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#### I. VISION AND MISSION

**Stafford Soccer Vision Statement:** Stafford Area Soccer Association, Inc. ("Stafford Soccer") aspires to be an outstanding educational-athletic organization that provides a safe, high-quality experience for every athlete. A high-quality experience is one in which every athlete:

- (1) is coached using the principles of Positive Coaching;
- (2) has fun playing the game;
- (3) feels like an important part of the team regardless of performance;
- (4) learns "life lessons" that have value beyond the playing field; and
- (5) learns the skills, tactics and strategies of the game and improves as a player.

**Stafford Soccer Mission Statement:** Stafford Soccer is committed to providing well-organized soccer recreation appropriately structured to accommodate any level of play commensurate with our players' individual abilities, potential, and interest and to promoting a positive sports culture that teaches life lessons and "honors the game" for all players in the Stafford area.

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#### II. INTRODUCTION

The Stafford Soccer Operations Manual is a supplement to the current version of the Stafford Soccer Bylaws. It provides additional details on the operation of Stafford Soccer and its Programs. This Operations Manual is not intended to be comprehensive or to address all of the possible applications of, or exceptions to, the general policies and procedures. Rather, Stafford Soccer reserves the right to interpret and administer the policies and procedures set forth in this Operations Manual in its sole discretion for the betterment of the organization. If you have questions concerning the applicability of a certain policy or procedure to you, you should address your specific questions to the Director of Operations, your Program Director, or any member of the Board of Directors.

The policies, procedures, and information contained in this Operations Manual may need to be revised or updated from time to time. As such, Stafford Soccer reserves the right to modify, alter or discontinue any policies or procedures described herein at its discretion at any time, with or without notice, if it determines that a change is necessary or desirable. This document will be reviewed by Stafford Soccer's Board of Directors (or its designated representative or committee) on a periodic basis, but no less than every 2 years. Any recommended updates or revisions to the Operations Manual must be approved by a majority of the Board of Directors.

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#### III. ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

Stafford Soccer is run by volunteers who are committed to the vision and mission of Stafford Soccer and contribute their personal time and energy in helping Stafford Soccer achieve its mission. Pursuant to its Bylaws, Stafford Soccer is operated under the direction of its elected Board of Directors. In addition to the seven (7) elected Board of Director positions provided for in Stafford Soccer's Bylaws, there are other positions — both volunteer and paid — that the Board has determined to be necessary for the efficient and orderly handling of its operations. The Board may, from time to time, determine that additional positions are needed and may assign or hire persons to fill such needed roles. Conversely, the Board may, from time to time, determine that a particular position is no longer needed and may eliminate the position. Aside from team specific positions (i.e., coaches, assistant coaches, managers, etc.), the following positions are currently being utilized but are not limited to, by Stafford Soccer to attend to its operations:

## Paid Employee Positions:

- General Manager/Technical Director
- Director of Coaching
- Director of Operations
- Office Assistant
- Fields/Scheduling Coordinator
- Director (s) of Player Development
- Travel Coaches

#### Volunteer Positions:

- Board Members
- Rules and Discipline Committee and Chairperson
- League Coordinators/Representatives (Travel Program)

#### Other Hired Positions:

- Tournament Director
- Field liners
- Athletic Trainer
- Itinerant Coaches
- Off-season program support/staff

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#### IV. OPERATIONAL INFORMATION

#### A. Season.

Stafford Soccer conducts its soccer program on a seasonal year basis. A **seasonal year** begins Fall of one year into Spring of the following year. The fall season runs from August to November. The Spring season runs from March to June. The Board of Directors may adjust limits as required when planning for a particular season of play, based on field availability and other circumstances that affect ability to schedule and conduct games.

# B. Programs.

Stafford Soccer operates Recreation, Revolution Academy, Travel and Adult League. Each of these levels is overseen by a Program Director, with assistance from various support positions. The major differences between the Programs are as follows:

- 1. <u>Recreation</u>. The Stafford Soccer Recreation Program strives to offer a fun type environment for all players and to teach a better understanding of the game of soccer. The Program caters to those interested in playing recreational soccer between 5 and 19 years of age. This means a child must be at least 5 years old at the time regular games for the season start and cannot be 19 years old (or older) on August 1 of the current soccer year (a soccer year runs from 1 August to 31 July).
- 2. Revolution Academy. The Stafford Soccer Revolution Academy strives to teach a greater understanding of the game of soccer and to instill self-confidence in players who show the potential for development for play in elite programs. The Revolution Academy is an advanced program that provides players and coaches who are serious about the game an environment in which they can develop their skills. The focus of the Program is to develop players such that they are well prepared for competition in higher-level leagues, including scholastic leagues. Although the Revolution Academy does not concentrate on the aspect of winning, it nevertheless provides a competitive and challenging environment. To be eligible for participation on a Revolution Academy team, a player must have participated in the try-out process and been selected for placement on a team. In contrast to the Recreation program, the Revolution Academy program does not allocate players to teams according to geographical area. Teams are formed based on a tryout rating and team balancing process. The Travel Program looks towards Revolution Academy players and coaches as it augments existing travel teams or looks to form new teams.
- 3. <u>Travel</u>: The Stafford Soccer Travel Program sponsors traveling teams in order to provide the opportunity for youth who possess the interest and the ability to play highly competitive soccer, a means whereby they may compete with comparable players and teams as representatives of Stafford Soccer. To be eligible for participation on a Travel

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Program team, a player must have participated in the try-out process or have been otherwise assessed by a designated coach or Technical Staff, and been selected for placement on a team.

4. <u>Adult League</u>: Stafford Soccer provides a separate recreational league for adults age 19 and over. This division follows FIFA guidelines and is a non-developmental, fun league for experienced and non-experienced players. There are no tryout requirements for this league.

Unless otherwise indicated, the policies and procedures set forth in this Operations Manual apply to all Programs.

# C. Registration

#### 1. General.

Registration for the upcoming season is announced well in advance through various public media. Registration dates, times, places and costs will be covered in the announcements. For all players, proof of age is required for Travel programs and is requested for Recreation and Academy.

A minimum four-week open registration will be held each season. The number of teams for the upcoming season, for which registration is being conducted, will be determined at the conclusion of the open regular registration period, based on number of members registered and the availability of coaches for such teams.

During the seasonal year (Fall to Spring) Player Returning Rights are applicable. As long as the registration is completed during the regular registration period, a Player will be placed on the same team in the Spring as they played in the Fall unless a specific request not to do so is received. If a player is registered during the waiting period, Player Returning Rights are forfeited.

Those members who register later than the regular open registration period are considered to be late registrants. Late registrants will be assessed a late registration fee, the applicability and amount to be determined by the Board of Directors prior to registrations being conducted for the season, and placement on a team is not guaranteed. However, the Program Director (or his/her designated representative) will maintain a waiting list for late registrants in the order that requests are received. For the Recreation Program, every effort will be made to place players from the waiting list on a team. For the Revolution Academy, players will be taken off of the waiting list only if one of the allocated spots in the Program remains vacant.

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Travel Program registration is covered in Section G "Additional Travel Program Policies".

Members may not register for an Academy team unless the player has attended the requisite tryout and has been offered and accepted a roster spot on the team. Position acceptance must be complete by the stated deadline. Failure to timely complete the registration process may result in loss of the roster spot.

# 2. Special Requests

#### a. Recreation Program:

Only during the open registration period, members may make special requests for placement. Special requests for placement must be made at the time of open registration, in the space provided for on the player and/or volunteer (i.e., to coach) registration form. Special requests must be made each time a player or coach is registered (i.e., special requests do not carry over from season to season). Special requests made after open registration, during the waitlist period, and/or not included on the registration form will not normally be considered.

The following special requests generally will be given favorable consideration by Stafford Soccer's Recreation Program:

- i. Coaches and Assistant Coaches. Coaches may request, and will be permitted to coach their child(ren)'s team. Additionally, coaches may request one assistant coach and their child(ren) to also be placed on their team. If the child(ren) of the assistant coach in the previous season are playing on the same team, the coach may not request an additional assistant coach. *Coaches have no team returning rights*. Coaches will be placed consistent with the needs of the Program and age groups in which they desire to coach.
- ii. Request Not to Play With a Specific Coach or Member. Parents may request that their children not play for a specific coach, or with specific other children in the age group in which they are playing. These requests will normally receive favorable consideration; however, the child being placed will be treated as a new player for purposes of placement on a team.

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iii. Recreation and Revolution Academy Only

Playing Up or Down. If a child will reach the next age group cutoff date on or before September 30 of the seasonal year, the parents or legal guardians of that child may request that the child be placed in the upper age group for play. Requests for Play up will be considered upon receipt of the Age-up Request found on the web page under the Recreation tab. Verbal requests will not be considered. Requests submitted after the Open Registration period ends will not be considered.

Requests for age down will not be granted unless exceptional circumstances are present, such as a physical or mental disability which creates a barrier for the player to engage with like aged children. Players with significant mental or physical disabilities may be referred to the TOPSoccer program for non-traditional athletes.

