



Monroe United Recreational Soccer League

Code of Conduct for Clubs, Coaches, Players & Parents

Revised 12/2/21

Our goal is to bring families from all over Monroe County and the surrounding areas together in the fun and enjoyment of the game of soccer. Our League offers developmental/recreational play for all children in the 10U, 13U, 16U and 19U age groups.

Our focus is to provide a healthy, safe and enjoyable environment for all children, promoting good sportsmanship and fair play, where they can build character as they develop their skills and have fun playing the game with their friends.

Our rules for success are outlined herein.

Clubs:

Ensure defined League policies and procedures are followed for registering and rostering all players and staff volunteers. ALL volunteers must complete the established Risk Management process, that includes online training from the CDC regarding concussion awareness, as well as that from SafeSport regarding sexual abuse awareness, along with a background check. Once completed, Risk Management passes are printed locally at Club level, and distributed to volunteers. Anyone working directly with children must be in possession of their pass AT ALL TIMES.

Players are rostered according to the year they were born. League rules allow for a player to be placed “up” a division if they are at the top of their current age bracket. Approval for players who are not at the top of their age bracket to play up, or approval for a player to be allowed to play down due to developmental issues or physical handicaps can be granted at Club level, but must then be requested by the League. This is accomplished by following the established League procedure for submitting the League Out of Division Request form prior to the deadline. The decision made by the League Executive Committee in these matters is final and binding. Failure to adhere to the decision can and will result in punitive action.

All team staff volunteers and players must be listed on the appropriate team roster. Players can only participate with/be rostered to 1 team, and cannot be “loaned” or “shared” with another team.

All teams must be associated with the League in Roster Pro. The League requires that every club submit an official recreational team roster for each team participating in League play, which is kept on file. Official rosters should include player jersey numbers for reference.

Coaches:

Coaching children in organized youth sports programs is a privilege and an honor offered to responsible Club level volunteers annually. The job requires a high level of commitment, and carries with it an obligation to uphold and abide by the rules and guidelines published by FIFA, the New York State West Youth Soccer Association, (herein referred to as NYSW, (www.nyswysa.org), and the League, (www.mursl.org), as well as those published by each member organization.

ALL TEAM STAFF must be registered with NYSW by their parent organizations. Once approved and assigned to a team, Head Coaches CANNOT go about securing additional volunteers to staff their teams without knowledge and approval of the parent organization.

There are many things that volunteer coaches must consider as they work with their children to develop their skills, and prepare them to participate in League play.

First and foremost is that this is a recreational soccer League, not Travel, Modified, JV, Varsity or ODP. There are no standings kept. There is no 1st place or last place. It's all about being outdoors, playing the game with friends, making new friends and having fun.

A coach's win/loss record is irrelevant. There is NO REASON for coaches to be jumping up and down on the sidelines or berating referees. Coaches are a solid role model for players, and their actions and behavior should reflect that. Win, lose or tie, what matters is that players are having fun practicing and playing the game.

With that in mind, the League would like to illuminate the Zero Tolerance Policy, published by NYSW, with a League addendum attached. This document, as well as all pertinent League documents, schedules, guidelines, etc., can be found on the League website. This policy should be reviewed by all member organizations with their coaches prior to the start of the season. All coaches must uphold and abide by this policy, and be in control of their respective sidelines on game day.

A very important rule that has been getting a lot of attention of late is the rule defining player eligibility for participating in League play.

The rule is simple. If a player is listed in the NYSW database of a competitive or premier program, he/she is INELIGIBLE to participate in our League. No ambiguity. Plain and simple. Carded players cannot be rostered on MURSL teams. Carded players cannot be "stuck into a game here and there" to play on a recreational team. PERIOD. Willingly and knowingly allowing ineligible players to participate in our League games WILL RESULT IN SUSPENSION OF LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP for the ENTIRE CLUB.

Going hand in hand with that rule is the rule that prohibits the sharing of players amongst teams. The premise is simple. Each team is given an OFFICIAL NYSW roster prior to the start of League play. ONLY THE PLAYERS LISTED ON THAT ROSTER are allowed to play for that team. You cannot play carded players. You cannot play with players from one of the other teams in your club. Simple. No ambiguity.

