



2026 RULES

YOUTH SOCCER

WOOSTER RECREATION

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COACHES

COACHES EXPECTATIONS

- On the sideline coaches are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner.
- Only 2 coaches will be permitted on the bench side of the field. If there has been a mentee assigned to a team from either the girls or boys high school soccer team, then three coaches will be permitted on sideline.
 - If there are more than 2 coaches, the unapproved coaches will be asked to move to the spectator side. If coaches refuse, they will be escorted off of the complex resulting in a 2 game day suspension.
- All coaches must be registered with the Wooster Recreation Department and have all required certifications on file. We encourage all schools to perform background checks on anyone who has youth in their programs.
 - All coaches will be required to take a Concussion Certification online training at www.NFHSLearn.com. This certification is free of charge, valid for 3 years, and must be turned in before a coach is permitted to work with athletes. If any coach is found working with athletes prior to completing this Concussion Certification, that coach could be expelled from the league and the school may be fined.
- During a game, coaches must stay on their own side of the field and may not cross over the mid-field line.
 - The only exception would be if an injury has taken place.
- Coaches are required to direct all parents/spectators who are watching from behind/beside the goals to go behind the dashed lines. The referee will not start the game until all spectators are behind the dashed lines.
 - Anyone who refuses to move will be escorted off of the complex by the Supervisor resulting in a 2 day suspension.
- Head coaches are responsible for asking for clarification on a call made during the game.
- Assistant coaches and players must take their concerns to the head coach who may then ask about a call or ruling. Keep in mind, asking for clarification on a call or ruling should be for educational purposes only, not to be argumentative.
- If approved by the Program Coordinator, there may be accommodations made during a game. The assigned official will be aware of any accommodations. Any unapproved accommodations will not be allowed.

COACHES BEHAVIOR

- Coaches are expected to be a positive role model on and off the field.
 - Coaches should be a positive example for players on both teams, officials and spectators at trainings and games.
- All communication should be positive and encouraging in nature.
- Any coach who receives a "red card" will be suspended for at least 2 game days, from issuance of Red Card. This includes any contact with team at practices and games.
 - Any coach who receives a second "red card" during the calendar year will be suspended for an undetermined amount of time based on the actions leading up to the "red card".
 - Coaches will also be included in the Sportsmanship Rating for their team.
- If at any time a player, coach or spectator gets ejected from a game, they will be given an automatic 2 game suspension. Notification will come from the Wooster Recreation Department.
- Approaching an official after a game in any negative manner is not permitted.

PARENTS & SPECTATORS

EXPECTATIONS & BEHAVIOR

- Parent and spectator behavior is a direct reflection of the school they represent and will be included in the sportsmanship rating for their team.
- Profanity, offensive gestures, or derogatory comments will not be permitted. Anyone who does not adhere to this will be required to leave the facility immediately, resulting in a 2 game day suspension.
- Parents/spectators are permitted to cheer for goals and good plays as well as encourage the kids from the sidelines.
- Parents/spectators may not be located on the same side of the players bench, or behind/beside the goals while watching a game. **All spectators must sit opposite of the bench and must be behind the dashed lines at all times.**
 - Parents/spectators who refuse to watch from the behind the dashed lines will be escorted off of the complex resulting in a 2 game day suspension.
- If at any time a player, coach or spectator gets ejected from a game, they will be given an automatic 2 game day suspension. Notification will come from the Recreation Department.

EJECTIONS & SUSPENSIONS

- A verbal warning will first be given to anyone who does not adhere to our rules, regulations and guidelines. This verbal warning can be given by an official or Recreation Supervisor. All verbal warnings will be documented with the Recreation Department
- After a verbal warning, a written warning will be given to an individual who does not adhere to our rules, regulations and guidelines. A written warning will come in letter form from the Recreation Department and the school representatives will also receive a copy.
- If an individual does not adhere to our rules, regulations and guidelines for a third time, a suspension will be issued by the Recreation Department. The suspension can range from 2 game day to season long depending on the severity of the infraction.
- If at any time a player, coach or spectator gets ejected from a game, or asked to leave a facility they will be given an automatic 2 game day suspension. Notification will come from the Recreation Department.
- The Wooster Recreation Department reserves the right to remove any coach or spectator for any reason, at any time. Additional action may be required if necessary, including banning attendance from games as spectators and removing any future coaching rights.
- The Wooster Recreation Department will contact the appointed representative for the individual receiving the warnings or suspension.

GAME RULES

LENGTH OF GAME

- 1st & 2nd grades, 3rd & 4th grades, 5th & 6th grades – 25 minute halves with a 2 minute half time break.
- Regional – 30 minute halves with a 5 minute half time break.
- Running Clock – clock does not stop for substitutions or balls going out of play.
- If there are any circumstances (weather etc.) that cause a referee to shorten the game, he/she may do so as long as both coaches are notified.
- The game will not begin until all players/coaches/spectators are in their designated areas.

