



**WEST FARGO
SOCCER CLUB**

**2017-2018
Competitive Program
Player & Family Handbook**

Updated 3/11/17

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Introduction

The West Fargo Soccer Club (WFSC or the Club) is dedicated to providing opportunities for players at every level to develop in a fun, challenging and respectful environment. WFSC serves West Fargo, Fargo, Moorhead and surrounding communities. The Club has learned over the years that clear and consistent communication is very important. This document will help provide clarity and details about the club's expectations for players and parents. This handbook will provide members of the Club's policies and expectations. As a WFSC member you are responsible for reading the handbook and signing the agreement. This covers the seasonal year of August 1st-July 31st.

WFSC focuses on helping young players reach their goals. The club understands that there are different levels of development and player ability. Joining the competitive program means that you have joined a group of players who are looking for a program that is designed for a player that is committed to soccer and wants to play at the competitive level. The program is designed to help players develop the necessary skills to play at the highest level. The competitive program is for ages 8-19. Parents should register their child for the WFSC competitive program if the child has average to above-average athletic ability and speed, a competitive nature and a love for the game of soccer. Competitive soccer is by its nature very competitive. The competitive teams typically play in 4-5 weekend tournaments during June and July, with practices beginning in the spring. The teams participate in tournaments in North Dakota, Minnesota and South Dakota. We may also play friendly games against other clubs and regional league games as available.

About WFCS

WFSC was incorporated as a non-profit organization in the State of North Dakota in 1992. The Articles of Incorporation state that the WFSC is formed exclusively for charitable and educational purposes to promote the game of soccer in West Fargo, to teach sportsmanship, and to develop physical and mental health through the game of soccer. WFSC cooperates with the United State Soccer Federation (USSF) and the United States Youth Soccer Association, Inc. (USYSA). WFSC players are registered through the USYSA, and the overseeing state body is the North Dakota Youth Soccer Association (NDYSA).

WFSC is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Donations are tax deductible. All donations and sponsorship information can be discussed with the Competitive Committee. Player registration fees are not tax-deductible contributions.

General Club Information

Player Information

Playing with the WFSC is voluntary, but it has commitments. When you commit to join the WFSC, you agree to follow the policies set by the club and your team. The club expects your full participation. That includes support for the whole season regardless of your team's success, personal playing time or anything else that does not meet your expectations. All players are expected to conduct themselves in a positive manner that reflects positively on themselves, family and the club.

All players will follow the standards below during practices and games:

- Do your best, work hard and have fun.
- Learn the rules of the game.
- Demonstrate self-control. Refrain from lashing out at opposing players, parents, spectators or coaches (even if you have been fouled or someone is taunting you). Controlling your emotions and reactions is very important.
- Treat teammates, coaches, opponents and officials with respect.
- Actively participate in practice and games.
- Accept direction and requirements made by coaches.
- Accept and follow WFCS player behavior guidelines.
- Be a good sport. Win with respect to your opponent and lose without making excuses. Shake hands with opponents, coaches, and referees.
- Fighting and use of mean spirited or foul language is not acceptable behavior.
- Refrain from making comments or gestures that express negative undertone towards the referees. Your focus should be working together with your teammates to achieve the goals of the team. Do not focus your energy on the referee's decisions. Control what you can control.
- Be respectful toward your teammates and coaches. Disagreements will happen. When one works on a disagreement with respect and a positive mentality, disagreements can help the team solve problems and friendships to become stronger.
- Accept all Club rules and policies.

Players who can't abide by the above standards may be disciplined by the team coach or by the WFSC Competitive Committee. Remember that it is a privilege to represent the Club. Helping players to become responsible young adults is important to the Club. Of course players will

make mistakes. However, the severity and repeated violation of above standards may result in suspension or even expulsion from the Club.

Parent/Family/Spectator Information

Game Conduct

Parents/families/spectators of a WFSC player should conduct themselves in a respectful and responsible manner. We welcome and strongly urge you to attend all games. We expect spectators to participate as spectators and not as coaches. Parents must follow the following guidelines:

