



**Zebulon Parks and Recreation
2026 Spring Youth Soccer
Rules and Regulations**

The Zebulon Parks and Recreation Department and the Parks & Athletics Manager and/or his designee will be the League Administrator for all leagues. All leagues will be governed by the rules set forth below and if not specifically mentioned, shall default to the rules for this sport as set by the National Federation of State High School Sports (NFHS).

6U & 8U Soccer Leagues

Rule 1 – Field and Equipment

- 1.1 Ball Size – 6U & 8U will use a size 3 ball.
- 1.2 Field Dimensions - 90 feet by 60 feet
- 1.3 Goal Size – 6 feet tall by 12 feet wide
- 1.4 Required Player Equipment
 - 1.4.1 Shin guards must be always worn by all players in practices and games.
 - 1.4.2 Closed toe shoes are required.
 - 1.4.3 Cleats are recommended by not required. Cleats must be made of rubber and not metal.
 - 1.4.4 No jewelry of any kind may be worn.
 - 1.4.5 Hats may not be worn while playing.
 - 1.4.6 Players should be dressed in their full uniform to include jersey, shorts, and socks.
 - 1.4.7 Jerseys must be tucked into shorts.
 - 1.4.8 Non-uniform items based on weather conditions may be allowed as long as uniform top is the outer layer to distinguish between teams.

Rule 2 – Playing Rules

- 2.1 All games shall be played 4 versus 4.
 - 2.1.1 There will be no forfeits. Games may begin with fewer players if necessary.
 - 2.1.2 If teams fall below 4 total players, the game should continue with the players that are present.
- 2.2 There shall be **no goal keepers** in the U6 or U8 soccer league.
- 2.3 The game will consist of four (4) eight (8) minute quarters.

- 2.3.1 The clock should only stop for injuries and substitutions at roughly the halfway mark of each quarter.
 - 2.3.1.1 These stoppages of the clock should be limited to 30 seconds or less.
- 2.4 There will be a 2-minute break between each quarter.
- 2.5 There will be a 5-minute break at halftime.
- 2.6 All players should have an equal amount of playing time and should be on the field for 50% of the total playing time.
 - 2.6.1 It is recommended that coaches rotate players at roughly the 4:00 mark of each quarter to better track individual playing time.
- 2.7 Players not actively in the game should remain seated on the bench area.
 - 2.7.1 Only players and coaches should be sitting in the team bench area.
- 2.8 One coach from each team will be allowed to be on the field during game play to instruct the players.
- 2.9 The start of each quarter shall begin with a kickoff at the center mark of the field.
 - 2.9.1 The home team shall kickoff to start the first and third quarters.
 - 2.9.2 The away team shall kickoff to start the second and fourth quarters.
- 2.10 All balls that go completely out of bounds will result in possession of the ball to the opposing team.
 - 2.10.1 Players in the U6 league may either throw the ball in with an overhead throw or may kick the ball in when given possession of the ball after the opposing team was last to touch it before going out of bounds on either sideline or end line.
 - 2.10.2 When the ball crosses a sideline in the U8 league, the opponent of the last team to touch the ball will be awarded a throw-in of the ball.
 - 2.10.3 When the ball crosses an endline in the U8 league, the opponent of the last team to touch the ball will be awarded either a corner kick or goal kick.
 - 2.10.3.1 Corner kicks are awarded if the team defending the goal along that sideline was the last team to touch the ball. The ball should be placed on the corner arc and kicked into play.
 - 2.10.3.2 Goal kicks are awarded if the team defending the goal along that sideline was not the last team to touch the ball. The ball should be placed on the goal box and kicked into play.
- 2.11 No player shall touch the ball with their hand, wrists or arms. This constitutes a hand-ball and possession of the ball should be awarded to the opposing team.
- 2.12 Pushing, shoving, and general rough play should not be allowed. Coaches should initially warn players if they are being too rough but if it continues, whenever a push, shove or general rough play continues then the ball should be awarded to the opposing team.
 - 2.12.1 Coaches should also substitute out players that continually exhibit excessively rough or aggressive behavior.
- 2.13 Slide tackling is strictly prohibited.
- 2.14 Offsides will not be called.
- 2.15 Any infraction should be awarded with a free kick to the opposing team. Opposing players should be at least 4 yards away from the ball at the kick.
- 2.16 There will be no carding or required sending off players off for an infraction.
- 2.17 There will be no penalty kicks called or awarded.
- 2.18 Scores and standings will not be kept for either the U6 or U8 soccer league.
- 2.19 Headers are NOT allowed in any age group.

