



YMCA OF CENTRAL STARK COUNTY SOCCER RULES

Recreational and Select Soccer

There are 2 types of youth soccer programs: **Recreational** (rec) and **Competitive** (club, travel, etc.)

- **Recreational Soccer** is what most youth participate in. North Canton YMCA holds recreation soccer in our Fall and Spring seasons. During the season, we practice one weekday and one weekend game. We focus on having fun and displaying good sportsmanship. Each player plays at least 50% of each game. All of our coaches are parent volunteers.
- **Competitive Soccer** is just that, competitive in nature. Teams practice several times per week and play year-round. There are usually try-outs for these teams, players can be cut and playing time is not guaranteed. They are sometimes called travel teams because they travel to tournaments in other cities. These teams often have paid coaches or a paid trainer.

Rules

Although most of our rules are in accordance to FIFA, however, there are a few accommodations we make for our youth soccer leagues.

- Field Size
 - **K/1 & 2/3** – Touchline (sideline) is 60' and the End line (Goal line) is 90'.
- Soccer Ball Size
 - **K/1** – Size 3
 - **2/3** – Size 4
- Players
 - **K/1** – 5 field players per team (5v5). No goalkeepers.
 - **2/3** – 5 field players per team (6v6) and 1 goalkeeper per team.
 - All soccer leagues are Co-Ed!
- Time of Play
 - **K/1** – Two 15-minute halves
 - **2/3** – Two 20-minute halves
- Substitutions
 - There are no limits to how many substitutes you have per game.
 - We allow coaches to substitute at any point in the game, but substitutions can only be made on a dead ball situation (throw in, goal kick, free kick, etc.)
 - Player must line up at the center line to indicate they are ready to sub.
- Fouls
 - All physical fouls (pushing, kicking, tackles, etc.) will be called by the referee.
 - Non-contact fouls (handballs, etc.) will be called at the referee's discrepancy.
- Restarts
 - **Kick Off:** All players must stand on the **outside** of the half line circle until kick has occurred.
 - **Goal Kicks:** Opposing team must stand at the half line until kick has taken place.
 - **Corner Kicks:** All divisions will do corner kicks. Opponents must stand 5 yards from kick.
 - **Free Kicks:** All will be indirect. Defenders have to stand at least 5 yards from the kick

Equipment

- All players **must** wear shinguards for every practice and every game. Hard surfaces of shinguards **must** be covered with socks.
- **No shoes** with front cleats may be worn (no baseball or football shoes if they have a front cleat, unless you cut it off). Only rubber cleats are allowed; metal cleats are not allowed.
- **No** jewelry, metal devices, or hazardous equipment may be worn. (Casts can be allowed if they are padded and the Referee approves them before the game).
- Each player should bring a plastic water bottle to games and practice. Coaches should allow adequate water breaks during practice & bring extra water (some players will always forget to bring water).
- To games, each player must wear a jersey or shirt, shorts, shinguards, socks that entirely cover the shinguards, and footwear. If it is cold outside, players can wear pants over their shorts and a jacket under their jersey. Hats and gloves are also acceptable to wear (no scarfs!)
- Goalkeepers must wear colors that distinguish them from the other players and from the referees. Mostly they either wear a special goalkeeper jersey, a mesh, pinnie) or a T-shirt.

Practice Attendance

Weekly practices are optional but highly recommended.

- Team practices will be determined by the director, coach, and parents of participants.

Playing Time

The YMCA requires that each child plays at least 50% of every game he or she attends.

- If a player misses practice during the week, their playing time will not be affected in the game.

Goalkeepers

- **K/1 – No goalkeepers**
- **2/3** – Goalkeepers will be used throughout the season (goalies, keepers, etc.)
 - Goalkeepers are the only players on the field who can legally use their hands (besides on throw-ins.)
 - Keepers will have different shirts on to easily distinguish themselves from field players.
 - Goalies can only handle the ball in the penalty area. Outside of the area will be a handball.
 - Goalies can either kick, drop kick, or throw the ball once they have handled it.
 - Keepers also will kick the goal kicks for their team (defenders can also kick if needed).

Small Sided Games and Formations

- Our games are **small sided** (less than the typical 11 on the field.)
- **K/1** – We play with 5 players on the field.
 - In small sided games with 5 or less players per side, you shouldn't worry about formations or positions but should teach basic concepts, teamwork, passing, dribbling & basic tactics such as **sagging** and to **mark up** behind a player when the other team has a throw-in or is near our goal.
 - By having fewer players on the field, we reduce the size of the "swarm", create more touches on the ball, does not allow players to be excluded from the activity, and requires players to make simple but realistic soccer decisions.
- **2/3** – We play 5 on the field and 1 goalkeeper.
 - Coaches can introduce positions and formations but keep it basic (defenders, midfielder, and forwards.) Introduce spacing on the field and player providing options off the ball. Players should work more as a team and begin to communicate with one another on the field.

