

West Sonoma County Youth Soccer Playing League Rules 2019

GAME PLAY IS GOVERNED BY THESE PLAYING LEAGUE RULES.

SEASON:

- The start of the season will be approximately the second to the last week in August, or as close thereto as possible. In 2019, games will start after August 17th and Opening Weekend will be August 24th.
- Approximately 8-12 games (at the scheduler's discretion). U-7 teams will play fewer games and only on Saturday at the beginning of the season to allow for more training.
- **WESCO Harvest Cup** Tournament 2019 dates are October 19th and 20th. All age groups and teams will be included unless there are not enough for a bracket of play. There is a **Harvest Cup** team entry fee which is included in the team sponsorship. Teams without a sponsor must pay a fee to enter the tournament.
- U-11, U-13 and U-15 season winners will be determined by straight points (3 points for a win, 1 point for a tie). Tie breakers will be head-to-head results, then goals scored during the season, then least goals conceded during the season.
- U-5, U-7, and U-9 players will all receive participation awards.

FORFEITS, CANCELLATIONS, RAINOUTS:

- Rain-out notification will come from the League; check the website, www.wescosoccer.org, for updates. A date and time will be given later for make-up games if possible. If a team is unable to make the makeup date they will forfeit the game, as long as the opposing team shows up with the requisite minimum number of players.
- Games will NOT be canceled except by league officials for weather conditions or dire emergency, or at the discretion of the referee, or as below.
- Teams are required to wait 15 minutes after scheduled game time before leaving the field if the opposing team is not present or has too few players to start game. A team may start the game with a minimum number of players. (See attached modified age group rules.)
- Rescheduling or forfeits will be determined by the League. In the event the game cannot be replayed, the game shall stand as a tie, scoring 1-1. Rescheduling shall be determined by the league scheduler.
- In the absence of a scheduled referee for a league game a suitable substitute(s) agreed upon by both coaches may serve as referee(s). The game will then be played under normal League rules. Either team may cancel without forfeiture before start of play.
- If a game is abandoned by a referee, it will be referred to the WESCO PAD committee for review within 48 hours and a recommendation will be presented to the League within 7 days.

SELECTION OF COACHES:

- Selection of coaches shall be made by the Directors of Coaching and a list submitted to the Rec Committee at their meeting, except that WESCO SELECT coaches must be submitted to the Board when chosen. Paid coaches and trainers shall be screened by a Committee and recommended to the Board.
- All coaches in the WESCO/WCU League shall complete an approved Coaches Application form online as directed by the League Registrar. Coaches may also be subject to coach background screening or other protocols as determined by the League.

FORMATION OF TEAMS:

- All WESCO SELECT teams shall be formed by a date established by the League, and a team roster submitted to the League Registrar not later than the August Board meeting.
- All Recreational teams within an age group shall be formed so as to be equal in ability when more than one team exists in an age/gender band. Teams will be formed in a North-South format.
- Teams playing in Cal North Dist. 5 shall be formed in accordance with District Playing League Rules.
- Teams shall be formed by a draft process as specified by the Rec Committee/League.
- Coaches must select their child as a selection at the appropriate rating. One assistant coach's child must be selected as a selection at the appropriate rating to be guaranteed (“protected”) placement on their team.
- Recreational play-ups are approved by the Rec Committee except for U-15, U-16 and U-19 teams. Class I and Class III play-ups as well as U-15, U-16 and U-19 must be approved by the Board of Directors. Any player requesting to play up must attend the evaluation in the age group they want to play in and score at least a 3 (out of 5) on their evaluation score. Play-ups will be placed only if they do not displace players legitimately in the age group or unfavorably impact the teams in their legitimate age group (leaving them short of players). Play-ups still require the Rec Committee/League's approval.
- Requests for placement on a specific team, or to play with another specific player must be made before team formation. In addition, if the player(s) are in the U11 division or above, they must attend a player evaluation day in the spring and also request this placement in person at a meeting of the League Board. Any requests for team placement must have a legitimate (hardship) reason.
- Improper team selection, use of non-registered players or players not drafted by their specific team will result in the loss of all points for all League games played until the team is redrafted as specified by the league.
- If coaches play players other than those registered on their team, they shall be given a forfeit and will be brought before the Board for disciplinary action. ***This is a very serious breach of League rules.***
- A coach may request that the league verify a player’s eligibility by checking registration forms.
- Players signed up after the formation of teams shall be placed only if players are needed to fill an existing team.

