

St. Mary's Youth Soccer

RECREATIONAL BY-LAWS

Revised 18 June 2012

Purpose – The purpose of the St. Mary's Youth Soccer By-Laws is to provide amplifying guidance related to the SMYS Constitution, and the Laws of the Game, as modified to fit the needs of SMYS.

Mission – The mission of Recreational Soccer is to promote the game of soccer through programs that emphasize each player's enjoyment, skill development, personal growth, passion for the game and team experience, consistent with the principles of Fair Play and Good Sportsmanship. Recreational soccer will provide children, regardless of skill level, the opportunity to play soccer in a team environment.

Programs – SMYS offers three programs in the recreational category.

- **Kiddie Kick** – This is a COED program that introduces our youngest players to the game of soccer. This division offers a weekly soccer clinic. All players are required to wear shin guards covered by socks, sneakers (or cleats if you have them), the Kiddie Kick T-Shirt which you will receive before the first session begins, a #3 soccer ball and water. Each session will run the players through various station drills that will teach them the fundamentals of the game: ball control, passing and receiving, shooting, and teamwork. Each session will end with mini-games on small field with small goals, usually 5v5 or 6v6. No goal keepers are used at this age.
- **Recreational Soccer (Rec)** – Rec soccer is an open program for players of all skill levels. Players do not try out for teams; they are placed on teams by Division Managers. SMYS does not guarantee the placement of a player to any specific team, coach, or practice location. Coaches are all volunteers. In general, there are two practice sessions and one game per week. Games are played exclusively in St. Mary's County, usually on Friday evening and Saturday. Roster size is limited to allow players to be on the field for approximately 50% of each game. Teams are formed for one season only (Fall or Spring).
- **Recreational Plus (RecPlus or Rec+)** – RecPlus is a more competitive program for players with higher skill levels, or a desire to play at a more competitive level. Players participate in a player evaluation session between June and July each year. Following evaluations, teams are formed for one year, and will play as a team in both the Fall and Spring seasons. Coaches are volunteers who typically have several seasons of coaching experience as well a MSYSA "E" License or higher. RecPlus players may not concurrently play on Recreational Teams, or on any St. Mary's United Travel Teams (or other select teams where players are carded). In general, there are two practices per week, and at least one game per week. Games are played in Southern Maryland, either in St. Mary's, Charles, or Calvert Counties, against RecPlus teams from Southern Maryland.

Ethics

Players Code of Conduct:

1. I will encourage good sportsmanship from fellow players, coaches, officials and parents at all times.
2. I will remember that soccer is an opportunity to learn and have fun.
3. I deserve to play in an environment that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol; and expect everyone to refrain from their use at all soccer games.
4. I will do the best I can each day, remembering that all players have talents and weaknesses the same as I do.
5. I will treat my coaches, other players and coaches, game officials, other administrators, and fans with respect at all times; regardless of race, sex, creed, or abilities, and I will expect to be treated accordingly.
6. I will concentrate on playing soccer. Always giving my best effort.
7. I will play by the rules at all times.
8. I will at all times control my temper and resist the temptation to retaliate.
9. I will always exercise self control.
10. My conduct with other players, spectators and all officials of the game shall be in accordance with appropriate behavior, and in accordance with FIFA's "Laws of the Game", and in adherence to St. Mary's Youth Soccer By-Laws.

Coaches/Volunteers Code of Conduct:

1. I will never place the value of winning before the safety and welfare of all players
2. I will always show respect for players, other coaches, and game officials.
3. I will lead by example, demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship at all times.
4. I will be knowledgeable of the rules of the game, and teach these rules to my players.
5. I will never use abusive or insulting language. I will treat everyone with dignity.
6. I will not tolerate inappropriate behavior, regardless of the situation.
7. I will not allow the use of anabolic agents or stimulants, drugs, tobacco, or alcohol by any of my players.
8. Youth have a greater need for example than criticism. I will be the primary soccer role model.
9. I will at all times conduct myself in a positive manner.
10. Coaching is motivating players to produce their best effort, inspiring players to learn, and encouraging players to hold their heads high win or lose.
11. Coach's actions on sidelines during games shall be in the spirit of "good sportsmanship" at all times. Profanity, profane gestures, arguing, inciting disruptive behavior by spectators and/or players, or any conduct not in the spirit of good sportsmanship, shall require disciplinary action from St. Mary's Youth Soccer.
12. I will complete the Background Check on an annual basis, or as required by the Recreation and Parks Department of St. Mary's County.

