

**MT. VERNON OPTIMIST CLUB
SOCCER BY-LAWS**

ARTICLE I

PURPOSE:

To furnish adult leadership and instruction in the game of soccer for youth age 3 through age 14.

To promote the basic fundamentals of soccer, teach respect, proper attitudes, and sportsmanship.

ARTICLE II

ADMINISTRATION:

The Board of Directors of the Mt. Vernon Optimist Club will be the governing body. The Soccer Commissioner(s) will be appointed by the Board of Directors and is the representative between the Board and the soccer league.

ARTICLE III

ELIGIBILITY RULES:

1. League field locations, eligible participants, and ball size:

Field Location	Eligibility	(League)	Ball Size
Municipal Park (front Softball Diamond)	Can't be 4 before 9/1	U4	#3
Municipal Park (front Softball Diamond)	Can't be 6 before 9/1	U6	#3
Municipal Park (Red Softball Diamond)	Can't be 8 before 9/1	U8	#4
Babe Ruth Field	Can't be 10 before 9/1	U10	#4
Landmark Park	Can't be 12 before 9/1	U12	#5
Landmark Park	Can't be 14 before 9/1	U14	#5

2. Each participant must have parent or guardian's authorization to play. The signature on the application will be sufficient.
3. An entry fee will be required by each player, which is payable at the time of the registration. Any exception to this must be approved by the Optimist Board of Directors.
4. All players, coaches, and parents shall exercise good sportsmanship and conduct at all times. Coaches are responsible for maintaining good sportsmanship for their team parents.

**MT. VERNON OPTIMIST CLUB
SOCCER BY-LAWS**

The soccer program is for the youth,
let them learn, but most of all,
let them have FUN.

ARTICLE IV

U4/U6

All games will be played under the following Micro Soccer rules:

1. Coaches and Assistant Coaches are encouraged to assist during the game. One (1) sideline coach and one (1) field coach is needed per team.
2. Teams will have 4-6 players on the field during each quarter of the game.
3. Each game shall be divided into four (4) equal ten (10) minute quarters. There shall be a half time break of five (5) minutes and a break between quarters of two (2) minutes each.
4. Each player shall play a minimum of two (2) quarters.
5. There are lines marking the goal areas.
6. All rule infringements are punished by an indirect free kick, there are no direct free kicks, and all opposing players must be at least five (5) yards from the ball on indirect free kicks. (This includes intentional fouls)
7. Six (6) feet wide by three (3) feet high goals are placed on the field end lines centered half way between the corner flags.
8. Goals can be scored from anywhere on the field.
9. The coach (coaches) referees, or appoints an assistant coach or parent to referee.
10. Time outs are called every five minutes for substitutions to be made.
11. If there are 8-12 players on a team (4-6 on, 4-6 off),

**MT. VERNON OPTIMIST CLUB
SOCCER BY-LAWS**

line changers can be made so that the same players do not always play together.

12. When the ball goes out of play, the game is restarted by one of the following ways"

A. Over the sidelines: with a throw in

B. Over the goal line: with a goal kick, if the attacking (offensive) team last touched the ball; or a corner kick, if the defending team last touched the ball.

NOTE: A goal kick can be taken from anywhere in the goal keeper handling zone.

C. After a goal is scored: restart the game with a center field kick by the team that was scored upon.

13. If a foul throw-in is committed, the coach (referee) explains the correct method and lets the offender re-take the throw-in.

MT. VERNON OPTIMIST CLUB

SOCCER BY-LAWS

14. Because of the small field size and the end to end nature of the game, the ball may go out of play frequently. Coaches should encourage parents on the side lines to help put the ball back into play to help aid in the flow of the game.
15. The U4 / U6 league will play on a 15 x 30 yard field.
16. The score of the game will not be recorded nor will any league standings be kept. The Mt. Vernon Optimist Soccer League seeks to promote good sportsmanship and individual development of soccer skills. Players should be taught to play competitively, but winning games is not to be stressed as all important.

ARTICLE V

U8 - U14 Game Rules

All games will be played under the current IHSAA Soccer Association rules, with the following exceptions:

1. All players and coaches shall remain within the marked confine of their team area during the game.
2. No team shall have more than two (2) coaches in their team area during the game.
3. Any team fielding less than five (5) players at the start of the game will automatically forfeit the game. All attempts to schedule around school sponsored events will be made to create an even field of play for all teams.
4. Each team shall field an equal number of players. If less players show up, each team will play with that number on the field and still allow for at least one (1) substitute (i.e. one team has nine (9) players and the other has eight (8) players, then both teams will only be able to have seven (7) players on the field and maintain at least one (1) substitute).
5. There is no established maximum number of players permitted on the field per team. The standard is nine (9) players per side on the field, including the goalie. Prior to the start of the game, both teams

will agree to the appropriate number of players that will be permitted on the field at one time. (As stated in Part 4 of this Article)

6. Any arguing with the officials by a coach or player during a game will be grounds for ejection from the game. Repeated infractions of the rules will result in removal of a coach or player from the league.
7. Each player will play a minimum of one (1) period.
8. Each game shall consist of two (2) twenty-five (25) minute periods. All timing will be done with a running clock to keep the games on schedule.

