



# OPERATING PROCEDURES

[07/09/2020]

Ohio North reserves the authority to make decisions and resolve conflicts for matters not otherwise provided for in these operating procedures.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1.0 Conference Introduction .....3**
- 1.1 Name ..... 3
- 1.2 Mission ..... 3
- 1.3 Owner of the Conference ..... 3
- 1.4 Coaches Committee..... 3
- 1.5 Conference Management and Guiding Principles ..... 3
- 1.6 Age Group Management: ..... 3
- 1.7 Rules, Policies and Procedures ..... 3
- 1.8 Playing Seasons..... 3
- 1.9 Precedence of Games ..... 3
- 2.0 Team Application/Declaration .....3**
- 2.1 Team Eligibility..... 3
- 2.2 Good Standing ..... 4
- 2.3 Conference Blue Division Selection Criteria ..... 4
- 2.4 Levels of Play ..... 4
- 2.5 Application/Declaration Deadlines..... 4
- 2.6 Application/Declaration Process ..... 4
- 3.0 Conference Fees .....4**
- 3.1 Team Application Fees: ..... 4
- 3.2 Team Declaration Fees ..... 4
- 3.3 Team Registration Fees ..... 4
- 3.4 Withdrawal from the Conference ..... 4
- 3.5 Fees and Other Expenses ..... 5
- 3.6 Return of Conference Fees ..... 5
- 4.0 Pools & Rosters .....5**
- 4.1 Conference Team Rosters ..... 5
- 4.2 Team Officials ..... 5
- 4.3 Player Eligibility..... 5
- 4.4 Guest Players ..... 5
- 4.5 Maximum Roster Size ..... 5
- 4.6 Player Passes ..... 6

|            |  |          |
|------------|--|----------|
| 4.7        | Player Roster Limitations.....               | 6        |
| <b>5.0</b> | <b>Games – Operational Procedures .....</b>  | <b>6</b> |
| 5.1        | Scoring Method .....                         | 6        |
| 5.2        | Tie-Breakers.....                            | 6        |
| 5.3        | Forfeits.....                                | 6        |
| 5.4        | Forfeited Games .....                        | 6        |
| 5.5        | No Contest.....                              | 6        |
| 5.6        | Number of Games .....                        | 7        |
| 5.7        | Scheduling of Conference Games:.....         | 7        |
| 5.8        | Dual Use of Game Reports .....               | 7        |
| 5.9        | Delayed Game Start.....                      | 7        |
| 5.10       | Inclement Weather.....                       | 7        |
| 5.11       | Unmanned Aircraft System .....               | 7        |
| <b>6.0</b> | <b>Send-Offs and Discipline .....</b>        | <b>7</b> |
| 6.1        | Send-Offs .....                              | 7        |
| 6.2        | Disciplinary Actions .....                   | 7        |
| 6.3        | Violations of Rules .....                    | 7        |
| <b>7.0</b> | <b>Game Control – Referees.....</b>          | <b>7</b> |
| 7.1        | Assignment of Referees.....                  | 7        |
| 7.2        | Payment of Referees .....                    | 8        |
| 7.3        | Termination of Games.....                    | 8        |
| 7.4        | Referee Game Report.....                     | 8        |
| <b>8.0</b> | <b>Protests and Appeals.....</b>             | <b>8</b> |
| 8.1        | Definition of a Protest .....                | 8        |
| 8.2        | Filing Procedures .....                      | 8        |
| 8.3        | Return of Filing Fee.....                    | 8        |
| 8.4        | Notification of Parties.....                 | 8        |
| 8.5        | Protests of Games Played.....                | 8        |
| 8.6        | Disputes, Discipline and Protests .....      | 9        |
| 8.7        | US Youth Soccer Article XVII Section 4 ..... | 9        |

## 1.0 Conference Introduction

**1.1 Name:** The Ohio Youth Soccer Association North (Ohio North) Northern Conference, hereafter known as the Conference will be comprised of a Blue, White and Red Division.

**1.2 Mission:** The mission of the Conference is to provide Ohio North clubs and teams with the opportunity to compete in a safe and well-organized competitive soccer environment. The conference will also increase opportunities for the education of players, coaches, referees and spectators.

**1.3 Owner of the Conference:** The Conference is owned and operated by Ohio North and is open exclusively to Ohio North member teams.

