



## CHERRY BLOSSOM RULES

Updated for 2024

### RULES

FIFA, with modifications as published below.

### FORMAT OF PLAY

- U9 - U10: 7v7 (5 players minimum to start the game)
- U11 to U13: 9v9 (6 players minimum to start the game)
- U14: 11v11 (7 players minimum to start the game)

### SUBSTITUTION

Unlimited substitutions (with the referee's permission) will be allowed at the following times:

1. prior to a throw-in by either team only when team in possession chooses to substitute
2. prior to a kick-off
3. prior to a goal kick by either team
4. prior to a corner kick by either team, only when team in possession chooses to substitute
5. upon issuance of a yellow card (only players involved may be substituted. If so, the opposing team may substitute a like number)
6. on an injury – only players involved may be substituted; if so, opposing team may substitute a like number.

### GAME LENGTH

U9 and U10 games will have 25-minute halves with a maximum of 5-minutes for half-time. U11 and older will have 30-minute halves with a maximum of 5-minutes for half-time.

Semi-finals (if needed) and final games that end in a tie will result in two 5-minute extra time periods (no sudden death). Semi-finals (if needed) and final games that remain tied after both halves of extra time will be decided by FIFA's penalty shootout procedure.

### GUEST PLAYERS

All players MUST be registered in MSI's LeagueApps registration system. You may add guest players, so long as they have been invited to your Cherry Blossom team through LeagueApps and have signed the applicable waivers. Roster sizes will be based on the maximum size of roster in your age group during the Spring season.

### AGE GROUPS

U9 Age Group (2015)

- Players born in calendar year 2015
- Players born between July 1 and December 31, 2014, so long as those players are enrolled in 3rd grade (the primary grade for the U9 Age Group)

U10 Age Group (2014)

- Players born in calendar year 2014
- Players born between July 1 and December 31, 2013, so long as those players are enrolled in 4th grade (the primary grade for the U10 Age Group)

U11 Age Group (2013)

- Players born in calendar year 2013
- Players born between July 1 and December 31, 2012, so long as those players are enrolled in 5th grade (the primary grade for the U11 Age Group)

#### U12 Age Group (2012)

- Players born in calendar year 2012
- Players born between July 1 and December 31, 2011, so long as those players are enrolled in 6th grade (the primary grade for the U12 Age Group)

#### U13 Age Group (2011)

- Players born in calendar year 2011
- Players born between July 1 and December 31, 2010, so long as those players are enrolled in 7th grade (the primary grade for the U13 Age Group)

#### U14 Age Group (2010)

- Players born in calendar year 2010
- Players born between July 1 and December 31, 2009, so long as those players are enrolled in 8th grade (the primary grade for the U14 Age Group)

#### U15 Age Group (2009)

- Players born in calendar year 2009
- Players born between July 1 and December 31, 2008, so long as those players are enrolled in 9th grade (the primary grade for the U15 Age Group)

#### U16 Age Group (2008)

- Players born in calendar year 2008
- Players born between July 1 and December 31, 2007, so long as those players are enrolled in 10th grade (the primary grade for the U16 Age Group)

#### U18 Age Group (2006)

- Players born in calendar year 2006
- Players born between July 1 and December 31, 2005, so long as those players are enrolled in 12th grade (the primary grade for the U18 Age Group)

### **DIVISION WINNERS**

Standings will be determined on the basis of points awarded per game, as follows:

- 3 points for a win
- 1 point for a tie
- 0 points for a loss

In the event of a tie in standings points, division ranking will be decided as follows:

1. Head-to-head competition
2. Most wins
3. Fewest goals against
4. First goal scored in head-to-head game (first team that scored within the game)
5. Goal differential between total goals scored and conceded in group play, up to a maximum of +3 goal difference per game
6. Fewest discipline points (1pt for yellow card, 2 pts for red card)
7. FIFA penalty shootout procedure – **to take place 15 minutes prior to first semi-final (if applicable) or final**

In the event that more than two teams are tied, the above tiebreakers will be applied until such time as one or more teams "fall out" of the tie. **At that point, the remaining "tied teams" will return to the first tiebreaker and have the process re-applied.** This process will occur until all ties have been broken.

### **ADVANCEMENT TO SEMIFINALS and/or FINALS**

**4-team Group:** After all group games have been played, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place teams shall advance to the Final.

**5-team Group:** This will be run as a league with all teams playing every other team in the group. Winners will be decided based on the standings after all games are played. There will be no final game.

**6-team Group:** Teams will be divided into two groups of three teams each. Within each group, following the completion of Saturday's group games, the teams shall be ranked 1-3. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place teams shall advance to Sunday's semifinals to play vs the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> place teams in the opposite group. The two 3<sup>rd</sup> place teams shall advance to play in Sunday's Consolation game.

**8-team Group:** Teams will be divided into two groups of four teams each. After all group games have been played, the 1<sup>st</sup> place team from both groups shall advance to the Final.

**9-team Group:** Teams will be divided into three groups of three teams each. Within each group, following the completion of Saturday's group games, the teams shall be ranked 1-3. The three "Group Winners", along with one "Wild Card" team (the best 2<sup>nd</sup> place team), shall advance to Sunday's semifinals. The "1<sup>st</sup> Group Winner" shall play the "Wild Card" team, while the "2<sup>nd</sup> Group Winner" shall play the "3<sup>rd</sup> Group Winner", unless the "1<sup>st</sup> Group Winner" and "Wild Card" teams come from the same group (in which case, the "2<sup>nd</sup> Group Winner" shall play the "Wild Card" team, and the "1<sup>st</sup> Group Winner" shall play the "3<sup>rd</sup> Group Winner". All other teams advance to Consolation games. Note: the losing team in semifinal #2 will advance to play a 4<sup>th</sup> game in "Consolation #3", to facilitate all teams getting to play at least 3 games. Ranking of teams shall follow the same Tiebreaking procedures indicated above, and any unresolvable ties shall be resolved by event management.

