MAPL LEAGUE HANDBOOK

2026-2027 Season

Table of Contents

SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION 3

SECTION 2 – CLUB MEMBERSHIP 3

SECTION 3 – TEAM ELIGIBILITY 3

SECTION 4 – COMPETITION RULES 4

SECTION 5 – SCHEDULING 5

SECTION 6 – MATCH DAY REQUIREMENTS 5

SECTION 7 – DISCIPLINE 5

SECTION 8 – PROTEST, DISCIPLINE & ETHICS 6

SECTION 9 – FINES & FEES 7

SECTION 10 – LEAGUE AUTHORITY 7

SECTION 1 — INTRODUCTION

1.1 About MAPL

The Mid-Atlantic Premier League (MAPL) is a US Club Soccer sanctioned league committed to providing meaningful, competitive competition that promotes player development, sportsmanship, and a positive game-day experience for players, coaches, clubs, referees, and families. Participation in MAPL is considered acceptance of the rules, policies, and procedures contained within this Handbook.

1.2 Mission

To provide a professionally managed competitive league that places the development of players, coaches, and clubs at the center of every decision.

1.3 Vision

To be the premier team-based competition in the Mid-Atlantic region by delivering consistent league administration, quality competition, and clear pathways for clubs and players.

1.4 League Authority

MAPL reserves the right to interpret and enforce the policies contained within this Handbook. Decisions made by MAPL regarding league administration, competition, and discipline are final unless otherwise stated.

SECTION 2 — CLUB MEMBERSHIP

2.1 Club Eligibility

All participating clubs must:

- Be a current US Club Soccer member in good standing.
- Maintain a designated Club Administrator and Director of Coaching.
- Provide quality playing facilities.
- Assign licensed referees for home matches.
- Maintain appropriate insurance and risk management requirements.
- Follow all MAPL policies and deadlines.

2.2 Club Responsibilities

Member clubs are responsible for the conduct of their players, coaches, team officials, parents, and spectators.

SECTION 3 — TEAM ELIGIBILITY

Teams participating in MAPL must:

Meet all league registration requirements.

- Maintain a minimum of 15 registered players for U13-U19.
- Register all players and staff through US Club Soccer.
- Comply with all roster deadlines established by MAPL.

SECTION 4 — COMPETITION RULES

4.1 Laws of the Game

All matches shall be played in accordance with the FIFA Laws of the Game except where modified by MAPL.

4.2 Match Length

Age	Match Length
U13-U14	35-minute halves
U15-U16	40-minute halves
U17-U19	45-minute halves

4.3 Game Day Roster

A maximum of eighteen (18) players may be listed on the game-day roster.

4.4 Club Pass Players

MAPL permits Club Pass players in accordance with US Club Soccer registration rules and any additional MAPL roster policies.

4.5 Standings

- Win = 3 points
- Tie = 1 point
- Loss = 0 points

Ties in the standings will be broken using:

1. Head-to-head results
2. Most wins
3. Goal difference
4. Fewest goals allowed
5. Goals scored
6. Coin toss

4.6 Substitutions

- U13-14. Unlimited over three (3) moments in each half plus halftime.
- U15-18/19. Unlimited over four (4) moments per match plus halftime.
    - Coaches may not agree to changes to the substitution policy.

Head Injury Substitution

If a player is suspected of having sustained a concussion or other head injury during a match, the player must be removed from play and may not return to that match.

- Allowance: Each team can make a maximum of two head injury substitutions per match.
- Opposition Allowance: The opposing team is allowed to make an equivalent extra substitution when a concussion sub is used.
- Exemption: These replacements do not count against a team's standard three regular substitution windows/limits.

SECTION 5 — SCHEDULING

Teams are expected to play on published league play dates.

Once schedules are released, game changes require approval from MAPL and may be subject to applicable fees.

Home clubs are responsible for:
- Field availability
- Referee assignment
- Score reporting
- Match administration

SECTION 6 — MATCH DAY REQUIREMENTS

Home clubs shall provide:

- Properly lined field
- Secure goals
- Corner flags
- Team benches
- Access to water
- Restroom facilities
- Three USSF licensed referees whenever possible
- The home club is responsible for reporting the final score within 24 hours.

SECTION 7 — DISCIPLINE

MAPL promotes respect for opponents, referees, teammates, and spectators.
Players, coaches, and clubs are expected to always demonstrate good sportsmanship.

Red Cards

A player or coach receiving a red card is automatically suspended for the next MAPL match.
Additional sanctions may be imposed depending on the severity of the offense.

