



Middletown Youth Soccer Club

COACHES HANDBOOK

FALL 2025

Thanks to all Players, Coaches, Parents, Volunteers and a special thank you to Sponsors, we are proud to be

CELEBRATING 30+ YEARS OF SOCCER

Founded 1992

Welcome to MYSC!

This is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization, so these programs are not possible without your participation. Whether you're a first-time coach, new to the sport, or an old hand, your time and effort are very much appreciated - by us, but also by players and parents. Thank you!

Our goal is to provide children a positive learning environment that stresses **fun** and development. We welcome all skill levels. To the best of our ability, we aim to form balanced teams that have an equal chance of succeeding on any given Saturday.

In addition to fostering teamwork, we ask that coaches pay special attention to the individual development of each of their players. A first-time player who learns to enjoy the game and noticeably improves in confidence and ability during the season is just as much a triumph as an already proficient player who gets better – and possibly even more satisfying to see! Equal playing time for all players is the expectation.

Our Coaching Coordinator, Jim Teeters (email: jim@tytech.org), has practice plans available for anyone who is interested. There are also a variety of helpful online resources listed in this handbook. While you can wing it, it's better to plan your practice beforehand - then be flexible to keep the kids active and engaged.

Please do your best to set a good example of sportsmanship, and to bring a positive attitude to practices and games. Encourage your players (and fans) to be respectful to their teammates, opponents, referees, and coaches. Especially the referees, who are also kids and mostly new to this position of responsibility and authority. They will make mistakes, and that's okay. Our referee coordinator, Ron Oard, will monitor their performance and help them improve. Feel free to provide him feedback on referee performance, good or otherwise.

The Fall Recreation season is eight games long, starting in early September and finishing in late October. All games and practices will be held at the Wyatt Road Soccer Complex at 540 Wyatt Road, Middletown RI 02842.

Thank you again for your generous participation in MYSC Fall Recreation soccer!

Darren McClurg
Fall Recreation League Director
Middletown Youth Soccer Club
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SMALL-SIDED GAMES	4
MYSC FALL RECREATION RULES	5
COACHES CODE	10
WHAT TO DO AT PRACTICE	11
GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE COACHING	12
USEFUL SOCCER RESOURCES FOR COACHES	14
HANDOUTS FOR PARENTS/PLAYERS	17
SAMPLE WELCOME EMAIL TO PARENTS/PLAYERS	18
PARENTS AND SPECTATOR CODE	20
HEAD INJURY POLICY	21

SMALL-SIDED GAMES

WHY SMALL-SIDED GAMES?

The priority in small-sided games is to motivate players in a friendly environment that is conducive to learning. The small-sided game:

- Lets players frequently touch the one “toy” on the field (the ball!)
- Provides many opportunities for players to score goals
- Maximizes active participation and minimizes inactivity and boredom
- Reflects the philosophy of player development expressed in state and national coaching schools
- Eliminates complicated rules such as offsides that may hinder youngsters from “playing”

First, and perhaps most importantly, small-sided soccer is FUN! Because of the smaller numbers, the skills and concepts involved in the game are presented in a simpler, less complicated way. Thus, there is a lower frustration level for the players and coaches, especially those new to the sport. The game is easier to understand when played with fewer players, and each player is able to have more touches on the ball during the course of the game, thus increasing their development. When players become more skillful, the game naturally becomes more fun.

Most U-6, U-8 and even U-10 players have not yet developed physically, psychologically or socially enough to meet the same challenges as older, larger players. They are better served by playing on smaller teams and fields commensurate with their abilities.

ROLE OF THE COACH & EXPECTATIONS

Ideally, the coach sets the conditions for learning (and fun!), provides some supervision, and helps players improve their individual abilities and teamwork. Learning from experiences in practices and games should also be a goal. Younger players generally need more hands-on coaching during games (U6 coaches are actually on the field with their players for this reason). But with older age groups, do your best to resist the temptation to instruct players on the field while the ball is in play. Helping them if they're stuck, reminding your defense to push up, etc, is fine, but try to let them figure it out as much as possible. When you identify areas for improvement, address them in practice, remind them at halftime, or when they're taking a break on the bench.

