

**OHIO VALLEY  
SOCCER  
LEAGUE RULES**

**3-15-2003**

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## **0.0 PURPOSE OF OHIO VALLEY SOCCER LEAGUE**

- 0.1 The purpose of OVSL is to encourage the development of leagues, clubs, associations, organizations and programs so that soccer is made available to youth at all levels of competition in the mid-Ohio Valley.
- 0.2 The following are specific goals of OVSL:
  - a) Encourage the development and practice of good sportsmanship
  - b) Emphasize the principles of fair play
  - c) Promote good character
  - d) Promote the growth of soccer in the mid-Ohio Valley
  - e) Instruct, train and educate players, coaches, and referees
  - f) Give every child a chance to experience soccer.
  - g) Help every child appreciate soccer as the 'Rules of the Game' intended to encourage sportsmanship, good manners, self-discipline, and a healthy team attitude.
  - h) Provide every child the opportunity to develop and acquire the motor and mental skills required to play soccer.
  - i) Encourage every child to have fun while developing soccer skills.
  - j) At the recreational level, give every child the opportunity of playing for different coaches. This promotes the league philosophy of team effort, total participation and skill development while avoiding the 'win-first' mentality.
  - k) Provide limited financial assistance for children to participate in the program (board approval required).

## **1.0 RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS, COACHES, PLAYERS AND FANS**

### **1.1 PARENTS RESPONSIBILITIES**

- a) Do not just send your child to a practice or match. Get involved by volunteering your time! Every coach will welcome your help. It is often echoed, "...but, I don't know anything about soccer". The same could be said of almost every coach when they first started. The experienced coaches started as "green" parents with an interest and willingness to help.
- b) Try to learn the rules of soccer. They are very simple. Attend a "rules clinic" or ask your coach to explain rules that you do not understand.
- c) Practice the basic skills with your child at home. It will show them that you care and it will help you to appreciate how difficult some of the skills really are.
- d) Make sure your child attends every practice.
- e) Make sure your child has a good night's sleep before practices and matches.
- f) Make sure your child has an appropriate meal well before a practice or match.
- g) Help your child to remember to notify the coach in advance if they must miss a practice or match.
- h) At soccer matches shout encouragement, not criticism. Keep yourself under control at all times. Do not scold your child, their coach, opponents or referees. Remember that the program is about learning soccer skills and having fun. Winning is NOT the main objective.
- i) Abide by the decisions of your child's coach concerning playing time for your child. Every coach should attempt to play every child at least 50% of every game. If you disagree with a coach's decision, talk to him/her at the next scheduled practice. Do NOT attempt this during or after a game. If you still have difficulties, please discuss with any member of the Board of Directors.
- j) Provide feedback to the coaches and Division Coordinators throughout the soccer season. Certain issues may be worthy of immediate attention.

### **1.2 COACHES RESPONSIBILITIES**

- a) The major responsibility of a coach is to provide an atmosphere of fun and learning. A coach should constantly be mindful that they are teaching children who have voluntarily agreed to play and learn soccer. These children

do not understand the game of soccer as most adults. Winning is not as important as having fun.

