



HOPEWELL VALLEY SOCCER ASSOCIATION DIVISION 1 (GRADES 1-2) FALL AND SPRING RULES OF COMPETITION (Effective 9/2023)

Our Division 1 rec program is meant to be a transition from the pop up goal games in kindergarten to the small sided 7v7 games in Division 2.

Though we were guided by the rules found in the most recent "FIFA Laws of the Game" manual, we have modified many to make for a positive experience for our children. For reference, the FIFA laws can be found here:

<https://www.ussoccer.com/referee-program/laws-of-the-game>

Players, coaches, and parents are encouraged to use this guide as an instructional tool and reference. Supporting and complimenting players is encouraged. Parents should allow the coaches to coach, the players to play, and the referees to referee, and should act as nothing more and nothing less than a supportive and encouraging audience. Enjoy this soccer season with us.

Division 1 Rules

1. With the addition of a referee for each D1 game, coaches should be on the sidelines, off the field, during Division 1 soccer games. You'll handle the coaching, and please allow our referees (many of whom are new to refereeing) to officiate the game.
2. Parents and spectators should remain on the opposite side of the field from the teams. Coaching is not permitted from the spectator side of the field.
3. Each team will have 6 players on the field (5 field players plus 1 goalie).
4. Goalies should wear pinnies so they stand out from field players.
5. Games will use a size 3 ball.

6. Games will be four 10-minute quarters. There should be a 2-3 minute break between quarters and a 4-5 minute break at halftime. The referee will act as the official timekeeper.
7. There are throw-ins. The referees will stop and instruct the players, as needed, and give them a redo if it's a foul throw. The same player must take the redo – how else will they learn! Coaches should try to rotate so all kids get turns throwing the ball in.
8. There are corner kicks. Referees will stop and instruct the players on both sides, as needed. Coaches should try to rotate so all kids get turns attempting a corner kick.
9. There are goal kicks. On a goal kick, opposing players MUST go back to their half of the field. The referee will stop and instruct the players, as needed. Coaches should try to rotate so all kids get turns attempting a goal kick.
10. Goalie Possession
 - When the goalie is in possession of the ball, opposing players MUST go back to their half of the field. The referee will remind the opposing players to retreat, as needed. Please remind your players to give the opposing team time and room to get the ball out of their half of the field.
 - There is no punting.
 - Goalies can put the ball down and kick it or they can throw the ball to a teammate but they should wait for the other team to retreat.
 - The referee will remind the players on all of the above, as needed.
11. Penalty Kicks are allowed, but only for blatant fouls (intentional handballs, big push, etc). The referee will have total discretion here, and under all circumstances you must respect and honor their decision, in silence. Any other inadvertent fouls (in the referee's discretion) in the penalty area will be moved outside of the penalty area.
12. No slide tackles are allowed. Players will be warned by the referee and repeat offenders may be instructed by the referee to leave the field of play and be substituted, to allow the Coach to further instruct that player on proper on-field conduct.
13. No headers are allowed. If the ball remains on the field of play, the referee will stop play and the opposing team will have an indirect kick from the spot of the offense. If the ball goes out of play, play will re-start as it otherwise would have. If the ball goes into the goal, the re-start will be a goal kick.
14. Referees will be instructed to stop the play if there is any potential for player injury. Please be patient and supportive of the referees with these determinations. For any headshots or banged heads the referee must stop play and check on the player(s). All other players will be asked to take a knee or sit down during any of these stoppages.
15. If any players are overly aggressive, the referee has the discretion to have the player leave the field of play and be substituted, to allow the Coach to further instruct that player on proper on-field conduct. Head coaches should talk to the player and remind them that arms must stay down, no pushing/shoving, etc. If the player continues to be dangerous despite warnings, the Coach should talk to the parent and/or escalate to the Division Coordinator.