ASSIGNMENT OF PLAYERS:

- All players within an age group shall be notified of at least one (1) pre-draft evaluation where their skills can be assessed before team selection. This applies to teams where there is more than one team in any age/gender group (except U-5, U-7, & U-9). Coaches within an age group shall be encouraged to attend that age group's evaluation.
- Every attempt will be made to have players assigned to a team. If players have registered and a coach has not been found for that team, parents shall be notified and refunds granted if no volunteer coaches come forward.
- In the event that there are too many players for the available team, assignment to team shall be based upon the time and date of registration. Early sign-ups will be placed on teams first.

FIELD RULES:

- Players in all recreational age groups **must play at least 50% of each game.** The penalty for noncompliance is forfeiture of the disputed game. (Players in Class I and III participate in accordance with District League Rules)
- A coach who plans to keep a player out for sickness or disciplinary reasons shall inform the other coach, the referee, the player involved and the player's parent or guardian prior to the game.
- When a jersey color conflict exists, the home team must wear pinnies.
- The home team is responsible for providing three properly inflated game balls for each game played, however the referee has final decision on the most suitable ball to be used.
- Coaches must confine themselves to the area 10 yards to either side of the centerfield line. Parents are not allowed to roam up and down the sidelines, or to stand near the goal areas, to coach and/or advise the players.
- A player who is shown a Yellow Card, must be substituted; the player may return to the game at the next legal substitution opportunity, at the discretion of the coach.
- All substitutions must be made from the sidelines at the center of the field and only after receiving a signal from the referee. Unlimited substitutions may be made: (See special rules for U-5, U-7, & U-9 below).
- Substitutions can be made:
 - Prior to either team's throw-in and prior to either team's goal kick
 - After a goal by either team, and at half-time
 - For an injured player, when play has stopped; *both* teams may substitute players
 - For a cautioned player, before play resumes

POLICY ON RUNNING UP THE SCORE

- WESCO plays under the United States Youth Soccer Association code of conduct (Fair Play) which states that the emphasis to your team should be that there is more to the game than just the

final score. We realize that at times the talent of one team will exceed that of another. If during the course of a game, your team has a point lead of 5, you should introduce one or more of these techniques to try and minimize your team's scoring of more points. *Please make every effort to minimize the differential in the score. A forfeit will be imposed for a score differential of more than 7 points at the end of the game. Own goals do not count.*

TACTICAL COACHING SUGGESTIONS TO AVOID HIGH SCORE DIFFERENTIALS

- Player Positioning: Switch key player positions [Example: striker/center forward moves to goalie or sweeper; switching midfield to defensive (back) mid positioning]; limit attacking midfield
- Shooting: Chip shots only; outside-the-box shots only. Opposite dominant foot shots (or "left foot only" shots). Chest traps to volleys from at least 15 yards from goal line
- Passing: Only have crosses enter inside the box, then pass out. Minimum amount of touches/passes prior to shot [Example: Minimum 5 touches/passes to same team without interference from opponent, then shoot].

