



McLean Youth Soccer
Recreational Soccer League
Handbook
For Coaches, Parents, and Players

Updated March 2025

This handbook is for players, families, and coaches in the McLean Youth Soccer (MYS) Recreation Program. We think it is very important for each participant to be fully informed about the club's policies, procedures, and goals. We also would like to emphasize that each player, parent, and coach has a role in making this program a success. We hope that you will take the time to read through this handbook and refer back to it throughout the season when questions may arise. If you have further questions, we encourage you to email admin@mcleansoccer.org.

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OVERVIEW OF THE CLUB

Mission and Vision Statements

Vision:

McLean Youth Soccer will be a model club known nationally for developing players at all levels, creating a culture of inclusion, innovation and excellence, and positively impacting our community.

Mission:

McLean Youth Soccer provides opportunities for all players to reach their full potential in sport and in life through participation in soccer.

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS

Qualifying Age Groups

Currently MYS offers recreation programs for players who are in the U3-U19 age groups. The cutoff dates for soccer age groups are different from those in other activities such as school or other sports. Please refer to the Age Group grid on the [MYS website](#) to check your child's age for the seasonal year. Please note MYS uses birth years as a determination of a child's eligibility for an age group.

Camps and Training Opportunities

For ages U6 to U19, MYS offers a number of in-season training opportunities for all levels of play as well as camps during summer, winter, and spring breaks.

The Progression

Our youngest players start in the MYS Recreation Program. There are no tryouts and children are assigned to teams by the Recreation Director and/or the MYS SFL League Commissioner. MYS tries to abide by all requests (coach, friend, school) but preferred team placement is never a guarantee. MYS also tries to abide by all roster minimum and maximums

Recreation Program

The MYS Recreation program emphasizes individual player development and the enjoyment of the game of soccer. MYS believes players, parents, and coaches should embrace this philosophy as the foundation of our club. While each player, coach, and team is striving to win, winning is not the primary goal. The MYS Recreation program aims to create a fun soccer environment where our members play and learn.

MYS' small-sided, continuous play model for ages U6-U7 maximizes touches on the ball and has been widely copied throughout the country.

The program encompasses the recreational soccer programs for players aged 2-19 (the Under 3 (U3) to Under 19 (U19) age groups).

- **U3-U4:** Academy style, player-centric introduction to soccer
 - The U3-U4 program is a developmental program designed to introduce MYS's youngest soccer enthusiasts to the sport of soccer. The program focuses on age-appropriate soccer activities, but is not a team-oriented program.
- **U5-U6** Non-results team-oriented developmental 3v3 program
 - The U7-U8 program offers a non-results-oriented team structured program focusing on age-appropriate skill development.
- **U6-U7:** Non-results team-oriented developmental 4v4 program

- The U7-U8 program offers a non-results-oriented team structured program focusing on age-appropriate skill development.
- **U9-U10:** Team-oriented program promoting fun, friendly competition and player development
 - The U9 through U10 program continues to promote the growth and development of the players and introduces friendly competition between teams
- **U11 and older:** Team-oriented program that competes against area club teams in the NCSL-Rec League.
 - The U11 through U19 program is affiliated with the NCSL-Rec, allowing MYS teams to compete against teams from other area clubs as well as against fellow MYS teams within their respective age and gender groups.

Recreation Program Contacts

There are many people who contribute to and support the MYS Recreation Program:

1. **Team Coach:** The individual team coach is the heart of the Recreation program. These are volunteers (typically parents) who dedicate their time to instilling the love of the game in all young players.
2. **Recreation Director:** The Recreation Director is responsible for the structure, programs, and curriculum, as well as overseeing all coaches, and professional technical staff. The Rec Director is also the primary admin support for U3-U10, forms teams, and solicits coaches.
3. **Fields & Programs Director:** The Fields & Programs Director is the field scheduler for practices, games, programs, and training.
4. **Club Administrator:** The Club Administrator provides admin support to the Rec Director and Fields & Programs Director.
5. **SFL Commissioner:** The MYS SFL League Commissioner is the admin support for all SFL teams U11-U19.
6. **On-Site Staff:** MYS has individuals who help facilitate weekly game play, especially for the U8-U10 age groups. Additionally, U6 game days are conducted by MYS professional staff.

