

# BIG LAKE SOCCER ASSOCIATION

## COMPETITIVE POLICIES

- I. Player move up
  - a) Playing at an older age group is discouraged. BLSA Soccer Club strongly believes that the vast majority of players are better served by playing with their age group. Players will only “play up” if:
    - i) Not enough player to fill a roster
    - ii) A player can only move up one age bracket
    - iii) Must have parents consent
    - iv) Player must be assessed and receive scores that fall in the top 70% of the team that they are assessing for.
    - v) In accordance with MYSA’s birthyear guidelines, the age level that the registered player is at, the team must have at least the minimum number of players required for a team or a player will not be allowed to move up an age bracket
    - vi) Player moving up cannot have a truly negative effect on the team they have moved from.
    - vii) In all cases, the player must attend their own age-appropriate assessments as well. Please be aware that in some cases this will mean that the player must attend two consecutive age-group assessments on the same day.
  
- II. Teams/Roster
  - a) Team Formation
    - i) The Coaching Director will meet with the Competitive Director and will be shown the rank and order of the assessment participants.
    - ii) Team formation procedures are designed to be used in the vast majority of age groups where we have a large number of participants in the assessment pool. However, in the unusual circumstances of a low assessment turnout for a particular age group, BLSA will adjust the process as follows.
      - (1) To illustrate the need for this, remember that the purpose of assessments is to place each player at the most appropriate playing level for their ability. In most age groups we have a large number of layers in the assessment pool and our team formation procedures are designed to accommodate such circumstances. However, on occasion we may have a particularly small assessment pool for an age group.

(2) For an extreme example, consider a U14 assessment pool with 20 players, 10 of who are tremendously skilled and 10 of who are completely new to soccer. The assessment evaluations would identify such a situation and there would be a natural break in the scores. If a single team were formed several players would have to be placed at an inappropriate level for their abilities. In such a case the Competitive Director will consider the assessment results and may determine that the best course of action would be to create two partially-full teams at different playing levels allowing each to fill out rosters with late registrants. This process may be used at the sole discretion of the Competitive Director (not each individual coach) after considering the distribution of assessment scores and only in circumstances with low tryout participation. This is defined as 10 or fewer players for U9-U12 and 15 fewer players for U13 and older, U9/U10 = 6 players, U11/U12 = 8 players and U13+ = 11 players.

b) Roster Size

- i) The Competitive Director will determine the desired roster size for the team.
- ii) For each age group MYSA defines a maximum roster size (12 players - U9/U10; 14 players U11/U12; 18 players U13 and older) This number represents the maximum allowable roster size. However, in many cases BLSA teams may not be filled to its maximum. The Competitive Director determines the roster size of each team. BLSA Soccer Club may choose the roster size which may be fewer than the MYSA maximum, based up on player commitment levels, desired playing time and injuries, and so forth.

III. Assessments

- a) The objective of assessments is to place each player at the most appropriate playing level for their ability, giving them the greatest opportunity for success, improvement, and enjoyment. This is a difficult task for several reasons:
  - i) No evaluation system is perfect
  - ii) We have a limited time
  - iii) We are bound by roster sizes and sometimes have more or fewer players than spots at a given playing level

- b) Big Lake Soccer Association holds open assessments, which means that each team is re-formed each year. Roster spots are not held or guaranteed for team members from the previous year. This includes children of previous year's coaches and other Big Lake Soccer Association representatives.
- c) Each coach will provide an end of season assessment of each of his players, which will become property of BLSA.

#### IV. Player release and Fee Refund Policy

- a) If Big Lake Soccer Association is unable to provide a team for the player, the parents will receive a full 100 percent refund. If a player registers, tries out, and is placed on a roster – later desires to leave Big Lake Soccer Association two issues must be addressed:
  - i) Player release from Big Lake Soccer Association
  - ii) Refund
- b) In accordance with Minnesota Youth Soccer Association (MYSA) rules, a player is bound to a club when they (or their parent/guardian if the player is a minor) sign a registration form and submit the full BLSA club fee.
- c) When a player submits registrations to multiple clubs (i.e. tries out with different teams), they are officially bound to the first club for which a registration form was signed and full club fees were submitted.
- d) In order to be released from Big Lake Soccer Association (allowing the player to join another club), the appropriate MYSA forms must be completed and signed by the BLSA President, BLSA Coach, and the President and Coach of the receiving club and approved by the appropriate District Director. **This is an MYSA rule.**
- e) If Big Lake Soccer Association places the player on a team for which he/she does not want to play (e.g. wanted to make a C1 but was placed on a C2) and the player wishes to leave the Big Lake Soccer Association, the parents should notify the Big Lake Soccer Association Competitive Director in writing. Postmarks will be used to determine the date of the request. Email notification is also acceptable (all email addresses may be found at [www.biglakesoccer.org](http://www.biglakesoccer.org)). Phone calls are not acceptable as official notifications. Player release requests will be processed as follows: The player will be released if any of the following conditions are met:

