



Policies and Procedures

New River United Modifications to FIFA Laws of the Game Policy Clarifications for New River United Coaches

December 2015

www.newriverunited.com



Our Mission

New River United strives to foster a community culture that is focused on the love of soccer. Our mission is to educate, develop, and challenge players, coaches, and parents at each level of participation.

Our Guiding Principles

“Small and Beautiful,” selective, focused, efficient, high quality.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people are involved each year in organizing an effective and successful program for New River United, the majority of whom are volunteers. Below are a few of the organizations and individuals who make it possible for your children to participate in New River United soccer. Please thank them when you meet them on the fields.

1. Blacksburg Parks and Rec: Parks and Recreation is enormously helpful with preparing our playing fields. Preparations include rolling, aerating, fertilizing, seeding, and mowing playing fields during the season. While they do not serve in any capacity as administrators of our soccer program, Blacksburg Parks and Rec is an integral part of your child's playing experience.

2. Montgomery County Public Schools, Principals and Faculty: Many Montgomery County Public Schools graciously provide New River United use of their recreational fields. Various schools have also provided New River United with space for seasonal coaches' meetings and instructional clinics. Faculty and principals at each school help with distribution of New River United's annual player registration forms and other New River United soccer information to students. As with any group of volunteers, some schools are able to provide more support (field time/space) than others; however, these entities do not have an obligation to help New River United, and your expression of appreciation, as well as abiding by the restrictions they place on our use, is helpful in maintaining our positive relationship.

3. Referees: These individuals are perhaps the most under-recognized part of our soccer organization. Each weekend, these young people (and some adults) take time to ensure our players play over 600 games under the New River United Laws of the Game, working hard to ensure your player has a safe and positive soccer experience. They are also required to recertify each year. Coaches are reminded to have their players thank the referee after each game, and you as a coach or parent should do so as well. This display of sportsmanship and goodwill – in addition to withholding criticism – sets a positive example for our young players to follow. New River United is always in need of additional certified referees; please visit our website for additional information.

4. Age Group Coordinators, Team Coaches, and Parent Volunteers: These individuals are our frontline New River United volunteers. They are integral in providing your child a positive soccer experience. Take every opportunity to express your appreciation to your Age Group Coordinator, Coach, and Parent Volunteers. These volunteers may spend more time with our soccer program than anyone else. Their contributions are invaluable to our organization, and as our number of players increases each year, so does their workload. The exponential growth of our organization is a direct result of the dedication and excellent job these individuals do each season.

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PLAYER SAFETY

I. GENERAL

As long as a child is in the practice or game area, and in the absence of their parents, guardians, or another responsible adult, the COACH has the responsibility for the child's safety and behavior, including, but not limited to the following safeguards:

A. Coaches' Responsibility for Players at Fields: Coaches are never to leave a player unattended at the end of practice or a game without assuring that a responsible adult is present to provide them transportation home. This assurance is imperative regardless of the circumstances at the time. Coaches should communicate to parents the importance of picking up their players promptly after practices and games. Coaches should know the persons who will be picking up their players and should NOT RELEASE them to anyone unless arrangements have been previously made and the player knows that person.

B. Player Illness/Injury: Coaches should not allow the child to play if there is any doubt about a possible player illness, injury, or other condition that might be unhealthy or unsafe for the player to participate in a practice or game. Coaches should always be aware of special medications that any of their players are taking, either on a regular or infrequent basis.

IMPORTANT NOTE on Player Registration Information/Parent and Coach Code of Conduct: Coaches must always keep the player registration/contact information and medical release forms available at each practice and each game. NO EXCEPTIONS. This information will be needed at the Hospital Emergency Room for player admittance should a player suffer an injury.

C. Player Behavior: Players must be supervised at all times to prevent vandalism, littering, fighting, dangerous play, or any other undesirable behaviors.

D. Player Equipment: The use of shin guards is mandatory at both practices and games. New River United's rules **PROHIBIT** illegal clothing or jewelry, which includes metal shoe cleats or shoes with toe cleats (football and baseball cleats); hard soled shoes; earrings; and metal, ceramic, glass and plastic jewelry. Coaches and parents must follow this restriction closely during both practices and games. Medical casts may be worn, if properly wrapped with padding, and if, in the opinion of the Referee, for that particular game, no hazard exists for the player with the cast or for any other participating player. The Referee's decision is final.

E. Inclement Weather: Both parents and coaches must have a good understanding of exactly what procedures will be followed in the event of inclement weather during practices and games. The plan must include procedures for notifying all team players in the event of a delayed or canceled game or practice, so no player is left alone, especially in bad weather. Absolutely no activities shall occur in the event of thunder or lightning. The field must be vacated, and all persons shall seek shelter (either in a

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building or a car.) It is the coach's responsibility to ensure that ALL players are accounted for and under cover. Please refer to our website for New River United's complete weather policy.

F. Spectator Conduct: No player, coach, referee, or spectator involved in the soccer program will be permitted to engage in inappropriate conduct toward another player, coach, referee, or spectator, including but not limited to the use of profanity; deliberate harassment or name-calling; physical or verbal provocations or intentional abusive physical engagement of one another; or negative gestures or vocal references about any player's, coach's or referee's abilities. Aggressive shouting, negative criticism, or any other type of intimidation of a player, coach, or referee will not be tolerated. New River United can and will take measures to enforce these requirements through the league association, participating schools, Blacksburg Parks and Recreation, and if necessary, the county Sheriff's department. Positive vocal encouragement and actions are always welcome.

G. Traffic Safety: Coaches, parents and anyone driving to and from practices and games must be particularly observant of player behavior when they are in the vicinity of parking lots, roadways, or other vehicular traffic patterns.

