

Western New York Christian Modified Soccer League

(WNYCMSL)

League Guidelines

Document Organization

Part I - Introduction

Part II - Organization

Part III - Teams, Coaches, Players, Referees, Games

Part IV - Rules and Recommendations

Part V - General Comments

Document Revisions

PART I - Introduction

The Western New York Christian Modified Soccer League (WNYCMSL) is a competitive Christian soccer league based upon the principles of Godly integrity, honor, and fair play. Its mission is to provide a nurturing environment for middle school aged children to learn to play competitive soccer while developing Christ-like character qualities.

Though the League may, at its discretion, allow teams to join the League which are not specifically Christian, it is our conviction that all players, coaches and spectators in a Christian league should inherently be held to a high standard of sportsmanship and conduct at all times. Our character, and the values we hold dear, is on display for the world to see. It should be evident to all that our Christian witness and our call to love one another are more important to us than the outcome of any game. With this in mind, the following guidelines have been established to:

- 1) Help raise the level of skill and sportsmanship exhibited in games
- 2) Increase the value of participation in the League
- 3) Minimize any potential misunderstandings
- 4) Maintain an acceptable level of integrity as a Christian organization
- 5) Provide structure, guidance and consistency to our League

PART II - Organization**A - Division Organization**

The league shall consist of one Co-Ed Division

B - League Coordinator

- 1) The League Coordinator shall be responsible for
 - a. Accepting new teams into the League
 - b. Compiling and maintaining contact information
 - c. Setting the League schedule
 - d. Compiling League standings
 - e. Coordinating the League playoffs (if desired by the League)
 - f. Coordinating the League all-star game (if desired by the League)
 - g. Maintaining these guidelines (refer to section C below)
- 2) The position of League Coordinator shall be filled (ideally by a non-coach) from among the participating teams. It is hoped that the position can be rotated from team to team every 2 years.

C – Guideline Revision Procedure

Among other things, these guidelines, (per above), are meant to provide “structure, guidance, and consistency” to our League. In order for them to remain useful and relevant, there may need to be additions or modifications made to them from time to time. The following procedure provides an outline for completing any updates.

- 1) Suggested modifications should be made in writing to the League Coordinator.
- 2) The League Coordinator shall forward the proposed changes to all the teams.
- 3) Each team (and if necessary, its parent organization) should review the suggested changes and provide feedback to the League Coordinator.
- 4) Any changes must be agreed upon by a two-thirds majority of teams in the League.
- 5) Once the final wording is agreed upon, the League Coordinator will add it to the guidelines and circulate it to all teams for final approval.

PART III - Teams, Coaches, Players, Referees, Games**A - Team Eligibility & Responsibilities**

- 1) New teams shall send a letter of intent to participate in the League to the League Coordinator by July 15.
- 2) Each team is responsible to verify the ages of their players.
- 3) Home team shall report game results to League coordinator within 24 hours.
- 4) Each team shall be responsible to educate all players and spectators of our rules of conduct.
- 5) Each team should appoint a “contact person” for the purposes of scheduling and scheduling change requests. This contact person may be the coach.
- 6) At all games and practices, each team shall have a fully stocked First Aid kit, along with a person who is formally trained in First Aid / CPR. The coach should have this training, but it is highly recommended that a second person also have this training.

B – Coaches’ Responsibilities

- 1) Coaches shall endeavor to set an environment where everyone involved exhibits respect, restraint and courtesy to players, coaches, referees and fans.
- 2) Coaches shall remove players from the game who are disrespectful of players, coaches, referees or the fans.
- 3) It is the responsibility of the coaches in coordination with the referees to help see that fans behave in a sportsmanship like manner during games.
- 4) During a game, coaches and captains may respectfully question the application or interpretation of a rule, but never verbally criticize the judgment or decisions of a referee.
- 5) Coaches shall not allow a player to participate in a League match who is not eligible. (See Player Eligibility Part III C)

C - Player Eligibility

- 1) The League is open to players from 5th grade through 8th grade, provided the following age requirements are met:
 - a. A player shall be at least 11 years of age during the calendar year.
 - b. A player shall be age 13 or under on August 31 of the current year.
- 2) No person who currently attends a public school is eligible.