The League would also like to illuminate the rule regarding a recurring issue that all member organizations and their coaches should be concerned about - lopsided games. There is NO REASON for a soccer game to have double digit lopsided scores. We understand that for some, the success they have out on the soccer field participating in organized sports is the best thing they have going for them in their lives. Success

can be had in a 2-0 game just as well as in a 15-0 game, and lesser opponents and their coaches and families don't leave the field feeling dejected or beat down. We also understand that situations such as this are life lessons that children need to learn how to handle in their lives, but this is RECREATIONAL SOCCER. It's all about having fun. Coaches must consider the psychological affect extreme lopsided games has on young players, and make every effort to attempt to keep lesser opponents in the game. The specifics regarding this are outlined in the published League rules documents, which should also be reviewed by member organizations with their coaches before the start of the season. We also publish some good reading on the subject on our website as well. We hope coaches will make use of this information.

Another thing to consider is coaching education. Many of our League coaches have played the game, and are licensed, experienced coaches. Many are also very new to the game and to coaching as well. The League strongly encourages all coaches from any age level to undertake formal coach training. NYSW offers all levels of training, both online and in person, with many sessions held annually in our area. Many of our member organizations require some sort of formal training before applicants can be considered for coaching positions, and some go as far as to host NYSW training in their communities, opening their doors for individuals to participate, regardless of club affiliation. Visit the NYSW website for more information on upcoming training in your area.

The League strongly encourages coaches to take advantage of every opportunity to offer team practice sessions. Professional coaches and instructors will tell you that there should be 2 practice sessions for every game played. While that may not be feasible realistically, nonetheless the League would like to see coaches make an earnest effort. Children will no doubt benefit from the effort. **ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD NOT BE LIMITING THE NUMBER OF PRACTICE SESSIONS THAT A COACH MAY OFFER TO HIS TEAM.** That practice frankly is ridiculous. Coaches should be **PRAISED** in their efforts to offer as many opportunities for their teams to practice as possible.

Coaches should be well prepared for their practice sessions. Players and parents definitely do take notice when they arrive at the field to find the Coach is already there and has the field setup with cones, flags, speed ladders, etc. The League recommends that coaches have a written practice plan in hand to follow for all sessions. Sometimes planned drills or exercises don't go over very well, so coaches should be prepared with an alternate drill or exercise just in case. The League offers a blank practice session planner for coaches to make use of, which can be found on our website.

The Internet is the gateway to vast resources that can be found as easily as searching for "xxU soccer practice plans", or variations on the theme. Practices should be just as much fun as League play, so keep in mind this "Rule of Thumb" for fun practice sessions: No laps, no lines, and no lectures! If a practice plan requires running for conditioning, have players take a ball with them. Structure laps with different dribbling techniques. For fun, have them toss the ball back and forth trying to keep it off the ground as they run. Be creative. Rosters can have as many as 26 children at the older age levels. Keep lines as short as possible when practicing. Nothing bores a player more than standing in line waiting to do something, except maybe a long winded coach who talks too much! Keep instruction brief and to the point, and then turn them loose and let them have fun with it.

Parents:

Volunteer coaches look towards parents for support. Be familiar with League rules and the rules of the game. Offer support and show respect for coaches and officials.

The aforementioned Zero Tolerance Policies apply to parents as well. Be familiar with these guidelines.

Avoid shouting out coaching instructions to players. Teams have coaches. Let them coach. Offer support to all players on the team. They love to hear spectators on their sideline cheering them on.

The Home Field Advantage rule is well defined in published League Rules documents. Be familiar with this rule, and be ready to abide by it and sit with your team on their sideline on game day.

Coaches and parents are role models for players. All must act accordingly.

This League is an avenue of equal opportunity for Clubs, teams and players from all communities and walks of life, regardless of race, creed or color, to come together in friendly recreational soccer games. Racial epithets, slurs or any other form of disrespectful behavior **WILL NOT BE TOLERATED**.

Reinforce the principles of teamwork, fair play and good sportsmanship at all times with all players.

Players:

Realize that much work goes on behind the scenes to make this all happen for players year after year. Enjoy yourselves. Have fun with your friends and make some new friends. That's what it's all about.

Do the best that you can do with whatever you choose to do in life. When the time comes to play soccer, give it your best effort and have fun with it. Don't be afraid to ask your coach or any of your teammates to repeat an instruction or for some additional help in developing your skills. Teams are made up of players of all different skill levels. When working together as a team, strengths support weaknesses, and everyone has fun.

