

Dinwiddie County Parks and Recreation Youth Soccer Rules and Regulations

***Updated Fall 2024**

DCPR Age Divisions
Instructional (4,5,6)
9u (6,7,8,9)
12u (10,11,12)
14u (13,14)
18u (15,16,17,18)

LAW I "THE BALL"

Division	Ball Size
Instructional	Size 3
9u & 12u	Size 4
14u & 18u	Size 5

LAW II "NUMBER OF PLAYERS ON THE FIELD"

Division	Amount of Players on the Field (per team)
Instructional	6
9u	9
12u & 14u & 18u	11

- A coach may elect to play with less than the recommended minimum number of players but shall not be forced to do so. If a team has less than the maximum (as adjusted due to any misconduct) number of players at any point during or prior to the match, the opposing coach may elect to 'loan' a player or players to the undermanned team. All team officials are to bear in mind that the goals of the recreational program are developmental, and all decisions should be based on what best supports these goals for the players of both teams.

SUBSTITUTION PROCEDURES

- Instructional: Games will follow the free substitution rule. No player should sit out for an entire game. In the event, that you have a player who DOES NOT want to enter the game, alert the Parks and Recreation staff so that they may handle the situation accordingly.
- Remaining age groups have unlimited substitutions with the permission of the referee/official. A coach may substitute for any player when; there is a throw-in to be taken by the team having possession of the ball; there is goal-kick to be taken by either team; a goal has been scored by either team; for an injured player with the opposing team allowed to substitute the same number of players; for a cautioned player (yellow card) with the opposing team allowed to substitute the same number of players. Referee must be notified specifically if the substitution involves the goalkeeper. ALL substitutions will take place at the mid-line. In order to treat players fairly and to show good sportsmanship, every effort should be made by the Coach to balance playing time for each player. Coaches should follow the 25% Rule, where each player plays for a minimum of a quarter of the game.

LAW III "PLAYER PRESENTATION"

- A players' uniform will consist of a jersey, shorts, and socks. Each individual team should be wearing the same uniform while on the field.
- Dinwiddie County Recreation will provide goalkeepers with a different color jersey from all other players and referees before the game
- **Jerseys must be tucked in during all games**
- **Shin guards must be worn at all games and practices**
- **Shin guards must be covered entirely by socks at all times**
- Shoes must be sneakers or soccer cleats. No metal cleats or baseball cleats.
- Earrings, necklaces, watches, bracelets, or any other jewelry must be removed

- Religious jewelry or other adornments may only be worn if required by their religion and determined to be safe by the match referee. If the player uses the item in an unsafe manor, the player may be asked to remove the item, leave the field until the issue is corrected or ejected from the match as appropriate. The same rules shall be followed for medical alert jewelry. Jewelry worn under this policy must be secured to the body with tape or another means. Unless deemed unsafe by the referee, headscarves and religiously required turbans are specifically allowed.
- Hard casts will be allowed only on a case-by-case situation determined by the Recreation Department.
- A player may not remain on the field with an open wound or bodily fluids evident on their uniform. Any player who leaves the field for this reason may reenter the field once the wound has been closed and/or the uniform has been sanitized. Prior to reentering the field, the player must gain permission from the referee who shall verify that the issue has been resolved.

LAW IV "THE REFEREE"

- All referees must be certified and current in order to be paid for their services. If no referee is present for a recreational game and both coaches agree that an individual is otherwise qualified, a noncertified or non-current referee may fulfill the duties of the referee on a volunteer basis.
- Keeps official time and score
- Protects players from natural hazards and violations of the Laws of the Game
- Ensures that no team or player takes advantage of another
- Controls all aspects of the game
- All decisions are final. With the following modifications the duties and responsibilities of the referee will be made to the best of the referee's ability according to the Laws of the Game and the 'spirit of the game' and will be based on the discretion of the referee to take appropriate action within the framework of the Laws of the Game.
 - For instructional and 9u games; in lieu of issuing a card, the referee should ask for a player to be substituted so that the coach may take corrective action. Except in the rare circumstance of repeated play that is likely to injure another player or blatantly violent conduct, a player substituted for this reason shall be allowed to reenter the match.
 - Referees are not required to blow the whistle for each stoppage of play; however, they must clearly indicate the reason for stoppage and the restart to players and coaches. This can be done through a combination of whistling, verbal and visual cues. It should be noted that most players at younger levels will not be familiar with most hand signals so it is important to use additional means of communication.
 - Referees are responsible to be aware of and enforce all DCPRT policies with special emphasis on those regarding safety such as (but not limited to) those regarding the playing of games in severe weather conditions; these decisions will be assisted by DCPRT staff on site.
- 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. The decisions of the referee, and all other match officials, **must always be respected.**