- b) Each coach should pause after every practice/match and ask: “Are my expectations truly consistent with my players’ abilities?” Be realistic about your expectations as a coach. Don’t push children too hard! Make practices and games FUN, while teaching them soccer skills.
- c) Coaches are expected to practice the basic philosophy of the league and learn the Rules of Soccer. Coaches should teach soccer rules to players and parents.
- d) Coaches are expected to identify and train their replacements by involving interested parents at practices and games. Be supportive of their interest. By involving others, new volunteers can be added to the program.
- e) **Coaches must be in control of themselves at all times – both at practices and during matches. Uncontrolled or unsportsman-like conduct will be subject to review by the Board of Directors.**
- f) Coaches are expected to practice their teams a minimum of once a week.
- g) Coaches should have their teams in proper attire and ready to play (on-time) at all games. Each member of the team should be notified before each practice and before each match. Encourage 100% attendance and participation every session.
- h) Coaches are expected to play every child at least 50% of the time in every game. Similarly, every coach is expected to see that every child experiences some “bench time” during matches.
- i) Coaches are expected to practice and train “good sportsmanship” at all times.
- j) Coaches of every team are responsible for their schedules. Any changes or problems must be taken up with the division coordinator two weeks in advance of the affected League Schedules.
- k) Coaches may ask a referee for an explanation of a call or “no call”. However, the referee need not answer the question during the game or may give a brief explanation.
- l) Referees shall utilize yellow carding (warning) and red carding (ejection) to enforce the OVSL Coach and Fan Behavior Rules. If a coach is given a red card, that person shall leave the field area. Any coach receiving a red card shall not be permitted to attend as a coach or fan the next game played by the coaches team.

m) The Board suggests that coaches read to their parents the entirety of Section 1 of this Rules Manual.

n) Coaches should “facilitate” the following objectives of the NATIONAL SOCCER COACHES ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA:

**1. YOUNG PLAYERS MUST HAVE FUN**

a) The best coach is the one whose players, after a practice or match, can say, “I HAD FUN! SOCCER IS A LOT OF FUN.

b) The most important commodity of the coach is enthusiasm. Enthusiasm for the child and enthusiasm for soccer.

c) Let the kids “PLAY” soccer, not “WORK” soccer.

**2. Young players must be put into situations where they experience success.**

i) Practice sessions and matches must be organized to facilitate success

ii) As players increase competency, raise the level of difficulty, but ensure that they still experience success.

**3. Coaches must be perceived as one who is happy, helpful, knowledgeable, teachers of soccer, only deals with positive reinforcement, etc.**

**4. Young players should perceive “winning” as a very low priority. Coaches must emphasize trying hard and playing for the fun and excitement of playing.**

**1.3 PLAYERS RESPONSIBILITIES**

a) Actively participate in the program.

b) Attend all practices. Be on time for practices and games. Notify your coach well in advance if you are not going to be at a practice or game.

c) Pay attention to the skills that your coach is trying to teach. Practice those skills at home.

d) Foot speed and stamina are important aspects of soccer. Run regularly to keep yourself in good playing shape.

- e) Give your best effort at all times.
- f) Learn and play by the rules.
- g) Be yourself and play within yourself at all times.
- h) Have fun!!!
- i) A player receiving a red card will be instantly ejected from the game and the team must play with a man short for the remainder of the game in progress. An ejected player will not be allowed to play in the following scheduled game in OVSL. This rule applies to all age brackets.

#### **1.4 FAN RESPONSIBILITIES**

- a) The game of soccer is for the benefit of our children and above all should be fun for the participants.
- b) Fans should encourage players at all times.
- c) Demeaning action or language directed at any player by coaches or fans will not be tolerated. No cursing or swearing is permitted by coaches or fans. Uncontrolled or unsportsman-like conduct will be subject to review by the Board of Directors. Fans can be restricted from games for repeated uncontrolled or unsportsman-like behavior.
- d) The referee is in complete control of the game and shall be treated with respect and dignity at all times by coaches and fans. Comments about referees are to be directed to the Coordinator of Referees (Dave Jones 2003).
- e) Coaches are responsible for fan behavior and shall take all necessary actions to control inappropriate fan behavior and shall assist the referee in controlling fan behavior when requested to do so by a referee.
- f) Referees shall utilize yellow carding (warning) and red carding (ejection) to enforce the OVSL Coach and Fan Behavior Rules. If a fan is given a red card, that person shall leave the field area. Any fan receiving a red card shall not be permitted to attend the next game played by the coach's team.

