

St. Croix Valley Athletic Association

Soccer Coach's Reference Guidelines

(All levels)

The objectives of the SCVAA Soccer League are:

- Encourage youth and adults to participate in the sport of soccer.
- Teach youth the fundamentals of soccer.
- Learn how to win and lose in a sporting manner.
- Have fun. Enjoyment of participating in a sport is the key ingredient for everyone.
- Demonstrate and educate youth on appropriate conduct within a recreational league.

Parental support is strongly encouraged. Parents are requested to give the program their total support. The league asserts that the conduct of the parents is the coach's responsibility. Any abusive language or harassment by spectators or coaches will not be condoned. The person or persons responsible will be asked to leave the premises. If they refuse, the match will be forfeited. **Remember, the best and worst educator is the example set by coaches and parents.**

The following guidelines and rules were established in pursuit of the St. Croix Valley Athletic Association Soccer League (henceforth referred to as SCVAA Soccer) objectives.

I. Sportsmanship

- A. All coaches, referees and parents are encouraged to be examples of good sportsmanship.
- B. Coaches shall be responsible for the actions of parents and players.
- C. Poor sportsmanship shall be determined by the referee. For example, use of foul language constitutes poor sportsmanship and, after one warning, is cause for ejection.
- D. In the case of a player being ejected from a match because of poor sportsmanship, his/her team shall play the remainder of the game with one less player and the ejection will be reported to the league coordinator.
- E. Spectators will remain 1 yard off the field and behind the touchline (sidelines). Spectators are not allowed behind the goal lines **or on the sideline with the team benches.**
- F. Coaches must stay on their sideline. They are not allowed behind the goal line.
- G. Fellowship is expected. Opposing teams, including coaches, shall line up at center field for handshakes after each match.
- H. Disciplinary Guideline

1. Players and coaches can be suspended for actions detrimental to the participants and program. Players can also be suspended for parent(s) actions.
2. Individual commissions can act on all discipline issues and take whatever disciplinary action deemed necessary for the integrity of the program
3. It is recommended that the Executive Board be notified promptly in writing of any disciplinary action within an individual commission before any action is taken.
4. The Executive Board of the St. Croix Valley Athletic Association will review all disciplinary procedures/actions of an individual commission before the individual commission proceeds with its disciplinary action.
5. All parties involved have the right to appeal the decision of the individual commission or Executive Board within 30 days upon receipt of a certified letter from the St. Croix Valley Athletic Association.
6. The appeal must be in writing and directed to the President of the St. Croix Valley Athletic Association or the Commissioner of the individual commission involved.

II. Eligibility

- A. All participants must meet the grade requirements described in Section IX.
- B. All participants must have paid their registration fee and must have had a parent or guardian sign the "Waiver of Injury" form.
- C. No one shall be denied the opportunity to play because of lack of ability. There will be no tryouts.
- D. Team selection shall be via selection protocol developed by the Soccer Commission.
- E. Team rosters will be provided to the coaches prior to (or at) the coaches meeting.

III. Registration Fee

- A. Registration fees for each division shall be determined by the Soccer Commission and shall be based on the costs, which includes: shirts, whistles, nets, balls, field maintenance, etc.
- B. A late fee shall be paid for any late registrations.

IV. Participation

- A. Coaches must notify all players on their roster of practices, games, etc.
- B. No child will play 4 quarters until all players have played 3 quarters. Coaches must try to even out playing time in a game.

V. Schedules

- A. The SCVAA Soccer Commission shall determine the final schedule. The tentative schedule calls for clinic, practices, and matches to be held in August, September, and October.
- B. Schedules of each team, with match dates, times, and field locations, will be distributed to the coaches at the coaches meeting in August.
- C. Practices are to be scheduled by coaches. Field signup for practices will occur at the coaches meeting in August.
- D. Information on special events (picture night, training sessions, etc.) will be announced / distributed to the coaches throughout the season as necessary.

