



**WEST CHESTER UNITED SC**

# **Recreational Procedures and Coaches Handbook for All Age Groups**

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<b>Revision History</b>	
March 1, 2005	Initial publication version 1.0
August 22, 2005	Added lightning policy Added maximum team player assignments Changed # of U-8 players on the field Added clarification on Number of games played and how they are counted in the standings
November 10, 2005	Added Playoff overtime rule (2 V 2)
July 28, 2006	Added game completion policy in event of inclement weather
July 28, 2006	Clarified over time substitution rule and minutes to play.
September 5, 2006	Clarified U-8 ball size as a size 3, per the USYSA instructions
March 20, 2007	Added new U-8 "Spring-only" procedures, updated u-7 and u-8 substitution and sideline separation procedures

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## Recreation Director's Corner

This is the first edition of this manual and I'm sure it will not be the last. There have been many late night meetings, emails, arguments, discussions, sweat, heart and soul poured into this manual by the Spring 2005 Age Commissioners, in an effort to create something special and lasting for our children and all the kids of West Chester United. I'd like to thank everyone by name for their time, energy and efforts in pulling this manual together. If you read this manual and see them around – tell them thanks for trying to make things better for your kids. They are:

Robin	Powton	U7
Dana	Seaman	U7
Dianne	Haley	U8B
David	Schiltz	U8G
Nicole	Stuart	U9B
Ed	Lynch	U9G
Andy	Tyler	U10B
Bob	Mackenzie	U10G
Jef	Frick	U12B
Sandy	Mulhern	U12G
Joe	Del Rossi	U12G
Robert	Fahey	U14B
Steve	Muntean	U14G
Steve	Schultheis	Senior Boys
Rich	White	Senior Girls
Jerry	Bonner	At large

See you on the Fields!

*Joe Grady*  
*Director of Recreation*

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# Introduction

The purpose of this manual is to guide the administration of the league, set forth current league rules and inform the conduct of Coaches, Players and Parents participating in the Recreation Soccer Program of West Chester United Soccer Club. It is also designed to be a manual for the youth coach, containing such items as ideas for running effective practices, team administration ideas and guidelines. As such, this manual will be a living, breathing document, updated regularly, as necessary. The most current version of this manual will always be posted on the club's website. It is the product of the collaboration of the recreation committee which is made up of the Age Commissioners for each division. Suggested updates to this manual can be sent via email to: [programs@wcusc.org](mailto:programs@wcusc.org) or to any commissioner. Each Age Group commissioner is listed on the club's website: [www.wcusc.org](http://www.wcusc.org). This manual is broken into two sections, Recreational League Rules and Regulations, and the Coaching Guide.

## Recreational Soccer Mission Statement

West Chester United Soccer Club serves the children, youth and adults of West Chester and beyond, by providing a safe, positive, soccer experience. We provide programs that develop soccer skills, are fun, and allow maximum participation by children and adults of all skill levels. Our soccer programs foster a sense of teamwork, camaraderie and competitiveness, while balancing the need of all participants to develop the physical, mental and emotional skills to succeed in life.

## Section 1 – Rules and Regulations

### ***Registration Process***

Each player shall be registered and paid for each season, before they can be placed on a team. A list of properly registered players will be made available for download by age commissioners. No player shall be placed on a team unless downloaded from the club's registration program. No coach is authorized to accept a player based upon a parent's statement. All player placements or trades must be authorized in writing by the division's age commissioner (email will suffice).

### **Special Requests**

Understanding that there are legitimate car pooling issues, the club will attempt to honor ONE (1) request to play with ONE (1) friend per registered child, but this request must be a matching request. e.g. Johnny can request to be placed on a team with Jimmy, but

Jimmy must request to play with Johnny as well. Non-matching requests will not be honored. We will no longer be in a position to honor requests for a specific coach.

Playing on the same team as a sibling will not be considered to be a special request - those requests will be honored. We will still attempt to use school classifications to set up teams, and players can still expect to be on a team with at least a few children from their school. Our goal is to bring together **all** of the members of the West Chester community to play soccer together. Note, this one special request is per registered child and NOT per family.

### **Special Rules**

A child who is wearing a cast on his body, may play, but the cast must be heavily padded.

### **Travel Players**

"A" team travel players must play up one division, i.e. a U-12 eligible travel "A" player, must play up to U-14s. Also -- regardless of team placement (A, B, C team ) NO requests honored with play with other travel players. Travel players MUST identify themselves as a travel player in the comments section of the recreation registration.

### **Game procedures**

All normal FIFA rules are in effect, except where noted below. The referee is the final arbiter of all rules on game days.

