

St. Croix Valley Athletic Association Soccer Coach's Reference Guidelines (All levels)

The objectives of the SCVAA Soccer League are:

- Encourage youth and adults to participate in the sport of soccer.
- Teach youth the fundamentals of soccer.
- Learn how to win and lose in a sporting manner.
- Have fun. Enjoyment of participating in a sport is the key ingredient for everyone.
- Demonstrate and educate youth on appropriate conduct within a recreational league.

Parental support is strongly encouraged. Parents are requested to give the program their total support. The league asserts that the conduct of the parents is the coach's responsibility. Any abusive language or harassment by spectators or coaches will not be condoned. The person or persons responsible will be asked to leave the premises. If they refuse, the match will be forfeited. **Remember, the best and worst educator is the example set by coaches and parents.**

The following guidelines and rules were established in pursuit of the St. Croix Valley Athletic Association Soccer League (henceforth referred to as SCVAA Soccer) objectives.

I. Sportsmanship

- A. All coaches, referees and parents are encouraged to be examples of good sportsmanship.
- B. Coaches shall be responsible for the actions of parents and players.
- C. Poor sportsmanship shall be determined by the referee. For example, use of foul language constitutes poor sportsmanship and, after one warning, is cause for ejection.
- D. In the case of a player being ejected from a match because of poor sportsmanship, his/her team shall play the remainder of the game with one less player and the ejection will be reported to the league coordinator.
- E. Spectators will remain 1 yard off the field and behind the touchline (sidelines). Spectators are not allowed behind the goal lines **or on the sideline with the team benches.**
- F. Coaches must stay on their sideline. They are not allowed behind the goal line.
- G. Fellowship is expected. Opposing teams, including coaches, shall line up at center field for handshakes after each match.
- H. Disciplinary Guideline

1. Players and coaches can be suspended for actions detrimental to the participants and program. Players can also be suspended for parent(s) actions.
2. Individual commissions can act on all discipline issues and take whatever disciplinary action deemed necessary for the integrity of the program
3. It is recommended that the Executive Board be notified promptly in writing of any disciplinary action within an individual commission before any action is taken.
4. The Executive Board of the St. Croix Valley Athletic Association will review all disciplinary procedures/actions of an individual commission before the individual commission proceeds with its disciplinary action.
5. All parties involved have the right to appeal the decision of the individual commission or Executive Board within 30 days upon receipt of a certified letter from the St. Croix Valley Athletic Association.
6. The appeal must be in writing and directed to the President of the St. Croix Valley Athletic Association or the Commissioner of the individual commission involved.

II. Eligibility

- A. All participants must meet the grade requirements described in Section IX.
- B. All participants must have paid their registration fee and must have had a parent or guardian sign the "Waiver of Injury" form.
- C. No one shall be denied the opportunity to play because of lack of ability. There will be no tryouts.
- D. Team selection shall be via selection protocol developed by the Soccer Commission.
- E. Team rosters will be provided to the coaches prior to (or at) the coaches meeting.

III. Registration Fee

- A. Registration fees for each division shall be determined by the Soccer Commission and shall be based on the costs, which includes: shirts, whistles, nets, balls, field maintenance, etc.
- B. A late fee shall be paid for any late registrations.

IV. Participation

- A. Coaches must notify all players on their roster of practices, games, etc.
- B. No child will play 4 quarters until all players have played 3 quarters. Coaches must try to even out playing time in a game.

V. Schedules

- A. The SCVAA Soccer Commission shall determine the final schedule. The tentative schedule calls for clinic, practices, and matches to be held in August, September, and October.
- B. Schedules of each team, with match dates, times, and field locations, will be distributed to the coaches at the coaches meeting in August.
- C. Practices are to be scheduled by coaches. Field signup for practices will occur at the coaches meeting in August.
- D. Information on special events (picture night, training sessions, etc.) will be announced / distributed to the coaches throughout the season as necessary.

VI. Rain Policy

- A. Coaches of the two teams scheduled to play shall decide whether or not to play the match. The safety of the players should be the prime consideration. Factors to consider include:
 - 1. Threat of lightning or dangerous storm.
 - 2. Condition of the playing field (mud, standing water, snow, etc). c. Heavy rain.
- B. The decision not to play may be agreed upon by both coaches 1.5 hours prior to the scheduled starting time.
- C. If the coaches do not agree to postpone the game 1.5 hours before game time, both teams are expected to show up for the match. Coaches on the field at the scheduled start time may agree to postpone the game. This decision should be based on the conditions on the field at the scheduled starting time.
- D. Postponed matches shall be rescheduled by mutual consent of the coaches. Date, time, and field signup are the responsibilities of the coaches.

VII. Referees' Responsibilities

- A. The referees shall be instructive and control the safe flow of the game. All calls shall be explained to the players.
- B. Coaches perform the role of referee in Leagues K, 1/2 and 3/4. Referees will be furnished for all 5/6, 7/8, and 9-12 division games. In case a referee does not show, a coach from each team should function as a referee.
- C. The referee shall keep time. The referees must blow the whistle to indicate the end of each quarter/half, and any other stoppage of play.
- D. The referee's decisions are final. A difference of opinion on calls should only be discussed at stoppages in play, not to interfere with the game.
- E. Opposing coaches and the referee(s) are required to meet before the match begins.