## 2.0 TEAM SELECTION PROCESS

### 2.1 AGE DIVISIONS

- a) OVSL will support coed programs in every individual age bracket up to age 17, provided enough children register to support play. At least four teams per age bracket are required. The Board of Directors shall decide from season-to-season the age bracket make-up based on registered player applications.
- b) It will generally be required that two age brackets be combined so that a minimum of four teams can be created. Normal age brackets (combined) will be as follows unless specifically altered via approval of the Board.

<b>Age Bracket</b>	<b>Birth Date for 2002-2003 Season</b>	<b>Birth Date for 2003-2004 Season</b>
U14, U13 Boys & Girls	8/1/88 to 7/31/90	8/1/89 to 7/31/91
U12, U11 Boys & Girls	8/1/90 to 7/31/92	8/1/91 to 7/31/93
U10, U9 Boys & Girls	8/1/92 to 7/31/94	8/1/93 to 7/31/95
U8, U7 Boys & Girls	8/1/94 to 7/31/96	8/1/95 to 7/31/97
U6 Boys & Girls	8/1/96 to 7/31/97	8/1/97 to 7/31/98

- c) In some seasons it may be necessary to combine more than one age bracket (as shown above) to ensure that four teams can be created. For instance, combining some players from U10 with U12, U11. If this becomes necessary, parental approval will be required before moving younger players up to the higher age level bracket.
- d) When the number demand becomes sufficient, the program will provide a "Girls Only" Division. None is planned for the program at this time because of insufficient numbers.
- e) A child, with the consent of the Division Coordinator and parent, may play up into the next division. Older children and skilled players may be encouraged to do so.
- f) Children younger than the cutoff for the U6 division are eligible to play if so requested by the parent. Parents should assess the physical development of their child versus other children in this age bracket before registering the child for U6. Skills Day provides an opportunity for this assessment, but is not mandatory.
- g) Under no circumstances can these age requirements be disregarded in order that a child plays down a division, except as follows: 1) Girls may play down one (1) year; 2) Boys that are over 14 years of age but

still in the eighth grade are exempt from the 14 year old rule and can play in the U14 bracket.

## **2.2 ASSIGNMENT OF PLAYERS TO TEAMS**

Team rosters in each age Division will be determined each fall season and will be applicable for the spring season. Rosters will be determined as follows:

- a) The purpose will be to create teams with children of equal skills
- b) Children will be evaluated by the coordinators, coaches, and volunteers at a required Skills Day. Skills Day is not a try-out for the program. Everyone that signs up plays! Skills Day helps the coordinators and coaches to place children in skill groupings.
- c) Division Coordinators with the assistance of the League Coordinator and Director of Coaching will use these groupings to select players for teams.
- d) Effort will be made to encourage children to play for several different coaches during their participation in the program. This is accomplished by selecting new teams each year.
- e) Car-pooling, desire to play for a particular coach, etc. may be considered, but is not a requirement for selection of teams. Balance of skills will be the primary factor considered.
- f) Children of coaches will be permitted to play on the coaches team. Also, children in the same family will be kept on the same team unless specifically instructed by the parent not to do so.
- g) Division Coordinators will maintain complete, up-dated rosters. All additions to teams will be made by permission of the Coordinators. Active recruitment for the program is encouraged, but recruiting for individual teams will not be permitted.

### 3.0 RULES OF PLAY

#### 3.1 OVERVIEW

The program will abide by the RULES OF THE GAME as set forth by FIFA and the USYSA with local modifications as necessary to meet specific recreational needs.