LAW V "DURATION OF THE GAME"

Age Division	Duration
Instructional	two fifteen (15) minute halves
9u	two twenty (20) minute halves
12u	two twenty-five (25) minute halves
14u	two thirty (30) minute halves
18u	two thirty-five (35) minute halves

LAW VI "STARTING PLAY"

- Kickoff takes place at the center circle / midpoint of the field
- Kickoff occurs at the referee/coaches whistle.
- Kickoffs begin at the start of each half.
- After a goal is scored, there will be a kickoff.
- If a foul kickoff occurs, the game will restart with an opposing team kick off.

LAW VII "BALL OUT OF PLAY"

- When the ball has fully crossed the touchline.
- When the ball has fully crossed the goal line.
- When the official has blown the whistle to signify a stoppage in play

LAW VIII "METHOD OF SCORING"

- A goal is scored when the **entire ball** passes over the goal line between the goal posts and under the crossbar provided no infringement of the game has occurred.

LAW IX "OFFSIDE"

- No offside for Instructional and 9u age groups.
- A player is offside if they are in the attacking half and closer to the opposing team's goal line than both the ball and the second-last opponent.
- The offside rule in soccer is not applied directly from a **goal kick, throw-in or corner.**

LAW X "FOULS AND MISCONDUCT"

- Officials make judgment calls on behalf of the participants. It is based on how they see the play; therefore, since it is a judgment call, **DO NOT ARGUE** with the officials; this pertains to coaches, players, and spectators.
- All rules followed are dictated by both VHSL & NFHS guidelines.
- At age group divisions 12u and younger, whenever the ball strikes a player in the head, play is stopped. The proper restart depends upon whether the player deliberately played the ball with their head. If deliberate, the proper restart is an indirect free kick to the opposing team. If this occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred. If the play by the head is deemed inadvertent, then the proper restart is a dropped ball.
- For Instructional, there will be no penalty kicks. For any infringement that would normally result in a penalty kick, the team that did not commit the infraction shall be awarded a direct free kick that shall be taken from any point on the edge of the penalty area closest to the mid-field line.
- Slide tackling is prohibited for 12u and below age levels, and the restart is a direct free kick.

LAW XI "EJECTIONS AND CARDS"

- Ejections, Red Cards (also result in an ejection), and Yellow Cards (warning) come from the official/referee when an infraction(s) has been committed.
- Players receiving a Red Card for an infraction(s) must leave the field of play and remain on the sideline under the supervision of the Head Coach. This player can also not be replaced on the field, thus causing his team to play a man down (11 v 10), (9 v. 8), etc.
- Red Cards are a result of two (2) yellow cards for minor infractions or one (1) major infraction..
- In the event that a player receives a Red Card and is ejected from the game, he/she must sit out for the remainder of the game. The incident will be evaluated by the Parks and Recreation Department for further disciplinary action. Players receiving three (3) yellow cards in a season will also be reviewed by the Department for further disciplinary action.
- In the event that a Coach is ejected from the game, or is involved in any derogatory conduct, the incident will be evaluated by the Parks and Recreation Department for further disciplinary action. Possible disciplinary actions include half-game or full game suspension

LAW XII "FREE KICK"

Direct

- All opponents must be 10 yards away from the ball
- The ball must move to be in play
- A goal may be scored directly without making contact with another player

Indirect

- All opponents must be 10 yards away from the ball
- The ball must move to be in play
- A goal may be scored only if the ball has made contact with another player before it crosses the goal line

LAW XIII "THROW-INS"

To execute a legal and proper throw-in the thrower must:

- Face the field of play;
- Have part of each foot on the ground outside of the field of play;
- Throw from behind and over the head;
- Have and keep both hands positioned on the ball until the ball is released.