BALL SIZE

- 1st & 2nd grade teams – Size 3 (provided by the Wooster Recreation Department)
- 3rd & 4th grade teams – & 5th & 6th grades – Size 4
- Regional Teams – Size 5

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

- 1st & 2nd grades – 5 v 5
- 3rd & 4th grades – 7 v 7
- 5th & 6th grades – 9 v 9
- Regional Teams – 11 v 11

PLAYING TIME

- Due to this league being recreational in nature, **EQUAL PLAYING TIME** is to be awarded to all players on a roster at the youth and regional levels.
- No individual may participate in more than 3 halves in any one day unless approved by Program Coordinator before game day.

PLAYER UNIFORM/EQUIPMENT

- Each player (except the goalie) on the same team must wear the same color shirt/jersey.
- Players MAY NOT wear jewelry including but not limited to earrings, bracelets, rings, hair clips and necklaces.
- Players MAY NOT place tape over newly pierced ears or permanent jewelry.
 - Any player who cannot remove jewelry will not be permitted to play until they are removed.
- Cleats, if worn, must have a molded bottom. Stud cleats may not be worn.

GOAL SCORING

- A goal is scored when the whole ball has crossed the goal line, between the goal posts and under the cross bar.
- The result of a soccer game is determined by the margin of goals scored.

TIES/TIE BREAKERS

- There are no tie breakers in regular season play.
- If a score is tied at the end of the game clock the game results are final.

SCORE DIFFERENTIAL

- One team ahead by 4
 - With the permission of the referee any time during the game if the score differential becomes more than 4 goals the team that is losing may add a player to the field of play.
 - If the score differential becomes 3 or less the team must remove their extra player.
 - All levels
- One team ahead by 6
 - With the permission of the referee any time during the game if the score differential becomes more than 6 goals the team that is losing may add a second additional player to the field of play.
 - If the score differential becomes less than 6 the team must remove their second extra player.
 - 3rd – 8th Grade
- If the losing team does not have any subs then the winning team must remove a player at the same goal differentials.
- **1st & 2nd Grade may only add up to ONE player due to field size.**

START OF PLAY

- Coin Toss
 - Prior to the kick off the official will do a "coin toss" with representatives from each team.
 - The team who wins the coin toss will be able to choose one of the following options:
 - Start with the ball.
 - Which side of the field they would like to defend.
 - If the team who wins the coin toss elects to start with the ball the team that didn't win the coin toss will then have the chance to pick the side of the field they defend.
- Kick-off (will alternate each half)
 - To start the game.
 - To start the second half.
 - After a goal has been scored.
- A player standing near the center line kicks the ball to a fellow player. After the ball moves the game is officially started. The player who kicked the ball first may not touch the ball until it has been touched by another player.
- Possession of the ball at the start of the game is determined by a coin toss.

HEADERS

- All players 10 years of age and under shall not head the ball directly from the air in any match or competition, nor shall these players practice heading the ball in any organized team setting.
- If a player age 10 or younger deliberately heads the ball in a match, the referee shall award an indirect free kick to the opposing team at the spot of the infraction. If the heading occurs within the penalty area, the referee shall move the ball outside the penalty area and award an indirect free kick to the opposing team.
 - **Headers are NOT ALLOWED at any of the following levels:**
 - 1st & 2nd grades
 - 3rd & 4th grades
 - 5th & 6th grades*
 - Some players may practice heading the ball in an organized team practice or skill session, but coaches shall monitor this practice so that no single player heads the ball more than 25 times per week, regardless of setting.
 - Headers ARE ALLOWED in Practice at the following levels:
 - Regional Teams
 - *6th graders (aged 11 or 12) in a combined 5th & 6th grade team
 - **Headers ARE ALLOWED in Games at the following level;**
 - Regional Teams

GOAL KEEPER

- Must wear a separate jersey that is distinguishable from their teammates and opposing team.
- Goalkeeper has 6 seconds to put ball in play.
- Goalkeeper may not use hands out-side of 18 yrd. box.
- A goalkeeper cannot use hands on a kickback from another teammate.
- On saves goalie can throw the ball or put it on the ground and play using their feet.
- Goalie may not punt or drop kick the ball. (Exception goalie may punt and dropkick at the Regional Level)

BALL IN & OUT OF PLAY

- The ball is not out of play until the whole ball has crossed the sideline or endline. If any part of the ball is touching the line it is still in play.
- When shooting at the goal, the ball must cross the entire goal line for it to count as a goal.
- Any ball striking a referee, goal post, corner posts and remaining on the field is in play.
- Continue to play the ball until the referee blows his or her whistle as they will be making the call.

