

VERMONT SOCCER LEAGUE

Divisional Rules and Guidelines

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I. MISSION STATEMENT

The Vermont Soccer League (VSL) serves Vermont's youth by striving to achieve the highest standards of youth soccer development - training, instruction and competition - by focusing on player development in an atmosphere of teamwork, respect, and professionalism.

II. PURPOSE

It is the goal of the VSL to bring out the joy that the game of soccer can provide our youth by offering players the highest level of competition available at multiple levels in the state of Vermont, fueling their passion, challenging them to grow, teaching them to persevere, and recognizing their strengths in contributing to their teammates and their communities.

III. DIVISIONAL PLAY – SPRING LEAGUE

DIVISION ONE (D1)

Division One is the premier level of play in the VSL. In D1 we provide the highest level of play through managing specific qualification criteria for a team's participation. Clubs and teams competing at this level will have a commitment that parallels this level of play. This may include; a more rigorous training approach, a more competitive atmosphere, and a more extensive travel schedule.

The VSL's D1 is a qualifying league for participation in Vermont Soccer Association (VSA) State Cup Championship. This competition establishes the State Champion in

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each age bracket. Teams winning State Cup are required to participate in the US Youth Soccer Association (USYSA) Region 1 National Championship Series. Clubs entering teams in D1 should have the primary goal of participating in State Cup for the chance of representing Vermont in the Region 1 National Championship Series.

Application Process

Clubs wishing to place a team in D1 for the first time must by the date established by the VSA Board; have submitted the appropriate application properly completed with team rosters to the VSA. No applications will be accepted if received late or without said application. Applications will be assessed by a competition committee and approved or rejected. New clubs that are participating in D1 for the first time may be required to submit a refundable bond equal to the full amount of referee fees for two matches. The bond will be refunded at the end of a successfully completed season.

Competition Committee

A Competition Committee comprising the VP of the VSL from the VSA BOD and selected individuals from member Clubs shall be convened to review all D1 applications. Composition of the committee shall be at the discretion of the VP of the VSL and the VSA BOD. The Committee will review applications of new teams and determine if D1 play is appropriate. The Competition Committee will develop preliminary brackets for all teams, which will be offered for review and comment by all participating clubs. Final brackets will be determined by the committee taking into consideration the input from the participating clubs.

Brackets

Brackets will be created for Boys and Girls at U10, U12, U14, U16, and U19. If a sufficient number of teams register at the individual age levels – U13 and U11 for instance – brackets will be created for those individual age groups. Bracket development will take into consideration number of teams within each age group and skill level of those teams so as to provide the most competitive and appropriate make-up.

Brackets will be set up with top priority given to teams competing in State Cup. Every effort will be made for those teams to play each team in its respective State Cup bracket. The balance of the bracket and schedule will be completed at the discretion of the Competition Committee.

Roster Size: State Cup

Teams competing in Vermont Soccer Association State Cup Championships are required to follow the roster rules set forth by USYSA and VSA as well as VSL requirements of:

- U10 minimum of 7 players on the roster
- U11 and U12 minimum of 8 players on the roster
- U13 thru U19 minimum of 11 players on the roster

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Roster Size: D1 Non State Cup Teams

- U10 minimum of 7 players and may contain no more than 14 players
- U11 and U12 minimum of 8 players and may contain no more than 15 players
- U13 thru U19 minimum of 11 players and may contain no more than 22 players

Club Passing Players – within your club:

D1 Teams may Club Pass players under the following rules:

- U10 thru U12 teams may Club Pass up to 3 club players per game.
- U13 thru U19 teams may Club Pass up to 4 club players per game.
- Club pass players must be on a roster within the SAME CLUB and **must present a valid USYSA Player Pass** indicating they are the appropriate age.
- Club pass players can play within their age or in the next age group just above.
- Coaches Club Passing players in a game must submit to the Referee a copy of the official VSA Roster with the club pass player's name/s written in. The Referee may keep this roster as a record of the Club pass player(s) participation.

Dual Roster of players – is only to be utilized to roster a player between two different clubs. Do not dual roster within your club.

