



NORTHERN LIGHTS
SOCCER CLUB

Northern Lights Soccer Recreational Policies & Rules Manual



--Recreational Soccer Information--

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Preface

Minnesota Youth Soccer Association (MYSA)

Mission

Minnesota Youth Soccer Association promotes the game of soccer for all youth players in Minnesota. We promote the importance of education, self-esteem, diversity and teamwork in a safe, fun environment, allowing players to develop to their fullest potential in soccer and life.

National Charge to Provide Opportunities Throughout the State

Each National State Association has the responsibility to provide and coordinate opportunities for every player in every part of its assigned territory to play soccer at the developmental, intermediate and advanced levels.

Program

RECREATION PROGRAM

Recreational soccer provides youth players with the opportunity to play in an appropriate environment. The focus of recreational soccer is toward participation and fun over competition. Recreational soccer is a learning program for youth players organized within their Member Club.

US Youth Soccer (USYS)

US Youth Soccer is non-profit and educational organization whose mission is to foster the physical, mental and emotional growth and development of America's youth through the sport of soccer at all levels of age and competition. Our job is also to make it fun, and instill in young players a lifelong passion for the sport.

Anoka Ramsey Athletic Association (ARAA)

Mission

Anoka Ramsey Athletic Association, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation formed in 1979 to provide the youth of Anoka, Ramsey, and surrounding areas with guidance, equipment, and fields in order to participate in sports.

ARAA is an all volunteer organization which cannot exist without the continuing efforts of committed parents, coaches, directors, commissioners, and board members. We believe this spirit of volunteerism and participation is essential to community health.

ARAA offers programs in Baseball, Basketball, Football, Softball, Tennis and Soccer (Northern Lights Soccer Club). In 2006 our programs involved over 3,700 children and adults in the pursuit of athletic recreation, competition, and excellence. It is our hope that ARAA provides an opportunity for character development in all of its participants and promotes community well-being through its efforts.

Northern Lights Soccer Association (NLS)

Mission

Northern Lights Soccer Club was formed in 1985 and our mission is to provide quality recreational and competitive soccer programs for youth ages 4 to 19 in the communities of Andover, Anoka, Coon Rapids, Elk River, Ramsey and surrounding areas. Our soccer programs are affiliated and regulated by Minnesota Youth Soccer Association (MYSA), United States Youth Soccer (USYS) and we are a division of Anoka Ramsey Athletic Association.

Program

RECREATION PROGRAM

Recreational soccer provides an opportunity for kids to be involved in an organized soccer program in a non-competitive environment. Our program age groups are segregated into 2-year increments, in the summer we offer U4, U6, U8, U10 and U12; in the fall we offer U5, U7, U9, U11 and U13. Our coaching staff for the recreational program consists of volunteer parents/relatives. We also hire professional trainers to work with our U8 thru U12 teams during the summer to better prepare them for competitive soccer as well as give them an example of what to expect at the competitive program level. We are always in need of volunteers for coaches, age group directors, organize team pictures and other committee level responsibilities. We want your help to make the program better for your kids.

Our program is developed as a noncompetitive program, designed with the emphasis firmly placed on fun, participation, enjoyment, acquisition of skills and growth of confidence. In this program - "everyone is a winner!" Your involvement with your child's team is helpful to the coaches, but it is also very important to your child. The coaches and NLS ask that you give your child and his/her teammates your full support with positive comments and/or feedback. We ask that you promote good sportsmanship conduct to the players and we also ask that you abide with the following:

It would be appreciated if parents would please refrain from "Coaching" along the sidelines. It makes it difficult for the kids, and for the coaches, when instructions are coming from parents. Feel free to talk to the coach if you have questions or concerns. Cheers of enthusiasm is what the kids need from the sidelines.

It is important that your child be at the field on time for warm-ups and to be checked in. (For reasons of safety, players without shin guards will not be allowed to play.) If a player is late for a game, it will be at the coach's discretion as to when they will be called-in to play. Also, if your child is unable to attend a game please notify the coach or team parent as soon as possible so the coach can make the necessary changes to his/her line-up.