Injuries

- If a player is injured, play will continue until the whistle is blown. The referee will stop the game if a child appears to be seriously hurt or if there is blood. If the game is stopped for injury, encourage players immediately stop and kneel where they are. The injured player should sit out and receive appropriate treatment.

Encourage Learning and Tolerate Mistakes

- If your team is learning and trying new things, they will make a lot of mistakes. Accept and be tolerant of mistakes. Encourage them to try new things and encourage effort even if it doesn't work.
 - Examples: "Great try. Keep it up." or "Good idea; try it again."

Rewarding or Punishing Performance

- Never punish or scold a child for lack of ability. All you can expect them to do is their best (don't make those who lose a game or come in last run laps or sit out while others play.)
- Measure each player's performance by their personal improvement and effort, and not by comparing them to another player.
- Try to motivate players in a positive way that builds self-esteem.

Measuring Success

In recreational soccer, consider measuring success in these ways:

- Is everyone having fun?
- Are they learning about teamwork?
- Are they learning something about soccer (i.e., are they improving?)
- Are they hustling, enthusiastic, and doing their best?

Be A Good Role Model

- Players and parents will follow your lead. Be a good sport and don't yell at the referees or at the other team.
- After the game, seek out the referees and shake hands and thank them, even if they made some bad calls.

Things You Should and Should Not Do

- Positive encouragement and instruction of your players from the sidelines is allowed. Negative criticism, hostility, abuse or anger are things you should not do. You are a role model and must set the example of good sportsmanship and insist upon it from your team.
- Cheering when the other team makes a mistake is considered unsportsmanlike. Cheering when the other team makes a great play is positive.
- **Never** criticize the referee. If an appealable mistake is made, talk to the referee or Sports Director after the game. Remember, you are the role model and must set the standard for behavior.
- **Don't run up the score.** It's not good for either team if the game is a mismatch, but sometimes it happens. If your team gets 5 goals ahead, try one of the following:
 - Put your weakest scorers up front (use this as an opportunity to let them be forwards).
 - Try someone new in goal or unfamiliar position.
 - Pull a player off the field & "play short". If it is still a mismatch, pull off another player.
 - Tell your players they must complete 5 consecutive passes before shooting.
 - Tell them they can only take shots from outside the Penalty Box (chip shots, lofted shots at the top of the goal, power shots, etc.)

Coaching During Games

- **K/1:** We allow the coaches to assist with gameplay on the field but ask that they do not interrupt gameplay. With the coaches on the field, you are able to get your coaching points out to your players. Coaches are welcome to stand on the touchlines to monitor substitutes.
- **2/3:** Coaches must remain on the sideline for the duration of the game. Coaches can give directions and instructions to players on the field as they play.
 - Keep in mind these comments should be instructive on how to play and should not be negative.

At the End of the Game

- At the end of the game, players and coaches usually line up facing each other on the field, give high five, and tell each other good game.
- Parents usually take turns providing refreshments after games.

Keeping Children & Parents Under Control

- Everyone must follow all directions given by the coaches and assistant coaches.
 - Everyone must hustle & do their best.
 - "When I talk you must be still & listen".
 - I expect everyone to be a good sport whether we win or lose (this includes parents)
 - "No cursing or name calling".
 - Disruptive or disrespectful behavior **will not be tolerated**.
- **Safety Rules** Certain rules must apply regardless of age.
 - "Keep your hands to yourself" (You cannot allow anyone to get hurt).
 - "Do not kick the ball in the air unless I tell you it is okay" (otherwise you will have kids getting hit in the back of the head or the face by flying balls).
 - Dangerous behavior will not be allowed or tolerated.
- **Dealing with disruptive players** . Rude or disrespectful behavior from players will not be tolerated.
 - Nip bad or disrespectful behavior early to avoid habits.
- **Dealing with disruptive parents.** Depending on the circumstances, ask our Sports Director advice and support.
 - Encourage parents to limit distractions on the sideline.
 - Parents should stick with positive reinforcement phrases during games.
 - Criticisms, argue with coaches and officials, and negative comments are grounds for removal by referee or Sports Director.

The Importance of Warming Up Before Playing

- A proper warm-up before the game gets the athletes ready to play and reduces their chance of injury. **Warmups** can include jogging with dynamic stretches, dribbling a ball around the field, playing tag, etc. Warmups should last around five minutes.

Always Remember

You are doing this for fun and to help the kids of our community! We appreciate your commitment to youth development!