



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

Updated April 2020



McLean Youth Soccer Recreation Handbook

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

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OVERVIEW OF THE CLUB

Mission and Vision Statements

Vision:

McLean Youth Soccer will be a leader in player development and in establishing a lifelong appreciation for soccer among our members. We will be a model soccer club for all developmental levels from the recreational to the elite player.

Mission:

McLean Youth Soccer develops youth through the sport of soccer by providing quality coaching, a high caliber environment and a commitment to best practices. We impart life lessons through soccer.



OVERVIEW OF PLAYING PROGRAMS

Qualifying Age Groups

Currently, McLean Youth Soccer offers recreation programs for players who are in the U4 - U19 age groups. The cutoff dates for soccer age groups are different from those in other activities such as school, or other sports. Please refer to the Age Group grid on the MYS website to check your child's age for the seasonal year (please note MYS uses birth years as a determination of a child's eligibility for an age group).

Registration

To join MYS, you must register online on our website: www.mcleansoccer.org. Complete information about registration, costs, etc., is available on the site. Registration begins in June/July for the Fall and December/January for Spring. While every effort is made to place players on teams, players who register after the posted deadline may be placed on a waitlist until space is available.

Camps and Training Opportunities

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

The Progression

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

Recreation Program

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

Our small-sided, continuous play model for ages U6-U8 that maximizes touches on the ball has been widely copied throughout the country.

The program encompasses our recreational soccer programs for players age 3-19 (the Under 4 (U4) to Under 19 (U19) age groups), and a TOPSoccer program.

- **U4-U5:** Academy style, player-centric introduction to soccer for our youngest players



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- The U4-U5 program is a developmental program designed to introduce our club's youngest soccer enthusiasts to the sport of soccer. The program focuses on age-appropriate soccer activities, but is not a team-oriented program.
- **U6-U8:** Non-results team-oriented developmental program
 - The U6 through U8 program offers a non-results-oriented team structured program focusing on age-appropriate skill development.
- **U9-U11:** Team-oriented program promoting fun, friendly competition and player development
 - The U9 through U11 program continues to promote the growth and development of the players and introduces friendly competition between teams with an end of season "playoff" tournament at U11, and All-Star Teams.
- **U12 and older:** Team-oriented program that competes against area club teams in the Suburban Friendship League (SFL)
 - The U12 through U19 program is affiliated with the Suburban Friendship League (SFL), allowing MYS teams to compete against teams from other area clubs as well as against fellow MYS teams within their respective age and gender groups.
- **TOPSoccer:** Promotes training and skills development for young athletes of all ages with disabilities.

Recreation Program Contacts

There are many people who contribute to and support the McLean Youth Soccer Recreation Program:

1. **Team Coach:** The individual team coach is the heart of the Recreation program. These are volunteers (typically parents) who dedicate their time to instilling the love of the game in all our young players.
2. **Director of Recreation:** The Recreation Director is responsible for structure, programs, and curriculum, as well as overseeing all coaches, and professional technical staff.
3. **Director of Rec Academy (U4-7):** The Director of Rec Academy (U4-7) is responsible for structure, programs, and curriculum, for our youngest players.
4. **Director of Operations:** The Director of Operations is the primary admin support for U4-U11, field scheduler (for practices, games and contests), programs/training admin and all-star facilitator.
5. **SFL Commissioner:** The MYS SFL League Commissioner is the admin support for all SFL teams (U12-U19).
6. **On-Site Staff:** MYS has individuals who help facilitate weekly game play, especially for the U9-11 age groups. Additionally, U6 game days are conducted by MYS professional staff.

