

## POLICIES

The following are the policies adapted by the Mad River Valley Soccer Association governing the MRVSA soccer program.

### 1.0 Levels of Play

MRVSA offers two levels of play, season dependent:

1.1 Recreational Team: The primary purpose of the Recreational Team is to offer instruction-based soccer. Fall recreational teams participate in intra- and inter-league play on a regularly scheduled seasonal basis. Matches are instructional and promote equal playing time for all participants. Spring recreational teams focus on skills development in a non-competitive environment.

1.2 Travel Team: The primary purpose of the Travel Team is to participate in a league against other town travel teams consisting of the better skilled, more motivated, and more team-oriented players of the recreational teams. Selection exceeds MRVSA boundaries to include the towns of Waterbury and Duxbury. Teams shall be chosen on a try-out basis provided that a large enough pool of players exists to warrant such action.

### 2.0 Eligibility

2.1 Fall Recreational League: All girls and boys in grades K-6 living within the Association's geographic area are eligible to participate in the Fall program. Players from outside MRVSA's geographic area may register as long as no special treatment for team placement or practice day and time is requested and space allows.

2.2 Spring Recreational League: Girls and boys in grades K-2 are subject to the same restrictions as in 2.1 above.

2.3 Spring/Summer Travel League: Girls and boys from U-10 through U-18 age levels living within the geographic area, including the towns of Waterbury and Duxbury, are eligible to participate in the Travel League, which participates in the Champlain Valley Youth Soccer League (CVYSL). Players participating in the Travel League at levels U-10 and above must adhere to the cut-off birth date of August 1st.

2.4 Players may request to play up as long as they receive parental/guardian permission and permission from the Program Coordinator.

### 3.0 Registration, Fees, and Refunds

3.1 MRVSA collects one fee for registration, insurance, clinics, and equipment. Limited scholarship money is available to those requesting such in writing to the Board.

3.2 The registration fee for each participant shall be fixed by the Board annually. Any refund may be refunded prior to the first scheduled practice if the participant:

- a. is injured and unable to play in league games and submits a doctor's statement to this effect when requested;
- b. moves out of the MRVSA geographic area;
- c. has an exceptional reason as determined by the Executive Committee for not being able to play the season, such as death in the family.

No refunds will be made for problems concerning transportation, childcare, conflict in schedules, fields, coaches, and other similar circumstances.

3.3 All registration forms must be received by the registrar prior to a player attending the first practice.

3.4 Team rosters and coach information must include official USYSA-required information (such as grade-level for all players and birth certificates for Travel League players) and must be given directly to the registrar the night of team balancing. A copy shall be made for each coach and one copy retained for MRVSA records.

3.5 Addition of players onto the official team roster is only allowed after acceptance by the MRVSA registrar.

3.6 Registration is limited depending upon such factors as field availability and volunteer support. When the registration limit has been met, additional players wishing to register will be placed on a waiting list on a first-come, first-served basis. Late registrants will only be taken if there is space on a team roster. They will also be subject to a waiting list.

#### 4.0 Team Assignment and Balancing

4.1 Fall Recreational League: All K-6 boys and girls who register will play in the Fall Recreational League.

- a. Team assignments shall be made by those persons designated by the Board based on relevant considerations. The coach shall be entitled to keep his or her child on his or her team. Except as aforesaid, there shall be no retention of players from the previous season.

- b. Every attempt will be made to balance skill level of teams within each division.

- c. Special requests for team assignment shall not be honored except under the most extenuating of circumstances, and then only if team balance is not compromised. Special requests must be made in writing and received before the registration deadline with a complete explanation of the extenuating circumstances. Said written request shall not be considered a guarantee of placement. The Board will review each request and make a decision based upon what is best for all involved.

d. Each player will be assigned:

1. a letter grade A-D reflecting his or her coaches' evaluation of his or her playing ability the previous season (players of unknown ability shall be assigned a grade based upon verbal information regarding experience and ability obtained from a parent or guardian);
2. a school grade level;
3. a town of residence;
4. special notations such as goalie, coach's child, sibling, and boy/girl opting for boy's/girl's league.

e. Age group coordinators or assigned volunteers shall be provided the above information from a master list distributed by the league registrar. Information shall be written on the individual player's registration form. When all players have been registered, balancing of teams may commence.

f. Those responsible for team balancing shall assure that all older A players in their respective divisions are distributed first, followed by the younger A players. The procedure will be followed with B, C, and D players. Each team will then be assured of a coach and goalie (should enough be available). Swaps may be made only for players of equal age and ability. Each team should have at least two players from every member town on each roster.

g. No changes to rosters shall be made after team balancing is accomplished without the approval of the Executive Committee.

h. Only players listed on an accepted team roster may play for that particular team.

