

Youth Soccer Coaches' Manual



**Eau Claire Parks and Recreation
Department
915 Menomonie St.
839-5032**

Summer 2024

Updated 5/7/2024

Mission Statement

The mission of the Eau Claire Parks and Recreation Department is to provide high quality services and facilities to families and visitors of Eau Claire. This is accomplished through department programs, services, and facilities as well as through the preservation and improvement of the local environment.

Department programs and services encourage a high quality of life for all people. We strive to be a leader through diverse programs and services provided in a clean and safe environment.

We take pride in the quality of services we provide, which directly reflects upon that image that we project in the community.

Contact Information

Weather Hotline: 839-2913

This is the number to call if you believe that games may be cancelled

Eau Claire Parks & Recreation Department: 839-5032

Call this number if you have questions regarding game times, field location, etc.

Contact Elizabeth Daniels

Email: **Recreation@eauclairewi.gov**

Eau Claire Parks and Recreation...

Providing the Building Blocks for Youth S.P.O.R.T.S.

Sportsmanship: Bring your best to all competition.

- BE COOPERATIVE: Join others in a mutual goal of quality recreation experience. Take turns!
- BE FAIR: Compete skillfully, guided by the spirit of the game.
- BE GRACIOUS: Savor the challenge and meet it with your best efforts, win or lose.
- BE HONORABLE: Respect the game & everyone's contributions.
- BE HUMBLE: Take success in stride – share the credit. React politely even when others may not.

Perseverance: Work through difficulty & discouragement in pursuit of individual & team objectives.

- BE RESILIENT: Learn from mistakes and losses; seize the opportunity to improve.
- BE DISCIPLINED: Remain dedicated and self-controlled, even when challenged.
- BE CONFIDENT: Remain confident it will all turn out right in the end
- BE FOCUSED: Recover quickly from mistakes and successes. Stay in the game!

Optimistic: Be cheerful, appreciative, and hopeful about a situation and the world around you.

- BE COURAGEOUS: Stand up for what you believe is just & good.
- BE ENCOURAGING: Demonstrate concern for the growth & development of all others
- BE HOPEFUL: Expect the best outcome and learn from mistakes, wins, & losses
- BE POSITIVE: Keep on trying and see the good no matter what the situation.

Respect: Treat others the way you want to be treated.

- BE ACCEPTING: Support everyone's worth & dignity. Take correction as a compliment.
- BE CONSIDERATE: Be aware of & honor others' feelings.
- BE ATTENTIVE: Be ready to learn from other parents, coaches, officials & the players themselves.
- BE HONEST: Choose words & actions that are sincere, not misleading
- BE APPRECIATIVE: Value the guidance of supportive mentors and program leaders.

Teamwork: Embrace opportunities to contribute.

- BE COMMITTED: Set high standards for behavior & stick to them, even in difficult situations.
- BE HELPFUL: Understand & advance the program's positive goals.
- BE CONSCIENTIOUS: Be aware & careful of the choices you make.
- BE ACCOUNTABLE: Accept that your actions impact everyone around you.
- BE RELIABLE: Prove that others can depend on you.

Service: Serve the common good

- BE EMPOWERING: Inspire & help others to grow, succeed & lead.
- BE VISIONARY: Raise expectations for yourself, individual players, the team, and others.
- BE INTERCONNECTED: Individual efforts equal group achievement. Cooperate and get involved.
- BE ENERGETIC: Initiate action - do what needs to be done.
- BE GENEROUS: Contribute & support to reach the team's goals. Do your share!

Season Information

First Day of Practice

Practices will begin on **Tuesday, June 25th**. All players will arrive at the following times: 4:30pm (6-7 yrs); 5:30pm (8-9 yrs); 6:30pm (10-11 yrs); 7:30pm (12-14 & High School) Players will have been placed on a team. Rosters and team placement will be posted around the center pavilion. Coaches need to show up at least 20 minutes early. We will have you line up along path and meet your players before going to assigned field.

GAMES

Games will begin on **Tuesday, July 9th** @ the Soccer Park. The schedule will be prepared the week prior and coaches will pick up copies to distribute to their team members by the first practice, which will be held at the Soccer Park. Regular season games will conclude on Thursday, August 8th.

