

Handbook
for the
Formation
& **Playing**
of the
“In-Town” Soccer League



Watertown Association for Youth Soccer

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1. Preface

This guide is intended to draw together all of the rules and regulations regarding the Watertown Association for Youth Soccer (WAYS) In-town soccer program, as played each fall and spring season. Whilst every effort has been made by the WAYS Board of Directors (BoD) to ensure its accuracy, the final authorities on this subject are the WAYS bylaws and any subsequent changes or additions approved by the BoD and recorded in the minutes of the monthly meeting of the same.

Any discrepancy between the guide and a WAYS bylaw or a decision of the BoD, should be reported to any member of the BoD as soon as possible after discovery.

2. Lack of Knowledge

In support of Connecticut Junior Soccer Association (CJSA) rule 1010, lack of knowledge of these rules will not relieve any coach, assistant coach, other team official, parent or player from responsibilities and possible penalties herein. All coaches, assistant coaches, other team officials, parents and players by their participation in a WAYS In-town program, agree to be bound by these rules.

3. Good Sport

It is the intention of the WAYS in-town program that coaches, assistant coaches, other team officials, parents and players will promote a spirit of sporting behavior in all activities associated with the WAYS in-town program. Furthermore it is expected that the preceding groups of people will support players and match officials in a positive manner.

Profanity, racial or sexist comments, or other intimidating comments or actions directed at match officials, coaches, assistant coaches, other team officials, parents, players or spectators will not be tolerated. Such behavior is grounds for removal from the site of the game or competition in question, and may be subject to disciplinary action by the WAYS BoD.

4. Matters Not Provided For

Except as otherwise provided herein, the “Laws of the Game” as published annually by the Federation Internationale de Football Associations (FIFA) shall apply to any and all in-town games played under the jurisdiction of WAYS. Any matter which is covered neither here nor in the “Laws of the Game” is subject to the decision of the WAYS BoD.

5. Formation of Divisions

Prior to each spring and fall season, the WAYS Registrar as appointed by the BoD shall form team rosters, comprising the players registered with WAYS as of that time, in the divisions noted in section 7 below, subject to there being sufficient such registrations. This is to be done by such means as are available at the time (i.e. computer program).

The minimum number of teams required to be formed per division is four (4). In the event, that it is not possible to form four teams into a given division, then the age groupings may be adjusted for that season only in order to allow all registered players to participate.

Once formed and distributed to coaches and/or assistant coaches, such teams are considered final. Players rostered may not be added, deleted or in any way ‘traded’ without the prior and express permission of the WAYS Registrar and the WAYS BoD.

Where players register after the initial formation of team rosters, such players shall be randomly placed on team rosters by WAYS Registrar. However, the primary reasoning behind such rostering should be to ensure that, as far as is practical, each team in the division is comprised of the same number of players.

6. Basis for Age Groups

Each player’s age to be used is that as of December 31st in the seasonal year (i.e. September to August).

Therefore, for the Fall season the player’s age to be used is that which (s)he will attain on or before the December 31st following the completion of the season.

7. Divisions to be Formed

The six divisions for play are to be formed as follows:

Division	Gender	Age Group
A	Boys	11 thru 14
C	Coed	Boys 7 & Girls 7 and 8
D	Girls	11 thru 15
E	Girls	9 and 10
F	Boys	8 and 10

8. Schedules

It is the intention of the WAYS BoD that all players be able to have the experience of regular season and play-off soccer.

