



**CITY OF NEWPORT NEWS  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION  
2026 SPRING YOUTH SOCCER LEAGUE  
RULES AND REGULATIONS**

The Newport News Youth Soccer League is a recreational program that places good sportsmanship, teamwork and the development of the youth soccer players above winning and losing. Unsportsmanlike behavior by coaches, players or spectators will not be tolerated. Referees and field supervisors are instructed to remove any unruly people from the field or surrounding areas. Repeated violations may result in suspension or permanent expulsion from participation.

**A. AGE ELIGIBILITY**

1. The age deadline is **March 1, 2026**. School records or other information may be checked if there is a protest in eligibility.
2. **Bantam League – Ages 5-6**  
All participants must be five (5) years old on or before **March 1, 2026**, and may not be seven (7) years old before **March 1, 2026**.
3. **Mite League - Ages 7-8**  
All participants must be seven (7) years old on or before **March 1, 2026**, and may not be nine (9) years old before **March 1, 2026**.
4. **Junior League - Ages 9-10**  
All participants must be nine (9) years old on or before **March 1, 2026**, and may not be eleven (11) years old before **March 1, 2026**.
5. **Intermediate League - Ages 11-13**  
All participants must be eleven (11) years old on or before **March 1, 2026**, and may not be fourteen (14) years old before **March 1, 2026**.
6. **Senior League - Ages 14-17**  
All participants must be thirteen (14) years old on or before **March 1, 2026**, and may not be eighteen (18) years old before **March 1, 2026**.

**B. PLAYING ELIGIBILITY:**

1. The Newport News Youth Soccer Program consists of five (5) coed leagues: **Bantam (5-6-year-olds), Mite (7-8-year-olds), Junior (9-10-year-olds), Intermediate (11-13-year-olds, and Senior (14-17-year-olds)**.
2. The league age cut-off date for the **SPRING** season is **March 1, 2026**. All players registered in the registration timeframe will be placed on a team. Any player who is refunded from the current season's program is not permitted to be added to another NNPR soccer team or to be placed on the waiting list.
3. All players in the Newport News Youth Soccer program will need to register before each soccer season. A \$0 resident or \$60 non-resident fee is required to complete the registration process.
4. A player may play up one league only if he/she has a brother or sister on a team in the older league and is within one season of moving up (following league age requirements). A parent or legal guardian must inform (in

writing) the Athletic Office of such intent. At no time may a player play on two (2) teams in the Newport News Youth Soccer League. If a player is found playing for more than one team, the team in which he/she was **NOT** placed by the Athletic Staff will forfeit all games that the team has played up to and including the game in which the error was found.

**C. TEAM FORMATION AND DRAFTING RULES:**

1. All teams are made NEW in the spring season. All players who register during the posted registration timeframe will be placed onto a team in ALL age groups.
2. Brother/sister combinations will automatically be placed on the same team as long as correct age requirements are met. Parents may request that siblings **not** be placed on the same team.
3. Once a player is placed on a team, he/she will remain on that team for the duration of the season, unless an unforeseen problem arises that must be resolved by the Athletic Staff. Any coaches found guilty of trading players will forfeit all games in which the ineligible player participated, will be ineligible for any regular season trophy, and will not play in any post season games.
4. **Requests to play on certain teams for any reason (friends, transportation, coach preference, etc.) will not be accepted.**
5. After rosters are completed, players will only be added to teams by Athletic Staff in the event additional players are needed on the team. If a coach or team needs additional players, the request must be made to Athletic Staff at the Warwick Recreation Center. Athletic Staff will assign players from the waiting list based on the order in which the waiting list is taken. The player has 24 hours to come in and register. Once that time elapses and the assigned player have not registered, it will move to the next player on the list. No additional players will be placed on teams after **March 31, 2026**, unless extreme circumstances arise. Coaches will be provided with updated rosters as soon as possible if changes occur.
6. A complete roster will be given to each coach for his/her team. Coaches unable to contact players with the information provided must contact Athletic Staff immediately. The addition of players to any team without the written approval of the Athletic Staff will result in forfeiture of all games in which the illegal player(s) participated and possible suspension of the coach. Players will only be added to teams after initial rosters are distributed by rule C5. Coaches cannot add players to their team under any circumstances.

