

**VINEYARD FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION  
BY-LAWS**

**JANUARY 1, 2005**

The current Federation International de Football Association (FIFA) and United States Soccer Federation (USSF) rules of play shall be in effect, except as specifically stated otherwise in these by-laws.

**I. Philosophy**

- A. Vineyard Football Association (VFA) was established for the purpose of bringing together the diverse cultures that exist on Martha's Vineyard through organized soccer.
- B. VFA is focused primarily on the amateur adult soccer community with a secondary focus on supporting youth development organizations such as the Friends of Vineyard Soccer (FOVS) and the Atlantic Football Club (AFC).
- C. VFA shall strive to create an environment where all sponsors, clubs, managers, players, spectators and referees can enjoy a competitive, fair and safe soccer experience.
- D. VFA shall set policy and encourage the integration of the various cultures existing on Martha's Vineyard with the intent of reducing the divisive effects of ethnocentrism while promoting the development of new relationships through fellowship.

**II. Eligibility**

- A. There is no age or gender requirement for participation in VFA, however all players who are minors must have a VFA waiver form signed by their parent or guardian.

### **III. Registration**

- A. VFA shall select clubs for participation in its league(s) as specified in Article 1.6 of VFA Constitution.
- B. Clubs shall consist of one (1) Sponsor who shall provide game shirts and/or one (1) Manager who will represent the club at all VFA meetings.
- C. A total of two (2) additional players may be assigned to a club before the draft provided they are full-time employees and/or immediate family members of the sponsor.
- D. Clubs shall request a uniform color approval from the VFA Board of Directors prior to production.
- E. All players shall register with the VFA by completing a VFA Registration form and paying associated fee. VFA Registration forms, outlets and due dates shall be set by the VFA Board of Directors.
- F. All VFA clubs shall be selected by way of player draft by the club sponsor, manager and/or representative(s). VFA date, time and location shall be set by the VFA Board of Directors.
- G. Only properly registered and paid VFA players shall be considered for the team draft.
- H. The order of draft selection shall be determined by a method of chance agreed to by the club sponsor, manager and/or representative(s).
- I. The club sponsor, manager and/or representative(s) shall separate the player registration forms into groups according to listed primary positions (i.e. Goal Keepers, Defenders, Midfielders and Forwards)
- J. The player selections shall be completed in order of predetermined draw until the last selection who then selects again, reversing the order back to the first. (i.e. 1,2,3,4,5,6,6,5,4,3,2,1,1,2,3,4,5,6...)
- K. The VFA Registrar shall attend the draft and document all club sponsor, manager and/or representative(s) player selections. The VFA Registrar shall retain all player registration forms and provide club sponsor, manager and/or representative(s) with a club roster including names and phone numbers.

- L. The number of clubs in any league, uniform colors and number of players selected for each club during registration shall be determined by the VFA Board of Directors.
- M. The player draw registration process may be changed under special circumstances to allow for a pre-formed team(s). The VFA Board of Directors shall decide on all such action and set conditions including but not limited to club fees, rosters and player age eligibility.
- N. No players shall be added to or transferred between clubs unless approved by the VFA Board of Directors.

#### **IV. Rosters**

- A. Each club shall provide the VFA Registrar with a copy of their registration roster with a uniform number assigned for each player at least fourteen (14) days prior to the first scheduled match.
- B. VFA Registrar shall update the registration rosters and prepare an official club roster for each club in the league. The official list of league clubs, club shirt color, club rosters and match schedule shall be provided to the VFA Board of Directors and clubs at least seven (7) days prior to the first scheduled match.
- C. Each club manager shall be responsible for its official club roster and shall bring it to every match. Failure to produce an official club roster prior to a match shall result in forfeit.

#### **V. Uniforms and Equipment**

- A. A regulation #5 game ball shall be provided by the home club.
- B. Equipment shall consist of matching uniform shirts with clearly legible and unique numbers, shin guards and shoes meeting FIFA requirements.
- C. Player shirt numbers must match their numbers on the official club roster; any exception must be disclosed to the referee and the opposing club manager prior to commencement of the match. Failure to comply with this rule shall result in forfeit.

- D. A Goalkeeper must wear shirt of a color that is different from his/her club and of the opponent club.
- E. A Goalkeeper playing as a position player must wear a numbered uniform shirt.
- F. In the event of similar color uniform shirts, the home club shall use alternate color uniform shirts or vests. In such cases, numbers are not required.
- G. No jewelry or wrist watches of any kind can be worn by players during matches.
- H. No hard casts of any nature can be worn by players during matches.