REFEREES:

- An active referee is determined by guidelines set up by the USSF.
- **Each team will be required to make a "linesperson" available for each scheduled game if needed. At the referee's discretion, the coach may be required to line the game if a parent volunteer is not available. "Club Linespersons" can only indicate when the ball is out of bounds.**
- Each Recreational team is required to have at least one trained adult referee who is not the coach.
- All WESCO referees will be required to wear the appropriate USSF Referees Uniform in a neat, proper, and professional appearance (i.e. shirts tucked in, socks pulled up over calf etc.) The WESCO Referees Coordinator will oversee the uniform dress code.
- If a coach behaves in an unsporting manner, at the recommendation of the Referee's Coordinator and the approval of the Board, the coach in question will be **suspended for at least two (2) games**. Any further incident may result in suspension for the duration of the season.
- **Coaches are responsible for the behavior of their players and their spectators.** If the players and/or spectators cannot be controlled, the coach will be held responsible and penalized.

PLAYER REQUIREMENTS:

- All players must be registered with the league to participate in League sanctioned games and practices. Registered players may not wear their League or Club logos while participating in games or scrimmages against non-affiliated teams, and are not covered by League insurance for non-sanctioned play.
- All players must wear shin guards at all practices and games. Shin guards must be made of a firm material (i.e. plastic, plastic with metal inserts, solid molded foam etc.). No old style soft foam-rubber shin pads shall be allowed. Soccer type shoes are recommended. No toe cleats are allowed.

Traxion type cleats are allowed. All players must wear socks pulled completely over their shin guards.

- All players must wear club approved uniforms with League approved colors to League games, which include a jersey with a number, matching shorts and socks; socks must be of the same color for the entire team.
- All team members to wear matching uniforms.
- There will **be absolutely no wearing of any type of jewelry** etc. that could be dangerous to either a player him/herself or to another player (i.e. watches, wristbands, any type of ring "ear, nose, finger etc", hats, headbands, bandannas, metal hair clips, berets, beads, pins, chewing gum etc.) Long fingernails may be required to be covered with tape or gloves.
- The goalkeeper must have proper attire. A goalie jersey or equivalent is allowed. Tank tops, sports bra etc. are not allowed even if goalie is distinguishable from other players,
- U-5 and U-7 will use a size 3 ball. U-9 and U-11 divisions will use a size 4 ball. All other ages will use a size 5 ball.

VIOLATION AND COMPLAINTS:

- All violations and complaints after a 24 hour waiting period (separate from FIFA playing rules) must be submitted to the league P.A.D. Committee via email (soccer@sonic.net) or dropped off directly at the League office (130 South Main Street, Suite 213, Sebastopol).
- Red cards given to players and/or coach ejections are reported to the League by the referee of record. Send-Off Reports shall be forwarded to the League President and P.A.D. Committee within 72 hours. He will act in accordance with WESCO Bylaws.
- **A player red card is an automatic one game suspension. Coach ejections are not subject to protest or appeal.** Only penalties above set minimums can be appealed.
- Protests and appeals from coaches are sent to the P.A.D. Committee. Only violations of the rules of this competition or misapplication of the "Laws of the Game" shall be proper subjects to be considered for action. Judgment calls by referees on the field ***are not subject to appeal.***
- Protests and appeals are to be in writing (typed or printed), and mailed to the WESCO Corporation President and shall be accompanied with a fee of Fifty dollars (\$50). Such protest or appeal shall be postmarked within five (5) working days after the official notification of the suspension.

Additional Rules for U7 Division

THE FIELD: Will be a rectangle approximately 20 by 30 yards. Place cones in 4 corners and midway on touchline to mark center line.

THE BALL: Will be a Size 3 ball.

GOAL SIZE: 4 feet high, 6 feet wide

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: Each team will ideally consist of 7 (seven) players with a maximum of 9 (nine) players. The maximum number of players on the field is 4 (four) at any one time. A minimum number of 3 (three) players is needed to start a game. There will be **NO goalkeeper. DO NOT** position a player near the opponent's goal. Players must position themselves at least 10 (ten) feet from the goal. Unlimited substitutions will apply. These substitutions can be made on the run. (i.e. without a stoppage in play). **Each player shall play at least 50% of each game.**

LENGTH OF GAME: Each game shall consist of 4 (four) 8-minute quarters, with 3 minute breaks between quarters and five minutes for the half-time. The home team shall take kick-off to start the first half. Visitors start second half with kick-off. Opponents must be 3 yards away from center mark when kick-off is taken.