16. While there are no actual Offside calls in D1, we do want the kids to begin to grasp the concept. To that end, we ask coaches to be vigilant in reminding players to “stay back”. If there are players who consistently cherry pick or are consistently in a very, very obvious offside position, the referee may remind them too and if they persist, the referee may ask them to be subbed out so their coach can further reinforce and explain the rule.
17. All players should get equal playing time. This is the coach’s responsibility.

Players’ Equipment

League supplied uniform shirts must be worn. Shorts must be gym-type shorts only (no buttons, zippers or snaps allowed). Players that are not properly attired will not be permitted to play.

Shin guards are mandatory and must be worn under, and completely covered by, soccer socks. Shin guard sleeves may be used in addition to, but not in the place of, soccer socks. Cleats are also mandatory. Goalies may wear soft brimmed hats with the Referee’s permission. Cold weather attire may be worn with uniform shirt, shorts and socks showing.

No watches, bracelets, or jewelry will be allowed on players. Earrings are not permitted under any circumstances. No boxer shorts or other articles of clothing worn for adornment will be permitted. Spandex shorts will be permitted under the league provided shorts. Unlike FIFA, the spandex color need not match the color of the shorts.

A player with a hard cast is not permitted to play, no matter what and even if the cast is covered with bubble wrap or otherwise. A player in a soft cast is permitted to play following inspection by both coaches. The determination is final, regardless of the determination in any prior game. Additionally, if during the game either coach or the referee determines that the soft cast is not safe, the player will be asked to leave the game.

A player whose shoelace is untied should immediately step off the field (so they are not struck by an errant ball or player) and re-tie the lace. The coaches should facilitate this as the referee will be focused on the run of play.

Special Note on Eyeglasses:

Parents, please be advised that the State of New Jersey has passed legislation requiring that children participating in certain youth sports, including soccer, who require the use of eyeglasses, must wear glasses that meet certain minimum standards. We recommend that parents review the law (https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2004/PL05/306_.HTM) and consult with their child’s eye doctor or ophthalmologist to determine whether the child’s eyewear meets the statutory requirements. Compliance is to be determined by the parents and will not be made by the Referees. That said, as with any decision regarding a player’s equipment and safety, if the Referee deems that the player’s eyewear will be unsafe to that player or any other player, the referee can deny that player permission to play in the game unless the issue is corrected and the eyewear made safe.

Sportsmanship

Coaches are required to do their best to keep all games balanced. Strategies include:

- moving stronger players to defense and goalie
- encouraging passing
- instructing defenders to stay behind the midline
- lending the opposing team a strong goalie
- removing a player from the field

Score Differential – a team obtaining a five (5) goal lead over an opponent MUST reduce by one (1) player its total number of players on the field until this differential is reduced by the opponent scoring a goal. Subsequent scores by the leading team will be addressed similarly. This is the coach's responsibility.

Other Important Rules

1. The Hopewell Valley Regional School District and/or local community groups have allowed us use of their grounds. The school system has rules regarding the prohibition of firearms, alcohol, and illegal drugs on school grounds. They also forbid dogs being brought onto school grounds. The HVSA adheres to these policies at ALL field locations.
2. Every head coach in Division 1 must possess an NJYS State License or its equivalent issued by the New Jersey Youth Soccer (NJYS) or another USSF-sanctioned organization and all coaches (including assistant or substitute) regardless of Division must participate in the NJYS KidSafe program, and must possess a Concussion Awareness Training Certificate. All coaches are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner, setting a sportsman-like example. All coaches are also required to have participated in the township-mandated background check.
3. The Referees working our D1 games, regardless of their age, are essentially Referees-in-Training. While they have been given training and guidance in game management for this level of play, they have not undergone the more detailed training that traditional certified referees undergo. As such, we expect and require your patience, professionalism, and respect in all interactions with them, regardless of the “heat of the moment” or any other circumstance. The club will have a zero-tolerance policy for any abuse or improper treatment of these referees. Bottom line, you are expected to treat these referees exactly how you would want someone else to treat your child if they were the referee.