

# 2023-2024 YOUTH SOCCER COACHES PACKET

Thank you for volunteering your time to coach a youth soccer team with Suwannee Parks & Recreation. Without the support of our volunteers we would be unable to provide recreational programs for the youth of our community.

The Suwannee Parks & Recreation Youth Soccer Program is designed to provide a fun, safe and educational experience for all of our participants. Our aim is to teach players the fundamental skills of the game while promoting fair play, good sportsmanship, teamwork and physical fitness.

Please carefully review this packet and feel free to contact us with any questions you may have.

## Important Dates:

**Friday, December 8<sup>th</sup> - 6:00 p.m. – 8U Draft**

**Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup> – 6:00 p.m. – 10U Draft**

**Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup> – 6:00 p.m. – 13U Draft**

**Monday, December 11<sup>th</sup> – Practice Begins**

**Saturday, January 6<sup>th</sup> – Games Begin**

## LAWS OF THE GAME

### Law 1 – The Field of Play

Age Division	Field Width	Field Length	Goal Size	Ball Size
6U	20 yards	30 yards	8' x 4'	Size 3
8U	40 yards	60 yards	18' x 7'	Size 4
10U	46 yards	80 yards	21' x 7'	Size 4
13U	55 yards	100 yards	24' x 8'	Size 5

Players and coaches of both teams shall be on the same side of the field. Up to three designated coaches and a "Team Mom" will be allowed on this side of the field. Teams will use the side of the field nearest the outfield fence.

Spectators will observe the game from the side of the field opposite the players and coaches and must sit within the marked spectator area and not along the goal ends of the field.

Team bench areas will remain the same for the duration of the game. Players not entered in the game must remain in the bench area on their designated side of the field.

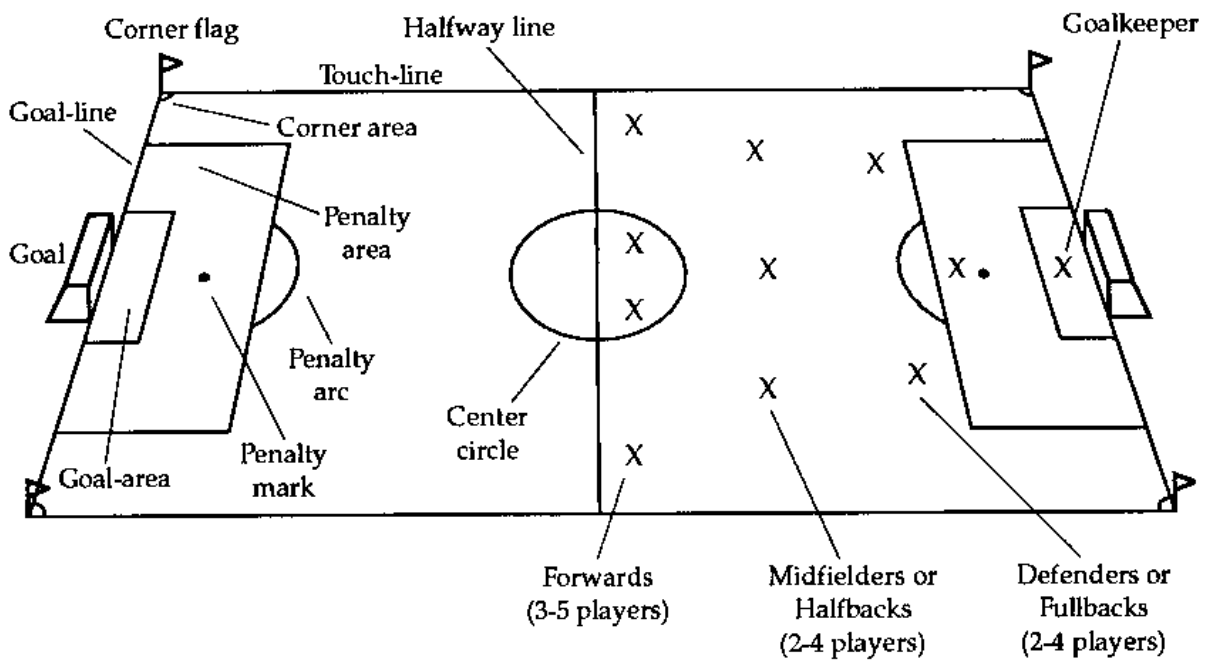
Coaches may only coach on their designated side of the field within the designated coaches' box between the halfway line and the area line and must remain one yard from the touchline.