Under no circumstances shall a player be listed on more than one roster in the same division. However players in different divisions may roster with a second club in accordance with the guidelines for dual rosters.

DIVISION TWO (D2)

Division Two provides a competitive level of play, and is open to all member Clubs whose teams match this level of play. While the commitment for D2 will include travel to communities that are generally within approximately a 90-minute travel time; additional travel time may be expected for a small percentage of the games. Training schedule is to be determined by individual Club or Coach, VSL recommends 2 training sessions per week for teams competing in D2.

Application Process

Any member Club may at their discretion place their teams in D2. VSA will provide guidance to insure that this level of play is appropriate. It is highly recommended that Clubs place teams in D2 based on competitive tryouts or through assessment during winter training and play. The intent of this division is to be competitive at a level just below D1.

Clubs should consider D2 appropriate for:

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- Teams with players primarily in the older year of the 2-year bracket
- Teams developing skills and competitive experience just below the level of D1

Brackets

Brackets will be developed taking into account; geographic landscape, the number of teams in an age bracket and quality of those teams. Generally, brackets will be created for U8 Coed and U10, U12, U14, U16, and U19 Boys and Girls. Geographic proximity will be a priority in developing D2 game brackets. However, geographic proximity is only one factor and the VP of VSL and the VSA BOD reserve the right to balance the brackets as needed.

Roster Size

Roster minimums are mandated

- U8 – no less than 5 players
- U10 – no less than 7 players
- U12 – no less than 8 players
- U1 thru U19 – no less than 11 players

Roster maximum size in D2 is not mandated, but recommendations are:

- U8 – no more than 10 players
- U10 – no more than 14 players
- U12 – no more than 15 players
- U14 thru U19 – no more than 22 players

Club Passing Players – within your club:

Teams may Club Pass players as follows:

- U10 and U12 teams may Club Pass up to 3 club players,
- U14 thru U19 teams may Club Pass up to 4 club players,
- Club pass players must be on a roster within the SAME CLUB and must present a valid USYSA Player Pass indicating they are the appropriate age.
- Club pass players can play within their age or in the next age group just above.
- Coaches Club Passing players in a game must submit to the Referee a copy of the official VSA Rosters with the club player's names written in. The Referee may keep this roster as a record of the Club pass player(s) participation.

Dual Roster of players – is only to be utilized to roster a player between two different clubs. Do not dual roster within your club.

Under no circumstances shall a player be listed on more than one roster in the same division. However players in different divisions may roster with a second club in accordance with the guidelines for dual rosters.

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DIVISION THREE (D3)

Division Three provides entry-level competition to travel team play, and is open to all member Clubs. However teams in D3 must be based on a town premised roster and be a match for this level of play. D3 is designed to serve as an introduction to competitive soccer. Clubs with teams that are not deep in experience or skills will have the opportunity to develop and grow while enjoying the spirit of the game. While the commitment for D3 includes travel to communities that are generally within a one-hour travel time; additional travel time may be expected for a small percentage of the games scheduled. Training schedule is to be determined by individual Club or Coach, but VSL recommends at least one training session per week for teams competing in D3.

Application Process

Any member Club may at their discretion place their teams in D3, VSA will provide guidance to insure that this level of play is appropriate and to verify the roster is town centric. While it is highly recommended that member Clubs place teams in Divisions 1 and 2 based on tryouts or through assessment during winter training and play, D3 is generally recommended for Clubs that may establish their teams by registration only.

Clubs should consider D3 appropriate for:

- Teams with players primarily in the younger year of the 2-year bracket
- Teams that are established by registration only, without tryouts or assessment
- Teams that are looking for entry-level travel team competition and commitment

Brackets

Brackets will be developed to accommodate the number of teams and quality of the teams submitted. Generally, brackets will be created for U8 Coed and U10, U12, U14, U16, and U19 Boys and Girls. Geographic proximity will be a priority in developing D3 game brackets. However, this is not guaranteed and the VP of VSL and the VSA BOD reserve the right to balance the brackets.