#### 3.2 LOCAL MODIFICATIONS

##### 3.2.1 PLAYERS (Rule #3)

- a) Each Division will consist of coed teams based on the number of children registered and evaluated by Division Coordinators. The number of players required to start and continue a match are as follows:

Division	If the format of play is	The minimum needed to start the game is	The minimum to continue a game is
U17, U16, U15, U14, U13, U12, U11	11 vs 11	9	7
	10 vs 10	8	6
	9 vs 9	7	5
	8 vs 8	6	4
	7 vs 7	6	4
	6 vs 6	5	4
	5 vs 5	4	4
	4 vs 4	4	4
U10, U9	8 vs 8	6	5
	7 vs 7	5	5
	6 vs 6	5	5
	5 vs 5	5	5
	4 vs 4	4	4
U8, U7	4 vs 4	3	3
	3 vs 3	3	3
U6	3 vs 3	2	2
	2 vs 2	2	2

- b)** On match day (usually Saturdays) a team may play the maximum allowed, even if the opponents have the minimum. At the referees discretion, volunteers may be requested to even the teams.
- c)** If it is known that a team will be short players for excusable reasons, the coach should notify the Division Coordinator. If both coaches are agreeable, a rematch will be considered by the Coordinator.
- d)** All matches will be played, weather permitting, at the discretion of the referees. As a general rule, the only condition that might cause a postponement (or delay) is thunder and lightning. All changes in scheduled games must have the consent of the Division Coordinators.
- e)** Coaches may borrow players from another team when they are short players so long as the opposing coach approves.
- f)** Every eligible player reporting to the referee at the start of a match **MUST** play at least half of the match. An eligible player is defined as any child who attends (or has been excused by his/her coach from) scheduled practices for that week in which the match is being played.
- g)** No player can play more than two (2) quarters or one (1) half as goal keeper in any match. A “quarter” is defined as any appearance, however brief, in the goal during a match.
- h)** Unlimited substitutions can be made at any stoppage of play (i.e., out-of-bounds, goal kick, etc).
- i)** Substitutions can be made without the referee’s consent when there is a stoppage of the clock, an injury, after a goal, or at the quarter/half break.
- j)** If the referee stops play for an injury the player should be replaced. That player is permitted to re-enter the match at the first possible opportunity.
- k)** Children must play more than one (1) position, both offense and defense.
- l)** All children must be registered and paid prior to league play.

### **3.2.2 PLAYERS EQUIPMENT (RULE #4)**

- a) Shin guards are required for each player at practice and at games.
- b) Shin guards should not be shared by teammates. No delays will be permitted to exchange shin guards during a match.
- c) Respectable attire is expected. The team jersey with number clearly visible must be the outermost garment on the upper body.
- d) Socks must be worn over shin guards.
- e) Goalies must wear a different color jersey than their team and the opposing team. The league prefers non-yellow color.
- f) No caps are permitted during league play. Toboggans are permitted during cold weather.

### **3.2.3 REFEREES (RULE #5)**

- a) It should be emphasized that the "LAWS OF THE GAME" gives the referees nearly dictatorial power over the playing of the match. This includes power over coaches, spectators, fans and well-meaning parents. It is the responsibility of the referee to use such authority as required during the match.
- b) The referee (in all age divisions) should teach players by stopping the match as required to tell/explain the call.
- c) In all instances, it is the duty of the referee to keep the game moving as the rules are intended.
- d) Referees should report the results of all matches to the Division Coordinator.
- e) Criticism of referees will NOT be tolerated and referees are to report problems to the Division Coordinator and/or other League Officials for consideration by the Board.

### **3.2.4 DURATION OF THE MATCH (RULE #7)**

<b>U17</b>	<b>Two (2) 45 minute halves</b>
<b>U16</b>	<b>Two (2) 40 minute halves</b>
<b>U15</b>	<b>Two (2) 40 minute halves</b>
<b>U14</b>	<b>Two (2) 35 minute halves</b>
<b>U13</b>	<b>Two (2) 35 minute halves</b>
<b>U12</b>	<b>Two (2) 30 minute halves</b>
<b>U11</b>	<b>Two (2) 30 minute halves</b>
<b>U10</b>	<b>Two (2) 25 minute halves</b>
<b>U9</b>	<b>Two (2) 25 minute halves</b>
<b>U8</b>	<b>Four (4) 12 minute quarters</b>
<b>U7</b>	<b>Four (4) 12 minute quarters</b>
<b>U6</b>	<b>Four (4) 8 minute quarters</b>

### **3.2.5 FOULS AND MISCONDUCT (RULE #12)**

- a) For all OVSL Divisions, an illegal charge of a goalkeeper holding/controlling the ball in his penalty area shall result in a direct kick penalty. The referee may issue a caution (Yellow card) or send the offending player off the field (Red card).