**Law 2 – Soccer Ball Size**

To make the most out of each practice, make sure each of your players brings an appropriately sized soccer ball with them. Playing with an age-appropriate sized soccer ball will allow your players to develop their skills more efficiently.

6U	8U	10U	13U
Size 3	Size 4	Size 4	Size 5

**Law 3 – Number of Players and Substitutions**



Age Division	# On Field	Minimum # to Start Game
6U	6 (w/ goalie)	4
8U	8 (w/ goalie)	6
10U	9 (w/ goalie)	7
13U	11 (w/ goalie)	8

Substitutions will be made at the following times with the acknowledgement of the referee:

6U – Players will sub after every four minutes of game play

8U – Players will sub between quarters and during the halftime intermission

10U & 13U – Players may enter the game at the following times:

- During their own team's throw in
- When a goal has been scored
- When a goal kick occurs
- During the halftime intermission

No substitution is allowed for players sent off / ejected by a Referee for the remainder of the game.

Injured players must be removed from play. You can sub for an injured player or play shorthanded if necessary. A player removed from a game due to injury must wait for the next legal substitution opportunity before reentering the game.

Teams have an unlimited number of substitutions available to them. There is NO reason for players not to receive an adequate amount of playing time.

All substitutes (10U & 13U) must report to midfield and wait to be waved on by the Referee at the next available substitution opportunity.

#### **Law 4 – Equipment**

Players may not wear any jewelry (with the exception of medical / religious items which must be securely covered) during any practice or game.

Padded casts will be acceptable with approval from Suwannee Parks & Recreation and / or the Referee.

All players must wear shin guards during all practices and games. Shin guards must be covered by socks.

Players are permitted to wear cleats but cleats must be composed of plastic or rubber (no metal cleats) and must be soccer-style cleats with no cleat located under the front toe area of the shoe. Baseball or football-style cleats are not permitted.

### **Law 5 – The Referee**

The Referee is responsible for controlling the game according to the Laws of the Game and any other provisional rules established by Suwannee Parks & Recreation.

- The Referee acts as timekeeper and keeps a record of the game
- The game may be stopped, suspended or terminated at the Referee’s discretion
- The Referee’s decisions concerning facts connected with play are final and not subject to protest; this includes (but is not limited to) whether or not a goal was scored, hand balls, offside violations, fouls and misconduct
- The Referee may warn, caution (Yellow Card), and send off (Red Card) players, substitutes, substituted players, coaches and assistant coaches
- The Referee is in control of the game upon entering and until leaving the field of play

Treat ALL referees with respect. If a Referee does a good job, praise them. If there is a problem with a Referee, contact Suwannee Parks & Recreation. Do not verbally criticize or harass any Referee or Assistant Referee.

### **Law 6 – The Assistant Referees**

The Assistant Referees support the Referee in controlling the game. The Referee is the final authority and may not always accept the Assistant Referee’s advice.

### **Law 7 – Duration of the Game**

<b>Age Division</b>	<b>Length of Game</b>	<b>Quarters/Halves</b>	<b>Length of Quarter/Half</b>
6U	32 minutes	Quarters	8 minutes
8U	48 minutes	Quarters	12 minutes
10U	50 minutes	Halves	25 minutes
13U	60 minutes	Halves	30 minutes

Five minute halftime break for all age divisions.

Water breaks may be taken in extreme heat conditions at the midway point of each half as determined by Suwannee Parks & Recreation or the Referee.

Regardless of the score, the Referee may extend the playing time (stoppage time) for all time lost through substitution, assessment of player injuries, removal of injured players, ball out of play or any other cause. The amount of stoppage time played is at the discretion of the Referee.

### **Law 8 – Start of the Game**

Teams will alternate kickoff at the start of each quarter / half. First possession will be determined by a coin flip prior to the first kickoff.

A kickoff will be taken at the center mark to start the game (or restart the game after a goal is scored or to begin an overtime period).

All players must be in their own half of the field during the kickoff.

Players on the team not kicking off must be outside of the center circle.