H. Player Transportation: When player transportation is provided it is mandatory (it is also state law) that all vehicular occupants wear safety belts when such are installed in the vehicle. NEVER transport players in the back of a pickup truck, with or without a truck cap installed; exceptions may be made only with prior New River United approval for parades or special events.

I. Goal Safety and Field Inspection: Coaches should inspect before and after practices and games the field condition to determine if there are holes, stones, glass, or any other objects that might pose a hazard to the players, linesmen, or referees. Likewise it is the coach's responsibility to ensure that mid-sized and large goals are anchored with a sandbag and are in no danger of tipping. If a goal is found to be unanchored, no activity shall occur around that goal. The unanchored goal must be reported to New River United as soon as possible. **Under no circumstances should any person be allowed to "hang" on or climb a goal or net. All Coaches are responsible for locking goals together after every use.**

J. Supervision: At least two (2) adults (persons 21 years or older) should be present at all practices and games for each team.

K. Smoking: Smoking is not allowed at any New River United-sponsored activities.

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II. KIDSAFE PROGRAM

Since 1996, New River United -- as a part of the Virginia Youth Soccer Association (VYSA) and US Youth Soccer (USYS) -- has participated in the KidSafe Program. The KidSafe program is a risk management program designed to ensure safe circumstances for every person, and especially every child, who participates in a US Youth Soccer affiliated activity. Criminal background checks are performed on all adult volunteers and employees as part of this program. The KidSafe Program is intended to ensure that all Youth Soccer volunteers and paid employees are screened for any past or present behavior that may pose a threat to any player participants in US Youth Soccer. All New River United Board members, coaches, and all other volunteers are screened on an annual basis for initial or continued suitability in the New River United program. All USSF-certified referees officiating at New River United soccer games are screened as well, under a separate program administered by the VYSA State Referee Administrator (SRA). This program is expected to further reduce the potential for any type of abuse against youth participants in US Youth Soccer caused by Youth Soccer volunteers and paid employees.

III. INJURIES

A. Slight Abrasions: Some types of minor abrasions can be treated with a "band-aid" and the player is allowed to continue playing in a practice or game.

B. Serious Injuries: The coach and parents should adopt and implement a procedure to follow when a player suffers a serious injury during practice or games. The procedures should be limited to performing only the most obvious and essential first aid steps necessary prior to transporting the player to a hospital Emergency Room or prior to the arrival of local Rescue Squad personnel.

C. Notification Procedures: Regardless of how serious an injury is, or the duration of discomfort, all injuries must be reported to the player's parents or guardians as promptly as possible so they may determine what additional procedures to take for the player.

D. Sprains: Sprains are the most frequent player injury suffered in soccer, most often in the knee or ankle. A sprain is a stretching or tearing of ligaments. The immediate care for a sprain is "RICE." Listed below are immediate actions that may be taken to help the sprained area:

REST: Remove the player from the field, and get him or her off his or her feet.

ICE: Ice, wrapped in a towel or other soft cloth, should be applied to the injury, as well as the surrounding area, for 15-minute intervals (15 minutes on, 15 minutes off) to decrease swelling and reduce pain. Do not apply ice directly on the injury.

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COMPRESSION: Wrap the ice directly against the injured area or wrap the area without ice using an ACE or TENSOR bandage or use another material wrap, but do not make it too tight. This can cause blood circulation complications and skin damage that can compound the injury.

ELEVATION: Swelling can be further reduced by having the player lie down and raise the sprained portion of the body above the level of the heart.

CAUTIONS: If the sprain symptoms do not disappear or are not significantly improved by the aforementioned procedures, the player should seek medical attention.

E. Head Injuries/Concussions:

1. Remove the player from play. Look for the signs and symptoms of a concussion if your player has experienced a bump or blow to the head. Players who experience signs or symptoms of concussion should not be allowed to return to play. When in doubt, keep the player out of play.
2. Ensure that the player is evaluated right away by an appropriate health care professional with experience in evaluating concussions. Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Health care professionals have a number of methods that they can use to assess the severity of concussions. As a coach, recording the following information can help health care professionals in assessing the player after the injury:

- Cause of the injury and force of the hit or blow to the head
- Any loss of consciousness (passed out/ knocked out) and if so, for how long
- Any memory loss immediately following the injury
- Any seizures immediately following the injury
- Number of previous concussions (if any)

3. Inform the player's parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give them the fact sheet on concussion. Make sure they know that the athlete should be seen by a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion.

4. Keep the player out of play the day of the injury. Do not return the player to play or practice until a health care professional, experienced in evaluating/managing concussion, has cleared them to do so in writing. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. Prevent common long-term problems and the rare second impact syndrome by delaying the athlete's return to the activity until the player receives appropriate medical evaluation and approval for return to play.

PROCEDURES

I. GENERAL CONDUCT OF New River United SOCCER PERSONNEL

A. Unacceptable Conduct: If at any time the conduct of a New River United Soccer official, team coach, or player is determined to be detrimental to New River United or the good of soccer, such individual(s) will be liable for sanctions imposed by the New River United By-Laws and Policies Committee. Such sanctions could include removal from participating in a New River United

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program.

B. Coaches' Responsibility: Coaches will be responsible for the conduct of their team's players and supporters while at a game, practice field, or other New River United Soccer sponsored event. Improper conduct on the part of the coaches, players, or spectators may result in penalties against the individual causing the misconduct as defined in paragraph I.A. above. The referee has full jurisdiction in all matters that include conduct at all New River United-sponsored soccer games in accordance with the Federation International of Football Association (FIFA) Laws and New River United Soccer Rules.