The decision to allow a child to play up or down is dictated by the stated policy.

Generally, other special requests for placement will not receive favorable consideration, unless there are compelling circumstances. Stafford Soccer cannot honor special requests for practice times and/or locations, and such requests will not be considered. The decision to approve any such requests rests with the Program Director and that decision is final.

#### b. Revolution Academy:

Special requests for placement will not be considered. Assignment of a player will be accomplished only through consideration of the results of the tryouts and in accordance with the team assignment procedures utilized by the Program, which may include evaluations conducted by team coaches.

In the Revolution Academy, players will not be permitted to play in either an upper or lower age group.

#### c. Travel Program:

Special requests for placement will not be considered. Assignment of a player will be accomplished only through consideration of the results of the tryouts and in accordance with the team assignment procedures utilized by the Program.

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In the Travel Program, players may be considered for approval to play in an upper age group, but will not be permitted to age up more than one (1) year. The player must attend the age appropriate tryout and indicate on the tryout registration that he/she would like to be considered for the next age group. The player will be evaluated by the coaches for both age groups. The Director of Player Development, and/or the Technical Director will make the final decision on player placement.

#### 3. Payment.

For Recreation Program and Revolution Academy players and Adult League, all fees (including any late fees) must be paid before a player will be assigned to a team. For Travel Program players, all fees must be paid in accordance with the payment schedule established by the Travel Program. Failure to pay all fees due by the deadline will result in revocation of the member's player card (which makes the player ineligible to participate in regular training or game play) until such time as all fees are paid or the player family creates an approved payment arrangement.

Fees may be paid via credit card online during the registration or may be paid by cash or check in the Stafford Soccer office. There will be a charge of \$25.00 for all returned checks. If a check is returned, the player will not be assigned to a team (or will be removed from a team) and not allowed to play until Stafford Soccer receives a cash payment for all outstanding fees plus the \$25.00 returned check fee.

For all families registering 3 or more participants in any combination of programs a multi-family discount will be provided. Prior to payment for programs, families meeting the 3 or more participant requirement will contact the office for discount rate and account adjustment. Discount is based on the number of participants in combination with the type of program. Multi-family discount grid is attached to this document as Appendix 3.

### 4. Refunds.

For Recreation Program and Revolution Academy players and Adult League, a refund or account credit of registration fees and dues, less any administrative fees (does not apply to account credit), can be requested and will be authorized for any reason until the date of the general membership meeting. Thereafter, refunds/account credit will only be granted for events that are out of the control of the parents or guardians and that are requested prior to the first game of the season, as approved by the Program Director. Requests for a refund/account credit because of an injury occurring before the first game of the season should be sent to the Director of Operations and must be accompanied by an injury report or a doctor's note. If approved, refunds will be processed in the same method as the original payment. Account credit shall be granted

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only for the season following the initial request. If a credit is given, rights to request for refund are rescinded. All requests for refund/credit must be submitted via the online request form.

For Travel Program players, a refund of registration fees and dues, less any administrative fees, can be requested and will be authorized if an injury occurs prior to the first game of the season. Requests for a refund under these circumstances should be sent to the Travel Director and must be accompanied by an injury report or a doctor's note. If approved, refunds will be processed in the same method as the original payment. Refunds will not be authorized for any other reasons, and no refunds will be given for Travel Program uniform costs for any reason. Travel Program is not eligible for an account credit. All requests for refunds must be submitted via the online request form.

# D. Team Assignment

#### 1. Tryouts

There are no tryouts for the Recreation Program or the Adult League. However, all players desiring to be considered for Revolution Academy and Travel Program teams must attend the age appropriate scheduled tryout session.

The Revolution Academy conducts tryouts prior to the start of each season. Supplemental tryouts are conducted at mid-year and are at the discretion of the Program Director. Players desiring to play in the Revolution Academy must comply with the following:

- a. New players to the Revolution Academy must attend a tryout.
- b. Returning players are required to tryout in the following instances:
  - i. prior to the start of the Fall season;
  - ii. when requesting transfer off current team within the same age category; or
  - iii. when the player has been identified by the coach as one who failed to demonstrate commitment to the game during the previous season.

Players in this third sub-category may be excluded from the Revolution Academy even though they may demonstrate sufficient technical capability during tryouts.

The Revolution Academy reserves the right to waive returning player privileges at any time.

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Players that are moving up to a new age Program will be placed on a team based on their ability. They may or may not be placed with players from a previous team.

The Travel Program conducts tryouts prior to the start of every year. New players to the Travel Program must attend a tryout. Returning players may be required to attend a tryout each year and must attend a tryout when changing age groups.

#### 2. Maximum Team Sizes

Team sizes are determined by the number of players permitted on the field during games for each age group and the requirement for each player to play a minimum period of time for every game.

For Recreation Program, the maximum team roster size is as follows:

U6: 10 U8: 10 U10: 10 U12: 12 U14: 15

High School Program: 16

Adult 14

For Revolution Academy, the maximum team roster size is as follows:

U10: 10 U12: 12 U14: 15

Team Builders should not assign more players to any team than the maximum number set forth above. Any roster in excess of the maximum set forth in this provision must be approved by the Program Director.

For Adult League, the maximum roster size is 14, minimum is 10.

For Travel Program teams, the maximum roster size shall be set by the age group coaches in consultation with the Stafford Soccer's technical staff, subject to any caps on team sizes imposed by the organization (i.e., ODSL, NCSL, NPL etc.) in which the team plays. In the event of any disagreement, the final decision concerning the appropriate roster size shall be made by Stafford Soccer's Director of Youth Development and/or Technical Director.

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## 3. Recreation Program

All members who are regular registrants will be placed on a team in their appropriate age group. Teams will be put together based mainly on geographic area (using nearest elementary school and sub-Program as references). Stafford Soccer will make every effort to place late registrants on a team using the same general guidelines for placement; however, late registrants lose returning player rights and may not be placed on a team within their geographic area.

In assigning players to teams, the following procedures shall apply to the extent possible:

- a. Team Builders will separate registered players by area; include coach/assistant coach on appropriate team rosters; and ensure that the coach's and assistant coach's children are on team roster. Team Builders will place coaches that are not associated with a specific team on one for which a coach is needed.
- b. For Spring Season only, returning players must remain on their current teams, unless they expressly request to move off of their current team. Any returning registered player that makes such a request will be reassigned.
- c. No move ups will be allowed to the High School Division. Only players attending high school may play in the High School Division, and all players attending high school are eligible to participate in the High School Division.
- d. Once modifications to current team rosters are complete, the team builder(s) shall assign newly registered and other unassigned (e.g. move up) players to current teams, using the following guidelines/restrictions when assigning players to teams:
  - i. Assignments are made by geographical area. If returning rights have been suspended for the age group for which the Team Builder is assigning: All new teams should be formed by starting at elementary school area (and/or housing area) that have the requisite or greater number of players to form a team (see the Stafford Soccer rules and/or Program Director for how many should be assigned to each team). The team builder(s) should form as many teams as possible and then move to the next area. Once the creation of initial teams is completed, the team builder(s) should go back, collect the remaining players from adjacent areas, and create another team. This process should be continued until all players are assigned to a team. If returning rights remain in effect: The team builder(s) should assign unassigned (move

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up, new) players to a team in their elementary school area (or housing area).

- ii. A set maximum number of players per team can be assigned, which is determined by age group. Permission from the Technical Director is required to assign more than the set number of players to a team. A team builder should seek permission to exceed the maximum roster size only in the most unusual of circumstances. It is recommended that the team builder(s) leave some space (one to two slots) on some teams (especially if a new team) when assigning in order to accommodate the inevitable late registrations from the waitlist.
- iii. Teams should be balanced by number of players, experience and sex distribution, as much as possible.
- iv. If the child of a coach who does not have a team assignment is available to be assigned for a team that does not have a coach, consider assigning that child to that team.
- v. Special requests on unassigned player registrations can be considered as players are assigned, or can be reconciled after initial assignments are completed.
- vi. "Request not to play with" special requests are higher in priority than other requests. Carpooling requests and requests for specific coaches are next in priority to be considered. Requests for specific practice field, day or time will not be considered. Requests to play down (which is only for physically or mentally handicapped situations) must be approved by the Recreation Program Director.
- e. If there are more registered players than there are spaces on current teams, then the team builder(s) should form new team(s). The team builder(s) should create a new team for the players for the area(s) that they have and assign team numbers to the newly formed teams. NOTE: The same guidelines/restrictions that apply to assigning new players to existing teams also apply to creation of new teams.
- f. The team builder(s) should make one more pass over all team rosters to ensure that the "best" balance (numbers, experience and sex distribution) have been obtained. The team builder(s) should also ensure that coaches are utilized as completely as possible to reduce the number of coaches that will have to be searched.