VI. Rain Policy

- A. Coaches of the two teams scheduled to play shall decide whether or not to play the match. The safety of the players should be the prime consideration. Factors to consider include:
 - 1. Threat of lightning or dangerous storm.
 - 2. Condition of the playing field (mud, standing water, snow, etc). c. Heavy rain.
- B. The decision not to play may be agreed upon by both coaches 1.5 hours prior to the scheduled starting time.
- C. If the coaches do not agree to postpone the game 1.5 hours before game time, both teams are expected to show up for the match. Coaches on the field at the scheduled start time may agree to postpone the game. This decision should be based on the conditions on the field at the scheduled starting time.
- D. Postponed matches shall be rescheduled by mutual consent of the coaches. Date, time, and field signup are the responsibilities of the coaches.

VII. Referees' Responsibilities

- A. The referees shall be instructive and control the safe flow of the game. All calls shall be explained to the players.
- B. Coaches perform the role of referee in Leagues K, 1/2 and 3/4. Referees will be furnished for all 5/6, 7/8, and 9-12 division games. In case a referee does not show, a coach from each team should function as a referee.
- C. The referee shall keep time. The referees must blow the whistle to indicate the end of each quarter/half, and any other stoppage of play.
- D. The referee's decisions are final. A difference of opinion on calls should only be discussed at stoppages in play, not to interfere with the game.
- E. Opposing coaches and the referee(s) are required to meet before the match begins.

VIII. Coaches' Responsibilities

- A. Serve as instructor and teacher.
- B. Exhibit good sportsmanship.
- C. Inform team members regarding schedule changes.
- D. Explain the rules to youth and parents.
- E. Officiate their team's matches (Leagues K, 1/2, 3/4).

IX. Grade Leagues

- A. Six SCVAA Soccer leagues are defined by the grade or grade equivalency of the participant as of September 1 of the soccer season.

League K	<i>Kindergarten</i>	Mixed Boys & Girls Teams
League 1/2	<i>1st and 2nd Grades</i>	Separate Boys & Girls Teams
League 3/4	<i>3rd and 4th Grades</i>	Separate Boys & Girls Teams
League 5/6	<i>5th and 6th Grades</i>	Separate Boys & Girls Teams
League 7-8	<i>7th and 8th Grades</i>	Separate Boys & Girls Teams
League 9-12	<i>9th through 12 Grades</i>	Mixed Boys & Girls Teams

- B. No youth may play in a league below their grade level. Exceptions to the league assignments are based on the best interests of the child and the league. Any exceptions must be approved by the League Coordinators.

X. Miscellaneous Reminders

- A. For safety on the field, players should not wear or carry jewelry, watches, phones, or baseball caps while competing.
- B. All players must wear their SCVAA jersey to compete. When the weather is cold, the jersey should be worn on top of a sweatshirt or coat if needed.
- C. The ball must completely cross a line to be out of bounds or to be in the goal.
- D. Review FIFA rules (<https://www.usyouthsoccer.org/referees/rules-of-the-game/>) and the SCVAA documents detailing exceptions for each league.

League K Division Summary

I. Coaches' Responsibilities

- A. Serving as instructor and teacher
- B. Exhibiting good sportsmanship
- C. Informing team members regarding schedule changes
- D. Explaining the rules to youth and parents
- E. Ensuring equal playing opportunity for all players regardless of skill level
- F. Officiating their team's matches

II. Player Equipment

- A. Each player is required to wear shin guards.
- B. Size 3 soccer ball; recommended
- C. Team jersey provided by VAA
- D. Molded cleats or sneakers. Metal cleats are forbidden.

