EPPL Official Rules

Updated November 16, 2026

These Rules govern EPPL leagues and divisions under one league organization. National 1 matches also follow their governing competition rules. This downloadable edition incorporates the central team check-in procedure and corresponds to the rules published at www.eppremierleague.com/rules.

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1 Authority and Application

1.1 The EPPL umbrella. Every league and division operated or administered by EPPL falls under one EPPL organization. This includes EPPL City League, EPPL East, EPPL West, and their Premier, Championship, Challenge and Recreational divisions. Geographic location, division, age group or playing format does not create a separate right to register with or represent another club. Clubs, teams, players, coaches, managers and spectators must comply with these Rules and applicable governing policies.

1.2 National 1. N1 matches follow the National 1 Rules and applicable district operator policies. An EPPL Club Pass designation or age exception does not establish eligibility for N1. Participation in an EPPL-administered N1 competition is also subject to the one-club requirement in section 2.6, alongside mandatory N1 eligibility rules.

1.3 Governing authority. Mandatory US Club Soccer and U.S. Soccer requirements control over conflicting local provisions. Matches follow The IFAB Laws of the Game, subject to authorized youth modifications stated here. The referee controls decisions connected with play; EPPL determines administrative eligibility, recorded competition outcomes and league discipline.

1.4 Official publication. The adopted EPPL rules webpage, together with official season notices issued under section 1.6, contains the controlling local rules. EPPL will publish those notices with the Rules. The season calendar sets deadlines; registration pages set fees; venue maps set field arrangements. These resources may set only the matters delegated to them by these Rules. Tutorials, graphics and the Coach Handbook explain procedures and do not independently change a rule.

1.5 Amendments. EPPL will publish a version and effective date, retain prior versions, and notify team contacts of material changes. Apply the version effective when the match or incident occurred. New local penalties will not apply retroactively. Mandatory governing-policy changes apply according to their effective dates.

1.6 Season specific modifications. EPPL may adopt season-specific modifications to address issues particular to a season, including weather disruptions, field availability, scheduling conditions, bracket participation, safety concerns or other operational circumstances. EPPL will communicate these changes to all participating coaches through official email communications and publish the written notice with the Rules.

Each notice must identify the season, affected leagues or divisions, the rule or procedure being modified, the modification and its effective date. An official season notice supplements these Rules and controls only the matters and period it expressly identifies, subject to sections 1.3 and 1.5. All other provisions remain in effect. Coaches must maintain current contact information, review official EPPL emails and communicate applicable changes to their team staff, players and parents.

1.7 Interpretation and matters not addressed. Any matter not expressly addressed in this version, or any ambiguity or confusion concerning its interpretation or application, will be resolved by reference to the prior EPPL Official Rules. The prior rules remain applicable to those matters unless expressly replaced or modified by this version or an official EPPL season notice.

The EPPL League Director has final authority within EPPL to interpret these Rules, resolve omissions or conflicting provisions, and determine their application to a particular situation. These determinations remain subject to mandatory governing-body requirements and any applicable appeal rights.

2 Registration and Eligibility

2.1 Team admission. Teams must complete EPPL registration and acceptance. Each team must maintain at least one approved, rostered coach. All participating players and adult team staff must hold the required US Club Soccer registration and approval.

2.2 Player eligibility. A player must be properly registered, age eligible, approved by EPPL, and listed on the official event roster and match report. Registration payment or appearance on an unapproved player list alone does not establish eligibility.

2.3 Age groups. The published season age-group chart determines eligibility. Players may play in their age group or an older group, subject to the competition and Club Pass restrictions. A girl may join a boys team but may not individually play below her age group. A girls-only team may enter a boys bracket one age group down in 7v7 or 9v9, or two age groups down in 11v11, with EPPL approval recorded before participation.

2.4 Coach credentials. Coaches and adult team staff must complete all applicable registration, screening, training and approval requirements. A participating coach must be on the team roster and display a valid physical coach ID at the match, except when EPPL grants the emergency authorization described below.

