

HANDBOOK

WITH
IN-TOWN PROGRAM GUIDELINES
AND RULES

ESSEX COUNTY PROGRAM GUIDELINES
AND RULES

SALEM YOUTH SOCCER



Witchcitysoccer.org

Salem Youth Soccer Association

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The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to Directors, Players, Coaches, Referees, and Parents. The following organizations have laws, rules, and practices upon which these guidelines have been developed: FIFA, USSF, MYSA, and ECYSA. The term “parent” will also include a legal guardian or caretaker of a child where applicable.

Meetings are held on a regular monthly basis. Meeting days and times are posted in advance on the website. Interested parents or coaches are invited to attend Board of Director Meetings or may submit written letters to the board with any comments concerning the program.

Please see the Appendices for additional information.

Registration

Salem Youth Soccer (SYS) registration occurs for each Fall and Spring season at times determined by the Registrar as approved by the Board and are subject to deadlines imposed by Essex County Youth Soccer Association (ECYSA) and/or Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association (MYSA). Said times will be advertised to the Salem community primarily through the SYS website and email distribution to members. Additional notification may be made through school, advertisements in newspapers and flyers at the field. At the time of registration all first time players must submit a copy of the player's birth certificate.

In-Town Program

All registration forms and fees must be submitted to the Registrar on or before the dates established. Late registrations may be accepted with an additional fee up to a final registration date.

Essex County Program

Participants in the Essex County divisions are subject to all conditions of Essex County Youth Soccer Associations rules and regulations. At the time of registration, a small head/shoulders picture of the player must be submitted for the issuance of ID cards in accordance with ECYSA rules. Late registrations may be accepted with an additional fee up to a final registration date. Waiting lists will be kept for any potential registrant.

Affiliations

A player is considered registered and affiliated once he/she has properly completed the registration forms and paid the appropriate fee(s) for the SYS or ECYSA league. For all players in the Essex County Program an ECYSA ID card-must be stamped by the ECYSA Registrar to be considered registered-

Age Groups and Eligibility

Salem Youth Soccer offers competition for boys and girls for spring and fall seasons. A child must be four (4) years of age before April 1st in order to play for the spring season. All players must be registered with SYS in order to play. Please see the SYS website for the age group guidelines.

Fees

All fees must be paid at the time of registration. Fees for both In Town and Essex County can be found on the SYS website. All fees are subject to change, the amount of the fees will be determined annually by the Board of Directors.

Scholarships/Payment Plans

Scholarships/Payment Plans are available at all age levels and will be controlled by the President, Registrar and Treasurer. Parents should contact the Registrar for more information. All candidates must complete an SYS registration. The names of all scholarship candidates shall be held in the strict confidence.

Player and Parent Responsibilities

Timeliness

It is the responsibility of players and parents to arrive at an appropriate time before practice or games. If a practice or game is to be missed, notification must be made in advance to the coach/assistant coach.

Equipment/Soccer Balls

Players at all levels should bring their own soccer ball of the appropriate size to all practices.-The appropriate soccer uniform must be worn to games. Shin guards must be worn at all practices and games.

Drinks

Players should bring drinks of cold water, etc. to all practices and games.

Code of Conduct

The essential elements of character-building and ethics in sports are embodied in the concept of sportsmanship and six core principles: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship. The highest potential of sports is achieved when competition reflects these "six pillars of character." Please refer to the Parent Code of Conduct in the Appendices.

In-Town Policies

The objective for the team formation is to achieve a balance of player talent between teams in the same age group on a fair and equitable basis so that they will all be competitive with one another and have the ability to advance their skills.

Eligibility

All registered players that are in good standing will be eligible for team selection during each season. A player must play in his or her appropriate age group.

Coach's Children/Siblings

The son/daughter of the coach is automatically assigned to his or her team. A sibling in the same age group is automatically assigned to the same team as his or her sibling.

Player Movement

Player movement, swaps etc. are not allowed unless there is a need by the Division Director to balance out teams.

Essex County Team Formation

The formation for ECYSA teams will follow the Essex County guidelines for all appropriate age groups.

