



GO

HANDBOOK



HANDBOOK

MLS GO is Major League Soccer's recreational youth soccer program, with the mission of creating an inclusive and elevated experience for all participants. Fun and affordability are at the heart of MLS GO with a program that has been designed to increase participation and enable more kids to play soccer.

MLS GO is offered to all children ages 4-14. Whether destined for the professional ranks or looking to get their first experience in the sport, MLS GO is the first step in the pathway where we invite all to learn fundamental soccer skills and develop a lasting love of the game.

By offering local communities a structured introductory soccer program with connections to a developmental pathway, we're enabling greater access to the sport — seeking to remove barriers to participating in the game we love.

Let's GO play!

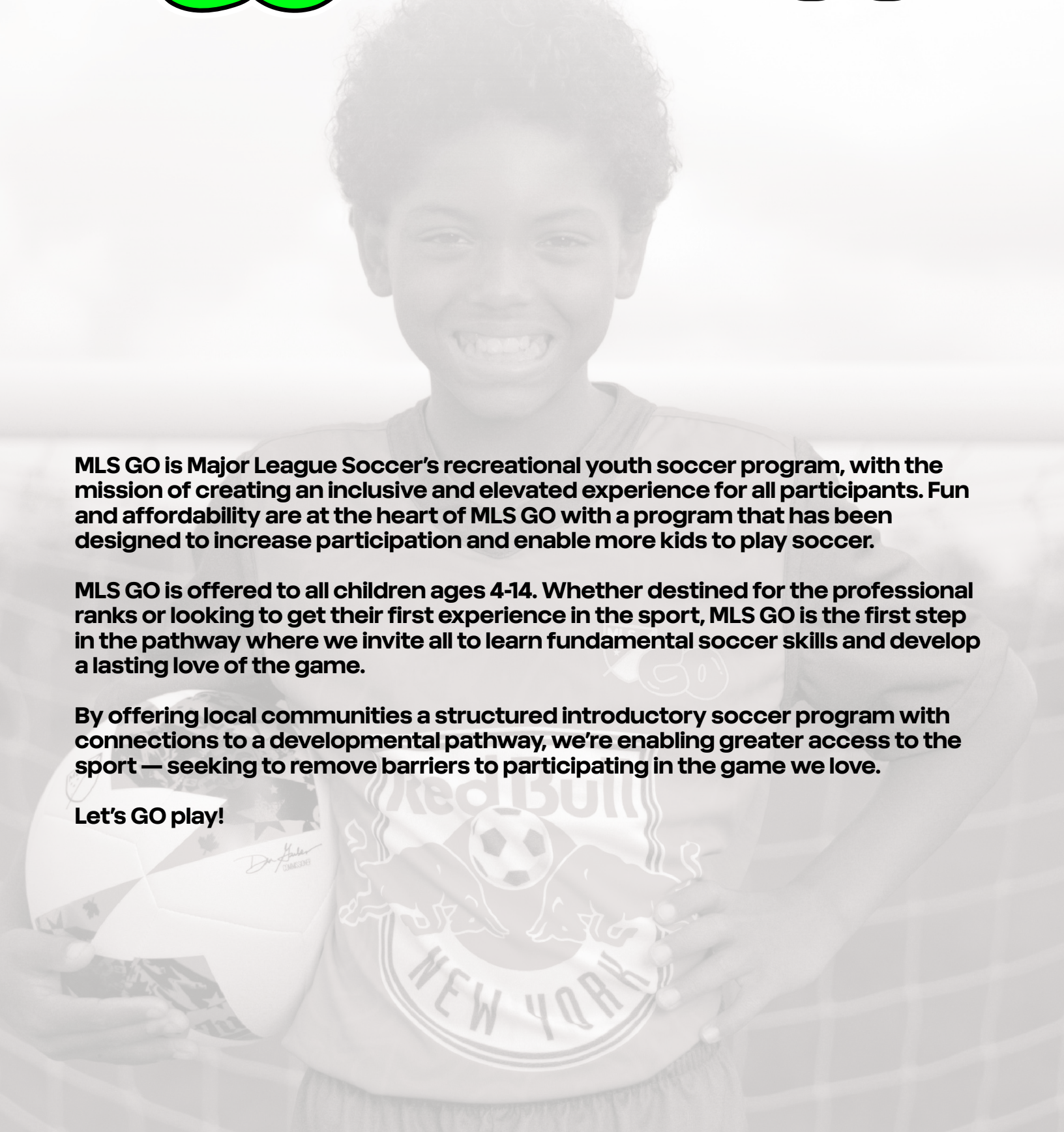




TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Getting Started	4
Starting Your League	5-6
II. Player Registration.....	7
Refund, Insurance & Sponsor Policies.....	8-10
Field Dimensions & Set Up.....	10-14
III. MLS GO PLAY FUND	15-16
IV. Health and Safety	17
Emergency Response Plans	18-25
Creating a Safe Sport Culture	26-27
Background Check Policies	28-31
Adult Participant Policies.....	32-33
One-On-One & Individual Training Policies	34-36
Communication, Transportation & Lodging.....	36-38
Diversity & Inclusion Policy	39
Prohibited Conduct Policy	40-41
V. Uniforms and Equipment Ordering.....	42
Shipping Options.....	42-43
Help With Exchanges/Returns.....	44-45
VI. Coach & Referee Resources	46
VII. Marketing and Logo Usage	47
VIII. Social Media Guidelines	48
IX. Appendix	49
Incident Report Form.....	49-50



GETTING STARTED

Through a partnership with RCX Sports, MLS is excited to engage league operators who believe in our mission of providing greater access and increasing participation in soccer in their respective communities.

MLS GO is designed to bring a fun, accessible, and affordable opportunity to play the game of soccer for all, while ensuring league operators are supported with access to tools and resources to help start, maintain, and grow successful recreational soccer programs.

Official MLS GO operators gain access to a suite of resources, assets, and support, including:

- Exclusive branded merchandise and uniforms
- Access to equipment to operate your league
- MLS GO PLAYBOOK, coaching and officiating support
- Access to technology (registration, scheduling, etc.)
- Access to MediaValet for branded marketing and promotional materials
- Support for insurance, background checks, etc.
- Inclusion in 'League finder' tool on MLS GO website
- Connection to MLS Clubs and exclusive MLS offerings
- And much more

Official MLS GO Operators are expected to uphold the policies and standards established by MLS GO, as detailed in the MLS GO League Operator Registration Contract. This includes such things as:

- Adherence to MLS values and mission of the MLS GO program
- Data sharing with RCX Sports for operational needs; data opt-in with MLS for marketing purposes
- Compliance with background checks and laws relating to youth
- Adherence to all rights, obligations, insurance, warranties, etc. within the Recreational Organization Agreement
- Commitment to designing a business model that works for the operator while maintaining affordability for families
- Openness and collaboration on storytelling opportunities
- MLS partnership integrations



Who Can Start a League?

MLS GO is interested in working with operators that share our values and vision for growing the game and creating the best introductory soccer experience for participants, regardless of whether the operator runs an existing soccer league or is coming to the game for the first time.

All Operators are required to complete an online application to start their league. When we receive your application, an MLS GO representative will reach out within one week to learn more about your league, and help you get started.

Once approved, all League Operators are required to complete a few steps before their league can begin.

League Participation Checklist

To confirm your participation and eligibility to operate MLS GO, RCX Sports requires the following to be verified:

- Operator Agreement signed
- Background checks for League Operators and coaches
- Insurance acquired/COI uploaded

Official Equipment Package

As part of the program, League Operators will be charged a per player licensing fee to access all of the tools and resources the program provides, and gain access to the MLS-branded uniforms and merchandise.

For the MLS GO program, Operators will pay a per player licensing fee. For each participant, per season, each League Operator will receive the following:

- MLS GO reversible jersey featuring MLS club logos and colors
- MLS GO shorts
- MLS GO socks
- Allocation of soccer balls – 2 per team

Additional Apparel and Equipment

League Operators and participants will also have additional equipment available for purchase. These items include:

- Goals
- Whistles
- Corner Flags
- Coach's T-shirt
- Training Pinnies
- Cones
- Hats
- Shin Guards
- Coach's Polos



Determining Your Budget

Determining your budget is an important first step when starting a league. Each league can set its own registration price, considering market rates in your area, and creating a budget that takes all costs into consideration. It is the goal of MLS and RCX Sports to ensure that MLS GO is as accessible and inclusive as possible. We also ask that all league operators provide at least one option for a payment plan to lessen the financial burden.

Here's a checklist to help you get started:

- Facility rental (practices & games)
- Insurance
- Background Checks
- SafeSport
- Referees
- Equipment
- Website/Marketing/Promotion
- MLS GO athlete packages



PLAYER REGISTRATION

Registration should open 10 weeks in advance of the first league game via digital platform. Registration must include waivers, acknowledgment of data sharing, and minimum data points provided below:

- Player First Name
- Player Last Name
- Gender
- Player DOB
- Jersey Size
- Short Size
- Sock Size
- MLS Player Agreement
- Race/Ethnicity
- Parent First Name
- Parent Last Name
- Email
- Cell Phone
- Zip/Postal Code
- MLS Privacy Policy
- MLS Marketing Opt-In
- Favorite MLS Club
- How did you Hear About MLS GO?