#### **U-7**

Duration:	8 Minute Quarters (3 Minutes between Quarters / 5 Minutes at Half-time)
Players:	4 versus 4 (No Goalkeepers)
Ball:	Size 3
Sideline Separation:	The team listed as the home team selects one sideline, along which all players, coaches, and supporters will remain. All visiting team players, coaches, and supporters must remain along the sideline on the opposite side of the field. <i>Each team's head coach is responsible for the behavior of their team's players, coaches, &amp; supporters. If the coach runs into any issues, he or she should contact the league for assistance.</i>
On Field Coaching:	One coach from each team may be on field during games.
Goal Kicks:	Any where on the penalty box, opposing team must be on opposite side of midfield
Corner Kicks:	On field corner
Off-sides:	Are not enforced

Substitutions:	Coaches may substitute players in anytime there is a stoppage of play. It is acceptable to call a ‘time out’ around the 4 minute mark of the quarter to make changes – PROVIDED – it is in conjunction with a normal stoppage of play, e.g. ball out of play. It is not acceptable to whistle a ‘time out’ during the run of play, solely to make substitutions.
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### **U-8 (Fall Season only)**

Duration:	8 Minute Quarters (3 Minutes between Quarters / 5 Minutes at Half-time)
Players:	4 versus 4 (No goalkeepers)
Ball:	Size 3
On Field Coaching:	One coach from each team may be on field during games.
Substitutions:	Coaches may substitute players in anytime there is a stoppage of play. It is acceptable to call a ‘time out’ around the 4 minute mark of the quarter to make changes – PROVIDED – it is in conjunction with a normal stoppage of play, e.g. ball out of play. It is not acceptable to whistle a ‘time out’ during the run of play, solely to make substitutions.
Goal Kicks:	Any where on the penalty box, opposing team must be on opposite side of midfield.
Corner Kicks:	On field corner
Off-sides:	Are not enforced
Sideline Separation:	The team listed as the home team selects one sideline, along which all players, coaches, and supporters will remain. All visiting team players, coaches, and supporters must remain along the sideline on the opposite side of the field. <i>Each team’s head coach is responsible for the behavior of their team’s players, coaches, &amp; supporters. If the coach runs into any issues, he or she should contact the league for assistance.</i>

### **U-8 (Spring season only)**

Duration:	8 Minute Quarters (3 Minutes between Quarters / 5 Minutes at Half-time)
Players:	6 versus 6 (including Goal keepers)
Ball:	Size 3
On Field Coaching:	One coach from each team may be on field during games.
Substitutions:	Coaches may substitute players in anytime there is a stoppage of play. It is acceptable to call a ‘time out’ around the 4 minute mark of the quarter to make changes – PROVIDED – it is in

	conjunction with a normal stoppage of play, e.g. ball out of play. It is not acceptable to whistle a 'time out' during the run of play, solely to make substitutions.
Goal Kicks:	Any where on the penalty box, opposing team must be on opposite side of midfield.
Corner Kicks:	On field corner
Off-sides:	Are not enforced
Sideline Separation:	The team listed as the home team selects one sideline, along which all players, coaches, and supporters will remain. All visiting team players, coaches, and supporters must remain along the sideline on the opposite side of the field. <i>Each team's head coach is responsible for the behavior of their team's players, coaches, &amp; supporters. If the coach runs into any issues, he or she should contact the league for assistance.</i>

### U-9

Duration:	10 Minute Quarters (3 Minutes between Quarters / 5 Minutes at Half-time)
Players:	8 versus 8
Ball:	Size 4
Sideline Separation:	The team listed as the home team selects one sideline, along which all players, coaches, and supporters will remain. All visiting team players, coaches, and supporters must remain along the sideline on the opposite side of the field. Coaching will be allowed to coach from the sidelines as long as the coach remains within the standard coach's box (ten yards on either side of the midfield line). <i>Each team's head coach is responsible for the behavior of their team's players, coaches, &amp; supporters. If the coach runs into any issues, he or she should first contact the Age Commissioner for assistance.</i>
Substitutions:	In order to have players substitute into the game, they must be ready to enter the game at the half field line prior to the stoppage of play. Teams may make substitutions on either team's goal kick or kick-off. The team in possession of the ball may make substitutions on a throw-in or corner kick. The team NOT in possession of the ball may make substitutions on a throw-in or corner kick if the team in possession of the ball is also substituting.
Goal Kicks:	The goal area is generally six yards from the goal, but in U-9/U-10, we play on a reduced size field, so the area should be made proportional. Depending on field set-up, if a goal area is made, kicks should be taken from that line. On goal kick, ball must leave penalty area before it is in play. If there is no goal area on the field, the kick may be taken from the edge of the penalty

	area. Players must be at least ten yards from the kicker.
Corner Kicks:	On field corner
Off-sides:	Off-sides fouls are enforced.

### U-10

Duration:	20 minute halves (5 minutes at half-time)
Players:	8 versus 8
Ball:	Size 4
Sideline Separation:	The team listed as the home team selects one sideline, along which all players, coaches, and supporters will remain. All visiting team players, coaches, and supporters must remain along the sideline on the opposite side of the field. Coaching will be allowed to coach from the sidelines as long as the coach remains within the standard coach's box (ten yards on either side of the midfield line). <i>Each team's head coach is responsible for the behavior of their team's players, coaches, &amp; supporters. If the coach runs into any issues, he or she should first contact the Age Commissioner for assistance.</i>
Substitutions:	In order to have players substitute into the game, they must be ready to enter the game at the half field line prior to the stoppage of play. Teams may make substitutions on either team's goal kick or kick-off. The team in possession of the ball may make substitutions on a throw-in or corner kick. The team NOT in possession of the ball may make substitutions on a throw-in or corner kick if the team in possession of the ball is also substituting.
Goal Kicks:	The goal area is generally six yards from the goal, but in U-9/U-10, we play on a reduced size field, so the area should be made proportional. Depending on field set-up, if a goal area is made, kicks should be taken from that line. On goal kick, ball must leave penalty area before it is in play. If there is no goal area on the field, the kick may be taken from the edge of the penalty area. Players must be at least ten yards from the kicker.
Corner Kicks:	On field corner
Off-sides:	Off-sides fouls are enforced..

