



Players First Recreational Soccer – Rules of Play

Mission & Vision

At Players First Recreational Soccer, our mission is to create a positive and inclusive environment where players of all skill levels can enjoy the game of soccer. We are dedicated to fostering teamwork, sportsmanship, and personal growth through fair play and community engagement. Our focus is on putting players first, ensuring every participant has the opportunity to develop skills, build friendships, and have fun on and off the field.

Players First is more than just a soccer program – it is a community-driven initiative where families, coaches, and players come together to celebrate the sport in an engaging, welcoming, and inspiring atmosphere. Our goal is to lay the foundation for a lifelong love of soccer, whether a player continues at the recreational level or aspires to more competitive club soccer opportunities. At Players First, every player matters, every experience counts, and every moment on the field is an opportunity to grow.

K-5 Kickers

Structure

- 1 weekly practice on Wednesdays or Fridays from 4:30-5:30pm or 5:30-6:30pm
- 1 weekly game on Saturday mornings between 8:00am - 12:00pm
- Girls and boys will play separately.
- All teams will have a volunteer coach.
- Practices will be age-appropriate, curriculum-based training sessions each week.
- Games will be organized matches against other Players First teams in the same age group, or against Chicago Empire FC teams at comparable ages and levels.
- Players should arrive 15 minutes early. Teams can warm-up in open spaces near their field.
- K-1st Grade Games: 4v4, no goalies
- 2nd-5th Grade Games: 5v5, 4 field players + goalkeeper
- All games will be 4 10-minute quarters, 2-3 min breaks between quarters

Playing Rules

- One team starts the game with a kick-off at midfield.
- Possession to begin each quarter should rotate.
- When a team scores a goal, the opposing team restarts play with a kick-off at midfield.
- Substitutions are allowed at stoppages during the game.
- K-1st Grade: No throw-ins. Players can pass to a teammate or dribble the ball in-bounds to restart play.
- 2nd-5th Grade: Throw-ins can now be used to restart play from the sidelines.
 - Coaches can assist and model - ball over the head, both feet on the ground.
- No heading the ball.
- No slide tackling.
- Goal kicks and corner kicks should be utilized accordingly.
- Build out line - Opposing teams should back up behind the half line for goal kicks and when the goalie has the ball in their hands. Once the ball is played by the goalkeeper, the opposing team can cross the half line.

Equipment

- Players First Puma Jersey
- Black soccer shorts
- Black soccer socks
- Shin guards (worn underneath the soccer socks)
- Soccer cleats
- Soccer ball (K-1st Grade: Size 3, 2nd-5th Grade: Size 4)
- Water bottle
- No jewelry or watches

Preschool First Kickers

Structure

- 1 weekly session that will include:
 - Gross motor skills
 - Technical soccer skills
 - Small-sided soccer games
 - Fun games
- Saturdays - 9:30-10:30 AM
- Groups will be COED.
- All groups will have a volunteer coach.
- All volunteer coaches will be provided with weekly session plans.

Small-Sided Playing Rules

- Participants will be organized into teams of 3 or 4.
- One team will wear pinnies.
- Coaches should explain to each team which goal they are scoring on and which goal they are defending.
- No throw-ins – Coaches should hold 1 or 2 soccer balls in hands and roll the ball back into play if the ball goes out of bounds. Players can also pass to a teammate or dribble the ball in-bounds to restart play.
- No heading the ball.
- No slide tackling.
- Keep the kids moving and playing!

Equipment

- Players First t-shirts
 - Soccer/athletic shorts (black is recommended)
 - Soccer socks (black is recommended)
 - Shin guards (worn underneath the soccer socks)
 - Soccer cleats
 - Soccer ball (size 3)
 - Water bottle
 - No jewelry or watches
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Volunteer Coach's Responsibilities

- Pass a background check through IYSA
- Complete SafeSport Certification
- Preschool First Kickers
 - Coach the weekly 1 hour sessions on Saturday mornings from 9:30-10:30am.
- K-5 Kickers
 - Coach the weekly practices on Wednesdays or Fridays.
 - Coach the weekly games on Saturday mornings.
- Coordinate and manage team communication alongside Players First Staff within PlayMetrics
- Wear provided Players First shirt to all sessions
- Bring provided equipment to all sessions
- Follow the [Players First Code of Conduct](#)

Inclement Weather, Rainouts, & Cancellations

- Do not assume practices and/or games are cancelled because of rain or weather conditions.
- Players First Staff have the decision-making authority on all cancellations, and one will always be on-site to make decisions related to weather.
- Cancellations will only take place when playing conditions are unsafe (ie: lightning, flooding)
- In the event the lightning siren is going off, the fields must be cleared and players and families must return to their cars. Games will not be allowed to continue until the weather tower sounds the "all clear" alarm.
- If a game or practice must be cancelled prior to the start time or during the session, parents will be notified as soon as possible on the PlayMetrics app.