If you cannot be at the field with your child during a practice or game, it is essential that you inform the coach, asst. coach, or team parent. Please be back to the field on time to pick up your child. Our coaches are parents who have volunteered their time so your child has the opportunity to enjoy the sport of soccer, it is important that they can leave with their families when the games are finished

It is very important that you provide your child with a water bottle, water jug, etc. for all practices and games.

Team Parent

Our coaches are parents who have volunteered and we need to give them as much help as needed NLS highly recommends a team parent volunteer for each team. As a team parent you will be asked to help out with the following:

- Make up a snack sign-up schedule for games and practices. The kids love to get a drink and snack at the end of the games, so you may want to make a reminder call the night before to the family who is responsible for bringing snacks to the next game. Once everyone has signed up, make copies or email to everyone so if they need to they can switch with someone else.
- Assist the coach, if needed, by phoning parents if there is a game cancellation, reminder calls for snacks, or pictures. You can call the ARAA hotline at (763) 422-9555 (press 6 and 1) to find out if practices/games have been canceled.
- Hand out literature to the parents. There is a lot of information to relay to parents; if you handle this it allows the coaches to focus on teaching your kids the skill of soccer. To assure that everyone receives their copy, you may want to write the players name on top of each hand out before passing it out to the parents.
- Meet with parents to inform them that we will play soccer in the rain but, not if weather is severe. Often, we will not cancel games/practices prior to the scheduled time due to weather unless it is obvious that the severe weather will interfere throughout the entire night. Also remind parents not to allow children to climb on nets and goals. This is not only dangerous but, costly to us when nets have to be replaced.

- Please make sure all substitute players are sitting together and not running around during a game. This will help the coach when he/she needs to make substitution changes.
- Please make sure that no snacks are handed out after the game until the field has been cleared, the players are in possession of all personal items, and the coach has made any necessary announcements.
- When leaving the field, remind everyone to pick up trash that has been left behind.
- If a parent is late in picking up their child, for reasons of safety and concern, stay with the coach until that child has been picked-up.

The willingness to volunteer as a team parent is greatly appreciated. If you should have any questions or concerns, please feel free to talk to the coach or the Recreational Soccer Director.

Canceled Games

Rain-Out Games will be announced on the ARAA Hotline after 4:00pm the day of the game. Please call (763) 422-9555 (press 6 and 1) if weather is in question. Please note that we do play in the rain but, will call the games if the weather is severe.

Canceled games will not be rescheduled during the season.

The primary form of communication between the club and our membership will be email. Please insure that the email address listed in “email 1” of your household is up to date and also insure your home phone number is correct as this is how coaches will contact you. To verify and/or make corrections, log-in to your household in our online registration system at http://www.northernlightsoccer.org/registration/index_E.html and select option #4. By logging in to your household you can also find out who your child’s coach is to obtain first practice information.

If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions, please feel free to contact your coach or Recreational Soccer Director. We look forward to a fun and exciting season.

Rule 1 – The Field of Play

All NLS practices/games will be played at Central Park in Ramsey. There are currently nine soccer fields setup for Summer and Fall soccer. One goal on each field is marked with a number.

U4/U5/U6/U7 – These age groups play on fields 1 – 4. Coaches can be on the field with their players throughout the season unless it is interfering with the game play.

U8/U9 – These age groups play on fields 5 – 7. Coaches can be on field with their players up through the 3rd week in May unless it is interfering with the game play. Beginning the 4th week in May, all coaches must coach from the sidelines.

U10/U11/U12/U13 – These age groups play on fields 8 and 9. Coaches can be on field with their players up through the 3rd week in May unless it is interfering with the game play. Beginning the 4th week in May, all coaches must coach from the sidelines.

Spectator seating: When possible, the technical area for both teams will be on the same side of the field with the spectators seated on the opposite side.

Adverse field conditions: If the field conditions are not satisfactory for a team, no forfeit will automatically be declared. Please make NLS aware of why the field conditions were not satisfactory.