- We have to set the right example. Please do not address the referee, opposing team's players, parents, or coaches in a negative, aggressive or confrontational manner. Our kids are watching our behavior and will copy us especially in stressful situations.
- Refrain from shouting instructions to the team. Players must be focused on the moment and the instructions that have been given to the team. It can become confusing, frustrating and overwhelming for a player when both parents and coaches are trying to give direction. During games, players must be completely focused on the directions the coach has given the players and the team in order for everyone to be successful.
- Refrain from criticizing calls and performance of the referees, coaches, and players. The players and the coaches need parents to be supportive and show good sportsmanship. Please encourage good performance and be positive when the team is experiencing difficult calls or other difficult circumstances. Sideline comments should always be positive. Negative comments will not be tolerated and could result in disciplinary action. Never cheer the misfortune of an opposing player.
- Refrain from approaching the field while warm up is in progress and **never approach a referee before, during, or after a game**. Before, during, and after the game ONLY rostered players may sit on or by the team bench/sideline. This is to respect the privacy for the coach and the team.
- Be supportive to the team and coaching staff whether the team wins or loss. Your coach is 100% committed and devoted to the development of your child and the team. Win or lose they need your support to achieve individual and team goals.

Practice Conduct

- Parents are asked to stay off the sidelines during practices. This is to allow the players to focus on the coach, undistracted by parents. Practices are a time for coaches to coach, players to learn and for the team to continue to bond. Interruptions can hinder the learning process and add unwanted pressure to coaches and the players. This rule is subject to the following exceptions:
 - If your child is young and has genuine concerns being away from you, speak with

the coach to make arrangements.

- o If your child is a disciplinary problem, a coach may ask you to be there to assist. If you suspect your child is causing trouble, please speak with the coach.
- o Coaches will periodically have “open” scrimmages when parents are invited to attend and watch. Remember, though, that these should be treated as games, and parents should behave as described above.
- Please help players to be on time to all practices. If players are running late, please notify the coach/team manager to warn them. If a player will need to miss a practice, please notify the coach/team manager as soon as possible. A couple of days’ notice is preferable. This helps minimize the team disruption.
- Parents are asked to be on time to pick up their children as the coach will have to remain at practices and games until all players have been picked up.

There is nothing that degrades youth sports more than unruly adults, be it coaches, parents or spectators. There is no excuse for derogatory or negative comments or gestures directed at players, parents, coaches or referees before, or other fans during or after a game. It is forbidden for parents to engage in arguments, name-calling, fights or other intolerable behavior. Although the WFSC fully understands the extent to which spectators can become emotionally involved in a soccer game, any such poor behavior will not be tolerated. Any coach, Competitive Committee member or Director that observes any such inappropriate conduct is required to immediately approach the parent/spectator and issue a warning and make a report to the Competitive Committee. In the event a similar situation occurs with the same adult any time during the remainder of the season, the parent/spectator may be ordered by the Competitive Committee to refrain from attending any subsequent games. Any parent or spectator that fails to abide a Competitive Committee directive to refrain from attending any subsequent games shall be reported to the Board of Directors for possible additional disciplinary action which may include membership termination without refund. Once again, aggressive, intolerable and negative behavior on the part of adults does nothing to help players become better athletes. Your cooperation is not only appreciated, it is mandatory.

Parent Communication

- If you have any routine questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your team manager, the coach, Director of Coaching (DOC), or a WFSC Competitive Committee. “Routine concerns” include all items other than disagreeing with the coach, such as practice times or other schedule questions.
- Coaching disagreements/conflicts/complaints:
 - o During the course of a season, one may disagree with a coaching decision or otherwise have complaints about the coach. If so, it is natural to speak to someone about it. We ask that you please do this by arranging a meeting with

the DOC. The DOC will then decide if a meeting with the coach should be arranged.

- o Meeting directly before games and directly after games are not good times to discuss any issues. During practice is also not a good time to talk with the coach. The players are there to practice and they need the full attention of their coach.
- o Please do not send long emails or heated ones. Please arrange to speak with the DOC or a WFSC Competitive Committee in person. It is very easy to misread or misinterpret a message. Especially when you don't already have an established relationship with that person.

Proper lines of communication with issues or conflicts arise are:

1. Discuss with the DOC;
2. If not resolved by #1, discuss with a competitive committee member
3. If not resolved by #2, discuss with board of directors.

The purpose of this policy is to prevent parent/coach conflict by interposing neutral parties. We do not want parents and coaches arguing in ways that may impact the team. We are committed to resolving conflicts and addressing concerns but want to do so in the context of an orderly process.

Program Information

Evaluations and Team Assignments

The Club may elect to hold evaluations to determine players' fitness for competitive soccer and the appropriate team. The Club may waive evaluations for players in our programs, whose coaches can evaluate them comprehensively, or for other players as appropriate in the opinion of the Competitive Committee.