Rule 3 – Officiating

- 3.1 Due to a local shortage of officials, all games in the U6 and U8 leagues will be officiated by the coaches.
- 3.2 Coaches are expected to be fair in their judgement for both teams when awarding possession after a ball has gone out-of-bounds.

Rule 4 – Sportsmanship

- 4.1 All coaches, players, and spectators are expected to always exhibit positive behavior towards members of both teams.
- 4.2 It is expected that coaches, players, and spectators will cheer positively for both teams regardless of the score.
- 4.3 Coaches, players, and spectators will be expected to exhibit humility when winning and dignity when losing.
- 4.4 Coaches are expected to not encourage their players to intentionally ‘run the score up’ when facing an overmatched opponent.
- 4.5 Coaches and spectators are expected to remember that the players on both teams are children, and they are still learning how to play the game.
- 4.6 Any coach, player, or spectator that does not exhibit good sportsmanship according to the Town of Zebulon’s Coaches Code of Conduct and the Parent and Spectators Code of Conduct will be asked to leave and will be subject to the Town of Zebulon’s Suspension Policy.

U10 & U12 Soccer Leagues

Rule 1 – Field and Equipment

- 1.1 Ball Size – U10 & U12 will use a size 4 ball.
- 1.2 Field Dimensions
 - 1.2.1 U10 Soccer shall play on a field 180’x 120.’
 - 1.2.1.1 Goal boxes should be 18’ from each goal post and extend 18’ into the field of play.
 - 1.2.1.2 Penalty boxes should be 36’ from each goal post and extend 36’ into the field of play
 - 1.2.2 U12 Soccer shall play on a field 220’ x 150.’
 - 1.2.2.1 Goal boxes should be 18’ from each goal post and extend 18’ into the field of play.
 - 1.2.2.2 Penalty boxes should 42’ from each goal post and extend 42’ into the field of play.
- 1.3 Goal Size
 - 1.3.1 U10 Soccer shall use a goal 6.5’ tall by 18’ wide.

- 1.3.2 U12 Soccer shall use a goal 7' tall by 20' wide.
- 1.4 Required Player Equipment
 - 1.4.1 Shin guards must be always worn by all players in practices and games.
 - 1.4.2 Closed toe shoes are required.
 - 1.4.3 Cleats are recommended by not required. Cleats must be made of rubber and not metal.
 - 1.4.4 No jewelry of any kind may be worn.
 - 1.4.5 Hats may not be worn while playing.
 - 1.4.6 Players should be dressed in their full uniform to include jersey, shorts, and socks.
 - 1.4.7 Jerseys must be tucked into shorts.
 - 1.4.8 Non-uniform items based on weather conditions may be allowed as long as uniform top is the outer layer to distinguish between teams.

Rule 2 – Playing Rules

- 2.1 All games shall be played 9 vs 9.
 - 2.1.1 There will be no forfeits. Games may begin with fewer players if necessary.
 - 2.1.2 If teams fall below 9 total players, the game should continue with the players that are present.
- 2.2 Goal keepers are allowed and are included in the 9 players allowed on the field.
 - 2.2.1 Goal keepers shall wear a vest of a differing color from either team to denote their position of goal keeper.
- 2.3 The game will consist of two (2) twenty-five (25) minute halves.
 - 2.3.1 Regular season games that end with a tied score will be recorded as a tie.
 - 2.3.1 Tournament games that end with a tied score shall play a sudden-death overtime.
 - 2.3.1.1 Overtime shall be one (1) ten-minute period.
 - 2.3.1.2 The game will end with the first made goal of any overtime period.
 - 2.3.1.3 Should the overtime period end with the score still tied, a best of 5 series of rotating penalty kicks shall take place until a winner has been determined.
 - 2.3.1.4 Should a team be mathematically eliminated before completing all 5 rounds of the series, the game shall be ended and the remaining kicks shall not take place.
 - 2.3.1.5 If the score is still tied after each team has had 5 penalty kicks, the series shall continue one round at a time until a winner has been determined.
 - 2.3.1.6 Teams must use a different shooter each round and shooters may not repeat unless all players, except the goalie, have had a round in which they were the shooter.
 - 2.3.1.7 The home team should take the first shot in the first round and every odd numbered round afterwards, should they be needed.
 - 2.3.1.8 The away team should take the first shot in the second round and every even number round afterwards, should they be needed.
- 2.4 There will be a 5-minute break at halftime.
- 2.5 All players should an equal amount of playing time and should be on the field for 50% of the total playing time.
 - 2.5.1 It is recommended that coaches rotate players at roughly every 6 minutes each half to better track individual playing time.