**MT. VERNON OPTIMIST CLUB
SOCCER BY-LAWS**

9. Unlimited substitutions are allowed during the game at each stoppage of play. Substitutions shall be ready to enter the field of play by positioning themselves at the center field line and alerting the official that a substitution is to be made.
10. Intentional fouls will result in an indirect free kick, with the opponents at least six (6) yards away.
11. Tied games will stand during the regular season.

ARTICLE VI

SIMPLIFIED RULES OF THE GAME (U8-U14)

1. Players may not carry onto the field any object (chains, bracelets, earrings, etc) which might cause injury to the player or another player.
2. Shin guards are mandatory for all practices and games.
3. **Start of the game:** The player who kicks the ball on a kick-off cannot touch the ball a second time until the ball has been touched by another player. The ball is not considered to be in play until it has rolled its own circumference. The ball must be kicked into the opponents half of the field. At the kick-off, the players of the team without the ball must remain on their own half of the field, outside of the center circle, until the ball is in play.
4. The ball is in play until it completely crossed the

boundary lines (touch lines) or goal line. If any part of the ball is touching the line, it is still in play. The players may be off the playing surface and still play the ball.

5. A goal cannot be scored unless the ball completely crosses the goal line between the goal posts. Also, it is important to note that a goal cannot be scored directly from an:
 - A. Indirect Kick
 - B. Throw-In
 - C. Kick-Off (U8-U10 leagues only)

6. **In-bounding the ball:** After the ball completely passes over the sideline (touchline) the inbound pass is used to put the ball back into play. The throw-in must be executed as follows:
 - A. The thrower must face the field with both feet behind or on the side line.
 - B. The ball must be thrown with both hands from BEHIND the head and brought directly over the head.
 - C. Both feet must be in contact with the ground as the ball is thrown.

**MT. VERNON OPTIMIST CLUB
SOCCER BY-LAWS**

7. **Goal area and goal kicks:** There is often some misunderstanding as to what happens in the goal area as opposed to the penalty area.

Goal Area: If the offensive team kicks the ball past the goal line, but not in the goal, the defensive team is awarded a goal kick to be taken from the goal area. Any player can take the goal kick. The ball is placed anywhere in the goal area half nearest the side from which the ball went out of bounds. All players must stay outside the penalty area until the kick is made. The player taking the kick may not touch the ball again until it has been touched by another player. Before the goal kick is considered in play, it must first cross the line marking the penalty area. The goal keeper may not be charged if he does not have the ball.

Penalty Area: In this territory, the goal keeper may use his hands to obtain possession of the ball. The goal keeper may not be charged in the penalty area.

8. **Corner Kick:** A corner kick is awarded when the defensive team causes the ball to pass over its own goal line, but not into the goal. The corner kick is taken from the corner arc nearest the place where the ball went out of bounds. A goal can be scored from this kick.
9. **Substitutions:** Substitutions can be made at the following times:
- A. Prior to a throw-in, in your favor (unless opponent is also substituting)
 - B. Prior to a goal kick, by either team.
 - C. After a goal, by either team.
 - D. After an injury, by either team when the referee stops the game.
10. **Off-Sides:** Optimist soccer does not enforce the off-side rule except in the U12 & U14 leagues. A player is off-side if he is nearer to his opponents goal line than the ball at the moment it is played unless:
- A. The player is in his own half of the field of play.
 - B. There are two (2) of his opponents nearer to their goal than he is.
 - C. The ball was last touched or played by an opponent.
 - D. The player receives the ball direct from a goal kick, corner kick, throw-in, or when it was dropped by the referee.
 - E. The player is not participating in the play and is

**MT. VERNON OPTIMIST CLUB
SOCCER BY-LAWS**

not distracting the other team or creating an unfair advantage.