Picture Day

Picture day will be **announced in the league welcome letter**. Pictures will take place **before** your scheduled game as noted on the schedule. We need all teams to be prompt with this schedule so games start on-time. Be sure to remind your players and parents about this multiple times during the week prior. There are no retakes or make up picture times; if a player misses picture day they miss the pictures. The rain date will be **announced in the league welcome letter**.

Rules of the Game

ECPR SPECIFICS:

In the 6-7 age group, the coach is allowed on the field for the **FIRST 2 GAMES ONLY**. After the first week of games, they will need to remain on the sidelines, except for a coach who is acting as the referee.

All other coaches will need to remain in the designated area on the sidelines.

Coaches are not allowed to add and/or drop players from their team. If player is not on roster they must register for the program before being allowed to play.

If a team is short players the game may still be played as long as the team has at least five players (12-14yr, 15-17yr) or at least 7 players (6-7yr, 8-9yr, 10-11yr). The opposing team will be allowed a one-player advantage in such an instance.

Each game for ages 8-17 yrs. will be led by one referee. Coaches will referee in the 6-7 age division.

Shin guards are required for all players. They should be worn underneath the socks.

Metal cleats/baseball cleats are strictly prohibited.

Jewelry is not allowed (rings, earrings, bracelets, necklaces, etc...).

Home team is noted according to the schedule.

Regular season games will end in ties, if the score is tied at the end of the game.

In the case of **extreme heat/humidity**, all age levels have the option of playing quarters. Four 12-minute quarters would be played with 2-minute breaks between each quarter. This will still keep games within the 1-hour time restriction.

Age-group specifics...

6-7 year olds

- **7 v 7** (including goalie) **4 x 10** mins **2 min** quarter breaks
- **Ball size** = 3
- Lifting a foot on a throw-in: told they can't do that and given another chance
- **No offsides**
- Penalty in goal box: will result in an indirect free kick, not a penalty kick
- Coaches Officiate!
- Consistent with the US Soccer mandates on heading the ball, heading is banned for all division players 11U and below in both practices and matches.

8-9 year olds

- **9 v 9** (including goalie) **4 x 10** mins **2 min** half time
- **Ball size** = 4
- Lifting a foot on a throw-in: told they can't do that and given another chance
- **No offsides**
- Penalty in goal box: will result in a penalty kick
- Consistent with the US Soccer mandates on heading the ball, heading is banned for all division players 11U and below in both practices and matches.

10-11 year olds

- **9 v 9** (including goalie) **2 x 25** mins **5 min** half time
- **Ball size** = 4
- Lifting a foot on a throw-in: will be called and the throw will be given to the other team
- Offside **will be** called
- Penalty in goal box: will result in a penalty kick
- Consistent with the US Soccer mandates on heading the ball, heading is banned for all division players 11U and below in both practices and matches.

12-14 year olds

- **8 v 8** (including goalie) **2 x 25** mins **5 min** half time
- **Ball size** = 5
- Lifting a foot on a throw-in: will be called and the throw will be given to the other team
- Offside **will be** called
- Penalty in goal box: will result in a penalty kick

15-17 year olds

- **7 v 7** (including goalie) **2 x 25** mins **5 min** half time
- **Ball size** = 5
- Lifting a foot on a throw-in: will be called and the throw will be given to the other team
- Offside **will be** called
- Penalty in goal box: will result in a penalty kick
- When ball is played from goalkeepers hands (thrown or punted) it must be touched before the midfield line.

Suggested Game Timeline

Pregame Countdown:

Have team arrive at game location 20 minutes before game start time. Remind your parents that arriving at the game early will give their child a chance to warm-up and it will make sure that the games start on time.

- 10 minutes: Have the team warm-up (jogging, passing, water breaks)
- 5 minutes: Take the field and keep warming up (official will be doing equipment check)
- 2 minutes: Give team final pointers