### **3.2.6 AGE SPECIFIC RULES**

<b>Under 6's</b>	<b>a) No referees</b>
	<b>b) No offside</b>
	<b>c) No direct kicks</b>
	<b>d) No goalies</b>
	<b>e) Ball size #3</b>
	<b>f) Several tries given for throw ins</b>
<b>Under 8's</b>	<b>a) Only one referee</b>
	<b>b) No offside</b>
	<b>c) No direct kicks</b>
	<b>d) No goalies</b>
	<b>e) Ball size #3</b>
	<b>f) Several tries given for throw ins</b>
	<b>g) The goal &amp; penalty boxes are same</b>
<b>Under 10's</b>	<b>a) One referee</b>
	<b>b) Club linesmen may be used</b>
	<b>c) No offside</b>
	<b>d) Kick back to goalie rule not enforced</b>
	<b>e) Ball size #4</b>
	<b>f) No goalie punt may pass midfield in the air – indirect kick at point of crossing.</b>

<b>Under 12's</b>	<b>a) One center referee and two linesmen if format is at least 9 vs 9. For small-sided games, the field size and referee requirements will be recommended by the Director of Coaching with Board approval required.</b>
	<b>b) Club linesmen may be used if only one referee is available.</b>
	<b>c) Ball size #4</b>
	<b>d) Offside may be suspended by Board approval if format is &lt; 8 vs 8.</b>
<b>U 14's through U17's</b>	<b>a) One center referee and two linesmen if format is at least 9 vs 9. For small-sided games, the field size and referee requirements will be recommended by the Director of Coaching with Board approval required.</b>
	<b>b) Club linesmen may be used if only one referee is available.</b>
	<b>c) Ball size #5</b>
	<b>d) Offside may be suspended by Board approval if format is &lt; 8 vs 8.</b>

#### 4.0 FIELD AND GOAL DIMENSIONS

The following dimensions shall apply for various player formats and age levels:

Division	Player Format	Field size (yds)	Goal Dimensions (ft)	Ball size
U17, U16, U15	All formats	Specified by Directors	Specified by directors	#5
U14, U13,	11 vs 11	60 x 90	8 x 24	#5
U12, U11	10 vs 10	60 x 90	8 x 24	#4
	9 vs 9	60 x 90	8 x 24	#4
	8 vs 8	50 x 70	8 x 24	#4
	7 vs 7	40 x 50	7 x 21	#4
	6 vs 6	40 x 50	7 x 21	#4
	5 vs 5	40 x 50	7 x 21	#4
U10, U9	8 vs 8	50 x 70	7 x 21	#4
	7 vs 7	50 x 70	7 x 21	#4
	6 vs 6	40 x 50	7 x 21	#4
	5 vs 5	40 x 50	7 x 21	#4
	4 vs 4	40 x 50	7 x 21	#4
U8, U7	4 vs 4	30 x 50	6 x 12	#3
	3 vs 3	30 x 50	6 x 12	#3
U6	3 vs 3	20 x 25	4 x 6	#3

#### 5.0 SCHEDULING

The recommended scheduling for each Division will be the responsibility of the League President. Scheduling will be dictated largely by the number of teams for each age bracket. Accordingly, the schedules will be prepared and then approved by the Board of Directors of the OVSL once registrations are completed. Minor changes to the schedule after the initial approval of the Board will not require further approvals.

