

**POLICIES & PROCEDURES RELATING TO COACHING, ELIGIBILITY,
TEAM FORMATION AND PLAYING
FOR THE
NORTHAMPTON SOCCER CLUB,**

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON THIS 11TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2019

This policy provides the policies and procedures relating to coaching philosophy, eligible players, team formation and playing time. All defined terms from the Bylaws are incorporated herein.

SECTION 1: COACHING PHILOSOPHY & MANAGEMENT

A. COACHING PHILOSOPHY

- 1) NSC recognizes that coaches are volunteers. NSC will provide training and support to these volunteers through intra-club trainings and guidance by our Director of Coaching and by funding external coach licensing courses, trainings and development workshops. Coaches are expected to participate in and seek out educational opportunities.
- 2) Coaches will work to instill a love for soccer along with providing guidance in the technical and tactical aspects of soccer.
- 3) *Subject to the considerations contained herein*, coaches have great latitude in decisions regarding playing time, position assignment, frequency of practices and other areas of team management.
- 4) Coaches will do their utmost to ensure that all eligible players present at a game participate in the game, and receive quality-playing experience.
- 5) Coaches will at all times treat players, parents, referees, and opposing coaches, teams, and parents with respect.

B. TEAM COACH AND MANAGER

1. Appointment and Requirements:

- A) The Board approves the position of Team Coach.
- B) The position of Team Coach is a critical responsibility within the organization. He/she has the responsibility to see that the NSC philosophy is carried out within his/her activity; to ensure that it is the good of the players that takes priority; to mediate disputes; to maintain an open and unbiased posture on every issue; to

ensure to the best of his/her ability, that player selection, and any other activity bearing on the sport, be performed with fairness to all.

- C) The Team Coach must understand and follow the coaching concepts and overall player development goals endorsed by the NSC.
- D) It is the philosophy of the NSC that its coaches, assistant coaches, and team managers, refrain from engaging in confrontations with other league teams or league officials, members or game officials. Any such incidents that require active resolution shall be accomplished through appropriate Executive Board actions.
- E) The position of Team Manager is also critical to the smooth functioning of the team. The Team Manager is the primary source of communication between the Team Coach and parents, and between the team and the Board. Together with the Team Coach, he/she has the overall responsibility for the day to day running of the team.
- F) Where there is not separate Team Manager, the Team Coach serves both positions.

2. Responsibilities and Duties:

A) TEAM COACH

- 1) Organize and lead all practices, and game situations. Arrange for a suitable substitute in the event of his/her absence. Team Coaches are strongly encouraged to lead practice at a minimum of two times per week.
- 2) Ensure all players on the team receive equal treatment.
- 3) Work closely with the Team Manager or any assistant coach to schedule Team Coach led practices.
- 4) Bring to the attention of the Board:
 - i. Any conflicts with parents and or players.
 - ii. Any conflicts with the coaching staff.
 - iii. Any conflict arising over league rules or play.
 - iv. Any conflict arising with referees or with other league teams during the course of a league game.
 - v. Any conduct or behavior detrimental to the NSC.

- 5) Provide roster, player passes or any other documents or information for the referee at all games.
- 6) Carry all league or tournament required documentation, to league or tournament games. (ex. player and coach cards, official league roster, etc.)

B) TEAM MANAGER

- 1) Work with Team Coach and the Director of Fields to arrange all necessary use of home fields for Team Coach led practices.
- 2) Ensure all coaches, players, and parents, are provided with accurate game and practice schedules.
- 3) Establish and promptly inform the team of any changes in practice or game times or locations. This should be done a minimum of one hour before the scheduled event if possible.
- 4) Report all injuries occurring at club sanctioned activities to the club President or Treasurer.
- 5) Bring to the attention of either the Team Coach, Director of Coaching or the President:
 - i. Any conflicts with parents and or players.
 - ii. Any conflicts within the coaching staff.
 - ii. Any activity or behavior detrimental to the NSC.

C. DISCIPLINE AND SUSPENSION OF MANAGERS AND COACHES

- 1) In cases involving player safety, gross misconduct relative to the By-laws, and possible violations of state or federal law, coaches, assistant coaches, and managers may be suspended by the President or acting President for a period not to exceed 7 days, pending due process review as specified in the Club's Disciplinary Process.
- 2) Persons under suspension shall refrain from player contact and the use of club equipment and facilities.
- 3) The Rules and Discipline Committee shall handle further discipline and rulings.