III. Team Equipment

- A. Equipment bag with two size 3 soccer balls and a dozen cones/discs
- B. Set of 10 team jerseys
- C. One 6' Pugg pop-up goal

IV. Skill Development Goals

- A. Individual soccer skills - dribbling
- B. Spatial awareness - dribbling in traffic
- C. Role of offense (score goals) vs. defense (protect from goals)

V. Division Format

- A. Small sided field created with cones for lines and pop-up goals
- B. First 30 minutes are practice, last 30 minutes are scrimmage against another team
- C. Coaches will rotate players through the various positions during each game. At this
- D. age, players are not encouraged to specialize in any particular position.
- E. Use 1/4 of field for practice with cones to create small sided (20' x 40') practice area
- F. Use 1/2 of field for scrimmage with each team providing one 4'x6' pop-up goal
- G. Scrimmage should be 6 players from each team (3 offense and 3 defense) with substitutions every 5 minutes; short 1 minute water breaks as necessary (every 5 minutes if desired)
- H. Both team's coaches should actively coach from the field and keep ball in play
- I. No throw-ins, offsides, goal/corner kicks, or penalty kicks
- J. If a ball goes out of bounds, return it to play without stopping play
- K. If player uses their hands, remind them (gently!) and keep play going
- L. Except as noted above, the rules set forth by FIFA are followed. Please familiarize yourself with the rules of the game.

VI. Goals and Advice

- A. As this is most players' first year of organized play, the goal is just to teach some basics, like *soccer is a game for the feet*. The exception of hands use for goalies and throw-ins just complicates things, so we don't introduce them yet. Feet only!
- B. If a player accidentally or intentionally touches the ball with their hands, just call it out, "*No Hands! Keep playing!*" Do not stop play or try to explain penalty kicks.
- C. At this age, coordination is still limited, so you will have some pushing, tripping, etc. As long as it is unintentional, just stop play so that players can get up and make sure everyone is okay. Remind players that **soccer is a non-contact sport** and that pushing is not allowed.
- D. Enforce sportsmanship. I have encountered very competitive kids at this young age who get upset because of a perceived rule violation. If a player continues to behave a certain way after multiple warnings or even one major infraction (like fighting or using inappropriate language), have them sit and have a discussion with their parents after the session.
- E. Focus your energy on the players that want to learn and have an assistant or another parent watch over those that are not interested or not listening. If a player continues to be disengaged, have a talk with their parents and ask them to participate in practice to ensure their child is supervised. Remind them you are a volunteer coach, not a babysitter.
- F. Assign players a role as either offense (score goals) or defense (protect our goal), but not more specific than that. Avoid having a goalkeeper! You will have one or more kids who insist on being the goalkeeper. If you need to, tell them you are the goalkeeper and they need to go out and play.
- G. Remind them to pass and spread out, but realize they will ignore this advice!

League 1/2 Summary

I. Coaches' Responsibilities

- A. Serving as instructor and teacher
- B. Exhibiting good sportsmanship
- C. Informing team members regarding schedule changes
- D. Explaining the rules to youth and parents
- E. Ensuring equal playing opportunity for all players regardless of skill level
- F. Officiating their team's matches

II. Player Equipment

- A. Each player is required to wear shin guards.
- B. Size 4 soccer ball; recommended
- C. Team jersey provided by VAA
- D. Molded cleats or sneakers. Metal cleats are forbidden.

III. Team Equipment

- A. Equipment bag with two size 4 soccer balls and a dozen cones/discs
- B. Set of 12 team jerseys
- C. Set of 12 yellow pinnies (use to identify goalie and if needed in scrimmage)

IV. Skill Development Goals

- A. Individual soccer skills - dribbling, shooting
- B. Team soccer skills - passing
- C. Role of player positions - offense/defense, left/center/right