Contacts

Contact	Position	Email
Haytham Mansur	Director of Recreation	haytham.mansur@mcleansoccer.org
Annie Gavett	Director of Operations	admin@mcleansoccer.org



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Lucas Winters	Director of Rec Academy (U4-7)	lucas.winters@mcleansoccer.org
Jane Scott-Jones	SFL Commissioner	sfl@mcleansoccer.org
Clyde Watson	Technical Director	clyde.watson@mcleansoccer.org
Louise Waxler	Executive Director	executivedirector@mcleansoccer.org



LEAGUE INFORMATION

Registration

Seasonal Registration Online

Anyone between the ages of 3 and 19 is eligible to participate in the MYS Recreation program regardless of ability. Only players registered and assigned to teams in the MYS program are eligible to participate in practices, games, training opportunities and All Stars.

The easiest and quickest way to register is on the [MYS website](#) by clicking the "Registration" link on the top of every webpage. Players who register on time for the fall and/or spring season are guaranteed placement on a team in their appropriate age group. Late registrations (new and returning players) will be placed on a waiting list and placed on teams where space is available or pending the identification of new coaches and the formation of new teams.

Financial Aid

Financial aid is available from McLean Youth Soccer.

Please visit the financial aid section on our website (under About Us) for more information or contact an administrator for more assistance.

Team Placement

Coaches and Teams

For the U6-U11 age groups the Director of Operations forms all teams, and for U12-U19 the MYS SFL League Commissioner forms all teams.

Teams are formed as follows:

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

MYS does not form teams based on a player ranking or draft at the recreational level.

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

MYS Rec is 100% volunteer-coached, there are no professional coaches.



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

Practice Schedules

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

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

Approximately two weeks prior to the start of the season, the Director of Operations will officially release the practice schedule (sent via email to all participants and posted on the Rec section of the McLean website).

The practice schedule is a Google Sheet, and lists all teams by age group and coach last name. Practices ARE NOT loaded into any team communication apps, and it is the responsibility of the coach to make sure all families are aware of practice days, times and locations.

Game Day Information

What To Expect

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

Recreation games are typically played on Saturdays. U4 – U11 age groups play in the McLean area. U12 and older teams play in the Northern Virginia area as members of the [Suburban Friendship League](#).

Recreation game schedules are typically available one-to-two weeks prior to the start of the season. U6-U11 games will be automatically uploaded into the organization's associated communication app: [Dick's Team Manager](#), U12 and up (SFL) teams MUST add the games to the app themselves.

Inclement Weather

In case of inclement weather or in the event that inclement weather has resulted in a deterioration of field conditions, practices and games may be canceled, rescheduled or delayed. We recommend that families check the status of their game / practice field prior to heading out to your team event. Field status can be found on the homepage of the [MYS website](#) in the field status section.



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MYS also provides a free text notification service to all members. When registering for the recreational league you can choose to “opt-in” to text notifications from Sports Connect. MYS will send out notifications to those who have “opted-in” for text notifications.

Lastly, an email notification will be sent of any large field closures or event cancellations due to weather.

Uniform and Equipment

Uniform

MYS provides each recreation player a uniform at the beginning of the fall season. This uniform should be worn throughout the fall and spring seasons. Players who are new to the club in the spring season will also receive a uniform.

Other Required and Recommended Gear

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

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

All players should bring water to every practice and game.

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

Ball sizes by age group:

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

Lost and Found

MYS has a fully remote staff, and as such does not have a physical office. MYS does not have the storage capacity to keep a lost and found, so if you feel you have lost an item at an MYS event please return to the field to see if it is there. If it is still lost please feel free to email fields@mcleansoccer.org, and the Director of Operations can put you in touch with the appropriate individuals who may have your lost item.



Additional Training Opportunities

MYS also offers a number of Training Programs based on age group and interest. We currently offer multiple in-season options (Skills Training, Goalkeeper Training), as well as additional “offseason” training programs offered in the form of Summer Camp, Spring Break Camp, and the Winter Ballmasters Training Program.

Check out the Rec Programs section under the Recreation section of the [MYS website](#) for more information and all options.

All-Star Program

The MYS All Star program is an extension of the Recreation program and provides children with an opportunity to play at a more competitive level.