In the registration process, operators should inquire if parents are interested in volunteering to coach or referee. The League Operator is responsible for seeking volunteers to help coach as needed.

The preferred registration platform for MLS GO is SportsConnect, and it includes a templated registration platform and custom branded website. We recommend utilizing this platform for ease of use and data sharing.

All operators will be required to upload the data listed above, and respond to some additional questions, prior to placing an order of merchandise or jerseys.

Please see your [OPERATOR PORTAL](https://mlsgo.mediavalet.com/portals/MLSGO) (<https://mlsgo.mediavalet.com/portals/MLSGO>) for more information on registration questions, your data upload and merchandise offerings.



Establishing a Refund Policy

Prior to opening registration, each league should establish a refund policy and ensure parents are aware of the policy when they register. MLS GO recommends offering full refunds to parents who wish to remove their child from the league before your registration closes. If they wish to leave the league after registration is closed and equipment has been ordered, we recommend offering a partial refund.

Insurance Requirements

All MLS GO Leagues are required to strictly abide by the insurance obligations set forth in its MLS GO Operator Agreement (“Operator Agreement”). This one-page summary is for informational purposes only; please consult the Operator Agreement for specific insurance requirements.

League operators upload a copy of their Insurance Certificate to their MLS GO Operator account and have RCX Sports LLC and certain MLS entities (as further described below) added to their policy as an additional insured.

Your policy must include:

- Workers compensation insurance in compliance with the laws of the state where the services are to be provided, covering employees, volunteers, temporary workers, and leased workers.
- Employers’ Liability with minimum limits of:
 - i. \$1,000,000 Each Accident
 - ii. \$1,000,000 Disease - Each Employee
 - iii. \$1,000,000 Disease- Policy Limit
- Commercial General Liability Insurance
 - i. \$1,000,000 Per Occurrence
 - ii. \$2,000,000 General Aggregate
 - iii. Coverage may not have any exclusions for brain injuries
 - iv. Sexual abuse and molestation-related exposure must not be excluded or it must be covered in a separate stand-alone policy
- \$1 Million Automobile Liability Insurance
- \$1 Million Umbrella Liability Insurance



Your policy must also name **ALL** the following organizations as additional insureds, with no right of subrogation:

- RCX Sports L.L.C., and its past, present and future affiliates and each of their respective predecessors, successors and assigns and each of their respective past, present and future, direct or indirect, owners, partners, principals, managers, members, shareholders, directors, officers, agents, trustees, employees, governors, attorneys and other representatives
- Major League Soccer L.L.C. and the Major League Soccer clubs
- Player Development, L.L.C., MLS Canada L.P., Pro Soccer Development, L.P., Soccer United Marketing, L.L.C., and each of their respective past, present and future affiliates and each of their respective predecessors, successors and as signs and each of their respective past, present and future, direct or indirect, owners, partners, principals, managers, members, shareholders, directors, officers, agents, trustees, employees, governors, attorneys and other representatives

This address needs to go under the “Certificate Holder” section on your Certificate of Insurance as follows:

RCX Sports LLC
Attn: MLS GO
250 Hembree Park Dr. Ste. 100
Roswell, GA 30076



Sponsorship

MLS reserves the exclusive right to engage with sponsors regarding MLS GO. League operators do not have the right to sell sponsorships.

Facility Requirements

The operator is responsible for securing and ensuring clean facilities and bathrooms, and access to water, for participants. Every facility must also have fire extinguishers.

League operators are required (where not impractical) to maintain automated external defibrillators (AEDs) at each venue or within 1-3 minutes of each venue where activities are held.

Operators will be responsible for monitoring the behavior of spectators and capacity limitations within the facility.

Other facility requirements:

- Well-marked fields using painted lines or cones and sized appropriately with age group recommendations.
- Netted goals in accordance with age group recommendations.

Identifying the Proper Play Surface

Games and training should be played on natural grass or properly maintained artificial turf.

If you have questions about the feasibility of a possible play surface, please contact a member of the league success team. Contact us by phone (470) 632-2350 or by email support@mlsgo.com

Facility Set-Up:

League operators are responsible for setting up the facility to include the appropriate lines, goals, corner flags (if available), and bench areas. League operators should ensure that each goal is properly anchored with weights or posts to prevent tipping forward.

League operators are responsible for checking the fields following recent rain or extreme weather in order to ensure safe field playing conditions. In case of a rainout, league operators must reschedule and adhere to the Season Format guidelines as outlined in the MLS GO rulebook.



Field Dimensions

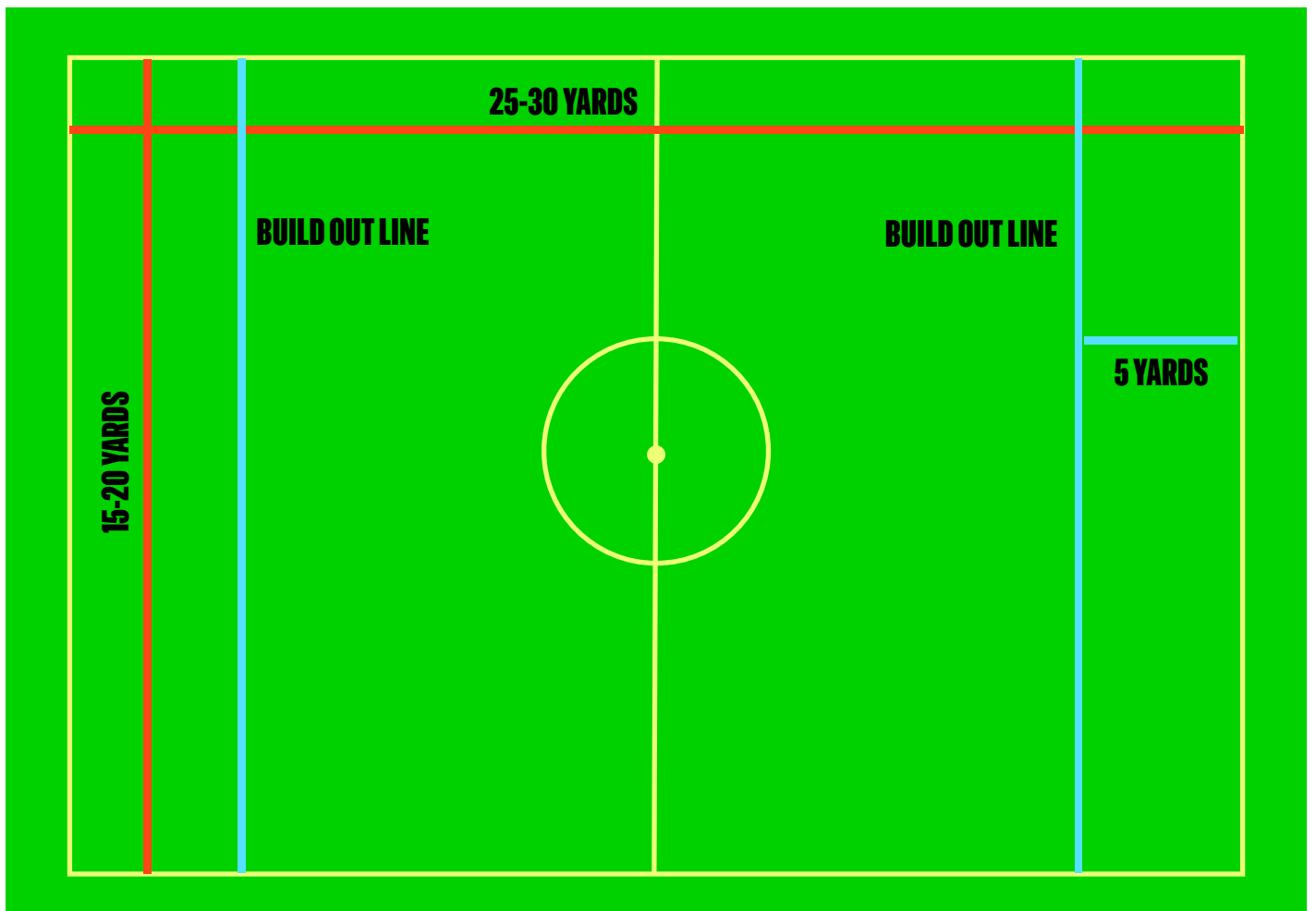
When finding fields and understanding how much space is necessary to operate league play, below are the guidelines to consider:

<u>Division</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Game Format</u>	<u>Field Size Ranges (yards)</u>	<u>Maximum Goal Size (feet)</u>
U5	Age 4	3v3 No GK	Length 25-35 Width 15-25	Height 4 Width 6
U6	Age 5	3v3 No GK	Length 25-35 Width 15-25	Height 4 Width 6
U7	Age 6	3v3 No GK	Length 25-35 Width 15-25	Height 4 Width 6
U8	Age 7	4v4 No GK	Length 25-35 Width 15-25	Height 4 Width 6
U9	Age 8	4v4 No GK	Length 25-35 Width 15-25	Height 4 Width 6
U10	Ages 9	7v7 GK	Length 55-65 Width 35-45	Height 6.5 Width 18.5
U11	Age 10	7v7 GK	Length 55-65 Width 35-45	Height 6.5 Width 18.5
U12	Ages 11	7v7 GK	Length 55-65 Width 35-45	Height 6.5 Width 18.5
U13	Age 12	7v7 GK	Length 55-65 Width 35-45	Height 6.5 Width 18.5
U14	Ages 13	9v9 GK	Length 70-80 Width 45-55	Height 7 Width 21
U15	Age 14	9v9 GK	Length 70-80 Width 45-55	Height 7 Width 21
		11v11 GK	Length 100-130 Width 50-100	Height 8 Width 24

*For divisions U11, U12 and U13 9v9 format is permitted but not recommended.
For divisions U14 and U15 11v11 format is permitted but not recommended.