V. Division Format

- A. One 60-minute team practice weekly using half of standard size field; coach's choice of practice day and location
- B. The duration of a match is four 10-minute running time quarters with a three-minute intermission between quarters
- C. Coaches also serve as referees and should actively coach and ref from the field during games
- D. Each team shall consist of seven players on the field
 - 1. Preferred format is 7 v. 7 with 3 attack, 3 defense and 1 goalkeeper per team
 - 2. Optional format is 8 v 8 with 3 attack, 3 defense, 1 midfield and 1 goalkeeper with 3 assigned to offense, 3 assigned to defense, and one goalkeeper.
 - 3. A team may play 2 players short.
- E. If a team is short more than 2 players 15 minutes after the scheduled match time, the match will be forfeited.
- F. In the event of a forfeit, players shall be borrowed from the opposing team to equalize the number on each side. A "fun" match should ensue which shall be refereed in the usual manner.
- G. No midfield limit; defenders may cross the midfield line
- H. Rotate players each quarter. Coaches need to develop a rotation to ensure even and varied playing assignments. Substitutions may occur only at the breaks between quarters or in the case of injury.

- I. Two points are awarded in the league standing for a win, one for a tie, and zero points for a loss or forfeit.
- J. As a recreational league, these points and league standings are not publicized. Rather, team points are used to match teams on similar abilities for Soccer Day Games (the last games of the season).
- K. Coaches are responsible to maintain the win/loss record. Coaches should inform the League Coordinator of the season record within two days after the last regular season game (i.e. in time for Soccer Days scheduling).
- L. A coin toss shall determine the choice of ends for the start of the match. The other team will have the kick-off. The team kicking off the first quarter will also kick-off the third quarter. The opponent will kick-off the second and fourth quarters.
 - 1. Team that gets to kick-off gets a buffer to start play. The size of the buffer is the circle lined at mid-field. Players of the opposing team must clear the circle until the ball is started in play.
- M. **Suggestion** - ask a parent on the sideline to keep track of game time and call quarter end so that the coaches can concentrate on the game.
- VI. **Rule Reminders** - Players should learn about and play with throw-ins, goal/corner kicks, hand ball and penalty kicks
 - A. Goal Kicks
 - 1. Any player on the defending team can take a goal kick
 - 2. On a goal kick, the ball may be placed anywhere within the goalie crease (smaller box) and kicked from the ground (not drop-kicked)
 - 3. On a goal kick, the opposing team may not enter the penalty box until the ball leaves the box.
 - B. A hand ball results in a free kick **only** when the ball handling is intentional
 - C. Corner kicks - At this grade level, few players have the leg strength to get the ball from the corner to the closest edge of the large box around the goal. Team on offense should have at least 1-2 players close enough to corner to receive ball.
 - D. Goalkeeper can only use hands if the ball was last handled by a player from the opposing team. If ball is kicked to the goalkeeper by a teammate, the goalkeeper must handle the ball with his feet as though he were a defender.
 - 1. For goalkeeper safety, forwards should be taught that once a goalkeeper goes down to his knees (or chest) and is arm's length or less distance from the ball, they need to disengage and not kick the ball one last time.
 - 2. If the goalkeeper mishandles the ball and it pops out by more than an arm's length, the forward may re-engage the ball and attempt a shot on goal.
 - E. Offside rule is NOT enforced in League 1/2
 - F. Slide tackles are not allowed. A slide tackle is a player sliding on the ground in to a player and/or the ball feet first. A slide tackle will be treated as dangerous play and will result in an indirect free kick.
 - G. All free kicks will be indirect free kicks.
 - H. Except as noted above, the rules set forth by FIFA are followed. Please familiarize yourself with the rules of the game.

League 3/4 Division Summary

I. Coaches' Responsibilities

- A. Serving as instructor and teacher
- B. Exhibiting good sportsmanship
- C. Informing team members regarding schedule changes
- D. Explaining the rules to youth and parents
- E. Ensuring equal playing opportunity for all players regardless of skill level
- F. Officiating their team's matches

II. Player Equipment

- A. Each player is required to wear shin guards.
- B. Size 4 soccer ball; recommended
- C. Team jersey provided by VAA
- D. Molded cleats or sneakers. Metal cleats are forbidden.