Temper your expectations and pick your goals judiciously. One hour of practice a week is usually not enough time to master complicated tactics or develop challenging new skills, even if the players possess the capabilities. Just keeping them focused for an hour might be a triumph. Incremental improvement is more realistic and less likely to frustrate or discourage players. Remember fun is the primary goal! Pick a few fairly simple things to work on during each practice. Embed them into activities the kids enjoy, if you can. Repetition over multiple practices will probably be necessary to see progress – that's okay! Don't forget to encourage players when they struggle and praise them when they succeed. That positive reinforcement goes a long way toward helping them enjoy the game.

MIDDLETOWN YOUTH SOCCER CLUB FALL 2024

RECREATIONAL SOCCER RULES



RULES

Middletown Youth Soccer is governed by the 17 Laws of Soccer as published by the United States Soccer Federation (USSF), with the following additions and modifications.

LAW 1. THE FIELD

The field shall be rectangular and its dimensions shall be approximately:

- U-6** 30 yards x 20 yards
- U-8** 40 yards x 25 yards
- U-10** 50 yards x 35 yards
- U-12** 60 yards x 40 yards
- U-15** 60 yards x 40 yards

LAW 2. THE BALL

- U-6** size 3
- U-8** size 3
- U-10** size 4
- U-12** size 4
- U-15** size 5

LAW 3. THE PLAYERS

- | | | |
|-------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| U-6 | 3v3 No goalkeeper | Minimum 3 players present or forfeit |
| U-8 | 4v4 No goalkeeper | Minimum 4 players present or forfeit |
| U-10 | 6v6 | Minimum 6 players present or forfeit |
| U-12 | 6v6 | Minimum 6 players present or forfeit |
| U-15 | 6v6 | Minimum 6 players present or forfeit |

Registration and Team Rosters. All players must be registered with the club in order to play. Use of a non-registered player(s) during a game will result in forfeiture of that game and incur serious liability issues should any player sustain an injury during the course of that game. Team rosters and permanent changes thereto must be made by agreement of coaches and approved by the Fall Rec Director and the Registrar.

Temporary Roster Changes (Recreational League Only). During the course of the season a team may become short-handed. For the purposes of league parity, a team may pick up a registered player (or players) from other teams for that day only, and only up to

the minimum number for play. If a team player arrives late, bringing the total of players to the age group minimum, the “pick-up” player must leave the game. In no case shall a temporary player be used at the expense of an assigned team player who is available and willing to play.

Playing Time. Coaches should manage substitutions to give players equal playing time to the maximum extent feasible, regardless of ability, the score, etc. Exceptions might include players arriving late to the game, or those that do not wish to play their fair share for various reasons (lack of confidence, injuries, etc). With kids who are reluctant to play, please be encouraging and supportive but avoid pressuring them. Discussing the issue with their parents at the next opportunity, to determine a mutually agreed way forward, is good practice.

Frequent substitutions are encouraged. Although it’s more challenging for the coach to manage, minimizing the length of time a player sits on the bench is usually beneficial and reduces the chances that they lose focus on or interest in the game. Moreover, many players struggle to play for long periods without a break.

Finding willing goalkeepers among the older age groups (U10 and up) can also be a challenge. Sharing the burden equally and limiting the time in goal is one way to deal with this in a way most will find to be fair.

Substitutions. Players must be recognized by the referee prior to entry onto the playing field. Substitutions are permitted at the following times.

U-6 Between periods, half-time and any stoppage in play.

U-8 Between periods and half-time. Substitutions during play can be done on the fly with the field player first being called off and leaving the field.

U-10 After a goal by either team, prior to a throw-in in your favor, prior to a goal kick by either team, and at half-time. On throw-ins, once a team substitutes a player, the opposing team may substitute an unlimited number of players.

U-12 Same as U-10.

U-15 Same as U-10.

Any time the referee stops the game due to injury and the coach enters the field of play, the injured player must leave the field. That player may be replaced by another team player immediately.

LAW 4. THE EQUIPMENT

Sneakers or soccer-specific cleats are the only allowable footwear. Players wearing items that the referee considers dangerous to other players must remove the items prior to entering the field. If play has already started, the referee may stop play and order the offending player off the field. The player may be substituted and the opposing team allowed a like number of substitutions. Shin-guards, worn under the socks, are **mandatory** and no player shall be allowed to play without them.

Cold Weather clothing. The referee may permit players to wear additional clothing appropriate to the weather conditions, such as sweat pants and hats. Sweatshirts may be

worn under the uniform shirt. In all cases, the players must have their team shirt clearly visible.