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- g. If spaces remain on current teams or newly formed teams after assignment of registered players is complete, the team builder(s) should then work from the waiting list from the program for that age group and place children from the waiting list on the appropriate team(s).
- h. The team builder(s) should, as soon as possible after conducting player assignments, begin to contact parents with children that are on teams that have no coach to solicit a volunteer. If a coach is obtained, the team builder should request they register via the online volunteer program. In the event a volunteer cannot be obtained to coach, the team builder should request further guidance from the Recreation Program Director.
- i. The team builder(s) should continue to monitor the wait list for opportunities to place children who desire to play. The team builder(s) will provide the most up to date rosters to coaches at the general membership meeting. Rosters will be posted on the web page for coaches' access. If modifications to the rosters are made after the general membership meeting, the team builder will update the online roster and contact the affected coach to communicate the change.

#### 4. Revolution Academy

The overall goal of the Revolution Academy is to compose teams that are highly competitive with other teams within their age group. The Revolution Academy fills the required age-group teams based on individual tryouts.

All members who are regular registrants and have been selected to the Revolution Academy based upon tryout results will be placed on a team in their appropriate age group through a draft administered by the Revolution Academy Director and/or his or her designee(s). This will be based on tryout information and/or knowledge of each player's skill in order to create teams that are as balanced as possible in each age group.

## 5. Travel Program

Players will be assigned to teams by the age-appropriate coaches and the Program Director or his or her designees, in consultation with Stafford Soccer's technical staff, based upon the results of the tryouts and/or knowledge of the player's skill.

# 6 Adult League

Players can register under a specific team name or as a free agent. Team Captains are sought prior to regular season registration. Team Captains can invite players to register

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by providing a team code. Free agent registrations will be assigned to existing teams if players are needed or if there are sufficient registrations, a new team will be formed.

# 7. Removal of a Team or Player

In the Revolution Academy and Travel Programs, if a team or an individual player demonstrates an attitude or lack of commitment which indicates they are not serious about the game and are thus not willing to put forth the effort necessary to develop, the Technical Staff reserves the right to initiate transfer to an appropriate recreational program. No adjustment of fees will take place should such a transfer be deemed necessary.

## 8. Coaches/Assistant Coaches

All Stafford Soccer members are eligible to coach in the Recreation Program. However, Stafford Soccer prefers that its Recreation Program coaches either have the appropriate US Youth Soccer certification or obtain such certificate within two (2) seasons of beginning to coach.

Recreation Head Coaches must be sixteen (16) years of age or older. It is required that any coach under eighteen (18) have the support of an adult Assistant Coach. Stafford Soccer supports our young players who give back to their club by coaching young recreation teams. High School Recreation coaches will be twenty one (21) years of age or older.

Recreation Assistant Coaches function to support the Coach. There are no age restrictions for Assistant Coaches, but if under the age of sixteen (16) cannot independently conduct a game or practice without the allocated Coach or additional Assistant Coach over seventeen (17) years of age present unless previously authorized by the Recreation Director or Technical Staff.

U5 Stars coaches may be under the age of 18 at the discretion of the Technical Staff.

Consistent with its focus toward player and coach development, the Revolution Academy accepts coaches that are committed to developing the desired skills and attributes of the players. Revolution Academy coaches must have or agree to obtain the appropriate certification within two seasons of his/her appointment. Exceptions must be presented in writing to, and approved by, the Program Director.

Academy Assistant Coaches are limited to one per team and will be approved by club technical staff.

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Travel Head Coaches are contracted by Technical Staff. All Travel Assistant Coaches are approved by Technical Staff.

Stafford Soccer reserves the right to deny any coach active participation in any season.

## 9. Recruitment of Players

Recruitment of players in the Recreation Program is strictly prohibited.

In the Revolution Academy, recruiting a player for a specific team by a coach or other Stafford Soccer member is highly discouraged. However, appropriate players may be recruited to consider playing in the Revolution Academy as a whole. Recruiting from planned or existing Recreation or Travel Program teams should only be attempted where all impacted Program Directors and coaches are involved prior to approval of the recruitment. Players recruited will be assigned to a team as dictated by team size needs.

In the Travel Program, Stafford Soccer discourages coaches from recruiting players from other travel teams. Coaches should mainly recruit from the Revolution Academy teams and the general population, but must comply with all league and/or organizational rules pertaining to recruitment of or contact with players associated with another team.

#### E. Practices

### 1. Recreation Program

Recreation Program teams will be permitted one or two practice sessions per week, depending upon the age group and field availability. The practice times and locations will be chosen by the team's coach from the allotted times and fields provided by the County. During the season, beginning with the first authorized practice date, a team may have no more than three (3) soccer events (scheduled practices, scrimmages and games) per calendar week. Exceptions may only be made at the discretion of the Recreation Program Director or his or her designee(s) in the event of unforeseen or compelling circumstances.

## 2. Revolution Academy

Revolution Academy teams attend team practices each week. Attendance and full participation in team practices is required in order to fully benefit from Revolution Academy play. Revolution Academy players are also expected to attend player

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development training sessions which will be arranged by Stafford Soccer. The cost of player development training sessions is included in the player registration fee. During the season, beginning with the first authorized practice date, a team may have no more than three (3) soccer events (scheduled practices, scrimmages and games) per calendar week. Exceptions are permitted as required by coaches, but such exceptions should be for a substantial minority of the season.

#### 3. Travel

Travel teams attend team practices each week. Attendance and full participation in team practices is required in order to fully benefit from Travel play.

# 4. Adult League

No scheduled practices will take place for the Adult League.

## 5. Practice Field Policy

All fields used by Stafford Soccer are owned and maintained by Stafford County Parks and Recreation ("County"). The County provides Stafford Soccer with a number of specific games and practice fields throughout the county. Adherence to the specified fields is critical in maintaining use of fields.

Before the beginning of any season, Stafford Soccer provides a requested schematic of fields within the county for use as game or practice fields. It is at the discretion of the County to approve these season requests. To the best of their ability, the County will provide initial lining and goals on practices fields but does not guarantee that sufficient equipment is available to place on all practice fields. The County will provide appropriate goals for all games fields.

#### F. Games

#### 1. Laws of the Game

All Stafford Soccer activities, which involve players, will be conducted in accordance with the most recent Federation International Football Association (FIFA) laws as administered by the United States Soccer Federation (USSF),), and Virginia Youth Soccer Association (VYSA). In addition, Stafford Soccer rules and Organization (ODSL NPL, NSCL, etc.) rules will be followed, as applicable.

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## 2. Game Scheduling

All Recreation Program, Revolution Academy and Adult League games, including makeup games, will be scheduled by the Fields Coordinator. No game shall be played by any Stafford Soccer team without the approval and/or knowledge of the Fields Coordinator and/or Program Director.

All Travel Program games, including makeup games, will be scheduled in accordance with the procedures established by the league or organization in which the team plays.

#### 3. Game Cancellation

Organization-wide game cancellations due to inclement weather or other circumstances will be announced via the Stafford Soccer website and the Stafford Soccer Weather Hotline as soon as possible after a determination is made that activities should be suspended. In the event of conditions that are local to one site, occur at the last minute, or during play, the center referee or coaches will determine whether conditions are suitable for play. Safety is the primary consideration when determining whether conditions are suitable for play - the center referee is the only person who has both the authority and responsibility for that decision.

Below are some basic guidelines regarding closures:

- a. The County is in control of the field. They will make the call and inform Stafford Soccer.
- b. The County *usually* makes a call on fields around 2 p.m. on weekdays and by 7 a.m. on weekends.
- c. Any information received regarding field closures will be posted on our website (<a href="www.staffordsoccer.com">www.staffordsoccer.com</a>), on our weather hotline 540-657-2010 and all social media outlets.
- d. Coaches and parents are encouraged to sign up for Stafford Alerts, which will provide information directly to them from the County on closures and cancellations.
- e. If fields are closed after 3pm, the club will make every attempt to communicate these changes.
- f. It is a coach's call if weather is very bad before/during practice time to cancel practice.
- g. It is at the discretion of the referee (if assigned) or the coaches to call a game due to inclement weather at game time.

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- h. In the case of thunder or lightning, players and parents should leave the field immediately for a grounded area. No players should go back on the field until 30 minutes after the last thunder or lightning. A county official, referee or coach can delay or cancel a game/practice after the 30 minute waiting period if thunder or lightening continues. Parent can choose to remove their child from the field of play under their own discretion.
- i. Games cancelled due to weather prior to conclusion of the first half of play will be rescheduled to be replayed in their entirety. Generally, if a Recreation or Revolution Academy game is cancelled due to weather after the second half kickoff, the game result will stand as the final result and the game will not be rescheduled.

Stafford Soccer follows the Stafford County Inclement Weather, Thunder and Lightning Guidelines, which are attached to this Operations Manual as Appendix 2. Any coach or official failing to comply with these Guidelines will be subject to disciplinary action.

# 4. Required Playing Time

In the Recreation Program and Revolution Academy, all players shall receive an equal amount of playing time for every game, including overtime periods, at which they are present, unless exceptions apply. Exceptions for unequal playing time may be applied by the coach based on the following situations:

- a. A player returning from injury; or
- b. A player's failure to regularly attend team practices or
- c. A player with a disciplinary issue

Coaches should notify parents of a player who will not be accorded equal playing time well before the game.