**D. PLAYING RULES:**

1. Newport News Youth Soccer plays under US Soccer playing rules with exceptions as listed in this document. The Peninsula Soccer Officials Association (PSOA) is contracted to provide referees for all scheduled games. There are **NO PROTESTS** of judgment decisions made by referees allowed in Newport News Youth Soccer. Player eligibility protests may be made at any time and must be submitted in writing to the Athletic Office. Video evidence will not be accepted in any protest situation.
2. There has been a recent amendment to the US Soccer playing rules regarding heading the ball in youth soccer. No heading is permitted (games and practices) in the Bantam, Mite, and Junior League. The Intermediate League may head the ball during games. Heading may be allowed in Intermediate practices, provided it is practiced sparingly. Players in the Senior League are permitted to head the ball in both games and practices.

**Penalty for heading: Any contact to the head, play is stopped immediately. The intentional use of the head will result in an in-direct free kick at the spot of the foul for the opposing team. Unintentional contact to the head will result in a drop ball to the team that last legally PLAYED the ball.**

**Swearing/Foul or Abusive Language: WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.** Players, Coaches, Parents and Spectators will show respect to the Officials, other team members and the opposing Team. Anyone player or Coach heard using this Language will receive a RED Card. If parents/spectator are heard the Coach will receive a

Yellow Card and the parks and Recreation Staff will remove the parent or spectator from the Field. Failure to leave will result in the termination of the game. (see Coaches/Player/Parent code of conduct)

3. \*All league specific rules are described below. All other rules not specific to one league will apply to all leagues.

### **BANTAM**

- Bantam League games will consist of four ten (10) minute quarters. Bantam players will use a size #3 ball.
- The Bantam League will play with six (6) players per side on the field. Each team must have no fewer than four (4) players to start a game. Teams will always play with five (5) field players and one goalkeeper on the field. A player must play in at least two (2) quarters per game, unless injury, illness or discipline problems arise. Coaches and players will be given a **5-MINUTE GRACE PERIOD** to allow additional players to arrive at the fields. If a team does not have enough players to start the game following the 5-minute grace period, the game will be declared a forfeit by the referees. To allow referees and games to remain on schedule, any game lost due to grace periods will not be made up.
- The offside rule will not be in effect in the Bantam League. Coaches are requested not to deliberately place offensive players in an offside position directly in front of the opponent's goal or goalkeeper. A coach attempting to take advantage of the no offside rule in this manner will face disciplinary actions from the League Office.
- During a goal kick or defending teams free kick in the box the ball must completely leave the penalty area before it is in play.
- **Slide Tackling is NOT allowed:** Slide tackling will be immediately whistled as a foul, and result in an indirect free kick. Continuous slide tackling will result in a yellow or red card, respectively. Coaches should instruct their players that slide tackling is dangerous and not allowed.
- **SUBSTITUTIONS:** In the Bantam League, coaches may substitute at any time on the fly to include substituting on goal kicks and kick offs for either team but may not have more than five field players and an identifiable goalkeeper participating at the same time.
- Keeper Substitutions will be made between quarters. The Keeper must have a different color shirt or penny on compared to the rest of the team but not match the other team.

### **mite**

- Mite League games will consist of four twelve (12) minute quarters. Mite players will use a size #4 ball.
- The Mite League will play with Eight (8) players on the field. Each team must have no fewer than six (6) players to start a game. Teams will always play with seven (7) field players and one goalkeeper on the field. A player must play in at least two (2) quarters per game, unless injury, illness or discipline problems arise. Coaches and players will be given a **5-MINUTE GRACE PERIOD** to allow additional players to arrive at the fields. If a team does not have enough players to start the game following the 5-minute grace period, the game will be declared a forfeit by the referees. To allow referees and games to remain on schedule, any game lost due to grace periods will not be made up.
- **Slide Tackling is NOT allowed:** Slide tackling will be immediately whistled as a foul, and result in an indirect free kick. Continuous slide tackling will result in a yellow or red card, respectively. Coaches should instruct their players that slide tackling is dangerous and not allowed.
- During a goal kick or defending teams free kick in the box the ball must completely leave the penalty area before it is in play.

- **SUBSTITUTIONS:** In the Mite League, substitutions can be made during a throw-in for *either team* as well as on a goal kick or a kickoff for either team. Teams may not have more than six field players and an identifiable goalkeeper participating at the same time. (No Substitution on Corner Kicks)
- Keeper Substitutions will be made between quarters. The Keeper must have a different color shirt or penny on compared to the rest of the team but not match the other team.

