

## West Liberty Soccer Association General Rules

1. Except as noted herein, all age groups and all divisions will play under the standard rules currently adopted by the American Youth Soccer Organization, and in accordance with the Guidelines adopted by the West Liberty Soccer Association.
2. All players must wear shin guards, covered completely by their socks, during all practices and games. Shorts or sweatpants may be worn, but no non-athletic trousers will be permitted. Long sleeve shirts may be worn, but they must be under the game jersey. Shoes must be molded soccer cleats or sneakers—football and/or baseball cleats are not permitted. No earrings, jewelry, watches, metal hairpins, etc., may be worn, although Medical ID bracelets or necklaces may be worn. Such items must be padded and taped so as not to present a hazard to any participant.
3. In all instances, the “home” team shall be the first team listed in the schedule of games. The “visitors” shall have the choice of kicking off or defending a specific end of the field during the first half.
4. The game clock will start as scheduled, regardless of the preparedness of the teams scheduled to play and/or the presence of a referee, and will run continuously, even through injuries. Games are over when the schedule says they are over, regardless of how much time has been played. The schedule will not be delayed. If no referee is present, the Home team coach shall officiate the match.
5. On occasion, field conditions or weather may dictate that the League suspend play. This will be done as early as practical, to avoid unnecessary travel.
6. Visible lightning or audible thunder observable from the area of the game field requires that any game in progress be suspended, and that any game pending be delayed, until 30 minutes after the last observance of lightning and/or thunder, no matter how remote from the area of the fields. If this delay takes the game past its scheduled termination, the game will be considered to have been completed. If a game is delayed from starting as a result of lightning in the area, it may not start if less than a full “half” can be played in the time remaining before scheduled completion.
7. The postponement of games for other reasons will be solely at the discretion of the two coaches involved in the game; re-scheduling of such games is the responsibility of the two coaches. Coaches must notify the West Liberty Soccer Association President of rescheduled games in order to avoid conflicts with other teams and to arrange for a referee if necessary.



8. A parent or designated adult of each child is expected to remain at the field during games and practice sessions. In the event of an injury or sudden change in weather conditions, children deserve the reassurance and protection of a trusted adult. Coaches have volunteered to teach the game of soccer, not to serve as guardians for unattended players. Unattended children will be referred to the West Liberty Police Dept.

9. Spectators may observe the game only from the sideline away from the team benches. Spectators will not be permitted on either goal line or along the touchline occupied by the competing teams. There shall be no horn-honking or excessive noise-making.

10. Coaching must be done only from the team bench area, which is designated as that area from the midfield line to a line ten yards closer to the goal line, in front of their "bench" area. Coaches are not permitted behind the goal area. Coaches who are on the field as referees may make corrections to players in regards to rules violations ONLY, and not in regards to tactics or technical execution. Assistant Referees may not coach while attending to those duties. (Exception- See U7 age specific rules)

11. No profanity or tobacco use will be permitted by players, coaches, or spectators. Violations of this rule will not be tolerated; violators will be immediately ejected and instructed to leave the game area. Participants in the game who are related to the ejected individual[s] will be required to leave, also. Failure to comply will result in the game's termination.

12. Abuse or ridicule of the game officials or coaches or players will also not be tolerated, with the same penalties applied as stated in Rule 11.

13. Occasionally players request to play in another age group due to experience level, physical size, and other factors. This will generally be permitted provided: the player does not unbalance the team, the player would not intimidate other players at that age group, and the player agrees to move to the correct age group at the discretion of the association.

14. The West Liberty Soccer Association may amend these rules at any time as needed.

### *U5 Division (4 Year olds)*

1. Games will be divided into four 5-minute periods, with 3 minutes rest between periods including halftime.
2. Game fields will be roughly 30 feet wide by 50 feet long. The goal size is approximately 3 feet across.
3. Ball Size shall be 3.
4. The number of players on the field from each team shall be three (3). All players on a team should play in the same number of periods (if possible). Goalkeepers are not used.
5. Coaches will share refereeing responsibilities, calling fouls and indicating possession when the ball is on their half of the field. Coaches are permitted to help direct their players on the field to promote learning.
6. The offside rule shall not be enforced. However, teams should not “cherry pick”, and players should be taught to “get back on defense” rather than to wait for the ball to be played forward to them.
7. Players will not use their hands at anytime in this age group (i.e. no throw-ins). When the ball goes out of bounds, the ball will be placed behind the line and the opposing team shall pass the ball back into play to one of their teammates. Alternatively, the coaches may place the ball back into play.
8. Players need to be taught which serious breaches of other rules should be whistled as fouls — remember, the kids at this age are still learning to be coordinated in their running, nevermind dribbling a soccer ball. Coaches must teach that tripping, uncontrolled charging into another player, intentional handling of the ball, unsporting conduct, and dangerous plays are not permitted.
9. No free kicks will be allowed at this age. No penalty kicks shall be awarded.
10. The goal for this age group is to develop ball handling and dribbling. In addition, the kids should learn the boundaries of the field. Ultimately the primary goal of this age group is for the kids to have fun.
11. Sportsmanship is of the utmost importance. Teams should play fairly in all instances, and Coaches should see to it that players shake hands and congratulate each other after the game. Cheering by spectators should always be positive and encouraging.