D – Referees

- 1) Home teams are responsible for providing a referee who is familiar with NFHS rules for League games. A referee assignor is available to assign referees for all games.
- 2) If a referee does not show for a game, a substitute may be used if mutually agreed upon by both coaches. (However, no coaches or students should referee League games, except as a last resort.)
- 3) If both coaches agree to #2 above, the game shall be played as an official game, and count in the League standings. If the coaches do not agree, the game shall be postponed.
- 4) Referees have full authority on the field, and have the permission of the League to deal with players, coaches and fans according to NFHS rules and League policy, including permission to eject any such persons from the game and/or field area, and/or terminate the game if necessary.

E - Games and Schedules

- 1) As a general rule, teams should reserve Tuesdays and Thursdays for League games. Games start at 4 PM.
- 2) If a team wishes to make a schedule change, they should contact the opposing team by phone at least 48 hours in advance and humbly request a change. If the team initiating a change contacts the opposing team less than 48 hours ahead of time, the opposing team is not obligated to accommodate a change in schedule. In the event a game needs to be rescheduled:
 - a. The two teams are to agree on a new date and time.
 - b. The home team is responsible to contact the referee or referee assignor to reschedule the game.
 - c. If a team cancels a game less than 48 hours before game time, that team is required to pay for any referee fees incurred.
 - d. In the case of inclement weather or dire circumstances, the decision must be made at least 12 hours prior to the game to give the referee assignor time to contact the referee. If the teams are already at the field the referee makes the final decision on whether or not to suspend or cancel the game.
 - e. As a general rule, every effort should be made to reschedule the game. At times this may involve some inconveniences, but in a spirit of understanding, and for the sake of league integrity, the game should be rescheduled, if at all possible.
 - f. There is no time limit for when a rescheduled game should be played, as long as it is prior to the conclusion of the regular season, and before any playoff dates.
 - g. If, after exhausting all avenues, it becomes clear that a game simply cannot be rescheduled due to unavoidable conflicts on the part of either team, the team calling for the original reschedule will be required to forfeit the game. The forfeit shall be recorded in the official league standings by a 3-0 score.

F – Playoff Procedures

- 1) Playoffs, if agreed upon by September 1st, will be based on League standings which will be based on the following point system:
 - 3 points for a win

- 1 point for a tie
0 points for a loss
- 2) If two or more teams are tied in the standings at the end of the regular season, playoff seedings are set as follows:
 - a. Head-to-head results (if team A beats team B twice, team A is the higher seed)
 - b. Most league wins (if team A has 2 wins, and team B has 1 win, team A is higher seed)
 - c. Best goal differential total head to head (maximum plus or minus 3 per game)
 - d. Best goal differential total all League games (maximum plus or minus 3 per game)
 - h. Most shut outs in all League games
 - i. Random selection method conducted by the League Coordinator.
 - 3) Divisional Playoffs will be held at the end of the season on the dates predetermined by the League Coordinator.
 - 4) First place shall play the Fourth place team; Second place plays the Third place team.
 - 5) While regular season games may end in a tie, playoff games cannot. The following procedure shall be used to determine a winner in the event of a tie game after the end of regulation;
 - (1) After a 5 minute break, a coin toss occurs, then a 10 minute sudden victory overtime period
 - (2) If still tied, a 2 minute break, switch ends, and another 10 minute sudden victory overtime period
 - (3) If still tied, a normal coin toss (winner chooses to kick 1st or 2nd), then a 2 minute break
 - (4) Each team selects (in writing, and in order), 5 players to take alternating penalty kicks (best of 5 wins). **NOTE THAT YOUR ENTIRE ROSTER IS AVAILABLE FROM WHICH TO SELECT YOUR 5 PLAYERS (YOUR GOAL KEEPER MAY ALSO BE USED AS A KICKER)**
 - (5) If still tied, each team selects 5 different players to take alternating penalty kicks (sudden victory, where... If Team A scores a goal, and team B misses their kick, Team A wins). **THERE IS NO REQUIREMENT HERE TO USE A DIFFERENT GOAL KEEPER.**
 - (6) If still tied, follow with any 5 players (sudden victory style). Continue until there is a sudden winner.