III. Team Equipment

- A. Equipment bag with two size 4 soccer balls and a dozen cones/discs
- B. Set of 12 team jerseys
- C. Set of 12 yellow pinnies (use to identify goalie and if needed in scrimmage)

IV. Skill Development Goals

- A. Individual soccer skills - dribbling, shooting
- B. Team soccer skills - passing, positioning
- C. Role of player positions - offense/defense, left/center/right

V. Division Format

- A. One 60-minute team practice weekly using half of standard size field; coach's choice of practice day and location
- B. The duration of a match is four 10-minute running time quarters with a three-minute intermission between quarters
- C. Coaches also serve as referees and should actively coach and ref from the field during games
- D. Each team shall consist of seven players on the field
 - 1. Preferred format is 7 v. 7 with 3 attack, 3 defense and 1 goalkeeper per team
 - 2. Optional format is 8 v 8 with 3 attack, 3 defense, 1 midfield and 1 goalkeeper with 3 assigned to offense, 3 assigned to defense, and one goalkeeper.
 - 3. A team may play 2 players short.
- E. If a team is short more than 2 players 15 minutes after the scheduled match time, the match will be forfeited.
- F. In the event of a forfeit, players shall be borrowed from the opposing team to equalize the number on each side. A "fun" match should ensue which shall be refereed in the usual manner.
- G. Rotate players each quarter. Coaches need to develop a rotation to ensure even and varied playing assignments. Substitutions may occur only at the breaks between quarters or in the case of injury.

- H. Two points are awarded in the league standing for a win, one for a tie, and zero points for a loss or forfeit.
- I. As a recreational league, these points and league standings are not publicized. Rather, team points are used to match teams on similar abilities for Soccer Day Games (the last games of the season).
- J. Coaches are responsible to maintain the win/loss record. Coaches should inform the League Coordinator of the season record within two days after the last regular season game (i.e. in time for Soccer Days scheduling).
- K. A coin toss shall determine the choice of ends for the start of the match. The other team will have the kick-off. The team kicking off the first quarter will also kick-off the third quarter. The opponent will kick-off the second and fourth quarters.
 - 1. Team that gets to kick-off gets a buffer to start play. The size of the buffer is the circle lined at mid-field. Players of the opposing team must clear the circle until the ball is started in play.
- L. **Suggestion** - ask a parent on the sideline to keep track of game time and call quarter end so that the coaches can concentrate on the game.

VI. Rule Reminders

- A. Goal Kicks
 - 1. Any player on the defending team can take a goal kick
 - 2. On a goal kick, the ball may be placed anywhere within the goalie crease (smaller box) and kicked from the ground (not drop-kicked)
 - 3. On a goal kick, the opposing team may not enter the penalty box until the ball leaves the box.
- B. A hand ball results in a free kick **only** when the ball handling is intentional
- C. Corner kicks - At this grade level, few players have the leg strength to get the ball from the corner to the closest edge of the large box around the goal. Team on offense should have at least 1-2 players close enough to corner to receive ball.
- D. Goalkeeper can only use hands if the ball was last handled by a player from the opposing team. If ball is kicked to the goalkeeper by a teammate, the goalkeeper must handle the ball with his feet as though he were a defender.
 - 1. For goalkeeper safety, forwards should be taught that once a goalkeeper goes down to his knees (or chest) and is arm's length or less distance from the ball, they need to disengage and not kick the ball one last time.
 - 2. If the goalkeeper mishandles the ball and it pops out by more than an arm's length, the forward may re-engage the ball and attempt a shot on goal.
- E. Offside rule is NOT enforced in League 3/4
- F. Slide tackles are not allowed. A slide tackle is a player sliding on the ground in to a player and/or the ball feet first. A slide tackle will be treated as dangerous play and will result in an indirect free kick.
- G. All free kicks will be indirect free kicks.
- H. Except as noted above, the rules set forth by FIFA are followed. Please familiarize yourself with the rules of the game.