REFEREES: Two volunteer parents or coaches, one from each team. The whistle should be blown **only** for the start and finish of a half. All other calls should be **spoken out** (i.e. "red throw in"). The rules, and infractions of them, should be explained **very briefly** to the offending player as play continues. When injuries require a stoppage of play, restarts are made by a ball being dropped by the "referee" between two opposing players, who must wait until the ball hits the ground before playing it. **Other restarts are by throw-in. There are no direct kicks, no penalty kicks.**

SCORES: There shall be **NO score** kept. After a goal, the team scored upon takes a kick-off.

COACHES: Each team will be allowed 1 (one) coach on the field at any one time to talk to and instruct his/her players on the game of soccer. Keep instructions brief; do not interrupt play.

THROW-INS: Players receive 2 tries at a proper throw-in. Coaches should explain correct method. After two incorrect tries another player should be given a chance.

HEADING: Deliberate heading during a game is a foul resulting in an indirect free kick by the opposing team at the spot of the offense

IMPORTANT NOTE: It is essential that all participants remember that the U-7 program will not concentrate on competition or on winning games. Instead, this program will exist for the purpose of introducing very young children to the game of soccer. Our objective will be to give the children involved a positive, rewarding, and happy first experience with the beautiful game of soccer.

Additional Rules for U9 Division

It is suggested that Monitors meet with both coaches before every game and review the rules, so there are no misunderstandings. Take this list to games with you for reference.

THE FIELD: Will be a rectangle approximately 30 by 50 yards. The center circle has a radius of 6 yards. The goal area is 3 yards from each goal post and 3 yards into the field of play. The goals will be a maximum of 6 feet high and 12 feet wide. **NO PENALTY AREA.**

THE BALL: Will be a size 4 ball.

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: Each team will ideally consist of 10 (ten) players with a maximum of 13 (thirteen) players. The maximum number of players on the field is 7 (seven), including a goal keeper, at any one time. A minimum number of 5 (five) players is needed to start a game. Substitutions may be made any time the game is stopped.

Each player shall play at least 50% of each game.

LENGTH OF GAME: Each game shall consist of 2 (two) 25-minute periods, with a 5 minute break between each. At kick-off (start of halves and after a goal) opponents must be 6 yards away from center mark when kick-off is taken.

REFEREES: The League will provide a Monitor (youth game official) for games. If a Monitor is not available, two volunteer parents or coaches are drafted, one from each team, one half each. Calls should be spoken out (i.e. "red throw in"). The rules and infractions of them, should be explained very briefly to the offending player as play continues. When injuries require a stoppage of play, restarts are made by a ball being dropped by the Monitor between two opposing players, who must wait until the ball hits the ground before playing it.

BALL IN & OUT OF PLAY: Players receive 2 tries for a proper throw-in. Monitors should explain correct method after first attempt.

NO PENALTY KICKS OR DIRECT KICKS: All kicks will be indirect and are taken from outside the defending team's goal box. There is **NO PENALTY AREA**. There is **NO OFF-SIDE** penalty. However, players cannot be stationed by the opponent's goal, since this will be considered as *unfair and unsporting conduct*.

BUILD-OUT LINE: When the goalkeeper has the ball (either during play or from a goal kick) the opposing team will need to drop behind the build-out line. This line is halfway between the penalty box and the half line. Once the opposing team is behind the build-out line the goalkeeper can pass, throw underhand or roll the ball to a teammate – **NO punting** will be allowed. After the ball is put into play by the goalkeeper the opposing team can cross the build-out line and play resumes as normal.

HEADING: Heading during a game is a foul resulting in an indirect free kick by the opposing team at the spot of the offense. Heading should **NOT** be taught during practices.

SCORES: Score may be kept, but there is no League Scorekeeper or Standing for this age group and there will be no "place" awards.