Division Coordinators will develop a schedule for their respective divisions and submit it to the in-town coordinator and schedule coordinator for approval. All divisions must begin regular season in a timely manner, as directed by BoD. The schedule should only be changed with agreement of in-town coordinator and schedule coordinator. With this in mind, the recommended schedules for each number of teams is as follows:

#	REGULAR SEASON	PLAY OFF FORMAT
4	RR 3 times	(1v4,2v3),CG
5	RR 2 times	(4v5),(1v4/5,2v3),CG
6	RR 2 times	(3v6,4v5),(1v4/5,2v3/6),CG
7	**	**
8	2 subdivision, RR 3 times	(A1vB4,A2vB3,A3vB2,A4vB1) (A1/B4vA2/B3,A3/B2vA4/B1), CG
9		
10	2 subdivision AR 2 times	(A4vB5, A5vB4), (A4/B5vA1, B4/A5vB1 A2vB3,A3vB2), (A4/B5/A1 vA2/B3,B4/A5/B1 vA3/B2) CC

The numbers 1, 2 etc. refer to the position in the final standings. The letters A & B refer to two subdivisions where appropriate.

‘RR’ is “round-robin,” i.e. each team plays each other team the specified number of times.

‘CG’ is “Championship Game”

--Seven and nine teams per division are very difficult to schedule, whilst maintaining a balance between number of games and time available in the season. It is recommended that, if possible, teams be assigned to form six or eight teams

DETERMINATION OF STANDINGS

The FIFA points system shall be used to determine the regular season standings:

Win 3 points (includes win by forfeit)

Draw (Tie) 1 point

Loss 0 point

In the event that two or more teams are level on points at the end of the regular season, the following tie-breakers will apply:

1. Record in head to head competition
2. Goals scored, subject to a maximum of three per game played
3. Goal difference, subject to a maximum of three per game played
4. Coin Toss

A win by forfeit shall count as a 1-0 win for the purposes of ‘goals scored’ and ‘goal difference’.

9. Playing Rules

The “Laws of the Game” shall be modified as follows

LAW 1- THE FIELD OF PLAY

In ‘A’, Division, the dimensions of the field (Law 1, para 1), the goal area (Law 1, para 4), the penalty area (Law 1, para 5) and the goals (Law 1, para 8) shall apply as stated in the “Laws of the Game.”

In ‘C’, ‘D’, ‘E’ and ‘F’ Divisions the above mentioned parts of the field of play shall be reduced in size in consideration of (a) modifications to Law 3 and (b) such fields as are from time-to-time available.

In all Divisions, the field markings (Law 1, para 3), the flag posts (Law 1, para 6) and the corner arc (Law 1, para 7) are to remain in force.

LAW 2- THE BALL

In ‘A’, and ‘D’ Divisions, a size five (5) ball shall be used. ‘C’, ‘E’ and ‘F’ Divisions a size four (4) ball shall be used.

LAW 3- NUMBER OF PLAYERS

(1) A match shall be played by two teams consisting of not more than eleven (11) players, one of whom shall be the goalkeeper, and a match may not start if either team consists of fewer than seven (7) players, except:

(a) ‘C’, ‘E’ and ‘F’ Divisions teams shall consist of eight (8) players, one of whom shall be the goalkeeper, and a match may not start if either team consists of fewer than five (5) players.

(b) in all Divisions, games shall be contested between an equal number of players, excluding the cases of player(s) shown a red card and sent off from the field.

For example

(i) The ‘A’ division red team finds that only six (6) of its players have arrived by the designated start of the game. The game must not start until a seventh red team player arrives. If this does not happen within a reasonable amount of time, the referee must abandon the match and report the incident to the appropriate authorities.

(ii) The ‘A’ division blue team finds that only nine (9) of its players have arrived by the designated start of the game. The game must start with 9-v-9. If additional blue team players subsequently arrive, both teams may add a player (up to the maximum of eleven (11)) at an appropriate break in the play and with the permission of the referee. Once 11-v-11 has been

achieved, any further blue team player(s) would become substitutes.

(iii) The 'E' division green team finds that only six (6) of its players have arrived by the designated start of the game. The game must start with 6-v-6. If additional green team players subsequently arrive, both teams may add a player (up to the maximum of eight (8)) at an appropriate break in the play and with the permission of the referee. Once 8-v-8 has been achieved, any further green team player(s) would become substitutes.