Respect coaches and officials at all times. They have earned it.

Play the game fairly, and exhibit good sportsmanship at all times. This is not MLS or the World Cup. If you win, great. If you lose, great. If you tie, great. Nobody cares what the score is. It's all about having fun, and if you go out there and play to the best of your ability, then you will always walk away as a winner.

For Everyone:

ALL participants in and spectators of League play shall understand, acknowledge and abide by the following "Prohibited Conduct Policy", as defined by the New York State West Youth Soccer Association.

This Policy is NYSWYSA's policy that applies to all NYSWYSA's "Covered Personnel" as defined by SafeSport. This policy also covers any subcontractor, supplier, customer or third party and their employees in their dealings with NYSWYSA employees, athletes, members and volunteers.

NYSWYSA is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free from all forms of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of any legally protected status. Accordingly,

NYSWYSA does not permit any form of unlawful harassment, discrimination or intimidation against its employees by anyone, including managers, supervisors, coworkers, executives, directors, officers, other employees, vendors, clients, customers or third parties. Protected status includes race, color, age, religion, marital status, sex, ancestry, national origin, citizenship, veteran's status, pregnancy, disability, sexual orientation, protected activity, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local law. The policy also prohibits harassment on the basis of the protected status of an individual's relatives, friends or associates.

NYSWYSA is also committed to maintaining a work environment that is free from all forms of sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, emotional misconduct, physical misconduct, bullying and hazing.

Any violation of this Policy by Covered Personnel may subject the Covered Personnel to disciplinary action. Appropriate action also will be taken against any subcontractor, supplier, or customer found in violation of this Policy.

Harassment

Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical or visual, that is based upon a person's protected status. NYSWYSA will not tolerate harassing conduct that affects tangible job benefits, that unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or safety, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Among the types of conduct prohibited by this policy are epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping or intimidating acts based on an individual's protected status and the circulation or posting of written or graphic materials that show hostility toward an individual because of his or her protected status.

Prohibited conduct can also include jokes, kidding, or teasing about another person's protected status. While harassing conduct is unlawful only if it affects tangible job benefits and/or interferes unreasonably with work performance and creates an abusive or hostile work environment, this Policy forbids harassing conduct even when it does not rise to the level of a violation of law.

Sexual Harassment

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the individual's employment;
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for an employment decision affecting that individual; or
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance and creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment may involve individuals of the same or different gender. It may also occur between individuals of any employment status.

Examples of conduct which may constitute sexual harassment and are prohibited by this Policy include, but are not limited to:

- unnecessary touching, patting, hugging, pinching, or brushing against a person's body;
- staring, ogling, leering, or whistling at a person;
- continued or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual nature;
- sexually explicit statements, sexual flirtations, advances, propositions, subtle pressure for sexual activity, comments, questions, jokes, or anecdotes;
- graphic or degrading comments about a person's clothing, body or sexual activity;
- sexually suggestive objects, cartoons, posters, calendars, or pictures in the workplace;
- suggestive or obscene letters, notes or invitations;
- harassing use of electronic mail, electronic or instant messaging, or telephone communication systems; or
- other physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature.

NYSWYSA prohibits administrators, directors, managers and supervisors from threatening or insinuating, either explicitly or implicitly, that a volunteer's or an employee's submission to or rejection of sexual advances will in any way influence any personnel decision regarding that employee's wages, assigned duties, advancement, evaluation, shifts, career development, or any other condition of employment.

Racial, Religious, or National Origin Harassment Racial, religious, or national origin harassment deserves special mention as well, and is expressly prohibited by NYSWYSA. Racial, religious, or national origin harassment includes any verbal, written, or physical act in which race, religion, or national origin is used or implied in a manner which would

make a reasonable person uncomfortable in the work environment or which would interfere with the person's ability to perform the job. Examples of race, religious or national origin harassment may include, but are not limited to:

- jokes, which include reference to race, religion, or national origin;
- the display or use of objects or pictures which adversely reflect on a person's race, religion, or national origin; or
- use of pejorative or demeaning language regarding a person's race, religion, or national origin.