### U-12

Duration:	25 minute halves (5 minutes at half-time)
Players:	11 versus 11
Ball:	Size 4

Sideline Separation:	The team listed as the home team selects one sideline, along which all players, coaches, and supporters will remain. All visiting team players, coaches, and supporters must remain along the sideline on the opposite side of the field. Coaching will be allowed to coach from the sidelines as long as the coach remains within the standard coach's box (ten yards on either side of the midfield line). <i>Each team's head coach is responsible for the behavior of their team's players, coaches, &amp; supporters. If the coach runs into any issues, he or she should first contact the Age Commissioner for assistance.</i>
Substitutions:	In order to have players substitute into the game, they must be ready to enter the game at the half field line prior to the stoppage of play. Teams may make substitutions on either team's goal kick or kick-off. The team in possession of the ball may make substitutions on a throw-in or corner kick. The team NOT in possession of the ball may make substitutions on a throw-in or corner kick if the team in possession of the ball is also substituting.
Goal Kicks:	On goal box, ball must leave penalty area before it is in play
Corner Kicks:	On field corner
Off-sides:	Off-sides fouls are enforced

#### U-14

Duration:	30 minute halves (5 minutes at half-time)
Players:	11 versus 11
Ball:	Size 5
Sideline Separation:	The team listed as the home team selects one sideline, along which all players, coaches, and supporters will remain. All visiting team players, coaches, and supporters must remain along the sideline on the opposite side of the field. Coaching will be allowed to coach from the sidelines as long as the coach remains within the standard coach's box (ten yards on either side of the midfield line). <i>Each team's head coach is responsible for the behavior of their team's players, coaches, &amp; supporters. If the coach runs into any issues, he or she should first contact the Age Commissioner for assistance.</i>
Substitutions:	In order to have players substitute into the game, they must be ready to enter the game at the half field line prior to the stoppage of play. Teams may make substitutions on either team's goal kick or kick-off. The team in possession of the ball may make substitutions on a throw-in or corner kick. The team NOT in possession of the ball may make substitutions on a throw-in or corner kick if the team in possession of the ball is also substituting.

Goal Kicks:	On goal box, ball must leave penalty area before it is in play
Corner Kicks:	On field corner
Off-sides:	Off-sides fouls are enforced

### Senior

Duration:	35 minute halves (5 minutes at half-time)
Players:	11 versus 11
Ball:	Size 5
Sideline Separation:	The team listed as the home team selects one sideline, along which all players, coaches, and supporters will remain. All visiting team players, coaches, and supporters must remain along the sideline on the opposite side of the field. Coaching will be allowed to coach from the sidelines as long as the coach remains within the standard coach's box (ten yards on either side of the midfield line). <i>Each team's head coach is responsible for the behavior of their team's players, coaches, &amp; supporters. If the coach runs into any issues, he or she should first contact the Age Commissioner for assistance.</i>
Substitutions:	In order to have players substitute into the game, they must be ready to enter the game at the half field line prior to the stoppage of play. Teams may make substitutions on either team's goal kick or kick-off. The team in possession of the ball may make substitutions on a throw-in or corner kick. The team NOT in possession of the ball may make substitutions on a throw-in or corner kick if the team in possession of the ball is also substituting.
Goal Kicks:	On goal box, ball must leave penalty area before it is in play
Corner Kicks:	On field corner
Off-sides:	Off-sides fouls are enforced

### **Calculating Standings**

Standings for each league will follow standard FIFA calculations. Three points are awarded for a win, one point for a tie. [\(This represents a change in how we've done it in the past.\)](#) In the event more than one team has the same number of points, ties in the standings will be broken by records in head-to-head play, and then fewest goals allowed. In the event teams are still tied, a coin flip will determine placement. Goals For do not factor into the equation.

NOTE: Every effort MUST be made to have teams scheduled for the same number of games. In the Fall season Eight games are played, and in the Spring Season seven games are played. If any team plays more than 8 (Fall) or 7 (Spring) only the first 8 or 7 games will be counted in the standings.

## ***Mercy Rule***

Coaches should do their best not to embarrass another team by outscoring them by a wide margin. Once a team reaches a 4 goal differential, coaches **MUST** employ some or all of the following tactics

- a. Put your weakest scorers up front (use this as an opportunity to let them be forwards).
- b. Try someone new in goal & at fullback
- c. Very quietly, pull a player off the field & play short. If it is still a mismatch, pull off another player.
- d. Very quietly, tell your players they must complete 5 (or more) consecutive passes before shooting.
- e. Tell them they can only take shots from outside the Penalty Box (i.e., practice chip shots, lofted shots at the top of the goal mouth or power shots).
- f. Tell them that **ONLY** a certain player will be allowed to shoot on goal.