(iv) A 'D' division game starts with the yellow and purple teams playing 11-v-11. After 20 minutes of play, a yellow team player is shown a red card and sent from the field. The game will continue with 11-v-10, purple having the advantage for the remainder of the game (subject to there being no further red cards).

(v) An 'F' division game starts with the white and grey teams, playing 8-v-8, but both teams have no substitutes available. After 10 minutes of play, a grey team player runs into a goal post and can subsequently take no further part in the game due to the injury. The game will continue with 7-v-7. In this instance the white team must remove a player from the field. The player so removed would, however, be available to be substituted back into the game in the normal manner, subject to retaining the 7-v-7 position.

(vi) An 'A' division game starts with the orange and grey teams, playing 11-v-11, but both teams have no substitutes available. After 50 minutes of play, a grey team player is shown a red card and sent from the field for a tackle on an orange team player, who can subsequently take no further part in the game due to injury. The game will continue with 10-v-9, orange having the advantage. In this instance the grey team must remove a player from the field in addition to the sent off player. The player so removed would, however, be available to be substituted back into the game in the normal manner, subject to retaining the 10-v-9 position.

(2) All rostered players who do not start a game shall be automatically 'named substitutes' for that game.

(3) Substitution shall be unlimited, meaning that a starting player may be replaced by a substitute, and may then reenter the game replacing either the player who replaced him, or any other.

In 'C' Division, substitution may take place, (i) at the break between quarters, by either team and (ii) after an injury, by either team, when the referee stops play, only.

In all other Divisions, substitution may take place, with the permission of the referee, at the following times:

Prior to a throw-in, by the team taking the throw-in only. Prior to a goal-kick, by either team. After a goal, by either team. After an injury, by either team, when the referee stops play. At half time.

LAW 7-DURATION OF THE GAME

The length of the game shall be as follows:

DIVISION	NORMAL TIME	OVER TIME*
A	2 x 40	2 x 15
C	2 x 35	2 x 10
D	2 x 40	2 x 15
E	2 x 30	2 x 10
F	4 x 15	2 x 10

*Overtime will be used only during Play-off and Championship games.

The half time interval in all divisions shall be ten (10) *minutes*. In addition, in 'C' division, a break of two (2) *minutes* is to be allowed between quarters.

Where it is apparent that, due to impending darkness and/or bad weather, a full game, as above, will not be completed, both coaches may agree to the shortening of the game to not less than half of the time above. If this is decided, then the referee must be informed before the start of play. In any event, the game must consist of two halves of play.

If a game (whether shortened as allowed above or not) is stopped by the referee, for any reason, before the completion of time specified above (or otherwise agreed) then:

- (a) If the game is a regular season game, and the second half of play has not started, then the game must be replayed in full.
- (b) If the game is a regular season game, and the second half of play has started, then the game score at the time of stoppage will be considered final, for the allocation of points and for goal difference.
- (c) If the game is a Play-Off or Championship game, and the game score is tied, then regardless of the time played prior to the stoppage. the game must be replayed in full.
- (d) If the game is a Play-Off or Championship game, and the game score is not tied, and the second half of play has not started, then the game must be replayed in full.
- (e) If the game is a Play-Off or Championship game, and the game score is not tied, and the second half of play has started, then the game score at the

time of the stoppage will be considered final, for advancement to a subsequent round of play, or for the awarding of the Championship trophies. The above paragraph applies even if the second half of play has completed, i.e. the game is in overtime at the time of the stoppage.

Overtime shall only be played in a Play-Off or Championship game. In all regular season games, a tie shall not be broken.

Prior to the start of overtime, an interval of five (5) minutes shall be allowed. There shall be no interval between the two halves of overtime

Where overtime is played, both halves must be played in their entirety. In the event that there is still no winner at the end of overtime, then FIFA “Kicks From The Mark” shall be used to determine a winner.

LAW 11- OFFSIDE

The offside law shall be enforced at all times in all divisions.

LAW 15 - THROW-IN

In ‘C’ Division, a player ‘improperly taking a throw in’, ie. from the wrong place or in the wrong manner, shall have one further chance to take the throw-in. If it is ‘improperly thrown’ a second time, the throw-in shall be taken by a player of the opposing team.

