2026 NWCC SOCCER LEAGUE RULES

2026 Ref Fees - $50 per ref per game. Each team will pay one ref.
If there is only one ref, the fee will be $80, split between each team playing.

Game Length

- A game consists of two (2) halves. Each half is 25 minutes, for a total time of 50 minutes (for both JV and Varsity games).
- 5 minute halftime between halves.
- There will be a 10 minute forfeit time allowed from scheduled game time. If 10 minutes is observed, a one minute halftime will occur.

Field and Players

- The field size and number of players on the field per team will be the same for both the JV (5th/6th) and Varsity (7th/8th) teams. Due to conference and school constraints, this is typically a smaller field and less players on the field for Varsity teams.
- The field will be between 70-80 yards long by 45-55 yards wide. The goals will be between 6-7 feet high by 18.5-21 feet long.
- Games will be 9 vs. 9. Eight (8) field players and one (1) goalie on the field per team.
- There are no minimum or restrictions on how many boys/girls are on the field at one time.

Uniforms and Equipment

- All cleats worn must be soccer-specific cleats, not baseball or all-purpose cleats.
- All players must wear shin guards.
- No jewelry is allowed.
- If players wear a hooded sweatshirt under their jersey, the hood must be tucked into the jersey.
- A size 4 ball will be used in JV games. A size 5 ball will be used in Varsity games. The home team will need to provide 2 soccer balls for the game.
- All fields should be appropriately lined for game play.
- Each field location, at each goal, must have a Penalty Kick (PK) spot, marked with an X or a circle.

Rules of the Game

- **Offsides will be enforced**. A player is offside if they are in the attacking half and closer to the opposing team's goal line than both the ball and the second-last opponent. The opposing team will then receive an indirect free kick, should a

player in an offside position come into contact with the ball or if they are deemed to become active in a play while their team is in possession of the ball. The offside rule isn't applied directly from a goal kick, throw-in, or corner kick.

- There is no build-out line in JV or Varsity games. No players of the defending team need to wait behind the build out line until the ball has been put back into play.
- The back-pass rule will be enforced in both JV and Varsity games. The back-pass rule prohibits goalkeepers from handling (picking up) the ball after it has been deliberately kicked to them by a teammate. Back-passes with parts of the body other than the foot, are allowed. The penalty for the offence is an indirect free kick. This is awarded from the position where the handling occurred, unless it is within the 6-yard goal area, in which the kick is taken from the point on the 6-yard line closest to the point of the offence.
- **There is no heading the ball in JV games**. If a player deliberately heads the ball, the referee shall award an indirect free kick to the opposing team at the spot of the infraction. There is heading allowed in Varsity games. It is up to the individual team's coaches to decide if their Varsity players will head the ball.
- **There is no slide tackling at either level.**
- Substitutions shall be unlimited in a game. Substitutions may be made, with the consent of the referee, at any stoppage of play.
- Team benches must be located opposite of the spectator area. Spectators are not allowed on the team side.
- Mercy Rule - A team losing by 5 goals may add a player. For each additional goal scored by the leading team, the other team may add another player. When the losing team scores under the mercy rule, a "mercy" player will need to be removed.

<u>Regular Season Scoring/Records</u>

- JV - If at the end of regulation the score is tied, the game will end in a tie.
- Varsity - If at the end of regulation the score is tied, there will be a shootout. There will be a coin flip. The winner of the coin flip will decide if they would like to shoot first or defer. Each team will have 5 PKs with alternate turns. If still tied after 5 turns, each team will be awarded 3 points for a tie.

<u>Playoff Scoring/Records</u>

- JV - There is no postseason for JV teams.
- Varsity - If at the end of regulation the score is tied, there will be an overtime period of two 5 minute sudden death halves. The first team that scores during this overtime wins, and the game is over. If the game is still tied at the end of the 10 minutes, there will be a shootout. There will be a coin flip. The winner of the

coin flip will decide if they would like to shoot first or defer. Each team will have 5 PKs with alternate turns. If still tied after 5 turns, it will move to sudden death PKs with alternate turns. Repeat the process until resolved.

Code of Conduct

- If a player receives two yellow cards or a red card, they must leave the field immediately and cannot return for the remainder of the game. Their team cannot replace the player, and must continue playing with one fewer player for each individual who is sent off. The player who is sent off will also be suspended for the following game.
- If a coach receives two yellow cards or a red card an assistant coach must take over immediately. If there is no assistant coach, a parent will be asked to step in to coach or the game will end in a loss by forfeit. The referee will report the coach to the league coordinator and a one game suspension will occur for that coach.

NWCC Sportsmanship