Referee Abuse and Assault

Referee Abuse and Assault shall be administered in accordance with the U.S. Soccer Referee Abuse Prevention Policy.

SECTION 8 — PROTEST, DISCIPLINE & ETHICS

8.1 Purpose

The MAPL Protest, Discipline & Ethics (PDE) process exists to ensure that all league participants are treated fairly, consistently, and in accordance with the values and standards of the league. The PDE Committee is responsible for reviewing matters involving competition rules, misconduct, ethics, and other issues affecting the integrity of the league.

8.2 Authority

The MAPL PDE Committee has the authority to investigate alleged violations of this Handbook, the MAPL Code of Conduct, US Club Soccer policies, and applicable competition rules. The Committee may issue warnings, suspensions, fines, probation, forfeitures, or other sanctions it determines appropriate.
The decisions of the PDE Committee are subject to appeal only as outlined in this section.

8.3 Types of Cases

The PDE Committee may review matters including, but not limited to:
- Alleged violations of MAPL competition rules.
- Ethics complaints involving clubs, coaches, players, or administrators.
- Recruiting or tampering violations.
- Player eligibility and roster violations.
- Red card reviews requiring additional discipline.
- Referee abuse or misconduct.
- Spectator misconduct.
- Failure to comply with league policies or deadlines.
- Any conduct deemed detrimental to MAPL or the game.

8.4 Filing a Protest

A protest is a formal objection concerning the application of a league rule during a specific match.
Protests must:

- Be submitted in writing by the Club Director or Executive Director.
- Be received within 48 hours of the conclusion of the match.
- Clearly identify the rule allegedly violated.
- Include all supporting documentation.
- Referee judgment decisions, including fouls, misconduct, offside decisions, and goals, are not subject to protest.

8.5 Filing an Ethics Complaint

Ethics complaints may be submitted by a Club Director, Executive Director, or other authorized club representative.
The complaint must include:

- A detailed description of the alleged violation.
- Names of the individuals involved.
- Dates and locations of the incident(s).
- Any supporting documentation, witness statements, photographs, video, or other evidence.
- Anonymous complaints will generally not be considered unless accompanied by substantial independent evidence.

8.6 Review Process

Upon receipt of a protest or complaint, MAPL will:

1. Acknowledge receipt of the submission.
2. Conduct an initial review to determine whether sufficient information has been provided.
3. Notify the responding club or individual and provide an opportunity to submit a written response.
4. Review all available evidence.
5. Issue a written decision.

The PDE Committee may request additional information or conduct interviews if necessary before reaching a decision.

8.7 Possible Sanctions

Depending on the severity and frequency of the violation, the PDE Committee may impose one or more of the following:

- Written warning
- Educational requirement
- Fine
- Match forfeiture
- Suspension of player or coach
- Suspension of club official
- Probation
- Loss of league privileges
- Removal from MAPL competition
- Nothing in this section limits MAPL from referring matters to US Club Soccer or other governing bodies when required.

8.8 Appeals

A club may appeal a PDE decision by submitting a written appeal to the MAPL League Office within seven (7) calendar days of the decision.
Appeals must identify:

- The specific decision being appealed.
- The basis for the appeal.
- Any new evidence not previously available.

The MAPL Appeals Committee will review the appeal and issue a final decision. The decision of the Appeals Committee shall be final.

8.9 Confidentiality

All protests, complaints, investigations, and disciplinary proceedings shall remain confidential to the extent reasonably possible. Clubs and participants are expected to refrain from discussing pending disciplinary matters publicly or on social media while an investigation is ongoing.

SECTION 9 — FINES & FEES

Violation	Maximum Fine
Failure to accept team placement by deadline	$200
Team withdrawal after schedules released	$350 + application fee
Team withdrawal after first match	$500 + application fee
Failure to schedule match	$50
Failure to reschedule within required timeframe	$50
Reschedule (14+ days)	$50
Reschedule (14 days–96 hours)	$100
Reschedule (96–48 hours)	$250
Reschedule (within 48 hours)	$500 + referee fees
Team forfeit (48+ hours)	$300
Team forfeit (less than 48 hours)	$400 + referee fees
Team no-show	$500 + referee fees
Playing an unregistered player	$500
Playing an ineligible player	$1,000
Unregistered coach	$1,500
Failure to report score within 24 hours	$25
Failure to provide required referees	$100 per referee
Failure to provide required match-day hosting standards	Up to $50 per occurrence

SECTION 10 — LEAGUE AUTHORITY

MAPL reserves the right to interpret these rules and make decisions that preserve the integrity of the competition.
Situations not specifically addressed within this Handbook shall be decided by the MAPL League Office, whose decision shall be final.