Program Contact Information

Contact	Position	Email
Trevor Lamb	Recreation Director	trevor.lamb@mcleansoccer.org
Tamara Ricca	Fields & Programs Director	fields@mcleansoccer.org
Vince Sprouls	Assistant Recreation Director	vince.sprouls@mcleansoccer.org
Katie Brown	Club Administrator	admin@mcleansoccer.org
Jose Venegas	Recreation Programs Director	jose.venegas@mcleansoccer.org
Jane Scott-Jones	SFL Commissioner	sfl@mcleansoccer.org
Bill Creswick	U8-10 Age Group Advisor	creswickw@verizon.net
John Harkes	Technical Director	john.harkes@mcleansoccer.org
Louise Waxler	Executive Director	louise.waxler@mcleansoccer.org

LEAGUE INFORMATION

Registration

Seasonal Registration Online

Anyone between the ages of 2 and 19 is eligible to participate in the MYS Recreation program regardless of ability. Only players registered and assigned to teams in the MYS program are eligible to participate in practices, games, and training opportunities.

The easiest and quickest way to register is on the [MYS website](#) by clicking the "Registration" link on the top of every webpage. All information about registration, fees, program overview, etc. is available on the site. Registration begins in June/July for the Fall and December/January for Spring. Players who register on time for the fall and/or spring season are guaranteed placement on a team in their appropriate age group. Late registrations (new and returning players) will be placed on a waiting list and placed on teams where space is available or pending the identification of new coaches and the formation of new teams. Players are expected to play in their birth year age group and any player playing out of age will need special permission from MYS Recreation administration.

Financial Aid

Financial aid is available from McLean Youth Soccer.

Please visit the [Financial Aid section on our website](#) (under Recreation tab) for more information or contact an administrator for more assistance.

Team Placement

Coaches and Teams

For the U6-U10 age groups the Recreation Director forms all teams, and for U11-U19 the MYS SFL League Commissioner forms all teams.

Teams are formed as follows:

1. Returning players (as long as he or she is registered before the first registration deadline)
2. Coach (or team) request
3. Friend request
4. School the child attends
5. Schedule request alignment

MYS does not form teams based on a player ranking or draft at the recreational level. Coaches do not choose their roster of players that can or cannot be on their team, coaches can indicate special requests.

Team placements will be finalized and released approximately two weeks before the start of the season. If you have not heard from your coach one week prior to the start of the season, please feel free to contact the Recreation Director or admin@mcleansoccer.org for more information.

MYS Rec is a volunteer parent coach based program for all age groups. MYS professional coaches help with the U3 to U5 sessions and for the U6-U7 Academy, MYS professional coaches alternate every other week to lead training for teams.

We encourage parents to consider volunteering to coach. Please refer to the Coach section of this handbook for more information about how coaches help our players and teams. If you cannot be a head coach, please consider offering to help your player's coach as an assistant coach.

Practice Schedules

Each team practices once a week at a local field in and around the McLean, VA area either at a park or school. Fields are of varying surfaces, grass or artificial turf, and may or may not have goals. Teams must practice at their assigned location and time.

Your player's coach places requests for his/her team practice schedule, and a practice slot is determined based on availability.

Approximately two weeks prior to the start of the season, the Recreation Director will officially release the practice schedule.

Game Day Information

What To Expect

In general, the fall season starts in early September and ends mid-November. The spring season typically begins in late March or early April and ends in late May or early June. Detailed information can be found on the [Recreation pages of the MYS website](#).

Recreation games are typically played on Saturdays in the McLean area for U6-U10 teams and U11-U19 teams play in the Northern Virginia area as members of the [Suburban Friendship League](#).

Recreation game schedules are usually available one-to-two weeks prior to the start of the season. U6-U10 games will be automatically uploaded into the MYS communication LeagueApps app (go to the app store on your mobile device and search for the McLean Youth Soccer app), while U11-U19 SFL teams MUST add the games to the app themselves.

Inclement Weather

In case of inclement weather or in the event that inclement weather has resulted in a deterioration of field conditions, practices and games may be canceled, rescheduled or delayed. We recommend that

families check the status of their game/practice field prior to heading out to your team event. Field status can be found on the homepage of the [MYS website](#).

It is our goal to communicate large field closures or event cancellations via email or text (if you opted in when registering on the LeagueApps platform).

Uniform and Equipment

Uniform

MYS provides each recreation player with two jerseys at the beginning of the fall season. These should be worn throughout the fall and spring seasons. Players who are new to the club in the spring season will receive jerseys.

Other Required and Recommended Gear

Soccer cleats are recommended, but any sneaker or turf shoe is acceptable.

All players are required to wear shin guards covered by long socks to all practices and games.

All players should bring water to every practice and game.

Each player must bring their own ball to every practice and game. Balls should be properly inflated and marked clearly with the player's name.