- 2.6 Substitutions are unlimited and allowed at any dead ball situation.
- 2.7 Players not actively in the game should remain seated on the bench area.
 - 2.7.1 Only players and coaches should be sitting in the team bench area.
- 2.8 The start of each half shall begin with a kickoff at the center mark of the field.
 - 2.8.1 The home team shall kickoff to start the first half.
 - 2.8.2 The away team shall kickoff to start the second half.
- 2.9 Teams shall switch the ends of the field after that they are defending after halftime.
- 2.10 All balls that go completely out of bounds will result in possession of the ball to the opposing team.
 - 2.10.1 When the ball crosses a sideline, the opponent of the last team to touch the ball will be awarded a throw-in of the ball.
 - 2.10.2 When the ball crosses an endline, the opponent of the last team to touch the ball will be awarded either a corner kick or goal kick.
 - 2.10.2.1 Corner kicks are awarded if the team defending the goal along that sideline was the last team to touch the ball. The ball should be placed on the corner arc and kicked into play.
 - 2.10.2.1.1 During corner kicks, opponents should be at least 8 yards away from the ball until it is kicked.
 - 2.10.2.2 Goal kicks are awarded if the team defending the goal along that sideline was not the last team to touch the ball. The ball should be placed on the goal box and kicked into play.
 - 2.10.2.2.1 During a goal kick, opponents should remain on their half of the field until the ball is kicked into play.
 - 2.10.2.2.2 The team kicking the ball does not have to wait until the opponent has finished retreating to their side of the field and may put the ball in play sooner if they so choose.
- 2.11 No player shall touch the ball with their hand, wrists, or arms. This constitutes a handball and possession of the ball should be awarded to the opposing team.
- 2.12 Pushing, shoving, and general rough play should not be allowed. Players should initially be warned if they are being too rough but if it continues, whenever a push, shove or general rough play continues then the ball should be awarded to the opposing team.
 - 2.12.1 Coaches should also substitute out players that continually exhibit excessively rough or aggressive behavior.
- 2.13 Slide tackling is strictly prohibited.
- 2.14 The offsides rule is applicable and should be called.
- 2.15 Any infraction will result in either a direct free kick or penalty kick. Opposing players should be at least 8 yards away from the ball at the kick.
- 2.16 Scores and standings will be kept for both U10 and U12 soccer leagues.
- 2.17 Headers are NOT allowed in any age group.

Rule 3 – Officiating

- 3.1 One official will be provided for all regular season and tournament games.
- 3.2 Beginning once the official walks onto the field and through the conclusion of the game, they assume full responsibility for administering and adjudicating the game.
- 3.2 Coaches are expected to always treat all officials with respect and dignity.

- 3.3 Yelling, berating, or otherwise disrespectful behavior towards the officials will not be tolerated.

Rule 4 – Sportsmanship

- 4.1 All coaches, players, and spectators are expected to always exhibit positive behavior towards members of both teams.
- 4.2 It is expected that coaches, players, and spectators will cheer positively for both teams regardless of the score.
- 4.3 Coaches, players, and spectators will be expected to exhibit humility when winning and dignity when losing.
- 4.4 Coaches are expected to not encourage their players to intentionally ‘run the score up’ when facing an overmatched opponent.
- 4.5 Coaches and spectators are expected to remember that the players on both teams are children, and they are still learning how to play the game.
- 4.6 Any coach, player, or spectator that does not exhibit good sportsmanship according to the Town of Zebulon’s Coaches Code of Conduct and the Parent and Spectators Code of Conduct will be asked to leave and will be subject to the Town of Zebulon’s Suspension Policy.