All-Star team currently participate in:

- Fall: [Herndon All-Star Cup](#)
- Spring: [Father’s Day All-Star Tournament](#)

All currently registered MYS recreational players are eligible to play if they have been on a Recreation or SFL team during the current season. Players who are on Waiting Lists are not eligible to tryout.

Tournaments Directors exclude carded Travel Players from participation in these recreation-oriented tournaments. It is MYS' policy to require full and open tryouts for eligible players who are interested in an All-Star tournament experience.

To assist in this process, the Director of Operations currently acts as liaison between the various teams and the Tournament Directors, with responsibility for registering all MYS teams with the tournament, dealing with the official paperwork, purchasing uniforms, and all communications with the tournaments



AGE GROUP SPECIFIC INFORMATION

U4-U9 Academy Model

MYS has developed a model for recreational player and coach development that utilizes specific and deliberate interactions with our professional Technical Staff during the U4-U9 years.

U4/5: The U4 players (with one parent chaperone) have a 45-minute-long session (1 hour for U5) each Saturday and all player activities are led by Technical Staff. The parents get to play along! The idea is to model the activities for the players and to provide families lots of fun games to play anytime. The practices also plant the seed for parents who may be interested in coaching in subsequent years.

U6: The U6 year is the first year when teams are formed with Volunteer Parent Coaches. Teams play each other on Saturday, and a technical staff member assists each team throughout the season. During the first half of the Saturday session, the Technical Staff member guides the Parent Coaches on how to lead the practice activities for the week. During the second half of the session, teams play a game in a 3v3 format. The Technical Staff helps establish the best way to run the games and get the most out of the experience for players, coaches and parents alike. During the week, the Parent Coach will hold their own practice with the players, repeating the activities used on Saturday.

U7: For the U7 Age Group, McLean Youth Soccer holds a Training Academy. U7 teams all train at a central location assisted by the Technical Staff once a week. A training plan is distributed to Parent Coaches, and during the weekly sessions, all the teams run the same training session. Every other week, the session is run by the same Staff Coach. Parent Coaches get the opportunity to ask questions and see how to run the session. On game day, the teams play in a 4v4 format, and the games are coached by the Volunteer Parent Coach with a similar style as the U6 year, but now without assistance from Staff.

U8: The U8 year marks the beginning of our “Juniors” Program, which is coached entirely by the Technical Staff for practices and games. “Juniors” acceptance is based on tryouts at the end of the U7 year. For those players who do not join the “Juniors” program, Parent Coaches run the weekly practices and games with participation in the Recreation league. The MYS Professional Technical Staff offer enhanced coaching education/support for U8 Parent Coaches in the form of help and guidance at games. During the spring season, Technical Staff visits the games to ensure the 4v4 games are running well in preparation for the next year.

U9: At U9 some players will play Recreation, while others will join the Travel Program which is solely led by the Professional Technical Staff. The U9 Recreation games are played with goalkeepers in a 7v7 format. The weekly practice and game are run by Volunteer Parent Coaches. To continue our model of coaching development, the MYS Professional Technical Staff offer game day support from a Technical Staff coach who visits the fields on a weekly basis to offer guidance and suggestions.



RULES BY AGE GROUP (U6-19)