#### 5. Reporting Incidents

All injuries, disciplinary incidents, (red or yellow cards, parent/spectator sent off the field, lack of roster during roster check etc.), referee discrepancies, field discrepancies, or other unusual occurrences should be reported as soon as possible to the Rules and Discipline Coordinator at Stafford Soccer, and the appropriate League (if applicable). Procedures for reporting incidents to Stafford Soccer are contained in a separate document, Rules and Discipline found on the web page under the "Our Club" tab. Contact rdcoordinator@staffordsoccer.com for more information.

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#### 6. Uniforms

Players must wear their Program's standard uniform in order to participate in matches.

# **G.** Tournaments or Special Activities Participation

Any Stafford Soccer team that wishes to participate in a tournament or other special soccer event that occurs outside of normally scheduled Stafford Soccer activities or those of the League they are involved with must submit their request and receive permission to participate. All active Travel Program teams are required to play in Stafford Soccer -sponsored tournaments and events. All Revolution Academy teams are encouraged to play in level-appropriate Stafford Soccer -sponsored events, and all Recreation Program teams may play in such events. Travel Program teams not competing in the current season, Revolution Academy teams not competing in the Stafford Soccer sponsored tournament, or those teams in both Programs ineligible because of age group restrictions, are still highly encouraged and may in some instances be required to participate in management, and/or operation of Stafford Soccer sponsored tournaments.

# H. Heat Index Policy

Purpose. Stafford Soccer's primary goal is player safety. Stafford Soccer recognizes and is dedicated to educating its members about the health risks posed to athletes in hot weather situations. In order to promote player safety and recognition of heat related symptoms, Stafford Soccer has adopted the following Hot Weather Policy.

## 1. Hot Weather Information.

- a. Generally. Hot weather, especially on turf fields, can present a significant health risk to athletes when the body is unable to cool, or when too much fluid or salt is lost through dehydration or sweating. As body temperature increases, fatigue levels, cramps and the possibility of heat exhaustion or heat stroke also increase. The body is much less apt to be able to cool in hotter, more humid weather. The health risks associated with hot weather can present in weather with temperatures as low as 65 degrees if the relative humidity is 100%.
- b. Heat Index. The Heat Index, sometimes referred to as the apparent temperature is given in degrees Fahrenheit. The Heat Index is a measure of how hot it really feels when relative humidity is factored in with the actual air temperature.

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## c. Heat Cramps.

#### Symptoms:

- i. Painful muscle cramps and spasms usually in legs and abdomen
- ii. Heavy sweating

#### First Aid:

- i. Apply firm pressure on cramping muscles or gentle massage to relieve spasm.
- ii. Give sips of water, if nausea occurs, discontinue water.

#### d. Heat Exhaustion.

## Symptoms:

- i. Heavy sweating
- ii. Weakness
- iii. Cool, pale, clammy skin
- iv. Weak pulse
- v. Possible muscle cramps
- vi. Dizziness
- vii. Nausea and vomiting
- viii. Fainting
- ix. Normal temperature possible

#### First Aid:

- i. Move person to a cooler environment
- ii. Remove or loosen clothing
- iii. Apply cool, wet cloths
- iv. Fan or move victim to air conditioned room
- v. Offer sips of water. If nausea occurs, discontinue water. If vomiting continues, seek immediate medical attention.

#### e. Heat Stroke.

# Symptoms:

- i. Altered mental state
- ii. Possible throbbing headache, confusion, nausea, dizziness, shallow breathing
- iii. High body temperature (106°F or higher)

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- iv. Skin may be hot and dry, or patient may be sweating
- v. Rapid pulse
- vi. Possible unconsciousness

#### First Aid:

- i. Heat stroke is a severe medical emergency. Summon emergency medical assistance or get the victim to a hospital immediately. Delay can be fatal.
- ii. Move the victim to a cooler, preferably air-conditioned, environment
- iii. Reduce body temperature with a water mister and fan or sponging
- iv. Use fan if heat index temperatures are below the high 90s
- v. Use extreme caution
- vi. If temperature rises again, repeat process
- vii. Do NOT give fluids

## 2. Practice and Policy.

- Education. Coaches should review this policy each season. The heat index chart will be
  posted online for reference along with this policy and the Heat Index Recommendations
  (below).
- b. Practices. Coaches should take into account the heat index when planning practice sessions. During practices, coaches should consider the intensity of activities and offer additional breaks for rest and water. Coaches may cancel practices for extreme weather conditions but must notify the Fields Coordinator or Office of any decision to do so. Parents may elect not to allow players to participate, but should notify the coach of such decision.
- c. Games. Games should be adjusted as the heat index rises. Coaches and referees should cooperate to offer water breaks or shorten the games. Water breaks can be added stoppages within a half, or the game might be divided into quarters instead of halves. Games can be shortened by reducing each half by up to ten minutes.

Heat Index	Recommendation
Up to 90°	Normal play.
91°-99°	Add a two-minute water break per half with running time. Shorten each half by five minutes.
100°-105°	Add a two-minute water break per half with running time. Shorten each half by ten minutes.
106°+	Suspend play.

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- d. Heat Index Recommendations. Club and team officials as well as tournament officials should monitor the heat index (by weather radio, online or the Weather Channel) and keep the participating teams and game officials informed of the heat index. Coaches are encouraged to also monitor the conditions. The following are recommended when there is a possibility of dangerous high heat index:
- e. Parents are ultimately responsible for making the decision to allow players to participate or not in hot weather conditions. In the event a team is unable to play due to lack of players during a hot weather event, the game or activity may be removed from the schedule and shall not be required to be rescheduled.

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#### V. Volunteer Background Checks

Background checks are part of the registration and implementation process for all coaches and other volunteers within the association. It is a way for soccer leagues to check on the overall status of a potential or current coach or other volunteer assisting in association operations.

All coaches, assistant coaches, team official, or other volunteers (except under 18 years of age) will be required to submit to a background check. These background checks will be performed for each new regular volunteer member when assigned and annually but no less than every two years for all returning volunteers. Each circumstance will be reviewed on a case by case basis. However, the following shall be considered to be matters of automatic disqualification:

- a. ANY crime against a child or children.
- b. ANY sexual offense also including "victimless" crimes of sexual nature such as pornography or solicitation convictions.
- c. Drug conviction within the last five (5) years.
- d. Weapons violation conviction within the last five (5) years.
- e. Assault, battery or any other crime of violence conviction.
- f. Lewd conduct conviction.

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- g. ANY two or more criminal convictions within the past five (5) years.
- h. Currently on Parole for ANY offense.
- i. ANY felony conviction.

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#### VII. OTHER POLICIES

#### A. Non-Discrimination

Stafford Soccer is committed to an environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has the right to enjoy the programs and services provided by Stafford Soccer in an atmosphere free of bias, prejudice and harassment. Stafford Soccer does not tolerate acts of discrimination based upon race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, religion, sexual orientation, disability, age, veteran status, or any other factor protected by applicable law. This anti-discrimination policy applies to all aspects of the programs and services provided by Stafford Soccer.

All persons are encouraged to promptly report any incident of discrimination and/or harassment to Stafford Soccer's General Manager or any member of the Board of Directors. Stafford Soccer will promptly, thoroughly, and impartially investigate all complaints of discrimination and/or harassment. Stafford Soccer will keep all discrimination and/or harassment complaints confidential to the extent possible and consistent with adequate investigation and appropriate corrective action. If it is determined that prohibited discrimination or harassment occurred, Stafford Soccer will take appropriate action, including disciplinary action against an employee, volunteer, or member, calculated to see that the discrimination or harassment ends.

#### **B.** Conflicts of Interest

By accepting a paid or a volunteer position with Stafford Soccer, each individual acknowledges that, at all times while he/she is an employee or volunteer, he or she owes undivided loyalty to Stafford Soccer. At all times, employees and volunteers must maintain high ethical standards and guard against the appearance of any improprieties in their dealings with Stafford Soccer and its members. Consequently, no employee or volunteer shall decide to hire or promote a member of his/her family or participate in any decisions regarding the hiring, promotion, or employment of a member of his/her family. Moreover, no employee or volunteer shall require,

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request, advance, lobby for, or otherwise seek to influence decisions concerning the employment or promotion of his/her family member. For purposes on this policy, the term "family member" shall include spouses, children, parents, siblings, grandchildren, and other members of the employee's or volunteer's immediate household. Moreover, no employee or volunteer of Stafford Soccer may use his/her position to directly advance the interests of his/her outside business, the business of a family member, or any other business with which the employee is affiliated. No employee or volunteer of Stafford Soccer may have any sort of business or financial relationship or arrangement with any Stafford Soccer players over whom the employee or volunteer has any decision-making authority, including, but not limited to, team placement, playing time, and acceptance into programs. By way of example, a Stafford Soccer coach may not charge additional money for or accept additional payment from his/her players for outside training sessions operated by the coach, the coach's family member, or an entity with which the coach is affiliated as a condition of being on a team or receiving playing time or require attendance at specified camps or other programs operated by persons or entities with whom the coach has a financial or other relationship. As a further example, a Stafford Soccer volunteer may not keep paid tasks, such as field lining, for himself/herself or steer such business to himself/herself, family members, or affiliated entities.