Placement Dates

Player evaluation dates will be set by the Essex County Vice President with -the Board of Directors' approval. Once the dates are approved, the information -will be available on the SYS website and my also be published through other local media. Only registered players will be allowed to attend try outs.

Player Placement Committee

The Player Placement Committee will consist of the Essex County Vice President, and the Division Directors along with the appropriate Team Coaches. The Placement Committee or their designees will conduct the player evaluations. The evaluations will be used as part of the formation of the Essex County team rosters.

Player Ratings

- The ratings will reflect a player's ability to perform the objective skills.
- The ratings are based upon comparison of all players on a team and, if possible, in the division.
- The ratings have no character reflection on a player, i.e. type of person, intelligence or attitude.
- The ratings are considered confidential and shall be for use in the placement only.

Player Movement

Players in the U12 division or below seeking to change his or her status must request permission to do so

to Salem Youth Soccer. Such requests must be initiated by a parent and sent to the Player Movement Committee, P.O. Box 8003, Salem, MA 01970. . All requests must be submitted by May 1st for the Fall Season. Incomplete or late forms will not be considered. The request will be submitted to the Board of Directors for submission to the Player Movement Committee for their review. The player must be approved by the Player Movement Committee and Board of Directors prior to changing age divisions. The Committee will review these requests using criteria not limited to the following list for player advancement evaluation:

- The comments and recommendations of the player’s current Coach and current Division Director.
- Player meets school-grade requirement if the player’s peer group is currently playing at the next level.
- Player must be rated Above Average to Superior player. A completed player rating form must be submitted by the player’s current coach.
- The next level must be in need of additional players to properly form the requisite number of teams with adequate number of players on the rosters.
- Player must attend try outs for current age group and the next higher age group they are seeking.

Clothing and Accessories

SYS will provide a jersey to each player at the start of the fall season for their use. These jerseys will be used for both Fall and Spring seasons. The jersey may be worn during in season activities such as tournaments, SYS approved fundraising, and SYS games. Lost or damaged jerseys can be replaced for a fee. See the website for the Uniform Replacement Policy.

All age groups must wear “soccer cleats” and shin guards with soccer socks over the shin guards. Uniform replacements requested during the Fall or Spring seasons are at the parents’ expense. See the SYS website for current pricing. All eyewear should be deemed safe for sports activities. All jewelry, including hard hair accessories, watches, rings, necklaces, bracelets and piercing jewelry is **NOT** permitted for practices or games.

Coaches Requirements and Responsibilities

Kidsafe

All Coaches and team volunteers must complete an SYS Application and a CORI check prior to be eligible. All CORIs will be valid for one year.

In Town Coach Selection

In Town coaches will be approved by the Division Director and/or the In Town Vice President.

Travel Team Coach Selection

Travel Team Coaches must submit a coaching application to the Board by the May 1st preceding the Fall season in which they wish to coach. For new coaching appointments for the Spring season, candidates must submit an application to the Board by November 1st preceding the Spring season. The Board will review all applications and notify new coaches in a timely manner. A candidate must complete a Salem Youth Soccer Coaches Application and CORI Form to be considered for a coaching position with SYS. A Travel Team coach will be selected and approved by the Salem Youth Soccer Board members. He or she may be assessed on the following criteria:

- Personal Qualities—integrity, leadership, understanding, sensitivity, organization, ability to communicate, fairness, dedication, commitment, etc.
- Coaching experience.
- Coaching license.
- Participation in SYS leagues.
- Recommendations of other coaches, coordinators and Board members.

- Interviews
- Other factors deemed appropriate by the Board members.

Coaching Licenses

Coaches are strongly encouraged to pursue the highest licenses possible. Completed training course fees are reimbursable for all SYS registered/affiliated coaches and assistant coaches. Minimum recommended licenses per age group are as follows:

U6 Class G
 U8 Class G
 U10 Class G/F
 U12 and above Class E

Coach/Assistant Coach Affiliation

A Coach/Assistant Coach must be affiliated with Salem Youth Soccer and must have current M.Y.S.A. liability insurance (this is accomplished automatically when coach/assistant coach is listed on the official coaches' list presented to the registrar for rosters). Coaches in Essex County must have a valid US Youth Soccer ID Card.