Age Group	Team Formation	Game Notes	Practice Notes
U6	Ø MYS Dir of Operations forms teams	Ø 4 v 4 Ø No goalies Ø Coaches throw in ball to keep play continuous Ø No score kept Ø Professional staff help to run game days	Ø One practice a week with own team
U7	Ø MYS Dir of Operations forms teams	Ø 4v4 Ø No goalies Ø Coaches throw in ball to keep play continuous Ø No score kept	Ø One practice a week with own team Ø Practices are led by professional staff with lesson plans circulated in advance
U8	Ø MYS Dir of Operations forms teams Ø Juniors program introduced (via tryout)	Ø 4v4 Ø No goalies Ø Coaches throw in ball to keep play continuous Ø No score kept Ø Sideline assistance provided	Ø One practice a week with own team
U9	Ø MYS Dir of Operations forms teams Ø All Stars begins (in addition to Recreation teams - via tryout) Ø First travel teams formed (via tryout)	Ø 7v7 Ø Goalies introduced Ø Referees introduced Ø Throw-ins and formal restarts introduced Ø No score kept Ø Sideline assistance provided	Ø One practice a week with own team
U10	Ø Same as U9	Ø Same as U9	Ø One practice a week with own team



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U11	Ø MYS Dir of Operations forms teams	Ø 9v9 Ø Begin off-sides calls Ø End of season round-robin tournament	Ø One practice a week with own team
U12	Ø MYS SFL Commissioner forms teams	Ø 9v9 Ø Join Suburban Friendship League – schedule includes non-McLean teams	Ø One practice a week with own team, optional second practice if requested
U13	Ø MYS SFL Commissioner forms teams	Ø 11v11	Ø One practice a week with own team, optional second practice if requested
U14-U19	Ø MYS SFL Commissioner forms teams	Ø 11v11	Ø One practice a week with own team, optional second practice if requested

Please note the U4 and U5 age groups are once a week classes, so there are no specific rules.



SFL INFORMATION

The Suburban Friendship League (SFL) has been operating since the fall 1990 season providing scheduling services for recreational soccer teams. The league's charter and decisions are based on whether the result is for the good of the players. During the spring and fall seasons, the SFL provides scheduling services to over 500 teams representing almost 25 different clubs. The primary age groups covered are the Under 12, Under 13, Under 14, Under 16, and Under 19 Boys and Girls. Find out more about the SFL at www.sflsoccer.org.

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

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



POLICIES

Refunds

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

Field Use and Safety Policies

All members should regularly review the policies posted on our the [MYS website](#) in the About Us section.

Equipment and Uniform Requirements:

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

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

All players should bring water to every practice and game.

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

Ball sizes by age group:

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

MYS provides a new uniform to all players at the beginning of the fall season, included in their registration fee, which they are required to use for both the fall and following spring season.

New players in the spring season will receive a full uniform.

Players are also required to bring water in a non-disposable container to every practice and game.



Codes of Conduct / Parent Information

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

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

1. Support your child:

- a. Support your child by giving encouragement and showing interest in his or her team. Help your child work toward skill improvement and good sportsmanship in every game. Teach your child that hard work, an honest effort and a positive attitude are more important than winning.

2. Always be positive:

- a. Children learn more by example than by criticism. Work to be a positive role model and reinforce positive behavior in others. Applaud good plays by others on your child's team as well as good plays by the opposing team. Do not criticize any child's performance from the sidelines. Accept the results of each game. Teach your child to be gracious in victory and to turn defeat into victory by learning and working toward improvement. If you have a suggestion, please provide it on another day.

3. Don't be a sideline coach or referee:

- a. Please refrain from coaching or refereeing from the sidelines. Parents who shout or scream from the sidelines often give inappropriate advice at the wrong time. The coach should be the only sideline voice. Remain a fair distance from the sidelines and within the spectator area. You and your child will both enjoy the game more if you put some emotional distance between yourself and the field or play. Officials are symbols of fair play, integrity and sportsmanship. Do not openly question their judgment or honesty.

4. Demonstrate a positive attitude toward your opponents and their families:

- a. Opponents are not enemies. Take care to show good hospitality at home and to represent McLean Youth Soccer in a positive way when visiting other clubs. Never allow yourself to be drawn into a verbal disagreement with opposing parents or coaches.

5. Remember that your child wants to have fun:

- a. Children must establish their own goals - to play the game for themselves. Don't impose unreasonable demands on your child. Let your children experience the fun of playing as well as the challenge of excelling.