

## **FALL SOCCER PROGRAM**

### **RULES AND REGULATIONS**

(As amended to May 15, 2011)

#### **Purpose**

- The purpose of the Upper St. Clair Athletic Association's Fall Soccer Program is to provide an opportunity for children of township residents to learn and play soccer.
- The emphasis of the program is to create a recreational environment in which the participants can have fun and can enjoy the experience of a team sport.
- A league format is structured to introduce the participants to competitive team play beyond the Under-10 age group. **AT ALL TIMES THE RECREATIONAL ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAM WILL REMAIN THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE WITHIN THE COMPETITIVE FRAMEWORK OF THE LEAGUES.**
- Equal playing time for all participants is stressed and exposure to all field positions is encouraged. Minimum playing time, in terms of quarters or minutes played, is established for all age groups and must be adhered to by all coaches. **EVERY PLAYER MUST PLAY A MINIMUM OF ONE HALF A GAME IN EVERY GAME PLAYED.**

#### **Eligibility**

- Children of current residents of Upper St. Clair township are eligible to participate in the USCAA Fall Soccer Program.
- A registration form, signed by a parent or legal guardian, must be completed and submitted to the USCAA Recreation Soccer Commissioner. The information required for registration includes the following:
  1. Player's full name
  2. Address of USC residence and telephone number
  3. Date of birth
  4. Age (at July 31 of current year)
  5. Soccer experience
  6. Waiver of liability
  7. Signature of parent or legal guardian

- Any false or misleading information contained in the Fall Soccer registration form, particularly regarding the residence or the birth date of the participant, will affect the child's eligibility for USCAA's Soccer Program and the parents' eligibility to participate in USCAA programs. Birth certificates will be required for all registrants that have not previously submitted one for USC Recreation Soccer.
- A fee per participant will be established by the Soccer Commissioner each year and payment must accompany the registration form submitted to the Commissioner. In case of financial hardship, a parent or guardian may request in writing a payment plan or a reduction or waiver of the fee. The request must be made to the USCAA Recreation Soccer Commissioner and approved by the USCAA Executive Committee.
- All registration forms and fees must be received by the Soccer Commissioner no later than the deadline stipulated on the registration form. Any registration received after that date will be subject to placement on a waiting list and only accepted if space is available in the appropriate age group.
- High school players on the Freshman, Junior Varsity and/or Varsity teams may, at times, be prohibited by the High School Soccer Coach from participating in the USCAA Fall Program. The registration period will be extended for high school students who do not make the high school teams but wish to play in our program.

### Age Groups

- Boys and girls will be separated into two different leagues and will not be commingled for the U-8 through U-16 leagues. The U-6 and U-19 leagues will be coed unless participant numbers support forming separate leagues as determined by the Soccer Commissioner.
- Age groupings will be based on the age groups stipulated by the United States Soccer Federation (USSF) and adhered to whenever possible. The cutoff date for all age groups will be based on the same calendar date and that date currently is July 31. In order to participate in our program, a player must be at least 5 years old on July 31 of the current year and not older than 18 on that same date.
- Players will be grouped based on their date of birth into one of the following leagues:

Under-6 as of 7/31 of the current year  
Under-8 as of 7/31 of the current year  
Under-10 as of 7/31 of the current year  
Under-12 as of 7/31 of the current year  
Under-16 as of 7/31 of the current year  
Under-19 as if 7/31 of the current year

- It is not permissible for a player to play in an age group for which he or she is not eligible. This includes a player who desires to play in an older age group than he or she would otherwise be assigned. Any exception to this rule must have the prior approval of the Recreation Soccer Commissioner.

