



HOPEWELL VALLEY SOCCER ASSOCIATION DIVISIONS 2 & 3 (GRADES 3-8) FALL AND SPRING RULES OF COMPETITION (Effective 5/2024)

All games will be played by the rules as found in the most recent "FIFA Laws of the Game" manual, subject to the revisions and/or additions as found herein. Coaches are expected to familiarize themselves and their players with the official Laws of the Game. Those Laws shall govern play except as modified below. A copy of the laws of the game can be found at:

<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. The Referee, however, is the sole judge of the application and interpretation of the rules during the game. Please extend to our referees due respect as officials of the game and join us in helping all the children have a rewarding soccer season. Help us promote sportsmanship and provide a good example.

Supporting and complimenting players is encouraged. Coaches are reminded that while a "coachable moment" may be used to instruct players, the players will benefit most from appreciative fans and coaches who can wait until practice time to teach. Parents, likewise, should allow the coaches to coach and the players to play and should act as nothing more and nothing less than a supportive and encouraging audience. Enjoy this soccer season with us.

Modifications to the Laws of the Game for HVSA Rec Soccer

Law 2 - The Ball

Division 2 will use size 4 balls, Division 3 will use size 5 balls.

Law 3 - The Number of Players

<u>Division</u>	<u>On Field</u>	<u>Minimum to Start</u>	<u>Minimum to Continue</u>
2B & 2G	7	6	6
3B & 3G	7	6	6

Though we recommend playing 7v7, teams may choose to play 8v8 or 9v9 on the field in any given week. This decision should be based on the number of players present on both teams to maximize playing time. This decision must be agreed upon by both head coaches and communicated to the Referee before the start of the game.

In our fall season, for the purposes of season standings, a team must have the minimum number of players to start a game, "Minimum to Start" and may not continue to play with fewer than the "Minimum to Continue" number of players. If a team does not have enough players, the game will be called a forfeit against that team and recorded as a 0-1 loss (or a 0-0 tie if both teams do not have enough players). There will be no grace period either before or during the game. In both the fall and spring seasons, if one or both teams do not have enough players, the referees and both coaches should work together to allow the players present to use the game time provided. This could mean that teams may share players or may agree to play with less on the field.

There is no limit to the number of substitutions from off the field. Substitutions may be made, by either team, at ANY stoppage in play, with the Referee's permission. Teams should make every effort to substitute from the center line to make it easier for the referee crew to notice and administer substitutions. Players leaving the field of play should exit the field on the team/coaches side of the field, on their team's half of the field.

It is recommended that a player who receives a yellow card be substituted for and not return until the next opportunity for substitution.

Entry onto the field of play by a substitute, trainer, or coach is prohibited without the approval of the Referee.

All players present at the start of the game must play at least 1/2 of the game (including any overtime periods during the fall playoffs/championship). Failure to comply will result in review by the HVSA Board and possible forfeiture of the game or other disciplinary action. The coach may remove a player with regard to disciplinary measure. This could possibly result in a player participating in less than half of the game. If a disciplinary removal occurs the coach MUST report such action to the Division Coordinator within 24 hours.

A disqualified player (red card) must be removed from the field, without substitution, and is ineligible for at least the team's next game.

Only players rostered on the team are eligible to play for the team. If a team is short players and if mutually agreed by both coaches and communicated to the Referee prior to the start of the game, a player rostered on another team in the same division may play for one team. Failure to comply with this will result in forfeiture of the game and review by the HVSA Board.

Law 4 - The Players' Equipment

League supplied uniforms must be worn (shirts and shorts and soccer socks if applicable). Shorts may be substituted with gym-type shorts only (no buttons, zippers or snaps allowed). Players that are not properly attired will not be permitted to play.

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 or pants will be permitted under the league provided shorts. Unlike FIFA, the spandex color need not match the color of the shorts.

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. Spikes (formed sole soccer shoes) and athletic supporters with cups (where applicable), while not mandatory, are highly recommended although sneakers may be worn. Goalies may wear soft brimmed hats with the Referee's permission. Cold weather attire may be worn with shirt, shorts and socks showing. Referees will oversee and approve cold weather changes.

A player with a hard cast is not permitted to play. A player in a soft cast may be permitted to play following inspection by the Referee. The Referee's determination is final, regardless of the determination in any prior game. Additionally, if during the game 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 must immediately cease play, step off the field of play, and re-tie the lace before returning.

A player that has a shoe come off while running or kicking is subject to the following sequence: 1st offense—warning from the official; 2nd offense—yellow card; 3rd offense—red card.

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.

All game-time decisions regarding equipment will be made by the Referee and will be final.

Law 5 – The Referee

It is the preference of the HVSA to operate three-man officiating teams at each match: one Referee and 2 Assistant Referees. HVSA may alternatively utilize two-person teams at certain matches where each such official will operate as a Referee, or one as Center Referee, one as Assistant Referee, and a "Club Linesman" (see Law 6).