Age commissioners will monitor reported scores and coaches will be contacted for explanations if an extremely lop sided score is recorded.

## ***Minimum Player Count/Forfeits***

If another team shows up with less than the required number of players to start a match, it is considered good sportsmanship for the team with more players to 'play down' a player or two. The table below represents league approved guidelines for how many players a team should play down, which incorporates a reasonable accommodation to sportsmanship, without impacting too much on the player experience. Under no circumstances can any coach in any division utilize a 'guest' player and have that game count in the standings. Any guest player utilized, for insurance reasons, **MUST** be registered and paid with the club for the current season and of the current age group. If playing a team with no substitutes, the team with substitutes may sub on any possession, not to impede the flow of the game.

Division	Normal # of players	Play down to:	Forfeit
U7	4	Not applicable	Not applicable
U8	4	Not applicable	Not applicable
U9	8	7	Less than 7
U10	8	7	Less than 7
U12	11	9	Less than 7
U14	11	9	Less than 7
Senior	11	9	Less than 7

## **Maximum Assigned Players**

Guidelines for Age Commissioners in the assignment of players to teams will vary by division. These guidelines should be strictly enforced. If there is a compelling reason to exceed the maximum number of players on a team, it must be discussed and approved by the Director of Recreation. The optimum and maximum number was arrived at by taking into consideration the best interests of the players and also to facilitate earliest possible ordering of team uniforms.

Division	Normal # of players on field	Optimum Assigned	Maximum
U7	4	8	8
U8	4	8	8
U9	8	12	13
U10	8	12	13
U12	11	15	16
U14	11	15	16
Senior	11	16	18

## **Expectations of parents**

It is expected of parents and supporters to cheer positively and say things like ‘good job’ ‘great going’ and ‘good play’. Parents are reminded that they should never tell a player on the field to ‘get in there’, or ‘move over to the left’ or to offer any type of positioning or coaching encouragement. The coach has worked with the players in practice and should be given all opportunity to affect his or her game plan. Parents should be sent out of the field area if they address any comments to the referee (even a seemingly innocuous ‘come on Ref’). West Chester United Soccer Club has a zero tolerance policy for referee abuse.

## **Sideline Behavior**

### **Referee Respect**

Simply stated, sideline behavior starts with the coaches. If a coach(s) shows disrespect to the referee, assistant referee(s) and/or a flag person(s), his/her team and supporters will feed off this act. Disrespect includes verbal and physical abuse of the officials. The Coach(s) must not voice an opinion on a rule interpretation or a particular play in the game in a loud and/or obnoxious manner. If a coach has a question on a rule or a

particular play in the game, the proper and respectful response should be to quietly approach the referee in between periods or at the end of the game. **At no time shall team supporters or players approach the officials.** Referees have been instructed to eject a coach or team supporter from the field area if the referee feels the level of disrespect warrants it. A player must receive either two yellow cards or one red card in a game before the referee can eject the player from the field area.

Remember, many of the Club's officials are young adults who have committed their time to making the recreation program operate effectively.

### **Sideline Separation**

Home Team will choose a side of the field and all their gear and supporters must be along that sideline of the field. The visiting team's gear and supporter will be on the opposite sideline. At no time will anyone be allowed to stand behind the endline.

### ***FIFA Official rules and Regulations***

For the official rules of soccer as set forth by FIFA, see <http://www.fifa.com/en/regulations/regulation/0,1584,3,00.html#>

You may also download the Adobe document located on our website

### ***Playoff overtime rules by age***

Should an end-of-season tournament game remain tied at the end of regulation, the following procedures are applicable. There is NO overtime during the regular season games.

Division	Overtime Procedures
U7	Not Applicable
U8	Not Applicable
U9	Winner of coin flip gets first choice of either possession or direction, loser of coin flip gets next choice. Teams play 5 v 5 with no goal keeper for 10 minutes, after 10 minutes, play is blown dead. Teams must remove one player. Teams will reverse directions and the team that got possession during original coin flip is defending. Every 2 minutes play is blown dead, and with teams removing another player, until there are only 2 players left per team, i.e. the lowest we go is 2 v 2. Game restarted at center circle, with alternating initial possession but no change of direction. Teams will play until a goal is scored. No offsides will be called but all other normal rules apply. If there is a handling of the ball in the penalty area, the offending team may designate one of the players on the field as goalie for the penalty kick. This player has all