- i) Less than two weeks have passed between the dates that assessment results were given to me and the date of the request or,
- ii) The player is asking for release in order to play at a higher competitive level at another club (e.g. C1 at another club versus C2 for BLSA) *Note that a higher age group alone (e.g. U14 versus U13 does NOT constitute a higher competitive level.)* Or,
- iii) The player's family is physically moving residences to a location that makes playing for BLSA impossible due to distance. Or,
- iv) The player's release would still leave a viable BLSA team. A "viable" team is one which has at least:
  - (1) 16 players for U13 and older
  - (2) 12 players for U11 and 12
  - (3) 10 players for U10 and younger
- v) If the player's release would leave fewer than the above number of players on the BLSA roster, then this condition is not met. Multiple requests from the same team will be processed in order of the date of request. If multiple requests from the same team are received on the same date, then they all must satisfy this requirement as a group. If none of the above conditions are met, then the player will not be released. If a player is released they may be entitled to a partial refund of their registration fee. No refund will be given if the release request is denied. Refunds will be calculated as follows:
- vi) Release Request Date Refund (if release granted)
  - (1) Less than 2 weeks after team formation results are posted
    - (a) Registration fee less \$50
  - (2) More than 2 weeks after results
    - (a) Registration fee less \$100
  - (3) After MYSA submittal
    - (a) No refund

V. Commitment

- a) **BLSA soccer is a traveling sport. As with all traveling sports, BLSA competitive soccer requires a high degree of commitment, both finances and time.**

- b) Although we do our best to control costs (as a volunteer, non-profit organization) traveling soccer is expensive. Fundraising opportunities are available to help lessen the financial strain (please see website for more details).
- c) Travel requirements may vary considerably by team. BLSA teams generally play in the MYSA North District, which currently means that we occasionally play midweek games as far away as Duluth, Grand Rapids, or Saint Anthony.
- d) Teams select the number and location of tournaments they wish to enter.

Generally this includes three to five weekend tournaments during April through July depending on team's commitment. Majority of the team must agree to enter tournament; once agreed, all who committed to play in the tournament, must pay fees and participate.

- e) Teams often choose to enter at least one out-of-town tournament during the season that would require overnight accommodations.
- f) All BLSA players, regardless of age level or playing level also make a significant commitment of time. Club sponsored training will usually begins indoors in late February or early March and teams begin practicing outdoors as early as possible (usually around April 1).
- g) The summer season extends through July, with MYSA State Tournaments usually held near August 1. The fall season runs through Sept.-Oct.
- h) Registration Fee includes District Tournament Fee but not the referee (officials) cost of the District Tournament.
- i) It is reasonable that players may have an occasional conflict during the season due to school homework, illnesses, family events and vacations, religious events, holidays, etc. However, during this period (April-July) it is expected that BLSA soccer will be the player's primary extracurricular activity and that each player will attend the vast majority of practices and games.
- j) From April through July, it will be very difficult for a player to be involved in a second traveling sport, music lessons, on dates that cannot be changed, or other extracurricular activities with a repeating, fixed schedule. Players who are unwilling or unable to make these commitments should consider non-traveling soccer options. For example, consider a BLSA player who is also a**

traveling hockey player. During the winter, the player plays indoor soccer in addition to hockey. Since winter is the primary hockey season, when schedule conflicts arise, the player should attend hockey events. During the spring and summer, the primary soccer season, if there are scheduling conflicts the player should attend soccer events. Premier and Classic 1 teams may require even further commitment. For example, travel may include much longer distances and training periods may be extended throughout the year.

k) Missing assessments

- i) If a player misses assessments due to a major injury (e.g. broken bone) or a major illness (e.g. cancer):
  - (1) The player may be placed on a team at the discretion of the Competitive Director.
  - (2) The player must attend assessments (unless they are physically incapable and approved in advance.)
  - (3) The player must have registered and paid in advance and must have contact the Coaching Director about their injury or illness.
  - (4) The player may be placed on the lowest level team room permitting. Other reasons (forgot, vacations, conflicts)
  - (5) Player arrives late or leaves early or can only attend one portion of assessment
    - (a) If a player misses the entire set of skill activities they will be assigned an overall skill score equal to the lowest score of all assessment participants minus 1 for the purposes of player ranking.
    - (b) If a player begins the skill activities but becomes injured or otherwise unable to finish for the activities they did not complete they will be assigned a score equal to the lowest score of all assessment participants for that specific activity minus 1.
  - (6) Missed small –sided games (all age groups)
    - (a) If a player misses the entire set of small–sided games they will be deemed to have missed assessments entirely even if they attended skill activities

- (b) If a player arrives late or leaves early; they must have attended at least 2/3 of the games to have been deemed present.