#### Program Administration

- The USCAA Board of Directors appoints a Soccer Commissioner who is responsible for the overall administration of the Fall Soccer Program. Such responsibility includes, but is not limited to the following:
  1. Registration of eligible participants
  2. Financial control of revenues and expenditures
  3. Equipment requirements including uniforms, balls, goals, etc.
  4. Field permits for practices and games
  5. League structure and age groupings
  6. Referees
  7. Compliance with rules and disciplinary procedures
  8. Clinics for coaches and/or players
  9. Coordination of field layout and lining, including hiring necessary personnel
- To assist in this effort, the Commissioner will select, on an annual basis, individuals to act as League Directors for the various age groups. A League Director will not be permitted to coach in nor have a child in his/her respective league. The Recreation Soccer Commissioner may also appoint an Assistant Commissioner to assist in the administration of the program.

#### League Director Responsibilities

- The League Directors are assigned the following responsibilities within their respective age group:
  1. Formation of teams as determined by the size of the league -- The Commissioner will determine the appropriate number of participants in each league based on registrations received and projected late registrants. Every player must be assigned to a team if he or she was registered prior to the end of the registration period. Late registrants will only be included on a team if space is available.

A waiting list will be maintained in the order in which the registrations are received and players will be placed on teams from the waiting list if and when space becomes available. Coaches may not “trade” players; all reassignments must have the approval of the Commissioner and the League Director.

2. League Balance -- The Director will strive to achieve competitive balance among all the teams within the League. Players will be distributed among the various teams based on their ratings from prior years, previous soccer experience or other known facts about the playing ability of the child. Every effort should be made to divide the talent equally among the teams to avoid unusually strong or weak teams. If possible, each team should have an equal number of similarly rated and experienced players.
3. Coach Selection -- The Director will identify individuals who have noted on their child’s registration form or otherwise indicated a desire to coach or to assist in coaching a team. From the available pool of volunteers, priority will be accorded to coaches who satisfy the following criteria, in the listed order of preference:
  - a. Have demonstrated good sportsmanship and mature behavior in handling young people.
  - b. Have exhibited a proper understanding of the purpose and objectives of USCAA’s Programs.
  - c. Have the potential to enhance the Soccer Program, in general, and contribute to the positive development of the participants, in particular.

The Director’s recommendation will be subject to review and approval by the Commissioner, and final approval by the Board.

4. Practice and Game Schedules - The League Director will issue practice and game field schedules for the League, and coordinate shared-use field assignments with other League Directors.
5. Field Set-up -- The League Director will coordinate the weekly set-up of the game field to which his league is assigned. Such set-up will normally include the following:

- a. Putting up and taking down U-6/U-8 goals
- b. Placing corner flags
- c. Ensuring game balls and referee flags are available
- d. Returning the flags and balls to equipment box after last game
- e. Locking the equipment box at the end of the last game
- f. Scheduling parent volunteers for concession stand duty

Coaches of the first and last game of the day are responsible to assist in this effort.

6. Disciplinary Problems -- The League Director will provide a report to the Soccer Commissioner of any dispute, game protest or game forfeiture that occurs within his/her league. Such report should be communicated (verbally or in writing) as soon as possible after the incident or dispute arises in order that the problem can be resolved as quickly as possible. Disciplinary problems involving a referee action which occurs during or after games will normally be reported by the game official to the Referee Coordinator. The League Director will be advised promptly of any disciplinary problem that has occurred within his/her league, however, all such matters will be adjudicated by the Disciplinary Committee, consisting of the Referee Coordinator, the League Director of the age group involved, the Soccer Commissioner and the Assistant Commissioner, if any.

### Referee Coordinator

The Soccer Commissioner will appoint one or more individuals on an annual basis to act as Referee Coordinators and whose duties will include:

1. Maintaining a list of certified referees to officiate the games and scheduling referees on a week-to-week basis for Saturday's games.
2. Ensuring that the performance of referees and linesmen measure up to acceptable standards. This may require periodic evaluations either directly or with the aid of game reports from coaches.
3. Providing guidance and assistance to referees to ensure they are fully aware of their responsibilities in terms of game control and the rules of the league in which they officiate. Instruction on the need for swift action to silence dissent from coaches, spectators or players is critical to this function.
4. Review referee reports of any and all game misconduct, whether or not a yellow or red card is involved; determine whether the Disciplinary Committee review is necessary and assist in determining the appropriate remedy.