Additional Rules for U11 Division

THE FIELD: Will be a rectangle approximately 40 by 70 yards. The center circle has a radius of 6 yards. The goal area is 6 yards from each goal post and 6 yards into the field of play. The goals will be a maximum of 6 1/2 feet high and 18 feet wide. The Penalty Area is 14 yards from each goal post and 14 yards into the field of play.

THE BALL: Will be a size 4 ball.

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: Each team will ideally consist of 12 (twelve) players with a maximum of 14 (fourteen) players. The maximum number of players on the field is 9 (nine), including a goal keeper, at any one time. A minimum number of 6 (six) players is needed to start a game. **Each player shall play at least 50% of each game.**

LENGTH OF GAME: Each game shall consist of 2 (two) 30 minute halves, with 5 minutes for the half-time.

REFEREES: Normally youth referees will be assigned to officiate these games. **Coaches and parents are reminded that these referees are developing their referee skills, just as the players are improving their game skills.** The important concerns are safety and fair play. If no referee is available, a coach or parent may serve as referee, as agreed upon by the two team coaches.

DIRECT KICKS, PENALTY KICKS AND OFFSIDES: There are NO Direct Kicks for this age group but offsides will be enforced. Any foul within the penalty box only rewards an indirect free kick.

HEADING: Heading should not be practiced and is not allowed in game. Deliberate heading during a game is a foul resulting in an indirect free kick by the opposing team at the spot of the offense.

Additional Rules for U13 Division

THE FIELD: Will be a rectangle approximately 50 by 75 yards. The center circle has a radius of 10 yards. The goal area is 6 yards from each goal post and 6 yards into the field of play. The goals will be a maximum of 6 1/2 feet high and 18 feet wide. The Penalty Area is 18 yards from each goal post and 18 yards into the field of play.

THE BALL: Will be a size 5 ball.

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: Each team will ideally consist of 15 (fifteen) players with a maximum of 18 (eighteen) players. The maximum number of players on the field is 11 (eleven), including a goal keeper, at any one time. A minimum number of 7 (seven) players is needed to start a game. **Each player shall play at least 50% of each game.**

LENGTH OF GAME: Each game shall consist of 2 (two) 35 minute halves, with 5 minutes for the half-time.

REFEREES: Normally youth referees will be assigned to officiate these games. **Coaches and parents are reminded that these referees are developing their referee skills, just as the players are improving their game skills.** The important concerns are safety and fair play. If no referee is available, a coach or parent may serve as referee, as agreed upon by the two team coaches.

HEADING: Minimal heading training allowed only during practice – not allowed in game. Deliberate heading during a game is a foul resulting in an indirect free kick by the opposing team at the spot of the offense.

Additional Rules for U15 Division

THE FIELD: Will be a rectangle approximately 50 by 75 yards. The center circle has a radius of 10 yards. The goal area is 6 yards from each goal post and 6 yards into the field of play. The goals will be a maximum of 7 feet high and 21 feet wide. The Penalty Area is 18 yards from each goal post and 18 yards into the field of play.

THE BALL: Will be a size 5 ball.

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: Each team will ideally consist of 15 (fifteen) players with a maximum of 18 (eighteen) players. The maximum number of players on the field is 11 (eleven), including a goal keeper, at any one time. A minimum number of 7 (seven) players is needed to start a game. **Each player shall play at least 50% of each game.**

LENGTH OF GAME: Each game shall consist of 2 (two) 40 minute halves, with 5 minutes for the half-time.

REFEREES: Often youth referees will be assigned to officiate these games. **Coaches and parents are reminded that these referees are developing their referee skills, just as the players are improving their game skills.** The important concerns are safety and fair play. If no referee is available, a coach or parent may serve as referee, as agreed upon by the two team coaches.

HEADING: Minimal heading training allowed during practice – and is allowed in game.

A Brief Review of the Laws of Soccer

The referee should know and apply all of the "Laws of the Game". Here we will cover only those which are most visible to spectators and new players. Rules for our WESCO U5 – U11 divisions supersede those below.