Roster Size

Roster minimums are mandated

- U8 – no less than 5 players
- U10 – no less than 7 players
- U12 – no less than 8 players
- U1 thru U19 – no less than 11 players

Roster maximum size in D2 is not mandated, but recommendations are:

- U8 – no more than 10 players
- U10 – no more than 14 players
- U12 – no more than 15 players
- U14 thru U19 – no more than 22 players

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Club Passing Players – within your club:

Teams may Club Pass players as follows:

- U10 through U19 teams may Club Pass up to 4 club players,
- Club pass players must be on a roster within the SAME CLUB and must present a valid USYSA Player Pass indicating they are the appropriate age.
- Club pass players can play within their age or in the next age group just above.
- Coaches Club Passing players in a game must submit to the Referee a copy of the official VSA Rosters with the Club pass player's names written in. The Referee may keep this roster as a record of the Club pass player(s) participation.

Dual Roster of players – is only to be utilized to roster a player between two different clubs. Do not dual roster within your club.

Under no circumstances shall a player be listed on more than one roster in the same division. However players in different divisions may roster with a second club in accordance with the guidelines for dual rosters.

Dual Roster Guidelines-limitations

Dual-roster of players is allowed as follows:

- U10 and U12 team rosters may have no more than 3 dual-roster players
- U13 thru U19 team rosters may have no more than 4 dual-roster players
- Dual-roster players must be formally registered with both clubs, appear on both official state rosters, and have an official Player Pass for each team
- Players should inform Coaches of their dual-roster status.

IV. DIVISIONAL PLAY - SUMMER LEAGUE:

The VSL Summer League is intended to provide competitive play and match experience for Club teams that are available during the summer season. Both Division One and Division Two brackets will be developed, depending on the level of interest received through registrations.

Application Process

Teams wishing to compete in the Summer League must, by the date established by the VSA Board, have paid their fees and submitted the appropriate application properly completed with team rosters. No applications will be accepted if received late or without the proper fee or other required material.

Brackets

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Brackets will be developed to accommodate the number and quality of the teams submitted. Generally, brackets will be created for Boys and Girls - U10, U12, U14, U16, and U19. The VP of the VSL, VSA BOD and a Summer Competition Committee will determine the final brackets and placement of teams.

- **Division One** is intended to provide a premier level of play and match experience for top level teams and players.
- **Division Two** is intended to provide a competitive level of play at match experience at a level below that of Division One.

Roster Size

Expanded rosters are allowed for the Summer League:

- U16 thru U19 – no more than 24 players

Club Players

Teams may Club Pass club players as follows:

- U16 thru U19 teams may Club Pass up to 3 club players.
- Club pass players must be on a roster within the SAME CLUB and must present a valid USYSA Player Pass indicating they are the appropriate age.
- Club pass players can play within their age or in the next age group just above.
- Coaches Club Passing players in a game must submit to the Referee a copy of the official VSA Rosters with the Club player's names written in. The Referee may keep this roster as a record of the Club pass player(s) participation.

Dual Roster of players – is only to be utilized to roster a player between two different clubs. Do not dual roster within your club.

No player can be registered on two teams in the same Division. Dual-roster of players is allowed as follows:

- U16 thru U19 teams may have no more than 4 dual-roster players
- Dual-roster players must be formally registered with both teams, appear on both rosters, and have an official Player Pass for each team
- Players should inform Coaches of their dual-roster status.

V. ROSTERS AND PLAYER PASSES

In order to participate in any VSL match all teams must have an approved roster issued by the VSA and all players and coaches must have a valid USYSA Player Passes, which must be shown to the Referee at each match. (The only exception; we do not require U8 players to show Player Passes.)

Coaches

All teams must have a coach or assistant coach with a valid USYSA Coach Pass present on the sidelines of the field for the duration of the game. If a team does not have a coach

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or assistant coach with their Coach Pass present for the duration of the game, the referee may declare a forfeit by the offending team with a minus 3 goal differential posted.

Absences of Rosters/Passes

If the team does not present their Player Passes or Roster, it will be reported by the Referee and declared as a forfeit by the offending team with a minus 3 goal differential posted. If both teams don't present their Player Passes or Roster, both teams will forfeit this match and will receive the minus 3 goal differential. There will be no refund of referee fees and fines may apply.

