

# Washington County Soccer Club FAQ

Soccer is played by more children in more countries than any other team sport in the world. More than 3,000,000 youngsters in the United States play. Although the modern game dates from the 1850's, soccer-type games have been played in Europe and China for at least 2,000 years. It is now one of the fastest growing team sports in the United States.

## **Why soccer?**

Because children like to run and kick a ball, it's easy to learn the basic skills and there's lots of action. In the younger-age games, we play "micro soccer", with just a few players on the field. If a child is on the field, the child is in the play most of the time – there isn't much standing around.

The only **mandatory** equipment a player **must** have is a pair of shin guards which **must** be worn under the socks. WCSC encourages coaches to keep uniform costs down to a minimum.

## **What are they doing out there anyway?**

They're trying to kick the ball into the other team's goal. Players may touch the ball with any part of their body except their hands and arms. Only goalkeepers inside the box may touch the ball with their hands.

## **When do you play soccer?**

WCSC has two seasons. Fall teams sign up in July and begin practice in August (yes it's hot). Play usually begins the first weekend after Labor Day and runs approximately 10 weeks. Spring teams sign up in January and begin practice in February (yes it's cold). Play usually begins in early March and runs approximately 10 weeks. Most age groups play on Saturdays, unless we have to make up a canceled game. The U19 recreational division, some competitive teams and the adult league plays on Sundays.

## **What age divisions do you have?**

WCSC offers recreational soccer for 4, 5, and 6 year-olds (Under 6 or U6), for 6 and 7 year-olds (U8), for 8 and 9 year-olds (U10), for 10 and 11 year-olds (U12) and so on up to U19. If we have enough players in an age group, we will attempt to form pure age group teams. We have boys' teams and girls' teams and we can even have coed teams which would play in the boys' leagues.

## **You used the word "recreational". Is there any other kind?**

Yes. For players who want to compete at a higher level, WCSC also offers "competitive" teams starting at age 10 and up. These teams may play on Saturdays and/or Sundays. Tryouts for U11-19 competitive teams are held in June and July.

## **How often are practices?**

In U5 and U6, they usually practice one hour per week and play a game for approximately one hour on Saturdays. In U7 and above, they may have three "meetings" a week, with a game counting as a meeting. So, U7 & U8's practice for up to one hour twice a week (some coaches practice for a shorter time) and U9 and above practice for up to 1 1/2 hours twice a week.

## **Do you play soccer in the rain?**

Yes, but not if there is lightning. If it has rained overnight or is raining on Saturday morning, Club officials will decide whether to play. Your **league commissioner** will inform **your coach** if you are not going to play. So, if you don't hear otherwise, **assume that you will play**. If bad weather blows in after the game begins, the referee will decide whether to continue.

**What about cold weather?**

Yes, we play in cold weather. Players may wear a sweatshirt or turtleneck under their uniform shirt. They may also wear gloves, a soft “ski”-type hat and sweatpants. Bring a jacket for them to wear on the sidelines.

**Isn't winning the object of any game?**

It's one. But in recreational soccer the main objectives are to learn teamwork, sportsmanship, acquire soccer skills, and to gain physical fitness. And above all to have fun. In fact, in U6-U10 soccer, where most children first encounter the sport, WCSC keeps score only to assist with league formation, and every child will receive a participation medal or trophy at the end of the season. They still play hard on the field, but there's less pressure from coaches and parents to win.

**Are treats mandatory?**

No. It's up to each team to decide if they want to do treats. But, the children love them. Most teams have half-time treats of orange slices, grapes, or other fruit, plus lots of water. After-game treats can be candy bars or cookies and soft drinks or juice. Generally, the parents take turns bringing treats.

**Where do the coaches come from?**

The coaches are volunteers who put a lot of time and effort into coaching. Some are licensed and many have attended coaching clinics. **Please don't** coach from the sidelines unless the coach asks you to. **Please do** be supportive when the coach asks for help, such as being the team parent, marking fields, mowing fields, or helping during a field work day.

**Where do the referees come from?**

The referees are parents, players, and siblings from our membership. The referees attend a nine-hour clinic to learn the nuances of the laws of the game and pass a test before they can referee. Then, they must take that knowledge to the field and apply it during the split second that a foul occurs. Though the refs get a small “show-up” fee, they are essentially volunteers, too. Whether they are adults or youth, they are all doing their best. So, **PLEASE** don't shout at the referees.

**Do you like parents to participate?**

**You bet!** The more, the better. Volunteer to coach, to be an assistant coach, to be a “team parent”, to mow fields, to certify as a referee, etc. This is a volunteer-run organization, so we welcome all the help we can get.

**What else should I do as a parent?**

Resist the temptation to give your child “constructive” criticism before or after a game. This tends to make a child play tentatively, for fear of making a mistake. The objective – as we said before – is for the kids to have fun. Applaud good play and good sportsmanship on either team. Support your child and be positive at all times.

**Where do I park at the fields?**

Please help us keep the children safe by parking **in** the parking lot. Please **do not park or drop off players** along Beck Drive, around the shed, or in front of the emergency vehicle gate to the fields. Also, do not park on any grassy area.

### What are some of the main soccer laws?

- Any player, including the goalkeeper, can play anywhere on the field.
- The **goalkeeper** is the only player allowed to pick up the ball, but only while he is in the box. He has to wear a different color jersey than the rest of the team.
- To be out, the ball has to be completely off the field.
- If the ball goes out the side, the team which didn't touch it last gets a **throw-in**. (The ball has to be held in both hands, come over the top of the head, and both feet must stay on the ground.)
- If the ball goes out the end line:
  - if the attacking team last touched it, the defenders get a **goal kick**.
  - if defenders last touched it, the attackers get a **corner kick**.
- Penalties\* in U7-U10 are most often called for handball, (deliberately touching the ball with the hand or arm, though protecting the face is legal) and tripping. Other penalties are reasonably intuitive: hitting, shoving, spitting (yuck), pushing \*\*, jumping at a player, etc. Also, in U9 and above, you may see the ref show a yellow card (a caution) or red card (an ejection) for a bad foul. (Parents note: Soccer is a **contact sport**, and in the younger leagues there is a **lot** of **incidental contact**. Even though a child may be knocked down, it is rarely caused by an intentional foul in U7-U10, so the ref usually doesn't blow the whistle.)
- Free kicks** – In U7-U8, only **indirect kicks** are permitted (the kicker can't score directly on the kick); in U9 and above, most free kicks are **direct** (the kicker can score).
- Offside** (applies only in U12 and above): An attacking player in the other teams' half of the field is in an offside position if he is nearer the goal than the second-to-last defender (counting the goalkeeper) and the ball. Just being in an offside position doesn't draw a penalty. It is only when his team passes the ball to him in that position or when he is "in the play" that a penalty should be called.

\*If it's to **the advantage** of the team which is fouled against **not** to call the foul, the referee has the discretion not to call it. This is the soccer equivalent of declining the penalty in football.

\*\*A player may legally move an opponent off the ball in a fair shoulder to shoulder push.