When an attendance emergency prevents the rostered head coach and any applicable assistant coaches or managers from being present, the league director or an EPPL-designated representative may expressly authorize a parent or coach who is not on the team roster to start the match as a temporary team representative. EPPL must approve the authorization before kickoff; consent from another coach, the opponent or the referee alone is insufficient.

Record the temporary representative's name, the approving EPPL official and any conditions or time limit on the match report before kickoff. The documented authorization serves as the person's temporary EPPL match credential and applies only to the specified match. The representative must hand over responsibility when an approved, rostered coach or manager arrives, or when the authorization expires, unless EPPL expressly provides otherwise. This is a limited adult-supervision exception; it does not amend the team roster, authorize an ineligible player, waive mandatory staff requirements or permit bypassing a dismissal or suspension.

2.5 Fees and deadlines. Required registration and Club Pass fees, including published late charges, must be paid. Current amounts and registration instructions are published on the Team Registration, Player Registration and Club Pass pages. Registration, transfer and season roster-freeze dates are published in the season calendar.

2.6 One club per player. A player may register, be rostered and participate with only one club at any given time across the EPPL umbrella defined in section 1.1. This restriction applies across all EPPL leagues and divisions, including EPPL-administered N1 participation under section 1.2. A player may not represent one club in EPPL West and a different club in EPPL East. Entering a different division, age group or playing format does not create an exception.

An approved Club Pass may permit participation for additional teams within the same club under sections 3.4-3.6; it does not permit participation for a second club. A player may change clubs only through an EPPL-approved transfer under section 3.3 and the applicable governing rules. The transfer must be approved before participation for the new club and replaces the prior club affiliation; it does not authorize continued participation for both clubs.

A player participating contrary to this restriction is ineligible for the unauthorized team. Matches involving that participation are subject to forfeiture and disciplinary review under section 8. Proven intentional evasion, false registration or concealment of a second club affiliation is subject to the cheating sanctions in section 8.8.

3 Rosters, Transfers, and Club Pass

3.1 Roster limits. Each team must comply with the following roster maximum and minimum number of players required to start a match.

Format	Maximum roster	Minimum to start
4v4	10	3
7v7	14	5
9v9	18	6
11v11	22	7

3.2 Official roster. The approved EPPL event roster and match report determine player eligibility. Coaches must verify approval before match day and provide the roster or valid player identification for check-in. A player absent from the official roster or match report may not play.

3.3 Roster changes and transfers. Submit weekend roster changes to registrar@eppremierleague.com by Thursday at 6:00 pm, El Paso local time. No additions, changes or updates to a team's roster are permitted on that team's match day, including for weeknight matches. All changes require registrar approval and remain subject to transfer and roster-freeze deadlines. No roster change may be made at the field.

3.4 Club Pass designation. An approved Club Pass permits an eligible player to appear for additional teams within the same club, subject to section 2.6. For this purpose, the club must use a common registration account, name and uniform displaying its club logo, and a single registrar. EPPL determines whether teams satisfy this definition.

3.5 Club Pass restrictions. A player without an approved CP designation may play for only one team. CP players must be approved on each destination roster and satisfy age requirements. Except under section 3.6, the destination must be an older age group than the primary team; a player may not represent two teams in the same age group. CP does not permit participation outside the player's club or below the player's age group.

A CP player or CP team may move one competitive level up or down from its primary team, but may not CP at the same competitive level. The ladder is Recreational, Challenge, Championship, Premier/N1. Thus, Recreational may CP to Challenge; Challenge to Recreational or Championship; Championship to Challenge or Premier/N1; and Premier/N1 to Championship. Premier and N1 occupy the same competitive level for this ladder. Movement down a competitive level does not permit playing below the player's eligible age group. All

age, club and roster-approval requirements still apply. N1 participation also requires compliance with section 1.2.

3.6 Same-age exceptions. A girl or girls-only team may CP from an all-girls bracket to a boys or co-ed bracket in the same age group. U8 players may participate in 4v4 and 7v7; U10 players may participate in 7v7 and 9v9. These exceptions do not waive the club, approval or competitive-division restrictions.

