



TCYSA Summer Soccer Guidance for Coaches and Referees 2026 Season

- 1.** The summer soccer league is organized by Thurston County Youth Soccer Association (TCYSA) for players in the u8 through u19 age groups. This summary is intended to help coaches understand how the league is organized, the values to which we all commit and what the association expects of those who participate. It is also intended to be read by referees to avoid inconsistencies and confusion. A commitment to sportsmanship underpins this league. Coaches are expected to be familiar with the contents of this document and are encouraged to contact their club if they have questions. Referees should direct their questions to the Referee Assignor. Contact details are set out at the end of the document.
- 2.** The league will be played in accordance with FIFA Laws of the Game and Washington Youth Soccer variations on FIFA for u8 through u12 divisions, with some local variations. For the summer season the association has approved four exceptions to FIFA Laws: clubs have some latitude to exceed the maximum roster rule, the game length for all full field matches will be two 30-minute halves, there is provision for guest players (using the Player Pass) and there is unlimited substitution at any stoppage of play (with referee approval). Director of Competition rulings are final.
- 3.** Games will begin on June 29 and end July 30 or as close to that date as is feasible. Girls' teams will play on Mondays and Wednesdays and boys' teams will play on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Games will generally start at 6:00 pm and 7:30 pm, but this may be varied to facilitate game scheduling. Every effort will be made to enable each team to play eight games. All games will be played in Thurston County.
- 4.** The scheduled time for each game is the start time for the game, not the show up time. Referees are expected to wait 10 minutes from the scheduled game time for both teams to be ready to play. If a 6:00 pm start time game begins late it must end by 7:20pm, regardless of whether the entire length of the match has been played or not, if there is a 7:30 pm game scheduled for the field. The referee's decision is final in such matters.
- 5.** The home team coach is responsible for making sure the playing field is ready for play at game time. The home team should provide at least two, size appropriate, properly inflated game balls.
- 6.** The home field coach gets to choose the sideline for his/her team and supporters. With agreement from the home field coach, teams and spectators may share a sideline.
- 7.** If two teams have identical, or nearly identical, jersey colors, it is the responsibility of the home team to wear an alternative shirt. Scrimmage vests may be worn. The referee is the final judge on a color conflict.
- 8.** No spectators, players or coaches are allowed to be positioned behind a goal or between the end line and even with the top of the 18-yard line of the penalty area or the equivalent line in mod-soccer games.
- 9.** The league will not maintain or post standings. However, coaches are required to email scores to TCYSA to facilitate club feedback on team strength.

- 10.** All participants are required to show sportsmanship towards others. The association reserves the right to take action against coaches and other participants for abuse of the sportsmanship requirement, even in situations where the referee has not officially cautioned or ejected an individual.
- 11.** The use of noisemakers, cow bells, horns or other such devices at fields is prohibited.
- 12.** Requests for refereeing assignments may be made through the Arbiter system. Referees must track the score of all matches (including mod-level) and record this information in Arbiter within 24 hours of the end of the match. Cautions and ejections must be recorded in Arbiter by the center referee within 24 hours of the end of the match, using the misconduct function.
- 13.** The association and clubs require all participants to commit to the rules and standards of behavior set out in this document and in the code of ethics of the clubs to which they are affiliated.
- 14.** No team (u8 through u19) may have more than three select players. A select player is one who played in the current playing year in a league other than recreational. The Association's Director of Competition decision on the application of the player pass rule is final. The coach is required to satisfy himself/herself that the team meets this requirement and notify his/her club if it does not.
- 15.** All players must be registered with Washington Youth Soccer in the current playing year. Players born in 2007 (age u19) may play provided they did not graduate from high school prior to 2026.
- 16.** Teams are required to play at parity with their opponent unless there is an agreement between the coaches to do otherwise. To achieve parity, the coach with the greater number of players must offer either (a) to share players or (b) elect to have fewer players than is permitted under the rules, subject to FIFA minimum player rules. The other coach may accept the offer or decline and elect to play with a smaller number of players. The referee must be informed of this agreement in advance.
- 17.** In addition to the arrangement for playing at parity set out above, all age groups will be permitted to have guest players, up to five per match, provided (a) the guests are registered to play in the summer league with another team or have played during the current playing year on a Washington Youth Soccer registered team, (b) are age and gender appropriate, (c) are noted on the roster (including their official team name) and (d) are advised to the opposing coach and referee at the field prior to the match. This flexibility is intended to enable teams to field appropriate numbers and should not be used to gain unfair competitive advantage. The Association commits to investigate any reports of abuse of the intent of this flexibility, including using the pass to "stack" teams for competitive purposes. Teams are still subject to the "three select players" rule, inclusive of guests. Male players may not guest on female teams.
- 18.** Referees are requested to check players against rosters prior to the match.
- 19.** Coaches and teams should not run up the score against opponents. It is recommended that coaches keep the score within 5 goals. Coaches are required to take actions to limit large differences in scores in games where the teams are not well matched (player positioning, giving weaker players more playing time, shooting with weaker foot, no scoring rule etc.). The association recognizes that large score differentials are easier to create in younger age groups (smaller field, more significant skill differences amongst teams). However, as guidance for all age groups, we suggest that the coach adopt tactics to minimize scoring when his/her team achieves a five-goal lead. The league will review all matches where the differential is five goals or more. Coaches who disregard this requirement may be subject to disciplinary proceedings. Clubs are expected to monitor the scores for their teams and address teams who run up the score (scores may be monitored on www.qcsra.org under information/match results). Teams trailing by 4 or more goals are allowed to add a player to the field and play a "player up". The coach of the team that is down should tell the referee they are adding a player during any stoppage of play.
- 20.** Player safety is our first priority. If a player on a team goes down with an injury, it is a show of good sportsmanship for the team in possession of the ball to kick the ball out of bounds intentionally to stop play so that the injured player may be attended to. On the re-start of play, the team in possession should intentionally play the ball to a player on the opposing team.