The Referee(s) is/are responsible for control of the game and for enforcing the Laws of the Game. The decision of the Referee(s) shall be final.

Note: Discrepancies, protests and/or challenges regarding conduct of the game are to be reported immediately following the match to the Division Coordinator. Examples of items for consideration by the Board: conduct of players, coaching staff and spectators, technical failure on the part of the assigned Referee or Assistant Referees, field condition or any danger to players, coaches, etc.

Law 6 - The Assistant Referee

Where three-person officiating teams are utilized, HVSA will endeavor to provide two Assistant Referees for each match. The Duties of those Assistant Referees are as set forth in FIFA Law 6. In the event fewer than 2 Assistant Referees are present, one or two parent(s) or spectators ("Club Linesmen") may be solicited to assist the Referee. Traditionally, the Referee will make a request for Club Linesmen by asking the coaches of each team to select a parent to assist with those duties. The duties of any "Club Linesmen" are strictly limited to assisting the Referee with determinations regarding whether the whole of the ball has passed out of the field of play. We also may assign certain games utilizing a 2-person Center referee system.

Law 7 - Duration of the Game

Division 2: four 12-minute quarters

Division 3: two 25-minute halves

The break between the first and second halves (or the second and third quarters, where applicable) should be no longer than 5 minutes. The break between the first and second quarters and the third and fourth quarters (where quarters are used) shall be no longer than 3 minutes. In an effort to keep all games on schedule, the Referee has discretion to start the clock if either team is taking too long during that break.

Law 8 - The Start and Restart of Play

Games will start in accordance with division schedules. If a team does not have a sufficient number of players to start the game (see Law 3) a forfeit will be declared and will be scored 1-0.

A coin toss will occur before the game. The Referee will decide which team will "call it in the air". The winner of the coin toss has the option to either select which end to attack or to take the first-half kick-off. If the winner opts to kick-off then the other team decides which end to attack. If the winner instead decides which end to attack, then the other team will take the first-half kick-off.

Where quarters or halves are utilized, ball possession changes at the beginning of each such period. Field direction changes at the half.

For each kick off at the start of a period or after a goal has been scored, each team must stay on its own side of the field and all defending players must remain outside the center circle on their side of the field until the ball is kicked & clearly moves (i.e. it is in play). There is no longer a requirement that it move "forward", only that it be kicked and clearly move. After a goal, the team scored upon will kick off.

A goal can be scored directly from a kickoff.

Sportsmanship

Coaches are required to do their best to keep all games balanced. This includes moving stronger players to defense and goalie, encouraging passing, instructing defenders to stay behind the midline, and instructing forwards and midfielders to drop back on a goal kick to give the weaker team a chance to play the ball out of their end of 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.

Any coach who wins a match by 7 or more goals will be subject to potential suspension of coaching during the current or future seasons.

Additional Rules

1. Head Balls

- a. When a player deliberately strikes the ball using the head in a game, an indirect free kick will be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense for a Dangerous Play unless the ball goes out of bounds directly from the head ball, then the restart is as it would normally be.
- b. If a defending player deliberately strikes the ball with the head in the defending team's own goal area an indirect free kick will be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred.
- c. If an attacking player deliberately strikes the ball with the head in the opponent's goal area an indirect free kick will be awarded and may be taken from anywhere inside the goal area.
- d. If contact with the head is not deliberate, there is no violation and play should continue.

2. Positioning on the sides of the Field

- a. Only players and league approved coaches from both teams shall occupy one side of the field.
- b. The parents and spectators of both teams shall occupy the opposite side of the field.
- c. No parents or spectators may be permitted behind either goal line.
- d. A team shall be permitted to have no more than three (3) coaches on the side with players and coaches.

- e. Each team is to remain on its own half of the center line. No coaches or spectators are permitted to observe the game from that area of the sidelines parallel to the top of the penalty area to the nearest goal line (i.e. all coaches and spectators must remain between the top of the two penalty areas). Coaches, players and spectators should remain at least 5 feet back from the touchline.
 - f. Coaching is not permitted from the spectator side of the field.
3. **SLIDE TACKLES ARE PROHIBITED FOR ALL DIVISIONS.** Slide tackles are considered a Dangerous Play and will result in the Referee awarding an indirect free kick UNLESS contact is made, in which case the Referee will award a direct free kick.
4. Misconduct
- a. It is recommended that a player receiving a yellow card be substituted for, to allow the coach to explain and settle the situation.
 - b. A player receiving a red card shall leave the game (no substitutions) and be ineligible for at least the following game.
 - c. A coach or other team staff individual receiving a red card shall leave the game and be ineligible for at least the following game. A certified assistant coach or qualified parent must assume responsibility or the game shall be forfeited.
 - d. Spectators showing dissent or inappropriate conduct toward the game or officials may be carded with a yellow card caution. If the situation persists, a red card will be issued resulting in said individual being given three (3) minutes to leave the field area (parking lot or street) or a forfeit will result.
 - e. Consequences of red card violations accumulated during a season:
 - i. 1st offense
 - 1. Player: remainder of game + at least one game
 - 2. Coach: remainder of game + at least one game
 - 3. Spectator: remainder of game + standard letter on ideals & sportsmanship
 - ii. 2nd offense
 - 1. Player: remainder of game + at least one game
 - 2. Coach: remainder of game + meeting w/board + one or more game suspension via board vote
 - 3. Spectator: remainder of game + meeting with the board
 - iii. 3rd offense
 - 1. Player: remainder of game + at least one game + meeting w/board (with parents)
 - 2. Coach: remainder of game + meeting w/ board with possible suspension/revocation
 - 3. Spectator: remainder of game + suspension for season letter from board
 - f. Consequences of Physical abuse (any instance) of any individual:
 - i. Player: remainder of game + meeting w/board (with parents) + possible suspension/revocation
 - ii. Coach: meeting w/board, minimum of three year suspension/revocation, possible legal action
 - iii. Spectator: suspension + possible legal action