## Disciplinary Committee

- The Disciplinary Committee will consist of 3 or 4 members of the USCAA Fall Soccer Program – with the Soccer Commissioner as Chairman, the Assistant Commissioner, if any, as Vice Chairman, the Referee Coordinator and the League Director for the age group involved in the disciplinary problem.
- The Committee will resolve any incident relating to player, coach, fan or team misconduct either before, during or after a game. Any abuse of officials, including protracted and continuing dissent of officials, by any participant in the Soccer program will also be reviewed by the Committee. Incidents involving playing time disputes, game protests, game forfeitures, or league standings will normally be handled by the League Director and only referred to the Disciplinary Committee if unsportsmanlike behavior is exhibited.
- The Disciplinary Committee will determine the appropriate action to be taken against any participant who exhibits unsportsmanlike behavior or whose conduct is detrimental to the purpose and objectives of the USCAA Soccer Program. Such action could include suspension or ejection from the program, and recommendation of further disciplinary action by the Board.

## Rules and Regulations

The USCAA Soccer Rules and Regulations which incorporate specific rules tailored to each age group, will govern all play in the USCAA Fall Soccer Program. Should a problem arise that is not covered by the USCAA Soccer Rules and Regulations, the ruling will be in accordance with the United States Soccer Federation (USSF) and Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). These rules in no way circumvent the Laws of the Game.

### 1. Coaches/Assistant Coaches

- a. All coaches and assistant coaches are subject to the Laws of the Game, to the USCAA Soccer Rules and Regulations and the USCAA Code of Conduct, and must abide by them. Coaches are responsible for adherence to the minimum playing time rules and should be able to demonstrate that all players have played a minimum of one half a game. Violations in this area will be handled by the League Director and referred to the Disciplinary Committee if necessary.

- b. A coach is permitted to coach from the touch line during the game. Coaches and assistant coaches must stay within 20 yards of the midfield line.
- c. A team may have as many assistant coaches as it wishes. However, at the start of a game, a team may declare only two coaches/assistant coaches that may be a part of the bench for that game. These two individuals are the only persons allowed to coach from the touch line. Coaches should advise their spectators that no coaching is permitted by anyone other than these two individuals.
- d. The coach is responsible for the behavior of his assistant coach, players and spectators. Dissent of referee actions or inactions is not permitted by anyone. A referee has the right to eject a coach from the game and he will serve the same suspensions as an ejected player. A coach who exhibits unsportsmanlike behavior in the opinion of the game officials, or who receives a yellow or red card, will be the subject of Disciplinary Committee review.
- e. Coaches who encounter unruly spectators or parents are expected to attempt to defuse the situation. The referee has the right to eject a coach for the unsportsmanlike behavior of the team's spectators.
- f. Coaches or spectators are not allowed to enter the field of play without the referee's permission. A game will be stopped by the referee in the event of a serious injury in order for the injured player to be assisted.

## 2. Protest Procedures

- a. Protest of any referee action or inaction involving a game situation will not be considered for the purpose of changing the outcome of a game.
- b. A protest of a referee's judgment relating to the continuance of a game due to dangerous conditions, e.g., lightning, will be reviewed and should be reported promptly to the Referee Coordinator or Soccer Commissioner.
- c. Reports on the performance of referees are welcome and should be submitted in writing to the Referee Coordinator. Such reports should indicate the league, game date and time, the areas in which the official was either proficient or deficient.

- d. A protest must be registered immediately with the referee and opposing coach. The game must be continued unless the safety of the players is in doubt. A formal written protest should be submitted to the League Director within 48 hours after the game. Under no circumstances should a team decline to play or leave the field before the completion of the game due to a disagreement over the rules.