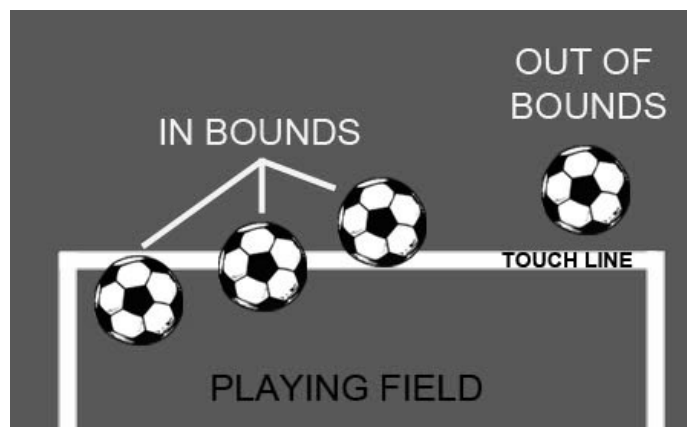
The ball must not be moving when it is kicked.

The ball must be kicked forward into the opposing team's half of the field (if kicked sideways or backwards, the kickoff will be replayed).

The player kicking off may not touch the ball again until it has touched another player.

### **Law 9 – Ball in and out of Play**

The ball is considered out of play when ALL of the ball is COMPLETELY beyond the outside edge of the touchline or goal line, either in the air or on the ground, and when the game is stopped by the Referee. The ball is deemed in play at all times other than the conditions listed as out of play.



*Note: If the ball bounces off the Referee or Assistant Referee when that official is in the field of play the ball shall remain in play as long as it does not leave the playing area.*

## **Law 10 – Method of Scoring**

### ***Scoring a Goal***

A goal is scored when ALL of the ball crosses COMPLETELY over the outside edge of the goal line, under the crossbar and between the goalposts while the ball is in play.

Any player on a team may score a goal, including the goalkeeper.

A player may score on the goal he or she is defending (known as an “own goal”) with the goal being awarded to the opposition; however, an own goal cannot be scored on a throw-in, goal kick, corner kick, free kick, penalty kick or kickoff.

### ***Standings***

In the 10U and 13U divisions, teams will be awarded points for victories and ties, which will count towards the regular season standings. Points are scored as follows:

Win = 3 Points

Tie = 1 Point

Loss = 0 Points

Game scores and team standings will not be tracked for the 6U and 8U divisions.

## **Law 11 – Offside (See additional handout for more info)**

A player is in an OFFSIDE POSITION if:

1. The player is in the opponent’s half of the field, and
2. The player is ahead of the ball, and
3. There are fewer than two opponents ahead of the player

A player is NOT in an OFFSIDE POSITION if the player is:

1. In his or her own half of the field of play, or
2. Even with or behind the ball, or
3. Even with the second-to-last opponent, or the last two opponents

A player in an offside position becomes offside if, at the moment the ball touches or is played by a teammate, the player (in the opinion of the Referee) is involved in the active play by:

- Interfering with play, or
- Interfering with an opponent, or
- Gaining an advantage by being in that offside position

There is no offside offense if a player receives the ball directly from a throw-in, corner kick or goal kick.

There is no offside offense in the 6U or 8U divisions; however, coaches in the 8U division should refrain from keeping players in an offside position.

### **Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct (See additional handout for more information)**

There are no Red or Yellow cards in the 6U division; however, coaches in all age divisions can be cautioned and sent off for misconduct or other violations.

Coaches are responsible for their players and spectators and must resolve all problems or be sent off. If a coach cannot solve spectator problems, the game may be suspended or terminated.

Players and coaches who are sent off by a Red Card will also be forced to sit out their team's next scheduled game.

Players who receive a Yellow Card must be substituted for.

*Note: For safety reasons, slide tackling is not allowed in any division of play. A slide tackle will result in a direct free kick for the opposing team (except in 6U and 8U where all free kicks are indirect)*

### **Law 13 – Free Kicks**

There are two types of Free Kicks:

#### **1. Direct Free Kick**

A Direct Free Kick is taken from the location of the foul. A goal CAN be scored by kicking the ball directly into the opponents' goal without the ball touching any player other than the kicker. A Direct Free Kick is awarded for a "penal" foul (see Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct handout).