Practice & Attendance

Teams generally practice 2-3 times per week. Attendance at practices is mandatory. Coaches use practices to teach techniques and tactics of the game. Players and parents should recognize that competitive soccer is similar to a school classroom, piano lesson, karate class, dance class or any other learning environment that promotes skill and discipline. Poor skill development due to low attendance or horseplay at practice sessions not only affects the player, but could also adversely affect the performance and enjoyment of the rest of the team.

Age Play

It is the opinion of the Club that it is in the best interest of the player and the Club for a player to compete at the age appropriate level. However, players may be moved up if they demonstrate the ability to excel at the higher level and the Club has roster spots available. Parents wishing to discuss moving up should contact the Coaching Director. In addition, the

Club may “pool” some ages together when doing so will result in better numbers for the Club as a whole. A player cannot play on a team younger than his or her age appropriate division.

Pool Play

If there are enough players at an age level for more than one full team, the players may be grouped into a “pool” for practice purposes. They will then be divided into teams for games and tournaments. The Club may sort players for games and tournaments for any number of reasons, including having teams to play at different levels, creating two or more teams of comparable strength, or for age reasons.

Playing Time

Player and team development are goals of the WFSC. Player development is especially important in the younger age groups. Player development occurs in team practice, individual practice and in games. During the course of the soccer season players participate in practices, scrimmages, and games, during which the coach will make decisions about player selection, lineup, player’s position, amount of playing time, and tournament participation. All playing time requirements are subject to modification by the coach for disciplinary reasons such as failure to attend practices regularly, lack of effort in practice, arriving late to a game, failure to follow the player code of conduct and behavior guidelines or due to injury. Additionally, there may have to be some deviation in these policies a player is not willing to play in whatever position is assigned. For instance, if only a few players are willing to play defense, they will get more playing time than the forwards and midfielders. Also, please remember that coaches have many responsibilities during a game including observing players for skill development, ensuring safety of the players during play, and making tactical and strategical adjustments to maximize their team’s efforts. With this in mind, a player may inadvertently receive more or less than the suggested playing time during a particular game but typically this averages out over the course of the season. The Club has adopted the following recommendations for playing time:

- U10: Substantially equal playing time is required for all field players.
- U-11-U14 teams: Each field player will play at least 50% of every game.
- U15-U19 teams: Premier/Classic I Teams - It is suggested that field players will play at least 25% of each game. Classic II Teams - Each field player will play at least 50% of every game

Bullying

Bullying is defined as a pattern of aggressive, intentional or deliberately hostile behavior that occurs repeatedly and over time. Bullying behaviors normally fall into three categories: physical, social, and verbal. Bullying may include, but are not limited to, intimidation, teasing, name-calling, taunting, threatening to cause harm, leaving someone out on purpose, telling others not to be friends with someone, spreading rumors about someone, embarrassing someone in public, hitting/kicking/pinching, spitting, tripping/pushing, taking

or breaking someone's things, making mean or rude hand gestures; and cyber bullying.

All reports of actions falling into the definition above will be investigated and dealt with seriously. Consequences for those involved shall be determined base of the severity and nature of the bullying behavior, the developmental age of the individuals involved and any history of problematic behaviors or performance. Every effort will be made to correct the problem behavior, prevent another occurrence of the behavior, and protect the victim.

Substance Abuse

WFSC prohibits all forms of substance use. Any cases of substance use can affect a player's participation or result in termination of membership with WFSC.

Injury Policy

Seek medical attention if an injury to a player results in them being unable to participate. WFSC recommends the players follow the advice of their doctor and only return to play when the doctor approves. Injured players are encouraged to continue to attend team events during their recovery time. If a player visits a medical professional for any injury they have sustained, they will need to submit a doctor's note stating the extent of the injury and a timeframe for when the athlete can return to full participation to the Coaching Director.

Volunteering

The Club is a volunteer organization. The primary source of funding is from player registration fees. WFSC strives to keep fees as reasonable as possible and still provide a quality program. The Club will seek funds from civic and community organizations, foundations and businesses to support the program. To raise additional funds and to support other Club activities, players, coaches and parents may from time-to-time be asked to volunteer their time or talents to support the maintenance and growth of the Club. These requests will be made not only during the playing season, but throughout the year. Your support is important in the efforts the Club makes to improve the soccer opportunities in the community.

Uniforms & Equipment

The Board selects uniforms. The Club strives to keep the same uniform style for several years, but this is not always possible. The player pays for the uniform, and it is theirs to keep. Players must provide their own soccer shoes and shin guards. Shin guards are required for practices and games. Each player should bring a soccer ball and water to practice. If you wear glasses, you must have protective eyewear, including a safety strap, approved for sporting activity. Jewelry is prohibited during games and practices. Alterations to the uniform (including any alternate jersey) are not allowed.