4.2 Spring/Summer Travel League: Players participating in the Spring/Summer Travel League compete against other town travel teams under the guidelines of the CVYSL and Vermont Youth Soccer Association (VYSA).

a. Boys and girls U-10, U-12, and U-14 participate in a tryout process that includes a comprehensive skills evaluation and practice game. Team formation is based on the tryout process and previous coaches' input.

b. U-16 and U-18 boys and girls form teams depending in the numbers of players and coaches.

c. Only players listed on an accepted team roster may play for that particular team. Alternates may be called to take the place of a player who has dropped from the team.

5.0 Eligibility

5.1 Teams at the K and 1 /2 levels shall be strictly coed.

5.2 Players in the upper levels shall have an option. All-girls and all-boys teams will be offered. A girl may opt to play on an all-boys team, and a boy may opt to play on an all-girls team upon approval of the Board. Once teams have been formulated, there will be no switching of players to another team.

## 6.0 Team and Field Size

6.1 Fall Recreational League: Teams at the K, 1/2, and 3/4 levels shall play 7v7 on a field approximately 30 x 40 yards. Field and goal specifications are subject to field availability and may therefore vary. Teams at the 5 / 6 level shall play 7v7 on a field approximately 40 x 60 yards, again subject to field availability.

6.2 Spring Recreational League: Teams at the K and 1 /2 levels shall play intramurally with no limitation as to team or field size. The spring program at this level is purely instructional and noncompetitive.

6.3 Spring/Summer Travel League: Teams at the U-10 level shall play 7v7; U-12, U-14, U-16, and U-18 levels shall play 11v11 on regulation fields. An attempt to limit team size to 16-18 players shall be made through the tryout process, if necessary.

## 7.0 Length of Season and Cancellation of Games

The Board shall determine the duration of the season as set forth in the Association calendar. Inclement weather or poor field conditions may necessitate the canceling of games from time to time. Any cancellation will be made at the discretion of the involved coaches as early as practicable before game time.

## 8.0 Attendance and Participation

Every participant on a Recreational Team shall be entitled to play at least one half of every game. At the Travel Team level, playing time is at the discretion of the coach; however, every effort shall be made to play participants as equally as possible.

## 9.0 Officiating

9.1 All matches in the Fall Recreational Program shall be officiated by youth referees. A one- or two-referee system may be employed.

9.2 Matches held during the more competitive Spring/Summer season for levels U-10 and up shall be officiated by referees certified by a recognized referee organization (USSF or VTSRA) and will be scheduled by CVYSL.

9.3 Any ejection of a player from a game must be reported to the MRVSA Board. A red card will result in a one-game suspension, and a second red card within a

playing season will result in suspension from MRVSA for the remainder of the season. An assault on a referee by a player or coach at any level will result in a one-year suspension.

9.4 FIFA rules as modified by MRVSA will apply for Fall play. Spring/Summer Travel teams will play by CVYSL and VYSA rules.

FIFA Modifications:

- a. No penalty kicks for K, 1 / 2, or 3 / 4 grade levels. All free kicks are indirect.
- b. Substitutions are allowed at the quarter, upon injury, at the half, after a score, either goal kick, or possession throw-ins and corner kicks.
- c. No overtime.
- d. At the 5 / 6 level, a game may be played when both teams have 6 or more players. The opposing coach is under no obligation to play fewer than 7 players. The game may be rescheduled if mutually agreed upon. At the younger age groupings, a minimum of 5 players is necessary to play a game. The same restrictions as with the 5 / 6 level apply.

## 10. Protests

No protests of a judgment call shall be permitted. Protest on a breach of the law that affected the outcome of the game will be allowed. All protests must be filed within a 48-hour period to the Association President. All protests will be decided by the Executive Committee.