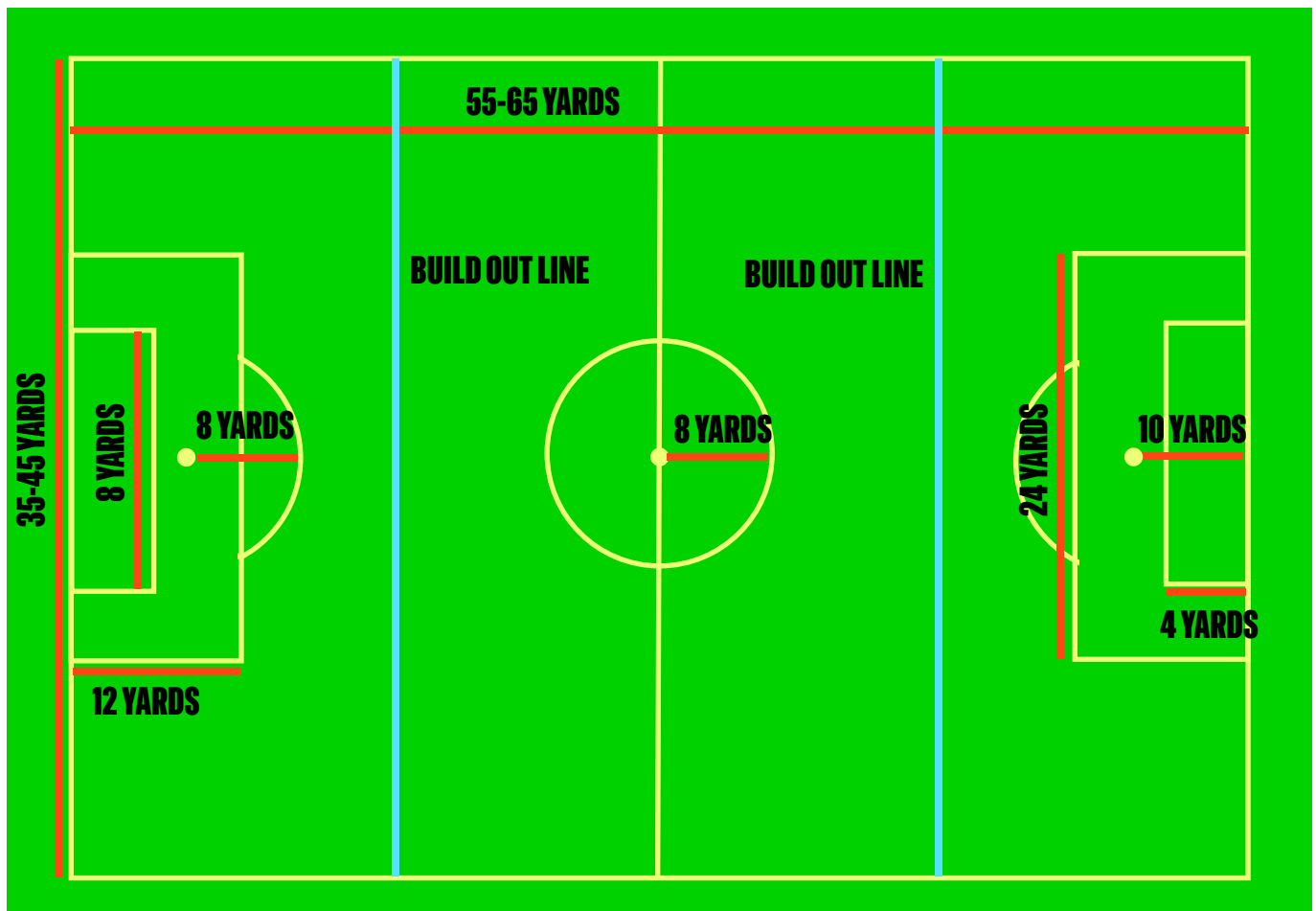


4v4 FIELD MARKINGS



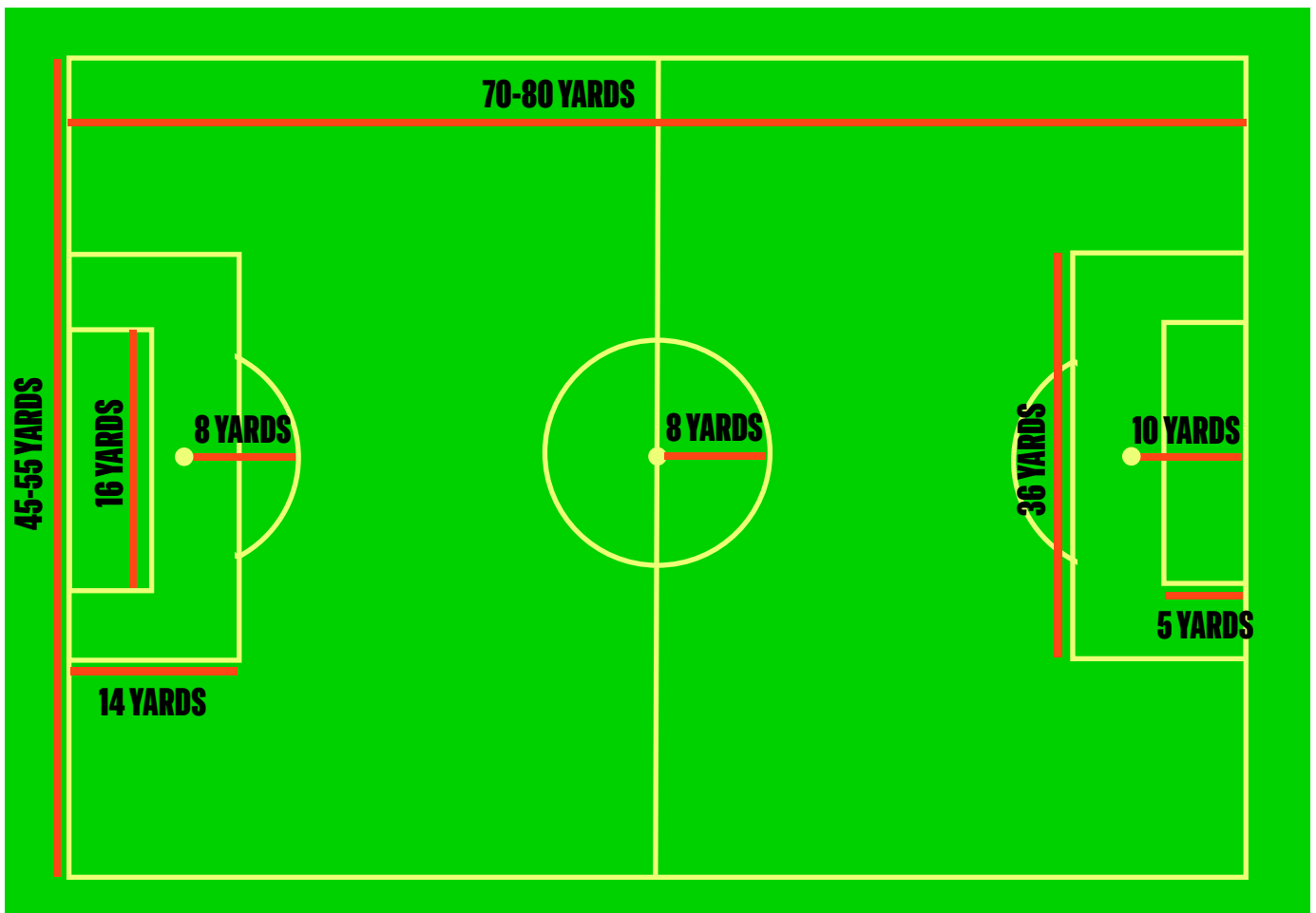


7v7 FIELD MARKINGS





9v9 FIELD MARKINGS





MLS GO PLAY FUND

Through the MLS GO Play Fund, there are two types of grant offered:

1. MLS GO Play Fund – Organization Grant: This grant is designed to offer financial assistance for organizations that currently, or plan to operate, an MLS GO league.
2. MLS GO Play Fund – Individual Grant: This grant is designed to offer financial assistance for MLS GO participants nationwide.

MLS GO PLAY FUND – ORGANIZATION GRANT

- Any league operator that has signed their league operator agreement is eligible to apply for the organization grant.
- Typically, LOs apply for this funding to cover scholarship for kids, equipment, facility rentals, etc.
- Funding here cannot be requested in a reimbursement style (i.e. to cover costs from a previous season, to cover costs of coaching trainings that have already occurred, etc.).
- **To apply:** [APPLICATION](#)

MLS GO PLAY FUND – INDIVIDUAL GRANT

- Any participant that plans to participate in an MLS GO program can apply for funding through this individual grant, which will cover the participant's entire registration fee.