In-Game: Be positive and support the decisions of the players

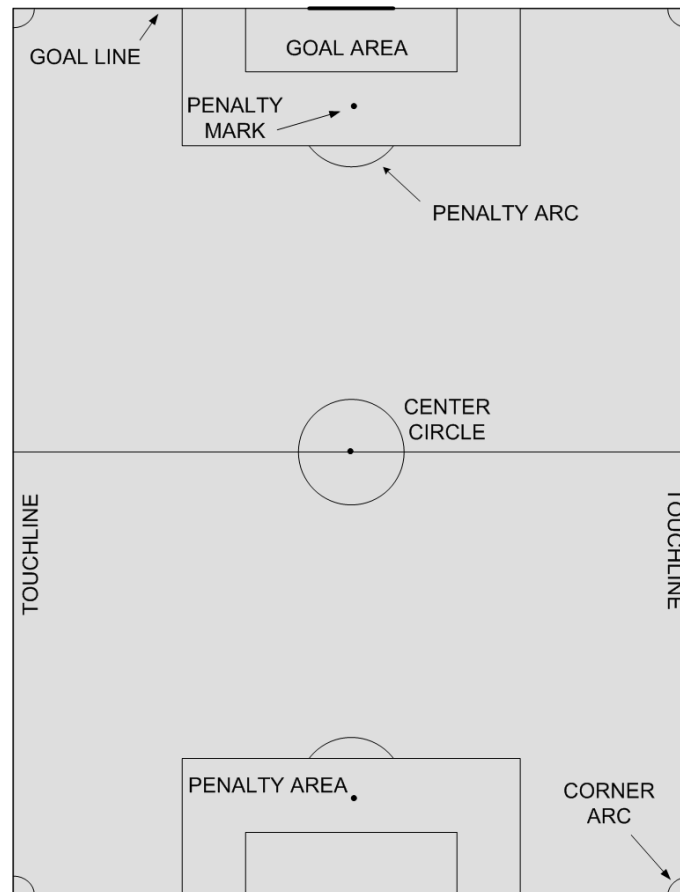
Half-time: Discuss positive actions and give constructive coaching

Post-Game: Congratulate your team and the opposing team and coach.
Remind players and parents of next game or practice

Concussion Rule:

Staff, Coaches, referees should remove participant if they show signs of head injury/concussion. The participant who has suffered a concussion cannot return to game/practice until they have been evaluated and cleared with written approval to participate by a licensed medical practitioner.

Written approval must be turned in to Soccer Director or ECPR office before returning to play.



Weather Information

- When thunder is heard, or lightning is seen, the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play, activity or event and take shelter immediately. This includes players, fans, patrons and ECPR employees.
- Thirty-minute rule: Once play, activity or event has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play, activity or event.
- Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30-minute count, reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin
- If we have thunder or lightning 15 minutes into practice time we will cancel
- **Rain we will play**
- If we have high heat indexes we will also play with shortened games/practices
- If there is ever a time that you feel as though your child would be best suited to not attend due to weather that is your choice but please communicate this to your coaches if at all possible

Coaching Tips

Here are a few tips on what you can do to make your players and your experience more enjoyable:



Set goals at the beginning that do not necessarily include winning every game



Stress importance of team play, good sportsmanship, and healthy competition



Show confidence in your team and your abilities as well



Play everyone on the team equally; let each player experience all positions



Treat officials, players, coaches, parents with respect



Be a role model for your players, other coaches and spectators



Verbally recognize the positives and use constructive, not destructive, criticism



Explain to the players why they are doing an activity so they better understand the game



Try to prevent blow out games, try moving your strong players around or having a certain number of passes that the team must complete in order to shoot on goal



Learn from mistakes and then move on



Encourage all players, and congratulate the other team and coach at the end of each match; they tried as hard as your team did!



Remember that it is only a game, so the most important thing is to

HAVE FUN!!

Coaching References:

Places to find advice



"First Season as a Youth Soccer Coach"

http://www.footy4kids.co.uk/first_season_as_a_youth_soccer_coach.htm

"Tips For Fun and Effective Practice"

<http://www.coachingsoccer101.com/soccercoaching.htm>

"Great website for activities"

<https://www.soccercoachweekly.net/>

Our coaching philosophy

The coaching staff and officials of **The Eau Claire Parks and Recreation** understand that children participate in soccer to have fun. If children don't have fun playing soccer, they'll soon pack it in.

We never forget that the game of soccer is just that - a game. It's not about how many wins and losses are accumulated. And, it is surely not about how many trophies are collected. It's not about how many goals we score or concede. It's all about enjoying the game and, at the same time, learning and developing soccer and life skills.

Proper soccer development requires that children play age appropriate activities so they are able to experience, comprehend, and execute the game as it relates to where they are at their own stage of physical and mental development.