## **JUNIOR**

- Junior League games will consist of twenty-five (25) minute halves. Junior players will use a size #4 ball.
- The Junior League will play with nine (9) players on the field and can start a game with no fewer than seven (7) players. Coaches and players will be given a **5-MINUTE GRACE PERIOD** to allow additional players to arrive at the fields. If a team does not have enough players to start the game following the 5-minute grace period, the game will be declared a forfeit by the referees. To allow referees and games to remain on schedule, any game lost due to grace periods will not be made up.
- During a goal kick or defending teams free kick in the box the ball must completely leave the penalty area before it is in play.
- **Slide Tackling is NOT allowed:** Slide tackling will be immediately whistled as a foul, and result in an indirect free kick. Continuous slide tackling will result in a yellow or red card, respectively. Coach should instruct their players that slide tackling is dangerous and not allowed.
- **SUBSTITUTIONS:** In the Junior League, substitutions can be made during a throw-in for *either team* as well as on a goal kick or a kickoff for either team. (No Substitution on Corner Kicks)
- **KEEPER SUBSTITUTIONS** can happen during the game or at halftime. The Keeper must have a different color shirt or penny on compared to the rest of the team but not match the other team. If a keeper change happens during the game, it must be a player already on the bench that is ready to enter the field so play can resume as quickly as possible.
- **MERCY RULE:** Any team that is up by 7 goals with 15 minutes of time remaining in the second half will be declared the winner and the game will end. This is to avoid unsportsmanlike conduct and injuries.

## **INTERMEDIATE**

- Intermediate League games will consist of twenty-five (25) minute halves. Intermediate players will use a size #4 ball.
- The Intermediate League will play with eleven (11) players on the field and can start a game with no fewer than seven (7) players. Coaches and players will be given a **5-MINUTE GRACE PERIOD** to allow additional players to arrive at the fields. If a team does not have enough players to start the game following the 5-minute grace period, the game will be declared a forfeit by the referees. To allow referees and games to remain on schedule, any game lost due to grace periods will not be made up.
- During a goal kick or free kick in the penalty area (defending team's free kick) the ball is considered in play once the ball is kicked (it does not have to leave the penalty area)
- **SUBSTITUTIONS:** In the Intermediate League, the team with possession can substitute on a throw-in. The team not with possession can only substitute when the team with possession is substituting. All leagues can substitute on a goal kick or kick off for either team. (No Substitution on Corner Kicks)

- **KEEPER SUBSTITUTIONS** can happen during the game or at halftime. The Keeper must have a different color shirt or penny on compared to the rest of the team but not match the other team. If a keeper change happens during the game, it must be a player already on the bench that is ready to enter the field so play can resume as quickly as possible.
- **MERCY RULE:** Any team that is up by 7 goals with 15 minutes of time remaining in the second half will be declared the winner and the game will end. This is to avoid unsportsmanlike conduct and injuries.

## **SENIOR**

- Senior League games will consist of thirty (30) minute halves. Senior players will use a size #5 ball.
- The Senior League will play with eleven (11) players on the field and can start a game with no fewer than seven (7) players. Coaches and players will be given a **5-MINUTE GRACE PERIOD** to allow additional players to arrive at the fields. If a team does not have enough players to start the game following the 5-minute grace period, the game will be declared a forfeit by the referees. To allow referees and games to remain on schedule, any game lost due to grace periods will not be made up.
- **SUBSTITUTIONS:** In the Senior League, the team with possession can substitute on a throw-in. The team not with possession can only substitute when the team with possession is substituting. All leagues can substitute on a goal kick or kick off for either team. (No Substitution on Corner Kicks)
- **KEEPER SUBSTITUTIONS** can happen during the game or at halftime. The Keeper must have a different color shirt or penny on compared to the rest of the team but not match the other team. If a keeper change happens during the game, it must be a player already on the bench that is ready to enter the field so play can resume as quickly as possible.
- **MERCY RULE:** Any team that is up by 7 goals with 15 minutes of time remaining in the second half will be declared the winner and the game will end. This is to avoid unsportsmanlike conduct and injuries.