SECTION 2: SELECTION OF PLAYERS AND TRAVEL TEAM FORMATION

1) General Eligibility Requirements:

- (a) Age Restriction: Only children under the age of 19 may actively participate as players. A child is under the age of 19 if he or she has not reached the age of 19 prior to August 1st immediately before the start of any seasonal year. A player who reaches 19 years of age during a seasonal year is allowed to compete that seasonal year.
- (b) No Bias or Discrimination: NSC accepts youths without regard to race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or identity, nationality, or financial status.
- (c) Northampton Public Schools: Although not affiliated with the Northampton Public Schools, it is the desire of the NSC to assist with the development of players who may eventually play at Northampton High School or any other team affiliated with Northampton Public Schools. To that end, it is mandatory that 75% of each team's players be students of Northampton Public Schools or be residents of the City of Northampton, which includes the areas known as Northampton, Florence and Leeds, unless insufficient qualified players are available. In addition, Roots Soccer League requires that players from towns with a member club seek a waiver from their home club before joining a club in another town. NSC follows this rule subject to the following exceptions, where warranted:
 - 1) The player's home club does not have an appropriate team for that player;
 - 2) The player is involved in divorce or custody circumstances and at least one parent is a resident of Northampton; or
 - 3) The player is a school choice student at Northampton Public Schools.

2) Travel Team Evaluation Process:

- (a) Evaluations shall be held each spring, but no later than June 15th, to select teams for the fall season. The fall season is the primary season for forming NSC teams and all positions on each team are considered unfilled and available.
- (b) For the spring season, evaluations may be held to select players to fill any open positions on a team roster. The Director of Coaching will work with coaches to fill these openings with players that register for the spring season.
- (c) The final decision on individual player selection and notification to all players who attended an evaluation is the responsibility of the Director of Coaching, subject to Board approval as necessary. Upon request, and only due to scheduling issues whereby a player may not be able to participate in formal evaluations, players may be evaluated by an independent licensed coach or other professional who is approved by the Director of Coaching.
- (d) Players will be selected on the basis of athletic ability, attitude, and the desire to learn, and whether they have parents who are supportive of the NSC program and

philosophies. Only players who have a positive evaluation by the independent personnel are eligible to be offered a roster position. The final decision remains that of the Director of Coaching.

- (e) All communications to prospective players regarding team formation and placement should be through the Director of Coaching, unless expressly authorized by the Director of Coaching, the President or the Board.

3) **Team Formation:**

- (a) **General Rule:** Subject to the exceptions below, the following general guidelines shall apply to team formation: (i) Residence, age (date of birth), and the number of players to be rostered per team must conform to the rules of the league or tournament which the NSC sponsored team has entered; (ii) team formation will only be finally determined based on registration, and not initial invitations; and (iii) the formation of any given team may result in an individual player not being rostered on any team.

(b) **Distribution of Players:**

- (1) **Generally:** The Director of Coaching will review the distribution of registered player's ages with the Registrar to determine the appropriate number of teams to be formed. If there is an abundance of players at any one age level or a lack of players at another, an effort may be made to better distribute the players. This will involve appropriate evaluations, and require approval from any affected players and their parents. This effort cannot be to the detriment of any age group, where possible.

- (2) **Advanced Team Placement:** If any age level above U8 has a number of players equal to those that play at that level on the field, e.g., 7 for 7v7, 9 for 9v9 or 11 for 11v11, who demonstrate a significantly higher level of ability than the other players in the age group, and who could effectively compete and benefit from playing at the D1 level, NSC will form a D1 team. Players not on the D1 team will be combined to form one or two lower division teams (depending on the available number of players). The players on the lower division teams will be comprised of mixed skill levels to create “even” teams.

If there are fewer than the requisite players in this category, players of mixed skill levels will be combined to create “even” teams. These teams will be placed in the same division (usually D2 or D3).

The final determination of ability level will be made by the Director of Coaching with input from all of the coaches for the entire age group. Lower division players will have the opportunity to move between teams in future seasons based on the evaluative process. NSC will make every effort to provide extra support to the lower division teams through selection and training of coaches and direct support from the Director of Coaching.