**Semifinal and Final Games:** These games must proceed until there is a "winner". As such, if the game is tied at the conclusion of regulation time, the game shall advance immediately to two 5-minute overtimes. There shall be no break between overtime periods, simply an immediate "switching of ends". If the game is tied at the conclusion of both overtime periods, it shall be settled by FIFA penalty shootout (5 penalties per team, followed by sudden death rounds, if necessary).

#### **FORFEITS**

Any team that forfeits any game will automatically forfeit the result of all of its games and may not advance to a semifinal or final game. This includes games actually played as well as un-played, in order to be fair to all teams. Forfeits will be recorded as a 3-0 result.

#### **PROTESTS**

All decisions made by the referee and tournament directors are final and binding. No protests are allowed.

#### **GENERAL CONDUCT**

Players receiving a red card or a total of two yellow cards during the tournament will be ineligible for their team's next game. MSI reserves the right to suspend or expel any player, coach, or spectator from the tournament for unruly conduct.

No coaches, spectators, or substitutes are allowed between the penalty area and the end line, or beyond the end line. Spectators and parents should set up on the opposite side of the field from coaches and players.

#### **REFEREE REPORT**

The referee of each game will record their official written game report in the field marshal's notebook, including the final score, the name and number of each coach, player, or person cautioned or sent off, and reason for any such disciplinary action. The coach of each team must sign the game report at the end of each game and must provide the name of any individual having received a yellow or red card.

#### **HEADING**

Heading the ball is prohibited in U11 games and younger. At age group divisions U11 and younger, whenever the ball strikes a player in the head, play is stopped. If deliberate, then the proper restart is an indirect free kick to the opposing team. If this occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred. If the play by the head is deemed inadvertent, then the proper restart is a dropped ball.

## **UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT**

Shinguards are mandatory for all players. Home team must change to an alternate jersey in the event of a color conflict. The home teams is also responsible for providing a game ball.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

If inclement weather forces cancellation after at least half of a regulation game has been played, the game shall be considered official and the score at the point of cancellation shall be recorded as the final score. The decision on whether a game will be "cancelled or recommenced" (if the referee agrees to resume play) will be made by the tournament directors, recognizing that there is limited time available to do so. If a game must be stopped before halftime, the result will be given as a 0-0 tie, unless one team already has a two goal advantage (i.e. 2-0 or 3-1 at the time the game was cancelled). Regardless of weather conditions, it is the responsibility of all affected teams to monitor the status of their games (via LeagueApps) and to appear with their team ready to play as scheduled by the tournament directors. The referee, tournament directors, or field marshal may postpone any game. Once the decision is made to cancel a game, that decision is final. In all cases, MSI reserves the right to abbreviate or shorten all games in order to adjust to weather or other complications that may occur.

## **U9 AND U10 SPECIFIC RULES**

### **Build-out Lines**

Build-out lines are indicated by cones placed halfway between the goal line and the halfway line.

Rules during open play:

- When the goalkeeper gains possession of the ball, players from the opposing team must retreat behind the build-out line. The referee and opposing team's coach should give reminders.
- The six-second count for the goalkeeper does not begin until players have retreated behind the build-out line.
- The referee may issue an indirect free-kick for the team in possession if the opponent is persistent in refusing to retreat behind the build-out line. Continued infractions can be considered misconduct (yellow card).
- Once the goalkeeper releases the ball and it is touched by a second player, opponents may cross the build-out line, and play continues normally.
- If the ball crosses the build-out line before being touched by a second player, play continues normally.
- The goalkeeper is NOT required to wait for opponents to retreat. If the goalkeeper decides to play the ball earlier, it is in play and all players may continue normally.
- The goalkeeper may NOT punt or drop-kick the ball over the build-out line. Play is resumed with a roll, throw, or normal play with the feet. All such actions put the ball into play.
- If a goalkeeper punts or dropkicks the ball, an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. Referee's can have the discretion to give a team a warning and stop play to return the ball to a goalkeeper after a punt and allow them to restart the game with a pass or roll the ball into play.
- If the punt or dropkick occurs within the goal area (not penalty area), the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the nearest point to where the infringement occurred.

Rules during goal kicks:

- When a goal kick is awarded, all members of the opposing team must retreat behind the build-out line. The referee and opposing team's coach should give reminders. Persistent refusal to retreat behind the build-out line can be considered misconduct (yellow card).
- The team in possession has no restrictions on their positioning. They may be on either side of the build-out line as well as in their own penalty area. The ball does not have to leave the penalty area before it is touched.
- The opposing team may cross the build-out line once a second member of the team in possession has touched the ball.

- If the goal kick travels beyond the build-out line without being touched by a second player, play resumes normally.

*Offside:* In 7v7 soccer, a player is not considered offside until they are beyond the build-out line and in an offside position.

*Miscellaneous:* The build-out line is not applied to any other restarts (throw-ins, free kicks) aside from goal kicks.

### **U9/U10 Goalkeeping**

Goalkeepers may only play one half of each game in goal.

Goalkeepers may not punt the ball from their hands. After one warning, an offending punt will result in an indirect free kick to the opposing team from the spot of the offense.