Playing Time: Each player must play at least ½ of each game except for reasons of injury, illness or discipline.

Rule 2 – The Ball

The ball size shall be:

U4, U5, U6, U7, U8, U9 - Size 3

U10, U11, U12, U13 - Size 4

NLS coaches will be provided with an acceptable game ball.

In the event the coaches do not have a satisfactory ball, the referee may select a game ball from the remaining lot of players soccer balls.

If the ball bursts or becomes defective during the game:

- the game is stopped
- the game is restarted by dropping the replacement ball at the place where the original ball became defective, unless play was stopped inside the goal area, in which case the referee drops the replacement ball on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the original ball was located when play was stopped.

If the ball bursts or becomes defective while not in play at a kick-off, goal kick, corner kick, free kick, penalty kick or throw-in:

- the match is restarted accordingly

The ball may not be changed during the match without the authority of the referee.

Rule 3 – The Number of Players

Number of Players

U4/U5

Maximum: 10 players on roster.

Maximum: 5 players on the field, no goalkeeper.

NLS Recommends: 5 players on the field, no goalkeeper.

Minimum: 4 players on the field, no goalkeeper.

U6/U7

Maximum: 10 players on roster.

Maximum: 5 players on the field, no goalkeeper

NLS Recommends: 5 players on the field, no goalkeeper

Minimum: 4 players on the field, no goalkeeper

U8/U9

Maximum: 11 players on roster.

Maximum: 6 players on the field, one of whom must be the goalkeeper

NLS Recommends: 6 players on the field, one of whom must be the goalkeeper

Minimum: 5 players on the field, one of whom must be the goalkeeper

U10/U11

Maximum: 11 players on the roster

Maximum: 7 players on the field, one of whom must be the goalkeeper

NLS Recommends: 6 players on the field, one of whom must be the goalkeeper

Minimum: 5 players on the field, one of whom must be the goalkeeper

U12/U13

Maximum: 11 players on the roster

Maximum: 7 players on the field, one of whom must be the goalkeeper

NLS Recommends: 6 players on the field, one of whom must be the goalkeeper

Minimum: 5 players on the field, one of whom must be the goalkeeper

Substitution – substitutions allowed at any stoppage of play, with permission of the referee.

Any of the other players may change places with the goalkeeper, provided that:

- the referee is informed before the change is made
- the change is made during a stoppage in the match

Rule 4 – The Players’ Equipment

NLS prohibits names or nicknames displayed on any uniform.

U4/U5 will be given a shirt to keep.

U6/U7/U8/U9/U10/U11/U12/U13 will be given a complete uniform (shirt, shorts and socks) to keep.

Safety

A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous to himself or another player (including any kind of jewelry.)

You will be asked to remove earrings from your child’s pierced ears for the duration of the game or practice, even if they are newly pierced. This is absolutely mandatory for legal reasons and cannot be debated.

Jewelry, watches and non-prescription glasses cannot be worn on the playing field. Prescription glasses must have a tether if worn on the field

Players are required to wear all equipment and appropriate clothing to all soccer activities. For everybody’s safety, jeans and other clothing with zippers or sharp objects attached to them are NOT allowed.

Basic Equipment

All players are required to wear shin pads, soccer cleats or regular gym shoes (cleats preferred). Cleats must not have a toe cleat present; if your shoes have one the referee will ask you to cut it off or change your shoes. For his or her own safety, no player will be allowed to play with a toe cleat present. Shin pads are to be covered by the socks, and shirts must be tucked in.

The basic equipment of a player comprises the following separate items:

- a jersey or shirt with sleeves – if undergarments are worn, the color of the sleeve must be the same main color as the sleeve of the jersey or shirt.
- shorts – if undershorts are worn, they must be of the same main color as the shorts.
- stockings
- shin-guards
- footwear

Shin-guards

- are covered entirely by the stockings
- are made of rubber, plastic or a similar suitable material
- provide a reasonable degree of protection

Colors

The two teams must wear colors that distinguish them from each other and also the referee.