Part IV - Rules and Recommendations

A – General

- 1) All League games will be played according to the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) rules, unless otherwise stated in these guidelines. (NFHS rules are what NYS Public High Schools use. Note: NFHS rules are NOT identical to the USSF / FIFA rules used in most travel leagues.)
- 2) Prior to every game, coaches, referees, and entire teams shall assemble for pre-game instructions, coin toss, sportsmanship message, and prayer. If available,

speaking persons shall use a PA system or bull horn. If a PA is not available, the teams will gather near the sideline where as many fans as possible can hear what is being said. Captains shall then be asked to step out from the group for the coin toss. The teams are dismissed.

B - Equipment and Fields

- 1) Coaches are responsible to ensure their players are properly equipped prior to start of play.
- 2) Shin guards which meet the NOCSAE standard are mandatory.
- 3) No metal cleats of any kind.
- 4) No jewelry, no wristbands (other than for perspiration), no hard or pointed objects in hair. Players may only use sweatbands, rubber bands or scrunchies in hair.
- 5) If two teams are dressed alike, it is the home team's responsibility to change uniforms or wear pinnies.
- 6) Goalkeepers must be in a contrasting color from all other players and referees. Please have more than one color keeper jersey (or pinny) available.
- 7) Players may wear knit caps and/or gloves in cold weather. Colors should match uniforms as much as possible.

C - Game Times and Suspension of Play

- 1) Teams should try to arrive at least 30 minutes before the scheduled start of a game, and games shall start on time. If a team cannot field enough players to begin the game by 30 minutes after game start time, that team will yield a 3-0 forfeit.
- 2) League Games will ordinarily consist of two 30-minute halves, though some coaches will prefer to play four 15-minute quarters. Either is acceptable, as long as both coaches agree on the format prior to the start of the game. If both coaches cannot agree on the format, then the home team makes the determination. The referee should be notified of the intended format prior to the start of the game. There is no overtime period during the regular season. Regular season games may end in a tie.
- 3) Prior to start of the second half, if a game cannot be continued due to weather, the remainder of the game shall be re-scheduled and continued from the time and score at which the game was suspended. However, once the second half has started, if a game must end early due to weather or darkness, the game shall be considered complete, and the score will count.
- 4) If a player is seriously injured such that removal from the field is not possible and/or hospitalization is likely, the game may be suspended and/or postponed out of concern for the player.

D - Number of Players

- 1) All League games are 11 vs. 11, with the following exceptions. The exceptions cover cases where a team cannot field a full team due to low registration numbers, injury, illness, or other absence. In these cases, teams may be able to play in League games with as few as 8 players. Note that in these cases at least 2 of the players on that team must be girls.
 - a. EXCEPTION CASES
 - (i) LOW REGISTRATION NUMBERS OR INJURY: In these cases, opposing teams must play down to matching numbers when facing teams in this situation, and they too must play at least 2 girls at all times. The team

forcing the shorthanded play must make opponents aware of the number of players they will be fielding at least 3 days in advance to allow proper game preparation.