OFFSIDES

- Offsides is not called at the 1 st & 2nd grade or 3rd & 4th grade level.
- It is not against the rules to be in an offside position when the player is not directly involved in the play.
 - There is no offsides if a player receives the ball directly from
 - a goal kick
 - a throw-in
 - a corner kick
 - or if the player is on their own defensive side of the field
- A player is considered to be in an offside position if he or she is lined up behind the last defender when the ball is passed to them while advancing toward an opponent's goal.
- A player is considered offsides if they move from an offsides position to an onsides position to receive the ball when it is passed.

THROW INS

- Throw Ins will be awarded after the whole ball crosses the sideline. The team that didn't touch the ball last will be awarded the throw in.
 - Rules for a Throw In
 - Both feet must be out of bounds (on or behind the sideline) when the throw is made.
 - The ball must be thrown using both hands directly over the head.
 - Both feet must be in contact with the ground at the time the ball is released from the players hands.
 - Throw Ins that are not executed correctly will be awarded to the opposite team.
- Official can call for substitutions if the team throwing in has players on the line to substitute.

GOAL KICKS

- Goal kicks are awarded when the ball (after being kicked by the offense) crosses the goal line.
 - Rules for a Goal Kick
 - The ball must be placed on or behind the 6 yd box (the goal box) and played at the sound of the referees whistle.
 - The ball does not need to clear the penalty area before it is touched by another player.
 - Any player is permitted to take a goal kick.

SUBSTITUTIONS

- Generally substitutions are made prior to a throw-in by your team, after a goal, prior to a goal kick by either team, at halftime, or because of injury.
- Referees may allow a substitution at ANY stoppage in play.
- In order to sub players, all players going in are required to be on the mid field line and be called on by the referee.
 - Any player who is not on the mid field line trying to go into the game will not be able to go in until they are on the mid field line and get called in by the referee.
- Substitutions are allowed for the team that has possession. If subbing, the opposing team may also sub.
 - Referee has final say on when substitutions can be made and who is allowed to sub in.

CORNER KICKS

- A corner kick is awarded when the ball crosses the goal line, after it was last touched by a defensive player (exception – if the ball crosses the goal line and result is a goal e.x. an Own Goal).
 - Rules for a Corner Kick
 - A player on the attacking team places the ball on the quarter circle nearest the flag post on the side of the goal where the ball went out.
 - The defending team must remain 10 yrds from the ball until it is kicked.
 - The player who takes the kick may not touch the ball a second time until another player from either team has touched the ball.
 - Goals may be scored off of corner kicks.

PENALTY KICKS

- A penalty kick is awarded after a serious rule infraction takes place in the penalty area.
- A penalty kick is a direct kick usually taken 12 yrds from the goal line.
 - Rules for a Penalty Kick
 - All players except the goalie and the kicker must stay outside of the penalty area.
 - The goalie must stand on the goal line and may only move laterally until the ball has been kicked.
 - Once the ball has been kicked, all players may move into the penalty area.
 - The player who takes the kick may not touch the ball a second time until another player from either team has touched the ball.

FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

- When a foul is called it may result in a direct or indirect kick.
 - Direct Kick – A kick that is awarded that can be either passed to a teammate or an attempt at a shot on goal.
 - Kicking
 - Holding
 - Tripping
 - Pushing
 - Slide Tackle
 - Hand Ball
 - Violent Charging
 - Charging from Behind
 - Striking an Opponent
 - Indirect Kick – A kick that is awarded that must be touched by another player before a goal is scored.
 - Dangerous playing (high kicking)
 - Charging away from the ball
 - Charging the goalkeeper when he/she doesn't have the ball
 - Opponent obstruction
 - A goalkeeper takes more than 6 seconds to put ball in play
 - A goalkeeper using his/her hands on a kickback from another teammate

BUILD-OUT LINES

- The build-out line promotes playing the ball from the back in a less pressured setting.
- A build-out line will be used for only 1 st & 2nd grade age group.
- This line is located halfway between the midfield and the penalty box.
- When the **goalkeeper** has the ball in his or her hands during play from the opponent, the opposing team must move behind the build out line until the ball is put into play and **has made contact** with another offensive player.
 - Once the opposing team is behind the build out line, the goalkeeper can pass, throw or roll the ball into play (punts and drop kicks are not allowed)
 - After the ball is put into play and has made contact with an offensive player, the opposing team can cross the build out line and resume playing.
 - A goalie may play a saved ball immediately; however doing so removes the rule of opposing team having to move behind the build-out line.