Code of Conduct

Salem Youth Soccer follows a Zero Tolerance policy which can be found on the SYS website. All Coaches are subject to the SYS Zero Tolerance Policy as well players, parents, and spectators. If any member of a team engages in unbecoming conduct, which is then brought to the Board of Directors' attention, the Grievance Committee will investigate and make recommendations to the board to take appropriate action. This could involve banning individuals from further league activities. The Grievance Committee may recommend further action for numerous violations by a Coach, Team or Team Member.

Player Participation

The coach/assistant coach is/are responsible for each player participating at least fifty (50%) percent of every game in the in town noncompetitive divisions, The players are there to have fun and are to be treated equally.

Team Parent

It is suggested that Coaches select a "Team Parent" who will agree to coordinate all non-coaching activities, (i.e. arranging for drinks or oranges for games and team communications.)

Registration/Affiliation

It is the coach's responsibility to ensure that only players who are registered and affiliated with Salem Youth Soccer participate in practices or games. Failure to do so may result in a coach's suspension. Coaches should have the approved Team Roster and/or Player ID Cards with them at all practices and games.

Games/Practices

Make sure that no player is left behind at the field after a practice or game. At games and practices, provide an environment conducive to learning the age appropriate skills.

Schedules

Schedule Changes

For all Essex County games Schedule changes will be determined by the Essex County Vice President and/or Field Director and will be posted on the Essex County website, www.ecysa2.org. Referee notification, and rescheduling will follow the Essex County guidelines.

All In Town game schedule changes will be determined by the In Town Vice President and/or Field Director and posted on the SYS website.

Field Rules

Team and Spectator Seating

During games, both teams are on one side of the field. Spectators are on the opposite side of the field from the team areas. Each team is responsible for the field on which the game or practice is being held. Please ensure that the team area is clear of debris both before and after your team's usage.

Practice Fields

Practice fields are assigned by the Fields Director-or his/her designee only. Anyone looking for additional field space MUST contact the Fields Director for approval on that time and field location. Messages are posted online at www.witchcitysoccer.org regarding practice cancellations.

Practice Time Requests

Requests are to be given to the Division Directors who will then forward them to the Fields/Scheduling Director or his/her designee. Requests for practice fields and times will be taken on a "first come, first serve" basis, with emphasis in placing like-age groups/same gender teams together on the same fields.

Coaches must comply with their assigned practice field/time assignments.

Field Permits

A Valid Field Permit is required by all Teams practicing on all City Fields – AT ALL TIMES.

Game and Practice Fields

All field designations for practice and games may be found on the SYS website.

Scheduling Conflicts for Fields – Precedence

If a game is scheduled on a particular field and a practice or tryout is scheduled at the same time, THE GAME shall have precedence.

Tournaments

Salem Youth Soccer encourages teams to participate in any U.S.Y.S.A. affiliated tournament. Also, where applicable, SYS may provide some additional financial support to eligible Salem teams.

Teams

Any team wishing SYS support in order to participate in any U.S.Y.S.A. affiliated tournament must fill out a Tournament Request Form and submit it to the Treasurer for payment. Checks will ONLY be made out to the tournament in which a team is playing, not to the individual requesting payment (i.e. Team Coach).

Patches

Salem Youth Soccer Patches are available to teams for exchange at "patch tournaments". Any

coach/team who would like patches may purchase them from the Equipment Director.

Pingree/MTOC Champions

Any team which wins Pingree or the MTOC may be eligible to receive a stipend to be spent on the team for a purpose approved by the SYS Board of Directors. A team may only receive one such payment each year. The intent of this provision is to support and celebrate our champion teams, either by helping defray travel expenses associated with MTOC or by subsidizing a team activity or clothing purchase.

Grievance Procedures

Salem Youth Soccer remains committed to providing a quality experience for all the young people of Salem. Even though all individuals involved from the coaching staff to the Board of Directors are volunteers, accountability is important to us. We try to communicate our expectations and standards to all parents and coaches by means of this handbook. Occasionally, issues arise concerning appropriate individual conduct that must be discussed at the Board of Directors level. The Board of Directors has created a Grievance Committee to help Division Directors resolve conflicts that might arise concerning the violation of standards put forward in this handbook.