No player without a valid Player Pass, regardless of appearing on the official roster, will be allowed to play in a match. Players with a valid Player Pass who do not appear on the roster can only participate in a match under the club player pass guidelines.

Roster and Player Pass Review

Fifteen minutes prior to the start of the match, players line up in front of their bench on the sideline with Player Pass in hand. The Coach will present a copy of the VSA official Roster to the Referee. The Referee will then verify the Roster and each Player Pass. The Referee will hold the game Roster and Player Passes until the end of the game. A player receiving a red card will not have his/her Player Pass returned, but must contact the VSA office about obtaining the pass after the suspension is served.

U8 Roster Review

The issuing of U8 rosters is intended to ensure players are properly registered with the VSA so that the various benefits of registration, including insurance coverage, are in place. To introduce U8 players and coaches to the roster review process, the VSL recommends that, 5 minutes prior to the match, the coaches line their teams up and exchange game rosters. The opposing coaches should call off each name on the roster, have the player step forward, and check for proper equipment.

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Roster Freeze Dates for State Cup Teams

A roster freeze date will be established by the VSA in accordance with the requirements of Region 1 National Championship Series. Rosters for teams participating in Vermont State Cup may only be altered pursuant to USYSA rules for additions, drops, and transfers. Deadlines for declaring the freezing of rosters will be determined on a yearly basis by the VSA. Please refer to VSA website for official date. -

Roster Freeze Dates for Non-State Cup Teams

Rosters, which are processed by the VSA, may be revised at any time during the season as long as the following requirements are met:

- All roster reissue and player fees are paid to VSA at the time of reissue
- Players being added to a roster must not violate the terms of VSA Player Recruiting Policy.
- VSA has adequate staff and time available to process the revision within the requested timeframe.

VI. Match Schedule – Reschedule, Cancellation, Forfeit

Schedule

The league schedule is ultimately the responsibility of the VP of VSL and VSA Board of Directors. The official league schedule that clubs are required to follow will be posted on the official league web site.

VSA will publish locked weekends for VSL play depending on divisional play. Clubs participating in the VSL must commit to leaving these dates open for VSL play as a first priority. Clubs failing to make their teams available to play on these weekends are subject to forfeiture of those matches. We will not reschedule from these weekends.

Clubs must ensure all teams make every effort to attend all VSL games scheduled for their club during the season. Once the final schedule is issued to the member clubs by the league, there are limitations as to re-scheduling games as official league games. Club Coordinators are responsible for ensuring their coaches, players and parents are familiar with the VSL rules regarding cancelations due to weather and field conditions, travel expectations, reschedules, and forfeits.

Re-Schedule Limitations

Rescheduling

We realize that certain circumstances arise that are beyond clubs control, therefore we do allow for limited adjustment to schedules in season.

Any club that has a conflict arise in season may request a change of schedule from the VSA Office. Any request for change to the final published schedule must be signed off on by the VSA Office and mutually agreed upon between the two teams.

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The decision to allow the reschedule will be at the sole discretion of the VSA Office. Requests must be made with as much advance notice as possible but will not be considered if inside of 5 days of the originally scheduled play date.

GAME RESCHEDULING

To reschedule a match the initiating club coordinator must;

- 1) Confirm that the match to be re-scheduled meets VSL criteria to be re-scheduled as a league match through the VSA office and
- 2) Confirm that a reschedule date, time and location has been mutually agreed upon by both teams; and
- 3) Provide VSA office with the rescheduled date, time and location of the match, with an advance notice of at least 5 days.

Reschedules due to matches cancelled due to weather by an official prior to the game or in the first half, the home team club coordinator should immediately;

- 1) Establish a rescheduled game date, time and location with the opposing team; and
- 2) Contact VSA office within 7 days of the original match with the date, time and location of the rescheduled match, including advance notice of at least 5 days.

