



DEVELOPING CHAMPIONS FOR LIFE!
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Challenge Grade 7-8 Abridged Rules & Key Reminders

All coaches, volunteers, and referees are encouraged to read Loudoun Soccer's full Rules and Policies document, available online on the club's website, which includes FIFA's Laws of the Game and Loudoun Soccer's modifications to those Laws.

Several updates to rules and policies are made each season; the purpose of this document is to highlight changes and reminders that are most significant to you and your role as coach and/or referee.

General Reminders for ALL Teams:

Team Rosters: Only players appearing on each team's official Loudoun Soccer roster are permitted to play in matches and to participate in practice. The participation of unregistered players may result in disciplinary measures against the coach and/or forfeiture of match results.

Team Officials – Registering, Background Check, SafeSport Training:

All Team Officials (head coach, assistant coach, etc.) MUST register with Loudoun Soccer, pass a background check, and complete SafeSport (abuse prevention awareness) training. Anyone in a position of trust or authority with the team on or off the field is considered a Team Official. Team Officials will be listed on your online team page. Only Team Officials on your team page are permitted to coach.

Practices - Frequency and Space:

Teams may practice twice per week; canceled practices may be made up on Fridays. Teams are assigned practice field space by the club office. This assignment includes specific days, times, locations, and space. Most if not all teams will share a field with another team, and will receive half of a field within their format (ex: a Grade 1 team will have half of a 4v4 field, while a Grade 6 team will receive half of a 9v9 field).

Playing Time and Positions

Every player who attends at least one (1) scheduled practice each week must play at least one half (1/2) of that week's scheduled game; coaches should exercise common sense when appropriating playing time so that players are not punished with less playing time due to circumstances beyond their control (e.g. practice canceled due to weather). Coaches are expected to rotate players into different positions throughout each game and/or the season.

Technical Area:

Coaches and substitutes should remain at least 10 feet from the touchline (3 big steps from the field). Coaches must remain in their technical area (from midfield to the top of the penalty area) during the match. They may not enter the field of play without the referee's permission, and should not coach from within the penalty area, within the opposing team's half, or from behind the goal.

Sideline Behavior and Referee Abuse:

Team Officials are responsible for their personal behavior as well as that of their team (spectators and players). Unacceptable conduct such as inappropriate language, aggressive actions, etc. toward anyone (referees, other Team Officials, players, spectators, etc.) will NOT be tolerated. Disciplinary action – including suspensions – may be issued for conduct that is either alleged or confirmed – serious violations can result in a suspension while facts are verified. **There is ZERO TOLERANCE toward referee abuse.**

Uniform Colors:

Challenge: The "home" team should wear the "grade" based color, while the "visiting" team should wear PINK. Teams are expected to bring both jerseys to manage conflicts.



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Player Equipment:

Shin guards are mandatory at practices and games. Soccer cleats are encouraged but not required; athletic cleats with an extra toe stud (e.g. baseball or football cleats) are strictly prohibited. All jewelry must be removed; **covering earrings with tape is not permitted**. Equipment made of hard plastic or metal should be sufficiently padded and covered; however, participation in games is subject to the discretion of the ref.

Paid Coaches or Trainers:

Loudoun Soccer coaches and/or parents in the Recreation program shall not hire paid coaches or trainers for Recreational players or teams. Those interested in higher-level training are encouraged to contact the Club, who will assist in determining the exact needs and will develop a plan to meet those needs.

Inclement Weather:

Absolutely no activities may occur outdoors in the presence of thunder and/or lightning. The field must be vacated and all parties take shelter (in a building or a car); a 30-minute wait period is enforced following each sign of thunder or lightning. The coach is responsible for ensuring that all players are accounted for in these circumstances. The referee determines whether a match is suspended, abandoned, or played; the coach is responsible in the absence of a referee (e.g. at practices).

Concussions:

Any player suspected of suffering a concussion should be removed from play for evaluation and is barred from returning to play that day. The coach should submit the reporting form to the club office. The player may return to athletic activity only when a licensed healthcare provider has provided written clearance to the club.

Grades 7-8 Challenge: Changes, Clarifications and Emphasis:

- Practice length: each practice may be no longer than 90 minutes.
- Game format: 11v11, two 35-minute halves.
- Goalkeepers: a player may play this position the entire match, although coaches are encouraged to rotate players.
- Substitutions can be made at the following stoppages with the permission of the referee: any goal kick; any kickoff; your team's throw-in; the opposing team's throw-in if they're subbing too; an injury for the injured player (opposing team may also sub one player at this time); and after a player has been cautioned (although not required, the player shown a yellow card can be removed if the coach requests it).
- Slide tackling is permitted but is discouraged.
- Heading is permitted in games. For Grade 7: heading in training is limited to a maximum of 30 minutes per week with no more than 15-20 headers per day, per week. While no restriction is in place for Grade 8, common sense with frequency and repetition should prevail.
- No "Competitive Balance" rule exists in this age group; however, as a sign of good sportsmanship teams that are winning by a large margin (4+ goals) are expected to adjust their play (e.g. place players in positions they are not accustomed to, require a number of passes completed in a row before scoring, etc.) to prevent the goal difference from becoming excessive.
- Play Balance: in the event one or both teams do not have a full complement to field a team (e.g. 11 players to start the match), the number of players on each team will be equalized for that particular game, by the team with more players either loaning team members, or playing down member so that the same number of players on each team are on the field against each other (e.g. 10v10), as long as minimum playing time per player is still achieved.
- Players sent off (red carded) may not be replaced, which means that team will play short for the rest of that game. A player sent off may face additional disciplinary measures.

- Scores for matches are to be reported within 24 hours after the match concludes by the coaches to the designated representative (refs are to report scores per normal procedure). For games in which Play Balance is utilized, the score should be reported as a 1-0 victory in favor of the team lending players, and Play Balance should be noted.
- All **Challenge** teams advance to the one-day playoff round during the final Saturday of the regular season.
- For standings and playoff seeding purposes, and to prevent teams from running up the score, the maximum goal differential per game is four (e.g. teams that win 4-0 or 8-1 will both be credited with a +4 differential). Refer to the program page for additional details.