	<p>the rights and regulations of a goalie. If the player stops the penalty shot, the player has six seconds to release the ball. Once the ball is released, the player is not considered a goalie. If a player prevents a goal by handling the ball or commits an offense preventing a goal, the player will not receive a red card. No substitutes – NONE – not even for injuries.</p>
U10	<p>Winner of coin flip gets first choice of either possession or direction, loser of coin flip gets next choice. Teams play 5 v 5 with no goal keeper for 10 minutes, after 10 minutes, play is blown dead. Teams must remove one player. Teams will reverse directions and the team that got possession during original coin flip is defending. Every 2 minutes play is blown dead, and with teams removing another player, until there are only 2 players left per team, i.e. the lowest we go is 2 v 2. Game restarted at center circle, with alternating initial possession but no change of direction. Teams will play down until a goal is scored. Offsides will not be called but all other normal rules apply. If there is a handling of the ball in the penalty area, the offending team may designate one of the players on the field as goalie for the penalty kick. This player has all the rights and regulations of a goalie. If the player stops the penalty shot, the player has six seconds to release the ball. Once the ball is released, the player is not considered a goalie. If a player prevents a goal by handling the ball or commits an offense preventing a goal, the player will not receive a red card. No substitutes – NONE – not even for injuries..</p>
U12	<p>Winner of coin flip gets first choice of either possession or direction, loser of coin flip gets next choice. Teams play 7 v 7 with no goal keeper for 10 minutes, after 10 minutes, play is blown dead. Teams must remove one player. Teams will reverse directions and the team that got possession during original coin flip is defending. Every 2 minutes play is blown dead, and with teams removing another player, until there are only 2 players left per team, i.e. the lowest we go is 2 v 2 Game restarted at center circle, with alternating initial possession but no change of direction. Teams will play until a goal is scored. No offsides will be called but all other normal rules apply. If there is a handling of the ball in the penalty area, the offending team may designate one of the players on the field as goalie for the penalty kick. This player has all the rights and regulations of a goalie. If the player stops the penalty shot, the player has six seconds to release the ball. Once the ball is released, the player is not considered a goalie. If a player prevents a goal by handling the ball or commits an offense preventing a goal, the player will not receive a red card. No substitutes– NONE – not even for injuries.</p>
U14	<p>Winner of coin flip gets first choice of either possession or direction, loser of coin flip gets next choice. Teams play 7 v 7 with no goal keeper for 10 minutes, after 10 minutes, play is blown dead. Teams must remove one player. Teams will reverse directions and the team</p>

	<p>that got possession during original coin flip is defending. Every 2 minutes play is blown dead, and with teams removing another player, until there are only 2 players left per team, i.e. the lowest we go is 2 v 2. Game restarted at center circle, with alternating initial possession but no change of direction. Teams will play until a goal is scored. No offsides will be called but all other normal rules apply. If there is a handling of the ball in the penalty area, the offending team may designate one of the players on the field as goalie for the penalty kick. This player has all the rights and regulations of a goalie. If the player stops the penalty shot, the player has six seconds to release the ball. Once the ball is released, the player is not considered a goalie. If a player prevents a goal by handling the ball or commits an offense preventing a goal, the player will not receive a red card. No substitutes – NONE – not even for injuries.</p>
Senior	<p>Winner of coin flip gets first choice of either possession or direction, loser of coin flip gets next choice. Teams play 7 v 7 with no goal keeper for 10 minutes, after 10 minutes, play is blown dead. Teams must remove one player. Teams will reverse directions and the team that got possession during original coin flip is defending. Every 2 minutes play is blown dead, and with teams removing another player, until there are only 2 players left per team, i.e. the lowest we go is 2 v 2. Game restarted at center circle, with alternating initial possession but no change of direction. Teams will until a goal is scored. No offsides will be called but all other normal rules apply. If there is a handling of the ball in the penalty area, the offending team may designate one of the players on the field as goalie for the penalty kick. This player has all the rights and regulations of a goalie. If the player stops the penalty shot, the player has six seconds to release the ball. Once the ball is released, the player is not considered a goalie. If a player prevents a goal by handling the ball or commits an offense preventing a goal, the player will not receive a red card. No substitutes – NONE – not even for injuries.</p>

### **Goal Safety**

As the coach it is your responsibility to make sure your players are safe. This is your **first** responsibility (way before winning). As a reminder to all coaches, prior to taking the field for a practice and/or game of the need to make sure goals are properly secured. Every year kids are seriously injured or killed by goals which fall over in soccer. With everything going on prior to a game or practice, checking to make sure the goals are secure can be overlooked. This is a mistake that could have terrible consequences. Make it the first thing you do before taking the field. Make the commitment to check the goals every time. If you move goals for practice make sure you secure them before beginning. When you put them back, make sure to put the weight bags back on them. If you are at a field and see a goal without a weight bag, go find one. If a team is practicing and you

notice an unsecured goal, ask the coach to stop practicing and secure the goal. If you can't find a weight bag, put the goal on it's side and don't use it. It's that important.

## **Section 2 – Coaching Guidelines and Ideas**

### ***Games***

Games will be played once per week, on Saturdays during the Fall season and usually on Sundays during the Spring season, the Senior and U-14 leagues may play on some Saturdays. Below U-12 division, coaches should rotate the positions of players and each player should play at least half of the game. In U-12 and above, it is acceptable to have players play a certain (few) position(s) all season. All players again, should play at least half the game.

### ***Practices***

All teams will hold practice only once per week, at the assigned practice field. Practice length should be no more than one hour for U-10 and below; U-12 and above, 90 minutes maximum, 60 minutes is sufficient. Practice may be limited by field availability. As a coach it is important to arrive promptly and direct the activities for the full practice period. Reference the “Tip Section” or contact your age commissioner if you have any questions regarding soccer practice activities

### ***Organize Game Refreshments***

During the games players should have halftime and end of game refreshments. These are important to ensure the players do not become dehydrated and exhausted. Oranges for half time and juice and carbohydrates for post game are good examples. It is recommended that you set up a refreshment schedule among the players parents. The schedule should indicate what refreshments are needed. Contact your age commissioner if you have any questions.