21. Slide tackling is permitted for u11 teams and older in TCYSA recreational leagues. Referees are expected to be alert to the application of dangerous slide tackling techniques to protect players. Referees are also encouraged to be strict on rough play; the summer league is a non-competitive fun event.
22. Although the offside rule does not apply at u8, teams must respect the spirit of the rule and referees are advised to penalize players for flagrant abuses.
23. Substitutions may be made at any stoppage of play with the consent of the referee.
24. Disciplinary issues will be handled by a judicial committee in line with Washington Youth Soccer rules. These include, but are not limited to, Rule 605.1 (c) (which provides for an automatic minimum one match ban for a red card offense), Rule 605.3 (a) (1) (which provides for a one match suspension for the accumulation of three yellow cards during the season) and Rule 213.3/4 (touchline misconduct/abuse/assault). Please contact your association or club if you have any questions about the disciplinary process.
25. The association has a zero-tolerance policy regarding the use of unregistered or non-rostered players by a team during a game (other than the use of players rostered to the opposing team under the player parity and guest players' provisions in this document). The coach of any team using an unregistered or a non-rostered player will be suspended immediately by the referee. The coach will be subject to an additional one match suspension. Subsequent violations will be considered by the TCYSA Judicial Committee. An official roster, supplied by the team's club or available from the registration website, must be supplied to the referee prior to the start of the match. If the coach is unable to provide an official roster an unofficial roster may be accepted by the referee. Rosters (official and otherwise) must include players' names, dates of birth and shirt numbers. Referees are required to forward each unofficial roster to the association for verification. Habitual failure by individual coaches to provide official rosters may result in a disciplinary hearing and possible suspension.
26. The referee has a responsibility to enforce the Laws of the Game to the best of his/her ability. It is not the place of the players, coaches or spectators to make the job of the referee more difficult by dissent through words or actions. The associations have a zero-tolerance rule for abuse of game officials and will not tolerate profanity, whether directed at referees or otherwise. Referees are encouraged to take appropriate action to maintain control over each game. Any player, coach, or spectator who is given a card or sent off the field of play or sidelines for abuse of a referee will be subject to the disciplinary provisions and process of Washington Youth Soccer.
27. All teams must be supervised by an adult-age, appropriately registered and risk-management cleared person who is deemed suitable by the home club/association to discharge the responsibilities of such position. The coach must be at least three years older than the age group of the team. Teams may have an assistant coach who is not yet eighteen years old, but all practices/games must be supervised by the designated adult or an alternative adult who is registered and risk-management cleared.
28. All teams must have at least two Washington Youth Soccer RMA Cleared coaches assigned to the roster.

Contact information:

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