C. Referee Incident Reports: So that the New River United By-Laws and Policies Committee can decide if it should invoke rule I.A. above in a particular adverse incident, referees will provide a verbal report of the incident to the New River United soccer referee assignor. This report should describe the circumstances surrounding any ejection of an individual from a game, in accordance with procedures defined under FIFA Law V and related New River United soccer regulations. The New River United referee assignor will be responsible for relaying this information to the New River United By-laws and Policies Committee for possible further review and action.

D. Referee Decisions: All referee decisions in regards to game results and game situations involving their judgment are final. No protests will be allowed or considered. However, the New River United By-laws and Policies Committee may exercise its option to review any incident involving misconduct on the part of any New River United official, coach, player, or spectator, as well as any suspension of a player, coach, or spectator as a result of misconduct. Policy and Procedure Documents are separate from this publication and are available on line at www.newriverunited.com, and in hard copy form at the New River United office.

E. Protests of Game Results: As there are no standings kept for the majority of the New River United soccer programs, protests of game results will not be allowed.

F. Parental Support: The support of players' parents is fully expected due to New River United's dependence on volunteers for coaching, refereeing, administration functions, fundraising, and other related matters.

II. LENGTH OF PLAYING SEASON

The New River United Soccer "Fall" playing season will normally commence on the week after Labor Day and will continue for nine (9) consecutive weeks thereafter. Our Recreational season consists of eight (8) games, typically scheduled from the first Saturday after Labor Day through the first weekend of November (the tenth week is usually reserved for an end-of-season event). Makeup games may be scheduled as a result of regular season games that are canceled due to inclement weather or other circumstances. The "Spring" soccer season begins in early March with eight games scheduled through the second weekend in May.

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III. CANCELLATION AND RESCHEDULING OF GAMES

A. Field Conditions, Inclement Weather and Field Closures:

In cases of weather-related field conditions, New River United will make their own decision regarding field playability.

When deciding whether a field is playable, consideration is given first to player safety and next to the possibility of detrimental field impact. In cases where fields are left at a “Game Time Decision” status, referees will be the first authority as to field playability unless New River United personnel determine otherwise (for U5-U6, the lead trainer decides). In the absence of a referee, coaches will be that authority. Referees and coaches should use the above mentioned guidelines when making their determination. If there is ever a doubt as to player safety, then the deciding entity is to err on the side of caution and not play.

NO ACTIVITIES ARE TO OCCUR ON CLOSED FIELDS.

All coaches, parents, players, and referees are individually responsible for checking for any game cancellations and field closures. All field closures are updated as soon as possible on the New River United website, www.newriverunited.com

Absolutely no activity should occur in the presence of thunder or lightning.

For U5/U6 the age group, the age group coordinator is the first authority at games regarding inclement weather.

For all other games (U7-U19), the referee is the first authority at games regarding inclement weather; in the absence of a referee, coaches will be that authority. Referees and coaches should use the above mentioned guidelines when making their determination. If there is ever a doubt as to player safety, then the deciding entity is to err on the side of caution and not play.

Please refer to our website for New River United’s complete weather policy.

B. Makeup Games: Makeup games canceled due to inclement weather may be rescheduled whenever possible. However, reschedules are not guaranteed due to limited available resources, and some games may go unscheduled. In the event that makeup games need to be scheduled, the New River United Director of Operations will do his/her best to get the game rescheduled.

IV. TEAM FORMATION AND PLAYER REGISTRATION

A. Team Formation Objectives:

Player assignment must be fair and impartial. The second objective of the New River United team formation process is to assign players to teams in an equitable manner so that all players have equal

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opportunity to play in an optimal development environment. All reasonable efforts to form balanced teams will be made.

B. Team Formation Roles:

1. Age Group Coordinator (AGC)

The Age Group Coordinators (AGCs) have the primary responsibility for forming Recreational teams within New River United. Each AGC is responsible for one or more age groups within an area and may be responsible for both boys and girls or a single gender. AGCs are selected by, and work under the direction of, the Recreational Commissioner. The AGC works closely with the club's Administrative Staff, who provide the AGC with player registration and wait list information. An AGC may communicate with AGCs in other areas to develop the best mix of team sizes and players or to transfer players to a different area of play.

AGCs generally have the following responsibilities:

- Determine team counts;
- Select team coaches;
- Assign registered players to teams;
- Accept players from the wait list to fill teams;
- Distribute rosters to coaches.

In addition, AGCs may also be delegated the tasks of assigning team practice times and/or distributing equipment and/or schedules to coaches. The Rec Commissioner, under the direction of the club's Administrative Staff, shall identify the specific responsibilities of the AGCs within his/her region.

2. Operational and Administrative Staff

The Operational/Administrative Staff registers players after verifying correct information, fees, and proof of age. They provide the AGCs and League Commissioners with the initial player registration data and periodically distribute a wait list of players who have not been assigned, pending acceptance by the AGCs. Once approved, wait listed players are added to the list of registered players. The updated registration data is also periodically distributed. Registration updates are made as necessary.

3. Coach

AGCs may consult coaches in the interest of forming well-balanced teams, but the coach does not have a direct role in team formation. Coaches may not accept registration forms or guarantee placement of any player on any team.

C. Team Formation Policies

1. Registration Deadline

There will be a defined registration deadline date set by New River United, after which late fees are imposed. The registration deadline will be posted on the New River United website. Families must

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register their child using our online process.

2. Proof –Of-Age

Proof-of-age must be provided upon request of the New River United Administrative Staff.