In ‘A’, ‘D’, ‘E’ and ‘F’ Divisions, the throw-in law shall be enforced at all times.

YELLOW CARDS

A single yellow card is a “warning” only - it has no —bearing on a player’s participation in the match.

A second yellow card to the same player in one game automatically results in a red card being shown to that player.

A single yellow during a game is disregarded at the end of that game. i.e.-there is no accumulation of cards or points’ for disciplinary purposes.

RED CARDS

All red cards (aka ejections) will be reported to the WAYS BoD by the match referee. The BoD reserves the right to review the incident and to impose further sanction (i.e. ‘suspension’ from one or more subsequent games) if the situation warrants.

10. Information for Coaches

1. The coach or assistant coach should be the first one to the practice or game field and the last one to leave. **NEVER LEAVE ANY PLAYER ALONE AT THE FIELD.**
2. Problems with players, parents or referees should be reported to Division Coordinator.
3. All coaches will practice at least four times prior to the beginning of the season.
4. Coaches will practice at the assigned time and at the designated fields. Any change in field assignments or practice times shall be reported to the Division Coordinator prior to the actual occurrence of the change.
5. All medical kits and player's registration form must be brought to games and practices. The registration forms contain the player's home and emergency phone numbers as well as authorization for emergency care.
6. If a player is injured during a game or practice and needs medical assistance, call 911 and the child's parents or emergency number. If a player's parents or guardians are not available, either you or your assistant should ride in the ambulance and wait at the hospital until one of them arrives.
7. All accidents or injuries should be reported to division coordinator.
8. Coaches will notify parents of any schedule changes.

PLAYING TIME

Except where there is a "discipline problem", coaches are mandated to play each player for at least half of each game, *unless directed otherwise by the child's parent due to injury etc.* It is recommended that each player be given the opportunity to play in at least two positions per game.

"Discipline problems" include but are not limited to

- missing two (2) consecutive practices without explanation
- missing one (1) game without explanation
- continually not listening to a coach or assistant coach
- constant disruption of practices or games
- arguing with or teasing teammates or opponents

If playing time is taken away, the coach should discuss the situation with the child's parent(s).

On the third subsequent occasion, after discussion with the division coordinator and the child's parent(s), the coach may petition the BoD to dismiss the player from the team. However, this is a serious penalty which should only be used with due consideration.

AT THE FIELD

Coaches and assistant coaches are reminded of their responsibility to help enforce Law 4 (Players' Equipment) with youth players.

Only players named on the roster provided to you by the WAYS registrar or your division coordinator may play in games or take part in practices.

At all fields the 'home' coach (i.e as designated on the division coordinator's schedule) will be responsible for ensuring that the corner flags are at the field.

Where necessary the 'home' coach is similarly responsible for the goal nets being at the field.

Where multiple games are played on the same field in one day, the first 'home' coach will be responsible for bringing the equipment, and the last 'home' coach will be responsible for taking it away.

After the game(s) has (have) completed, the equipment should be returned to the division coordinator, or to the next coach to need it, as determined by the coordinator.

Both teams will use the same side of the field, each selecting one half to store equipment etc., and as a warm-up area for substitutes. All parents and other spectators will use the opposite side of the field. Coaches, players and spectators may not use the area behind either goal at anytime during a game.

Coaches and assistant coaches are permitted to walk their half of their sideline, from the center of the field to the nearest corner, during a game. However, coaches are to enter the field of play, only on instruction from the referee, in the case of injury etc. *All reported violations of this rule, will result in serious penalty if proven.*

Any and all incidents of referee abuse and/or assault will be investigated vigorously by the WAYS BoD. Proven cases of abuse and assault against referees, will result in the suspension of the coach or assistant coach for the remainder of the season, and the withdrawal of all future invitations to coach in the WAYS organization

As representatives of WAYS, the sport of soccer, and our community, all coaches and assistant coaches are to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at all times. This includes during games, practices, and all league events, all in accordance with Rule 3, "Good Sport."