LAW XIV "GOAL KICK"

- Ball is placed anywhere on the 6yd line inside the goal box and kicked back into play by any player on the team that earned the goal kick
- Players on the same team that earned the goal kick may remain in the goal box and make a play on the ball prior to the ball leaving the goal box
- Opposing team may not make a play on the ball inside the goal box until the team that earned the goal kick makes a play on the ball
- Opposing team may not have a player within the penalty area at the time of the goal kick
- A goal can be scored off a Goal Kick as it is a direct free kick

LAW XV "CORNER KICK"

- Ball is placed in and kicked from within the arc at the corner of the field on the half it went over the touch-line
- All opponents must be ten (10) yards away from the ball
- A goal can be scored directly off of a corner kick as it is a direct free kick

LAW XVI "SHOOTOUTS/OVERTIME"

- During **regular season**, there will be **no overtime** in the case of a tie.
- During **play-offs**: In the event of a tie in our 9u, 12u, and 14u Divisions, we will have **a 5 min overtime**. If there is still a tie at the end of overtime, we will move into **penalty kicks/shootout**
- The referee chooses the goal at which the kicks will be taken.
- A coin flip will decide determine which team will take the first or the second kick
- The referee keeps a record of the kicks being taken.
- Subject to the conditions explained below, both teams take **five** kicks. The kicks are taken alternately by the teams.
- If, before both teams have taken five kicks, one has scored more goals than the other could score, even if it were to complete its five kicks, no more kicks are taken.
- After the five kicks have been taken by each team, and there is still a tie, the shootout will continue with each team and they will alternate 1 and 1.
- If, after both teams have taken five kicks, both have scored the same number of goals, or have not scored any goals, kicks continue to be taken in the same order until one team has scored a goal more than the other from the same number of kicks.
- All players on each team are eligible to take penalty kicks during the shootout - not just the players on the field once the final whistle is blown to end regulation time
- Each kick is taken by a different player and all eligible players must take a kick before any player can take a second kick.
- An eligible player may change places with the goalkeeper at any time when kicks from the penalty mark are being taken.
- Only the eligible players and match officials are permitted to remain on the field of play when kicks from the penalty mark are being taken.
- All players, except the player taking the kick and the two goalkeepers, must remain within the center circle.
- The goalkeeper who is the teammate of the kicker must remain on the field of play, outside the penalty area in which the kicks are being taken, on the goal line where it meets the penalty area boundary line.
- At the end of the match and before the kicks start to be taken from the penalty mark, one team has a greater number of players than its opponents, it must reduce its numbers to equate with that of its opponents and the team captain must inform the referee of the name and number of each player excluded. Any player thus excluded may not participate in kicks from the penalty mark.
- Before the start of kicks from the penalty mark, the referee must ensure that an equal number of players from each team remains within the center circle and they shall take the kicks.

Additional Notes to Coaches:

1. For all age groups: all teams should only have on the players' side, 1 head coach and no more than 2 assistant coaches at all times. All other coaches, parents, siblings, visitors, etc., should not be on the field at any time. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

Head Coaches: please do not allow additional assistant coaches to coach from the parent sideline. The other parents don't appreciate it, it is very distracting for the players, and other surrounding teams. It is not beneficial for the Athletes with everyone yelling coaching directions toward them.

2. **Running up the score:** Listed below are some guidelines to follow for all age groups if you find your team in a position that you are dominating the game and scoring goals too easily.

Scenario: If you are the 0 in a 0-10 game, your team is certainly not having any fun. If you are the 10, try to picture what it would feel like to be the 0. Please follow the guidelines below for all future games so that the scores will not get out of hand for any team, home or away.

1. **If your team is winning by 5 or more, take out your stronger players, or**
2. **Play forwards as defenders, or**
3. **Substitute in players on the bench**

Coaches who violate these guidelines will be penalized

3. All age groups using referees: 9u and above. - No coach at any time is allowed on the field without the referee's approval/permission.
4. **9u and 12u Champions League Format** - Seeding will be determined by:
 1. Overall record (Win in Regulation = 3 points, Tie = 1 point, Loss = 0 points)
 2. Goal Difference
 3. Head to Head match-up
 4. Coin toss