



WESTERLY YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION

501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization
P.O. Box 1015 • Westerly, RI 02891 • www.westerlysoccer.com

Fall 2026 Recreational Soccer Program

David Thomas
Recreational Director

Matthew Thomas
Assistant Recreational Director & Youth Referee Coordinator

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

This division is designed to provide a fun, safe, and developmentally appropriate soccer experience. At this age, players continue developing technical skills, tactical awareness, teamwork, sportsmanship, confidence, and decision-making. Winning is not emphasized. Success is measured through participation, effort, improvement, teamwork, and enjoyment.

TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

Teams are responsible for cleaning up fields after games. Coaches, players, parents, and spectators are expected to demonstrate sportsmanship and respect.

GAME FORMAT

7v7 including goalkeeper. Size 4 ball. Two 25-minute halves with a 5-minute halftime. No published standings or recorded scores.

TEAM ROSTERS

Maximum 12 players. Seven players on the field including a goalkeeper. Every player must participate in at least 50% of each game. Smaller-sided play increases touches, decision making, involvement, and overall player development.

SUBSTITUTIONS

Substitutions may occur at any stoppage with **referee approval** and for injuries. Coaches should use substitutions to ensure equal participation.

PLAYER EQUIPMENT

Shin guards required and covered by socks. No jewelry. No toe cleats. Goalkeepers must wear a different colored jersey or pinnie. Cold weather clothing is permitted if safe.

COACH EXPECTATIONS

Board of Directors

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Attend practices and games, conduct practices, distribute schedules, attend coaching meetings, provide game balls when home team, ensure players are equipped, and follow up appropriately on injuries.

PARENT & SPECTATOR EXPECTATIONS

Encourage all players, respect coaches and referees, refrain from sideline coaching, and avoid standing behind goals.

OFFICIATING

Games will be officiated by WYSA youth referees. Officials should promote safety, sportsmanship, fair play, and player development.

GOALKEEPERS

Goalkeepers may use hands within the penalty area and must wear distinguishing apparel.

CHARGING THE GOALKEEPER

Players may not make contact with, harass, or challenge a goalkeeper in possession of the ball.

GOALKEEPER DISTRIBUTION

Goalkeepers may throw, roll, or pass to teammates. Punting and drop-kicking are discouraged for development purposes but not disallowed. Opponents may cross midfield after release.

When the goalkeeper catches the ball or takes a goal kick, the opposing team must retreat behind the build-out line.

FIELD POSITIONING

Teams and spectators should occupy opposite sides of the field whenever possible.

START OF PLAY

Kickoff from center field. Opponents remain six yards away. Players remain in their half until kickoff. Ball is in play when touched.

RESTARTS

Kickoff after goals. Second half begins with opposite team kickoff. Injury stoppages restart with an indirect free kick or drop ball when appropriate.

BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY

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The ball is out of play when it completely crosses a touchline or goal line, or when play is stopped by the referee.

METHOD OF SCORING

A goal is scored when the entire ball crosses the goal line between the goalposts and under the crossbar.

OFFSIDE

Offside is not enforced. Goal hanging is discouraged and may be addressed instructionally by referees and coaches.

FOULS & MISCONDUCT

Direct free kicks and indirect free kicks are permitted. Penalty kicks may be awarded. Heading and slide tackling are prohibited. Dangerous play should be addressed immediately.

THROW-INS

Traditional throw-ins will be used. Referees may allow one instructional re-throw. Goals may not be scored directly from throw-ins.

GOAL KICKS

Any defender may take a goal kick. Opponents remain six yards away. Goals may be scored directly from goal kicks.

CORNER KICKS

Traditional corner kicks are used. Opponents remain six yards away. Goals may be scored directly from corner kicks.

INJURIES & SAFETY

Bleeding players must leave the field until treated. Significant injuries should be communicated to parents. Medical clearance should be followed when appropriate.

WEATHER POLICY

Play stops immediately for lightning or thunder and may resume only after 30 minutes without additional lightning or thunder.

MERCY RULE GUIDANCE

Coaches should make developmental adjustments such as rotating positions, encouraging passing, limiting touches, and emphasizing weaker-foot play.

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GAME DAY RESPONSIBILITIES

Home team provides game ball. Visiting team assists with cleanup. All teams arrive early and ensure players are equipped.

COACH REMINDER

Success is measured through participation, improvement, confidence, teamwork, sportsmanship, and enjoyment. We are not developing teams. We are developing players.

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