#### **2. Indirect Free Kick (All Free Kicks in 6U and 8U are indirect)**

An Indirect Free Kick is taken from the location of the offense. A goal CANNOT be scored directly from the kick; the ball must be touched first by the player taking the kick then by a second player before a goal can be scored. Indirect Free Kicks are awarded for "non-penal" fouls (see Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct handout).

When restarting play with a Free Kick, the ball must not be moving when kicked.

A player cannot score directly on his or her own goal from a Free Kick.

The player taking the Free Kick may not play the ball again until it has been touched by another player.

6U & 8U opponents must be a minimum of six yards away on a Free Kick

10U opponents must be a minimum of eight yards away on a Free Kick

13U opponents must be a minimum of 10 yards away on a Free Kick

#### **Law 14 – Penalty Kicks**

If a player commits a foul that would typically result in a direct free kick in his / her penalty area, the fouled team is awarded a Penalty Kick from the Penalty Mark, rather than a direct free kick.

It is the location of the foul, not the location of the ball that determines whether a Penalty Kick or a direct free kick is awarded to a team.

All players (with the exception of the kicker and opposing goalkeeper) must be lined up outside of the penalty area and the penalty mark when the Penalty Kick is being attempted.

The defending goalkeeper must remain on the goal line between the goal posts, facing the kicker until the ball is kicked. The goalkeeper may move laterally along the goal line.

*NOTE: There are no Penalty Kicks in the 6U or 8U division, all kicks are indirect.*

#### **Law 15 – Throw In**

The throw in is a method of putting the ball back in play after it has crossed completely over a touchline.

The throw in is taken within one yard of where the ball left the field of play.

The throw in can be taken by any player on the team that did not touch the ball last.

The thrower may not play the ball until it has been touched by another player.

The ball cannot be thrown directly into a goal off of the throw in, it must be touched (by any player other than the thrower) before a goal can be scored.

To be considered a legal throw in:

- The ball must be thrown with both hands and the ball shall be thrown directly over the head
- Both feet must be in contact with the ground on or behind the touchline at the moment the ball is released by the thrower

Players in the 8U division will be given a second throw in attempt if the first throw in is done incorrectly.

*NOTE: Players in the 6U division will kick the ball back into play rather than throw it in.*

#### **Law 16 – Goal Kick**



A goal kick, taken by any defending player, is a way of restarting the game when the ball has been put out of play along the goal line by an attacking player.

The goal kick can be taken from anywhere inside the goal area.

The ball must not be moving when it is kicked.

The team taking the goal kick is entitled to have all opposing players outside the penalty area, but may elect to kick the ball without waiting for opponents to clear the penalty area (exception: all 8U goal kicks will be taken with the opponent outside the penalty area).

The player taking the goal kick may not play the ball again until it has been touched by another player.

The ball is in play once it leaves the penalty area. The goal kick will be retaken if:

- The ball does not leave the penalty area, or
- The ball is played by any player before it leaves the penalty area

*NOTE: 6U goal kicks will be taken from the top of the penalty box with opponents a*  
**Law 17 – Corner Kick**

A corner kick is taken by any offensive player in order to put the ball in to play when the ball has been put out of play across the goal line by the defensive team.

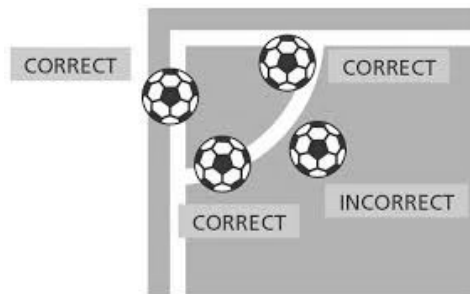
The ball will be placed in the corner arc nearest the side of the field where it went out of play. The ball may be placed anywhere within or on the arc or on a painted line (see image below).

A player taking the corner kick may not play the ball again until it has been touched by another player.

The ball must not be moving when it is kicked.

The kicker may score by kicking the ball directly into the goal.

- 6U & 8U – Opponents must be a minimum of six yards away from the corner kick
- 10U & 13U – Opponents must be a minimum of 10 yards away from the corner kick



*taken from the top of the minimum of six yards away.*

offensive player in order to put has been put out of play across team.

corner arc nearest the side of

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## Player Participation

All players must participate in a minimum of half of each game. There is NO excuse not to get all of your players into the game. Players have signed up to PLAY soccer. They did not sign up to WATCH soccer.