3.7 Club Pass teams and scheduling. Whole-team CP registrations require EPPL approval and do not automatically waive individual restrictions. EPPL does not guarantee that a coach, CP player or CP team will have conflict-free fixtures, including playoffs and finals.

4 Divisions, Competition, and Standings

4.1 Divisions. EPPL offers the following divisions. Admission to a particular bracket remains subject to age, format and league placement.

Division	Age and format	Scores and standings	Postseason
Premier	U10-U12, 9v9	Kept	Playoff bracket
Championship	U8-U19, 7v7/9v9/11v11	Kept	Playoff bracket
Challenge	U5-U19, applicable format	Kept	Final standings; no playoffs
Recreational	U5-U10, 4v4/7v7	Not published; no champion	No playoffs

4.2 League placement. EPPL assigns brackets according to age, participation and competitive balance, and may require movement between divisions for a subsequent season. Promotion toward N1 does not guarantee N1 admission. Division descriptions and award packages are published on the League Info page.

4.3 Match guarantee. Premier and Championship teams are guaranteed at least eight matches, including playoffs. Challenge and Recreational teams are guaranteed at least eight matches without playoffs. Recorded forfeits count toward the applicable guarantee under section 6.7.

4.4 Premier and Championship formats. EPPL publishes the applicable format for each bracket. Additional regular-season opponents are selected by the scheduling system.

Teams	Regular season	Playoff qualification
4	6 games; each opponent twice	All 4; semifinals, third place and final
5	8 games; each opponent twice	Top 4; semifinals, third place and final
6 or 7	8 games	Top 6; top 2 have byes
8	7 games for the younger/less competitive option; otherwise 8	All 8 for the first option; otherwise top 6 with top 2 byes
9 or more	8 games	Top 6 or 8, as published for that bracket

4.5 Standings and tiebreakers. For divisions keeping standings, a win earns 3 points, a draw 1, and a loss 0. Ties in the table are resolved in this order: greatest goal differential, with no goal cap; most goals scored; fewest goals conceded; most shutouts; then a penalty shootout. Disciplinary point deductions apply before final standings are established.

4.6 Playoff results. Seeds follow final regular-season standings. Brackets remain fixed after seeding; teams are not reseeded between rounds. A tied knockout match proceeds directly to an IFAB penalty shootout without extra time. The restrictions on penalty kicks during ordinary play in 4v4 and 7v7 do not prohibit a postseason shootout.

4.7 Match reports and awards. An official team representative must review and sign the referee's match report after the match. EPPL records and publishes official results from match reports. Recreational scores are not published. Award packages and individual-award selection criteria are published with the season information on the League Info page.

5 Scheduling and Weather

5.1 Official schedule. Teams must monitor the official online schedule and inform their participants of changes. Matches may be scheduled on the published season dates, including Sundays and weeknights where provided in the calendar. A proposed change has no effect until EPPL confirms it.

5.2 Requests. Preseason blackout dates must be submitted through the designated form before the published deadline. After publication of the schedule, each team has two schedule-change requests for the season. Submit requests through the official Schedule Change Request Form on the Coaches page. Requests are subject to remaining allowance, scheduling approval and opponent, field and referee availability.

A submitted team request counts toward the allowance. League-initiated changes, including weather makeups, do not. A request does not guarantee a change.

5.3 Request windows. Count calendar days before the scheduled match date, using the submission timestamp in El Paso local time. A request received by the end of that local calendar day falls in the corresponding window.

Submission window	Treatment
4 or more days before the match	An available request may be considered under the standard process.
2 or 3 days before the match	A change may be attempted. If rescheduled, the requesting team pays the applicable referee fees for the rescheduled match.
Day before or match day	No team-requested change. The original fixture remains scheduled.

For a Saturday match: Tuesday or earlier follows the standard process; Wednesday or Thursday may be attempted with referee fees; Friday or Saturday cannot be approved.