(7) Check -In

- (a) If not pre-registered players must have a completed registration form with payment. If new to the BLSA Soccer Club player should bring a copy of their birth certificate and uniform order form.
- (b) Players should wear appropriate footwear, bring a ball, and plenty of water.

(8) Scoring of Evaluations:

- (a) Evaluations are based upon a combination of skill activities (30%) and small-sided games (70%).

(9) Skill Activities

- (a) These activities are published in advance. Players are encouraged to practice the activities.
- (b) It is impractical to test for every possible soccer skill so the sets of activities are selected as a representative sample.
- (c) Each activity has equal weighting and the order that players execute the activities is irrelevant.
- (d) Activity layouts are measured and set up in advance.
- (e) All activities consist of an objective measurement (e.g. a timing, count, etc.) rather than a subjective evaluation
- (f) Skill activities are conducted using BLSA Soccer Association volunteers for timing recording ball retrieval, and logistics.
- (g) If weather forces a cancellation, BLSA Soccer Association will attempt to hold a make-up date. If this proves impossible then only small-sided games will be used for player evaluation.
- (h) Scoring
- (i) For each activity a relative ranking of player scores will be calculated. The player's average rank over all activities generates an overall skill activity score, which constitutes 30 percent of their overall ranking.

(10) Small-sided games

- (a) Small-sided games are used for assessments at all age levels. These games provide players the opportunity to show technical ability tactical understanding athleticism and attitude.
  - (i) Players will play short games (less than 10 minutes)
  - (ii) Evaluation is subjective. All evaluator of small-sided games are independent.
  - (iii) BLSA coaches from the age group and gender (even if paid and independent) are not eligible.
  - (iv) BLSA volunteers will participate to handle such logistics as check-in, field marking, and so forth. BLSA coaches and parents may attend and may take notes privately but may not provide instruction or feedback during tryouts.
  - (v) Players will normally play a minimum of three games. In exceptionally hot weather or with very small tryout groups, BLSA may shorten games, provide longer water breaks or reduce the number of games.
  - (vi) All players will play in each game (no substitutions).
  - (vii) It is our intention that players play with and against many different tryout participants and are seen by many different tryout evaluators.
  - (viii) Players are not assigned positions for these games; they must move and act as the game dictates.
- (b) Evaluators
  - (i) Technical skills: individual ball skills, passing, receiving, shooting defending and tackling
  - (ii) Tactical ability: movement with and without the ball, vision, decision making, speed of play, transition play, and communication
  - (iii) Athleticism: speed, quickness, agility, and desire
- (c) Scoring: All games are weighted equally. Every player earns a score for the games played. This score represents the summary of evaluator's assessment of the elements above (technical, tactical, etc.) for the games. This means that the evaluators will use their expertise to score each player. Players are not ranked within a grid, so multiple players may receive the same score for a particular game.



Players are evaluated using a 1–10 scale (10 is best).

Evaluators are instructed to use the following guidelines:

- (i) 1–2 = below average
  - (ii) 3–4 = average
  - (iii) 5–6 = above average
  - (iv) 7–8 = good
  - (v) 9–10 = very good
- (d) Defender Scoring: Good defenders score well in small-sided games because good defenders have good skills and tactical ability. Players who “hang way back” and do not engage in play do not score well but this is not the behavior of good defenders. Players who simply “boot” the ball will also score poorly; again, this is not what good defenders do. Defenders need the same ball skills as forwards and midfielders. Defensive skills are needed by all positions and are part of what is being looked for by evaluators.
- (e) Score data: After assessments are completed the score sheets are collected by the Coaching Director. They are kept confidential until the team formation process begins. The Coaching Director produces a rank order of players for each age group. Exact ties are given the same rank.
- (f) Goalkeepers Evaluation: For U9– U11 players there are no separate goalkeeper evaluations, as we do not advocate that players exclusively focus on goalkeeper for those ages. For U12 and older, goalkeeper-specific assessments are available. Goalkeeper assessments are held simultaneously with field player assessments.
- (g) Coach’s input: A fundamental philosophy of BLSA is open assessments. Every year at each age group new players move into the area and new players come from other clubs. Since we wouldn’t have previous year’s evaluations for those no-BLSA players we have not used previous coaches evaluations as part of the assessment rankings. However the coach’s knowledge is not ignored.