LAW 5. THE REFEREE

The league will supply center referees only. Referees shall be in charge of the game from the time they step on the field. **No disagreement with a referee's decision will be tolerated on or off the field.** Coaches or other officials shall not enter the field of play, unless requested to do so by the referee.

LAW 6. ASSISTANT REFEREES

Assistant referees will not be assigned for MYSC recreation games.

LAW 7. DURATION OF MATCH

U-6	Four 8 minute periods (running time)
U-8	Four 10 minute periods (running time)
U-10	Two 25 minute halves (running time)
U-12	Two 25 minute halves (running time)
U-15	Two 30 minute halves (running time)

For the U6, and U8 age groups there will be breaks of 2 minutes between quarters 1 and 2 and between quarters 3 and 4. For all age groups a break of 5 minutes at half time shall be observed.

NO stoppage time will be added to any playing period. If there is an unusually long stoppage (i.e., for a serious injury), the referee may stop the clock until play is resumed.

LAW 8. START OF PLAY

The game shall start with the ball in the middle of the center circle. Opponents must be outside the center circle while kickoffs are in progress.

LAW 10. METHOD OF SCORING

For U-8 age group only: No **defender** may remain in the goal box unless the ball is being played in the area. Discretion of the referee prevails. If the defending team violates this rule while remaining in the goal box to prevent a goal, the attacking team will be rewarded with a Free Kick from where the attacker last had possession of the ball. No **attacker** can be in the opposing team's goal box unless the ball enters first. If the attacking team violates this rule, the defending team will be awarded a goal kick.

LAW 11. OFFSIDE

There are NO offside infractions.

LAW 12. FOULS

All fouls shall result in an indirect free kick. In all age groups, the referee shall explain all infractions to the offending player. **NO** slide tackles are permitted in recreation play. Violations shall result in an indirect kick for the opposing team.

LAW 13. FREE KICKS

All free kicks will be indirect. No kicks shall be taken in the defending teams' goal box. For U-6 and U-8 age groups, opponents must be 5 yards away from the placement of the ball. For U10 and above age groups, opponents must be 10 yards away.

LAW 14. PENALTY KICKS

There are no penalty kicks taken during these games.

LAW 15. THROW-IN

For **U-6** only, **throw-ins are replaced by kick-ins**. A kick-in must start behind the touch line and is considered an indirect free kick with the opponents 5 yards away from the ball.

For **U-8** only, players will be allowed to re-throw an improper throw-in after the referee explains what was improper about the throw-in.

U-10, U-12, and U-15 throw-ins are in accordance with FIFA rules.

LAW 16. GOAL KICK

For all ages, **U-6, U-8, U-10, U-12, and U-15** the goal kick shall be taken within the goal area. Opponents must be 10 yards away from the ball. The ball must land before mid-field. The penalty for a longer kick is an indirect free kick for the opponent on the midfield stripe at the point where the ball **CROSSED** the midway stripe.

LAW 17. CORNER KICK

For **U-6** and **U-8** age groups, all corner kicks are indirect and the opponents must be 5 yards away.

LEAGUE-SPECIFIC RULES

Goalkeeper. The goalkeeper cannot take possession (with hands) of any ball that is intentionally played to him/her by his own teammate. The goalkeeper shall be in possession of the ball when he/she has trapped it with one hand, caught it, or is in the act of carrying, or throwing, the ball. No opposing player shall move in such a way as to interfere with the goalkeeper while he/she is in possession of the ball. Such interference shall result in an indirect free kick.

During the course of the game the goalkeeper is not permitted to cross the midfield stripe with or without the ball. The penalty against a goalkeeper for traveling beyond the mid-field stripe is a free kick for the opponent at the point where the goalkeeper crossed the mid-field stripe.

The ball must touch a player or the ground in the defensive half of the field on all goalkeeper distributions. The penalty for a longer distribution is a free kick for the opponent at the point where the ball crosses the mid-field stripe. Goalies may **NOT punt** the ball. If the goalie drops the ball and then kicks it from the ground, it must also touch a player or the ground in the defensive half of the field.

[NEW for 2025] Buildout Lines & Goal Kicks / Goalie Distribution. When a goal kick is awarded or the goalie gains possession of the ball, players from the opposing team must retreat to midfield (U6 and U8) or the blue 'build out' line (U10). This practice

mirrors competitive soccer youth rules intended to allow teams to build out of their defensive third. This rule does not apply to U12 and U15 teams, but in case of a lopsided game coaches should consider agreeing to retreat to midfield for goal kicks and goalie distribution. The goalie or player taking the goal kick does not have to wait for the opposing team to retreat; they can choose to play the ball quickly.