TEAM RULES & GUIDELINES

SPECIAL PARTICIPATION RULES

- Travel and Club Players must play in the "A" Division, in all age groups.
- Players **MAY NOT** be rostered on more than one team.
 - If a team knows they will have less than the number of players needed (5, 7, 9 or 11) they may borrow a player from the same or lower division. Any borrowing of players must be approved by the Recreation Department prior to game day.
 - Players are NOT permitted to play more than 3 halves (1 full game and 1 half of another game) in a day unless approved by the Program Coordinator.
- Girls may fill in and help out on a boys' team on an as needed basis. However, the girl may not take the place of boys already playing on the team. The rule of equal playing time still applies and they need to be in the same or lower division.
- All players are required to be enrolled in the school their club/association is associated with. Players who do not attend or are enrolled in the school they are playing for will not be eligible to participate.
 - Homeschooled players must play for the school district their home resides in.
- **If a team is using players from a different school, higher division or grade, they will not be permitted back into this league.**

REGIONAL TEAMS

- Regional teams will play High School Rules.

SPORTSMANSHIP

- Teams, including: players, coaches, parents, and spectators, will be rated by scorekeepers and officials after every game. The Recreation Department will use these Sportsmanship Ratings to monitor behavior during the season and for end-of-the-season sportsmanship awards.

OFFICIALS

- At least one soccer official will be assigned to referee each scheduled game.
 - A second official may be assigned to referee a game if they are currently learning how to become an official.
- Referees who are currently students in High School will be identified with an ORANGE armband. This armband will serve as a visual cue to all players, coaches, parents and spectators that they are also a youth participant in our program, and are in the process of learning how to become an official. Please keep this in mind when interacting with them at the soccer complex.
- The referee is in charge of ensuring that the games are being played fairly, cleanly and in the spirit of friendly competition. ***A Sportsmanship rating will be conducted at the conclusion of the game by the official.**
 - Every call does not have to be made; a referee may call out "play on" to keep play in progress without giving an unfair advantage to either team.
 - Referees should verbalize and use hand signals when making all calls. This will give children instruction and clarification as to what actually occurred.
 - The decision of the referee is final.
- Coaches, Players, Parents or Spectators may not yell at, badger or degrade a referee if they do not agree with a call and they may not approach a referee after a game for any reason.
 - Any Coach, Player, Parent or Spectator that confronts an official in a negative manner before, during or after a game will be escorted off of complex resulting in at least a 2 game day suspension.

SUPERVISORS

- There will be at least one trained supervisor on the soccer complex at all times.
 - The Supervisor will likely be driving the City of Wooster golf cart.
- The Supervisor is there to help with any injuries, conflicts, schedule changes or weather cancellations.
- The Supervisor has the final decision on any conflict that may arise with coaches, players, parents or spectators.
 - If receiving a red card or being escorted off of the complex by the Supervisor, the individuals are required to leave the premises and not return for up to 2 game days.
- If a Supervisor feels they are being harassed, threatened or followed in any way they are obligated to call higher authority.

ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

- Team Player Rosters/Waivers
 - Any player needing to be added to a team roster after it has been turned-in must be done so through the coordinator in charge of the Youth Soccer Program.
 - No player can participate without a signed waiver and name on a Team Roster that is approved by the league.
- School Representatives
 - The designated representative is the only individual to contact the Program Coordinator about any issues with officials, opponents, coaches, parents or anything regarding the season.
 - The Wooster Recreation Department will not communicate with any coaches, parents or spectators unless it is us enforcing rules before, during or after games at the complex.
 - Each participating school district is responsible for the conduct of its coaches, players, parents/guardians and fans. If we experience any issues with a member of your school district or association's team, your team may be held responsible, and we reserve the right to reevaluate its participation in any of our leagues or programs.
 - It is the responsibility of the representative to evaluate the fitness of all coaches for your school district or association's program.
 - Approved Representatives are the only individuals who may register their established and approved association to participate in the Wooster Recreation Department League.
 - Any coach/parent who has concerns about the organization of, or something that has taken place during the soccer program are expected to bring concerns up to their program representative. The program representative will then reach out to the coordinator in charge of the Youth Soccer Program.
 - A reasonable effort will be made to address concerns that are brought up throughout the season by the Recreation Department.

WEATHER

- If thunder or lightning is heard or seen, the Supervisor will blow the air horn and all teams, parents and spectators are required to be off of the soccer complex for at least 30 minutes.
 - Every thunder or lightning will restart the 30 minute timer.
 - If games are in the 1st half, they will continue as long as there is still time left in the game once the timer is up.
 - If games are in the 2nd half, the remainder of the game will be cancelled.
 - Once officials get the go ahead to return to their field, teams, parents and spectators can also return and games can start.
- To know if your game has been cancelled call the Recreation Weather Line (330) 263-5203.
- Cancellations will also be posted on the Recreation Department's Facebook page.

CONTACT

- Department Address - 241 S. Bever St. Wooster, OH 44691
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