It is about playing in different positions so the player learns all the skills necessary to develop in the game.

It's about receiving equal playing time, so the players are all given equal opportunity to learn.

It's about learning the techniques of the game through a variety of fun games where players have as much contact with a ball as possible and learn at their own rates.

Code of conduct for parents,

- Be your child's best fan and support her unconditionally.
- When you take your child home after a match or training session, please be supportive and always focus on the positive aspects of her game.
- Develop a responsibility in your child to pack her own kit, clean her boots and take a water bottle to practice and games.
- Respect the facilities at our opponents' grounds.
- Do not criticise your child's coach to your child or other parents. If you are not happy with the coach you should raise the issue with the coach in private and after the game/practice.
- Encourage your child to speak with the coach. If your child is having difficulties in training or games, or can't attend training etc. encourage her to speak directly to the coaches. This "responsibility taking" is a big part of becoming a mature person. By handling off the field tasks, your child is claiming ownership of all aspects of the game.
- Help your child to focus on the performance and not the result. Remember - winning is not as important as the performance.
- Support all the players in your child's squad. Do not criticise anyone. Remember – children don't mean to make mistakes.
- Do not criticise the opponents, their parents or their officials.
- Never audibly dispute a referee's decision. They will make mistakes occasionally. We all do. If you abuse or shout at the referee you are breaking the rules of the game.
- Parents must not coach from the touchline during matches or training. Leave this to the coach or you may cause confusion and erode your child's confidence.
- Parents must not enter the field of play.

Please remember – the game is for the children. It is not for the glory of the coach, manager or parents.

Code of conduct for players

Players should:

- Play according to the laws and spirit of the game.
- Be on time and be prepared for matches and training sessions.
- Display self-control in all situations. Never use foul or abusive language - before, during or after a game or practice.
- Train and play to the best of your ability, have a positive attitude, and encourage others to do the same.
- Respect the opposition. Treat them as you would like them to treat you.
- Respect the referee. Never dispute his or her decisions. They are only human and they make mistakes, just like you.
- Turn up for training and matches in appropriate and clean clothing.
- Wear the right sort of footwear. Note: we recommend against the use of metal cleats on health and safety grounds.
- Always wear shin guards.

Code of conduct for coaches and officials

A coach's primary responsibility is to make sure that his/her players have fun, develop as footballers and to instil in them a passion for the game.

The performance of coaches is not measured in wins and losses, but rather in what players learn in terms of technique, sportsmanship, and fair play.

Coaches are charged with the responsibility of controlling their players and parents at all times during a match.

Coaches lead and teach by example; our players will be a reflection upon the manager and coach.

Coaches will:

- Use positive reinforcement when dealing with players.
- Never use foul or abusive language and never abuse a player mentally, verbally, or physically.
- Have respect for the authority of the referee and opponents.
- Teach your children the rules of the game, fair play, and proper behaviour.
- Develop your child's technique and their decision-making ability.
- Inspect the playing area for hazards and generally make practice sessions and matches as safe as possible for your children. You should be aware, however, that soccer is a contact sport and your child may be injured. If this happens, we will provide appropriate first aid.

In addition:

- We will not leave your child unattended at a practice session or a game.
- We will only allow your child to leave a practice or a game if a responsible person collects them unless you give written permission for your child to leave on their own.
- We will always be enthusiastic (even in the pouring rain!)
- We will try our best to make the game enjoyable for everyone who takes part – players, opponents, parents and spectators.

Coaches' Sportsmanship Contract

One of the most important values that you can teach your players this season is the value of good sportsmanship. You can do so in a variety of different ways, including how you conduct yourself on the field and at practice. We ask that all coaches read and sign this contract to promote good sportsmanship in themselves and their players.

- I will respect the integrity and judgment of the sports officials.
- I will stress the values of fair play to all players.
- I will encourage leadership, use of initiative and support the decisions of the players on the team.
- I will promote activities that facilitate cooperation rather than just competition.
- I will control my emotion during frustrating situations and handle myself in accordance to good sportsmanship.
- I will maintain the attitude that each game/practice should be fun for those participating.
- I will ask that all spectators of our games promote good sportsmanship.
- I will set a good example for all players, parents and spectators by refraining from arguments with officials or other coaches.
- I will show respect to other teams and coaches.

Signature _____ Date _____