Violations of this policy will be grounds for discipline, including, but not limited to, termination of employment or volunteer service.

## C. Fundraising

As a general rule, Stafford Soccer does not do club-wide fundraising because the vast majority of its teams are Recreation and Revolution Academy teams that really do not incur costs outside of the normal registration and, therefore, do not need to do fundraising. However, Stafford Soccer recognizes that some of teams, such as Travel teams and some Revolution Academy teams, may want to do fundraising on their own to defray tournament costs and other team-related expenses. Stafford Soccer has no problem with individual teams conducting a fundraising campaign.

Stafford Soccer as a whole will not take any proceeds from such team based fundraising efforts. Stafford Soccer will not advertise fundraising opportunities or e-mail specific fundraising opportunities or materials to its coaches/teams unless approved by the Board for club sanctioned events.

In addition, Stafford Soccer expects that any teams engaging in fundraising will adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Participation in the fundraising cannot be mandatory for team members, cannot impact playing time, or otherwise affect their status on the team (other than the fact that they may owe additional funds because they did not participate);

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- 2. Stafford Soccer's name and logo cannot be used on any of the promotional materials unless approved by the Board;
- 3. Teams should not be engaging in any type of inappropriate or unsafe activities while fundraising; and
- 4. Proceeds from the fundraising need to be used in a manner that benefits the team. For example, fundraising proceeds should not be used to cover the costs of additional training provided by the coach or that otherwise would appear to be a conflict of interest.

#### D. Team Bank Accounts

Teams are permitted to open bank accounts to fund special projects for their teams. Team accounts may be opened utilizing the Club EIN under the following conditions:

- 1. Director of Operations is the Primary signature on the account;
- 2. Account statements are sent to the office;
- 3. Team accounts are tracked by Director of Operations for 990 reporting purposes;
- 4. Team must gain approval from Director of Operations prior to opening a new account;

Team Accounts that are abandoned will revert to fixed or financial assets of the Club. Should a Team Manager or Coach decide to close an account, any assets remaining in the account revert to assets of the Club. Any fixed asset in question shall revert to a fixed asset of the Club.

## E. Refund Policy

1. Recreation/Revolution Academy/Adult

All refunds for Revolution Academy and Recreation registration fees will include a \$15 administrative fee. Refunds requested for registration fees paid for by a check will take up to 30 days to process.

At the commencement of each season, the Board of Directors may establish a Withdrawal Date which shall be the date of the Seasonal Coaches Meeting. If a Withdrawal Date is established, refunds for Recreation and Revolution Academy will be granted prior to the Withdrawal Date for any reason. Following the Withdrawal Date, or in the event no Withdrawal Date is created, refunds will be granted for the

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following reasons ONLY: medical emergency, receipt of military orders to relocate by the parent or guardian (a copy of the military transfer order must be provided), or transfer to a Stafford Soccer Travel team.

Requests for a refund because of an injury occurring prior to the first game of the season should be sent to the Program Director and must be accompanied by an injury report or a doctor's note. If approved, refunds will be processed in the same method as the original payment. Members may request an account credit instead of a refund that must be used for the season immediately following the season the credit is requested. Travel members cannot request an account credit.

Refunds will NOT be made for:

- a. inability to satisfy a special request, such as team placement or age-up;
- b. decision not to play;
- c. practice or game dates/field locations;
- d. cancellation of games and/or practices due to inclement weather

Refunds must be requested via the refund request form, which can be found online on the Stafford Soccer website. Credit card processing fees will not be refunded.

#### 2. Travel

After the first game of the Fall season there will be no refunds for any reason.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, if injury occurs prior to the first game of the season, you may apply for a full refund (less \$25 processing fee). If approved, refunds will be processed in the same method as the original payment; credits will be issued to credit card, or a refund check will be issued within three (3) weeks of the request. Refunds must be requested via the refund request form, which can be found online on the Stafford Soccer website. Credit card processing fees will not be refunded.

The initial \$100 deposit will NOT be refunded, unless the team folds for lack of players or a coach.

Credit card processing fees will not be refunded

There will be no refund of the travel uniform for any reason at any time.

Questions regarding refunds should be sent to TravelDirector@StaffordSoccer.com.

# TOURNAMENT REFUNDS:

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Tournament registration fees for two (2) tournaments for Travel teams are paid for by Stafford Soccer and are included in the player's registration cost. Many tournaments do not offer refunds if they are rained out or canceled. Stafford Soccer cannot accommodate the cost of an additional tournament in lieu of a canceled tournament.

If a team attends less than two (2) tournaments during a season (for any reason), refunds will NOT be given to the team members for the cost of the missed tournament(s).

- 3. Camps, Added Training, Misc. Sessions.
  - a. Injury. If injury occurs prior to the first session, you may apply for a full refund. An injury report and Doctor's note along with the refund request should be submitted via e-mail to <a href="mailto:office@staffordsoccer.com">office@staffordsoccer.com</a>, or to a member of the Board of Directors if such e-mail address is no longer valid.

If injury occurs during the off season camp/program a refund may apply prorated on the remaining sessions. An injury report and Doctor's note along with the refund request should be submitted to office@staffordsoccer.com

If approved, refunds will be processed in the same method as the original payment; credits will be issued to credit card, or a refund check will be issued within 3 weeks of the request.

- b. Relocation. Should the family of the registered player relocate directly prior to or during the session, a refund will be provided prior to session or prorated during session. Refund request along with date of departure will be submitted via e-mail to office@staffordsoccer.com.
- c. Non Attendance. Refunds will NOT be considered should a player not attend the camp/program for which they were registered.
- d. Cancellation. A refund may be provided, less the processing fee, should a registered player request cancellation from the program two (2) weeks prior to the first scheduled session.

The processing fee of \$25 will NOT be refunded except as noted above, unless the session is cancelled due to low enrollment.

## F. Financial Aid Policy

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Financial Aid applications will be reviewed by the Director of Operations upon receipt. Receipt of application activates the following process:

- 1. An email will be sent to the applicant requesting proof on need
- 2. When proof of need is received the application will be reviewed for aid level.
- 3. Documentation will determine the level of financial aid approved
  - a. Free lunch full financial aid minus any applicable fees
  - b. Reduced lunch sliding scale based on Household Size and Monthly Income utilizing chart provided by USDA Income Chart for Reduced Meal prices (USDA Schedule). Scale is recalculated at the beginning of each seasonal year based on the new USDA Schedule.
  - c. Foster Child/Ward of the State full financial aid (SNAP or TANF recipient).
  - d. Family unemployed full financial aid.
  - e. One income family/financial hardship sliding scale based on Household Size and Monthly Income based on chart provided by USDA Income Chart for Reduced Meal prices (USDA Schedule).
- 4. Staff communicates with applicant on decision.

The decision is final based upon guidelines, no appeal process is provided.

Applications not supported by appropriate documentation will not be considered.

<u>Financial Aid for Travel Players</u>. Travel players leaving the Club prior to the end of the season (Fall + Spring) in any given year will agree to reimburse the club on a prorated basis.

# G. Additional Travel Program Policies

Additional Travel Program Policies may be attached to this Operations Manual as Appendix 1.

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# H. Concussion Policy

#### 1. Purpose.

Stafford Soccer's primary goal is player safety. Stafford Soccer recognizes and is dedicated to educating its members about the serious risks posed to athletes from traumatic brain injuries such as concussions. In order to promote player safety and recognition of concussion symptoms, Stafford Soccer has adopted the following Concussion Policy.

#### 2. Basic Concussion Information.

#### What is a Concussion?

Concussion, a type of traumatic brain injury, is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head. Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth—causing the brain to bounce around or twist within the skull.

This sudden movement of the brain can cause stretching and tearing of brain cells, damaging the cells and creating chemical changes in the brain.

#### a. Concussion Prevention. To minimize risk of concussions:

- i. Players must follow the laws of the games and all rules for safety.
- ii. Players should practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- iii. Players may use appropriate headgear, though no such equipment exists which is "concussion-proof".