11. There are nine (9) prohibited acts for which a referee can award a Direct Kick (U12 & U14 leagues only) from the point where the foul occurred. A goal can be scored from a direct kick:
 - A. Kicking or attempting to kick an opponent.
 - B. Tripping
 - C. Jumping at or intimidating an opponent
 - D. Violent charging
 - E. Striking an opponent
 - F. Holding
 - G. Pushing
 - H. Handling the ball with the hands or arms
 - I. Charging from behind, if reckless or excessing, otherwise permitted to challenge those who are shielding.

**MT. VERNON OPTIMIST CLUB
SOCCER BY-LAWS**

12. **Indirect Kick:** An indirect free kick shall be awarded when these acts occur:
- A. Dangerous play (to oneself or opponent)
 - B. Charging away from the ball **
 - C. Charging the goal keeper when he does not have the ball **
 - D. Opponent obstruction
- **Can also be grounds for caution (yellow card)
13. All free kicks awarded as the result of a foul in the U8-U14 leagues shall be INDIRECT, with the opponents at least six (6) yards from the ball. A goal may not be scored until the ball has been touched by a second player of either team. No kicks shall be taken inside the goal area.
14. **Referees:** Referees are provided for all regular season games and tournament games in the U8-U14 leagues
15. **Red / Yellow Cards:** Yellow Carded player shall be warned and must be substituted immediately. Players can return on the next substitution. Red Carded players are required to sit out the rest of the game and can be substituted for immediately. Red Carded coaches will be asked to leave the field area. All Red Card incidents will be reported to the league commissioner(s) before the end of the day.
16. **Linesmen (Optional):** One parent or coach from each team in the U12 & U14 league will be designated as linesman from the duration of the game. A coach for each team is responsible for obtaining a volunteer to fill one of the two linesman positions and introducing them to the referees for instruction.
17. Game referees will instruct the volunteer linesman on their duties and responsibilities. Volunteers may be switched out only after a goal or between periods of a game. Each linesman will be given a hand flag to use and assigned one side of the field. Linesman duties and instruction will cover:
- A. Out of play ball.
 - B. Determination of possession
 - C. OffSides
 - D. Signaling
 - E. Keeping up with the play on the field

**MT. VERNON OPTIMIST CLUB
SOCCER BY-LAWS**

18. **Goalie Play:** Goalies are allowed to touch the ball with their hands anywhere inside the Penalty Box. Goalies can take as many steps with the ball inside the Penalty Box as necessary. A goalie may not intentionally drop or roll the ball on the ground and then pick it up again. Accidental dropping of the ball, however, is permissible.
(Referee will warn the goalie about intentional dropping)

ARTICLE VII

PLAYER DISTRIBUTION

1. The league commissioner(s) will be responsible for the proper distribution of talent on each team.
2. A player draft may be held, at the commissioners discretion, for leagues U6-U14.
3. Coaches and Assistant Coaches are eligible to participate and include their siblings on their own team, as part of player distribution for U4 -U10.
4. Only Coaches (not Assistant Coaches) are eligible for including their siblings on their team as part of player distribution for U12 & U14 without approval of the league Commissioner(s).

ARTICLE VIII

COACHING STAFF

1. All coaches shall be subject to the approval of the Soccer Commissioner(s).
2. Any coach not abiding by the By-Laws of the soccer program and the soccer rules shall be subject to removal by the Board of Directors upon recommendation by the Soccer Commissioner(s).

ARTICLE IX

SPECTATORS

1. Spectators shall confine themselves to the designated spectator areas (the opposite side of the playing field from the players and coaches) and shall display good sportsmanship at all times.

**MT. VERNON OPTIMIST CLUB
SOCCER BY-LAWS**

2. Spectators displaying bad sportsmanship WILL be asked to leave the premises.

ARTICLE X

PRACTICE RULES

1. No team practice shall exceed one (1) hour.
2. No team shall exceed two (2) hours of practice in any one week period prior to the 2nd game of the season.
3. No team shall exceed one (1) hour of practice in any one (1) week period after the 2nd game of the season.

ARTICLE XI

EQUIPMENT

1. All players will receive a colored jersey representing their designated team, a pair of shorts, and a pair of soccer socks as part of their league registration.
2. **Shin guards are mandatory at all times while players are on the soccer field!**
3. All players must wear at least tennis shoes, soccer cleats are optional. **NO STEEL CLEATS PERMITTED!**

ARTICLE XII

PLAYER ROSTER ADJUSTMENTS

1. Teams are required to play with the original drafted players.
2. If a player drops from a team, the coach is required to contact the Commissioner. Under NO circumstances is a coach to seek out a replacement player.
3. Any teams playing a game with a player not approved by the Commissioner will forfeit that game(s).

**MT. VERNON OPTIMIST CLUB
SOCCER BY-LAWS**