(c) Individual Player Placement: Players will be placed on the team in the youngest age group at which a team is available for which the player qualifies. Exceptions to this rule shall be made only if:

- (1) the player's parent is the coach of a team adjacent in age to the team for which the player qualifies and no other coach is available for that team;
- (2) if there is only a first division or level team available within an age group, it may be determined that a player is not eligible for that team due to the player's level of skill or ability even if there are roster spots available; or
- (3) The Board in its discretion determines it is necessary to assign a player to a team which is not the youngest age group team for which the player qualifies.

Any exception to this rule must be approved by the President on the recommendation of the Director of Coaching.

(d) Guidelines For When There Are Insufficient Players For A Team Or A Player Cannot Be Rostered:

- (i) Coaches may recruit non-NSC members from Northampton;
- (ii) Coaches may recruit from other area clubs, subject to the other limitations set forth herein;
- (iii) NSC may solicit other clubs for space on their teams;
- (iv) Recommend the player participate on a recreation team for 3rd through 6th graders.

(e) Subject to the provisions above, the final decision as to whether a player is put on the roster for any team will be made by the Board based on the recommendation of the Director of Coaching, which shall be given presumptive approval. NSC recognizes that every season there may not be an appropriate team formed for every child.

SECTION 3: PLAYER REGISTRATION

- 1) All registration materials shall be submitted to, verified and maintained by the Club Registrar.
- 2) The Registrar is responsible for registering teams and players in the league selected by the Executive Board.
- 3) Registration fees will be determined by the Board prior to start of each playing season.

- 4) Registration fees are required for commitment, both by the player to the team, and the club to the player.
- 5) Once registered there are no pro-rates, refunds, or discounts should the player leave the program, miss training sessions, or be unable to play due to injury or moving out of the area, except for the following exceptions, in which case a refund will be issued minus a fee to be determined by the Board:
 - a) If a player is "cut" from a team after evaluations, and there is no other NSC team available for the player to participate on.
 - b) If a player/family moves out of the area before the first practice.
 - c) If a child registers but then develops a life-threatening, or terminal illness, with an accompanying doctors note.
 - d) In the event of the death or disability of the child.
- 6) Each player will be required to submit, either electronically or in hard copy, the following:
 - a) Completed registration form;
 - b) One (1) school or passport type picture, 1 x 1 inch;
 - c) Copy of birth certificate or passport;
 - d) Proof of medical insurance;
 - e) Release of liability - signed by parent/guardian; and
 - f) Acknowledgment of acceptance of Club Policies and Procedures.
- 7) Willfully falsifying a player's date of birth on registration information shall result in the player's suspension for the remainder of the current season. The same shall apply to any player who signs their parent or guardian's name to the registration form or the release of liability form. Collaborating NSC members, if any, shall be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with NSC Discipline procedures.

SECTION 4: PLAYER PARTICIPATION & PLAYING TIME

- 1) Attendance: Players are expected to be present for all practices and all games. Players who miss practices or games due to conflicts with other activities may be penalized at the coach's discretion. Practice sessions are a vital part of the team effort and should be treated as such. In the event of an anticipated absence, either from a practice, or a game, the coach should be notified as far in advance as possible.

- 2) Playing Time: While playing time is important to the development of soccer skills, it is partially determined by a player's ability, attendance at practices, and game and standing situations. A coach shall make all final determinations regarding playing time. That said, for teams U10 and younger, coaches should endeavor to provide equal playing time for each player.

SECTION 5: TOURNAMENTS & INDOOR SOCCER

NSC encourages its teams to participate in various indoor soccer leagues and tournaments. Most events have no league affiliation and are "loosely" run. If a team would like to enter an indoor league or tournament using the NSC name, the following criterion must be met.

- 1) Approval from the Board is required. A written request including associated coaches and manager, a player list, and all associated costs shall be presented to the Board through the President.
- 2) Any per player club fees or dues as determined by the Board must be paid to the club.
- 3) Any league or entry fees shall be paid through the club.
- 4) Teams that are formed shall be open to all players of the NSC.
- 5) General policy as set forth in this policy must be followed.