#### b. Symptoms of Concussions

Parents or coaches may observe the following common symptoms associated with concussions:

- i. Appears to be dazed or stunned
- ii. Is confused about assignment
- iii. Forgets plays
- iv. Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- v. Moves clumsily
- vi. Answers questions slowly
- vii. Loses consciousness (even temporarily)
- viii. Shows behavior or personality change
- ix. Forgets events prior to hit (retrograde amnesia)
- x. Forgets events after hit (anterograde amnesia)

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Players may report the following symptoms:

- i. Headache
- ii. Nausea
- iii. Balance problems or dizziness
- iv. Double or fuzzy vision
- v. Sensitivity to light or noise
- vi. Feeling sluggish
- vii. Feeling "foggy"
- viii. Change in sleep pattern
- ix. Concentration or memory problems

#### Severe Concussion Danger Signs

- i. One pupil larger than the other
- ii. Is drowsy or cannot be awakened
- iii. A headache that gets worse
- iv. Weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination
- v. Repeated vomiting or nausea
- vi. Slurred speech
- vii. Convulsions or seizures
- viii. Cannot recognize people or places
- ix. Becomes increasingly confused, restless, or agitated
- x. Has unusual behavior
- xi. Loses consciousness (even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously)

#### c. Diagnosis and Treatment

Upon occurrence of a suspected concussion, the player should be removed from play and precluded from further participation in the current game. Any player suspected of suffering a concussion should be evaluated by a qualified medical professional within 72 hours of the concussion and follow the professional advice given by the attending doctor or physician. If diagnosed with a concussion, players should follow the Return to Play Guidelines set forth below.

- 3. Coaching Education and Certification of Concussion Awareness.
- a. At least once annually, all coaches shall participate in concussion awareness certification. Stafford Soccer currently requires all coaches participate in the CDC's "Heads Up" online training and certification program, available at <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/concussion">www.cdc.gov/concussion</a>.

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- b. Coaches shall be required to submit a certification of successful completion of the concussion awareness program to their respective Program Director or to the office.
- c. If a coach suspects an athlete has suffered a concussion, the coach shall remove the player from play and notify the player's parents as soon as possible following the game. The coach shall not allow the player to participate further until adequate authorization has been provided by a qualified medical professional.

#### 4. Parent and Athlete Awareness.

- a. Players are encouraged to obtain baseline concussion testing at least every other year from junior high through high school.
- b. At least once per year, parents and players shall acknowledge receipt and understanding of current concussion related materials to be provided by the club as part of the registration process. These materials shall also be available online via the club's website and in the office. Players who have not returned completed acknowledgments will not be allowed to participate in league activities.

## 5. Return to Play Guidelines

- a. Prior to returning to play, players having suffered a concussion must present clearance from a qualified medical professional.
- b. Following diagnosis of a concussion, players should complete the following recovery program. Each step must be successfully completed at least one full day prior to advancing to the subsequent step.
  - i. Step 1. No activity. Physical and mental exercise should be limited to promote recovery.
  - ii. Step 2. Light aerobic exercise. Heart rate may be elevated with non-contact, low-to moderate-intensity running, walking, biking, or weight lifting.
  - iii. Step 3. Sport-specific exercise. Player may engage in sport-specific, non-contact play including high intensity sprinting or biking, regular weight lifting routine and other non-contact activities.
  - iv. Step 4. Return to Practice. Player may participate in full contact, controlled practice setting.
  - v. Step 5. Return to Play. Player may engage in full competition.

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#### 6. Administration

- a. For purposes of this Concussion Policy, a qualified medical professional shall mean a physician, physician assistant, osteopath physician, or athletic trainer licensed by the Virginia Board of Medicine; a neuropsychologist licensed by the Board of Psychology; or a nurse practitioner licensed by the Virginia State Board of Nursing.
- b. Stafford Soccer shall retain a copy of all concussion related documentation, including but not limited to coaches', parents', and players' signed acknowledgments of receipt of concussion information, coaches' online concussion training certification forms, and records of medical clearances for a minimum of seven (7) years.

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Stafford Soccer Concussion Awareness Certification Fall \_\_\_\_\_ - Spring \_\_\_\_ Player Name: \_ Stafford Soccer's primary goal is player safety. Stafford Soccer recognizes and is dedicated to educating its members about the serious risks posed to athletes from traumatic brain injuries such as concussions. In order to promote player safety and recognition of concussion symptoms, Stafford Soccer has adopted a Concussion Policy which requires the club to distribute information to parents and players. Players and parents should read the club's current Concussion Policy which can be found online at www.staffordsoccer.com/concussion and the attached fact sheets about concussions. After reading these fact sheets, parents and players must sign to acknowledge receipt of this concussion information and understanding of the risks of concussions associated with the sport. Following signatures, please return this form to your player's coach. I, as the parent or legal guardian of the above named player, received, read, and understand the club's Concussion Policy and the information in the attached handout titled, "Heads Up – Concussion in Youth Sports – A Fact Sheet for Parents". I understand the nature and risk of concussion and head injury to athletes, including the risks of continuing to play after concussion or head injury. (Signature of Parent or Guardian) (Date) I am a student athlete participating in the sport of soccer. I received, read, and understand the club's Concussion Policy and the information in the attached handout titled, "Heads Up – Concussion in Youth Sports – A Fact Sheet for Athletes". I understand the nature and risk of concussion and head injury to youth athletes, including the risks of continuing to play after concussion or head injury. (Signature of Player) (Date) Attachments:

Heads Up – Concussion in Youth Sports – A Fact Sheet for Parents Heads Up – Concussion in Youth Sports – A Fact Sheet for Athletes

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Stafford Soccer Concussion Awareness Certification Fall -Spring

Coach Name:		
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information in the attached handout titled, "Hear	d, and understand the club's Concussion Policy and ds Up – Concussion in Youth Sports – A Fact Sheet cussion and head injury to athletes, including the risk.	t for
(Signature of Coach)	(Date)	
Attachments:		
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# APPENDIX 1 Additional Travel Program Policies

#### A. Tryout Policy

EVERY player who would like to participate in the Travel program MUST try out each year, regardless of whether or not he or she is currently on a Travel team. Tryouts will be held toward the end of each spring season, typically toward the end of May and/or beginning of June.

The schedule for Travel tryouts will be published on the Stafford Soccer website. Each player will try out for the age group he or she will be in the Fall season. By way of example, a player on a U10 team for the spring in the year in which tryouts are held will try out for the U11 team in the fall.

Tryouts generally run more than one day. Players should plan to attend all tryout dates. In the event a player cannot make all tryout dates, the player should contact the Technical staff.

In the event a player is unable to attend a tryout, the Stafford Soccer technical staff and the coach of the particular team or teams for which the player would have been eligible shall have the sole discretion to allow for an independent evaluation or assessment, and to determine whether such player should be allowed to participate on a team. Players should make every effort to attend tryouts and there is no guarantee that a roster space will be available for any player failing to attend the tryout sessions.

Tryouts, or player assessments, may be held throughout the year as deemed necessary by Stafford Soccer or by an individual team (if approved by technical staff) to replace departing or injured players or to add to a roster or create a new team. In such event, players currently on the team shall attend the tryout to allow Stafford Soccer to properly evaluate other registered participants. Players currently on a team for the Fall will remain on the team through the Spring season for which a tryout may be held.

On the day of a tryout, players should arrive early in order to check in. Check in will open approximately 30 minutes before the beginning of each tryout day. Each player must check in at the designated area and receive his or her tryout number prior to participating in the tryout. Players are required to bring the following items to tryouts: soccer appropriate attire (including cleats), shin guards, a soccer ball, and water. Following the tryout, players should return their tryout numbers to one of the assessors or other Stafford Soccer staff.

#### **B.** Player Contact Information

Each year the team manager should maintain a copy of the medical release form for each player, including emergency contact information.

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#### C. Team Commitment

Players and his or her parents shall abide by the following Team Commitment Policy.

- 1. The team is committed to the development of player's technical skills and team building through sportsmanship and tactical instruction.
- 2. Travel Soccer is a more competitive sport. As the players work and play together, they become much like a second family. It takes a major commitment not only from the coach and players, but from the parents as well. Travel soccer requires a lot of your time, in getting your child to practices, scrimmages, games, clinics, tournaments, and other team events.
- 3. During seasonal play, the team travels to home games located in the Stafford area and to games located as far away as Leesburg and/or Bethesda.
- 4. The team will participate in at least two tournaments per season. The team may also participate in scrimmages, designed to help the coaching staff evaluate players, and for the players to sharpen their skills.
- 5. Each Spring, our teams will participate in the club's St. Patty's Day tournament at no additional cost to the team (3rd tournament). Parents will need to volunteer hours during that weekend to work the tournament. This Tournament allows the club to award college scholarships to our older student athletes, as well as supplements our ability to provide financial aid to our travel players in need.
- 6. There is a financial commitment for travel soccer. Unlike recreational soccer, each travel team is responsible for some of their own finances; i.e. player uniforms, summer/winter training fees, tournament related travel expenses.
- 7. Each player and the player's parents are expected to participate in team functions. This includes such activities as assisting at practices, helping with field set-up and takedown, and any other league or club volunteer positions.

#### **TEAM POLICIES**

- 1. All matters pertaining to player development, playing time, positioning of players, player discipline, player release, or player selection will be dealt with by the Coaching Staff. Parents having a concern in one of these areas will contact the Head Coach directly, and not during a team activity.
- 2. BE ON TIME FOR TRAINING SESSIONS; wear designated attire and proper seasonal clothing. Please allow enough time for the proper fitting of shin guards socks and footwear (if it takes you 15 minutes to get these on, arrive 20 minutes early so you can be ready to go when we start practicing).
- 3. Be at all games ready to warm-up AT LEAST 30 MINUTES before the scheduled game time.