VIII. Coaches' Responsibilities

- A. Serve as instructor and teacher.
- B. Exhibit good sportsmanship.
- C. Inform team members regarding schedule changes.
- D. Explain the rules to youth and parents.
- E. Officiate their team's matches (Leagues K, 1/2, 3/4).

IX. Grade Leagues

- A. Six SCVAA Soccer leagues are defined by the grade or grade equivalency of the participant as of September 1 of the soccer season.

League K	<i>Kindergarten</i>	Mixed Boys & Girls Teams
League 1/2	<i>1st and 2nd Grades</i>	Separate Boys & Girls Teams
League 3/4	<i>3rd and 4th Grades</i>	Separate Boys & Girls Teams
League 5/6	<i>5th and 6th Grades</i>	Separate Boys & Girls Teams
League 7-8	<i>7th and 8th Grades</i>	Separate Boys & Girls Teams
League 9-12	<i>9th through 12 Grades</i>	Mixed Boys & Girls Teams

- B. No youth may play in a league below their grade level. Exceptions to the league assignments are based on the best interests of the child and the league. Any exceptions must be approved by the League Coordinators.

X. Miscellaneous Reminders

- A. For safety on the field, players should not wear or carry jewelry, watches, phones, or baseball caps while competing.
- B. All players must wear their SCVAA jersey to compete. When the weather is cold, the jersey should be worn on top of a sweatshirt or coat if needed.
- C. The ball must completely cross a line to be out of bounds or to be in the goal.
- D. Review FIFA rules (<https://www.usyouthsoccer.org/referees/rules-of-the-game/>) and the SCVAA documents detailing exceptions for each league.

League K Division Summary

I. Coaches' Responsibilities

- A. Serving as instructor and teacher
- B. Exhibiting good sportsmanship
- C. Informing team members regarding schedule changes
- D. Explaining the rules to youth and parents
- E. Ensuring equal playing opportunity for all players regardless of skill level
- F. Officiating their team's matches

II. Player Equipment

- A. Each player is required to wear shin guards.
- B. Size 3 soccer ball; recommended
- C. Team jersey provided by VAA
- D. Molded cleats or sneakers. Metal cleats are forbidden.

III. Team Equipment

- A. Equipment bag with two size 3 soccer balls and a dozen cones/discs
- B. Set of 10 team jerseys
- C. One 6' Pugg pop-up goal

IV. Skill Development Goals

- A. Individual soccer skills - dribbling
- B. Spatial awareness - dribbling in traffic
- C. Role of offense (score goals) vs. defense (protect from goals)

V. Division Format

- A. Small sided field created with cones for lines and pop-up goals
- B. First 30 minutes are practice, last 30 minutes are scrimmage against another team
- C. Coaches will rotate players through the various positions during each game. At this
- D. age, players are not encouraged to specialize in any particular position.
- E. Use 1/4 of field for practice with cones to create small sided (20' x 40') practice area
- F. Use 1/2 of field for scrimmage with each team providing one 4'x6' pop-up goal
- G. Scrimmage should be 6 players from each team (3 offense and 3 defense) with substitutions every 5 minutes; short 1 minute water breaks as necessary (every 5 minutes if desired)
- H. Both team's coaches should actively coach from the field and keep ball in play
- I. No throw-ins, offsides, goal/corner kicks, or penalty kicks
- J. If a ball goes out of bounds, return it to play without stopping play
- K. If player uses their hands, remind them (gently!) and keep play going
- L. Except as noted above, the rules set forth by FIFA are followed. Please familiarize yourself with the rules of the game.

VI. Goals and Advice

- A. As this is most players' first year of organized play, the goal is just to teach some basics, like *soccer is a game for the feet*. The exception of hands use for goalies and throw-ins just complicates things, so we don't introduce them yet. Feet only!
- B. If a player accidentally or intentionally touches the ball with their hands, just call it out, "*No Hands! Keep playing!*" Do not stop play or try to explain penalty kicks.
- C. At this age, coordination is still limited, so you will have some pushing, tripping, etc. As long as it is unintentional, just stop play so that players can get up and make sure everyone is okay. Remind players that **soccer is a non-contact sport** and that pushing is not allowed.
- D. Enforce sportsmanship. I have encountered very competitive kids at this young age who get upset because of a perceived rule violation. If a player continues to behave a certain way after multiple warnings or even one major infraction (like fighting or using inappropriate language), have them sit and have a discussion with their parents after the session.
- E. Focus your energy on the players that want to learn and have an assistant or another parent watch over those that are not interested or not listening. If a player continues to be disengaged, have a talk with their parents and ask them to participate in practice to ensure their child is supervised. Remind them you are a volunteer coach, not a babysitter.
- F. Assign players a role as either offense (score goals) or defense (protect our goal), but not more specific than that. Avoid having a goalkeeper! You will have one or more kids who insist on being the goalkeeper. If you need to, tell them you are the goalkeeper and they need to go out and play.
- G. Remind them to pass and spread out, but realize they will ignore this advice!