



# Monroe United Recreational Soccer League

## Code of Conduct for Coaches, Players & Parents

*Revised 9/18/24*

Our goal is to bring families from all over Monroe County and the surrounding areas together in the fun and enjoyment of the game of soccer. Our League offers developmental/recreational play for all children in the 10U, 13U & 17U age groups.

Our focus is to provide a healthy, safe and enjoyable environment for all children, promoting good sportsmanship and fair play, where they can build character as they develop their skills and have fun playing the game with their friends.

Our guidelines for success are outlined herein.

### **Coaches:**

Coaching children in organized youth sports programs is a privilege and an honor offered to responsible Club level volunteers annually. The job requires a high level of commitment, and carries with it an obligation to uphold and abide by the rules and guidelines published by FIFA, the New York State West Youth Soccer Association, (herein referred to as NYSW, ([www.nyswysa.org](http://www.nyswysa.org)), and the League, ([www.mursl.org](http://www.mursl.org)), as well as those published by each member organization.

ALL TEAM STAFF must be registered with NYSW by their parent organizations. Once approved and assigned to a team, Head Coaches CANNOT go about securing additional volunteers to staff their teams without knowledge and approval of the parent organization.

There are many things that volunteer coaches must consider as they work with their children to develop their skills, and prepare them to participate in League play.

First and foremost is that this is a recreational soccer League, not Travel, Modified, JV, Varsity or ODP. There are no standings kept. There is no 1st place or last place. It's all about being outdoors, playing the game with friends, making new friends and having fun.

A coach's win/loss record is irrelevant. There is NO REASON for coaches to be jumping up and down on the sidelines or berating referees. Coaches are a solid role model for players, and their actions and behavior should reflect that. Win, lose or tie, what matters is that players are having fun practicing and playing the game.

With that in mind, the League would like to illuminate the Zero Tolerance Policy, published by NYSW, with a League addendum attached. This document, as well as all pertinent League documents, schedules, guidelines, etc., can be found on the League website. This policy should be reviewed by all member organizations with their coaches prior to the start of the season. All coaches must uphold and abide by this policy, and be in control of their respective sidelines on game day.

The League would also like to illuminate the rule regarding a recurring issue that all member organizations and their coaches should be concerned about - lopsided games. There is NO REASON for a soccer game to have double digit lopsided scores. We understand that for some, the success they have out on the soccer field participating in organized sports is the best thing they have going for them in their lives. Success can be had in a 2-0 game just as well as in a 15-0 game, and lesser opponents and their coaches and families don't leave the field feeling dejected or beat down. We also understand that situations such as this are life lessons that children need to learn how to handle in their lives, but this is RECREATIONAL SOCCER. It's all about having fun. Coaches must consider the psychological affect extreme lopsided games has on young players, and make every effort to attempt to keep lesser opponents in the game. The specifics regarding this are outlined in the published League rules documents, which should also be reviewed by member organizations with their coaches before the start of the season. We also publish some good reading on the subject on our website as well. We hope coaches will make use of this information.

Clubs will be tasked with providing the League with their Lopsided Games Plan PRIOR TO the start of League play annually. League reps from each Club will be tasked with ENSURING that coaches are informed and up to speed with the League's expectations in this regard.

Another thing to consider is coaching education. Many of our League coaches have played the game, and are licensed, experienced coaches. Many are also very new to the game and to coaching as well. The League strongly encourages all coaches from any age level to undertake formal coach training. NYSW offers all levels of training, both online and in person, with many sessions held annually in our area. Many of our member organizations require some sort of formal training before applicants can be considered for coaching positions, and some go as far as to host NYSW training in their communities, opening their doors for individuals to participate, regardless of club affiliation. Visit the NYSW website for more information on upcoming training in your area.

The League strongly encourages coaches to take advantage of every opportunity to offer team practice sessions. Professional coaches and instructors will tell you that there should be 2 practice sessions for every game played. While that may not be feasible realistically, nonetheless the League would like to see coaches make an earnest effort. Children will no doubt benefit from the effort. **ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD NOT BE LIMITING THE NUMBER OF PRACTICE SESSIONS THAT A COACH MAY OFFER TO HIS TEAM.** That practice frankly is ridiculous. Coaches should be PRAISED in their efforts to offer as many opportunities for their teams to practice as possible.

Coaches should be well prepared for their practice sessions. Players and parents definitely do take notice when they arrive at the field to find the Coach is already there and has the field setup with cones, flags, speed ladders, etc. The League recommends that coaches have a written practice plan in hand to follow for all sessions. Sometimes planned drills or exercises don't go over very well, so coaches should be prepared with an

alternate drill or exercise just in case. The League offers a blank practice session planner for coaches to make use of, which can be found on our website.

The Internet is the gateway to vast resources that can be found as easily as searching for “xxU soccer practice plans”, or variations on the theme. Practices should be just as much fun as League play, so keep in mind this “Rule of Thumb” for fun practice sessions: No laps, no lines, and no lectures! If a practice plan requires running for conditioning, have players take a ball with them. Structure laps with different dribbling techniques. For fun, have them toss the ball back and forth trying to keep it off the ground as they run. Be creative. Rosters can have as many as 26 children at the older age levels. Keep lines as short as possible when practicing. Nothing bores a player more than standing in line waiting to do something, except maybe a long winded coach who talks too much! Keep instruction brief and to the point, and then turn them loose and let them have fun with it.

### **Parents:**

Volunteer coaches look towards parents for support. Be familiar with League rules and the rules of the game. Offer support and show respect for coaches and officials.

The aforementioned Zero Tolerance Policies apply to parents as well. Be familiar with these guidelines.

Avoid shouting out coaching instructions to players. Teams have coaches. Let them coach. Offer support to all players on the team. They love to hear spectators on their sideline cheering them on.

The Home Field Advantage rule is well defined in published League Rules documents. Be familiar with this rule, and be ready to abide by it and sit with your team on their sideline on game day.

Coaches and parents are role models for players. All must act accordingly.

This League is an avenue of equal opportunity for Clubs, teams and players from all communities and walks of life, regardless of race, creed or color, to come together in friendly recreational soccer games. Racial epithets, slurs or any other form of disrespectful behavior WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

Reinforce the principles of teamwork, fair play and good sportsmanship at all times with all players.

### **Players:**

Realize that much work goes on behind the scenes to make this all happen for players year after year. Enjoy yourselves. Have fun with your friends and make some new friends. That’s what it’s all about.

Do the best that you can do with whatever you choose to do in life. When the time comes to play soccer, give it your best effort and have fun with it. Don’t be afraid to ask your coach or any of your teammates to repeat an instruction or for some additional help in developing your skills. Teams are made up of players of all different skill levels. When working together as a team, strengths support weaknesses, and everyone has fun.

Respect coaches and officials at all times. They have earned it.

Play the game fairly, and exhibit good sportsmanship at all times. This is not MLS or the World Cup. If you win, great. If you lose, great. If you tie, great. Nobody cares what the score is. It’s all about having fun, and if you go out there and play to the best of your ability, then you will always walk away as a winner.

**For Everyone:**

Much work goes on behind the scenes, putting your respective programs together and then bringing them all together to compete in League play year after year. With everyone's cooperation, moving forward towards the same goal, we look forward to another enjoyable recreational soccer season!

Thank you all and let's have fun out there!