5. The coach may use the sideline from the eighteen (18) yard box to the opponent's eighteen (18) yard box to coach his/her team. Team members, coaches, and parents must remain on the SAME SIDE of the field of their team using the proper social distancing requirements if practical. The team listed first on the schedule will be the home team and have a choice of sides. Opposing coaches may not agree to occupy the same side of the field. At no time may a coach, team member (player or parent) and/or spectator be allowed behind the goal area. All parents and spectators must stay at least five yards away from the sidelines.
6. Any player or coach receiving a red card will not participate in the next scheduled game. Any Coach, Junior, Intermediate or Senior player receiving 3 cautions (yellow cards) in a season will be suspended for the next scheduled game. Suspensions may be extended or rescinded at the discretion of the Athletic Staff. Coaches are responsible for the behavior of the players, assistants, and spectators on their respective side of the field and can be warned or ejected by the referee for the unsportsmanlike conduct of any unruly person on their sideline. Parents also can be ejected from a field at any time, please make them aware of this. Any player involved in a physical altercation, as deemed by Athletic Staff, will be suspended for a minimum of the next league game and possible future games. Any coach or parent receiving a red card must immediately leave the field and surrounding area but can remain in the parking lot.
7. Soccer cleats or turf shoes are recommended. Baseball-style cleats (square molding on soles), multi-purpose cleats with a toe cleat, or any type of metal spikes may not be worn at any time.
8. Shin guards are mandatory for all leagues and MUST be always worn under the socks. The shin guard must be completely covered by the sock. Rolling the sock down over the top of the shin guard does not count as under the sock.
9. Any player who is bleeding on the field will be removed from the game until such bleeding has been completely stopped. Once the bleeding has been stopped, the player may re-enter the game at the next available opportunity

to substitute. Any uniform (socks included) that contains blood will be termed illegal and a replacement must be used.

10. A drop ball will be called when the ball hits the referee and possession is not regained by the team in possession of the ball at the time it hits the referee. If possession is regained that does not result in an immediate attack on goal, then play will continue. All drop balls will be dropped to the team that had possession when the infraction occurred. Any drop ball called in the penalty area will be dropped to the keeper.

## **E. SCHEDULING & WEATHER**

1. Practices will be scheduled by Athletic Staff. Fields throughout the city will be used as practice sites for all leagues. If a conflict occurs, the practice schedule distributed by the Athletic Staff will be considered official. A full field (two goals) will almost never be available unless another team does not show up. Practices will be scheduled in half field, one-hour time slots.
2. Game and practice schedules are created by the Athletic Staff. Coaches are requested to submit, in writing, any potential dates or times they may not be available prior to , to [athletics@nnva.gov](mailto:athletics@nnva.gov). **Once the game schedules have been distributed, it will not be changed to accommodate one or more teams for any reason. Any coach or coaches found to have altered the game schedule without Athletic Staff approval will result in immediate game forfeiture and possible future game suspension.**

Teams should be expected to play between 8-10 games throughout the season. Scores and standings will be kept for Junior, Intermediate and Senior teams.

3. Games may be played in the rain provided there is no lightning and the field remains playable. All game cancellations will be made by the athletic staff prior to the start of the first game. Once the first game kicks off, it is the responsibility of the referee to stop play due to weather or field conditions during the remaining scheduled games. Weather related cancellations/postponements will be made on our RAINOUT hotline and website (Search for Newport News): <https://rainoutonline.com/>. Our new weather online hotline number is 757-899-1200, but you can follow the link provided to see all field conditions related to weather. To receive texts or emails to specific fields you can subscribe for free here: <https://www.nnathletics.com/Default.aspx?tabid=204697>. Coaches that agree not to play or refuse to play for any reason may be subject to forfeiting that game. Any game that is not played because of a coach's refusal to field his/her team will not automatically be made up. All make-up game decisions will be made by the Athletic Staff. No games will be played after June 10, 2023.
4. All fields will be cleared immediately after thunder has been heard or lightning seen. Players and spectators are expected to go to their cars in the parking lot and take shelter with their windows rolled up. No one will be allowed to remain on soccer fields. There will be a 30-minute wait before returning to play after the last sign of lightning activity. Players should not leave until their game is officially cancelled.