Eligibility requirements:

- The participant must receive free or reduced lunch through their school system
- The participant's family's annual household income must be less than the median national average of \$74,850
- The participant is not already registered for the upcoming season
Funding will not be granted in a reimbursement style (i.e. if the participant has already paid the registration fee for the upcoming season, the application will be denied)

Process:

1. Legal/parent guardian applies for funding
2. If the application meets all of the eligibility requirements, RCX Sports Foundation (RCXF) will reach out to the league operator of that participant's MLS GO league to confirm that the participant will play in the league that season.
3. Once confirmed, RCXF will direct the parent/guardian to reach out directly to the LO to get registered for free.
4. RCXF will process a check to send to the league to cover the child's registration.

- **To apply:** [APPLICATION](#)

A printable version can be made available should technology be a barrier for your athletes.



THE MLS GO PLAY FUND OFFERS TWO TYPES OF GRANTS

ORGANIZATIONAL GRANTS

This grant provides financial assistance for **organizations** that currently, or plan to, operate an MLS GO league.

- **Eligibility:** Any league operator that has signed their league operator agreement can apply.
- **Typical Uses:** Funding is often requested to cover scholarships for kids, equipment, facility rentals, etc.
- **Important:** Funding cannot be requested in a reimbursement style (i.e. For costs from a previous season or coaching trainings that have already occurred, etc.).
- **To apply:** [APPLICATION](#)

INDIVIDUAL GRANT

This grant offers financial assistance for individual **participants** nationwide, covering the full registration fee for MLS GO programs.

Eligibility Requirements:

- The participant must receive free or reduced lunch through their school system.
- The participant's family's annual household income must be below the national median of \$74,850
- The participant must not have already registered for the upcoming season.

Note: Funding will not be granted in a reimbursement style (i.e., applications will be denied if the participant has already paid the registration fee).

Application Process:

1. The legal parent/guardian applies for funding.
2. If the application meets all eligibility requirements, RCX Sports Foundation (RCXF) will contact the league operator to confirm the participants' enrolment.
3. Once confirmed, RCXF will direct the parent/guardian to the LO to register for free.
4. RCXF will process a check to send to the league covering the child's registration.
 - **To apply:** [APPLICATION](#)



HEALTH & SAFETY

All MLS GO leagues should foster a culture of respect and provide a positive and safe environment for all participants and athletes. We also require all leagues to provide their teams, coaches and any other personnel with best-in-class support, training, and resources to promote respect, inclusion, and safe play.

We know firsthand that the benefits of sports extend far beyond the field, and we are committed to creating opportunities for every athlete who wants to play. We also know that building an inclusive environment starts within our organization. That is why we support our staff, coaches, officials, youth athletes and fans of the LGBTQ+ community, encouraging them to be themselves so they can fully experience the positive impact of sports.

To promote best practices for player health and a safe environment for all participants, the following information covers Health & Safety policies and resources that provide a framework for an appropriate response to medical emergencies (including cardiac and mental health emergencies) and meet standards of care for athletic injuries.

Every league operator should implement health and safety guidelines, including COVID-19 protocols, that are consistent with industry standards and applicable laws. League operators shall provide CPR and AED education for coaches and follow U.S. Soccer's Recognize to Recover player health and safety guidelines.

Found in your [MediaValet portal](#), these policies and resources are intended to allow each league to develop and implement protocols that are consistent to its own venue(s), resources, and local medical infrastructure, and as such are not intended as a clinical practice guideline or legal standard of care. Individual treatment and response to emergencies will depend on the facts and circumstances specific to each individual case. <https://mlsgo.mediavalet.com/portals/MLSGO>

- Emergency Response Plan
- COVID-19 Protocols
- Cardiac Response Protocol
- Concussion Protocol
- Mental Health
- Injury Prevention
- Environmental Conditions
- MLS GO Prohibited Conduct Policy

Templates for these policies and other resources can be found in your [MediaValet portal](#).

U.S. Soccer's Recognize to Recover Comprehensive Player Health and Safety Program can be found at www.recognizetorecover.org



Emergency Response Plan (Mandatory)

For each venue (location running an MLS GO league where players regularly practice or play games), League Operators must adopt and maintain an appropriate emergency action plan that is posted, rehearsed, and updated annually. The emergency action plan must include in written detail the specific steps that will be taken in response to an emergency, including a cardiac incident.

League operators are required to document a written emergency response plan (and review and update it annually, prior to competition) that includes at least the following components:

1. Names, locations, and cell phone numbers for all “potential responders” (described below), emergency personnel, local medical services for emergencies and non-emergent medical conditions, and local resources for non-medical emergencies;
2. The precise location of all AEDs in the facility;
3. The precise location of at least one first aid kit at the facility;
4. The most direct route from the field to the EMR unit, or the most direct route from the facility to the building entrance where the EMR unit will arrive (with signage indicating such route recommended);
5. The most efficient procedure to activate trained staff, and contact local authorities (e.g., signal/contact the on-site EMS directly for a sudden cardiac arrest event during a game; dial 911 for a sudden cardiac arrest event during a practice); and
6. A listing of the essential elements of a response to cardiac emergencies.



Written Emergency Response Plan (Optional, but Recommended)

In addition to addressing the required elements (described above), it is recommended that any emergency response plan address the following components (with specific information as appropriate for each venue):

1. Emergency Personnel – The members and roles of the emergency response team involved when an emergency response plan is activated should be defined.
2. Potential Responders – Potential responders for a cardiac emergency should be trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and AED use. Potential responders can include coaches or other appropriate administrative personnel whose job regularly includes proximity to players during practices or games.
3. Emergency Communication
 - A. An emergency communication plan should be established to facilitate communication between the league’s staff, an on-site medical staff, local EMS, and a designated medical facility in the event of a cardiac emergency. The plan should define what communications devices are available (e.g., walkie-talkies), where they are stored (if applicable), and who has access to them. The communication plan should be in place before the beginning of each season.
 - B. Have a way to call 9-1-1 in case of an emergency during activities, including if cell availability is unavailable or poor in your area, and determine protocol for communication between staff and contacting the authorities when necessary.
4. Venue and Field Access – For games, the point of entry/exit for emergency medical responders/vehicles should be clearly established beforehand, including the entry/exit point(s).

League operators may consult templates for emergency response plans that are available online in your [MediaValet portal](#).

COVID-19 Protocols

League operators are responsible for implementing COVID-19 protocols that are consistent with industry standards and applicable laws.



Cardiac Response Protocol

Below is a template that can be used when determining the Emergency Response Plan associated with cardiac emergencies. This should be edited according to the operations and locations of each MLS GO league.

Sudden cardiac arrest events can vary greatly. MLS GO staff, Coaches and Cardiac Emergency Response Team (CERT – defined in Appendix A) members must be prepared to perform the duties outlined below. **Immediate action is crucial** in order to successfully respond to a cardiac emergency. Consideration should be given to obtaining on-site ambulance coverage for high-risk youth sporting events. The facility should also identify the closest appropriate medical facility that is equipped in advanced cardiac care.

Follow these steps in responding to a suspected cardiac emergency:

Recognize the following signs of sudden cardiac arrest and take action in the event of one or more of the following:

- The person is not moving, or is unresponsive, or appears to be unconscious.
- The person is not breathing normally (has irregular breaths, gasping or gurgling, or is not breathing at all).
- The person appears to be having a seizure or is experiencing convulsion-like activity. (Cardiac arrest victims commonly appear to be having convulsions.)
- Note: If the person received a blunt blow to the chest, this can cause cardiac arrest, a condition called commotio cordis. The person may have the signs of cardiac arrest described above and is treated the same.

Facilitate immediate access to professional medical help:

- Call 9-1-1 as soon as you suspect a sudden cardiac arrest. Provide the address, cross streets, and patient condition. Remain on the phone with 9-1-1. (Bring your mobile phone to the patient's side, if possible.) Give the exact location and provide the recommended route for ambulances to enter and exit. Facilitate access to the victim for arriving Emergency Medical Service (EMS) personnel.
- Immediately contact the members of the Cardiac Emergency Response Team.
- Give the exact location of the emergency within the facility or athletic field complex. Assign someone to wait for and flag down EMS responders and escort them to the exact location of the patient.
- If you are a CERT member, proceed immediately to the scene of the cardiac emergency.
- The closest team member should retrieve any available automated external defibrillator (AED) in route to the scene.
- Acquire AED supplies such as scissors, a razor and a towel and consider an extra set of AED pads.



Start Hands-Only CPR

Begin continuous chest compressions and have someone retrieve any available AED. Here's how:

- Press hard and fast in center of chest. Goal is 100 compressions per minute (Faster than once per second, but slower than twice per second.)
- Use 2 hands: The heel of one hand and the other hand on top (or one hand for children under 8 years old), pushing to a depth of 2 inches (or 1/3rd the depth of the chest for children under 8 years old).
- Follow the 9-1-1 dispatcher's instructions, if provided.