5.4 Freezes and postseason. Team requests close at the published schedule-freeze date even if a normal request window would otherwise remain open. Teams may not request a change to a published playoff or finals date. EPPL may adjust fixtures for weather, safety or venue operations. Unless EPPL confirms a change, the team must attend the original fixture or forfeit.

5.5 Weather and safety. The referee, designated site coordinator or league official may stop, delay or cancel play for unsafe conditions. Teams must obey venue closures and evacuation instructions. Play may resume only after officials authorize it under the Severe Weather and Lightning Policy.

5.6 Interrupted matches. For weather interruptions that cannot resume, a match stopped before halftime may be rescheduled; a match stopped at or after halftime is final at the recorded score. An unstarted match will be rescheduled, subject to the published contingency plan. For 4v4, halftime is the end of the second quarter.

If full replay cannot be completed, EPPL may use the published weather contingencies: a shortened match, a penalty shootout, or a recorded 0-0 draw. EPPL will notify the teams of the selected method and its effect on standings, postseason qualification and the match guarantee. Weather-result rules do not determine the result of a match abandoned for misconduct.

6 Match Day Requirements and Forfeits

6.1 Team check-in. Before kickoff, both teams must meet at center field for player check-in. Each team's coach must present the approved EPPL roster PDF or valid physical or virtual player ID cards, together with a valid physical coach ID. The referee and the opposing team's head coach must check each player against the official match report and the photographs on the presented roster or ID cards. A temporary adult representative authorized under section 2.4 performs the coach's check-in role and must present the documented EPPL authorization in place of a coach ID; the referee or authorized field official must verify that authorization. Any roster or player discrepancy must be referred to the field manager before the player in question is allowed to participate. A player absent from the official roster or match report, or whose eligibility remains unresolved, may not play. Roster or player issues must not delay kickoff; a team that refuses to start because of such an issue is subject to forfeiture.

6.2 Readiness and courtesy period. Teams must be at the correct field, ready to play with an approved coach or a temporary adult representative expressly authorized under section 2.4. A team that is absent or short of the minimum players in section 3.1 receives ten minutes from the scheduled kickoff time. If it remains unable to start, the referee records a forfeit. The courtesy period does not itself grant emergency authorization or permit an ineligible player to participate.

6.3 Home team and field arrangement. The first-listed team is the home team and must change colors when the referee identifies a conflict. Follow the current venue map and field-staff instructions for team and spectator areas. Where no different arrangement is designated, the home team takes the north or west side.

6.4 Uniforms and numbers. Players must wear the team uniform or a matching solid-color jersey. Premier, Championship and Challenge players must have a permanent jersey number matching their approved roster and match report. Numbers must be unique, except that an approved CP player may have a duplicate number. Recreational players are exempt from the number requirement.

A noncompliant player is excluded until the defect is corrected. A kit or number defect alone does not automatically forfeit the match; the minimum-player rule still applies. A coach who knowingly uses an excluded player is subject to competition and disciplinary review. Alternate-kit numbers and accepted goalkeeper identification must be recorded consistently with EPPL approval.

6.5 Equipment. Shin guards are mandatory. Hard casts are prohibited. A soft cast requires league permission and must also be judged safe by the referee. Other equipment must comply with IFAB Law 4; league permission does not override the referee's equipment-safety decision.

6.6 Game ball. Each team must present one FIFA-approved game ball of the correct size at the scheduled kickoff. If a team fails to present its required game ball, the opposing team is awarded a penalty kick at the beginning of the match. There is no courtesy period for a missing game ball; the ten-minute readiness allowance in section 6.2 does not extend this deadline. This local penalty applies in all EPPL formats, including 4v4 and 7v7, separately from ordinary foul penalties. For 4v4, use the penalty-kick location and no-goalkeeper procedure in section 7.4.

6.7 Forfeits. A forfeited match is recorded as a 5-0 loss for the offending team and counts as a scheduled match toward the applicable guarantee. A voluntary forfeit must be recorded by the referee. The result cannot be reversed by an agreement between the coaches.