Injuries. When a player has been injured the referee shall stop play **immediately**. Coaches and/or parents may enter the field only after play has been stopped and when signaled by the referee. When play has been stopped due to an injury, the injured player must be substituted. When the substitution is made, the opposing team may substitute a like number of players. The game shall be restarted with a dropped ball or indirect free kick as appropriate. **Please see the “Head Injury Policy” on pages 23-24 of this booklet.**

Body Adornment and Arm Casts. Body “adornment” to include rings, necklaces, bracelets, ear rings, hair clips, or jewelry of any kind or material (including plastic and rubber) is prohibited during all practices and games. Elastic bands to hold back long hair and soft elastic cloth head bands and soft knit hats are allowed. Players with hard arm casts are not allowed to participate in games or practices due to the potential of injury to themselves and other players. Padding or “bubble wrap” on the cast does not allow the player to participate. The referee will enforce these rules during the player check-in process.

Rainouts. Significant precipitation will generally cause cancellation of practices and games for the day. However, precipitation does not automatically trigger cancellation. The day’s forecast and the field conditions are determining factors. We will generally play/practice through light rain, provided the fields remain playable.

Notices of cancellation will be distributed through our website at www.MiddletownYouthSoccerClub.org. Coaches will be notified by email as soon as a decision to cancel is made. Rained out games will generally not be rescheduled. But if an entire game day is cancelled we will attempt to replay it on the Saturday after the last scheduled game day.

4x2 Rule- If a team goes up by 4 goals, the opposing team may add one extra player. When the goal differential decreases to 2 goals, the added player comes off the field. If numbers do not permit this, then the team with the higher score will play one player down until the goal differential is 2. As this is recreational soccer and the number one goal is fun, running up the score against an overmatched team is discouraged.

Heading the ball: Due to the potentially serious consequences injuries like concussions pose to youth brain development, U.S. Youth Soccer policies prohibit players 10 years old and younger from deliberately heading the ball, either in games or practices. Heading is allowed for 11-12 year old players, but practicing this skill is limited.

MYSC enforces this heading policy in games by age group:

- U12 and younger: referees will award an indirect free kick to the opposing team if a player deliberately heads the ball. The referee may allow play to continue if he/she judges the head-to-ball contact was inadvertent. (The U12 age group is included here because some players are still 10 years old).
- U15: heading the ball is allowed in games without restriction.

COACHES CODE

- Your feedback is welcomed and encouraged, please let us know how this soccer program has lived up to your expectations or could be improved. Email your feedback to Darren McClurg at: mcclurgd5210@hotmail.com.
- Try to remain calm, positive, and encouraging.
- Understand the Laws of the Game and teach them to your players.
- Do your best to conduct effective (and fun!) practices. Attend classes, access online resources, or ask our coaching coordinator for help.
- Strive to include all players in practice activities. Those that involve all players are better than those that engage only one or two at a time.
- During games, try to leave decisions on the field to the players. This means you refrain from instructing players during the game, especially when they're on the ball or challenging for it (it's okay to remind your defense to push up when the ball's on the other side of the field).
- Manage substitutions to afford equal playing time for all players as best you can.
- Set an example of good sportsmanship and encourage players and fans to treat opponents and referees with courtesy and respect.
- Enjoy yourself! If you're having fun, it tends to rub off on the players!



WHAT TO DO AT PRACTICE?

The following general practice structure tends to work well.

When the kids arrive, let them kick the ball around or shoot on goal if one is available.

Do some warm-up's and stretching.

Start some age-appropriate practice activities: shooting, passing, communicating with teammates, or tackling. A major key to development is touches with the ball. Structure your practices to maximize touches: minimize activities that involve standing in lines waiting for turns with the ball.

Scrimmage amongst your own group or with another team that is practicing nearby. During this scrimmage you should point out the practice items covered earlier and encourage players to try them in a game situation.

Allow the kids to get water whenever they want it.

Have a brief cool down session at the end of the scrimmage.

Remind everyone about the next game and to arrive 15 minutes before start time.

Be a coach and a role model to the kids and the spectators! Enjoy yourself, it will be over all too soon.