Use the nearest AED

- When the AED is brought to the patient's side, press the power-on button, and attach the pads to the patient as shown in the diagram on the pads. Then follow the AED's audio and visual instructions. If the person needs to be shocked to restore a normal heart rhythm, the AED will deliver one or more shocks.
- Note: The AED will only deliver shocks if needed; if no shock is needed, no shock will be delivered.
- Continue CPR until the patient is responsive or a professional responder arrives and takes over.

Transition care to EMS

- Transition care to EMS upon arrival so that they can provide advanced life support.

Action to be taken by RCX Sports Administrative Staff

- Confirm the exact location and the condition of the patient.
- Activate the Cardiac Emergency Response Team and give the exact location if not already done.
- Confirm that the Cardiac Emergency Response Team has responded.
- Confirm that 9-1-1 was called. If not, call 9-1-1 immediately.
- Assign a staff member to direct EMS to the scene.
- Perform "Crowd Control" – directing others away from the scene.
- Notify other staff: facility administrators, athletic trainer, etc.
- Ensure that medical coverage continues to be provided at the athletic event if on-site medical staff accompanies the victim to the hospital.
- Copy the patient's emergency information for EMS.
- Notify the patient's emergency contact (parent/guardian, spouse, etc.).



Input AED locations at facility below

Facility Location Information

Facility & Name & Address _____

Facility Emergency Phone # _____

Cross Streets _____

AED Location _____ AED Location _____

AED Location _____ AED Location _____

AED Location _____ AED Location _____

MLS GO Cardiac Response Team

- The Cardiac Emergency Response Team shall be composed of individuals (administrators, RCX Sports staff members) who have current CPR/AED certification. It also includes an organization member who can call 9-1-1 and direct EMS to the location of the SCA.
- One of the members shall be designated as the Cardiac Emergency Response Team Coordinator.
- All members of the Cardiac Emergency Response Team shall receive and maintain nationally recognized training, which includes a certification card with an expiration date of not more than 2 years.
- As many other staff members as reasonably practicable shall receive training.

Resources:

- [Athlete Collapse Guidelines](#)
- [U.S. Soccer CPR and AED Training](#)



Concussion Policy

Below is a template that can be used when determining the Emergency Response Plan associated with concussions and return to play protocols. This should be edited according to the operations and locations of each MLS GO league.

All league operators must comply with U.S. Soccer’s prohibition and limitations on heading. For players 10 years old or younger heading is prohibited both during practice and games. For players ages 11, 12 and 13 heading is allowed in games but it is limited in practice to a maximum of 30 minutes per week with no more than 15-20 headers per player, per week.

What is a Concussion?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury—or TBI—caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. This sudden movement can cause the brain to bounce around or twist in the skull, creating chemical changes in the brain and sometimes stretching and damaging brain cells.

Medical providers may describe a concussion as a “mild” brain injury because concussions are usually not life-threatening. Even so, the effects of a concussion can be serious.

Concussion Signs and Symptoms

Athletes who show or report one or more of the signs and symptoms below, or that say they just “don’t feel right” after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body, may have a concussion.

Signs and symptoms generally show up soon after the injury. However, you may not know how serious the injury is at first and some symptoms may not show up for hours or days. Continue to check for signs of concussion after the injury and a few days after the injury. If an athlete’s concussion signs or symptoms get worse, they should be taken to the emergency department.

Concussion Signs Observed	Concussion Symptoms Reported
Can’t recall events prior to or after the hit or fall	Headache or “pressure” in head
Appears dazed or stunned	Nausea or vomiting
Forgets an instruction, is confused about a position, or unsure of game, score or opponent	Balance problems or dizziness, or double or blurry vision
Moves clumsily	Bothered by light or noise
Answers questions slowly	Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
Loses consciousness (even briefly)	Confusion or concentration or memory problems
Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes	Just not “feeling right” or “feeling down”



Concussion Danger Signs

In rare cases, a dangerous collection of blood (hematoma) may form on the brain after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body. Call 9-1-1 immediately, or take the athlete to the emergency department if they have one or more of the following danger signs:

Dangerous Signs & Symptoms of a Concussion
One pupil larger than the other
Drowsiness or inability to wake up
A headache that gets worse and does not go away
Slurred Speech, weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination
Repeated vomiting or nausea, convulsions or seizures (shaking or twitching)
Unusual behavior, increased confusion, restlessness, or agitation
Loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out). Even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously

Responding to a Concussion

MLS GO is committed to the health and well-being of our athletes and has developed the following Concussion Protocol following U.S. Soccer’s Recognize to Recover Safety Program.

Remove From Play

If the concussion is suspected or happens while participating in an MLS GO event coaches, staff and trainers will:

- Immediately remove the athlete from playing – “When in doubt, sit them out.”
- Keep them from play the day of the injury until they can be assessed by a qualified provider experienced in concussion management.

Athletes that return to play too soon have greater risk of a repeat concussion which can be more serious in nature.



Return to Play

After a concussion is diagnosed, an athlete may only return to competition if the parent or legal guardian of the athlete provides a signed statement of a provider of health care indicating that the athlete is medically cleared for participation in the competitive sport and the date on which the athlete may return to the competitive sport.

MLS GO recommends an athlete begin the return to play protocol only after being cleared to do so by a trained medical professional.

Under the supervision of a professional trained in concussion management, the below six gradual steps over the course of time, should help to safely return an athlete to play.

1. Back to regular activities – athlete is back to regular activities and has been cleared to begin the process for return to play.
2. Light aerobic activity – light aerobic activity meant to increase heart rate. Short time increments 5-10 minutes, walking, light jog or exercise bike. No weightlifting at this step.
3. Moderate activity/ Soccer Specific (non-contact) – Continue with activities that increases the athletes heart rate to include moderate jogging, brief running, moderate intensity stationary biking, moderate intensity, weightlifting (should be less than their typical routine was).
4. Heavy, Non-Contact Soccer Training Drills – Add heavy non-contact physical activity, such as sprinting/running, high intensity stationary biking, regular weightlifting routine, non-contact sport specific drills.
5. Full Contact Team Soccer Training – athlete may return to practice in a controlled setting.
6. Athlete may return to competition (if the parent or legal guardian of the athlete provides a signed statement of a provider of health care indicating that the athlete is medically cleared for participation in the competitive sport and the date on which the athlete may return to the competitive sport).

An athlete should only move to the next step if they do not have any recurring or new symptoms at the current step. If symptoms return the athlete will stop those activities and contact the medical professional involved in managing the return to play. When no symptoms are present, they may start the progression again at the previous step.



Creating a Safe Sport Culture

The MLS GO League Operator will create and enforce a safe sport culture that can lower an athlete's chance of getting a concussion and create an environment that allows them to feel comfortable in reporting symptoms of a concussion.

Enforce the Rules

The MLS GO League Operator will enforce the rules of the sport for fair play, safety and sportsmanship. Ensure that athletes always avoid unsafe actions. Explain to athletes that good sportsmanship is always expected both on and off the field.

References:

- [U.S. Soccer's Recognize to Recover](#)
- [Athlete Concussion Guidelines](#)
- [Concussion SCAT5 Child](#)
- [Concussion Daily Symptoms Checklist](#)
- [Concussion: Let's Take Brain Injuries Out of Play](#)
- [Fact Sheet for Athletes](#)
- [Fact Sheet for Coaches](#)
- [Fact Sheet for Parents](#)

CDC – Injury Center – Heads Up, Brain Injury Basics
(<https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/basics/index.html>)

- What is Concussion
- Concussion Signs and Symptoms
- Dangers Signs
- Responding to Concussion

Shape America – What PE Teachers should know about Concussion
(<https://www.shapeamerica.org/standards/guidelines/Concussion/default.aspx>)

ImPact Applications Inc. <https://impacttest.com/concussion-protocol-101-guide/>



Mental Health

MLS GO staff, coaches, referees, and parents should aim to create a safe and inclusive environment by understanding the importance of awareness of mental health issues amongst athletes. Please see the resources below to refer individuals to access the help they may need:

- [Mental Health Awareness Guide](#)
- [Recognize to Recover Mental Health Guide](#)

Injury Prevention

MLS GO staff, coaches, referees, and parents should aim to create a safe environment that keeps players on the field. Not all injuries can be avoided, but the probability can be reduced through proper warm up, good sportsmanship, protective equipment, and more. Below we include U.S. Soccer's Recognize to Recover injury prevention resources:

- [U.S. Soccer's Recognize to Recover Injury Prevention](#)
- [U.S. Soccer's Recognize to Recover Injury Recovery](#)

Environmental Conditions

Environmental conditions can significantly impact a player's health and safety. League operators must follow the information guidelines provided in U.S. Soccer Recognize to Recover program to ensure the safety of all participants. Recognize to Recover includes information and guidelines on heat & hydration, air quality, sun safety, cold weather, lightning & severe weather, field conditions, and CDC resources for healthy travel. U.S. Soccer Recognize to Recover Environmental Conditions guidelines can be found [here](#).

SafeSport

MLS GO is committed to providing a safe environment for all participants and requires league operator staff to take the U.S. Soccer SafeSport trained 90-minute course. In addition, staff must take a refresher course that is 30 minutes every year thereafter.

SafeSport courses cover topics that discuss Sexual Misconduct Awareness and Education, Mandatory Reporting and Physical and Emotional Misconduct. These training modules help prevent, recognize, and address any potential misconduct within MLS GO leagues.