If anyone has a concern that the behavior of a Board Member, Coach, or Parent is not in accordance with Salem Youth Soccer's Guidelines, the concerned person should:

- a) Discuss the situation with the person involved at an appropriate time; or
- b) Discuss the situation with the appropriate Division Director for their age level; or
- c) Discuss the situation with the Essex County or In-Town Vice Presidents.

If they still are unsatisfied with the outcome, they may bring the matter before the Grievance Committee. Our overall hope is to continue to provide a positive experience for all those involved in the Salem Youth Soccer Program, to make certain that all volunteers are accountable to the guidelines of this handbook, and to provide a forum for individuals where their concerns will be heard.

Appendices

Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association Coaches Code of Conduct

The Board of Directors of Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association, Incorporated (Mass Youth Soccer) and the leaders of the affiliated Leagues are concerned about the conduct of all coaches and referees during games at all levels, from recreational to premier to ODP.

We want to ensure that games are fair, positive and enjoyable experiences for all of the children and adults involved. A soccer game should be friendly and unifying – a spirited social and athletic occasion for players, coaches, referees and spectators.

To clarify expectations of coach conduct, we jointly expect all coaches to conform to this Code of Conduct.

- Before, during and after the game, be an example of dignity, patience and positive spirit.
- Before a game, introduce yourself to the opposing coach and to the referee.
- During the game, you are responsible for the sportsmanship of your players. If one of your players is disrespectful, irresponsible or overly aggressive, take the player out of the game at least long enough for him or her to calm down.
- During the game, you are also responsible for the conduct of the parents of your players. It is imperative to explain acceptable player and parent behavior in a preseason meeting.
- Encourage them to applaud and cheer for good plays by either team. Discourage them and you may need to be forceful and direct from yelling at players and the referee.
- During the game, you are also responsible for the conduct of spectators rooting for your team.
- During the game, do not address the referee at all. If you have a small issue, discuss it with the referee calmly and patiently after the game.
- If you have a major complaint, or if you think the referee was unfair, biased, unfit or incompetent, report your opinion to your League. Your reactions will be taken seriously if they are presented objectively and formally.
- After the game, thank the referee and ask your players to do the same.

We stress two points:

Referees – especially young and inexperienced ones – are like your players and yourself, in that they need time to develop. You can play an important role in helping them to improve by letting them concentrate on the game. You can help by encouraging them, by accepting their inevitable, occasional mistakes and by offering constructive post-game comments. On the other hand, you could discourage and demoralize the referees by criticizing their decisions, by verbally abusing them and inciting – or even accepting – your own players' overly aggressive behavior.

Your example is powerful, for better or worse. If you insist on fair play, if you concentrate on your players' enjoyment of the game and their overall, long term development, and if you support the referee, your players and their parents will notice. If you encourage (or allow) your players to play outside the rules, if you're overly concerned about results, or if you criticize the referee harshly, your players and their parents will also notice.

Think about what you're doing during a game! Uphold the Spirit of the Game! If you follow the expectations described above, the spirit of the game will be alive and well in Massachusetts and will grow, along with the enjoyment of all.

SPORT PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

On September 23, 2000, more than thirty heads of Massachusetts' chapters of national sports and medical associations, educational organizations, and professional associations met at Children's Hospital in Boston to participate in a consensus meeting to develop a sport parent code of conduct for the state. The meeting was convened by the Massachusetts Governor's Committee on Physical Fitness and Sports and the National Youth Sports Safety Foundation, Inc.

Preamble

The essential elements of character-building and ethics in sports are embodied in the concept of sportsmanship and six core principles: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship. The highest potential of sports is achieved when competition reflects these "six pillars of character."