### *U7 Division (5 & 6 year olds)*

1. Games will be divided into four 5-minute periods, with 3 minutes rest between periods including halftime.
2. Game fields will be roughly 20 yards wide by 30 yards long. Goals are approximately 4 feet wide.
3. Ball Size shall be 3.
4. The number of players on the field from each team shall be four. All players on a team should play in **the same number of periods (if possible). There are no goalkeepers and defensive players should not be in the goal box unless the ball has been played into the goal box area.**
5. Coaches will share refereeing responsibilities, calling fouls and indicating possession when the ball is on their half of the field. One coach from each team is permitted to be on the field to help direct their players to promote learning.
6. The offside rule shall not be enforced. However, teams should not “cherry pick”, and players should be taught to “get back on defense” rather than to wait for the ball to be played forward to them.
7. Players will not use their hands at anytime in this age group (i.e. no throw-ins). When one team kicks the ball out of bounds across a sideline, the ball will be placed behind the sideline and the opposing team shall pass (kick) the ball back into play to one of their teammates.
8. Corner Kicks and Goal Kicks: When the defending team kicks the ball out over the end line, the offensive team may kick the ball in from the corner nearest their goal. When the offensive team kicks the ball out over the end line near their goal, the other team takes a goal kick. The ball will be kicked from the front edge of the goal box.
9. Only serious breaches of other rules should be whistled as fouls—remember, the kids at this age are still learning to be coordinated in their running, never mind dribbling a soccer ball. Only flagrant tripping, uncontrolled charging into another player, intentional handling of the ball, unsporting conduct, and dangerous plays should be penalized.
10. All free kicks will be indirect. No penalty kicks shall be awarded, although the foul which would ordinarily result in a penalty kick should be whistled, and the indirect free kick rule applied.
11. On free kicks, five yards must be yielded by the defense, unless they are not that far from the goal, in which case they may stand on the goal line.
12. Slide tackling is not permitted at this level.
13. Sportsmanship is of the utmost importance (including score sportsmanship-no game should have a goal differential more than 3, if at all possible). Teams should play fairly in all instances, and Coaches should see to it that players shake hands and congratulate each other after the game. Cheering by spectators should always be positive and encouraging, not discouraging.

### *U9 Division (7 & 8 year olds)*

1. Games will be divided into four 8-minute periods, with 3 minutes rest between quarters and at the half.
2. Game fields will be roughly 30 yards wide by 50 yards long.
3. Ball Size shall be 4.
4. The number of players on the field from each team shall be seven. All players on a team should play in the same number of periods.
5. If no referee is available, Coaches will share refereeing responsibilities, each taking responsibility for one half of the game. Except for the Coach who is refereeing, no other Coaches or adults shall be on the field of play.
6. The offside rule shall generally not be enforced. Players should first be warned. If offside conduct continues, the rule should be enforced as needed. Teams should not “cherry pick”, and players should be taught both to “get back on defense” and to “press the attack” by advancing to whatever part of the field is necessary to control the ball.
7. On throw-ins, a player should be given a second opportunity to perform correctly if they make an error, but if they fail to throw the ball in legally on the second attempt, the ball should be turned over to the opposing team.
8. Only serious breaches of the rules should be whistled; flagrant tripping, uncontrolled charging into another player, intentional handling of the ball, unsporting conduct, and dangerous plays should be penalized. However, Referees and Coaches should use the stoppage of play to instruct all the players, not just the offender, about the infraction.
9. Slide tackling is not permitted
10. All free kicks will be indirect No penalty kicks shall be awarded, although the foul which would ordinarily result in a penalty kick should be whistled, and the indirect free kick rule applied.
11. On free kicks, five yards must be yielded by the defense, unless they are not that far from the goal, in which case they may stand on the goal line.
12. Sportsmanship is of the utmost importance. Teams should play fairly in all instances, and Coaches should see to it that players shake hands and congratulate each other after the game. Cheering by spectators should always be positive and encouraging, not discouraging. Coaches are specifically requested to ensure that a game does not get too lopsided, by putting players into unfamiliar positions or by requiring the team to pass the ball several times before permitting them to shoot. A six-plus margin of victory is discouraged and coaches should take appropriate actions to prevent this (e.g. 5 passes before shooting, play a player down, shift weaker players to offensive positions, etc.)