## 11. Conduct During Games

11.1 The highest standards of conduct must be maintained at all times. Abusive or foul language is prohibited. All participants must dress in a neat, clean manner. The use of shin guards is mandatory for all age groups.

11.2 Coaches are expected to be positive and set the best possible example for the participants. Excessive coaching from the sidelines will not be permitted, and the function of the coach should be to provide encouragement and a positive direction. The coach may only enter the field of play with the consent of the referee and may only coach within the coaching box (10 yards either side of the halfway line).

11.3 Spectators must remain 5 yards behind the touchline, their vocal efforts limited to positive comments to all participants. Under no circumstances should they attempt to coach or address derogatory comments to the referee or players. Discipline shall be up to the referee at each game, and he or she shall have the power and authority to eject players or coaches from the playing area if their

conduct violates these guidelines or otherwise interferes with the course of play. No appeal of disciplinary action taken by a referee shall be allowed.

The MRVSA Codes of Conduct for Players, Parents, and Coaches are attached.

## 12. Parental Participation

MRVSA encourages parental participation. Volunteer positions include coach, assistant coach, fields worker, program coordinator, publicity personnel, and so on.

## 13. Facilities

No trash shall be left on the fields. It is up to the last home team to play on a field to pick up. Parking shall be limited to those areas designated at the fields.

## 14. Equipment

The Association shall supply each participant with a shirt, as well as playing fields, goal posts, and nets. Each participant is expected to provide soccer shoes and/or sneakers, shin guards, ball, water bottle, and a jacket. No player shall be allowed to participate in either a practice or a game without shin guards.

## 15. Grievance Process

Grievances will be heard only when the following grievance process is adhered to:

15.1 Approach the player's coach and discuss the matter at a mutually agreed upon time and place.

15.2 If the matter is not cleared up at the coaching level, the parent or player may then approach the age group coordinator, who shall attempt to resolve the problem.

15.3 The age group coordinator may choose to bring the matter to the Executive Committee for consideration and action, if he or she can't solve the problem to the satisfaction of all parties involved. Decisions made by the Executive Committee shall be considered final.

## Player's Code of Conduct

1. Play for the fun of it, not just to please your parents or coach.
2. Play by the rules.
3. Never argue with or complain about the referee's calls or decisions.

4. Control your temper and resist the temptation to retaliate when you feel you have been wronged.

5. Avoid using inappropriate language and gestures.

6. Concentrate on playing soccer and on affecting the outcome of the game with your best effort. Work equally hard for your team as for yourself.

7. Be a good sport by cheering all good plays, whether or not it is your team's or opponent's.

8. Treat all players as you would like to be treated.

9. Remember that the goals of the game are to have fun, improve your skills, and feel good. Don't be a show-off or a ball hog.

10. Cooperate with your coaches, teammates, opponents, and the referees.

#### Parent's Code of Conduct

1. Do not force an unwilling child to participate in sports.

2. Remember: Children are involved in organized sports for their enjoyment, not yours.

3. Help your child work toward skill improvement and good sportsmanship in every game. Your child will then be a winner even in defeat.

4. Do not ridicule or yell at your child for making a mistake or for losing a game.

5. Applaud good plays by your team and by members of opposing teams.

6. Do not publicly question the referee's judgment and never their honesty.

7. Recognize the value and importance of volunteer coaches and officials and give them their due respect. Without them there would be no MRVSA.

8. Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from youth sporting activities.

#### Coach's Code of Conduct

1. Be reasonable in your demands on the young player's time, energy, enthusiasm and their performance on the soccer field.

2. Impress upon your players that they must abide by the rules of the game.

3. Develop team respect for the ability of opponents as well as for the judgment of referees and opposing coaches.
4. Ensure that your players' soccer experience is one of fun and enjoyment. Players should never be yelled at or ridiculed for making mistakes or losing a game.
5. Set a good example and be generous with your praise when it is deserved. Children need a coach they can respect.
6. Enlist the support of your team's parents in your efforts to instill the proper attitudes and values in the players.
7. Keep informed about sound coaching principles and growth and development principles of children.
8. Check equipment and facilities that you use. They should meet safety standards and be appropriate for the age and ability of your players.
9. Follow the advice of a physician when determining when an injured child is ready to play again.

---Approved by MRVSA Board of Directors March 2001---