain in effect unless and until modified or reversed following a hearing or an appeal. Players accumulating three (3) yellow cards in a season will be suspended for their next FWRL match. Players accumulating five (5) yellow cards in a season will be suspended for their next FWRL match. Players accumulating seven (7) yellow cards in a season will be suspended for their next FWRL match.

9.02 Disciplinary Actions

All disciplinary measures imposed by the FWRL shall be limited to an individual or team's participation in the FWRL. The FWRL will record the issuance of all red and yellow cards and other matters involving the conduct of a team, its players, coaches or supporters and immediately distribute this information to the respective State Associations and the respective team. The home State Association has the right to impose additional sanctions with regard to any matters arising from participation in the FWRL.

9.03 Violation of Rules

Any violation of the rules herein will be subject to disciplinary action by the FWRL.

9.04 Disciplinary/Fine Schedule

Prior to the start of the Fall and Spring Seasons, the FWRL Committee shall distribute a Disciplinary/Fine Schedule.

SECTION X. PROTESTS AND APPEALS

10.1 Protest

A **protest** is a formal written objection of any violation of established rules, policies, or procedures. Protests are usually related to a specific game or administrative action and are filed by one of the involved team officials. Only those teams involved are permitted to protest a game result. Third parties, i.e., coaches from other teams, state administrators, cannot file protests on a specific game. Protests must be based upon a violation of the published rules of the organization, competition, or FIFA Laws of the Game. Referee judgment calls cannot be protested. Protests may be heard by any three FWRL Trustees except that no Trustee involved in a hearing may be a member of a state association that is party to the protest. Protests may also be referred to the Discipline and Appeals Committee under Section 10.4 of the FWRL Rules at the discretion of the FWRL Commissioner or the Chairman of the FWRL Trustees.

10.2 Appeals

An **appeal** is a review of a decision following a hearing. The appeals committee shall have the authority to affirm, reverse, or remand a matter on appeal. It shall affirm the decision appealed if the decision does not violate applicable laws, constitutions, bylaws, and rules and regulations and is supported by substantial evidence. Substantial evidence means evidence of credible value that a reasonable person could accept. Only parties to the decision being

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appealed who have been adversely affected by the decision may appeal. All appeals are handled under Section 10.4 of the FWRL Rules.

10.3 Grievances

A **grievance** is an allegation of misconduct against a league official or against the FWRL Trustees which has adversely affected the party filing the grievance. Grievances may be filed by any party with a demonstrated harm caused by the alleged misconduct. The Region IV Director will determine the validity of any grievance. (Allegations of misconduct against a referee or misconduct of a referee will be handled by the state association hosting the competition under USSF Rules 531-9 and 531-10.) All grievance hearings are handled by the Discipline and Appeals Committee under Section 10.4 of the FWRL Rules.

10.4 Discipline and Appeals Committee

The Region IV Bylaws and Policies Committee representative shall be the chair of the FWRL Discipline and Appeals Committee. The chair of the committee will appoint no fewer than three (3) and no more than five (5) members of the Region IV Council or Region IV staff to hold a hearing or decide an appeal. The members appointed will not be from the state association of, have any other association with any of the parties involved, or otherwise have a conflict of interest. The committee's decisions shall be in writing, issued within a reasonable time following completion of the review of a protest, the holding of a grievance hearing, or the holding of an appeal and shall be sent to the FWRL Commissioner and all affected parties.

10.5 Filing Procedures

A protest, request for a grievance hearing, or appeal must be in writing and filed within seventy-two (72) hours of receipt of the decision or adverse action being protested, for which a hearing is sought, or being appealed. The written filing must include:

- (a) A statement of the specific facts involved;
- (b) Citation of all rules, policies, or procedures alleged to have been violated;
- (c) The relief requested;
- (d) Copies of all relevant documents; and
- (e) A filing fee in the amount of \$250.00 in the form of certified check or money order made payable to US Youth Soccer Region IV.

Any protest, request for a hearing, or appeal may be e-mailed to the FWRL Commissioner to meet the 72 hour deadline, but must also be filed by mailing it registered or certified mail to the Region IV office along with the \$250 fee, and postmarked within the 72 hour deadline.

10.6 Protests of Games Played

Notice of intent to protest arising from events relating to a game must be given to the site coordinator within one hour of the completion of the game.

10.7 Appeal of FWRL Assessed Fines

An appeal of FWRL assessed fines, must be postmarked no later than three (3) business days from notification of an assessed penalty in accordance with the Filing Procedures listed in Section 10.4. The FWRL Discipline and Appeals Committee will hear such fines as established by the Region IV Director.

10.8 Notification of Parties

The FWRL Commissioner shall notify all parties involved, no later than three (3) business days from receipt of an appeal or protest, that an appeal or protest has been filed.

10.9 Disputes and Discipline

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The FWRL Committee are authorized to settle disputes and handle hearings other than grievance hearings which arise in the course of FWRL Competition. The FWRL Committee, in accordance with the disciplinary policies and procedures of Region IV, US Youth Soccer, and US Soccer, will investigate all allegations of misconduct by teams, coaches, players or others involved in FWRL operations and will impose an appropriate sanction for any violation found.