Guest Players

From time to time, we will use guest players to fill out rosters when necessary. Club members will never be cut off from teams to accommodate guests. If you wish to have player guest play, and your team needs a player, contact the DOC so we can make appropriate arrangements with the coach, player, his or her parents, and his or her club.

Coaching Staff

Coaches will be selected and reviewed each season. A coach will not automatically be given the team coached in the previous season. This placement will be done on a season-by-season basis. The coaching selection will be based on adherence to Club policies, qualification to continue coaching at advancing levels and a review of other qualified candidates. The Board and the Director of Coaching will make the final decision/placement of coaches. Coaches are expected to follow the policies and procedures set by the Club. In addition, coaches are expected to:

- Teach age-appropriate soccer skills, fundamentals of the game and team play.
- Develop each player as much as possible within the limits of the player's abilities.
- Promote sportsmanship and maintain discipline.
- Serve as a positive role model.
- Arrive to practices and games on time and if unable to attend a practice or game make appropriate arrangements for a substitute.
- Cancel or end practice if the players' safety is at risk due to severe weather conditions.
- Remain at the practice site until all players have left.
- Use constructive criticism and positive encouragement rather than insulting or degrading comments.
- Treat players, parents, officials and opponents with respect.
- Be accessible to players and parents on a reasonable basis to clear up misunderstandings or to discuss the player's progress or lack of progress.
- Respect the judgment of the officials of any competition.
- Ensure that the players/team follow the behavior guidelines
- Ensure that players and parents abide by the WFSC policies.

Coaches have the authority to expel a player from a game or practice for disciplinary reasons. Fighting, profanity, obscenity, or failure of the player to conduct himself or herself in a sportsmanlike manner will be reasons for such action. Infractions shall be reported to the Competitive Committee.

Financial Information

Registration Deadline

Registration will take place on the club's website. Registration forms must be submitted by the registration deadline established for each season. Payment in full is required at the time of registration unless you arrange a payment plan with the Club. Late registrations will be assessed a late fee.

Fees

The fee for the competitive program is set annually by the Board of Directors. The fee covers the player's NDYSA state registration fee, all tournament fees, scrimmage and referee fees and coaching fees. A discount is given to families with 3 or more players in the program. The fee does not include the cost of a uniform which must be purchased separately. Players may have to pay additional fees if their teams choose to attend extra tournaments.

Scholarships

It is the WFSC's goal that anyone having the skills and desire to participate in our competitive program be allowed to do so. Accordingly, some scholarships are available for players who need financial assistance. All such requests will be handled in strict confidence.

Refunds

Refunds are allowed at the discretion of the Board of Directors. Full or partial refunds will be given if 1) a player cannot participate in the season because they moved out of the area; 2) an injury prior to the season or in the first tournament prevents a player from playing the rest of the season; or 3) in the event that there is not an open roster position for a player on a team, a full refund of the initial down payment will be given. Fees are forfeited if a player is suspended for a rules violation.

Handbook Acknowledgement

Read and initial the below:

___ / ___ I have read the WFSC Competitive Program Handbook and agree to abide by the provisions of the handbook as long as I am a member of the club. I agree to respect the club. I agree to accept the decision of the Board of Directors regarding the policies set forth. I understand that if I violate the policies, it may result in my dismissal from the club.

___ / ___ I understand that WFSC has the right to remove a parent from the sidelines, if necessary, for behavior not acceptable to Parent/Player Agreement, Financial Agreement and any other rules that apply to sideline behavior. The duration of this removal will be at the discretion of the Competitive Committee.

___ / ___ I understand that each family has volunteer hours to complete before the end of the season that this is mandatory.

___ / ___ I grant permission to the WFSC to use my child's photograph on print or online materials designed for news, informational, or educational purposes related to WFSC. This includes website and social media. I understand I will not have final say on the photos chosen to be posted. I understand I need to change this request in writing.

I acknowledge that I have received and been given the opportunity to read the West Fargo Soccer Club Competitive Program Handbook and have had the opportunity to ask questions regarding its application to our involvement with the WFSC. I understand that the Handbook is not a contract, express or implied, with the WFSC.

I acknowledge WFSC may change, delete, revise and update the handbook at any time without any prior notice. The most current version is available for review from the WFSC website.

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the WFSC's policies and agree to abide thereby including, but not limited to the Player's Code, the Substance Abuse Policy and the Parent/Spectator Code.

Player Printed Name

Player Signature

Parent Printed Name

Parent Signature

Date: _____