After the referee declares a forfeit, both coaches may agree to play a friendly or scrimmage without referees. A referee may remain and officiate the friendly only with express EPPL authorization. The friendly does not reverse the forfeit or change the official 5-0 result. Any friendly remains subject to field availability and all safety, participant-eligibility and venue instructions, and may not delay another scheduled match. A forfeit arising from violence or a safety closure does not authorize continued play.

A team that does not appear without notifying the league owes the applicable referee fee plus a $30 no-call/no-show fine and may not play until paid. Repeated unnotified or deliberate failures to appear may result in suspension or refusal of future entry.

7 Playing Rules by Format

7.1 Format specifications. The following EPPL specifications apply; N1 match lengths and rules are separate.

Format	Playing time	Interval	Ball	GK	Offside
4v4	4 quarters of 8 min	1 min between quarters	3	No	No
7v7	2 halves of 25 min	5 min halftime	4	Yes	Build-out line to goal line
9v9	2 halves of 30 min	5 min halftime	4	Yes	IFAB Law 11
11v11	2 halves of 35 min	5 min halftime	5	Yes	IFAB Law 11

7.2 Substitutions. Unlimited return substitutions are permitted with the referee's approval at a throw-in by either team, a goal kick, an injury stoppage, after a goal, at a period break, or for a cautioned player.

7.3 Heading. Deliberate heading is prohibited in U11 and younger competitions, including U10 9v9. Award an indirect free kick at the offense; when inside the goal area, place it on the goal-area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest the offense. U12 and older match heading is allowed subject to US Club Soccer restrictions, including its guidance for younger players playing up.

7.4 4v4 modifications. There is no goalkeeper or offside. Fouls and prohibited slide tackles are penalized by an indirect free kick at the offense. The penalty arc discourages players from remaining stationed in front of goal. As the specific exception to the indirect-kick rule, deliberate handball affecting play inside that arc results in a penalty kick from the nearest point of the center circle, without a goalkeeper.

7.5 7v7 modifications. Ordinary fouls are penalized by indirect free kicks; no penalty kicks are awarded for ordinary fouls during play. This restriction does not remove the missing-ball penalty in section 6.6 or postseason shootouts under section 4.6. An offense in the goal area is restarted from the nearest point on the goal-area line parallel to the goal line. Slide tackling is permitted subject to ordinary foul and safety standards.

At a goal kick or when the goalkeeper controls the ball in the hands, opponents must retreat behind the build-out line. They may advance when the goal kick is kicked and clearly moves, or when the goalkeeper releases the ball into play. Punts and drop-kicks are prohibited. Offside applies only between the build-out line and the goal line.

7.6 9v9 and 11v11. IFAB penalty-kick and offside rules apply, subject to the match lengths, substitutions and heading restrictions above.

7.7 Head injuries. US Club Soccer's Head Injuries policy applies. Teams may not override a participant's exclusion imposed under an applicable head-injury or safety policy.

8 Conduct and Discipline

8.1 Expected behavior. Players, coaches, team staff, parents and spectators must act respectfully and support fair play before, during and after league activities. Abuse, threats, harassment, discriminatory

conduct, violence and deliberate cheating are prohibited. The following expectations and consequences apply regardless of the score or match type, including playoffs and finals.

8.1(a) Coaches. Coaches must model good sportsmanship, prepare and supervise their teams, manage the technical area, and take responsibility for the conduct of their players, bench and associated spectators. Coaches must treat referees, EPPL staff, opponents and spectators respectfully. Disruptive shouting, persistent arguing, insults, intimidation and confrontations are unacceptable. When officials direct a coach to address spectator behavior, the coach must act promptly and instruct those spectators to stop.

8.1(b) Parents and spectators. Parents and spectators must support the players respectfully, remain in designated spectator areas and follow officials' instructions. Insults, abusive language, threats, taunting, confrontations and disruptive behavior toward players, coaches, referees, EPPL staff or other spectators are prohibited. Spectators must comply when directed to stop misconduct or leave. Field entry is governed by section 8.6. Coaches must communicate these expectations and their consequences to their team families.