## **VI. Officials**

- A. A Referee will be assigned by the Central Referee Assignor appointed by the VFA President subject to the approval by the VFA Board of Directors.
- B. If a referee fails to appear, the home team is responsible for providing a substitute agreeable to both clubs. If the clubs cannot agree on a substitute referee, they may reschedule the match with the Central Referee Assignor subject to the approval by the VFA Board of Directors.
- C. The referee shall be the official match time keeper.
- D. In the event that a team(s) forfeits a match due to lack of attendance, the referee will receive full payment.
- E. Referee relations shall be handled by the VFA Referee Committee. Any suggestions, problems or concerns regarding the referee must be placed in writing and forwarded to the VFA Referee Committee.
- F. Referees must submit an official match report to the VFA Referee Committee. Referees shall retain photo copies of their original match report for their own records.

## **VII. Number of Players**

- A. A maximum number of players per club shall be twenty (20).
- B. A Minimum of seven (7) players must be on the field at the start of a scheduled match to constitute a legal game. A club's failure to reach the minimum shall result in a forfeit.
- C. A club which legally starts a match but goes below the minimum as a result of ejections during the match will forfeit the game.
- D. A club which legally starts a match but goes below the minimum as a result of injury during the match shall continue the match or request a forfeit.

## **VIII. Pre-Games**

- A. All clubs shall establish their bench areas along the north (Vineyard Haven) sideline.
- B. Prior to each match, each club shall provide the referee and the opposing club manager its official club roster. A club's failure to produce an official club roster prior to a match shall result in a forfeit.
- C. The referee shall confirm each player and shirt number with the official club roster. Verification must be via picture ID (driver's license, immigration card, passport, registry of motor vehicle picture ID or any other form of ID that officially ties a name to a picture). Club managers shall collect and keep copies of this player information prior to the first match which will expedite pre-game roster confirmation.
- D. A player not listed on the official club roster is ineligible to play.
- E. Players wearing uniform shirt numbers that differ from the official club roster shall play upon informing both the referee and opposing club manager.

## **IX. Match Time and Place**

- A. Matches shall be played on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings at 5:30 pm (1730 ET) and 6:45 pm (1845 ET) or as indicated in the schedule.
- B. All matches shall be played at Veteran's Memorial Field located behind the US Post Office in Vineyard Haven.
- B. Clubs must be present on the field of play fifteen (15) minutes prior to scheduled kickoff.
- C. Clubs shall have a ten (10) minute grace period after the scheduled start time of each match to field the required seven (7) players.
- D. Clubs that fail to field the required seven (7) players after the grace period shall forfeit.

## **X. Playing Periods**

- A. Normal playing period will consist of two (2) thirty (30) minute halves.
- B. No overtime will be played in regular season matches.
- C. All matches shall be completed except that, in the event a match is cancelled due to inclement weather or other hazards, the match will:
  - 1. be replayed entirely if at least thirty (30) minutes remain to be played.
  - 2. if there remain fifteen (15) minutes or more to be played, the amount of time remaining shall be played as an addendum to the next match between the two clubs, and the result shall stand.
  - 3. if less than fifteen (15) minutes remain, the result of the match at termination shall stand.
- D. All 5:30 pm (1730 ET) matches shall end at 6:45 pm (1845 ET) sharp - regardless of time played. The result of the match at termination shall stand.
- E. All 6:45 pm (1845 ET) matches shall end after sixty (60) minutes of play or earlier due to darkness at the discretion of the referee. The result of the match at termination shall stand.

## **XI. Substitutions**

- A. All player substitutions shall assemble at the bench sideline at mid-field and signal to the referee.
- B. Unlimited substitutions are allowed during matches with the consent of the referee and at the following times:
  - 1. Goal Kicks
  - 2. Goals Scored
  - 3. Half-Time
  - 4. When ball is stopped for injury and injured player is substituted
  - 5. Own throw-ins, both clubs if thrower club substitutes

## **XII. Cautions and Ejections**

- A. A player ejected from a match cannot play in the next match played. A player ejected (red carded) from two (2) matches cannot play in the following two (2) matches and is subject to further action by the VFA Board of Directors. A player ejected from three (3) matches is automatically suspended for the remainder of the season and is subject to further action by the VFA Board of Directors. All suspensions apply to play-offs, all-star, inter-island and off-island matches.
- B. Ejected players are to leave the field of play and the vicinity of the playing area as defined by the referee. If an ejected player refuses to vacate the field and its vicinity or causes dissent the referee shall stop the match, and the player's club shall forfeit the match. The player in question shall be subject to disciplinary action by the VFA Board of Directors.
- C. Any time a player accumulates six (6) yellow cards in one season he will be suspended from participating in the next game. This suspension shall count as one (1) ejection (red card). Accumulating an additional six (6) yellow cards, totaling twelve (12) for the season, will result in immediate suspension for that individual.
- D. A club which receives a total of fourteen (14) yellow cards (one (1) red card = two (2) yellow cards) within one (1) season shall be penalized three (3) points in their standings. A club with twenty (20) yellow cards will be penalized an additional three (3) points in their standings and shall be subject to disciplinary action by the VFA Board of Directors.

