Article #1

**Rule 1 - The Field of Play**  Major League Soccer fields may have a minimum width of 65 yards and a maximum width of 100 yards, and fields may have a minimum length of 100 yards and a maximum length of 130 yards.

**Rule 2 - The Ball**  The official Mitre Game Ball of Major League Soccer will have a circumference of 27" - 28" and a weight of 14 oz.- 16 oz.

**Rule 3 - Number of Players**  Each team consists of 11 players, one of whom must be the goalkeeper. A maximum of three substitutes, plus a substitution at goalkeeper, may be used. If an MLS team substitutes its 'keeper during a match, he shall not count as one of the three allowed field player substitutes.

**Rule 4 - Player Equipment**  A player's uniform must consist of shirt, shorts, socks, shinguards and shoes. The goalkeeper must wear colors which distinguish him from the other players, the referee and the referee assistants.

**Rule 5 – Referees**  One referee and two referee's assistants and a fourth official, are appointed for each match. The referee is responsible for control of the game and his/her decisions regarding facts connected with play are final.

**Rule 6 - Referee's Assistant**  Two referee assistants will assist the referee by indicating offside, when the ball is out of play, which team is entitled to a corner kick or throw in, or goal kick, substitution request and by indicating other misconduct or any incident that has occurred out of the view of the referee.

**Rule 7 - Duration of the Game**  The game shall be divided up into two equal periods of 45 minutes each. If an MLS match is tied after 90 minutes, two "golden-goal" overtime periods, consisting of five minutes each, will attempt to determine the winner. Should the game remain tied, the contest is declared a tie.

**Rule 8 - The Start of Play**  A flip of a coin decides which team will kick off. Each team must stay in its own half of the field and the defending players must be at least 10 yards from the ball when it is kicked. After a goal, the team scored upon will kick off. After halftime, the teams change ends and the kickoff will be taken by the opposite team to that which started the game. A second toss of the coin precedes the second overtime.

**Rule 9 - Ball In and Out of Play**  The ball is out of play when (a) it has wholly crossed the goal line or touchline, whether on the ground or in the air, or (b) when the game has been stopped by the referee. The ball is in play at all other times.

**Rule 10 - Method of Scoring**  A goal is scored when the whole of the ball has passed over the goal line, between the goal posts and under the cross bar, whether on the ground or in the air.

**Rule 11 - Offside**  A player is in an offside position if he is nearer to his opponent's goal line than both the ball and the second last opponent unless: i) he is in his own half of the field of play, or ii) he is level with the second last opponent or two last opponents. A player in an offside position is only penalized if, at the moment the ball touches or is played by one of his team, he is, in the opinion of the referee, involved in active play: i) interfering with play or with an opponent, or ii) gaining an advantage by being in that position. A player shall not be declared offside by the referee i) if he receives the ball direct from a goal-kick, a corner-kick, a throw-in, or when it has been dropped by a referee. If a player is declared offside, the referee shall award an indirect free kick, which shall be taken by a player of the opposing team from the place where the infringement occurred, unless the offense is committed by a player in the opponent's goal area, in which case the free-kick shall be taken from any point within the goal area.

**Rule 12 - Fouls and Misconduct**  A direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following 6 offenses in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless or using excessive force: (a) kicks, (b) trips, (c) jumps at, (d) charges, (e) strikes, (f) pushes. A direct free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following 4 offenses: (g) holds, (h) spits, (i) deliberately handles the ball, or (j) tackles an opponent to gain possession of the ball, making contact with the opponent before touching the ball. A penalty kick is awarded if any of the above 10 offenses is committed by a player inside his own penalty area, irrespective of the position of the ball, provided it is in play. An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player, in the opinion of the referee, commits any of the following offences: (a) dangerous play, (b) impedes the progress of an opponent, or (c) prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands. An indirect kick will also be awarded if the goalkeeper: (a) takes more than four steps while controlling the ball with his hands, before releasing it, (b) touches the ball again with his hands after it has been released from his possession and has not touched any player, (c) touches the ball with his hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him by a team-mate, (d) touches the ball with his hands after receiving it directly from a throw-in taken by a teammate, or (e) wastes time. A player is cautioned and given a yellow card if he commits any of the following offences: (a) unsporting behavior, (b) shows dissent by word or action, (c) persistently infringes the Laws of the Game, (d) delays the restart of the game, (e) fails to stand the required distance for a corner kick or a free kick, (f) enters or re-enters the field without the referee's permission, or (g) deliberately leaves the field of play without the referee's permission.  A player is sent off and shown the red card if he commits the following offences: (a) guilty of serious foul play, (b) guilty of violent conduct, (c) spits on an opponent or any other person, (d) denies an opponent a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball, (e) denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent moving towards the player's goal by an offence punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick, (f) uses offensive language, or (g) receives a second caution in the same match.