Parents/Guardians Code of Conduct:

1. I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, game officials, and administrators at all times.
2. I will place the emotional and physical well being of all players ahead of any personal desire to win.
3. I will support the coaches, officials, and administrators working with my child, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.

4. I will remember that the game is for the players, not for the adults.
5. I will ask my child to treat other players, coaches, game officials, administrators, and fans with respect.
6. I will always be positive.
7. I will always allow the coach to be the only coach.
8. I will not get into arguments with the opposing team's parents, players, or coaches.
9. I will not come onto the field for any reason during the game.
10. I will not criticize game officials.

General Program Rules & Procedures

Recreational:

- Failure to adhere to the rules and procedures established by SMYS can result in sanctions against a player/parent/coach/team. Coaches and parent volunteers are expected to be familiar with the rules and procedures of SMYS.
- No player carded by St. Mary's United (or other select teams where players are carded) may play on a Rec or RecPlus team during the same season without a waiver from SMYS.
- No player on an SMYS RecPlus team of any club participating in the RecPlus Program may play concurrently on an SMYS Recreational Team.
- Coaches may not add or remove players from their team. Players are assigned only by the Division Manager, VP (Rec) or President SMYS.
- A player may not be added to a team after registration has closed and team rosters are final without a waiver from the VP (Rec).
- No child may participate in a team practice or game if the player is not officially registered and shown on the team roster. Doing so presents serious insurance risks to SMYS and the adult in charge.
- Players are NOT guaranteed placement with specific teams, coaches, practice locations, days or times.
- Players will be allowed to request to "Play-Up" one age group, provided the players date of birth is within 12 months of the beginning of that age group.
- Players are NOT permitted to "Play-Down" an age group. In the case of developmental or physical limitations, the VP (Rec) may grant a waiver to this rule.
- Teams will be held to stated roster sizes.
- Players, parents, and coaches are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct,
- All games will be played in accordance with the Laws of the Game as modified for SMYS games. See Attachment 4 through 8.
- Scores and Standings are not recorded for Recreational games.

Recreational Plus:

- For additional rules & procedures, refer to *SMYS RecPlus Bylaws*.

Uniforms:

- SMYS uniforms are to be worn as the outermost garment during all games. League issued team shirt must be tucked in.
- Players will wear sneakers, rubber cleats, or plastics cleats. Metal cleats of any type are not allowed. Coaches and Referees will check Player's footwear before each game.

- Shin guards are mandatory for all games and practices. Socks must completely cover the shin guards during all official games. Shin guards that are constructed to be part of a sock and have sufficient padding covering the shin guard, are allowed.
- All players shall wear soccer, or athletic shorts. In colder weather, sweat pants (without zippers, snaps, button etc.), sweatshirts (without hoods, strings, zippers, snaps, button etc.), and knit caps/gloves will be permitted.
- No Jewelry or chewing gum is allowed.
- Any clothing deemed by the referee to present a risk of injury to any player on the field, will not be allowed.
- Referee will check player uniforms for safety before each game.
- Failure of a player to come prepared may result in the referee not allowing that child to play.

Medical:

- Any player wearing a cast SHALL present to the referee prior to each game a note from the doctor giving permission to play with the cast on. The cast SHALL be padded.
- A player who is bleeding or has an open wound must leave the field for treatment. If a substitute is available, the player's coach may substitute. The injured player may return to the game at the earliest substitution opportunity, provided the referee is satisfied with the player's condition.

Conduct of the Game:

- Unlimited substitutions are allowed: after a goal; before a goal kick; before a throw-in (if the team in possession makes a substitution, the other team may substitute as also); after an injury or disciplinary action (in case of an injury, the other team may substitute player(s) in a number equal to those substituted due to injury)
- All players are required to play at least half the game, unless in the event of an injury or disciplinary action.
- Slide tackling is NOT allowed.
- The Referee shall penalize foul or abusive language, or inappropriate gestures directed at players, referees, parents/guardians, or coaches by other players. The referee may issue a Yellow or Red Card to the offending player, parent or coach engaged in using inappropriate tone, language, or gestures.
- Harassment of any player or referee will not be tolerated by the league.
- Coaching from the sidelines during the games will be limited to verbal communications, without the use of aids. Goal lines (end line) will be kept clear of all spectators and Coaches. Coaches are not allowed on the field during games unless called on by the Referee. The rule does not apply to U06 and U07 divisions.
- Spectators are to sit on the sideline opposite the teams. Both teams and their Coaches will remain in the designated area during play. One team will take the left half and the opposing team will take the right half.