Proof of age shall consist of a birth certificate; a Uniformed Services Identification and Privilege Card (DD Form 1173) issued by the uniformed services of the United States; a birth registration issued by an appropriate government agency or board of health records; a passport; an alien registration card issued by the United States Government; a certificate issued by the Immigration and Naturalization Service attesting to age; a current driver's license; an unexpired federal, state, or local government identification card (if documentation of date of birth is required); or a certification of a United States citizen born abroad issued by the appropriate government agency. Hospital, baptismal, or religious certificates will not be accepted. [as per USYS rules]

3. Properly Registered Players

A player cannot be placed on a team or participate in New River United soccer events (practices or games) until he/she has been properly registered.

4. Late Registration

Late registration players are those whose dates of registration are later than the On Time Registration deadline date. Late players will be placed on a wait list to be drawn upon to fill existing teams that do not have the maximum allowable numbers of players assigned. Late players are individually approved and placed for registration by the AGCs as they are placed when/if space is available.

5. Refunds

a) Unable to Place

Inevitably, the AGCs will not be able to place some players in any of their desired areas of play due to limits in available resources (teams, fields, coaches, or because of a lack of players necessary to field a team.) If a player cannot be placed on a team due to these circumstances, and another agreeable placement cannot be offered, the New River United registration fee will be fully refunded.

AGCs will notify the family of any players they are unable to place prior to the first practice. In general, AGCs should notify the family of the players whenever they suspect that they will not be able to place them and present them any available opportunities in an alternate area of play. Whenever possible, a player who cannot be placed on a team will be placed on a wait list until the second game on the season. The Administrative Staff will fully refund the New River United Registration fees of all players on the wait list who are unable to be placed after the second game. These refunds do not require a written request.

b) Requested Refund

Requests for refund, for reasons other than “Unable to Place” must be made in writing to New River United and will be processed by the Administrative Staff. Verbal Requests are not permitted.

Electronically Transmitted (faxed or emailed) requests are acceptable. Refund Requests of New River United soccer registration fees, for any reason other than “Unable to Place,” will be assessed a processing fee.

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6. Everyone Plays

All players shall be treated equally when being considered for team placement. The priority given to players is based on their date of registration. On-time registered players have priority over late registered players. The AGCs shall make every reasonable effort to place all on-time registered players on a team. AGCs should anticipate and prepare for the placement of a certain number of late registered players; however allowing policy exceptions in this case is discouraged.

7. Teams

Recreational teams consist of a head coach and a roster of players, assigned to the head coach by an AGC for the duration of the season. The coach may choose one or more assistant coaches (must register and pass a background check) and request team parents as volunteers for various team “administrative” functions, such as snack coordinator, etc.

8. Team Balance

Team parity is an important component in providing an optimal development environment. A primary goal of each AGC is to establish a fair and balanced distribution of playing talent among all teams in their age group and area. The AGCs shall make every reasonable effort to achieve that goal.

9. Team Size

a) House League

The target size for House League teams is shown in the table below. The House League target team sizes are designed to support the following considerations for fielding a team for a game:

- Every player must play at least two quarters (or one half) per game in a field position. Playing goalkeeper does not count as a field position.
- The majority of players will play in at least three quarters (or three-fourths) of a game.
- With one player absent, no player will be required to play more than three quarters.
- A team can be fielded with two players absent.

In anticipation of late registrations or player transfers from other areas, teams may initially be formed with fewer players than necessary to field a team during a game. The Recreation and League Commissioner shall be notified if a team has less than the minimum number of players after the first practice.

In certain areas in order to support placement of on-time registered players, the number of players on the team may have to be increased beyond the target number. The Recreation Commissioner shall be notified any time an AGC wishes to exceed the maximum team size, and may only do so with the Recreation Commissioner’s approval.

10. Team Continuity

Team continuity refers to the placement of coaches and players together on the same team from one

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season to the next and is not guaranteed. Recreational teams are formed for one season only. Teams are officially established when the AGC provides the player roster to the head coach that has been selected for the team. Teams are disbanded after the last game of the season.

a) Team Parity

Under no circumstances shall team continuity take precedence over team parity and balance within an area of play. Additionally, youth players benefit from experiences with a variety of teammates and coaches.

11. Age Groups

New River United Soccer follows birth date ranges for its age groups as set by US Youth Soccer, which uses August 1-July 31 to determine age groups (e.g. U9 refers to players who turn age 9 between those dates during the Fall and/or Spring soccer seasons). Please refer to the Age Group Chart on our website. In all but an extremely small number of instances, it is most appropriate for a player to play in their proper age group. See below for exceptions (exception requests must be made each season).

a) Playing Up – August/September Birth Dates

In some instances, children born in August and September will be attending one grade higher than most of the children in their age group. Players with August or September birthdays may request to play-up an age group to play with other players in their grade. Parents should be cautioned, because this places the player in an environment where they may be less skilled than their teammates. This type of request must be made at the time of registration. Play-ups under this condition are typically approved but may be restricted due to team formation concerns in the gaining age group; a play-up will not displace an age-appropriate player who registers on time (therefore, requests are not guaranteed).

b) Playing Up – Based on Ability

Players capable of playing up an age group based on ability are extremely rare. To be beneficial to the player and the player's teammates, a player who is playing up must be able to perform at an average to above average skill level for that age group. When determining if a player should play up based on ability, the following must be considered:

- Physical Characteristics – size, speed, strength;
- Individual Skill Level – technical skills such as dribbling, passing, and receiving;
- Emotional Maturity – ability to interact with other players and handle different competitive levels;
- Mental Development – ability to understand teamwork and the dynamics involved in an older age group where the game is faster and more complicated.