## **6.0 PROTEST**

There will be no protests. The real beauty of soccer is in the fun derived from playing and competing – not in winning or losing. No match is ever lost because of one call, or one player, or one anything. If every child is given the opportunity of having fun playing soccer, nothing else could be more important!

## **7.0 AMENDMENTS TO LEAGUE RULES**

By a majority vote of the Board of directors, these League Rules can be modified at any time. The changes become effective on the date in which the vote was conducted.

## **8.0 ROLE OF LEAGUE COORDINATOR**

The League Coordinator's responsibilities may be assumed by a committee chaired by the Board President if the position becomes vacant. The following are responsibilities of the League Coordinator:

- a) Help and assist Division Coordinators when preparing Division rosters.
- b) Make sure that the Division Coordinators have turned in team rosters and given a copy to the League Registrar.
- c) Schedule practice times for Recreation teams and Competitive teams.
- d) Schedule concession dates for each division and give them to Division Coordinators.
- e) Hold Coordinators' meeting prior to coaches meeting for the spring and fall sessions.
- f) Give new coaches a copy of the OVSL League rules.

## **9.0 ROLE OF DIVISION COORDINATORS**

The Division Coordinators' responsibilities may be assumed by a committee chaired by the Board President if the position becomes vacant. The following are responsibilities of the Division Coordinators:

- a) With the assistance of the League Coordinator, create team rosters, assign coaches, and schedule assignments. Copies will be provided for coaches and League Coordinator. Make all coaches aware of League rules.
- b) Assign team responsibilities for concessions and organize the weekly concessions. This will include ensuring that the money box is returned to the League Treasurer.

## **10.0 LEAGUE REGISTRAR**

The League Registrar's responsibilities may be assumed by a committee chaired by the Board President if the position becomes vacant. The following are responsibilities of the League Registrar:

- a) Make sure that each team's roster is up-to-date.
- b) Schedule games and times in coordination with the League Referee Coordinator.
- c) Make sure that all players have a registration form completed and paid before being permitted to play.

## **11.0 COMPETITIVE TEAMS**

### **11.1 COACHING REQUIREMENTS**

- a) The coach of any competitive team must give the Division Coordinator of the age group they are coaching a two (2) week notice for any activity that would affect the spring or fall league schedule.
- b) No friendly games or practices (except prior scheduled tournaments) shall be scheduled during the game days for the Recreation league's spring or fall season. Make up Rec league games that conflict with previously scheduled Competitive games must be resolved with the Division Coordinator.

### **11.2 COMPETITIVE PLAYERS IN RECREATION LEAGUE PLAY**

There are two options for play as a competitive player:

- 1. Play as a competitive team. This will require playing up at least one age level. The level of play will be determined by the Director of Coaching after an evaluation of team skill level. The coach must present a roster to the Division Coordinator on or before Skills Day.
- 2. Play as an individual player on an assigned team. Competitive players will be divided among participating teams in each age bracket. Note that competitive players will not be required to participate in Skills Day.

### **11.3 TRAVELING TEAMS COORDINATOR**

A Coordinator will be assigned to provide continuity between the Recreation league and other competitive teams and will assist traveling team coaches with

administrative issues related to traveling play. The Coordinator will also prepare a tryout schedule each season.

#### **11.4 TRAVELING TEAM COACHES**

Competitive coaches will be approved by the Board of Directors. Persons wishing to become a competitive coach should hand in a written application to the Board of Directors.

#### **11.5 COMPETITIVE TEAM TRYOUTS**

Tryouts for competitive teams will proceed in the following order so that a boy or girl can tryout for a team above his or her age level and if unsuccessful, still have an opportunity to tryout for their own age bracket.

U14 Boys
U14 Girls
U13 Boys
U13 Girls
U12 Boys
U12 Girls
U11 Boys
U11 Girls
U10 Boys
U10 Girls
U9 Boys
U9 Girls