League 5/6 Division Summary

I. Coaches' Responsibilities

- A. Serving as instructor and teacher
- B. Exhibiting good sportsmanship
- C. Informing team members regarding schedule changes
- D. Explaining the rules to youth and parents
- E. Ensuring equal playing opportunity for all players regardless of skill level
- F. Officiating their team's matches in case of referee no-show

II. Player Equipment

- A. Each player is required to wear shin guards
- B. Size 4 soccer ball; recommended
- C. Team jersey and socks; provided by VAA
- D. Molded cleats or sneakers. Metal cleats are forbidden.

III. Team Equipment

- A. Equipment bag with two size 4 soccer balls and a dozen cones/discs
- B. Set of 14 team jerseys
- C. Set of 12 yellow pinnies (use to identify goalie and if needed in scrimmage)
- D. Pair of goalkeeper gloves

IV. Skill Development Goals

- A. Team soccer skills - passing, positioning
- B. Role of player positions - forward/midfield/defender, left/center/right

V. Division Format

- A. One 60-minute team practice weekly using half of standard size field; coach's choice of practice day and location
- B. The duration of a match is four 12-minute running time quarters with a 3-minute break between quarters
- C. Coaches should coach from sideline unless no referees are available, in which case one coach from each team should function as a referee. When a referee is present, coaches should help with calling out of bounds from their sideline.
- D. Each team shall consist of nine players on the field. The preferred format is 3 offense, 2 midfield, 3 defense and 1 goalkeeper. A team may play 2 players short.
- E. If a team is short more than 2 players 15 minutes after the scheduled match time, the match will be forfeited.
- F. In the event of a forfeit, players shall be borrowed from the opposing team to equalize the number on each side. A "fun" match should ensue which shall be refereed in the usual manner.
- G. Rotate players through positions during the first half of the season. During the second half of the season, it is okay to limit player to a position with mutual agreement of the player and coach. Coaches need to develop a rotation to ensure even playing assignments.

- H. Substitutions may occur by either team after a goal scored or a goal kick. No substitutions on throw-ins or corner kicks. The only exception to these rules is a sub for an injury.
- I. Two points are awarded in the league standing for a win, one for a tie, and zero points for a loss or forfeit.
- J. As a recreational league, these points and league standings are not publicized. Rather, team points are used to match teams on similar abilities for Soccer Day Games (the last games of the season).
- K. Coaches are responsible to maintain the win/loss record. Coaches should inform the League Coordinator of the season record within two days after the last regular season game (i.e. in time for Soccer Days scheduling).
- L. A coin toss shall determine the choice of ends for the start of the match. The losing team in the coin toss will have the kick-off in the first half and the winning team in the coin toss will have the kick-off in the second half.

VI. Rule Reminders

- A. Any player on the defending team can take a goal kick
- B. On a goal kick, the ball may be placed anywhere within the goalie crease (smaller box) and kicked from the ground (not drop-kicked)
- C. A hand ball results in a free kick **only** when the ball handling is intentional
- D. Goalkeeper can only use hands if the ball was last handled by a player from the opposing team. If ball is kicked to the goalkeeper by a teammate, the goalkeeper must handle the ball with his feet as though he were a defender.
 - 1. For goalkeeper safety, forwards should be taught that once a goalkeeper goes down to his knees (or chest) and is arm's length or less distance from the ball, they need to disengage and not kick the ball one last time.
 - 2. If the goalkeeper mishandles the ball and it pops out by more than an arm's length, the forward may re-engage the ball and attempt a shot on goal.
- E. Offside should be introduced in the 5/6 division. Offside is very misunderstood in soccer. An offside infraction only occurs if a player plays the ball while offside. Just standing offside is not an infraction.
- F. Slide tackles are not allowed. A slide tackle is a player sliding on the ground in to a player and/or the ball feet first. A slide tackle will be treated as dangerous play and will result in an indirect free kick.
- G. Except as noted above, the rules set forth by FIFA are followed. Please familiarize yourself with the rules of the game.