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Failure to account for all these factors can be detrimental to the development of the player and his or her teammates. Requests to place players in an older age group must be made in writing, detailing why the player and the player's teammates would benefit from that player participating in an older age group. Independent verification of the player's ability may be required before a decision will be made by New River United. Players will NOT be able to play up from U13 division to the U18 division due to safety concerns.

c) Playing Down

Play-down requests are only considered if a physical or mental deficiency exists. Additional written information is required (e.g., a doctor's note) before the request can be considered. Requests to play down not accompanied by written justification cannot be considered.

d) Teams Play Up

Play-up requests shall only be considered on an individual basis. Requests for entire teams to play up will not be considered.

12. Special Requests

Occasionally players will make requests on their registration form for specific needs due to personal conflicts or hardship. Requests are also often made for reasons of convenience or personal preference. Special requests can make team formation complicated for the AGCs and put them in a position to arbitrarily accept some requests and deny others. Honoring special requests shall not be put at a higher priority than team balance. In no case shall any special request be guaranteed to be granted

13. Resource Limitations

Specific areas may limit the number of teams formed due to lack of resources. Resources in this situation primarily include fields and coaches. In a situation where there are more players than coaches and teams, the players shall be placed on teams in order of their registration date. Players not placed on a team shall be transferred to an alternate area of play, moved to another eligible and appropriate age group, or designated to receive a refund. AGCs shall inform the parents of these players when this situation occurs. Exceptions may be made for children of coaches, AGCs, and other league volunteers.

14. Coach Selection

New River United coaches are the primary influence on player development and project an image of New River United to its members and the community. New River United coaches are expected to show respect for the all members of the New River Valley community at all times, including players, parents, other coaches, referees, volunteers, school employees, and employees of New River United. In addition, New River Soccer coaches must demonstrate respect for New River United soccer policies and procedures as well as the Laws of the Game.

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AGCs should select coaches based on training, experience, ability, and the image of New River United they project. No coach is guaranteed to be selected simply because he/she coached in a previous season, but returning status is one of many considerations.

15. Team Formation Policy Exceptions

Unless addressed otherwise in this document, all requests for exceptions to the team formation policies must be approved by the responsible AGC and reviewed by the Director of Operations. It is expected that the decision-making process and any documentation used in the Policy Exception Process be cataloged and stored for further reference. AGCs should be aware that any exception to policy sets a precedent. In certain cases, it will be necessary to follow the success of a policy exception for a season and document the outcome or success of the decision.

V. TRAINING FOR COACHES

A. Coach Training:

Providing sufficient training opportunities is a key element for improving and maintaining the quality of our Recreational coaches. Coaching tools can be found at the www.newriverunited.com webist. Coaches are encouraged to attend all courses that apply to the age groups they are coaching. Coaches may be required to attain a minimum level of certification in order to be eligible to coach; such minimum standards are at the discretion of the New River United Technical Staff and will be communicated accordingly.

In addition to in-house clinics, New River United promotes numerous USSF Licensing Courses each year. Coaches are encouraged to advance themselves through these courses throughout their coaching career. Information of dates, times and locations of any coach course can be found on NRU's website: www.newriverunited.com.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

A. Practices:

1. Team practice will not be allowed to start before the date set by New River United each season.
2. No recreational league team may practice more than one (1) days per week without approval from the Director of Operations.

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3. No practices take place for U5/U6.

B. Spectators:

1. Spectators must remain behind designated lines at the playing fields during game play (between midfield and the penalty area, across from your team's bench), and may not stand at the ends of the field.

2. Team players and coaches must be on one side of the playing field and the spectators must be located on the opposite side across from their team.

3. A player's parent, or anyone else, may only be on the team's side of the playing field if he or she is a properly registered team official for that team.

4. Refer to LAW I (New River United Law Modifications) for additional information.

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FIFA LAWS OF THE GAME

The laws of the game, as authorized by the **Federation Internationale De Football Association (FIFA)** and the **United States Soccer Federation (USSF)**, will apply in all cases except as modified by the New River United rules. The FIFA Laws of Soccer can be found at [http://www.fifa.com/development/education- and-technical/referees/laws-of-the-game.html](http://www.fifa.com/development/education-and-technical/referees/laws-of-the-game.html).

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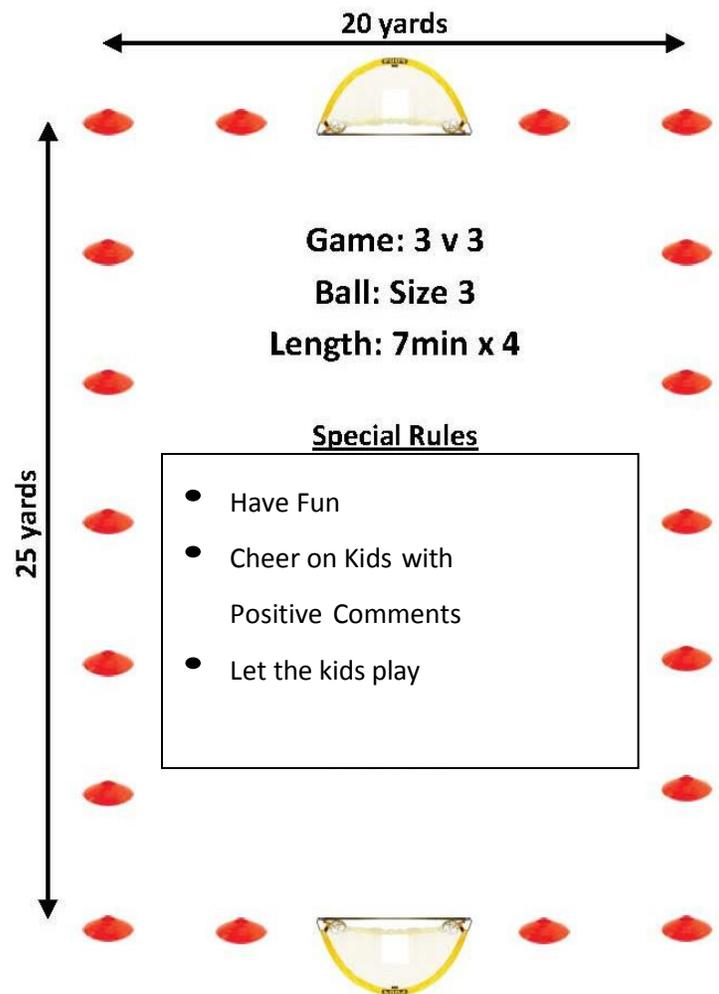
New River United Modified Rules