- E. The VFA Disciplinary Committee shall have the authority to suspend until the next board meeting any player(s) involved in physical and/or violent acts.
- F. Physical and/or violent acts committed against an opponent or referee shall not be tolerated within the VFA. Sponsors, Managers, and players who commit such an infraction shall be subject to immediate and severe action, pending a meeting of the VFA Board of Directors.

### **XIII. Fair Play Award**

- A. At the end of each season, a Fair Play award will be granted to the club exhibiting the best commitment to sportsmanship and fair play. This award will be based largely on lowest card accumulation and referee reports.
- B. The VFA League Commissioner shall calculate and recommend the recipient club subject to approval by the VFA Board of Directors.

### **XIV. Results and League Standings**

- A. Three (3) points shall be awarded for a win or a forfeit.
- B. One (1) point shall be awarded for a tie.
- C. Zero (0) points shall be awarded for a loss or a forfeit.
- D. All results and cautions shall be called into the VFA League Commissioner by the home team no later than twenty four (24) hours after the game.
- E. If clubs are tied with points the following rules shall be used to break the tie:
  - 1. Goal difference
  - 2. Goals against
  - 3. Head to Head competition
  - 4. Coin toss

#### **XV. Postponed Matches**

- A. All postponed matches must be rescheduled within seventy two (72) hours and played prior to the last scheduled day for make-up matches as stipulated by the VFA Board of Directors.
- B. It is the responsibility of the home club to reschedule the match.
- C. If there is no agreement to reschedule between the clubs involved within seventy two (72) hours, the VFA League Commissioner shall reschedule the match.
- D. All postponed matches must be played. Any club not showing for a rescheduled match will forfeit the match.

#### **XVI. Forfeits**

- A. Any club which fails to appear at the field on time and without the specified minimum number of eligible players without prior notification to the VFA League Commissioner (at least twenty four (24) hours) shall receive a forfeit.
- B. All clubs that win by forfeit are granted a (2-0) win.
- C. All clubs that loose by forfeit are granted a (0-2) loss.

#### **XVII. Cancelled Play-off Matches**

- A. If any play-off final is canceled due to adverse weather conditions and cannot be rescheduled amicably between the two clubs the VFA League Commissioner or a neutral assignee shall reschedule the match. The club which declines to play at the time and place designated by the VFA League Commissioner or a neutral assignee shall forfeit the match.

### **XVIII. Protests**

- A. The VFA League Commissioner shall be chairman of the Protest Committee, unless the case involves a direct conflict of interest. In this case, another VFA board member shall chair the committee. The Protest Committee shall consist of five (5) at large members appointed by the VFA President subject to the approval of the VFA Board of Directors.
- B. Match protests must be submitted in writing by the club manager and postmarked within seventy-two (72) hours of the match date. All protests shall be mailed to the VFA League Commissioner or appropriate VFA board member with a fifty dollar (\$50) fee.
- C. A protest of any VFA Board action shall be submitted within seventy-two (72) hours of the notification. If the fine is not upheld, or is protested, payment must be made by the next registration date. Failure to do so will void the registration of such club(s).
- D. If a protest is upheld, the fee shall be refunded to the club manager.

### **XIX. Conduct**

- A. All members of a club are expected to conduct themselves in a manner befitting the VFA, its league, and the individuals who play in it.
- B. Any club, sponsor, manager, player or spectator verbally or physically abusing the referee and/or his/her property or an opponent club, sponsor, manager, player or spectator will be dealt with severely, up to, and including being banned from the VFA League for life.
- C. All clubs, sponsors, managers, players and spectators are expected to observe United States Federal Laws, Massachusetts State Laws and Tisbury Town By-Laws which supercede these VFA by-laws.
- D. All clubs, sponsors, managers, players and spectators are subject to arrest, prosecution, fine and/or imprisonment for violating United States Federal Laws, Massachusetts State Laws and Tisbury Town By-Laws which supercede these VFA by-laws.