The following are the critical elements of the Code of Conduct and apply to all parents, guardians, relatives, and guests:

1. A parent will not force his child to participate in sports.
2. A parent will remember that children participate to have fun and that the game is for youth, not adults.
3. A parent will inform the coach of any physical disability or ailment that may affect the safety of his child or the safety of others.
4. A parent will learn the rules of the game and the policies of the league.
5. A parent (and guests) will be a positive role model for children and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy, and by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, officials and spectators at every game, practice or other sporting event.
6. A parent (and guests) will not engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct with any official, coach, player, or parent such as booing and taunting; refusing to shake hands; or using profane language or gestures.
7. A parent will not encourage any behaviors or practices that would endanger the health and wellbeing of the athletes.
8. A parent will teach his child to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.
9. A parent will demand that his child treat other players, coaches, officials and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, color, sex or ability.
10. A parent will teach his child that doing one's best is more important than winning, so that his child will never feel defeated by the outcome of a game or his/her performance.
11. A parent will praise his child for competing fairly and trying hard, and make his child feel like a winner every time.
12. A parent will never ridicule or yell at his child or other participant for making a mistake or losing a competition.
13. A parent will emphasize skill development and practices and how they benefit his child over winning. A parent will also deemphasize games and competition in the lower age groups.
14. A parent will promote the emotional and physical well-being of the athletes ahead of any personal desire a parent may have for his child to win.
15. A parent will respect the officials and their authority during games and will never question, discuss, or confront coaches at the game field, and will take time to speak with coaches at an agreed upon time and place.
16. A parent will demand a sports environment for his child that is free from drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and will refrain from their use at all sports events.
17. A parent will refrain from coaching his child or other players during games and practices, unless he am one of the official coaches of the team.

A parent failing to abide by the aforementioned rules and guidelines will be subject to disciplinary action that could include, but is not limited to the following:

- Verbal or written warnings by an official, head coach, and/or head of league organization
- Parental game suspension with written documentation of incident kept on file by organizations involved
- Game forfeit through the official or coach
- Parental season suspension

SALEM YOUTH SOCCER, June 2007.

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Zero Tolerance Policy

Because of physical and verbal abuse directed at referees, MYSA and other soccer organizations have adopted zero tolerance policies.

Salem Youth Soccer has adopted the following:

It is the responsibility of ALL coaches to maintain the highest standards of conduct for themselves, their players and supporters in all matches. Abusive and obscene language, violent play, violent conduct, fighting and other behavior detrimental to the game will not be tolerated. A coach's responsibility for referee support and spectator control includes the times prior to, during, and after the match at the field and surrounding areas.

All persons responsible for a team and all the spectators shall support the referee. Failure to do so will undermine the referee's authority and has the potential of creating a hostile environment for the players, the referee and all other participants and spectators.

SYS has adopted the following Rule for all of its participants:
****No one may address the referee during the game.****

Exceptions to the rule and considerations for Coaches and Asst. Coaches:

- Exceptions during play:
 - Responding to a referee initiating a communication.
 - Making substitutions.
 - Pointing out emergencies or safety issues.
- Exceptions during halftime or at the end of the game:
 - Politely requesting that the referee explain a rule.
 - Polite and friendly feedback can be given to the referee.
- Absolutely no sarcasm, no harassment, and no intimidation.
- Penalties: for coaches and asst. coaches and others responsible for the team
 - For any major infraction and depending on the seriousness, the referee may issue a Warning (Caution) or Dismissal (Ejection).
 - In the event of a Warning, the Coach or Assistant Coach will be told that that they are Warned and the incident will be reported to SYS.
 - In the case of Dismissal (Ejection), the Coach or Assistant Coach will be told by the referee that they are dismissed. They must surrender their pass card and leave the field. The incident will be reported to SYS.

Exceptions to the rule and considerations for Spectators:

- Exceptions during the game:
 - Responding to a referee initiating a communication.
 - Pointing out an emergency.
- Penalties: for spectators
 - 1st Infraction: The Referee, at the next stoppage of play, shall ask the coach to quiet the offending spectator.
 - 2nd Infraction: A verbal warning. The Referee, at the next stoppage of play, shall ask the coach to warn the spectator that the next infraction will result in the of the spectator or the referee will abandon the game.
 - 3rd Infraction: The Referee, at the next stoppage of play, shall instruct the coach to direct the spectator to leave the field. The referee may abandon the game if the spectator does not leave the field.