**1.4 Coaches Committee:** The Conference Administrator shall appoint a Coaches Committee composed of up to six (6) coaches from Ohio North memberships to advise the program on all soccer related matters.

### 1.5 Conference Management and Guiding Principles

1.5.1 The Conference is managed and operated by Ohio North with a designated Conference Administrator. The Ohio North staff will collaborate with the State Technical Director(s) as well as the Coaches Committee to provide guidance in the development and growth of the Conference.

1.5.2 The Conference is guided by the following:

1.5.2.1 State, Regional and National Pathways

1.5.2.2 Coach and player Development

1.5.2.3 Club Development

1.5.2.4 U.S. Soccer Player Development Initiatives (PDIs)

**1.6 Age Group Management:** Each age group will be managed by the Conference, which will be responsible for, but not limited to, the following:

1.6.1 Creating gender specific age group divisions

1.6.2 Serving as the liaison with the approved Referee Assignor(s) to ensure that games officials are assigned

1.6.3 Collecting and approving all-Conference team rosters

1.6.4 Recording and posting of scores and standings

1.6.5 Communicating of age group news and information

**1.7 Rules, Policies and Procedures:** Ohio North will have authority to promulgate all Conference rules, policies and procedures reasonable and necessary for the administration and growth of the Conference.

**1.8 Playing Seasons:** The Blue Division will operate as a seasonal year commitment and the White Division will operate with fall and/or spring season. The Conference shall determine the start and end dates of each season with the parameters of the seasonal year calendar.

**1.9 Precedence of Games:** US Youth Soccer National Championship Series, US Youth Soccer Presidents Cup, Ohio North Cup Series and US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference games will have priority over Conference games.

## 2.0 Team Application/Declaration

**2.1 Team Eligibility:** Entry is accepted on a team basis and teams and players must be currently registered with Ohio North within 9U-19U age groups. Admission to the Conference will be based upon the Conference criteria outlined in Section 2.2, Section 2.3 and Section 2.4.

**2.2 Good Standing:** All teams must be properly registered in accordance with the requirements for participation and are in good standing with Ohio North.

**2.3 Conference Blue Division Selection Criteria:** In order to be accepted into the Blue Division, the following criteria will apply in this order for the 2020-2021 seasonal year.

2.3.1 Teams that participated in ONPL.

2.3.2 The Coaches Committee in collaboration with Ohio North, will review and select the remaining available spots based upon individual team history, which may include participation in other leagues or tournaments.

**2.4 Levels of Play:** There are three (3) levels in the Conference.

2.4.1 **Blue Division:** Team-based seasonal year application and commitment for Premier level teams.

2.4.1.1 Minimum of teams per division is four (4)

2.4.1.2 Northern Ohio travel required

2.4.1.3 Opportunities: Ohio Soccer State League (OSSL), US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference (GLC) and US Youth Soccer National Showcase Series

2.4.2 **White Division:** Team-based declaration per season for Competitive level teams.

2.4.2.1 Minimum of teams per division is four (4)

2.4.2.2 Northern Ohio travel required (Conference may assist with neutral venues and/or double-headers as requested)

2.4.2.3 Opportunities: Blue Division

2.4.3 **Red Division:** Team-based declaration per season for Community level teams.

2.4.3.1 Teams placed in divisions based on their geographic location.

2.4.3.2 Average 60-mile travel radius maximum (Conference may assist with scheduling if exceeds radius)

2.4.3.3 Minimum of teams per division is four (4)

2.4.3.4 Opportunities: White Division

**2.5 Application/Declaration Deadlines:** All applications/declarations for participation in the Conference must be received by the deadlines as established by Ohio North for each playing season.

**2.6 Application/Declaration Process:** Team applications/declarations to participation in the Conference must be completed through the online compliance system established by Ohio North. Teams will register directly with Ohio North for the Blue and White Divisions.

## 3.0 Conference Fees

**3.1 Team Application Fees:** Prior to the beginning of the seasonal year, a team application fee for the Blue Division must be paid to Ohio North prior to acceptance.

**3.2 Team Declaration Fees:** Prior to the beginning of the Fall and/or Spring seasons, a team declaration fee must be paid to Ohio North for the White Division prior to adding players/coaches to the team(s) rosters.