5. Once play has been started, rainouts or suspensions of play shall be made at the discretion of the Referee. Decisions regarding whether the game will be rescheduled or the result of any such game shall be made by the VP of Rec Soccer.
6. 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.
7. Protests must be initiated, by verbal notification, at the time of the incident, with the Referee, and immediately after the match with the Division Coordinator, followed by written explanation submitted within 48 hours to the Division Coordinator.
8. Every head coach in Divisions 2 and 3 must possess an F license, Grassroots Certificate or its equivalent issued by the New Jersey Youth Soccer (NJYS) or another USSF-sanctioned organization, or a Rutgers Safety Course certificate. 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.

FALL PLAYOFF SEEDING TIEBREAKER RULES

Standings, in the case of a tie, will be determined by comparing the affected teams as follows:

1. head to head (does not apply if the tie involves more than 2 teams); if still tied then
2. fewest goals against; and if still tied
3. coin flip to determine playoff game schedule (trophies will be given to all tied teams) – winner of coin flip will be higher seeded team.

TIE-BREAKER RULES FOR FALL PLAYOFF & CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES

A tie at the end of regulation game time shall be broken as follows:

1. Two five minute overtime periods. A coin toss consistent with the modifications to Law 8 above will be held before the first overtime. Both periods must be played in their entirety (i.e., this is not golden goal). There will be a 3-minute break between these periods. The clock will only be stopped (or stoppage time added) for injuries (and at the Referee's discretion) during overtime. If there is a penalty kick during either overtime period, the team not taking the kick will be able to designate a replacement goalkeeper for the penalty kick. However, that player must remain as the goalkeeper until the next stoppage in play at which time the team may reinstate the prior goalkeeper or continue with that goalkeeper.
2. If the game is still tied after both 5 minute overtime periods, the teams will proceed immediately to Kicks from the Penalty Mark (a shootout). All players from each team who participated in that game (except those who received a red card), including

goalkeepers, will be eligible to participate in the shootout (“Eligible Players”). The shootout will be conducted as follows:

- a. A coin toss will be held, to be called by the visiting (lower seeded) team. The winner of the coin toss has the option to shoot either first or second in the shootout.
- b. The Referee chooses the goal at which the kicks will be taken.
- c. The Referee keeps a record of the kicks being taken.
- d. Subject to the conditions explained below, both teams initially take five kicks.
- e. The kicks are taken alternately by the teams.
- f. If one team has fewer Eligible Players than the other, the team with the greater number of Eligible Players has the option to “Reduce to Equate” and reduce its number of Eligible Players to match that of its opponent. Thus, the minimum number of players required to take a kick before any player on that team can take a second kick shall equal the lesser number of Eligible Players among the two (2) teams.
- g. If, before both teams have taken five kicks, one has scored more goals than the other could score, even if it were to complete its five kicks, no more kicks are taken.
- h. If, after both teams have taken five kicks, both have scored the same number of goals, or have not scored any goals, kicks continue to be taken in the same order until one team has scored a goal more than the other from the same number of kicks. (e.g Team A kicker 6, Team B kicker 6, and then if necessary, Team A kicker 7, Team B kicker 7, and then if necessary continue in that pattern until a winner is declared).
- i. Each kick must be taken by a different player and all Eligible Players (including the goalkeepers) must take a kick before any player on that team can take a second kick.
- j. The order of the shooters may, however, be altered for each time through the lineup (i.e. after all “Eligible Players” for that team have taken their kick).
- k. An Eligible Player may change places with the goalkeeper at any time when kicks from the penalty mark are being taken.
- l. All players, except the player taking the kick and the two goalkeepers, must remain within the center circle or behind the mid- field line.
- m. The goalkeeper who is the team-mate of the kicker must remain on the field of play, outside the penalty area in which the kicks are being taken, on the goal line where it meets the penalty area boundary line.
- n. Unless otherwise stated, the relevant Laws of the Game and International F.A. Board decisions apply when Kicks from the penalty mark are being taken.