Game Format:

- A summary of Game Formats is included as Attachment 3.
- Recreation Division
 - U5 Division – This division is run as a clinic, meeting weekly for about 7 weeks. There are no formal teams. The day and time of the weekly clinic is determined by the Division

- Manager/Facilitator. Players are required to bring water, a #3 soccer ball, and wear shin guards.
- U6 and U7 Divisions – These divisions provide the players their first opportunity to play on a formal team, however, goal keepers are not used in games. Teams typically meet once a week for practice and have a game on Saturday. Teams are split in half on game day and teams play 2 simultaneous 4v4 games using a #3 soccer ball, with the coach’s facilitating the games. No referees are used and there are no off-side calls. Teams will play 4 – 10 minute quarters with a 5 to 8 minute halftime.
 - U8 Division – Players are introduced to using goal keepers and have a USSF Certified referee to officiate the game. Games are played on bigger fields, and teams play 6v6 including the goal keeper using a #3 soccer ball. All kicks are indirect; there are no penalty kicks; there are no off-side calls. Teams will play 4 – 12 minute quarters with a 5 to 8 minute halftime.
 - U9 and U10 – Players in these divisions play with an 8v8 formation including the goal keeper and a #4 soccer ball. Off-Side calls are introduced. Teams will play 2 - 25 minute halves with a 5 to 8 minute halftime.
 - U12 and U12G – Players in these divisions play with an 8v8 formation including the goal keeper and a #4 soccer ball. Teams will play 2 - 30 minute halves with a 5 to 8 minute halftime.
 - U14, U15G, and U18 Divisions – Players in these divisions play with an 8v8 formation including the goal keeper and a #5 soccer ball. Teams will play 2 - 35 minute halves with a 5 to 8 minute halftime. (U18 may play 11v11 formation based on registration)
 - Recreation Plus Division
 - Per the RecPlus Bylaws.

Referees:

- Concern for player safety is of the highest priority in youth soccer; therefore, referees will be protective of players at all times. To ensure the protection of the goal keeper, the referee will assume the goalkeeper has possession of the ball when the ball is on or under his/her hand, even if he/she is only touching the ball. This protects the goalkeeper from injury.
- The Referee shall penalize foul or abusive language, or inappropriate gestures directed at players, referees, parents, spectators, or coaches by other players, coaches, parents, or spectators. He, or she, may issue a Yellow or Red Card to the offending player, or coach, or eject the spectator(s) engaged in using inappropriate tone, language, or gestures. Coaches and parents/guardians are responsible for the conduct of their teams and their fans. Harassment of any player or referee will not be tolerated by the league.
- For instructional purposes, Referee calls should be made verbally as well as by signal to the player. If, in the referee’s judgment, explaining the call would prompt dissent from a player or coach, the referee may simply call “Play-on”.
- Referees will attempt to signal and verbally call "Play-on" decisions.
- Protests of any type are not allowed. All referee decisions are final. Concerns should be submitted in writing, or voiced to the appropriate Division Manager or/and any league official as soon as possible.
- A Referee Mentor will be present at both Hollywood Soccer Complex and Chancellors Run Regional Park fields during SMYS sponsored games. Additional information on the Referee Mentor Program can be found in Attachment (12)

Yellow Card:

- In accordance with FIFA.
- Not applicable to U05 Kiddie Kick, U06 or U07 Divisions.