8.2 Behavior Enforcement and Consequences

For these procedures, the head coach is the coach in charge at the match, including a temporary adult representative authorized under section 2.4. Referees administer warnings, cards and match-control decisions; EPPL staff may direct corrective action, spectator removal or an immediate safety closure and report misconduct for league discipline.

8.2(a) Coach misconduct. The following sequence applies when a coach is disrespectful, disruptive or displays poor sportsmanship:

Step 1 — Warning and caution. The referee gives the coach a verbal warning, directs the behavior to stop and shows a yellow card.

Step 2 — Continued misconduct. If the coach continues or repeats the misconduct, the referee shows a second yellow card and the resulting red card. The coach must leave the field vicinity promptly and remain beyond sight and hearing.

Step 3 — Continuation or forfeit. The match may continue only if the removal and replacement requirements in section 8.2(c) are satisfied. Refusal to leave, lack of an approved replacement coach, or uncontrolled behavior preventing safe play results in a forfeit.

8.2(b) Parent and spectator misconduct. The following sequence applies when a parent or group of associated spectators is disrespectful, disruptive or displays poor sportsmanship:

Step 1 — Warning through the coach. The referee verbally warns the head coach and directs the coach to control the spectators. The coach must promptly instruct them to stop the behavior.

Step 2 — Continued misconduct. If the spectator behavior continues, the referee shows the head coach a yellow card and directs that the behavior stop.

Step 3 — Further misconduct. If the spectator behavior continues after that caution, the referee shows the head coach a second yellow card and the resulting red card. The coach must leave promptly. Officials may also order the offending spectators to leave.

Step 4 — Continuation or forfeit. The match may continue only if the dismissed coach and any removed spectators leave, spectator behavior improves, and an approved replacement coach is present. If any required condition is not met, the responsible team forfeits under section 8.2(c).

8.2(c) Mandatory removal and forfeit. A person ordered to leave must comply promptly and may not return during the match. If a dismissed coach or spectator refuses to leave, or uncontrolled behavior prevents safe continuation, the responsible team forfeits regardless of score or match type. If a dismissed coach or temporary adult representative cannot be replaced by another approved, rostered coach with a valid coach ID, the team forfeits. Emergency authorization under section 2.4 may not be used to bypass a dismissal or suspension. Forfeits are recorded under section 6.7; the No Contest rule in section 8.5 applies where responsibility cannot be assigned to one offending team.

8.2(d) Immediate action and additional discipline. The sequences above do not require officials to give a warning before taking action against threats, violence, serious abuse or another offense requiring immediate removal or a direct red card. Unauthorized pitch entry carries the minimum sanction in section 8.6(e), and violent entry triggers section 8.6(d). Existing cautions are not reset when misconduct moves from one category to another. If a coach already has a caution, the next caution results in a red card and immediate removal. Continuing or completing a match does not prevent later suspensions, bans, point deductions or other league sanctions under this section.

8.3 Send-offs and suspensions. A player or coach dismissed after two cautions may participate in the team's next match unless separately suspended. A direct red card carries suspension for that team's next played match, with additional discipline where warranted. A player sent off after kickoff while playing cannot be replaced.

Suspended persons may not participate for any EPPL team while the suspension remains unserved. Dismissed adults must leave the field vicinity and remain beyond sight and hearing during a match suspension. A dismissed minor must remain under responsible adult supervision in a safe location designated by officials and may not continue participating.

8.4 Violent conduct. A player sent off for fighting, striking or attempting to strike another person receives at least a three-match suspension, subject to any controlling greater sanction. EPPL may impose additional individual, team or club sanctions for a wider altercation.

8.5 Misconduct forfeits and No Contests. When violence requires termination and one offending team can be established, that team forfeits. Spectator fighting or participation in violence connected with a match results in an automatic forfeit by the offending team, whether it occurs before, during or after the match, on or off the field. This consequence applies whether the match has started, continued or finished, regardless of the score or match type, including playoffs and finals. A forfeit is recorded under section 6.7; the No Contest outcome below applies when both teams are responsible or no clear offending team can be established.