- (ii) ILLNESS OR OTHER ABSENCE: In these cases, where no prior notification can be made, opponents can play down, but are not obligated to do so.
 - b. In short-handed game situations, some thought must be given to field size out of concern for the play of the game and the players on the field. (i.e. some fields may be too large for low numbers). This represents a situation that may or may not be a factor in our League, but one in which both coaches understand and agree to prior to game time. If an alternate venue needs to be established, the League coordinator should be made aware of the situation to allow for these scheduling changes.
- 2) Co-ed: The maximum number of boy players on the field shall be limited to 9.
 - 3) If a team has no girls present, or only 1 girl present, that team is still limited to only 9 boys, and therefore must play short. The opposing team is not obligated to play down.
 - 4) If a team cannot field 8 for the beginning or remainder of a game, the League game is forfeited. However, if teams wish to loan / borrow players in order to continue to play an unofficial game, they may do so.
 - 5) All players who appear to have received an injury which affects their ability to play are to be initially removed to the sidelines as soon as possible as directed by the referees, regardless of what the coach or player has to say. The game shall continue, provided there are enough players. The injured player(s) shall be inspected by the team designator and/or coach before being put back in the game.

E - Post Game Procedures

- 1) The "hand shake" shall occur immediately following the game. There shall be no coaching until the hand shake is completed.
- 2) All coaches and referees MUST supervise the hand shake.
- 3) Teams should leave the field together as a group as soon as possible following the game.

Part V - General Comments

Being in a Christian league doesn't automatically make all games edifying. Coaches must make a specific effort to avoid these 5 don'ts:

- 1) Don't argue with the referee. You may encourage them to keep the game safe, but don't undermine their authority.
- 2) Don't make negative comments to players. Good coaches catch players doing things right. Correct mistakes with admonition, teaching and encouragement.
- 3) Don't encourage over-aggressive, unsafe play. Good coaches win by teaching skills, and by motivating players to have an honest work ethic.
- 4) Don't run up the score against weaker teams.
- 5) Don't have bench warmers. Every player should play. Wanting to win and doing our best brings meaning to the activity and sets a stage for character development. But don't let the goal of winning overwhelm your Christian testimony.

At practices, please consider taking some time to do a short sharing on some of the following sports related topics:

- a. Glorifying God (1 Cor. 6:20, 10:30)
- b. Developing Discipline (1 Cor. 9:24-27)
- c. Placing Others over Self (Rom. 12:10)
- d. Submitting to Authority (Rom. 12:10)
- e. Being Energetic (Rom. 12:11)
- f. Being Teachable (Prov. 4:13, 6:23)
- g. Focusing on the Goal (Phil. 3:13-14)
- h. Patiently Enduring (Heb. 12:1-6)
- i. Encouraging Others (Eph. 4:29)
- j. Talking Right (Eph. 4:29)
- k. Trusting God (Isaiah 40:28-31)
- l. Accepting a Challenge (Jos. 1:2-9)
- m. Having Self Control (1 Cor. 13:5)
- n. Being Humble (1 Cor. 13:4)
- o. Being Honest (1 Cor. 13:6)
- p. Having a Positive Attitude (1 Cor. 13:7)
- q. Believing in your Purpose (Phil. 3:16)
- r. Having Unity (Rom. 14:7, 8)
- s. Achieving Victory (1 Cor. 15:57-58; Rev. 20:6)
- t. Being Thankful (1 Thess. 5:16, 18)

Version 0.8 (07-May-2012)

Document Revisions

Version 0.6 was the baseline version of the guidelines, and represented the 2011 soccer season. Going forward, all changes from that baseline will be captured here.

Changes made for Rev 0.7 (March 2012)

- Added a title page
 - Changed the font, added page borders, and other changes to improve readability
 - Added a header and footer (with page numbers)
 - Part III, E, 2 – Subheadings e, f, and g were added, pertaining to rescheduled games and forfeits.
 - Part III, F, 5 – Newly added section dealing with tie-breakers during playoff games.
 - Part IV, C, 2 – Added a provision for games to consist of quarters (some coaches prefer the additional breaks to talk to their teams and it may make substitutions easier, to ‘get everyone’ into the game).
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Changes made for Rev 0.8 (May 2012)

- Part IV, C, 2 – Modified the language slightly to capture the forfeit score of 3-0.
 - Part IV, D, 1 – Major changes here involving the number of players a team can field. This section is a morph of revision 0.7 sections 1 and 2. The motivation for the change was primarily driven by teams with low numbers due to low registration or lack of players, but has been enlarged to cover other scenarios as well.
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