For All Age Groups:

- Have fun. Let's teach kids to enjoy soccer. Be positive.
- In order to make games more competitive: If a team is ahead by 5 goals, the losing team may (not required) add a player on the field, and add another player for each additional goal scored by the leading team. BUT the teams shall go back to even numbers if the goal differential is reduced to 4.
- Starting Fall 2012, slide tackling will not be permitted in ALL age groups of the New River United recreation program. All slide tackles will result in a direct free kick for the opposing team, and the player that committed the offense will receive a yellow card. If the player commits a second slide tackle, the respective player may be given a red card, which would result in an immediate dismissal from the game. All decisions are at the discretion of the center referee. The referee crew will have zero tolerance in this matter during all official games. The 'No Slide Tackling' rule was implemented to minimize reckless challenges and injuries and help create a fun, safe, and positive experience for all parties involved.

U5 & U6 Soccer Rules

1. The field is roughly 20 yards wide by 25 yards long. The goals are 6' pop-up goals. If pop-up goals are not available, then goals may be marked with cones. Fields for kindergarten will not be lined. Thus coaches will need to mark off the field with discs/cones. In this case, the "goal" discs/cones should be clearly distinguishable from the "line" discs/cones.
2. Games are played 3v3 using a size 3 ball.
3. All players are required to wear shin guards during games.
4. Game length is 4 quarters each 7 minutes long, with a 1 minute break between quarters and a 3-minute break at halftime.
5. Kickoffs take place at the start of game, start of second half, and after each goal scored.



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6. Defense stands back 3 yards and allows for completion of the first pass.
7. If the ball goes out of bounds (end line or side line) a coach should roll a ball back into play. This is to keep play moving. So coaches may want to carry 2 balls and have one ready to roll in when needed.
8. If a **foul** occurs (e.g., a player from one team knocks a player from the other team down), the coach should pause play and explain to all players that there should be no rough pushing or shoving.
9. No goalkeeping/use of hands is allowed. Players should be discouraged from standing directly in front of the goal.
10. Coaches will rotate players in and out of the game by substituting at the quarter breaks. If it is **necessary** to substitute before quarter breaks, only a single substitution is permitted at a time and the coach will do so **“on the fly”** so as not to delay the flow of the game (hockey-style substitution).
11. All players will play approximately equal time during the game.
12. A coach from each team referees the game. A different coach should referee each half of the game.
13. Coaches should not keep score of the game per se, but if one team is scoring much more (perhaps 5 more goals), then the losing team may add a player to the field.

*Remember, this is a **TEACHING LEAGUE**. This is the first exposure to soccer that these kids will have, so please take time during the game to **BRIEFLY** explain/instruct/correct the proper way to do a kick-off. Give kids another chance if they miff a kick-in or kickoff.*

U7 Playing Rules

- The field will be 40 x 25. Six foot pop ups will be used. The fields will be lined.
- All teams will use a **size 3 ball**.
- A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than 5 players.
 - No team will use a goalkeeper.
 - No players will be allowed to play the ball within the arc immediately in front of each goal.
 - Substitution may be made at the quarter break and at other times as necessary.
 - All players will play approximately equal time during the game.
- Each game will consist of **4 ten minute** quarters. There will be a one minute break between quarters 1-2 and 3-4 and a five minute halftime.
- Equipment
 - All **players are required to wear shin guards** during the game.
 - Players may wear sneakers or soft-cleated shoes.

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U8 Playing Rules

- The field will be 50 x 30. The goals will be 6 x 12s. The fields will be lined.
- All teams will use a **size 4 ball**.
- All teams will play 6v6, 5 field players and a goalkeeper.
- All players will play a minimum of 50% of the playing time.
- Substitutions may be made during any stoppage (after injuries, before goal kicks, after goals, before a team's throw-in, between quarters and at the half).
- Each game will consist of **4 ten-minute** quarters. There will be a one minute break between quarters 1-2 and 3-4 and a five minute halftime.
- Equipment
 - All **players are required to wear shin guards** during the game.
 - Players may wear sneakers or soft-cleated shoes.

U10 Playing Rules

- The Field will be 75 x 45. The goals will be 6 x 18s.
- **The Ball** – Size 4.
- All teams will play 6v6, 5 field players and a goalkeeper. If each team has 10 players and would like to play 7v7 (six field players and a goalkeeper), that is also acceptable.
 - *Substitutions:* At any stoppage and unlimited.
 - Playing time: Each player SHALL play a minimum of 50% of the total playing time. Teams and matches may be coed.
- **The Players' Equipment** – A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous to himself or another player, including any kind of jewelry. The basic compulsory equipment of a player is:
 - Team Uniform with jersey, shorts, and socks.
 - Footwear
 - Shin guards are covered entirely by the socks, are made of a suitable material and provide a reasonable degree of protection.
 - Each goalkeeper wears colors that distinguish him/her from other players, the referee and the assistant referees. Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams.
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- **The Referee** – 1 referee will be used.