### ***Player Practice / Game Preparation***

At the start of each season you should remind the players and parents of the equipment needs and other requirements. Practice / Game Considerations:

Have Fun!

Water Bottle

Soccer shoes (optional, no steel cleats)

Shin Pads and Soccer Socks

Game Shirts (Some coaches require this for practice)

Soccer Ball (based on age group – U-7s size 3 – u8-u12 size 4 – u-14and above – size 5)

Practice time should be about one hour.

## ***Team Make-up***

Each coach will be given a roster of registered players and there will be no switching of players between teams without the written permission of the Age Commissioner (email may serve as written confirmation). Age Commissioners have the final authority on team make up. Disputes should be raised up to the Director of Recreation. It is not permissible to play a league game with any players that are not part of the league approved roster, and each coach should have a league approved roster in his or her possession during all games. Should a situation occur where a coach is aware that they will not have enough players to field a team, the coach should refer to the section of this manual which refers to minimum player numbers and forfeits. If a forfeit cannot be avoided, a coach must make every effort to contact the Age commissioner and the opposing coach to make them aware of the fact.

## ***Player Rotation***

You must rotate player positions until age 12. This means that each player will play each position during the season. Prior to age twelve, the players should experience all aspects of soccer and should not be migrated to a particular position.

The exception is the goalie position. You should press but not force the players to play the goalie position.

## ***Report Scores***

Based on the age group, the commissioner may elect to post the current standings on the age group WEB Site. In order to do this the weekly game results must be reported each week (U-9 and above ONLY). Generally the team with the most goals communicates the results to the age group commissioner. The format should be:

- Your team Number and Number of Goals
- Opponents Team Number and Number of Goals
- Referee comment:
  
- Example:
  - My team 05 Scored 4 goals
  - Opponent team 01 Scored 2 goals
  - The referee was alert and called a good game...

Both teams should send a game summary along with a referee assessment. Reference the "Referee" section for details.

## ***Organize Game Line Up***

This is a key responsibility. You must be very conscience of equal play time for all players. This can take some real planning. Some coaches do this planning in advance of the game and others set the line ups prior to the start of the game based on which players arrive for game time. This is /can be one of the biggest challenges you will face. Be aware that both the players and the parents are sensitive to the amount of play time. It is very important to ensure each player is given their fare share of play time. It is recommended that you enlist the support of your assistant coach in ensuring this is done fairly.

**Note:** Each player should be given the opportunity to be a team captain for a game. Two players per game should represent the team. The team captains take center field for the coin flip to select direction and kick off selection just prior to the start of the game.

## ***Game Time Coaching Rules***

The coach's interaction with the players on the field varies with the age group. Referees are assigned to all age groups except U7 & U8. Reference the Recreation Guide for age group specific substitution rules. Players going into a game on a substitution should be ready to enter the game at the half line.

Teams and spectators are to set up on opposite sidelines. All players, coaches, parents & supporters must be on the same sideline. No one is allowed behind the goal line. The first team listed on the schedule has the choice of sidelines.

## ***Review Soccer rules***

Generally the league adheres to the "FIFA rules of soccer", with certain deviations by age group. Please reference the league rules section of the Recreation manual. Contact your age group commissioner if you have any questions. (Reference: [www.fifa.com](http://www.fifa.com) or <http://www.fifa.com/en/regulations/regulation/0,1584,3,00.html>).

Note: The FIFA rules are well documented and can a bit over whelming. Your age group commissioner can help clarify any question you have.

The games are played in quarters or halves based on your age group. This will be explained prior to the start of the season.

## ***Game Linesperson Support***

Generally there is one referee assigned to each game. The referee will need support in calling out of bounds on the side lines. Each team should identify a volunteer linesperson. It is recommended that these volunteers discuss their duties with the referee. The linesperson should not indicate which team's gains possess, only that the ball is out of play. Also, the linesperson should not determine off-sides or assist the referee with

calling fouls. Note: ball is out of play when the ENTIRE ball has crossed the sideline or end line.

### ***No Referee***

If the referee is not present at the scheduled start time and the game is to still start on time, a volunteer should substitute as the referee. The basic guide lines are, the parents and spectators should be solicited first, then the away team coaching staff and lastly the home team coaching staff. The coaches must agree on the volunteer selected

### ***Parent Involvement***

There will be a number of Adults more than willing to volunteer their time and effort to make the season successful. Send out an email to all parents, listing the specific activities you would like them to sign up for. Those activities could include:

#### **Assistant Coaches**

Even if you have a formally designated assistant coach, you may have other parents with experience or interest that can help out at practice or during games. This is especially important if you and/or your assistant find it a challenge to make all practices or games. Having additional assistants also gives you the opportunity for more effective, small group drills at practice.