Red Card:

- In accordance with FIFA.
- A player receiving a Red Card will be removed from the game and must leave the field immediately. Player is ejected from current game, without substitution, and suspended from participation in the next league game. The next game is considered to be the next scheduled game actually played. As an example, if the next schedule game is postponed or canceled for any reason, the following game will be the game the suspension is invoked.
- A Coach receiving a Red Card shall leave the playing field immediately and the assistant coach or a team parent/guardian shall assume the coaching duties for the remainder of the game. A coach that has received a Red Card, or a spectator that has been ejected, shall leave the field in such a manner that the offending person is "out of sight and out of sound" of the playing field. If the offending person does not leave the playing area, as previously stated, the game will be terminated by the referee, and the incident will be reported to the Division Manager.
- A player/coach receiving a Red Card or a spectator that has been ejected may not return to the field at the end of the game, nor be on the sidelines at the following game.
- NOTE: All Red Cards that are issued by the Referee are final and cannot be rescinded. The incident can be reviewed for additional action as addressed in these by-laws. The automatic game suspension remains intact regardless of the findings of the review process unless reviewed and overturned by the President and two other board members. It is the responsibility of the Referee and the Coach to maintain good order and sportsmanship before, during, and immediately after a game.
- Red Card Reporting:
 - a) Referees shall report all Red Card incidents to the Head Referee, the Division Manager and Vice President as soon as possible (no later than 48 hours after the incident). The Head Referee or Vice President may request a written statement with the following information:
 - i) Date
 - ii) Name of person(s) red carded, or ejected.
 - iii) Indicate if person is a player, coach, parent/guardian, or spectator.
 - iv) Assigned team
 - v) Reason for issuing Red Card
 - vi) Additional supporting information
 - b) The Head Referee/Vice President will notify the Division Manager and the coach of the team that was issued the Red Card of the one game suspension. The Head Referee/Vice President will forward the information to the SMYS R&D Committee. Any Board member may recommend to the President or the Secretary any additional actions based on the incident or any other past history of the person involved.
 - c) After reviewing the information available, the R&D Chair will make a recommendation to the VP (REC) and President on any further action to be taken. The VP (REC) or President will notify the player, parent, coach or spectator of the decision.

Complaints and Appeals of R&D Decisions:

- Complaints about unsporting behavior by a Player, Coach, Volunteer or Referee should be sent to the President SMYS and VP (Rec). Concerns specific to a referee should also be sent to the

Head Referee. Complaints must be in writing (or via e-mail) and must be specific. Anonymous complaints or concerns will not be considered.

- Decisions of the R&D committee may be appealed to the SMYS Executive Board. Appeals must be submitted in a timely manner, and must be in writing (or via e-mail). The appeal will not constitute a new hearing on the matter but will solely be concerned with whether the original committee hearing was fair, was based on accurate testimony, and reached a reasonable conclusion.

Weather and Cancellation Policy:

- In the event of inclement weather, SMYS will post an announcement on its web site (www.playsmys.org) concerning the status of fields and games.
- A text message will also be sent to families who have subscribed to the text message alert found on the SMYS web site (www.playsmys.org).
- Occasionally, there could be field by field closures that will affect some but not all fields used by SMYS teams.
- Once a game starts, it is up to the referee, or SMYS Board Members present at the fields, to suspend games in dangerous weather conditions. In the event lightning is observed or thunder is heard, the game must be suspended immediately.
- A game is considered complete if the game has been played through the first half.
- SMYS will attempt to reschedule cancelled games, based on field availability. SMYS cannot guarantee that games will be rescheduled due to field availability.

Registration:

- Registration for Recreational Soccer is open to all.
- Registration takes place semi-annually beginning in July for the Fall season, and January for the Spring Season.
- Players who play for a travel team, or on a Rec Plus team may not concurrently register for a Rec team.
- Players who register prior to the closing date for registration will be assigned to teams.
- Players who register after registration has closed will be charged a late fee, and will be added to a waiting list. Players will be assigned on a space available basis.
- Players who request to "Play-Up" an age group will be evaluated on a space available basis. Play-Up requests are not guaranteed to be approved.
- Players will be assigned to a division based on their date of birth as shown in Attachment 2.
- Players will not be assigned to teams until payment of all fees has been received.
- SMYS does not guarantee assignment with any coach, team, practice location, date or time.
- Players who withdraw prior to the end of the regular registration period will be eligible to receive a full refund minus administrative fees.
- Any player who withdraws after the regular registration closing date will not be eligible for a refund.

Updates/Changes/Amendments:

- This manual should be updated annually.
- Changes and updates shall be approved by the SMYS Executive Board.
- Amendments shall be proposed at any regular meeting and will be included in the next annual update unless otherwise directed by the Executive Board.