**Rule 13 - Free Kick**  Free kicks are classified into two categories: "Direct" (from which a goal can be scored directly against the offending side) and "Indirect" (from which a goal cannot be scored unless the ball has been touched by a player other than the kicker before entering the goal). For all free kicks the offending team must be at least 10 yards from the ball or the goal line until the ball is kicked.

**Rule 14 - Penalty Kick**  A penalty kick is a direct free kick taken at the penalty mark. All players except the player taking the kick and the goalkeeper must stay outside the penalty area and be at least 10 yards from the ball (hence the arc at the edge of the penalty area).

**Rule 15 - Throw In**  When the ball has wholly crossed the touchline, it is put back into play by a throw-in from the spot where it went out and by a player from the opposite team to the player who last touched it. A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in, another player must touch it first..

**Rule 16 - Goal Kick**  When the ball has wholly crossed the goal line after being last touched by a player from the attacking team, it is put back into play by a kick from the goal area by the defending team.

**Rule 17 - Corner Kick**  When the ball has wholly crossed the goal line after being last touched by a player from the defending team, it is put back into play by a kick by the attacking team from the corner on the side the ball went out.

**Article #2**

**Kicking:** It involves shooting at the goal, putting the ball in play, or putting the ball into a particular area of the field. A good player can kick the ball accurately in many ways with either foot.

**Dribbling:** Enables a player to keep possession of the ball while running. Faking makes dribbling more effective. A player may fool an opponent by faking a pass or a shot and then dribbling. The player may also fake a dribble in one direction and then dribble in another.

**Header:**  Hitting the ball with the head. It sometimes is the only legal way a player can reach the ball in the air. A player may use the head to pass the ball, intercept an opponent's pass, or shoot at the goal. Good players can head the ball long distances with great power and accuracy.

**Passing:** When a player kicks the ball to his/her teammate. Short passes generally are more effective than long ones, which involve a larger margin for error.

**Shooting:** When a player kicks the ball at the opponent's net in an attempt to score a goal.

**Trap:** When a player uses his body to slow down and control a moving ball, most often using his chest, thighs or feet.

**Turning with the ball:** The act of receiving the ball when facing one's goal and turning, with the ball under control, to face the opponent's goal.

**Article #3 Positions**

**DEFENSE PLAYERS:**  Right Fullback, Left Fullback, Sweeper, Stopper

**Functions of Fullbacks:** Ability to create width (spread out) the attacking offense.  Man to Man marking (man-to-man defense) or space marking (zone defense).  Create balance for cover.  Start the attack out of the Defensive end.

**Functions of Stopper:** To defend against opponent's center forward. To deny the ball to opposing forwards.  To help support the mid-fielders.  Must possess following attributes:  Ability to mark (defend) tightly.  Speed.  Intensity.  Strength.

**Functions of Sweeper:**  Must be aware at all times of the following:  Where the ball is....  Where the opponents are...  Where the teammates are...  Where the goal is...  Where the off-sides is...  Where the goalie is...

**MID-FIELD PLAYERS:**  Right Mid-Fielder, Left Mid-Fielder, Center Mid-Fielders (also known as Half-Backs)

**Functions of Mid-Fielders:**  Creativity.  Distribution of the balls to proper channels (passing lanes).  Must possess the rhythm or flow of the game.  Vision and pace.  Ability to see and/or change the point of an attack.  Possess Offensive and Defensive skills.

  **FORWARDS:** Right Wing, Left Wing, Center Forward

**Functions of Forwards:**  Shooting.  Scoring.  Heading.  Dribbling.  Maintaining postion (creating space)  Speed.  Pass and move.