### *U11 Division (9 & 10 year olds)*

1. Games will be divided into two 25 minute halves with a 5 minute rest at the half.
  2. Game fields will be roughly 45 yards wide and 80 yards long.
  3. Ball size shall be 4.
  4. The standard number of players on the field from each team shall be nine, including a goalkeeper. All players should receive equal playing time, meaning that each player should play in the same number of periods, and the goalkeeper should be rotated after every period. Substituting may be done during any stoppage of play which results in your team's possession, except for free kicks resulting from fouls.
  5. Responsibility as goalkeeper should be rotated at halftime. Some kids will prefer to play as the goalkeeper, and to "mind the nets" more often. This is permitted, as long as the child is not being relegated to the back to hide a real or imagined weakness as a field player, and as long as his or her monopoly doesn't prevent someone else who is interested from having a turn in the goal.
  6. Referees are assigned by the West Liberty Soccer Association and may either be youths or adults. Sideline officials shall be supplied by each team, and must be at least 12 years old. Sideline officials shall make possession calls only on out of bounds balls. All rules will be enforced. If no Referee is assigned, the home team Coach will referee the game. Except for the Coach who is refereeing, no other Coaches or adults shall be on the field of play. Sideline Referee volunteers are permitted to cheer for their child's team, but they are specifically prohibited from instructing or coaching. All coaching must be done from within the team bench area, and the home team Coach who is acting as the game official may not instruct his/her team from her/his position on the field of play.
  7. Slide tackling is not permitted.
  8. The offsides rule will be enforced. When a team attempts to play a ball from an offsides position, the opposing team will be awarded a free kick from the spot where the offsides occurred. \*\*The offsides rule is a difficult one to judge and is widely misunderstood by many spectators. Do your best to instruct your players how to avoid being offsides and help them understand that it is a subjective call by the official (like fouls.)
  8. On free kicks, a minimum of eight yards must be yielded by the defense, unless they are not that far from the goal, in which case they may stand on the goal line. Free kicks are awarded when a team "handles" the ball, is offsides, or commits a foul.
  9. Fouls should be penalized with a "direct" free kick. If the foul occurs within the penalty area (18 yard line), it should be penalized with a "penalty kick", from the line or spot marked in the penalty area for this purpose (10 yards).
- Examples of fouls from 2012-2013 NFHS Soccer Rules: A player shall not kick, attempt to kick, strike, attempt to strike, spit at or jump at an opponent. A player shall not trip, or attempt to trip, an opponent. This includes tripping or attempting to trip an opponent in such a manner as to cause a fall or loss of balance. A goalkeeper shall not strike or attempt to strike an opponent by throwing or kicking the ball at an opponent or by pushing an opponent with the ball while holding it. A player shall not hold or push an opponent with the hand(s) or arm(s) extended from the body.
10. A player shall not participate in dangerous play, which is an act an official considers likely to cause injury to any player (self, teammate, or opponent). Example: a high kick near the head of another player.

11. We will attempt to assign licensed referees when possible to the U11 field and will be reintroducing the use of Yellow and Red cards for misconduct. It is important that players learn from an early age what is appropriate/inappropriate conduct on or around the field. The following are situations warranting a card (but subject to referee's interpretation):

Yellow card (caution) a. entering/leaving field of play without permission of official b. persistent infringement of any of the rules of the game c. objecting by word of mouth or action to any decision given by the official (dissent) d. any incidental use of vulgar or profane language e. unsporting conduct (unnecessary delay, holding an opponent's uniform, deliberate verbal tactics, encroachment on a free kick, deliberate handball to stop an attack

Red card (ejection) a. exhibiting violent conduct b. taunting – use of word or act to incite or degrade an opposing player, coach, referee, or individual c. committing serious foul play – using disproportionate and unnecessary force against an opponent d. a second yellow card in the same game e. spitting at an opponent, teammate or game official f. using insulting, offensive or abusive language/gestures

Consequences of a card:

Player Yellow Card

Must leave field until next legal substitution opportunity

May be substituted for

Remains in team area

Red Card

Must leave field

May not return to field

May not be substituted (team must play a man down)

Restricted to bench

Coach Red Card

Must leave the vicinity of playing area

If no parent / assistant available to assume coaching responsibility, game will end

11. Sportsmanship is of the utmost importance. Teams should play fairly in all instances, and Coaches should see to it that players shake hands and congratulate each other after the game. Cheering by spectators should always be positive and encouraging, not discouraging. Coaches are specifically requested to ensure that a game does not get too lopsided, by restricting the conditions under which the players may score, such requiring them to pass and shoot with only their non-dominant foot or by rotating players to unfamiliar positions. A four goal victory in soccer is quite substantial. A six-plus margin of victory is discouraged and coaches should take appropriate actions to prevent this (e.g. 5 passes before shooting, play a player down, shift weaker players to offensive positions, etc.) The only exception would be in tournament play, where goal differential may be used as a tiebreaker (with a maximum of +3 goals counted).