### 3. Players

- a. Only registered players will be permitted to play and they must play on the team to which they are assigned.
- b. Players must wear matching team shirts which must be worn outside of sweatshirts or jackets. Sweatpants are allowed for goalies and should only be worn by field players in case of cold weather. No jeans or similar pants with zippers, belts, belt loops or buckles should be worn.
- c. No jewelry of any kind should be worn. This includes watches, bracelets, rings, necklaces, earrings, metal or plastic barrettes or any item that might cause injury to that player or other players.
- d. A player cannot play in a game with a cast of any kind, regardless of whether or not it is padded. Due to the wide range of finger splints that are in use, a player must obtain prior approval from the League Director in order to be allowed to play with a finger splint. A signed note from the Director must be presented to the referee prior to the start of the game.
- e. Players must wear shin guards during all practices and games.

### 4. Misconduct

This applies to players, coaches and assistant coaches before, during or after a game. Coaches are responsible for the actions of their spectators.

- a. Yellow card -- Any player or coach receiving 3 yellow cards in one season will be subject to review by the Disciplinary Committee.
- b. One red card -- A player or coach receiving a red card is automatically ejected from the game. A coach must vacate the premises completely in the event a red card is received by him/her. The player or coach receiving a red card will serve a one game suspension.



- c. Two red cards -- A player or coach receiving two red cards will be suspended indefinitely from the Soccer Program. The player or coach must appear before the Disciplinary Committee before reinstatement in the league.

## 5. Referee Section

- a. Every effort will be made to use certified United States Soccer Federation referees who hold current referee registration cards.
- b. The majority of the referees are township boys and girls who are experienced soccer players but who have limited experience as referees. Every effort will be made to ensure that these referees are not subjected to abuse or unsportsmanlike conduct by coaches, players and spectators.
- c. The referees report to the Referee Coordinator(s) of the Soccer Program. The referees are an independent organization under the direction and supervision of the Referee Coordinator(s) and coaches or League Directors have no authority over the referees.
- d. The referee is in charge of the game from the time he appears at the field until the time he departs the premises. Once a game has started, the referee will determine whether play should continue or be suspended for any reason including weather, fan interference, dangerous conditions, etc.
- e. If play is stopped by the referee due to severe inclement weather, the game will be considered complete if the second half kick-off has occurred. Stoppage of play for inclement weather prior to the second half kick-off will require the game to be replayed. No one is required to play or continue a game during which lightning is visible, no matter how distant it may occur. Referees will be instructed to halt play as soon as lightning is observed.
- f. Every effort will be made to utilize a 3 man referee system in the Under 12, Under 14 and Under 16 age groups. For 8 man soccer games that are played in the Under 10 league, a 2 man system will be used. The Under 8 league may use a one man system consisting of a referee who is an experienced soccer player or, if necessary, a volunteer.
- g. The Under 6 league will use a combination practice/game format and will not use referees during the game portion. The U-6 coaches will provide the necessary oversight during game play.

- h. A fee schedule for referee and linesmen will be established by the Soccer Commissioner at the beginning of each season.
- i. Referees will report any incidents of fouls which result in yellow or red card violations to the Referee Coordinator(s). Any unruly coaches or spectators who are encountered before, during or after a game should also be reported.

6. General Matters

- a. The USCAA “Code of Conduct” and the USCAA “Program Reminders for Parents” apply to this Program.
- b. All players and coaches will line up at mid-field at the end of each game and shake hands with the other team’s players and coaches.
- c. The consumption of alcoholic beverages by anyone at any practice or game is strictly prohibited. Any coach or assistant violating this rule will be sanctioned.
- d. By township ordinance, and for safety and hygiene, pets are not permitted at the fields.
- e. A League Director shall not direct a league in which his/her child is a player.
- f. A member of a Disciplinary Committee shall be disqualified in any matter where the failure to do so would create a conflict of interest or appearance of bias.