#### **Snack/Refreshment Coordinator**

It is a good idea to provide oranges or other refreshments at half time during games as well as a snack (cookies, chips, etc.) after the game. Have someone coordinate this activity by assigning parents for halftime refreshments and after game snacks.

Other activities that you may want to involve parents include the fundraisers, picture day and in putting together an end of season get together for the team.

Utilize your volunteer parents to help insure a successful season and experience for all.

### ***Organize Team Pictures / Fund Raiser***

During fall season there will be a fund raiser and a team picture day. Your age group commissioner will supply the details. As a coach you are responsible for organizing these activities

### ***Skills expectations by Age***

Coming soon

### ***Drills***

There is a plethora of websites that contain great drills that are even broken down by age. Please try: [www.soccerhelp.com](http://www.soccerhelp.com) to get yourself started.

## ***Foul Weather considerations***

Generally speaking, rain will not cancel a game, but soaked fields are what usually causes games to be cancelled. Postponements will be listed prominently on the club's homepage ([www.wcusc.org](http://www.wcusc.org)). There is also a phone hotline that will be updated nearly simultaneously.

## ***Lightning Policy***

In the event of lightening or thunder in the vicinity of a soccer field, great caution is needed. As our fields are spread out throughout the county, it is not possible to make a centralized decision as to whether games should be cancelled or postponed, but the following guideline are offered for coaches consideration. Generally, the referee is the final arbiter of game continuations, but given that some of them are young and not as savvy in these areas, team coaches are expected to act in the best interest and safety of the children in their care. If only thunder is heard, coaches should assign a parent to be extra vigilant for lightening. If lightning is visible from anywhere on the field, the game should be stopped immediately and everyone should move off the field to appropriate cover. Play may be resumed no sooner than 20 minutes after the last lightning is observed. Games should not be delayed for more than 40 minutes waiting for a storm to pass.

## ***Game Completion***

If a game has reached the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> half, it will be considered a full game. If a game is called off for any reason anytime during the first half of play, it will be considered as if the game was never started. Game will be replayed in full, with score reset zero - zero.

## ***Tips:***

Below are practice, game and general tips supplied by various WCUSC coaches.

### **Practice Tips**

- Attend the Coaches training sessions.
- A whistle is recommend
- 8 colored pinnies shirts for scrimmaging
- Use a stop watch for speed drills
- If possible, schedule your practice later in the week for younger players, this will increase the chances the skills covered in practice will be remembered at game time.
- Have the players perform a physical activity at the start of practice. This will help gain and maintain their attention.
- Use the game captains as a reward for a good practice (be sure each player gets a chance).
- Scrimmage. This can be done with another team or divide your team in half.
- Avoid drills that involve waiting in lines, focus on activities that give the players as many touches as possible. Try to keep them all involved.

- Set up three or four practice stations. Each focusing on a skill. It is best if there is supervision at each station.
- Teach “Space” work on activities that will support getting into an open position.
- Use activities that simulate the game. Emphasize communication, proper touches and field positions.

### **Game Time Tips**

- Pick a skill for each player and reward it when it is executed in the game. The rewards can be something tangible or post game recognition.
- Have your assistant do the actual substituting. You can discuss the changes a let your assistant carryout the changes. This will allow to focus on the game and players.
- Bring an extra whistle to the game in the event a substitute referee is required.

### **General Tips**

- Hand out players names and number to the parents and fans.
- Assign a parent to be in charge of first aid (ice and TLC)
- Motivate and be a constant role model, action speak louder then words. The players will know when you in a stressful situation and will be supportive.
- Kick Off the Season with a Pep Rally. Invite the players, parents and coaches. This is also a great time to set expectations and discuss behaviors.
- End of season get together
- Fan appreciation day

### **Goal Safety**

As the coach it is your responsibility to make sure your players are safe. This is your **first** responsibility (way before winning). As a reminder to all coaches, prior to taking the field for a practice and/or game of the need to make sure goals are properly secured. Every year kids are seriously injured or killed by goals which fall over in soccer. With everything going on prior to a game or practice, checking to make sure the goals are secure can be overlooked. This is a mistake that could have terrible consequences. Make it the first thing you do before taking the field. Make the commitment to check the goals every time. If you move goals for practice make sure you secure them before beginning. When you put them back, make sure to put the weight bags back on them. If you are at a field and see a goal without a weight bag, go find one. If a team is practicing and you notice an unsecured goal, ask the coach to stop practicing and secure the goal. If you can't find a weight bag, put the goal on it's side and don't use it. It's that important.

### **Characteristics of Age Groups**

(reprinted from <http://www.nysl vb.org/charac.htm> )

## U04 to U06

- Short attention span.
- Can attend to only one problem at a time.
- May understand simple rules that are explained briefly and demonstrated.
- May or may not understand or remember: what lines mean on the field; what team they are on; what goal they are going for. We need to be patient and laugh with them as they get 'lost' on the field.
- Easily bruised psychologically. Shout praise often. Give "hints", don't criticize.
- Need generous praise and to play without pressure. No extrinsic rewards (trophies, medals, etc.) should be given for winning.
- Prefer "parallel play" (Will play on a team, but will not really engage with their teammates. Thus, a 3 against 3 game is, in reality, a 1 against 5 game because they all want the ball at the same time.
- Very individually oriented (me, mine, my).
- Constantly in motion, but, with no sense of pace. They will chase something until they drop. They are easily fatigued but recover rapidly.
- Development for boys and girls are quite similar.
- Physical coordination limited. Eye - hand and eye - foot coordination is not developed. Need to explore qualities of a rolling ball.
- Love to run, jump, roll, hop, etc..
- Prefer large, soft balls.
- Catching or throwing skills not developed.
- Can balance on their "good" foot.