SAFETY

A player may not use equipment or wear anything which is dangerous to themselves or other players (including any type of jewelry or watches). Safety is an issue determined by the on-field official and their decision is final.

EQUIPMENT

Basic equipment. The basic compulsory equipment of a player for both practices and games consists of a jersey or shirt, shorts, socks, shinguards, and footwear. Cleats are not compulsory, but are recommended. Cleats, when worn, should be designed for soccer or multi-sport use. metal spikes and Baseball cleats are prohibited.

Team Uniforms. All players are provided with WAYS approved team jerseys. It is the coach's responsibility to distribute and ensure that players wear these jerseys for both regular season games and Play-off games. Coaches are not allowed to deviate from this policy.

ONE SIDED GAMES

It is recommended that coaches prevent one sided games where a team has scored more than 5 goals more than their opponent.

Methods for achieving this:

1. Playdown. Put fewer players on field than opposing team.
2. Play offensive players on defense and vice versa.
3. Enforcing a mandatory number of passes before taking a shot on goal.

MISCELLANY

The coach of each team is responsible for the prompt return of all equipment supplied by WAYS at the conclusion of his/her team's games for the season.

All coaches and players are responsible for ensuring that the fields used are left in the same condition found. All empty water bottles and other trash must be dealt with appropriately before leaving the area of the field.

The coach of each team is responsible for reporting scores and goal scorers names to the webmaster by Monday of each week, The information will be posted on each team's web page on watertownyouthsoccer.net as well as forwarded to *The Town Times*.

11. Referees

Only USSF registered referees shall be assigned as referees or assistant referees in WAYS in-town games.

All games, except each division's Championship Game and, at the discretion of the division coordinator and Watertown Referee Assignor, semifinal games, shall have one (1) referee assigned. Whenever possible, a single referee should attempt to obtain the services of two club assistant referees from the spectators of the game.

For each division's Championship Game, and if so decided semifinal games, three (3) referees will be assigned. These being one (1) referee and two (2) assistant referees.

The dual or two (2) person system is not permitted in WAYS in-town games or competitions.

The referee in all WAYS in-town games must be at least one year older than the highest age taking part in a division, or *have the permission of the Watertown Referee Assignor*.

DIVISION	MINIMUM AGE
A	15
C	12
D	15
E	12
F	12

Note: Referees must be at least 12 years old to attend the USSF Referee Certification Class.

Referees shall submit a US Soccer Report and Supplementary Report(s) in the event of any the following occurrences

- Send off of players or coaches
- Serious injury to player(s)
- Serious misconduct on the part of spectators, players, coaches

Reports shall be filed within forty-eight (48) hours of the completion of the match in question.

The first copy of the Report and Supplementary Report(s) shall be submitted to the President of WAYS

The second copy of the Report and Supplementary Report(s) shall be submitted to the Watertown Referee Assignor.

The third copy of the Report and Supplementary Report(s) shall be retained by the referee.

Blank reports and current mailing information for the above people is available from the Watertown Referee Assignor.

1 2. Job Responsibilities of In-Town Coordinator

1. Recruit Division Coordinators
2. Meet with all Division coordinators at least twice. Once prior to start of season, and once during the season.
3. Distribute team roster to the Division Coordinators.
4. Approve Division Schedules.
5. In support of Division Coordinators, attend each Divisions' Coaches Meeting (to be held prior to August 1st).
6. Work with WAYS Field Coordinator to establish practice times and game times for each division.
7. Provide support to Division Coordinator when conflicts arise within respective divisions.
8. Act as a liaison between the Division Coordinators and the WAYS BoD.

