



YOUTH SOCCER 2020 HANDBOOK



WEATHER CANCELLATIONS: Call our Play Line for weather cancellations or latest information- 804 693-5811

QUESTIONS OR FEEDBACK. If you have questions or would like to provide feedback on the program contact Ron Alston at ralston@gloucesterva.info or 804-693-1262



PARENTS:

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **Question:** My child has never played before. Will they be ok?
Answer: GPRT Youth Soccer Leagues are for all levels of talent and experience. Beginning players are always welcome and encouraged.
2. **Question:** Can I request to be on a certain team? What about carpool request
Answer: No. Players cannot request teams and coaches may not request certain players. Priority is given to creating a fair system which tries to balance talent out among the teams. All roster assignments are done by the GPRT Athletic Supervisor. Carpool request are considered, but only ONE carpool request per registrant. Although we like to make things easier on the parents, requests are not guaranteed to be honored.
3. **Question:** Does my child need cleats and shin guards?
Answer: Yes, all soccer participants must have cleats, shin guards, and should also have an age appropriately sized ball for practices. Cleats and shin guards keep your child safe during play. GPRT does have a cleat swap program if you are in need of assistance for cleats for your child. Check with us at the office to inquire about cleats!
4. **Question:** When and where are practices?
Answer: GPRT soccer practices occur Monday-Thursday evening. Although, your team will practice only 2 times per week out of those days. Usually Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday. Practice times are dictated by the coaches but will not happen earlier than 5pm. Practices are spread between Abingdon Park, Ark park, Peasley Fields and Bethel Fields.
5. **Question:** Will my child receive a trophy?
Answer: GPRT currently does not provide trophies or medals for participation. Although during a sponsored tournament or event, these may be provided. It is the coaches discretion if they would like to provide trophies for their team, although participation in a sports, making friends and developing skills is a great trophy within itself!

YOUTH SOCCER LEAGUE RULES

- I. **Teams will switch ends every period (This does not apply to the 5y League)**
- II. **Shin Guards-** All Players must wear shin guards
- III. **JEWELRY (INCLUDING EAR RINGS) –** With the exception of medical or religious jewelry, players may not wear any jewelry. This includes ear rings. This is a safety issue
- IV. **Spectators-** All spectators must sit on the sideline opposite the players. Spectators may not be along the end line, near the goal, or near the player benches.
- V. **CLOCK –** Games will use a running clock. Clock will begin at scheduled kick off time.
- VI. **No player may play goalie for more than 1 quarter in any game or ½ in a game played in halves. It is suggested that teams give all kids that want to and can safely play the position a chance in goal.**
- VII. **Please never harass the VOLUNTEER officials. If you have constructive criticism to offer that will help them as new officials become more efficient offer the advice at a proper time in a proper way. The advice should have nothing to do with whether a call was for or against your team.**
- VIII. **Any rules not covered by Parks and Recreation will be covered by Virginia High School Rules.**



	5y Rugrats	6-8y Looney Toons	9-11y Juniors	12-14y Seniors
Ball Size	4	4	4	5
Players on Field	6 (No Goalie)	8	9	11
Game Time	8 minute quarters	10 minute quarters	12 min quarters	25 min halves
Field Size	60x90	120x186	180x300	180x300
Goal Size	4x6	7x12	8x24	8x24
Coach Permitted on field?	<p>Yes. One coach from each team is permitted on the field during play during the first 2 games!</p> <p>The coach must do everything possible to stay away from the play and may not touch any player or the ball. An infraction will result in an indirect kick.</p>	No. Standard Rules Apply		
Heading the ball	No	No	No	No
Offsides Called?	No	No	Yes. Standard Rules Apply	
Throw ins/Goal Kicks/Corner Kicks	<p>All re-entry plays from out of bounds will be performed by throw in, in this age group.</p> <p>The opposing players must retreat beyond the center line on goal kicks</p>	<p>Standard Rules Apply.</p> <p>In order to teach proper skills, a retry can be given on throw ins, but should not delay the game..</p>	Standard Rules Apply	
Substitutions (remember equal play time!)	Substitute mainly during quarter breaks and if necessary, on stoppages where the ball leaves play.			



PARENTS CONTINUED..

Volunteer Coaches.

Volunteer Coaches are the greatest asset we have in the community. All coaches in the youth leagues for Gloucester County Parks Recreation and Tourism are volunteer coaches. They do not get paid. They are making a commitment to help out the youth of the community because they want to give back. Please help them out in any way you can. All coaches attend our coaches meeting and submit to a background check.

Cheering and Jeering.

Parents are encouraged to cheer for their child, their team, or any player making a good play. Critical comments such as "I can't believe he made another error," "That kid is terrible," or even things like "you need to be tougher" are not in the spirit of a recreational youth program. Even adults have difficulty separating well-meant criticism from personal attacks. Parents should not be making critical comments about the other team. This includes cheering because a particular player was called for a foul or ejected, etc. Please be respectful and courteous. Every child is important. If comments made by parents are seen to be harmful or unsportsmanlike, coaches are the first line of defense to help keep things in perspective. If it becomes excessive, a member from the parks and recreation staff will communicate and possibly ask the parent to leave the premises.