**For age appropriate practices, consult your handbooks or tap into the seemingly infinite library of Youtube or Google or... One excellent source is :
<https://www.usyouthsoccer.org/coaching-resources/>**

Jim Teeters

Director of Coaching

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GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE COACHING

1. Background

A. 4 pillars of soccer

1. Physical (Strength, Endurance, Speed, Quickness)
2. Technique (Ball Skills, Style)
3. Tactics (Strategy, Set Plays)
4. Mental (Attitude, Desire, Awareness, Aggressiveness, Discipline, Behavior)

2. Coaches Role during Practice

A. Plan practice beforehand

B. 1 subject per practice

C. Arrive early (always)

D. Talk (3 minutes)

1. Review what was learned
2. Review the last game played
3. Tell players what to expect today
 - a. Describe practice- skill, use, importance
 - b. Encourage top effort, attitude, and behavior
 - c. Explain terminology

E. Warm-up with the ball (5 min.)

A. Talk the skill (1-min.)

B. Show the skill (2-min.)

C. Have the team try it under no pressure. (10 min.)

D. Add progressively more pressure. (10 min.)

1. Add fun play for practice
2. Play with the kids.

A. Put the team in a game like situation using the skill. (20 min.)

1. Play game to motivate
2. Get them excited.

A. Cool down (2 min.)

E. Review Session (2 min.)

F. Think up homework with the ball they can do on their own.

3. Coaches Role during Games

A. Pregame

1. Arrive early (20 minutes minimum)
2. Ensure kids are there (15 minutes minimum)
3. Warm 'em up
 - a. Dribble around, play keep away
 - b. Shoot on goal
 - c. Use previous practice sessions. Do something familiar.

B. During the Game

1. Start with a team cheer
2. Take notes for future practices and half-time/postgame talks
3. Encourage, recognize **effort** more than **results**
4. Be positive
5. Instruct players on field judiciously:
 - a. Resist the urge to instruct players in the play, i.e. players under pressure

- b. **Limit** instruction to players not in the play, players not under pressure
 - c. **Try** not to instruct players at all during the game
 - d. **Encourage** parents to cheer, but not to instruct players during the game
- 8. Do instruct substitute players on the sideline during the game. Ask them questions, keep them engaged if you can.
 - 9. Cheer! Complement! Encourage!
 - 10. Sub frequently; strive for equal playing time as best you can and minimize lengthy stays on the bench.

C. Half-time

- 1. Water them down
- 2. Provide oranges (if desired)
- 3. Identify 2-3 items to address, get players' views
- 4. Cheer!

D. Post Game

- 1. Be positive
- 2. Get players views if you can (might need to wait for practice)
- 3. Cheer!
- 4. Snacks!!!

USEFUL SOCCER RESOURCES FOR COACHES

Also do a search for Soccer Drills or Soccer Games in Google or any other search engine. On-line information changes all the time. YouTube.com has an incredible selection. If you find a site that is particularly useful, please forward it on to our director of coaching Jim Teeters at jim@tytech.org.

US Youth Soccer

<http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/>

United States Soccer National Men's and Women's Programs

<https://www.ussoccer.com/coaching>

Matt Callahan's soccer plans

<https://www.youtube.com/@mattcallahansoccer9754/playlists>

Select the Playlists then the Dribbling Moves for videos that illustrate some 1v1 moves useful to the medium and advanced player.

Pill's Drills

<http://jaymoore.com/jpill.htm>

Fabulous source of younger material: Pills Drills. By Jeff Pill, of US Soccer and formerly New Hampshire, who is a phenomenon in youth coaching. Well worth repeated visits. Lot's of 4v4 progressions, and progressions for different topics.

Videos

www.onlinesocceracademy.com

www.YOUTUBE.com (type in "soccer drills" or for tricky moves "Coerver moves").

MYSA

http://www.mayouthsoccer.org/coaches/session_plans/

A non-profit organization dedicated to encouraging player development and to promoting and enhancing the game of soccer! Mass. Youth Soccer is the official representative of US Youth Soccer and the United States Soccer Federation in Massachusetts. With over 200,000 registered players, the largest youth sports organization in the state and the second largest state youth soccer organization in the country.