## U07 - U08

- Attention span is a bit longer than U-6 players but still not at a "competitive" stage
- Inclined towards small group activities.
- Always in motion: scratching; blinking; jerking; rocking....
- Easily bruised psychologically. They will remember negative comments for a long time. Shout praise. Give "hints".
- They want everybody to like them.
- Developing physical confidence. (Most are able to ride a two-wheeler.)
- Starting to imitate older players or sports heroes. Want the same "gear" as them.
- Lack sense of pace. They go flat out until they drop.
- Skeletal system growing rapidly. Often results in apparent lack of coordination.
- Cardiovascular and temperature regulation system is not developed. Their heart rate peaks quickly and they overheat quickly. Make sure that they get adequate water breaks.
- Limited understanding with personal evaluation. "If they try hard, they performed well" regardless of the actual performance. Thus, they need to be encouraged constantly, and asked "Now, can you do this?"

- Better at recognizing when the ball is out of play and remembering what goal they are going for... but, in the heat of battle, they will sometimes still forget. They still find it difficult to really be aware of more than one thing at a time.

## U10

- Lengthened attention span
- Still in motion but not too busy
- Psychologically becoming more fun
- Boys and girls begin to develop separately
- Overall and small motor skills becoming more refined
- Prefer team type balls and equipment
- Pace Factor becoming developed (to think ahead)

## U12

- Enjoys competition
- Psychological development has progressed
- Team work has improved
- Technical competency has improved
- Development of speed and strength
- Problem solving with teammates
- Self appearance and peer pressure are a concern
- Varying stages of puberty

## U14

- Differences in mental development
- Sense of belonging
- Varying stages of puberty
- Displays independence and is self critical
- Aware of praise, status and recognition
- A time of self discovery

## U15 and above

- Transition from childhood to adulthood
- Biological, cultural and psychological transition
- Strive for a personal identity and self definition
- Independent
- Conflicting influences between parents and peers
- High expectations of themselves
- Need to belong
- invincible



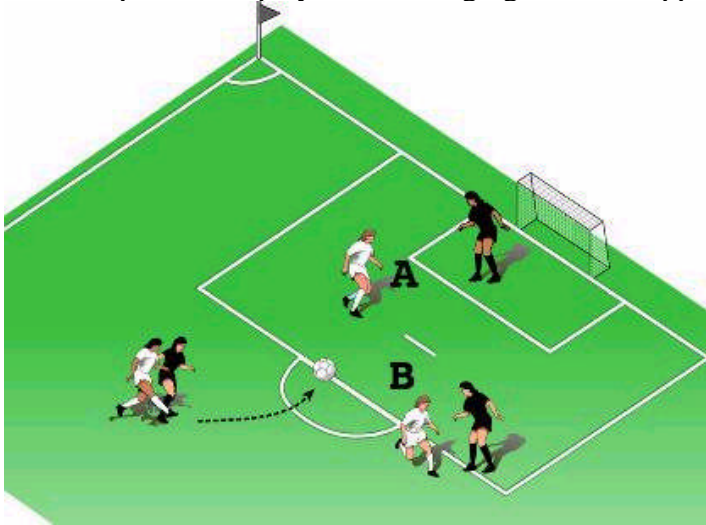
## **Quick Offsides primer**

Offsides is perhaps the most difficult soccer rule to understand:

Offside essentially is when an offensive player (Player A) without the ball, has fewer than two defenders (includes goalie) between herself and the end line when the ball is played forward by a teammate.

(Player B in the diagram below is onside because a defender and the goalie are between her and the endline).

The rule prevents a player from hanging out at an opponent's goal.



Offside is called at the moment the ball is passed ("the ball is played forward by a teammate") ...not when the pass arrives or travels past the defender.

An offensive player **MAY** dribble past the last defender or **RETRIEVE** a pass past the last defender, as long as she was **NOT** behind the last defender **WHEN THE PASS WAS MADE**.

A player can not be in an offside position if:

- He is in his own half of the field of play
- He is level with the last two opponents (i.e. even is **NOT** offside) NOTE: this is a change from how you might have grown up playing -- it used to be 'even is off'.
- He is behind the ball
- On a goal kick
- On a corner kick
- On a throw-in.

### ***Available Website information***

The club's website is now state of the art and a plethora of information is contained there. The league maintains a very useful WEB site ([www.wcusc.org](http://www.wcusc.org)). It is used for all WCUSC communications. The Recreation League page covers many things. League wide information such as closed fields, picture day changes are contained there. This is where age group specific communications are found. You will find a list of the coaches in your age group, the standings and other information. These pages are maintained by the Age Group commissioners.

Please familiarize yourself with the website.