**3.3 Team Registration Fees:** The team fee is per team, per seasonal year for the White Division. Team fees are due once the declaration fee has been paid and prior to the start of the Fall and/or Spring seasons by the established deadline.

### 3.4 Withdrawal from the Conference

3.4.1 Clubs should only enter a team into the Conference knowing they will be able to field that team in the age group selected at the time of entry.

- 3.4.2 Once the Conference has confirmed a team's application and/or declaration, the team fee for the Blue Division and/or the declaration fee for the White Division is non-refundable should the team withdraw after acceptance.

**3.5 Fees and Other Expenses:** Each team playing in the Conference will pay the fees established by the Conference. The Conference is not responsible for expenses incurred by teams through forfeits, travel, housing, coaching, uniforms and other related team operating costs.

**3.6 Return of Conference Fees:** The Conference shall return fees paid for any team that is not admitted or declines their position in the Conference. In situations where a team withdraws following formal acceptance into the Conference, the team will forfeit its Conference team application fee.

## **4.0 Pools & Rosters**

### **4.1 Conference Team Rosters**

- 4.1.1 Teams must be registered to the age group of the oldest player on the team. Teams will not be allowed to play up or across genders unless approved by the State Association.
- 4.1.2 The roster can be changed at any time, but the Game Day Roster must be printed off prior to each game showing the active players for that game. Players who will not be in attendance may be crossed out on the Game Day Roster. Coaches/Managers may NOT write, type or print anything additional on a Game Day Roster after it has been printed. Player names may not be manually added to a Game Day Roster after it has been printed.

**4.2 Team Officials:** Team Officials shall refer to coaches, assistant coaches, managers and trainers.

- 4.2.1 All team officials must be registered with and in good standing with Ohio North.
- 4.2.2 All team officials must carry a current US Youth Soccer/Ohio North laminated member pass to be on the sidelines.
- 4.2.3 All team officials must comply with Ohio North's Participant Safety Policy, including but not limited to, background screenings, Lindsay's Law, Concussion Training and SafeSport.
- 4.2.4 The Conference requires one (1) team coach to hold a minimum of a U.S. Soccer "D" License, or United Soccer Coaches National License.
- 4.2.5 Temporary exceptions may be made when the individual is currently in the process of obtaining the proper license and with the recommendation of the State Technical Director.

**4.3 Player Eligibility:** All players must be registered with and in good standing with Ohio North.

- 4.3.1 A player's age group is determined by their birth year.
- 4.3.2 Any player wishing to play for an Ohio North team in the Conference who is not a resident of Ohio North must first receive written permission from the State Association where the player resides (home state) and from Ohio North. Permission must be obtained each seasonal year.
- 4.3.3 A player is permitted to dual roster between a Northern Conference team within the rules and restrictions of each league.

**4.4 Guest Players:** No guest players are permitted to participate in any Northern Conference games.

**4.5 Maximum Roster Size:**

| Age Group | Max Team Roster | Max Pool | Max Game Day Roster | Min to Start Game |
|-----------|-----------------|----------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 9U-10U    | TBD             | N/A      | 12                  | 5                 |
| 11U-12U   | TBD             | N/A      | 16                  | 6                 |
| 13U-19U   | 22              | 30       | 18                  | 7                 |

**4.6 Player Passes:** Ohio North player passes are not needed for Conference games as all eligible players are listed on the Game Day Rosters.

**4.7 Player Roster Limitations:** Any player registered in a club registered to a Conference team is eligible to club pass for another team in the same club provided the player is age appropriate within the rules and restrictions of each league. Players may only be rostered to one team in the Conference.

## 5.0 Games – Operational Procedures

**5.1 Scoring Method:** The standings of teams within age groups are based upon the number of points earned. Teams earn points as follows:

- 5.1.1 Three (3) points for a win;
- 5.1.2 One (1) point for a tie;
- 5.1.3 Zero/No (0) points for a loss; and
- 5.1.4 Minus three (-3) points for a forfeit.

**5.2 Tie-Breakers:** The following tie-breaking criteria will be used to determine the final standings for each Division:

- 5.2.1 Winner of head to head competition. This criterion shall not be used when more than two (2) teams are tied in points;
- 5.2.2 Winner of most games;
- 5.2.3 Goal differential (goals scored minus goals against);
- 5.2.4 Fewest goals allowed; or
- 5.2.5 Coin toss.