Ball sizes by age group:

- U3-U4,
 - Size 2 Ball
- U5, U6, U7, U8:
 - Size 3 ball
- U9, U10, U11, U12:
 - Size 4 ball
- U13 and up:
 - Size 5 ball

Lost and Found

MYS has a fully remote staff, and as such does not have a physical office. MYS does not have the storage capacity to keep a lost and found. If you feel you have lost an item at an MYS event, please return to the field to see if it is there. If it is still lost, please feel free to email admin@mcleansoccer.org.

Additional Training Opportunities

MYS also offers a number of recreation training programs based on age group and interest throughout the year. We currently offer multiple in-season options (i.e. - Rec Skills Training and Goalkeeper Training), as well as additional “offseason” training programs offered in the form of Summer Camps, Spring Break Camps, and winter training programs.

Check out the [Recreation Training section](#) under Training and Camps on the MYS website for more information and all options.

AGE GROUP SPECIFIC INFORMATION

U3-U9 Academy Model

MYS has developed a model for recreational player and coach development that utilizes specific and deliberate interactions with our professional Technical Staff during the U3-U9 years.

U3-U5: The U3-U4 players (with one parent chaperone) have a 45-minute-long session (1 hour for U5) each Saturday and all player activities are led by Technical Staff. The parents get to play along! The idea is to model the activities for the players and to provide families lots of fun games to play anytime. The practices also plant the seed for parents who may be interested in coaching in subsequent years.

U5: The U5 year is the first year when teams are formed with Volunteer Parent Coaches. Teams play each other on Saturday, and a technical staff member assists each team throughout the season on game days. During the first half of the Saturday session, the Technical Staff member guides the Parent Coaches on how to lead the practice activities for the week. During the second half of the session, teams play a game in a 3v3 format. A 2v2 format is also acceptable if the number of players present suits the game. The Technical Staff helps establish the best way to run the games and get the most out of the experience for players, coaches and parents alike. During the week, the Parent Coach will hold their own practice with the players, repeating the activities used on Saturday.

U6: The U7 teams play each other on Saturday and have one practice a week in a 3v3 format. A 2v2 format is also acceptable if the number of players present suits the game. The Technical Staff helps establish the best way to run the games and get the most out of the experience for players, coaches and parents alike. During the week, the Parent Coach will hold their own practice with the players, repeating the activities used on Saturday.

U7: For the U7 Age Group, McLean Youth Soccer holds a Rec Training Academy. Parent Coaches get the opportunity to ask questions and see how to run the session. On game day, the teams play in a 4v4 format, and the games are coached by the Volunteer Parent Coach with a similar style as the U6 year, but now without assistance from Staff.

U8: In the U8 program, volunteer coaches run the weekly practices and games with participation in the Recreation league in a 4v4 game format. A 5v5 or 3v3 game format is also acceptable if the number of players present suits the game. U8 players can NOT participate in both the Juniors and Recreation programs. Junior is a Pre-travel program.

U9: At U9 many players will continue to play in the Recreation league, while others will have tried out for and been offered a spot in the Travel Program which is solely led by the Professional Technical Staff. The U9 Recreation games are played with goalkeepers in a 7v7 format. The weekly practice and game are

run by volunteer parent coaches. To continue our model of coaching development, the MYS Professional Technical Staff offer game day support from a Technical Staff coach who visits the fields on a weekly basis to offer guidance and suggestions.

RULES BY AGE GROUP U6-U19

Age Group	Team Formation	Game Notes	Practice Notes
U5	Recreation Director forms teams	3v3 3 v 3 No goalies Coaches throw in ball to keep play continuous No score kept	One practice a week with own team
U6	Recreation Director forms teams	3 v 3 No goalies Coaches throw in ball to keep play continuous No score kept	One practice a week with own team
U7	Recreation Director forms teams	4v4 No goalies Coaches throw in ball to keep play continuous No score kept	One practice a week with own team
U8	Recreation Director forms teams Juniors program introduced (via tryout)	4v4 (or 5v5) No goalies Hybrid rules with side-kickins + center kickoff Coach throws ball in if ball goes over endline behind goal No score kept	One practice a week with own team

U9	Recreation Director forms teams First travel teams formed (via tryout)	7v7 Goalies introduced Referees introduced Throw-ins and formal restarts introduced No score kept Sideline assistance provided	One practice a week with own team
U10	Same as U9	Same as U9	One practice a week with own team
U11	MYS NCSL-Rec League Representative forms teams	9v9 Join NCSL-Rec League – schedule includes non-MYS teams	One practice a week with own team
U12	MYS NCSL-Rec League Representative forms teams	9v9	One practice a week with own team, optional second practice if requested
U13	MYS NCSL-Rec League Representative forms teams	11v11	One practice a week with own team, optional second practice if requested
U14-U19	MYS NCSL-Rec League Representative forms teams	11v11	One practice a week with own team, optional second practice if requested

Please note the U3-U5 age groups are once a week session, so there are no specific rules.