League 7/8 Division Summary

I. Coaches' Responsibilities

- A. Serving as instructor and teacher
- B. Exhibiting good sportsmanship
- C. Informing team members regarding schedule changes
- D. Explaining the rules to youth and parents
- E. Ensuring equal playing opportunity for all players regardless of skill level
- F. Officiating their team's matches in case of referee no-show

II. Player Equipment

- A. Each player is required to wear shin guards
- B. Size 5 soccer ball; recommended
- C. Team jersey and socks; provided by VAA
- D. Molded cleats optional. Metal cleats are forbidden.

III. Team Equipment

- A. Equipment bag with two size 5 soccer balls and a dozen cones/discs
- B. Set of 18 team jerseys
- C. Set of 12 yellow pinnies (use to identify goalie and if needed in scrimmage)
- D. Pair of goalkeeper gloves

IV. Skill Development Goals

- A. Team soccer skills - passing, positioning, maintaining possession
- B. Playing positions, using space on the field

V. Division Format

- A. One 60-minute team practice weekly using half of standard size field; coach's choice of practice day and location
- B. The duration of a match is two 30-minute running time halves with a five-minute intermission between halves
- C. Coaches should coach from sideline unless no referees are available, in which case one coach from each team should function as a referee. When only one referee is present, coaches should help with calling out of bounds from their sideline.
- D. Each team shall consist of 11 players on the field. The preferred format is 4 offense, 3 midfield, 4 defense and 1 goalkeeper. A team may play 2 players short.
- E. If a team is short more than 2 players 15 minutes after the scheduled match time, the match will be forfeited.
- F. In the event of a forfeit, players shall be borrowed from the opposing team to equalize the number on each side. A "fun" match should ensue which shall be refereed in the usual manner.

- G. Two points are awarded in the league standing for a win, one for a tie, and zero points for a loss or forfeit.
- H. As a recreational league, these points and league standings are not publicized. Rather, team points are used to match teams on similar abilities for Soccer Day Games (the last games of the season).
- I. Coaches are responsible to maintain the win/loss record. Coaches should inform the League Coordinator of the season record within two days after the last regular season game (i.e. in time for Soccer Days scheduling).
- J. A coin toss shall determine the choice of ends for the start of the match. The losing team in the coin toss will have the kick-off in the first half and the winning team in the coin toss will have the kick-off in the second half.
- K. Players should be give the opportunity to try different positions during the first half of the season, but may be limited to certain positions with mutual agreement between the player and coach.
- L. Substitutions may occur by either team after a goal scored, before a goal kick or corner kick by either team, and before a throw-in only by the team in possession of the ball. The only exception to these rules is a sub for an injury.

VI. Rule Reminders

- A. Any player on the defending team can take a goal kick
- B. On a goal kick, the ball may be placed anywhere within the goalie crease (smaller box) and kicked from the ground (not drop-kicked)
- C. A hand ball results in a free kick **only** when the ball handling is intentional
- D. Offside is very misunderstood in soccer. An offside infraction only occurs if a player plays the ball while offside. Just standing offside is not an infraction.
- E. Goalkeeper can only use hands if the ball was last handled by a player from the opposing team. If ball is kicked to the goalkeeper by a teammate, the goalkeeper must handle the ball with his feet as though he were a defender.
- F. For goalkeeper safety, forwards should be taught that once a goalkeeper goes down to his knees (or chest) and is arm's length or less distance from the ball, they need to disengage and not kick the ball one last time. If the goalkeeper mishandles the ball and it pops out by more than an arm's length, the forward may re-engage the ball and attempt a shot on goal.
- G. Slide tackles are not allowed. A slide tackle is a player sliding on the ground in to a player and/or the ball feet first. A slide tackle will be treated as dangerous play and will result in an indirect free kick.
- H. Except as noted above, the rules set forth by FIFA are followed. Please familiarize yourself with the rules of the game.