Child Sexual Abuse

Any sexual activity with a child is prohibited. This includes sexual contact with a child that is accomplished by deception, manipulation, force or threat of force, regardless of the age of the participants, and all sexual interactions between an adult and a child, regardless of whether there is deception, or the child understands the sexual nature of the activity.

Sexual Misconduct

Any sexual interaction between an athlete and an individual with evaluative, direct or indirect authority is prohibited. Such relationships involve an imbalance of power and are likely to impair judgment or be exploitative. This section does not apply to a pre-existing relationship between two spouses or life partners.

Emotional Misconduct

Emotional misconduct in all forms is prohibited. Emotional misconduct is a pattern of deliberate, noncontact behavior that has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to another person. Non-contact behaviors include verbal acts, physical acts, or acts that deny attention or support; or any act or conduct described as emotional abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g. child abuse, child neglect). Emotional misconduct does not include professionally-accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline or improving athletic performance.

Physical Misconduct

Physical misconduct in all forms is prohibited. Physical misconduct is defined as contact or non-contact conduct that results in, or reasonably threatens to, cause physical harm to another person; or any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g. child abuse, child neglect, assault). Physical misconduct does not include professionally-accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline or improving athletic performance. For example, hitting and punching are well-regulated forms of contact in combat sports, but have no place in soccer.

Bullying

Intentional, persistent and repeated pattern of committing or willfully tolerating physical and nonphysical behaviors that are intended, or have the reasonable potential, to cause fear, humiliation or physical harm in an attempt to socially exclude, diminish or isolate the targeted athlete(s), as a condition of membership are prohibited. Bullying does not include group or team behaviors that (a) are meant to establish normative team behaviors, or (b) promote team cohesion.

Hazing

Coercing, requiring, forcing or willfully tolerating any humiliating, unwelcome or dangerous activity that serves as a condition for (a) joining a group or (b) being socially accepted by a group's members are prohibited. Hazing does not include group or team activities that (a) are meant to establish normative team behaviors or (b) promote team cohesion.

Procedures for Complaints, Investigations and Corrective Action

All Covered Personnel are responsible to help ensure that we avoid misconduct. NYSWYSA cannot act to eliminate misconduct unless it has notice of the conduct. Covered Personnel are thus charged with reporting any concerns regarding compliance in the manner provided in this document and appendixes. For the avoidance of doubt, in some instances, Covered Personnel will be required to report to law enforcement and/or the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

Furthermore, NYSWYSA employees are responsible to help assure that the work environment, on or off-premises, is free from harassment. All employees have an obligation to promptly report any and all allegedly harassing conduct they are the subject of, that they learn of, or that they witness. Our Policy provides for immediate notice of problems to the persons designated in this Policy so that we may address and resolve any problems as quickly as possible.

An employee must report the harassing conduct to either:

- The person to whom you report (supervisor or manager);
- Department Head;
- The Human Resources Department;
- The Legal Department;
- The Chief Executive Officer; or
- The Integrity Hotline.

If the employee feels uncomfortable going to his or her supervisor with the complaint, he/she must report the matter to any other member of management as designated above.

This Policy does not require reporting the misconduct to any individual who is creating the harassment or discrimination.

All Covered Personnel have an obligation to cooperate in any investigation of a complaint of misconduct, including providing any and all information concerning the complaint. Failure to do so may be a violation of this Policy.

NYSWYSA's Prohibited Conduct Policy offers its employees greater protection from harassment than does the law. Consequently, Covered Personnel who are found to have violated NYSWYSA's Prohibited Conduct Policy shall be subject to corrective action, discipline or termination, even in cases where applicable laws may not have been violated and without regard to whether the conduct constitutes a violation of the law.

An employee wishing to file a complaint outside the Federation may also contact either the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or the fair employment agency in his or her state. Much work goes on behind the scenes, putting your respective programs together and then bringing them all together to compete in League play year after year. With everyone's cooperation, moving forward towards the same goal, we look forward to another enjoyable recreational soccer season!

Thank you all and let's have fun out there!



The signature of the Member Club Representative below signifies that this information, as well as League rules, policies, procedures and all other pertinent information has been conveyed to all members of their staff, especially those coaches who will be participating in League play, their players and all spectators.

Member Club: _____

League Representative Signature: _____

Date _____