### 5.3 Forfeits

- 5.3.1 When a team does not have the minimum number of players available to start a game, a 15-minute grace period shall be extended beyond the official start of the game.
- 5.3.2 At the end of the 15-minute grace period:
  - 5.3.2.1 If a minimum number of players are available, the game can commence.
  - 5.3.2.2 If a minimum number of players are not available, the team will forfeit the game and there will be no reschedule option.
- 5.3.3 In the event of a forfeit, the team that forfeits the game will have three (3) points deducted, and the game score will be recorded as 0-4.
- 5.3.4 The opponent will be awarded three (3) points and a 4-0 win.

**5.4 Forfeited Games:** A club or team that forfeits a Conference game shall be fined. The fee for a forfeited game is:

- 5.4.1 **First Offense:** \$200 forfeited game fee plus referee fees.
- 5.4.2 **Second Offense:** \$250 forfeited game fee plus referee fees.
- 5.4.3 **Third Offense:** Team(s) may be suspended from the Conference and all results against them removed from the schedule.

**5.5 No Contest:** Games deemed to be “No Contest” will be recorded as a game played with a score of 0-0 with each team earning zero (0) points for the contest.

- 5.6 Number of Games:** The number of games shall be determined by the Conference based on the final number of teams in an age group division each season.
- 5.7 Scheduling of Conference Games:** Refer to the Conference Scheduling Meeting document for more details.
- 5.8 Dual Use of Game Reports:** Except for the Ohio North Cup Series qualifying games or preliminary games, which may be used, there shall be no dual use of tournament or other competition results to fulfill the requirements of playing the posted Conference schedule.
- 5.9 Delayed Game Start:** Any team delaying the start of a scheduled game by more than 15-minutes without the authorization from the Conference Administrator shall forfeit the game to their opponent and shall be responsible for full payment of the game officials' fees.
- 5.10 Inclement Weather:** Each complex is responsible for notifying the Conference of field closures due to inclement weather as soon as possible. Remember that weather can pop up at any time and the final decision to play may be made by the referee at the game site.
- 5.11 Unmanned Aircraft System:** The use of non-approved unmanned aircraft systems (ex: drones) are strictly prohibited at any/all Conference games. The use of unmanned aircraft systems may be approved by Ohio North as well as the complex and/or city (where applicable) for specified promotional activity given that the request is submitted in writing to Ohio North. Any person in violation of this policy shall be immediately removed from the field, facility and/or event.

## **6.0 Send-Offs and Discipline**

### **6.1 Send-Offs**

- 6.1.1 Any player or team official given a red card will be suspended for the team(s) next Conference game.
- 6.1.2 If a player or team official is ejected two (2) times in a season, the individuals will be suspended for the next three (3) Conference games.
- 6.1.3 Any player or team official who is deemed guilty of violent conduct on or off the field of play will be suspended for the next two (2) games in which the player or team official is scheduled to participate.
- 6.1.4 Unsporting behavior will not be tolerated. The Conference will track and internally post all send-offs and expulsions.

**6.2 Disciplinary Actions:** All disciplinary measures imposed by the Conference shall be limited to an individual or team's participation in the Conference. The Conference 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 Ohio North. Furthermore, Ohio North has the right to impose additional sanctions regarding any matters arising from participation in the Conference.

**6.3 Violations of Rules:** Any violation of the rules herein will be subject to disciplinary actions by the Conference.

## **7.0 Game Control – Referees**

**7.1 Assignment of Referees:** Referees will be assigned under the authority of the Conference with designated certified assignors.