LAW VIII: START OF PLAY

Play begins with a kickoff. Which team kicks is decided by the coin toss. (Winner of the toss decides which direction to attack at the start of the game.) All players must be on their own side of the centerfield line and players on the team not kicking must be outside the Center Circle. The ball can be kicked in any direction, and may not be touched again by the kicker until it has been touched by another player. It is "in play" as soon as it rolls, and any player except the kicker may kick it at that time.

BALL OUT OF PLAY AND RESTARTS

LAW XV: THROW-IN. When the whole ball passes completely across either touchline ("sideline") it is put back into play with a throw-in by the team which did not put it out. A legal throw-in starts behind and comes over the head. It is thrown (not just dropped) with both hands. The thrower must face the field with part of his/her body and *both feet* must be touching the touchline or the ground *outside* the field of play when the ball is released. Because proper throw-ins are difficult for young players, **U-7 and U-9 get 2 tries**. Illegal throw-ins result in the "turnover" of the ball to the other team.

LAW XVI: GOAL KICK. When the *attacking* team kicks the ball over the goal line (instead of into the goal), the defending team puts it back into play with a kick from anywhere within the goal area. (See special U-7 - U-11 rules). Defending players may remain inside their own penalty area while the ball is kicked, but no attacking player may touch the ball before it crosses out of the penalty area.

LAW XVII: CORNER KICK. When the *defending* team kicks the ball over its own goal line (and not into their goal), the attacking team puts it back in play with a kick from the Corner Arc on the side where the ball went out. The ball need only be anywhere in the arc; the kicker may only kick it once.

LAW XII: FOULS AND FREE KICKS. There are 10 major fouls: holding, pushing, kicking, tripping, hitting, spitting at an opponent, handling the ball (except as goalie or on a throw-in), jumping at a player or the ball, making contact with an opponent before touching the ball [on a tackle], and charging violently [or from behind]. Serious fouls result in the violator being cautioned ("Yellow Carded") or ejected ("Red Carded") from the game and the field. Ejected players may not be replaced, and the game continues with a reduced team. When any of the major fouls occur inside the fouler's own penalty area, the attacking team is awarded a PENALTY KICK. This kick is taken from a spot 12 yards in front of the goalmouth and only the kicker and goalie may be inside the penalty area or the penalty arc until the ball is kicked. The goalie may *only move sideways on the goal line* until the kick is taken.

There are six lesser fouls: playing in a dangerous manner, obstructing an opponent's progress [when not playing the ball], preventing the keeper from releasing the ball from his/her hands, the goalkeeper playing the ball again with hands after releasing it, the goalkeeper handling the ball when it has been kicked to him/her by a teammate, and the goalkeeper handling the ball directly from a teammates throw-in. These fouls give the opposing team an "INDIRECT" FREE KICK (i.e., the ball must touch another player from either team before going into the goal or the goal does not count).

In addition to the above fouls, there are other types of unfair or "unsporting" actions for which players may be cautioned or ejected. Two common ones are **using foul language**, and showing **disagreement** [dissent] with regard to the referee's judgment calls. (**WARNING:** These violations may be applied to the coach, substitute players, and spectators).

LAW XI: OFFSIDE: An *attacking* player who is not in possession of the ball and is in the attacking half of the field must have at least two opponents ("defenders") between her/him and the goal **AT THE MOMENT A TEAMMATE PASSES THE BALL FORWARD**. Merely being in an offside position does not warrant a penalty, but if *in the judgment of the referee*, he/she may gain an advantage from being in an offside position, or interferes with an opponent or with play, then the penalty applies. The opposing goalkeeper counts as one defender. The best strategy is to keep two players between you and the goal when receiving a pass in your attacking half of the field. There is no offside direct from a throw-in, goal kick, corner kick, or when the ball has been dropped by the referee. The penalty for offside is an Indirect Free Kick for the opposing team.