NCSL-Rec INFORMATION

The National Capital Soccer League (NCSL) provides information on league structure, mission and scheduling on its [website](#). The primary age groups covered are the Under 11, Under 12, Under 13, Under 14, Under 16, and Under 19 Boys and Girls.

Teams may practice once or twice a week depending on coach and player availability. Game schedules, field directions, and other information can be found on the SFL website.

In this 8-week regular season, MYS teams may play other MYS teams, and those games are on our fields in McLean. The other games are against teams from local clubs such as Great Falls, Annandale, Alexandria, Fairfax, Reston, and Herndon. Those games may also be played on home fields but some will be played away where we travel to our opponents' fields in their communities. For tournament play, our teams are placed in divisions based on their win-loss record, and games that weekend take place all over northern Virginia.

POLICIES

Refunds

All MYS registration fees are **non-refundable**. Payment of the club registration fee implies consent and we rely on this information to form teams and any reversal negatively impacts this process. As MYS has a limited number of roster spots, registration is considered a binding commitment to pay 100% of all registration fees (MYS membership fee, coach/league fee, training fee, County fee, etc.) for the season or program even if the player chooses to leave the team/program.

Field Use and Safety Policies

All members should regularly review [field information](#) and [club policies](#) posted on our MYS website under the About tab.

Age Group Placement

MYS follows the United States Soccer Federation & the United States Youth Soccer's [Player Development Initiative](#) for birth year player placement. Placements are based on birth year (starting January 1st and ending December 31st) to ensure the ideal playing environment for each player, team, and volunteer coach. By doing so, MYS is aligning with national and international standards for creating a safe, fun, developmental experience for everyone involved. Players should play age appropriately in their birth year according to the following chart:

Birth Year	2022-2023 Season	2023-2024 Season	2024-2025 Season	2025-2026 Season
2020	U3	U4	U5	U6
2019	U4	U5	U6	U7
2018	U5	U6	U7	U8
2017	U6	U7	U8	U9
2016	U7	U8	U9	U10
2015	U8	U9	U10	U11
2014	U9	U10	U11	U12

2013	U10	U11	U12	U13
2012	U11	U12	U13	U14
2011	U12	U13	U14	U15
2010	U13	U14	U15	U16
2009	U14	U15	U16	U17
2008	U15	U16	U17	U18
2007	U16	U17	U18	U19
2006	U17	U18	U19	
2005	U18	U19		
2004	U19			

Codes of Conduct / Parent Information

We wish to remind parents of your role in making your child's participation in soccer a fun and rewarding experience. As a parent, you play a special role in the development of your son or daughter, and his or her teammates. Your encouragement and good example will do more to ensure good sportsmanship and self-discipline than any other influence. It is important to respect opponents and the referees - they are not the enemy. Playing well and fairly is the essence of the game.

Here are a few key points as you head out to watch your child play.

- **Support your child:**
 - Support your child by giving encouragement and showing interest in his or her team. Help your child work toward skill improvement and good sportsmanship in every game. Teach your child that hard work, an honest effort, and a positive attitude are more important than winning.
- **Always be positive:**
 - Children learn more by example than by criticism. Work to be a positive role model and reinforce positive behavior in others. Applaud good plays by others on your child's team as well as good plays by the opposing team. Do not criticize any child's performance from the sidelines. Accept the results of each game. Teach your child to be gracious in victory and to turn defeat into victory by learning and working toward improvement. If you have a suggestion, please provide it on another day.
- **Don't be a sideline coach or referee:**
 - Please refrain from coaching or refereeing from the sidelines. Parents who shout or scream from the sidelines often give inappropriate advice at the wrong time. The coach should be the only sideline voice. Remain a fair distance from the sidelines and within the spectator area. You and your child will both enjoy the game more if you put some emotional distance between yourself and the field of play. Officials are symbols of fair play, integrity, and sportsmanship. Do not openly question their judgment or honesty.
- **Demonstrate a positive attitude toward your opponents and their families:**
 - Opponents are not enemies. Take care to show good hospitality at home and to represent MYS in a positive way when visiting other clubs. Never allow yourself to be drawn into a verbal disagreement with opposing parents or coaches.
- **Remember that your child wants to have fun:**
 - Children must establish their own goals and play the game for themselves. Don't impose unreasonable demands on your child. Let your children experience the fun of playing as well as the challenge of excelling.