MOJO is an app with messaging, scheduling, practice building and tons of practice content. Lots of “games”, great for the younger players/

<https://www.mojo.sport/>

The Coaching Manual-Enter in your practice schedule and you get a curriculum (very similar to the USYS 12 week progression), lots of great drills aligned to the training goals and videos and a big library of training education. Also has a drawing app for new diagrams. Great to just follow on social media, they have a good coaches educational program.

<https://app.thecoachingmanual.com/>

Sports Session Planner-helps fill in the gaps.

<https://www.sportsessionplanner.com>

Magazines and Books

<http://www.worldclasscoaching.com/>

Sample sessions for mostly older or professional level soccer available. Big club sessions here--Juventus, Manchester United and so on.

WWW.SOCCERCLINICS.COM

<http://www.soccerclinics.com>

Great manuals for all ages, and a source for Soccer Software and a drill maker and starter drills provided. Excellent for individual soccer players who are individually motivated.

United Soccer Coaches

<https://unitedsoccercoaches.org/>

Education courses for coaches

The Best Soccer League in The World

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/football/default.stm>

You can get to many other sites in the world here. I particularly like the coaching sessions often here, and the Flash replay of great goals this week, or of set plays.

Virtual Replay (install Flash to get this!)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/virtualreplay/premiership/index.shtml?1064>

The European Scene from Knowledgeable Writers.

Go to *More Sports* and pull down Soccer.

iSoccer

Many resources including an online skills assessment tool you could use with your players.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/ISoccer>



SUGGESTED HANDOUTS FOR PARENTS/PLAYERS

The following information should be provided to the parents of players on your team, either by the club or by the coach. :

- Welcome to MYSC for Fall 2024 email (Personalize the blanks to match your team's information).
- Parents & Spectators Code
- Practice Field Layout showing your practice field
- MYSC Game Schedule (for the relevant age group)
- Snacks: certainly optional, but snacks after games tend to be a big deal for younger kids (and even for older ones). If you choose to arrange snacks it's common to assign game days to parents, or you might ask a parent to work out a schedule.

Welcome Email Template

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Middletown Youth Soccer Club's 2025 Fall Recreation program! Your coach, [coach's name here], is very much looking forward to coaching your kids this season. **Please confirm to the coach that you received this email.**

Here are the basics up front:

- **Team Name:** [your team name / sponsor here] (this is how we're listed on the schedule).
- **Practice:** our slot is [time] on [day of the week], first practice is (date) on Field # at Wyatt Road Soccer Complex in Middletown. See attached field diagram.
- **What to bring to practices & games:** size # ball (see pg 5), water bottle, shin guards, cleats are recommended but tennis shoes will work. Cleats from other sports will not. Wear team t-shirts to games, of course. Your child will also get a pair of black socks, but any shorts and socks are fine.
- **First game:** Date @ [time of game], Field [#], Wyatt Road Soccer Complex in Middletown. Please arrive at least 15 min early. Full game schedule is attached.

The MYSC Fall Recreation Program is recreational, accepts all skill levels, and tries to balance teams as much as possible. The emphasis is on developing basic skills and having fun doing it. We keep score during games but do not record results or track standings. If one team is up by 4 goals in a game, the other team gets an extra player (running up the score is discouraged). MYSC does have competitive teams, a few in the Fall, more in the Spring if you're looking for a more rigorous program.

U# Games:

- #v#, with/without goal-keepers.
- Game duration: (see page 7) We do our best to ensure all players get equal playing time.
- League-specific rules: No slide tackling allowed, no off-sides, and no penalties. All free kicks are indirect. Goalies may not punt the ball.
- Heading: Players age 10 and younger are no longer allowed to head the ball per U.S. Soccer guidelines (due to the risk of injuries which can affect brain development).

Coaching: Instructing players from the sidelines, by either coaches or parents, is discouraged. We'll work on skills in practice but want to let the kids learn to make decisions in the games as much as possible (In the U6 age group only, coaches will be on the field to help players). Especially if they're in possession or challenging for the ball, instructions just tend to distract players anyway. Best thing we can do as parents is cheer them on – the more positive and encouraging, the better. If anyone else would like to help coach, you're most welcome. Having someone to help herd cats on the sideline during games is much appreciated, or to substitute if

the coach can't make it to a practice or game. Please note that all coaches are volunteering their time to coach your children!

Referees: The referees are kids as well. They'll do their best but will make mistakes (professional ones do too!) – and that's okay, they're learning. Please do not address any negative remarks toward them. It's a pretty thankless job and we're lucky to have them. Poor sportsmanship directed at referees is a big reason why there is a major shortage, nationwide.