SafeSport training will be provided through RCX Sports and will be offered to league operators at a discount. League operators will be required to manage the completion of the training with their league admins, volunteers, coaches and relevant participants and will be subject to regular audits by the RCX Sports team. League operators shall instruct their admins, volunteers, coaches, and any other relevant participant to retain copies of their SafeSport certificate(s) of completion for a period of five years.



Background Check Policy

MLS GO is committed to the safety of all individuals who participate in its programs or events, including without limitation minors and vulnerable adults. To help protect these individuals, MLS GO requires that each MLS GO League Operator conduct background checks, including a criminal record check and, where appropriate, a vulnerable sector check (where permitted and in compliance with applicable law) on all administrators, staff, volunteers, officials, coaches, and other on-field representatives of MLS GO League Operator with access to MLS GO participants. All background checks must be conducted using MLS GO's approved background check provider.

Policy Statement

This policy applies to the following individuals (collectively, the "Subjects"):

1. MLS GO League Operator employees and individuals MLS GO League Operator formally authorized, approved, or appointed to (a) serve in a position of authority over or (b) have regular contact with MLS GO athletes.
2. Coaches, assistant coaches, referees, on or off field representative, or personal care assistants who are funded, have a contractual obligation with, or are credentialed by MLS Go League Operator, or otherwise have regular contact with MLS GO athletes.
3. All other individuals listed in the MLS GO Adult Participants, Minor Athletes, and Exceptions Policy as "Adult Participants."
4. Individuals referenced in this subsection shall have 45 days after reaching the age of majority to come into compliance with this background check policy to participate in MLS GO events. An "MLS GO Event" is any MLS GO sanctioned activity.
5. Other individuals who have regular contact with MLS GO athletes, or who have one on one access to athletes, as determined by MLS GO, in its discretion.

Timing

A criminal background check covering a Subject utilizing the background check components set forth in Section IV ("Background Check Search Components") will be completed prior to the Subject's participation in an MLS GO Event. Thereafter, a criminal background check covering a Subject utilizing the Background Check Components will be conducted every two years for as long as that individual qualifies as a Subject.



Certification

In connection with the Club's annual registration with MLS GO, MLS GO requires the MLS GO League Operator to certify in writing that it is in compliance with the background check requirements of the Operator Agreement and all applicable federal, state, and local laws related to background checks.

Background Check Search Components

1. Social Security Number validation (e.g., Social Security Trace);
2. Name and address history records;
3. Federal prohibited person database/Federal Government Watch List search (OIG, OFAC, Terrorist Watch Lists);
4. Department of Justice National Sex Offender Registry;
5. Nationwide Criminal Database search;
6. Current County/state criminal record searches;
7. Unlimited County/state criminal record searches —7-year residence history;
8. All available state sex offender registries;
9. The Center for SafeSport Centralized and Disciplinary Database;
10. USSF Disciplinary Database;
11. Comprehensive International Records search for individuals who have lived outside of the United States for six consecutive months in any one country, during the past seven years; and
12. Professional License/Certification Verification for certain medical roles.



Screening Results

MLS GO Background Checks: Any criminal background check that is obtained pursuant to the terms of this Policy will report the findings of its search to the MLS GO League Operator based upon a “Red Light / Green Light” system.

- A “Green Light” or “meets the criteria” finding indicates that the background check did not identify criteria that would indicate that the individual is unsuitable for the intended role or activity.
- A “Red Light” or “does not meet the criteria” finding indicates that one or more of the below-listed criteria was flagged during the background screening process.

Unless otherwise prohibited by law, any of the following criteria appearing on a background check will result in a “Red Light” finding:

Any felony (any crime punishable by confinement of greater than one year).

Any lesser crime:

- a) In which sexual misconduct is an element or of a sexual nature to include but not limited to; rape, child molestation, sexual battery, lewd conduct, possession and distribution of child pornography, possession and distribution of obscene material, prostitution, indecent exposure, public indecency, and any sex offender registrant, including “victimless” crimes of a sexual nature (including pornography);
- b) Involving controlled substances or alcohol;
- c) Involving harm to a minor, including, but not limited to, offenses such as child abandonment, child endangerment/neglect/abuse, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, and DUI with a minor;
- d) Involving violence against a person (including crimes involving firearms and domestic violence);
- e) Involving stalking, harassment, breaking and entering, trespassing, false impersonation, blackmail, violation of a protection order and/or threats;
- f) destruction of property, including arson, vandalism, and criminal mischief;
- g) any sex offender registration;
- h) any violation noted in SafeSport’s centralized disciplinary database; or
- i) animal abuse or neglect.



Background Check Process

If a criminal background check results in a “Red Light” determination that is the result of a clerical or administrative error, the Subject will have an opportunity to challenge the correctness of the determination by contacting the applicable background check provider.

Upon re-review, if the Subject still receives a “Red Light” determination as a result of one or more offenses or other matters noted in his/her background report, the Subject will be informed of the decision in writing.

RCX Sports is responsible for individually reviewing each “Red Light” determination in accordance with applicable law and providing each Subject the opportunity to appeal the decision, to the extent required by law.

Any appeals must be decided by RCX Sports, who may consider any or all of the following during the review process (to the extent permitted by law):

- How long ago the applicable offense/conviction occurred
- The severity of the offense/conviction
- Whether the offense is directly related to the Subject’s expected duties or role; and any other explanation or information provided by the Subject relevant to the offense

Review of USSF Risk Management Database:

- RCX will check all names approved after background check against the USSF Risk Management List



MLS GO Defining Adult Participants Minor Athletes, Exceptions Policy

This policy uses the term “Adult Participants” to refer to those adults (age of majority and older) to whom these policies apply. Adult Participants are required to follow all policies included in the Athlete Safety Policy.

Adult Participants is defined as adult (age of majority and older) who is an MLS GO:

1. MLS GO League Operator or MLS GO Board Members, Officers, and Directors;
2. MLS GO League Operator or MLS GO Employees and Independent Contractors;
3. Coaches and Trainers;
4. Team Managers and Club Administrators;
5. MLS GO League Operators and Administrators;
6. Tournament Directors;
7. Athletic Trainers;
8. Referees.

This policy is issued to protect “Minor Athletes” who participate in MLS GO. A Minor Athlete is an amateur athlete under the age of majority who participates in, or participated within the previous 12 months in, MLS GO. Although this policy focuses in many areas on concerns unique to Minor Athletes, these may be applicable and are designed to protect participants of all ages.

Please note that a “Close in Age” Exception exists within the different components of this policy. This exception applies to certain policies and allows for “In-Program” contact between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete if:

- The Adult Participant has no authority over the Minor Athlete; and
- The Adult Participant is not more than four (4) years older than the Minor Athlete.



There are also exceptions for Adult Participant Personal Care Assistants (PCA) working with a Minor Athlete. A PCA is an individual who assists an athlete who requires help with the activities of daily living or in preparation for athletic participation. This support can be provided by a Guide for Blind or visually impaired athletes, or can include assistance with transfer, dressing, showering, medication administration, and using the restroom. When assisting a Minor Athlete PCAs must be authorized by the athlete’s parent/guardian. For a PCA to be considered an Adult Participant, the PCA must have Regular Contact with additional Minor Athlete(s) besides the Minor Athlete for whom they provide care. In these circumstances, the following requirements must be met before a PCA Exception will be granted:

1. The Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian must provide written consent to the MLS GO Team or MLS GO League Operator for the PCA to provide care/work with their Minor Athlete; and
2. The PCA must complete all training required by MLS GO; and
3. The PCA must meet all Background Check requirements of MLS GO

Further, Adult Participants with a dual role or relationship with a minor creates an exception to certain policies set forth within this document. A “Dual Relationship” exception exists when:

- An Adult Participant has a dual role or relationship with a Minor Athlete. The exception requires written consent of the Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian at least annually.
- Many of the exceptions require parent/guardian consent.
- Examples of a dual role relationship can include, but is not limited to:
 - i. Adult Participant who is a Parent/Guardian of a minor athlete;
 - ii. Adult Participant who is an Aunt/Uncle of a minor athlete; or
 - iii. Adult Participant who is a family friend of a minor athlete.

“In Program Contact” includes MLS GO events and facilities (including travel and lodging), but it also applies more broadly to sport-related interactions, and is defined as:

- Any contact (including communications, interactions, or activities) between an Adult Participant and any Minor Athlete(s) related to participation in MLS GO.

Examples of in-program contact include, but are not limited to: competition, practices, camps/clinics, training/instructional sessions, pre/post game meals or outings, team travel, review of game film, team- or sport-related relationship building activities, celebrations, award ceremonies, banquets, team- or sport-related fundraising or community service, sport education, or competition site visits.



MLS GO One-On-One Interactions Policy

MLS GO recognizes that youth-adult relationships can be healthy and valuable for development. Policies on one-on-one interactions protect children while allowing for these beneficial relationships. As child sexual abuse is often perpetrated in isolated, one-on-one situations, it is critical that organizations limit such interactions between youth and adults and implement programs that reduce the risk of sexual abuse.