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- 4. Playing time will be at the discretion of the Coaching Staff, and will be a result of the consideration of the factors listed below.
- 5. Attendance and participation at training sessions, scrimmages, and games.
- 6. Attitude, intensity, and commitment to learning.
- 7. Skill development level.
- 8. Demonstrated Fitness.
- 9. Players could be suspended for a minimum of ONE game for the following reasons:
- 10. Issuance of a Yellow and/or Red Card for dissent, violent or unsporting behavior.
- 11. Fighting or arguing with a teammate or opponent.
- 12. Threatening behavior.
- 13. Use of profanity.
- 14. Parent request due to misconduct or poor grades at school.
- 15. Please note that repeated troubles with any of these could lead to dismissal from the team.
- 16. NO sideline coaching. The Coaching Staff will provide ANY/ALL instructions.
- 17. Players attendance at tournaments is mandatory as part of the acceptance of a position on this team. Plans for tournaments will be announced as far in advance as possible.

#### **TEAM COMMUNICATIONS**

- 1. Pre-season meetings will be held with parents and players to ensure that everyone is aware of schedules and policies associated with the Club. Other ad-hoc meetings may be scheduled as needed.
- 2. Throughout the season the majority of information is distributed via email.
- 3. Parents and players are expected to check email regularly for the latest game and practice information.
- 4. Last minute field and schedule changes are common due to weather and travel challenges.
- 5. Key web sites include:
- 6. Stafford Area Soccer Association Travel Division www.staffordsoccer.com
- 7. Old Dominion Soccer League www.odsl.org
- 8. National Classic Soccer League www.ncsl-soccer.com
- 9. Virginia Youth Soccer Association www.vysa.com
- 10. National Premier League NPL www.vapremierleague.com

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#### THE GAME

- 1. Each player is required to wear proper gear at all practices, scrimmages, and games including:
- 2. Shin guards and Molded/Soft Cleats
- 3. Water Bottle
- 4. A proper #5 Soccer Ball for ages U13+; a proper #4 Soccer Ball for ages U12 and below.
- 5. Home/Away Game Uniform
- 6. Grey shirt for Practices
- 7. Understand there is a very real risk of injury.
- 8. The VYSA Medical Insurance policy is secondary to your primary insurance policy.
- 9. The Team Manager must have a signed Medical Release and player information forms prior to registration.
- 10. Coaches, Players, Parents, Family Members, and Friends must always display good sportsmanship.

#### LEAVING THE TEAM

If you voluntarily request that your child be released from the team or he/she is involuntarily released from the team, within one week, you are required to:

- 1. Complete and sign a VYSA Player Release form (available from the Team Manager or the VYSA web site).
- 2. The Team Manager will submit the Team Roster, the Release form along with the Player's card to the Registrar. He/she will receive a new roster along with a copy of the signed Release form and provide you with a copy.
- 3. Note that the Player ID Card remains with the Registrar.
- 4. If you decide to join another team, you must provide your copy of the signed Player Release form to the new Team Manager so that he/she can proceed to add your child to that Team's roster via the Registrar, who has held your child's Player ID Card.
- 5. Remember that without the Player ID Card, your child cannot play ANY sanctioned games.
- 6. The team fees are non-refundable.

#### **TEAM BREAKUP**

If either a majority of the players leave the team voluntarily or involuntarily, all team equipment, and funds will remain with the team or be returned to the club in the case of a complete dissolve of the team.

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#### D. Travel Commitment

Players and his or her parents shall abide by the following:

Being selected to play for a Stafford Soccer travel team means being given the opportunity to play in youth soccer leagues that are amongst the most competitive in the world. To be a successful competitor when playing in these leagues requires discipline and sacrifice by players and their families alike. Players and their teammates must be physically and mentally prepared if they are to succeed.

Soccer is a team sport. Successful teams are those having players continuously developing their individual skills within the context of team play. Playing time is not guaranteed. Successful teams have players who understand and apply the Laws of the Game. A player breaking a Law, either intentionally, or from lack of understanding, hurts the team.

Recreational soccer programs generally make little demands on the player. Such programs may be what you are looking for, and you should seriously consider them as an alternative to select soccer. Rec leagues are less expensive to join and run. Practices may be less demanding, if they are held at all. Everyone typically gets playing time, based on league rules. There are often little, if any requirements placed upon coaches.

Select soccer is more demanding of the player and their families. The player must sacrifice time to develop individual skills and maintain game fitness. Parents must arrange their schedules to make certain players have rides to and from practices and games. The player must be dressed, on time, and physically and mentally prepared if they are to learn and compete with their team.

Stafford Soccer is a not-for profit organization. In order to provide area youth an opportunity to play, Stafford Soccer engages in various activities requiring the participation of teams, team officials, players and parents. Typically, these include things like field preparation and maintenance, sponsoring tournaments and other fundraisers, as well as serving on different committees that are essential to the working operation of the club. Without such participation, there would be no opportunity for play.

Individual teams are organized in different ways. Teams and coaches are admitted to the Travel Division the rules and guidelines established by the organizations under which we play. How expenses are covered is a team matter. Some teams ask for monies from the player and their families, others use fundraisers, and some use a combination of both. The costs associated with travel soccer and tournaments may be considerable, as is the time and effort put into fundraisers.

By committing to play select soccer, a player and family commits to the team that made the selection. Monies made through fundraising or donations in the name of the team remain with

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the team if a player leaves. A player's share of team expenses should not shift to the other players and their families or team officials if the player decides to quit.

Players and their families should have a clear understanding of what their responsibilities are before joining a travel team:

### My responsibilities as a player:

- 1. I will discipline my time so that I am able to make practices and games. I will be dressed, on time, and physically and mentally ready to participate. I will work on my skills, my fitness, and my understanding of the Game so that I can become a better player and help my team.
- 2. I will show respect to my coaches, teammates, game officials, my opponents, the spectators, and the Laws of the Game.
- 3. I will do what is required of me to help my team.

#### My responsibilities as a parent:

- 1. I will make certain my player has arranged their schedule, to be able to get to practices and games on time and prepared to play. I will arrange transportation, if needed, so they are on time.
- 2. I will show respect to coaches, my player's teammates, game officials, opponents, other spectators, and the Laws of the Game.
- 3. I will be positive and encouraging as my player develops.
- 4. I will do my share in team and Stafford Soccer activities so that my player and others will continue to have a chance to play.

#### E. Code of Conduct

In addition to the general standards of conduct, Stafford Soccer Travel participants commit to a heightened standard of conduct.

- 1. The purpose of the travel division is to provide players the opportunity to promote, develop, and pursue "Excellence in Soccer".
- 2. "Excellence in Soccer" applies to all involved in the travel division: officers, coaches, players, parents, and team supporters.

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- 3. For coaches and other team officials, "Excellence in Soccer: includes behavior reflecting positively on the travel division, the Laws of the Game, and the Spirit of "Fair Play." Team officials should promote player development in a safe environment appropriate for the age, maturity, experience, and ability of the players. Team officials shall assume responsibility for team participation in travel division activities on a fair and equitable basis with other teams. Team officials are also responsible for the conduct of their players, their parents, and other team supporters.
- 4. For players, "Excellence in Soccer" includes learning and playing within the spirit and Laws of the Game, your League and Associations. It means showing respect for team and game officials, as well as your teammates and opponents. It means contributing to your team by attending practices and games so you can develop as a player along with your team.
- 5. For parents and other team supporters, "Excellence in Soccer" means recognizing the game belongs to the players for their growth and enjoyment. Your actions reflect on the players, their team, and the travel division. Be positive in your encouragement of players and the team, and be respectful of opponents, team and game officials. Be supportive of your player, the team and the travel division. Your support is needed for your child and others to participate.
- 6. The travel division reserves the right to suspend or bar from future participation in division sponsored activities, individuals or teams for gross or repeated actions contrary to the spirit of "Fair Play" and "Excellence in Soccer."

Each player and his or her parent(s) agree to abide by all Stafford Soccer Codes of Conduct and those of the League in which the child will play.

#### F. Technical Curriculum

Technical Curriculum is developed by the Technical Staff, and distributed to our coaches as needed

#### **G.** Volunteer Requirement

Each Travel team shall meet the volunteer requirements of the league in which the team plays, including a Team Manager; TSL; STARs; etc.

Teams may appoint such other volunteers as needed to conduct team business.

All Travel teams shall provide volunteers for the annual Stafford Soccer St. Patrick's Day tournament which will be held on or about St. Patrick's Day weekend. Each player's family

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members shall be responsible for fulfilling various required support roles for the tournament. Stafford Soccer's volunteers provide for a successful and friendly tournament event, as well as reduce costs for player fees.