Snacks: Often one of the highlights of the game! Your coach may assign snack duties for each game or ask a parent to arrange a schedule. At the snack shack on the field, you can get snacks and drinks for a reasonable price. There's a form you fill out before the game, and they'll have it ready for you when the game finishes up. It's also fine to bring something from outside if you prefer.

Weather: The club will get the word out via the website and emails to coaches if games or practices are canceled. We will try to play if at all possible, including through light rain. Heavy or persistent rain will usually prompt cancellation because the fields become waterlogged and unplayable. If lightning is observed we will stop play for safety reasons. Should an entire game day be rained out, we will play the canceled game schedule on 2 Nov.

Head Injuries: The club takes these very seriously based on the latest CDC guidance. It's thankfully rare, but if a player sustains a head injury (due to a collision of heads, being struck in the head by the ball with some force, etc) they must be removed from the game or practice. The player may not resume participation in soccer activities until cleared by a licensed medical practitioner. Parents must forward the doctor's letter to the club president, and he'll let the coach know your child is cleared to resume play. The latest research on child concussions indicates it's far better to be safe than sorry.

Parking @ Wyatt: It can get busy, especially on game days, and there will obviously be lots of kids running around. Please drive very slowly! The parking lot is one-way; you'll see the signs. Please do not stop and block traffic to load or unload passengers.

Once again, please confirm to your coach that you received this email. Thank you for signing up for Fall Rec Soccer - see you round the pitch!

Sincerely,

[name and contact info]

PARENTS AND SPECTATOR CODE

- Demonstrate good sportsmanship. Cheer enthusiastically!
- Try to resist the urge to instruct children from the sidelines during games. It tends to distract them from learning how to make their own decisions on the field.
- Support decisions by coaches and referees, even if you disagree with them. If you have concerns, discuss them with the coach after the game or contact the Fall Rec Director or another board member.
- Offer to help the coach during practices and games if you can. They have volunteered their time to provide recreational activities for your child and they make this program possible. Don't forget to thank them!
- Questions or comments may be directed to Darren McClurg, Fall Recreation Director, at mcclurgd5210@hotmail.com.

Middletown Youth Soccer Club Head Injury Policy

A concussion is a brain injury and all brain injuries are serious. They are caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, or by a blow to another part of the body with the force transmitted to the head. They can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Even though most concussions are mild, all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications including prolonged brain damage and death if not recognized and treated properly. Most sports concussions do not involve loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms may show up right after the injury, or they can take hours or days to fully materialize.

Middletown Youth Soccer Club Head Injury Policy:

If a player sustains an apparent head injury, the referee or coach must stop the game or practice immediately. If the injury appears serious or you're not sure, call 911 (see symptoms below). Whether emergency services are required or not, the player must be removed and not allowed to resume soccer activities. The coach is required to communicate the player's name to a MYSC official immediately following the game or practice. During a game, the referee at times may be obstructed and lack a good view of an incident. If the coach feels that a player has sustained a potential head injury, he/she should immediately get the referee's attention.

AND

After a suspected head injury, the player may not return to soccer activities until he/she has been evaluated and cleared. Written clearance to return to play from a licensed health care provider is required and must be forwarded to Walt Wildemann, MYSC President, either in person, by mail to 4 Baldwin Road, Middletown, or by scanned email attachment to Wildewalt@gmail.com. Clearance will then be communicated to the coach.

Ignoring signs and symptoms of a concussion and continuing to play leaves young athletes especially vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from repeated concussions, so seeking treatment and allowing time for complete recovery is especially important for both short- and long-term health and safety.

Symptoms may include one or more of the following:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headaches• "Pressure in head"• Nausea or vomiting• Neck pain• Balance problems or dizziness• Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision• Sensitivity to light or noise• Feeling sluggish or slowed down• Feeling foggy or groggy• Drowsiness• Change in sleep patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amnesia• "Don't feel right"• Fatigue or low energy• Sadness• Nervousness or anxiety• Irritability• More emotional• Confusion• Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays)• Repeating the same question/comment
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Signs observed by teammates, parents and coaches could include:

- Appears dazed
- Vacant facial expression
- Confused about assignment
- Forgets plays
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Slurred speech
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to hit
- Can't recall events after hit
- Seizures or convulsions
- Any change in typical behavior or personality
- Loses consciousness