- 7.2 Payment of Referees:** Referees and Assistant Referees appointed under the provision of these Conference Operating Procedures shall be paid at the beginning of the game. Each team is responsible for payment of one half (1/2) of the Conference required fees of the game officials.
- 7.3 Termination of Games:** Referees may terminate games for the lack of crowd control, poor team behavior or other unsportsmanlike circumstances. Each team official is responsible for the behavior and conduct of his/her players, parents and supporters. Upon request by the referees, team officials are responsible to assist in the control of parents, fans and spectators. The referee will report the termination of any games to the Conference within 24 hours. The Conference shall ascertain the facts and determine appropriate disciplinary action that may include:
- 7.3.1 Reprimand;
  - 7.3.2 Forfeiture of game as appropriate;
  - 7.3.3 Suspension from future Conference games; or
  - 7.3.4 Recommendation to the Ohio North of a more severe penalty. If play is stopped at any time due to one of the teams (by action of players, team officials, administrators, spectators) adjudged to be at fault, it shall be at the discretion of the Conference Administrator whether the game is to be replayed or declared a forfeit.
- 7.4 Referee Game Report:** In the event that a player is removed from a game for a red card, the referee must file with the Conference a red card report within 24 hours of the game. In the event that a player is removed from a game for a suspected concussion, the referee must note the incident on the Game Day Roster. Filing shall be defined as providing pertinent game information via email.

## **8.0 Protests and Appeals**

- 8.1 Definition of a Protest:** A *Protest* is a formal written objection of any violation of established rules, policies, or procedures related to a specific game. Referee judgement (e.g. calls) decisions cannot be protested. Only those teams directly involved in a game (i.e. the two (2) competing teams) are permitted to protest a game result. Third (3<sup>rd</sup>) parties i.e., coaches from other teams, club administrators, parents, cannot file protests on a specific game.
- 8.2 Filing Procedures:** A protest must be filed in writing and must include:
- 8.2.1 The nature and specifics of the complaint;
  - 8.2.2 A listing of the rules, policies, or procedures that have been violated;
  - 8.2.3 A statement of the desired resolution;
  - 8.2.4 Copies of all documents relevant to the protest; and
  - 8.2.5 The filing fee for a protest is \$300.00 (certified check or money order made payable to Ohio North Youth Soccer).
- 8.3 Return of Filing Fee:** If a protest is upheld, then the filing fee shall be returned to the individual filing the protest; otherwise, the filing fee is non-refundable.
- 8.4 Notification of Parties:** The Conference along with Ohio North shall notify all parties involved, no later than three (3) business days from receipt of a protest, that a protest has been filed.
- 8.5 Protests of Games Played**
- 8.5.1 Notice of intent to protest activity that occurred during a game must be registered with Ohio North within 24 hours of completion of the game.
  - 8.5.2 All protest must be submitted in writing within the appropriate fee to the Conference and Ohio North State Office.



- 8.5.3 The protest must be postmarked no later than three (3) business days from the game completion in accordance with the Filing Procedures listed in Section 7.4.
- 8.5.4 The referee is the final authority on the field of play. All decisions of the referees with the respect to matters of fact, including judgement matters are final.
- 8.5.5 Ohio North is authorized to settle disputes that arise during a Conference game. Ohio North will hear the protest, investigate and adjudicate all allegations of misconduct by teams, team officials, players or other involved related to such game and may impose appropriate sanctions for any violation found.
- 8.5.6 A decision on a protest must be made within 14 business days from the receipt for a protest. Decisions shall be reduced to written form and shall be sent to the principal parties no later than two (2) business days from the conclusion of investigation and adjudication.

**8.6 Disputes, Discipline and Protests:** Ohio North is authorized to settle disputes, which arise from a Conference competition. The Conference, in accordance with the disciplinary policies and procedures of US Youth Soccer and U.S. Soccer, will investigate and adjudicate all allegations of misconduct by teams, team officials, players or others involved in the Conference operations and will impose an appropriate sanction for any violation found.

**8.7 US Youth Soccer Article XVII Section 4:** States: “No member of USYSA, official, league, club team, player, coach, administrative, or referee may invoke the aid of the courts of the United States or of a state without first exhausting all available remedies within the appropriate soccer organizations, as provided within USYSA.” Additionally, for violations, offending party shall be subject to suspension and/or fines and shall be liable to the Northern Conference, Ohio North and USYSA for all expenses incurred by the Northern Conference, Ohio North or USYSA and its officers and members of the Board of Directors in defending each court action, including the following: (a) court costs; (b) attorney’s fees; (c) reasonable compensation for time spent by the Northern Conference, Ohio North or USYSA officials and employees in responding to and defending against allegations in the action, including responses to discovery and court appearances; (d) travel expenses; and (e) expenses for holding special meetings by the Northern Conference, Ohio North or USYSA necessitated by court action.