If both teams are responsible for the violence, or no clear offending team can be established, the match is declared NO CONTEST. There is no winner. In the regular season, neither team receives points. In the playoffs, neither team advances from that match; in a final, neither team wins or receives the championship from that match. Record the result as NC, not as a draw or a 5-0 forfeit. The result must not be replaced by a replay or a score-based winner. EPPL issues a written ruling recording the result, its effect on the remaining bracket and any additional disciplinary action.

8.6 Pitch Entry and Pitch Invasion Policy

8.6(a) Unauthorized entry. A pitch invasion is any entry onto the field of play by a coach, team official, parent or spectator without the referee's explicit permission, before, during or after a match. Do not enter the field without authorization. Being a player's parent, holding a coach ID or disagreeing with a decision does not by itself authorize entry. Parents and spectators must remain off the field unless expressly directed otherwise.

8.6(b) Authorized assistance. During a violent incident, match officials control the response. A credentialed coach with a valid ID or a temporary adult representative authorized under section 2.4 may enter when the referee authorizes assistance in controlling the situation; EPPL staff may assist in their official safety role. Authorized assistance must focus on calming and separating participants and following officials' directions. It does not authorize confrontation, retaliation or participation in violence.

8.6(c) Emergency mitigation. Spectator entry solely to prevent imminent harm or stop an active physical fight may be considered mitigating only if the person does not incite or escalate the conflict or engage in violence, and immediately disengages once officials regain control. The person must comply with instructions to leave. This narrow consideration does not excuse aggression, retaliation or remaining on the field after the emergency has ended. Officials assess the person's conduct and the circumstances, not merely a claimed intention to help.

8.6(d) Violent entry and automatic forfeit. Any pitch invasion by a coach, team official, parent or spectator that incites, escalates or participates in violence results in an automatic forfeit by the offending team, regardless of score or match type, including playoffs and finals. If both teams are responsible or no clear offending team can be established, apply the No Contest rule in section 8.5. Additional consequences may include individual removal, suspensions or bans, team point deductions under section 8.9, and team or club sanctions. Violence against a match official is also subject to section 8.7.

8.6(e) Minimum sanction and continuation. Any unauthorized field entry by a coach, team official, parent or spectator carries a minimum yellow card to the head coach of the offending team. If that caution is the coach's second, the coach is shown a red card and must leave. A more serious offense may require a direct red card, an automatic forfeit or additional discipline. Officials will direct the person who entered to leave the field and report the incident to EPPL; that person may also be removed from the venue. If no physical violence occurs, the situation does not escalate and control is quickly restored, the referee may allow play to continue only when the conditions in section 8.2 are satisfied. Continuation does not cancel the minimum sanction or prevent further discipline. Refusal to leave or behavior preventing safe continuation results in the consequences stated in section 8.2.

8.6(f) Authority and compliance. The referee controls play and decides whether to stop, suspend or abandon the match. EPPL staff may direct immediate safety action and report the incident; EPPL determines competition forfeits and additional league discipline under these Rules. Officials consider whether entry was authorized and whether conduct was mitigating or aggravating. Immediate safety and removal instructions must be obeyed; disagreement does not authorize entry or continued play. Coaches must explain this policy to their teams and spectators. Unauthorized pitch entry jeopardizes player safety, match integrity and the future participation of the responsible individuals and team. Subsequent review follows section 9.

8.7 Referee and staff protection. Violence against a match official results in immediate removal of the responsible team from the event and no refund, subject to applicable review and governing requirements. Referee abuse is handled under U.S. Soccer Policy 531-9 and reported through the required US Club Soccer process. Abuse or threats toward EPPL staff may result in removal or suspension of the responsible individual and team sanctions where justified.