One-On-One Interactions

Observable and Interruptible

All one-on-one In-Program Contact between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must be observable and interruptible, except in emergency circumstances. The exceptions below may apply to specific policies, and if the exceptions apply, they are listed in the policy.

These exceptions also apply to all one-on-one In-Program Contact not specifically addressed in other policies:

- When a Dual Relationship exists; or
- When the Close-in-Age Exception applies; or
- If a Minor Athlete needs an Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant, and:
 - i. the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent to the MLS GO League Operator for the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - ii. the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with MLS GO' required training; and
 - iii. the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with MLS GO' background check policy; or

In other circumstances specifically addressed in this policy that allow for certain one-on-one interactions if the applicable MLS GO team or MLS GO League Operator receives parent/ guardian consent.

Meetings and Training Sessions

Observable and Interruptible

Adult Participants must follow the one-on-one interaction policy in all meetings and training sessions where Minor Athlete(s) are present.



Individual Training Sessions

One-on-one, In-Program, individual training sessions must be observable and interruptible except if:

- A Dual Relationship exists; or
- The Close-in-Age Exception applies; or
- If a Minor Athlete needs a Personal Care Assistant, and:
 - i. the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent to the applicable MLS GO League Operator for the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - ii. the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the MLS GO' required training; and
 - iii. the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the MLS GO' background check policy.

The Adult Participant providing the individual training session must receive advance, written consent from the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian at least annually, which can be withdrawn at any time; and parents/guardians must be allowed to observe the individual training session.

Meetings with Licensed Mental Health Care Professionals and Health Care Providers (Other Than Athletic Trainers)

If a licensed mental health care professional or licensed health care provider meets one-on-one with a Minor Athlete at an MLS GO event or facility, which is partially or fully under MLS GO' jurisdiction, the meeting must be observable and interruptible except:

- If the door remains unlocked; and
- Another adult is present at the facility and notified that a meeting is occurring, although the Minor Athlete's identity needs not be disclosed; and
- At least two other Adult Participants are notified that the provider will be meeting with a Minor Athlete; and
- The provider obtains consent consistent with applicable laws and ethical standards, which can be withdrawn at any time.



Athletic Training Modalities, Massages and Rubdowns

All In-Program athletic training modalities, massages, or rubdowns of a Minor Athlete must:

- Be observable and interruptible; and
- Have another Adult Participant physically present for the athletic training modality, massage, or rubdown; and
- Have documented consent as explained below; and
- Be performed with the Minor Athlete fully or partially clothed, ensuring the breasts, buttocks, groin, or genitals are always covered; and
- Allow parents/guardians in the room as an observer, except for competition or training venues that limit credentialing.

Consent

Consent must be obtained from Minor Athletes' parents/guardians before providing any athletic training modalities, massages, or rubdowns. Minor Athletes or their parents/guardians can withdraw consent at any time.

Electronic Communications

Open and Transparent

All one-on-one electronic communications between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must be Open and Transparent except:

- When a Dual Relationship exists; or
- When the Close-in-Age Exception applies; or
- If a Minor Athlete needs a Personal Care Assistant, and:
 - i. the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent to the applicable MLS GO League Operator for the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - ii. the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the MLS GO required training; and
 - iii. the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with MLS GO's background check policy.

Open and Transparent means that the Adult Participant copies or includes the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian, another adult family member of the Minor Athlete, or another Adult Participant.

If a Minor Athlete communicates with the Adult Participant first, the Adult Participant must follow this policy if the Adult Participant responds.

Only platforms that allow for Open and Transparent communication may be used to communicate with Minor Athletes.



Team Communication

When an Adult Participant communicates electronically to the entire team or any number of Minor Athletes on the team, the Adult Participant must copy or include another Adult Participant or the Minor Athletes' parents/guardians.

Content

All electronic communication originating from an Adult Participant(s) to a Minor Athlete(s) must be professional in nature unless an aforementioned exception exists.

Requests to Discontinue

Parents/guardians may request in writing that their MLS GO League Operator, RCX Sports or an Adult Participant subject to this policy not contact their Minor Athlete through any form of electronic communication. Their MLS GO team, MLS GO League Operator, RCX Sports and the Adult Participant must abide by any request to discontinue, absent emergency circumstances.

Transportation

An Adult Participant cannot transport a Minor Athlete one-on-one during In-Program travel, except if:

- A Dual Relationship exists; or
- The Close-in-Age Exception applies; or
- If a Minor Athlete needs a Personal Care Assistant, and:
 - i. the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent to the applicable MLS GO League Operator for the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - ii. the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with MLS GO' required training; and
 - iii. the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the MLS GO' background check policy; and
 - a) The Adult Participant has advanced, written consent to transport the Minor
 - b) Athlete one-on-one obtained at least annually from the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian.
 - c) Minor Athlete(s) or their parent/guardian can withdraw consent at any time.
 - d) An Adult Participant meets the In-Program transportation requirements if the Adult Participant is accompanied by another Adult Participant or at least two minors.
 - e) Written consent from a Minor Athlete's parent/guardian is required for all transportation at least annually.



Lodging

Hotel Rooms and Other Sleeping Arrangements

All In-Program Contact at a hotel or lodging site between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must be observable and interruptible, and an Adult Participant cannot share a hotel room or otherwise sleep in the same room with a Minor Athlete(s), except if:

- A Dual Relationship Exists, and the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided the applicable MLS GO League Operator with advance, written consent for the lodging arrangement.
- The Close-in-Age Exception applies, and the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided the applicable MLS GO team or MLS GO League Operator with advance, written consent for the lodging arrangement; or
- If a Minor Athlete needs a Personal Care Assistant, and:
 - i. the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent to the applicable MLS GO team or MLS GO League Operator for the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - ii. the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the MLS GO' required training; and
 - iii. the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the MLS GO' background check policy.

Written consent from a Minor Athlete's parent/guardian must be obtained for all In-Program lodging at least annually.



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Major League Soccer is dedicated to supporting the communities where we live and play our games, and to providing an environment in which our staff, players, coaches, officials, partners and fans are treated with dignity and respect. MLS GO is an anti-racist, non-discriminatory program that supports diversity and inclusion in all aspects of the game. We know firsthand that the benefits of sport extend far beyond the field, and we're committed to providing an environment where people of all backgrounds can contribute and play in a safe, healthy and respectful setting. MLS GO will not tolerate discrimination based on age, race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other social identity category and/or defining characteristic. MLS GO players are able to participate in the program in a manner that is consistent with their gender identity.

To support and promote inclusion of all LGBTQ+ youth players, all representatives including coaches, game officials and program operators must abide by the following principals:

- Respect all players' gender identities, gender expressions, and use their preferred names and pronouns
- Anticipate and address any uniform problems or access issues
- Respect all players' rights to privacy, and not disclose any player's personal information without express consent (including, but not limited to, whether any player identifies as transgender or non-binary)
- Address discriminatory behavior based on any perceived or actual gender identity or gender expression of a player



MLS GO Prohibited Conduct Policy

It should be noted that all MLS GO players, coaches, referees, staff, volunteers, MLS GO league operators, on or off field representatives and attendees/spectators are subject to this Prohibited Conduct Policy. Prohibited behaviors include harassment, sexual harassment, racial, religious, or national origin harassment, child sex abuse, sexual misconduct, emotional misconduct, physical misconduct, bullying and hazing. All adult participants have an obligation to cooperate in any investigation of a complaint of misconduct, including providing all information concerning the complaint. Failure to do so may be a direct violation of this Prohibited Conduct Policy. Any violation of this Prohibited Conduct Policy may subject the individual to disciplinary action and MLS GO prohibits any retaliation against individuals making good faith reports of misconduct, including potential violations of this Prohibited Conduct Policy.

1. **Harassment** - repeated and/or severe conduct that causes fear, humiliation or annoyance, offends or degrades, creates a hostile environment, or reflects discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority or power over an individual or group based on age, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, national origin, or mental or physical disability; or any act or conduct described as harassment under federal or state law.
2. **Sexual Harassment** - any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, non-verbal, graphic, physical, or otherwise. Sexual harassment can also include harassment related to gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, which may include acts of aggression, intimidation, or hostility, whether verbal or non-verbal, graphic, physical, or otherwise, even if the acts do not involve conduct of a sexual nature.
3. **Racial, Religious or National Origin Harassment** - includes any verbal, written or physical act in which race, religion, or national origin is used or implied in a manner which makes a reasonable person uncomfortable in the environment. Examples include but are not limited to: jokes, which include reference to race, religion or national origin; the display of objects or pictures which adversely reflect on a person's race, religion or national origin; or use of pejorative or demeaning language regarding a person's race, religion or national origin.
4. **Child Sexual Abuse** - any sexual activity with a child is prohibited. This includes sexual contact with a child that is accomplished by deception, manipulation, force or threat of force, regardless of the age of the participants, and all sexual interactions between an adult and a child, regardless of whether there is deception, or the child understands the sexual nature of the activity.



5. **Sexual Misconduct** - any sexual interaction between an athlete and an individual with evaluative, direct, or indirect authority is prohibited. Such relationships involve an imbalance of power and are likely to impair judgment or be exploitative. This section does not apply to a pre-existing relationship between two spouses or life partners.