Each goalkeeper must wear colors that distinguish him from the other players, and the referee.

The referee has the final decision on the safety of players’ equipment or clothing. A player will be allowed to wear a cast only if, in the opinion of the referee, it is well padded and will not constitute a risk of injury to the player or others.

Rule 5 – The Referee

U4/U5 – Coaches will referee their own games. Rule #1 of soccer: No Hands! Children will need to use their hands to touch the ball and the core soccer rule of “no hands” can be encouraged. However, if a child uses their hands, do not stop play. They are still learning and a simple “no hands” verbal reminder will suffice.

U6/U7 - NLS will provide referees but they are not guaranteed. If you do not have a referee for a game, the coaches should referee from on the field.

U8/U9/U10/U11/U12/U13 – NLS will provide referees but they are not guaranteed. If you do not have a referee for a game, the coaches should referee from on the field.

Respect the call/decision of the Referees at all times whether you think he/she is right or wrong. You may ask questions respectfully after the game or at halftime if necessary. Please empower these young adults to make decisions and DO NOT be confrontational. Contact a club official if you have problems with a referee, it's the only way things will get fixed.

Each game is controlled by a referee who has full authority to enforce the Rules of the Game in connection with the game to which he/she has been appointed.

The Referee:

- enforces the Rules of the Game
- controls the game
- ensures that any ball used meets the requirements of Rule 2
- ensures that the players' equipment meets the requirements of Rule 4
- acts as timekeeper and keeps a record of the match
- stops, suspends or abandons the match, at his/her discretion, for any infringements of the Rules
- stops, suspends or abandons the match because of outside interference of any kind
- stops the match if, in his/her opinion, a player is seriously injured and ensures that he/she is removed from the field of play. An injured player may only return to the field of play after the game has restarted.
- allows play to continue until the ball is out of play if a player is, in his/her opinion, only slightly injured
- ensures that any player bleeding from a wound leaves the field of play. The player may only return on receiving a signal from the referee, who must be satisfied that the bleeding has stopped.
- allows play to continue when the team against which an offense has been committed will benefit from such an advantage and penalizes the original offense if the anticipated advantage does not ensue at that time
- punishes the more serious offense when a player commits more than one offense at the same time
- takes disciplinary action against players guilty of cautionable and sending-off offenses. He/she is not obliged to take this action immediately but must do so when the ball next goes out of play takes action against team officials who fail to conduct themselves in a responsible manner and may, at his discretion, expel them from the field of play and its immediate surrounds.
- ensures that no unauthorized persons enter the field of play
- indicates the restart of the match after it has been stopped
- provides the appropriate authorities with a match report, which includes information on any disciplinary action taken against players and/or team officials and any other incidents that occurred before, during or after the match

Decisions of the Referee

The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play, including whether or not a goal is scored and the result of the match, are final. Respect the call/decision of the Referees at all times right or wrong. Do not argue or voice your opinion. You may respectfully direct questions to your coach if you do not understand the call made. Violators may be subject to suspension from all ARAA soccer activities until review by the soccer committee for disciplinary action. Repeat offenders will be terminated from the ARAA soccer program.

Rule 6 – The Assistant Referees

NLS Recreational soccer does not use assistant referees.

Rule 7 – The Duration of the Game

The length of games shall be:

U4/U5 - Each week, teams are scheduled for one-hour in which to have a short practice and then your game. Coaches should communicate with each other when they want to change players, have a break, and end the game.

U6/U7 - Quarters are 12 minutes each. Two minutes between quarters and three minutes at the half. We play by running time, which means the clock doesn't stop for any reason.

U8/U9/U10/U11/U12/U13 – 25 minute halves. Ten minutes at the half. We play running time, which means the clock does not stop for any reason.

Rule 8 – The Start and Restart of Play

Procedure

- all players must be in their own half of the field of play
- the opponents of the team taking the kick-off are at least 10 yards from the ball until it is in play
- the ball must be stationary on the center mark
- the referee gives a signal
- the ball is in play when it is kicked and moves forward
- the kicker must not touch the ball again until it has touched another player

After a team scores a goal, the kick-off is taken by the other team.