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- **The Duration of the Match** – The match lasts two equal periods of 25 minutes. There shall be a half-time interval of 5 minutes.
- **The Ball In and Out of Play** – The ball is out of play when:
 - It has wholly crossed the goal line or touch line whether on the ground or in the air
 - Play has been stopped by the referee
- **The Method of Scoring** – A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goalposts and under the crossbar, provided that no infringement of the Laws of the Game has been committed previously by the team scoring the goal.
- **Offside** – It is not an offense in itself to be in an offside position. A player is in an offside position if he/she is nearer to his/her opponents' goal line than both the ball and the last two defenders. A player is not in an offside position if he/she is in his/her own half of the field or he/she is level with the second to last defender or he/she is level with the last two defenders or he/she is level with the ball. A player in an offside position is only penalized if, at the moment the ball is played by one of his/her own teammates, he/she is, in the opinion of the referee, involved in active play by interfering with play or interfering with an opponent or gaining an advantage by being in that position. There is no offside offense if a player receives the ball directly from a goal kick, a throw-in or a corner kick.
 - *NOTE: At the U10 level, only "blatant" offsides is called because there is only one center referee. Blatant offsides are roughly defined as waiting at the opponent's goal (AKA cherry picking), and not typically when a player is ahead of the ball on a "fast break." Keep in mind, all decisions are at the discretion of the referee.*
- **Free Kicks** – All free kicks are direct and opponents are at least 8 yards from the ball until it is in play. The ball must be stationary when the kick is taken and the kicker does not touch the ball a second time until it has touched another player. If the free kick is kicked directly into the opponents' goal a goal is awarded. If a free kick is kicked directly into the teams own goal a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team.

U13 Playing Rules

- The Field will be 80 x 50. The goals will be 7 x 21s.
- **The Ball** – Size 5.

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- **The Number of Players** – All teams will be play 8v8, 7 field players and a goalkeeper.
- *Substitutions:* At any stoppage and unlimited.
- **The Players' Equipment** – A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous to himself or another player, including any kind of jewelry. The basic compulsory equipment of a player is:
 - Jersey, shorts, and soccer socks.
 - Proper Footwear (cleats)
 - Shin guards are covered entirely by the socks, are made of a suitable material and provide a reasonable degree of protection.
 - Each goalkeeper wears colors that distinguish him/her from other players, the referee and the assistant referees or linesmen/women. Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams.
- **The Referee** – 3 referees per game.
- **The Duration of the Match** – Each game will be 60 minutes long, with two 30 minute halves. There shall be a half-time interval of 5 minutes.
- **Offside** – It is not an offense in itself to be in an offside position. A player is in an offside position if he/she is nearer to his/her opponents' goal line than both the ball and the second last opponent. A player is not in an offside position if he/she is in his/her own half of the field or he/she is level with the second last opponent or he/she is level with the last two opponents or he/she is level with the ball. A player in an offside position is only penalized if, at the moment the ball touches or is played by one of his/her own team, he/she is, in the opinion of the referee, involved in active play by interfering with play or interfering with an opponent or gaining an advantage by being in that position. There is no offside offense if a player receives the ball directly from a goal kick, a throw-in or a corner kick.
- **Free Kicks** – All free kicks are direct and opponents are at least 10 yards from the ball until it is in play. The ball must be stationary when the kick is taken and the kicker does not touch the ball a second time until it has touched another player. If the free kick is kicked directly into the opponents' goal a goal is awarded. If a free kick is kicked directly into the teams own goal a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team.

U18 Playing Rules

- The Field will be 100 x 65. The goals will be 8 x 24s.
- **The Ball** – Size 5.
- **The Number of Players** – Both teams will play 11v11.
- *Substitutions:* At any stoppage and unlimited.

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- **The Players' Equipment** – A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous to himself or another player, including any kind of jewelry. The basic compulsory equipment of a player is:
 - Jersey, shorts, and soccer socks.
 - Proper Footwear (cleats)
 - Shin guards are covered entirely by the socks, are made of a suitable material and provide a reasonable degree of protection.
 - Each goalkeeper wears colors that distinguish him/her from other players, the referee and the assistant referees or linesmen/women. Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams.
- **The Referee** – 3 referees per game.
- **The Duration of the Match** – Each game will be 60 minutes long, with two 30 minute halves. There shall be a half-time interval of 5 minutes.
- **Offside** – It is not an offense in itself to be in an offside position. A player is in an offside position if he/she is nearer to his/her opponents' goal line than both the ball and the second last opponent. A player is not in an offside position if he/she is in his/her own half of the field or he/she is level with the second last opponent or he/she is level with the last two opponents or he/she is level with the ball. A player in an offside position is only penalized if, at the moment the ball touches or is played by one of his/her own team, he/she is, in the opinion of the referee, involved in active play by interfering with play or interfering with an opponent or gaining an advantage by being in that position. There is no offside offense if a player receives the ball directly from a goal kick, a throw-in or a corner kick.
- **Free Kicks** – All free kicks are direct and opponents are at least 10 yards from the ball until it is in play. The ball must be stationary when the kick is taken and the kicker does not touch the ball a second time until it has touched another player. If the free kick is kicked directly into the opponents' goal a goal is awarded. If a free kick is kicked directly into the teams own goal a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team.

Exploitation of No Offside Law in U7 AND U8 MATCHES

The Offside Law is not enforced in the 4v4 format for U7 and U8 players primarily for developmental reasons and due to the developmental limitations of those players. Coaches are **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED** to avoid exploiting this modification through use of a "cherry-picking" player – a player who stays near the opponent's goal in anticipation of a long or big kick from his teammates in the defensive half who would then have an open goal to score in.