GAME CANCELLATIONS

- Once the final schedule is posted and sent to the Clubs, teams are expected to adhere to the schedule, and to participate in all scheduled games. Cancelled games, those due to weather, unplayable field condition, availability of officials, State Cup conflict are open to reschedule. VSL expects all teams to act in good faith and make every effort to re-schedule all cancelled games. The acceptable reasons for cancelling and rescheduling a game are: 'unplayable' field conditions, a game 'called' by a referee due to weather or field conditions, State Cup game conflicts (see below), or absence of a referee if both coaches don't agree to an acceptable referee substitute.
- Teams may not just switch schedules and or re-schedule games with another team on their own. The Club Coordinator must contact the VSL Office with reason for the request to reschedule and provide a mutually agreed upon alternative for the rescheduled match.
- State Cup Exception: Reschedules due to direct conflicts with State Cup games will be allowed. If a team reaches the finals of State Cup and it creates a direct schedule conflict, that Club is responsible to notify the opposing Club at least seven (7) days prior to the scheduled game to determine a reschedule date, time and location. The HOME Club Coordinator must then contact the VSL Office for approval and reassigning of officials for the rescheduled match, which must be rescheduled no later than one week after the close of the season.

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Cancellations Due to Weather/Field Conditions

- Up to 24 hours ahead of time, Club Coordinators can cancel games due to Weather/Field Conditions.

If a field is deemed unplayable (flooded/dangerous) the DAY BEFORE the match, the HOME Club Coordinator must have confirmed contact with the visiting coach and the visiting Club Coordinator. They must contact the VSA Office as well.

Inside of 24 hrs. "Game Day": Only the officials can cancel or delay the game due to weather or field conditions. (Safety First -- no exceptions.)

- At the first sign of lightning or thunder, and observance of any successive occurrence officials will delay the game for 30 minutes, and then make determination to either cancel the game or continue play. Games called after the start of play in the second half will be scored as official games. Games may be rescheduled if the game is called prior to the start of the second half.
- Officials receive only an appearance fee if they come to the field and the game is canceled before it starts. Officials receive full game fee if the game is cancelled due to weather during either half or make appearance due to Clubs not following proper cancellation procedures. For games cancelled in the first half, both clubs will be responsible for splitting payment of the official's fees.

GAME FORFEITS

Games not played that fall outside of the allowable re-schedule parameters will be termed forfeits.

Every effort should be made to avoid forfeits. Clubs and or teams that have excessive occurrence will be subject to league sanctions and or fines.

- If a match is to be forfeited due to the unavailability of one or both teams, the team/s responsible for causing the forfeit are still required to have confirmed contact with the VSA office and as a courtesy the opposing team at least 24 hours ahead of the scheduled match (e.g. sending an email alone with no response is inadequate). This will avoid having individuals travelling needlessly to the field, and to allow for officials to be reassigned to other matches.
- Any team responsible for causing a forfeit shall have the match declared a forfeit and will have a minus 3 goal differential posted. As well the team responsible for the forfeit shall be assessed a penalty of \$200 payable to the Vermont Soccer League. Penalty shall be split if the forfeit is mutual.

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- If the team responsible for the forfeit does not contact the opposing Club and or the VSA office at least 24 hours before the scheduled game, this forfeit penalty may be increased to \$300.
- End of season review to be done for any club with excessive number of forfeited games. No matches will be scheduled the following season for Clubs with outstanding penalty fees owed due to forfeitures.
- Note: Teams with forfeited games may choose to schedule as a ‘friendly’ game. However, these will not be VSL sanctioned games, will not have referees assigned through the VSL, and will not be reflected in VSL records of game results.

Referee No Shows

Club Coordinators should contact the VSL through the VSA Office within 48 hours of the scheduled game to inform of referee no-shows.

Late Arrival

The referee and the teams should be present at the field at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled start. A forfeit may be claimed if a team arrives more than 15 minutes after the scheduled start.

VII. RECRUITING OF PLAYERS

The VSL adheres to the policy and guidelines of the VSA regarding the recruitment of players, please refer to Recruiting Policy on the VSA website - <http://www.vermontsoccer.org>

VII. ZERO TOLERANCE

The VSL adheres to the policy of Zero Tolerance for coaches, players, spectators. Please refer to the Zero Tolerance Policy on the VSA website - <http://www.vermontsoccer.org>