#### H. Other Travel Policies

Jersey numbers. In the event there are multiple teams within a given age division, no two players in a given age division should utilize the same jersey number. This policy allows for integration and substitute play throughout the season. Returning players shall have priority to retain their jersey number, except in the following circumstances:

- 1. Moving from White Team to Blue Team, Blue player retains number.
- 2. Older aged player in merged teams retains number.
- 3. Any other circumstances will be reviewed by the Travel Director for resolution.

Game day. Coaches or their designees shall look for any issues on home playing fields immediately upon arriving at the field. If any problems exist (goals not secured, nets not tied, lines not marked, corner flags missing, grass not cut, field unplayable), a team official shall contact Stafford County. If a white county vehicle is on site, an onsite worker should be able to address the issue. In the event no county representative is available, the team official should contact the county's off hours hotline at (540) 658-7110. Games are not to be played if the nets/goals are not secured. Any issues with fields should be additionally reported to the Stafford Soccer Fields Coordinator (fieldscoordinator@staffordsoccer.com).

A team official shall provide corner flags for home games on grass fields. Corner flags for each team are available from the Stafford Soccer office. A team should provide a minimum of three (3) game balls for each home game. Each ball shall be properly inflated and proper size for the specific age group.

#### **Practices**

- 1. Any issues relating to practice areas, locked gates or lights not being turned on can be directed to the County on call staff immediately 540-658-7110, then follow-up with an email to our Field Coordinator at fieldscoordinator@staffordsoccer.com.
- 2. Travel practice area schedules are coordinated by the technical staff and the fields coordinator. Teams are not to go directly to the Field Coordinator to make changes to the schedule for the benefit of their team. • If you are not using your designated notify practice areas you must the **Technical** Director (technical@staffordsoccer.com) Field Coordinator and the (fieldscoordinator@staffordsoccer.com), as soon as possible.

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Referees

Referee assignors

NCSL and ODSL - Jack Hitchens - 540-847-2951

There currently is no way for either a club representative or referee to know who is supposed to be the referee at a particular field, except for the games one of us is refereeing. This is done to protect the referees. Even if a parent, coach, manager, sibling, etc. comes over and asked the referee for his/her name he/she does not have to give it. Instead they need to contact their club representative who will pass on the information to the referee assignors. The reason for this is many but mostly for the protection of the referees. Not only do we have some young referees, we have had referees assaulted, followed home, chased, etc. It is also important to note that both leagues have strict rules against anyone approaching the referee, at any time, with the possible except of the manager, to verify game score and cards only.

#### NCSL:

#### When the Referee is Missing:

- a. The league encourages teams to play their matches whenever possible. If the referee does not arrive prior to the scheduled game time, the game may be played with a volunteer referee whether certified or not. If both the coaches agree to use a volunteer referee, no protest of the outcome of the match will be allowed based on the qualification (or lack of) the volunteer. Agreement must be documented by both coaches initialing the blue game card next to the volunteer referee's name prior to the start of the game.
- b. If both coaches do not agree on use of a volunteer referee, both teams should immediately leave the field and not attempt a scrimmage or inter-team training session.
- c. If the assigned referee arrives after the game has started, the volunteer referee may turn over responsibility to the late-arriving referee at a stoppage of play after establishing with him the time remaining, score, and any cautions/ejections issued. The game will continue, not be restarted.

An immediate family member of a player is not permitted to serve as an assigned or volunteer referee or assistant referee for that player's game without prior approval by both coaches. Immediate family member is defined as parent, grandparent, guardian,

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sibling, aunt, uncle, or any other family relative who may have a vested interest in the outcome of the match. The team providing the family member must ensure that their opponent is informed of the family relationship.

The approval must be documented by both coaches initialing the blue game card prior to the start of the game.

Exceptions: Documented approval by coaches is not required when:

- i. An assistant referee serves in a U12 or U13 match as a Special Team Assistant Referee (STAR).
- ii. A referee uses a volunteer only to signal when the ball has left the field. This role is referred to as a club linesman by USSF.

Failure to follow the documentation procedures in this section may result in a forfeit, non-game or replay of the match.

Report the absence of a referee to your club representative and division scorekeeper.

Team Meetings and Communication. Teams shall hold meetings no less than once per season. Teams shall hold a team meeting in advance of the start of a season at a minimum. Teams should strive to meet at least once, or more often as necessary, during the season to address any concerns of players or parents.

Coaches shall relay information to their teams from the office, or shall delegate responsibility for sharing of information to a team representative. If the coach delegates, the coach shall forward information to the representative. Coaches shall be responsible to provide comments and notes weekly to parents. Coaches shall provide the Technical Director or other technical staff with updates as to the team's training goals and progress throughout the season.

Coaching absences, coverage required. If a coach cannot attend a practice, the coach must obtain coverage from another coach approved by the Technical Staff. Unless the Technical Director specifically permits cancellation or fields are closed due to inclement weather, practice sessions shall not be cancelled to the extent possible. If a coach is unable to attend a game, the coach shall communicate the absence to the TD as far in advance as possible. Every effort will be made to have another coach provide coverage. If no coach is available, the TD may permit the team assistant coach or a team parent to perform the role of coach. A coach required to miss a game should provide the covering coach and TD with the team's current roster and positions (if applicable), playing formation, and substitution patterns.

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# APPENDIX 2 Stafford County Inclement Weather Policy

STAFFORD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

## INCLEMENT WEATHER, THUNDER AND LIGHTNING GUIDELINES

When inclement weather is forecast all staff on duty at any park or county facility should be observant of weather conditions. When severe weather that includes thunder or lightning is expected these general guidelines will be followed. Safety of park patrons is paramount.

#### Sports Fields

- 1. Upon hearing thunder or seeing lightning the officials (umpires and referees) shall suspend the game and clear the field.
- 2. Officials shall direct participants and spectators to go to their vehicles or some other enclosed substantial structure. (Dugouts and picnic shelters are not suitable, safe structures during a lightning storm.)
- 3. Persons will not be permitted to reenter the facilities until 30 minutes after the last time thunder was heard or lightning was seen.
- 4. If staff is on site and inclement weather is likely, before games start staff shall confirm with the officials the department policy on thunder and lightning.
- 5. Upon observing thunder or lightning staff shall notify the officials and identify the direction it came from.
- 6. Staff shall give the officials the opportunity to suspend or terminate the game.
- 7. If the officials take no action in a reasonable amount of time (within minutes) and severe weather persists, staff shall blow one long, 2 second, blast on an air horn to notify all park patrons of the need to proceed to their vehicles or other enclosed substantial structure.

#### General Park Areas

If staff is on site and upon hearing thunder or seeing lightning, staff shall notify patrons that they need to proceed to their vehicles or other enclosed substantial structure. (Dugouts and picnic shelters are not suitable, safe structures during a lightning storm.)

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Multi-Family Discount Grid Appendix 3

# of Players	Recreation	Academy	Travel		Total	Discount
3	3	0	0		3	\$ 20.
3	2 2	1	0	<u> </u>	3	\$ 25.1
3	2	0	1		3	\$ 50.
3	1	2	0		3	\$ 25.
3	1	0	2		3	\$ 100.
3	1	1	1	_	3	\$ 75.
3	0	3	0		3	\$ 40.1
3	0	2	1	F	3	\$ 75.1
3	0	1	2		3	\$ 100.1
3	0	0	3	F	3	\$ 150.1
4	4	0	0		4	\$ 30.1
4	3	1	0		4	\$ 35.1
4	3	0	1		4	\$ 60.1
4	2	2	0		4	\$ 35.1
4	2	1	1		4	\$ 80.1
4	2	0	2		4	\$ 110.1
4	1	1	2		4	\$ 115.1
4	1	0	3		4	\$ 160.1
4	1	2	1	F	4	\$ 80.1
4	1	3	0	F	4	\$ 45.1
4	0	4	0	F	4	\$ 50.1
4	0	3	1	F	4	\$ 75.1
4	Ö	2	2	F	4	\$ 130.1
4	Ö	1	3		4	\$ 165.
4	Ö	ó	4	F	4	\$ 200.
5	5	Ö	ó		5	\$ 40.
5	4	ŏ	1	<b>F</b>	5	\$ 70.1
5	4	ĭ	ó	F	5	\$ 40.
5	3	i	1	F	5	\$ 85.1
5	3	2	ó	F	5	\$ 40.1
5	3	ō	2		5	\$ 135.
5	2	ň	3		5	\$ 180.1
5	2	3	ő		5	\$ 45.1
5	2	2	1		5	\$ 80.1
5 5	2	1	2		5	\$ 135.
5	1	o d	4		5	\$ 210.1
5 5		4	0		5	\$ 210.1 \$ 55.1
5 5	-	3	1		5 5	\$ 55.
		3				
5	1	1	3		5	\$ 170.1
5	,	2	2		5	\$ 125.1
5	0	5	0		5	\$ 70.1
5	0	0	5		5	\$ 300.1
5	0	1	4		5	\$ 210.1
5	0	2	3		5	\$ 175.
5	0	3	2		5	\$ 135.1
5	0	4			5	\$ 100.