League 9–12 Division Summary

I. Coaches' Responsibilities

- A. Serving as instructor and teacher
- B. Exhibiting good sportsmanship
- C. Informing team members regarding schedule changes
- D. Explaining the rules to youth and parents
- E. Ensuring equal playing opportunity for all players regardless of skill level
- F. Officiating their team's matches in case of referee no-show

II. Player Equipment

- A. Each player is required to wear shin guards
- B. Size 5 soccer ball; recommended
- C. Team jersey and socks; provided by VAA
- D. Molded cleats optional. Metal cleats are forbidden.

III. Team Equipment

- A. Equipment bag with two size 5 soccer balls and a dozen cones/discs
- B. Set of 18 team jerseys
- C. Set of 12 yellow pinnies (use to identify goalie and if needed in scrimmage)
- D. Pair of goalkeeper gloves

IV. Skill Development Goals

- A. Team soccer skills - passing, positioning, maintaining possession
- B. Playing positions, using space on the field

V. Division Format

- A. One 60-minute team practice weekly using half of standard size field; coach's choice of practice day and location
- B. The duration of a match is two 30-minute running time halves with a five-minute intermission between halves
- C. Coaches should coach from sideline unless no referees are available, in which case one coach from each team should function as a referee. When only one referee is present, coaches should help with calling out of bounds from their sideline.
- D. Each team shall consist of 11 players on the field. The recommended format is 3 offense, 3 midfield, 4 defense and 1 goalkeeper. A team may play 2 players short.
- E. If a team is short more than 2 players 15 minutes after the scheduled match time, the match will be forfeited.
- F. In the event of a forfeit, players shall be borrowed from the opposing team to equalize the number on each side. A "fun" match should ensue which shall be refereed in the usual manner.

- G. Two points are awarded in the league standing for a win, one for a tie, and zero points for a loss or forfeit.
- H. As a recreational league, these points and league standings are not publicized. Rather, team points are used to match teams on similar abilities for Soccer Day Games (the last games of the season).
- I. Coaches are responsible to maintain the win/loss record. Coaches should inform the League Coordinator of the season record within two days after the last regular season game (i.e. in time for Soccer Days scheduling).
- J. A coin toss shall determine the choice of ends for the start of the match. The losing team in the coin toss will have the kick-off in the first half and the winning team in the coin toss will have the kick-off in the second half.
- K. Players may be limited to certain positions with mutual agreement between the player and coach.
- L. Substitutions may occur by either team after a goal scored, before a goal kick or corner kick by either team, and before a throw-in only by the team in possession of the ball. The only exception to these rules is a sub for an injury.

VI. Rule Reminders

- A. Any player on the defending team can take a goal kick
- B. On a goal kick, the ball may be placed anywhere within the goalie crease (smaller box) and kicked from the ground (not drop-kicked)
- C. A hand ball results in a free kick **only** when the ball handling is intentional
- D. Offside is very misunderstood in soccer. An offside infraction only occurs if a player plays the ball while offside. Just standing offside is not an infraction.
- E. Goalkeeper can only use hands if the ball was last handled by a player from the opposing team. If ball is kicked to the goalkeeper by a teammate, the goalkeeper must handle the ball with his feet as though he were a defender.
- F. For goalkeeper safety, forwards should be taught that once a goalkeeper goes down to his knees (or chest) and is arm's length or less distance from the ball, they need to disengage and not kick the ball one last time. If the goalkeeper mishandles the ball and it pops out by more than an arm's length, the forward may re-engage the ball and attempt a shot on goal.
- G. Slide tackles are not allowed. A slide tackle is a player sliding on the ground in to a player and/or the ball feet first. A slide tackle will be treated as dangerous play and will result in an indirect free kick.
- H. Except as noted above, the rules set forth by FIFA are followed. Please familiarize yourself with the rules of the game.