## Girl Players

Each team must have half of their girls (that are present at the game) on the field at all times. If the Referee observes that a team is not abiding by this rule, the game will be temporarily suspended until the correct number of girls are placed on the field.

# Girls Present	# Girls in Game
2	1
3	2
4	2
5	3
6	3

## Equipment

All coaches will receive a set of soccer balls and cones to use at each practice and game. You will return this equipment upon the conclusion of the season. Please take care of the equipment you receive; do not leave it where it can be stolen or exposed to the elements.

Players must provide their own shin guards to be worn (under their socks) during all practices and games. Any player without shin guards will not be permitted to participate. Players may wear cleats, but cleats must be soccer-style (with no cleat under the front toe area of the shoe) and made of rubber or plastic. No metal cleats or baseball / football style cleats are permitted.

## Tobacco / Alcohol

Use of tobacco or alcohol is prohibited in all County parks and facilities.

## First Aid / AED

In the event of an accident or an injury, a First Aid kit and an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) will be available in the Concession Stand.

### **Library References**

The Suwannee River Regional Library has several books and videos on coaching and playing soccer available to assist you during your season.

*The Manual of Soccer Coaching*  
Reese, Roy  
Call No. 796.334 Ree

*Go For the Goal*  
Murray, Stuart  
Call No. 796.334 Mur

*The Complete Book of Youth Soccer Coaching*  
Whitehead, Simon  
Call No. 796.334 Whi

*Soccer for All Ages (video)*  
Call No. 796.3 Soc

### **Internet Resources**

National Soccer Coaches Association of America.....[www.nscaa.com](http://www.nscaa.com)

Coaching Soccer 101.....[www.coachingsoccer101.com](http://www.coachingsoccer101.com)

Soccer Help.....[www.soccerhelp.com](http://www.soccerhelp.com)

Soccer Xpert.....[www.soccerxpert.com](http://www.soccerxpert.com)

Please take the time to review some of the sources listed above, or do your own research. The more prepared you are for your season, the more successful your season will be.

## **COACHING RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS**

### **Call the Players on Your Team Immediately**

Once you receive your roster, notify your players as soon as you can. They have been waiting to play and they are looking forward to hearing from you. Inform them of your first scheduled practice. Be sure to tell them what time they need to be at practice and where they need to go. Also inform them of any necessary items they should bring to your practice.

### **Hold a Parent Meeting at your First Practice**

Introduce yourself to the parents and players on your team. Tell them about yourself and your coaching philosophy. Answer their questions and motivate them to get involved. This is a good opportunity to recruit assistant coaches or a Team Mom.

### **Have a Plan for Each Practice and Game**

Take the time to create a practice plan before getting to the park. Knowing what your team needs to practice and having a plan to practice effectively will allow you to make the most of your practice time.

### **Be on Time and be Prepared**

Do you expect your players to be on time, ready to participate? Your team will expect the same from you. Each time has a limited amount of practice time available. Maximize your time by arriving early and setting up any drills or games you plan on conducting during practice so you can get started quickly.

### **Communicate with your Team**

It is essential that you stay in constant contact with your team. Make sure that every player receives a call to inform them of practices, games, and other important team information. The most frequent complaint we receive is, "My coach never called me!"

### **Make your Practices and Games Enjoyable**

Simply put, the players on your team signed up to play soccer to have fun. Make your practices fun by keeping your players moving as much as possible. Avoid "long line" drills where players are doing more standing than playing. Go the extra mile to create a memorable experience for your players. The season will only be as good as you make it. Keep things simple and focus on the fundamentals.

### **Learn the Rules for your Age Division and Teach them to your Players (and Parents)**

The Laws of the Game are relatively straightforward, however, there are different rules for each age division. Review the Laws of the Game packet and understand how each law will affect your team. Ask questions if you don't understand a particular rule or scenario.

### **Provide a Safe Environment**

Examine the playing field prior to practice and games. If there is an unsafe condition, notify a Suwannee Parks & Recreation staff member immediately. Do not put your players in a position where they could be hurt. Accidents will happen, but do your best to eliminate unsafe conditions.

### **Be Respectful to all Coaches, Parents, Players, Officials and Staff**

Follow the Golden Rule and treat others the way you wish to be treated. We have enough children in the park playing soccer, we don't need to have adults acting like children.