1 3. Job Responsibilities of Division Coordinator

1. Recruit coaches
2. Meet with the division coaches and assistant coaches no later than 4 weeks prior to start of season in order to distribute rosters, practice schedule, and the In Town Handbook, to discuss the season schedule, rules and playoffs, and to handout equipment.
3. To maintain the lines on the field which is assigned for division play.
4. To coordinate practice time, so that all teams have equal access to practice fields. To be sure that teams within the division practice on fields that are assigned at the specified times.
5. Will report scores of division games to the webmaster no later than Monday morning.
6. Will keep track of division standings. Will collect and inventory all equipment at the end of the season. The equipment will be returned to the Equipment Coordinator no later than two weeks after last game.
8. Will report the final standings of league play and the results of Champion play to the In Town Coordinator no later than one week after the Division Champion Game. The complete roster of the winning and losing team will be handed in to the In Town Coordinator at the same time.

14. Postponement/Cancellation of League Play

There will be times when weather can cause the field(s) to become unsafe for players and/or in such poor condition that playing a game will hinder the future play on that field. It is at these times that the President of

WAYS shall meet with the Coordinator of Fields and the In Town Coordinator to decide if and when the fields will be playable. Once a decision is made, the In Town Coordinator will contact the Division Coordinator and the Coordinator of Referees who in turn will contact their respective parties (coaches and referees) to notify them of the cancellation/postponement and the rescheduling of the game, if there is any. If fields are deemed playable by those mentioned above, then cancellation/postponements will then be under the power of the official when he/she arrives at game time. Coaches and/or division coordinators do not cancel/postpone games without prior consent. The intent of this section is not to usurp the power of the official.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

Guidelines for Supportive Parents

According to Rutgers University's Youth Research Council (Room 206, College Avenue Gymnasium, New Brunswick, NJ 08903), supportive parents:

- **Focus on mastering skills and strategies**, rather than competitive ranking. Sport mastery focuses on performance which can be controlled by the athlete; competitive ranking focuses on winning and losing, which is often outside the athlete's control.
- **Decrease the pressure** to win. They realize that sport creates its own pressure to succeed and that additional parental pressure is likely to be counterproductive, especially in the long run. Supportive parents avoid making the outcome of a game larger than life.
- **Believe that sport's primary value is the opportunity for self-development.** The probability of achieving lasting fame and glory via sport is low—but sport does allow athletes to develop lifelong values and self-respect.
- **Understand risks. Competition places athletes on center stage.** Any time you attempt to succeed publicly, you risk failure. In the long run, competing means being willing to chance failure. Giving your best is what athletics is all about.
- **Communicate their true concerns directly with the coach.** A positive working relationship is based upon clearly communicated mutual goals among parents, coaches and athletes.
- **Understand and respect the differences between parental roles and**

coaching roles. While parents are ultimately responsible for their child's development, once they agree to let their child be coached they must leave the coaching to the coach. Parents must avoid coaching "over the coach's shoulder," or questioning a coach's decisions.

- **Control negative emotions, and think positively.** Few athletes wish to perform poorly; negative reactions to poor performances only add to an athlete's pressures. Criticizing athletes does little to enhance performance.
- **Avoid the use of fear.** Using punishment and the withdrawal of love to pressure youngsters to perform better trades short-term performance gains for long-term risks to health and emotional well-being.
- **Avoid criticizing.** Nagging parents often confuse support with constantly reminding children about the need to practice more, condition more, concentrate more, etc. Overly involved parents frequently lose their objectivity, and are unable to provide critical emotional support that children often need during competition.
- **Recognize and understand expressions of insecurity.** When children are nervous, uncertain or feel pressure, insensitive parents may trivialize those fears or see them as signs of weakness. Supportive parents realize that such expressions are normal, and a call for emotional support.
- **Avoid the use of guilt.** "We've done so much for you" is a typical way of manipulating a child to perform the way the parents desire. Show empathy for the young athlete. Empathy is an understanding of what the child is feeling, and an awareness of the pressures and demands a sport places on an athlete. Empathy is NOT necessarily sympathy or agreement, but rather a true understanding of the difficulty of a task. Empathy is the ability to say, "Yes, it will probably be a tough game today. Let me help you get ready."