Rule 9 – The Ball In and Out of Play

U4/U5 - If the ball goes out of bounds anywhere on the field, a coach/parent should roll it back on the field into an open area. This will get the kids to spread out more (which is a key skill at this age).

U6/U7/U8/U9/U10/U11/U12/U13 - Putting the ball into play after out-of-bounds is the same as you were taught (throw-in, goal kick, corner kick), except if a player does it incorrectly (feet leave ground during throw-in, ball doesn't come all the way in, kids trips during kick, etc.), gently correct the player and allow them to redo it until it is correct.

Goalies must throw the ball when they have it in their hands (no drop-kicks).

Rule 10 – The Method of Scoring

A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goalposts and under the crossbar, provided that no infringement of the Rules of the Game has been committed previously by the team scoring the goal. The team scoring the greater number of goals during a match is the winner. If both teams score an equal number of goals, or if no goals are scored, the game ends in a tie.

Rule 11 – Offside

Offside is not in effect for NLS Recreational games, however, we do not want to encourage play that is offside. We want to instruct the kids to play within the intended offside rule, but NLS does not enforce this rule, nor will the referees enforce this rule.

Rule 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

Indirect kicks are used for all fouls.

Rule 13 – Free Kicks

The indirect free kick - A goal can be scored only if the ball subsequently touches another player before it enters the goal. All indirect kicks must be moved at least 6 yards from the goal line area that encompasses the goal itself.

Rule 14 – The Penalty Kick

The penalty kick is not in effect for NLS Recreational games.

Rule 15 – The Throw In

A throw-in is a method of restarting play. A throw-in is awarded to the opponents of the player who last touched the ball when the whole of the ball crosses the touch line, either on the ground or in the air. A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in.

At the moment of delivering the ball, the thrower:

- faces the field of play
- has part of each foot either on the touch line or on the ground outside the touch line
- holds the ball with both hands
- delivers the ball from behind and over his head
- delivers the ball from the point where it left the field of play

All opponents must stand no less than 2 yards from the point at which the throw-in is taken.

The ball is in play when it enters the field of play.

After delivering the ball, the thrower must not touch the ball again until it has touched another player.

If the player does this incorrectly, gently correct the player and allow them to redo until they get it correct.

Rule 16 – The Goal Kick

A goal kick is a method of restarting play. A goal kick is awarded when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, either on the ground or in the air, having last touched a player of the attacking team, and a goal is not scored in accordance with Rule 10.

A goal may be scored directly from a goal kick, but only against the opposing team.

Procedure

- The ball is kicked from any point within the goal area by a player of the defending team
- Opponents remain outside the penalty area until the ball is in play
- The kicker must not play the ball again until it has touched another player
- The ball is in play when it is kicked directly out of the penalty area

Rule 17– The Corner Kick

A corner kick is a method of restarting play. A corner kick is awarded when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, either on the ground or in the air, having last touched a player of the defending team, and a goal is not scored in accordance with Rule 10. A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick, but only against the opposing team.

Procedure

- The ball must be placed inside the corner arc nearest to the point where the ball crossed the goal line
- The corner flag-post must not be moved
- Opponents must remain at least 6 yards from the corner arc until the ball is in play
- The ball must be kicked by a player of the attacking team
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves
- The kicker must not play the ball again until it has touched another player

CONDUCT

NLS is committed to promoting an environment that is free from: harassment and violence in any form; verbal or physical intimidation; vandalism; drug, alcohol or tobacco use; gambling; and inappropriate language.

If there are behavioral issues on either team (i.e. pulling hair, pushing down/kicking other children, spitting at another child), the coach of the child exhibiting the behavior is responsible for addressing the situation with the child/parents. In no case should the parents or coach on another team address the behavior. If the coach of the child is not addressing the issue, even after being made aware of it, please notify the Recreational Soccer Director.