## **F. EQUIPMENT**

1. **Illegal Equipment: NO jewelry may be worn during games at any time.** This includes, but is not limited to, hair beads, barrettes, starter earrings, necklaces, bracelets, or any other item worn anywhere on the body. Coaches are advised to follow this policy in practice as well. Using athletic tape or similar material to cover jewelry is not allowed for any reason. Athletic wristbands and headbands made of cloth material may be worn at any time. Medical alert necklaces or bracelets may be worn provided they are taped to the body. **Shin-guards – these must be made of suitable material and be of an appropriate size to provide reasonable protection and be covered by the socks. Micro Shin guards are not authorized.**
2. Casts or splints made of a hard substance in its final form such as leather, rubber, plastic, plaster, or fiberglass will not be allowed except for a manufactured knee brace that has not been altered and an Ace bandage with nothing underneath. This is an exception to the US Soccer rules that allow casts or other braces if covered by soft, pliable foam or other substance and accompanied by a medical release. **Newport News Youth Soccer does not allow casts, soft or hard, on any part of the body to be worn in games. There will be no exceptions to this rule.**

3. **PENALTY FOR ILLEGAL EQUIPMENT:** The head coach shall receive the first caution (yellow card) for an illegally equipped player. All subsequent cautions (yellow cards) for illegally equipped players shall be issued directly to the players and not to the head coach. The player shall be instructed to leave the field and may be replaced at the time of the caution to the coach or player. The removed player may re-enter at the next legal substitution opportunity once the illegal equipment has been removed or rectified.
4. Uniforms are provided by the Parks & Recreation Department. The head coach is responsible for making sure each player is properly dressed. All players' shirts must remain intact. **Shirts may not be altered for any reason (for example, no cut off sleeves, no cut off shirts, and no altering numbers). All players must wear their assigned jersey provided by NNP&R for that season. Any player with a duplicate number found playing on the soccer field must be substituted immediately and cannot return until their issued jersey is worn.** Players cannot wear two different colored socks at any time (for example, one red and one blue sock). If a sweatshirt or long sleeve t-shirt is worn, it must be worn **under** the team shirt. Any hooded sweatshirt must have the hood tucked inside the back of the shirt. Sweatpants may be worn in cold weather conditions or for approved medical reasons. The Athletic Staff will make the final decision on any uniform related issue. Uniform shirts may be exchanged through the athletic office up to **ONE WEEK** after shirts have been distributed to coaches. After one week, replacement shirts will need to be purchased through the Athletic Office for \$15 per shirt.
5. Coaches that are approved by the Athletic Staff will receive a volunteer shirt for the season. Coaches are asked to wear this shirt when they are coaching a practice or a game to help be identifiable.

## **H. INJURIES/MEDICAL EMERGENCIES:**

Report all injuries to the Athletic staff located at the field you are playing on. If an injury is discovered after leaving the playing field, please email the Athletic staff at [athletics@nnva.gov](mailto:athletics@nnva.gov) with a full description of the incident that caused the injury.

In the event of a medical emergency the Athletic staff will call 911 and remain with the player until they have left the playing fields. Parents will be responsible for directing medical services to the hospital of choice. Parents will email the Athletic staff at [athletics@nnva.gov](mailto:athletics@nnva.gov) with the extent of the injury.

## **I. SCORES/STANDINGS:**

1. Standings will only be kept for the Junior, Intermediate, and Senior Leagues. The league standings will be derived by a point system: Three (3) points for a win, one (1) point for a tie, and zero (0) points for a loss. At the conclusion of the regular season, a single-elimination playoff will take place for the Junior, Intermediate and Senior Leagues.
2. **A coach (head or assistant) from each team in the Junior, Intermediate, and Senior Leagues must report the final score, regardless of a win, loss, or tie, to the Athletic Office to ensure accurate standings. Please email all scores within twenty-four (24) hours of a game being played to [athletics@nnva.gov](mailto:athletics@nnva.gov). Email is the preferred method of contact so there is a record of all reported scores.**
3. Individual awards will be presented to the league champion after the tournament concludes. The Bantam and Mite leagues are considered instructional, and no awards are given. If two or more teams are tied after all regular season games have been played, the tiebreaker will first be head-to-head games played, with the next tie breaker being total goals against, and lastly total goals scored for.

## **J. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

1. The City of Newport News prohibits the use of tobacco, tobacco products, and alcohol on school or recreational facility grounds, including athletic fields, bleachers, parking lots, and surrounding areas within one hundred (100) yards of any of the above locations.
2. Pets are prohibited at any field used by NNPR Athletic programs. Animals must remain behind the fence located around the athletic fields during practice and scheduled games. If there is not a fence at an athletic site, animals must remain back 10 yards from the playing field (aggressive animals will be asked to leave the field for the safety of all present).