## VI. Coaching

- a) After assessments, the selection of coaches is made at the discretion of the Coaching Director with final approval required by the Board of Directors. The Coaching Director will consider several factors when selecting coaches:
  - i) The desire of last year's coach.
  - ii) Input obtained from parents throughout the year and the end of season survey of parents.
  - iii) The result of assessments, if the coach is a parent of the age group. Each position will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Coaching a particular team or level one-year does not guarantee that a coach will be asked to coach the team in following years. It also does not guarantee that the coach's child will automatically make the team. However, in some cases, a player may be elevated to a higher team in order to have a highly-regarded coach continue working with an existing team. Again, the Competitive Director considers the circumstances of each age group.
- b) Any person interested in taking MYSA coaches licensing courses and requesting reimbursement must submit an application to the board prior to the coaching clinic. The board must approve applications for the reimbursement of the licensing course.
- c) For any traveling team, a coach, co-coach or assistant coach may not be rostered on more than one team as a coach, co-coach, or assistant coach, unless approved by the board of directors.
- d) In order to provide the safest and most secure environment for all players, BLSA requires all individuals volunteering as coaches, assistant coaches and team managers to undergo an annual background investigation. This also applies to the BLSA board members.
- e) BLSA will provide a written coach's agreement that will be updated annually and must be signed by all coaches, assistant coaches and team managers.
- f) All coaches must take **MYSA's Coach's PACT Training** before the start of the season, which BLSA will host annually before the start of the spring season.

- g) BLSA requires that all team functions there will be a second adult present preferably the same gender as the players.
- h) Any violence, manipulations, deceptions, or unbecoming conduct will not be allowed and teams, coaches, players and spectators will be disciplined because of it. This will be communicated to all BLSA coaches, players, and parents for each soccer season.
- i) All parents are strongly encouraged to attend **MYSA's Parent PACT Training** before the start of the season, which BLSA will host annually before the start of the spring season.
- j) All other BLSA endorsed outside paid coaches will not be subsidized by the BLSA club. Payment for outside paid coaches will be the responsibility for that team. All payments made to outside coaches must receive a 1099 form from the BLSA club.
- k) Coach selection process
  - i) The selection of coaches for BLSA teams is the responsibility of the Competitive Director
  - ii) Coaches will be considered on the following criteria:
    - (1) Past performance with BLSA
      - (a) Number of years coaching experience at the age level for which applying for
    - (2) Win/loss record
    - (3) Past team performance at tournament, conference and/or state level
    - (4) Rates of player retention from prior season
    - (5) Level of coaching license
    - (6) Coach evaluation forms from prior season
    - (7) Support of the parents of the team he/she is applying for
    - (8) Compliance of MYSA risk management policies
    - (9) Applicable MYSA requirements
    - (10) If no coach is identified for a particular team after assessments, the Competitive Director will act on the team's behalf with regard to roster decisions possibly with input from the previous coach.
- l) Definition of good standing – any member who fees (dues) are paid in full (no debt to club) or violated any MYSA or BLSA club policies or bylaws is a member of good standing.

- i) Returning gear
  - i) Every coach will turn in all equipment at the end of each season. If equipment is missing unreasonably damaged or not returned a fee for equipment will be assessed. If fee not paid can be added to the player's fee for the next season or billed.

#### VII. Player

- a) Eligibility– eligible players are those who have paid their fees in full. Players who are not paid in full by the submittal of team rosters to MYSA will not be allowed to practice or participate in games.
- b) Player dress code
  - i) No jewelry of any type
  - ii) Casts need to be soft wrapped
  - iii) Uniform ( or soccer related apparel) must be worn to all practices
  - iv) Eyeglasses must have a safety strap
  - v) Must wear shin guards
  - vi) Appropriate footwear
  - vii) No barrettes or hard ponies

#### VIII. Club sanctioned activity

- a) Anyone who wants to use the club tax–exempt status must present a written letter to club on the event. Club will review and if approved will send a letter for use to register.
- b) Any teams formed over the BLSA summer/fall are sanctioned and encouraged to participate in tournaments during their season.

#### IX. Referee Policies

- a) Shall follow policies under MYSA and will be posted on the club website.