HOW TO BE AN ALL STAR SPORTS PARENT

Make your child proud of you. Here are some great tips on being a sports parent.

Don't impose your ambitions on your child. Improvement and progress occur at different rates for different individuals. Don't judge your child's progress based on the performance of others, and don't push based on what you think they should be doing.

Don't create public scenes. If you have a problem with someone there are better ways to address it: talk to the coach privately, email the athletic supervisor, etc. Even if you're in the right, creating a public display undermines the coach or official and makes your child feel embarrassed of you.

Acknowledge your child's fears. Any game or big event is stressful. It's natural for a child to be anxious. Assure your child that you, the coach, and their teammates are all pulling for your child's success.

Do not criticize the officials. It gains nothing. It only distracts from the game and puts the focus on you instead of on the players where it should be.

Remember that there are goals besides winning. An honest effort, regardless of the outcome, is much more important than winning. Sometimes the road to player development and confidence is paved with small steps. At this level development and fun are more important than trophies.

Respect the coaches, even when you disagree. Coaches have a hard job. They are trying to develop players of varying talent levels, plan practices, encourage players, promote fun, teach, deal with parents' expectations, communicate to everyone, and yes—win games. And they do all of this because they want to help others, not because they're getting paid.

Not every player will play professionally. Statistically the odds are actually better of getting struck by lightning. Encourage your child to dream big, to be focused, to be proud of their accomplishments but don't push your child so hard you don't leave room for them to have fun.

Best thing to say to your child before the game. "Have fun." "Play hard." "I love you."

Best thing to say to your child after the game. "Did you have fun?" "I'm proud of you." "I love you." "I just love to watch you play"



PARENT'S PROMISE

I pledge to provide positive support, care, and encouragement for my child participating in youth sports by following this Parent's Code of Ethics Pledge.

- I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches and officials at every game, practice, or other youth sports event.
- I will place the emotional and physical well-being of the children ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will do my best to call the coach to let them know if my child will be late or miss a practice or game.
- I will support coaches and officials working with my child, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
- I will discuss any concerns I have with the coach privately and respectfully.
- I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free of drugs, tobacco and alcohol; and will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- I understand that coaches are volunteering their time and effort
- I will remember that the game is for youth—not for adults.
- I will ask my child to treat other players, coaches, fans and officials with respect regardless of race, sex, creed, or ability.
- I will promise to help my child enjoy the youth sports experience by doing whatever I can such as being a respectful fan, assisting with coaching, or providing transportation.

Parent's Signature

Date



COACHES:

Program values. Gloucester County sports programs are built upon the foundation of Sportsmanship, Opportunity, Fun and Development. We believe kids should have a positive environment that:

- Teaches character lessons such as sportsmanship, personal growth, cooperative team work, fair play and overcoming challenges.
- Provides everyone an opportunity to enjoy the benefits of sports. Every player in our youth soccer league get to play. Coaches are also encouraged to give players opportunities to play different positions.
- An emphasis on fun is more important than a focus on winning. Players that enjoy a sport will continue to play. Winning a game is secondary. If you're worried more about the kids winning the game than whether or not they're having fun, this is not the place for you.
- Kids should learn the fundamentals of the sports and develop their skills. When kids do this the confidence, they earn becomes an important part of who they are. We believe that sports can teach kids valuable lessons about life while fostering physical skills and developing social maturity. Kids involved with sports routinely do better in school and get into less trouble. The key issue isn't about wins and losses on the scoreboard as much as it is about creating a situation where kids enjoy themselves while learning to be better players, and better people.
- All players should play equally. This means ***EQUAL!!!!*** Sitting and playing equally. You cannot do this correctly by winging it. If you need help let me know. Failure to comply with this rule may be cause for dismissal as a coach. If you do not accomplish this goal you are violating one of the most important philosophies of our youth programs. To accomplish this goal you ***MUST*** do a pre-game playing chart. You can not do it by winging it on the sidelines. The only exception to this will be for repeated absences, discipline or health considerations. In either case a coach must tell the field supervisor and the opposing coach. In 12-14 soccer only someone who plays a full half as keeper may play the whole game.

Practices. Generally coaches determine practice times, starting after 5pm and days that they will be able to hold practices. Ideally, we like to have an even balance of teams that practice Monday/Wednesdays as well as Tuesday/Thursdays. Make up practices due to rain outs can be made up on Fridays if communicated with the Athletic Supervisor. If a special request of practices days is needed (Tues/Wed) this may be able to be worked out. Keeping in mind that players are also placed on teams based on their practice day availability, among other things. Teams will practice two times per week. Practices will begin one week after the coaches meeting. 2-3 weeks of practices are granted before the first round of games. Players should make every attempt to be at each practice. Practices are as important an experience as the games and vital to development.

- Show up 10 minutes early. That goes for players and coaches. Coaches should remain until the last player is picked up.
- If a player is going to miss a practice, please contact the coach ahead of time and let them know.
- Be sure to clean your practice area when you are done. This includes collecting any water bottles or other trash.