Advice to New River United Soccer Coaches:

While coaches should encourage depth in their team shape (which the "cherry-picking" player provides), they also need to encourage players to understand all elements of the game, from attacking skills

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(dribbling, passing, receiving, shooting) to defensive skills and moments of transition.

This strategy is counter-productive for the development of all players, as it sacrifices the use of their skills and employs a strategy that will fail in older age groups for the benefit of winning matches in which no standings or official scores are kept.

Coaches who encounter another coach who positions a player directly in front of the goal should follow these procedures:

1. remind that coach that New River United considers this action to be unsportsmanlike conduct, and ask him to move his players away from the goal;
2. notify the referee if the coach ignores this request;
3. notify the Recreation Commissioner regarding this issue following the match if it is unresolved by steps 1 and 2.

Referee Actions:

Referees have been instructed to warn a coach if he/she is violating the Spirit of the Game by allowing players to play as goalkeepers. If the coach refuses to correct the problem, and his/her players continue to guard the goal, then the Referee will note that fact in the Referee Game Report. The Referee Game Report will be submitted within 48 hours so the assignors can contact the appropriate club official who will take the necessary corrective action against the offending coach or coaches.

METHODS TO AVOID “BLOW-OUT” GAMES

Even though AGCs make every attempt to balance the relative strength of teams in a particular age group, there are frequently cases where relatively weak teams play games against considerably stronger teams. Running up the score by a margin greater than four goals lessens the enjoyment of the game for the opposing team; in an effort to promote good sportsmanship, New River United prohibits its coaches from “blowing-out” other teams in all age groups. While New River United recognizes it is hard to keep the stronger team engaged in the game, it is much more important that they learn good sportsmanship. Please note that only at the U7, U8, U9 and U10 age groups are more players added on the field when a “blow-out” occurs.

Advice to New River United Coaches:

There are several methods that coaches of stronger teams can employ when a discrepancy in ability and score lines occur:

- Have all players exclusively use their “weaker foot” for passing, ball control, and shooting;
- Designate players who have not yet scored goals as the only ones who are allowed to shoot (other players have to pass them the ball);
- Place stronger players in primarily defensive positions and encourage them to pass to the weaker players playing primarily attacking positions;
- Set special conditions for their players before they are allowed to score (i.e., complete five consecutive passes before shooting);
- Limit the number of players in your offensive half of the field.

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- Remove a player from your team from the field (play 7v8).

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Referee Actions:

Referees have been instructed to remind coaches of the “blow out” rule so they can make every attempt to prevent the situation from worsening. If a coach refuses to correct the problem then the Referee will note that fact in the Referee Game Report. The Referee Game Report will be submitted within 48 hours so that the assignors can contact the appropriate league officials who will take the necessary corrective action against the offending coach. During a potential “Blow-out” situation in U7-U10 games, Referees will use the procedures in Law 3, Paragraph F to attempt to mitigate the “Blow-out.” Actions taken by a coach to avoid the blow out will still be a matter of record in the Referee’s game report.

UNREGISTERED PLAYERS/LATE PLAYER ADDITIONS TO TEAMS

Coaches are often approached by parents to let their unregistered child practice with and/or play on their teams. Coaches should NEVER allow any unregistered players to play with their team, as unregistered players are not covered by insurance. Coaches should not make promises to parents regarding player placements; New River United has a first-come/first-serve policy that is strictly enforced. Any team openings must be filled by players who have registered and are already on a waiting list. Coaches should never accept late registration forms and fee payments from parents, but should instead instruct the parents to contact New River United.

Participation by an unregistered player is a serious violation, as they are an insurance liability; coaches who allow such action to occur may be suspended or removed from their position.

PAID COACHES/TRAINERS

New River United Recreational Coaches and/or parents shall not hire paid coaches or trainers for Recreational or All-Star teams. Those interested in higher-level training are encouraged to contact the Director of Coaching. The Director of Coaching will assist you in determining your exact needs and work with you to develop a plan to meet those needs. New River United offers a variety of seasonal camps, clinics, and programs that provide its players training and instruction from professional coaches and trainers.

EQUALIZATION OF PLAYING TIME

New River United policy states that players who attend at least one practice per week must play at least half of that week’s game; coaches should exercise common sense when appropriating playing time so that players are not punished with less playing time due to circumstances beyond their control (e.g. a player is absent from one practice and the second practice is canceled due to inclement weather).

Coaches should strive to equalize playing time in each game, or between two successive games in order to give all players a relatively equal amount of game-time experience. Providing excessive playing time

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to only the best players on a recreational team in order to win games is considered to be unsportsmanlike conduct on the part of the coach. For U9 or U10 games that require goalkeepers to be changed at each quarter, players who play the goalkeeper position must be allowed to play at least two other quarters of the game in field positions.

Coaches are expected to rotate players into different positions throughout the season.

RULES OF CONDUCT VIOLATIONS

Each season New River United receives a number of complaints from coaches or parents who have experienced unsportsmanlike conduct during a practice, game, or tournament. New River United expects its coaches to behave in accordance with the conduct policies that are documented in the rules and procedures guide, and to ensure that their team players and parents do so as well. If coaches experience any serious unsportsmanlike conduct from an opposing team's players, coaches, and/or spectators during the season, they should do the following:

- Calmly request the referee to note the incident in the post-game report
- Attempt to learn the name(s) and affiliation of the offending person(s)
- Document the incident in an E-Mail message and send to the Director of Operations and to the AGC.
- Be specific in documenting the incident (i.e. names, dates, times, field location, etc.)

For cases involving teams from other clubs, information regarding unsportsmanlike conduct should be sent to the Director of Operations, who will follow up with the representatives from the other clubs to make sure the complaint is addressed.