8.8 Intentional cheating. Knowingly using an unapproved or over-age player, falsifying credentials, or deliberately evading eligibility restrictions is cheating. Confirmed offenses accumulate against the entire club, including offenses by any of its teams. Following a finding through the disciplinary process, the first offense removes the offending team from the current season and records its games as forfeits; the second offense removes the entire club from that season; the third offense excludes the club from future EPPL participation. No refunds are issued for these removals.

The club's offense count resets after twelve consecutive months without another proven cheating offense, measured from the date of the most recent offense established in a final disciplinary decision. A new proven offense within that period restarts the twelve-month period. The reset affects the count used for a future offense; it does not cancel or shorten a sanction already imposed, including exclusion from future participation. Each decision must identify the club, the offense date, the count applied and the sanction.

When a team is removed from the season for cheating, EPPL will notify all participants by official email. The notice will identify the removed team, the effective date and the effect on affected fixtures and results.

8.9 Point deductions. The adopted EPPL Point Reduction Matrix governs team point deductions in addition to individual discipline. Its listed consequences and cumulative-deduction rules apply. Eight deducted points in a season trigger suspension review. EPPL notifies team managers of deductions within 48 hours of the match.

8.10 Disciplinary review. EPPL reviews reports, relevant evidence and applicable rules, and gives affected parties an opportunity to respond before a final sanction when required. Committee members with conflicts of interest must recuse themselves. Where requested, the coach or manager submits one official team response; witness statements may be submitted separately. Written decisions state the findings, rule, sanction, effective period and available appeal process.

Immediate protective measures and automatic match suspensions may apply pending review. Mandatory governing policies control; the US Club Soccer Discipline Matrix is guidance unless EPPL expressly adopts a particular local standard. League procedures do not replace or delay required reporting to US Club Soccer, U.S. Soccer, SafeSport or law enforcement as applicable.

9 Protests and Appeals

9.1 Referee judgment. The referee's factual and judgment decisions connected with play are final. A complaint about judgment alone is not a match protest. Referee evaluations use the separate evaluation process; reports of misconduct remain reportable.

9.2 Competition protests. A team may protest an eligibility issue or the administration of a competition rule. Raise a player-identity concern with the referee or field manager before kickoff, at halftime, or immediately after the match before signing the report. Officials review the relevant credentials; coaches must not confront the player. Ordinary concerns must not delay kickoff.

The coach or manager must send the written protest to info@eppremierleague.com within 48 hours after the match, identifying the fixture, rule, supporting evidence and requested remedy. The on-site concern should be recorded on the match report. This ordinary deadline does not bar later reporting of suspected fraud, abuse or safeguarding concerns.

9.3 Misconduct reports. Use the designated grievance/reporting channel on the Discipline and Safeguarding page. Include the match number, teams, date, time, field, description and available evidence. Anyone may report a safeguarding concern through the appropriate governing-body channel; an official team statement is not a prerequisite for required reporting.

9.4 Internal appeals. An affected party may appeal an eligible EPPL disciplinary decision to info@eppremierleague.com within 48 hours of notification. Identify the decision, grounds and supporting evidence. The sanction remains effective unless EPPL or the competent authority stays it. EPPL may hold a hearing where appropriate or required and issues a written determination.

9.5 Finality and external rights. The appeal determination concludes the EPPL internal process. Nothing here removes an applicable hearing, reporting or external appeal right under US Club Soccer, U.S. Soccer or another controlling authority. External procedures, eligibility and deadlines are governed by those authorities.

Related Resources

Current season calendar
Official schedule and venue maps
League structure and season awards
Coach requirements forms and tutorials
Team Registration
Player Registration and fees
Club Pass registration and fees
Discipline and Safeguarding reporting resources
Severe Weather and Lightning Policy
Jersey and Numbers Guide
EPPL Point Reduction Matrix
National 1 Rules and Handbook
US Club Soccer Bylaws Policies and Guidelines
US Club Soccer Head Injuries
US Club Soccer safeguarding reporting
U.S. Soccer Referee Abuse Prevention Policy
The IFAB Laws of the Game