6. **Emotional Misconduct** - a pattern of deliberate, non-contact behavior that has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to another person. Non-contact behaviors include verbal acts, physical acts, or acts that deny attention or support; or any act or conduct described as emotional abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g. child abuse, child neglect). Emotional misconduct does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline or improving athletic performance.

7. **Physical Misconduct** - is defined as contact or non-contact conduct that results in, or reasonably threatens to, cause physical harm to another person; or any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g. child abuse, child neglect, assault). Physical misconduct does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline or improving athletic performance. For example, hitting and punching are well-regulated forms of contact in combat sports but have no place in soccer.

8. **Bullying** - intentional, persistent and repeated pattern of committing or willfully tolerating physical and non-physical behaviors that are intended, or have the reasonable potential, to cause fear, humiliation or physical harm in an attempt to socially exclude, diminish or isolate the targeted athlete(s), as a condition of membership are prohibited. Bullying does not include professionally accepted group or team behaviors that (a) are meant to establish normative team behaviors, or (b) promote team cohesion.

9. **Hazing** - coercing, requiring, forcing, or willfully tolerating any humiliating, unwelcome or dangerous activity that serves as a condition for (a) joining a group, or (b) being socially accepted by a group's members are prohibited. Hazing does not include professionally accepted group or team activities that (a) are meant to establish normative team behaviors, or (b) promote team cohesion.



UNIFORMS & EQUIPMENT ORDERING

Paying for Equipment

All orders can be paid by credit/debit card or ACH bank transfers through your league operator account. Paying with credit/debit card or ACH bank transfers will submit your order immediately for fulfillment.

All major credit cards are accepted. Paying by ACH bank transfer will require you to complete a verification process in the admin setting of your account. This process entails submitting your bank account information and confirming the totals of small deposits made in your account. This is a process that can take 3-5 days to complete.

Approved nonprofit and Parks & Recreation programs are eligible to pay by check sent by mail but will be required to provide a purchase order before these orders are submitted for fulfillment. All pay by check orders will have net 30 payment terms. Prior approval is required to use this payment option. For approval to use the pay by check option, email support@mlsgo.com

If you are a sales tax-exempt organization, please email your state sales tax exemption certificate to support@mlsgo.com for approval prior to placing your order.

Timetables

It is recommended that all orders are placed at least two (2) weeks prior to gameplay to account for processing, shipping, and auditing orders upon receipt.

All MLS GO orders will be fulfilled from the RCX Sports fulfillment center in Sylvan Lake, MI, and will ship via FedEx.



Bulk Order Processing Times

Ground Shipping

Refer to FedEx Ground Shipping Map for timeline. Please allow up to two (2) business days for Bulk order processing on ground orders during peak seasons.

Expedited Shipping Options

- Cut off time for same-day processing and shipping of all bulk orders is 10 am EST for all orders placed with FedEx Standard Overnight and FedEx 2Day options. FedEx Standard Overnight and FedEx 2Day refer to business days.
- Orders of \$5,000+ will require an additional one (1) business day processing time and cannot be guaranteed to be processed and shipped on the same day.
- If a bulk order is needed for Friday delivery for games over the weekend, orders need to be placed before 10 am EST Thursday of that week with FedEx Standard Overnight selected.

Pack by Team Order Processing Times

We offer a 'Pack by Team' option for an additional \$2.50/participant. All 'Pack by Team' orders will require a 4-business day processing time. Same-day processing of Pack by Team orders cannot be offered. Expedited shipping options can still be added to any order at an additional cost, but the four (4) business day processing times still apply.

Order Confirmation Emails

Once your order is placed and received by MLS GO, you will receive an order confirmation with your order number and full order details. When your order has shipped, you will receive a second email with the tracking number listed.

All orders can be tracked on www.fedex.com.

Checking Orders upon Arrival

Once your order is received, go through the entire order prior to passing out jerseys to your coaches and compare the order summary received via email. This order summary can also be found on the "orders" page for your league on your MLS GO Operator account.

Make sure to inventory every box.

If there are any issues with your order, please contact us at support@mlsgo.com or (470) 632-2350 and reference your order number from the packing slip. Please alert our team of any missing or damaged boxes in transit.



Need help with your order?

We have a team dedicated to supporting MLS GO and League Operators. If you have any questions or need help, the MLS GO Leagues customer service team can be reached by phone at (470) 632-2350 or by email at support@mlsgo.com Monday - Friday 9 am to 5 pm ET.

Official Equipment Package

As part of the per player licensing fee, each League Operator will receive an official equipment package that includes the following:

- MLS GO reversible, sublimated jersey featuring MLS team logos and colors
- MLS-branded uniform shorts and socks
- Two (2) soccer balls per team

Additional Apparel and Equipment

League Operators and participants will also have additional merchandise available for purchase. These items include:

- Coaches Shirts
- Cones



Exchange Policy

MLS GO has a No Refund Policy on equipment orders. We understand that last-minute registration changes occur, and we are willing to help address these situations by offering a one-time (1) per-season exchange policy. **

Details for Exchange

- \$25 exchange fee for restocking, processing, and shipping costs up to ten (10) items
- If exchanging more than ten (10) items, please complete and submit multiple forms as needed
- \$5 charge for each additional item exchanged
- A limit of 20% of the current season's order can be exchanged
- League Operator is responsible for shipping costs back to MLS GO
- Items can only be exchanged for items of matching value
- All items must be in NEW, UNWORN condition
- Exchange shipments will be processed once the original items have been received and checked in by the MLS GO team
- Exchange shipments back to customers are shipped with Ground Shipping only
- No express shipping options are available

Shipping Returns and Payment Options

A template exchange form can be found in the Appendix of this operator handbook.

Send all exchange requests to the following address

RCX Sports Fulfillment Center
Attn: MLS GO EXCHANGES
2240 Greer Blvd
Sylvan Lake, MI 48320



COACHES RESOURCES

Coaches of all experience levels are welcome in MLS GO. The MLS GO PLAYBOOK provides coaches with the tools to learn the game, run a training session, and manage a soccer game.

[MLS GO PLAYBOOK](#)

The PLAYBOOK is split into six age-specific, interactive manuals that give coaches a basic understanding of the physical, mental, technical, and tactical development of children between the ages of 4 and 14 and specific areas of focus for each age group. The curriculum includes hundreds of fun, age-appropriate training exercises and session-by-session practice plans for coaches and players between the ages of 4 and 14.

REFEREE RESOURCES

The role of an official or referee consists of 2 major functions:

- Ensuring player safety
- Game management/rule enforcement

Training

All referees will be expected to fully review the following documents prior to league play:

- [MLS GO Rulebook](#)
- [Grassroots Referee Profile](#)
- [Rules and Laws of the Game](#)

Additional resources including understanding of the game and understanding rules of play, can be found in the [MLS GO PLAYBOOK](#).

Prior to working a game, and upon completion of the onboarding and training process, all officials are expected to know and understand the rules for gameplay.



SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

DON'T

League operators are not allowed to register or apply to register any domain or social media account containing or including the MLS GO name, logo, or any mark or word confusingly similar to the MLS GO name. This includes using the words “MLS GO” and/or logo within profile handles, usernames, names, picture and/or avatar.

DO

As best practice, league operators can include the MLS GO name within their social media bio. Designations of their affiliation with MLS GO within text of the social media bio could include:

- Official league operator of MLS GO
- Official MLS GO league operator
- Official partner rec league of MLS GO
- Official MLS GO partner rec league

Unauthorized or incorrect usage of the MLS GO name and logo will be flagged and MLS GO staff will request that league operators promptly remove or rectify it.



APPENDIX

Incident reports should be used anytime an incident or injury occurs during a league event. This includes, but is not limited to: an athlete requires ice/band aids from a staff member, a parent/guardian reports inappropriate conduct, a fight breaks out an event, a referee complains of unfair treatment from spectators etc.

Incident Report Form

The following form should be submitted to _____ whenever a violation of MLS GO' _____ policy occurs.

Incident Report

Particulars of incident:

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Type of incident (please circle below):

Injury Illness Environmental Notifiable Event Abuse
Other: _____

Reported by: _____ Phone: _____
Role in the event: _____ Email: _____
Relationship to the victim: _____

The injured/abused person:

Name: _____ Address: _____
Age: _____ Phone: _____

Parent/Guardian Information (if a minor):

Name: _____ Address: _____
Phone: _____ Other Parent/Guardian Name: _____

The alleged abuser/offender

Name: _____ Address: _____
Age: _____ Phone: _____ Gender: M F

Witness(s):

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____
Name: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____
Name: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____



Describe the incident:

Describe any illness or injury: *What part of the body is affected and how?*

Describe the nature and extent of injury/abuse: *What damage was caused and how?*

Describe any property damage: *What damage was caused and how?*

Analysis: *What do you think caused or contributed to the incident?*

Prevention: *What action has been taken to prevent a reoccurrence?*

Have all preventative actions been reviewed and determined by Event Management, and implemented?

	Yes	No
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Signature:

Date completed:

PLEASE FILL OUT IN THE EVENT OF ABUSE:

Was there any indication of prior abuse/neglect? Explain.

Circumstances under which you became aware of the abuse:

Physical and/or behavioral indicators identified:

Names/information of other children in the household:

Name: Age:

Name: Age:

Name: Age:

Name: Age: