

# **East Side Soccer League Rules and Regulations 2019**

Member communities:

Dansville  
East Lansing  
Fowlerville  
Haslett  
Holt  
Leslie  
Mason  
Okemos  
Perry  
Stockbridge  
Williamston

Points of Interest:

1. Players must obey league rules and put forth their best effort.
2. Players and spectators must exhibit good sportsmanship, including respect for referees, linesmen, coaches, opposing players, spectators, and fellow teammates.
3. Players are responsible for attending team practices and games. Failure to notify coaches ahead of time may result in loss of playing time.
4. Verbal abuse, offensive language, game interference and/or unruly behavior by players or spectators will not be tolerated.
5. Players and spectators should respect the equipment in a game area by not hanging on goals, climbing nets, etc. This not only ensures long life of equipment but also prevents injuries due to accidents.
6. Remember that this is a training ground for players, coaches, and referees. Please support their efforts in a positive manner.
7. For the health and safety of all participants, please do not bring dogs to the games.

AS A VISITOR, YOU ARE A GUEST  
AS A HOME TEAM, YOU ARE A HOST

## I. ORGANIZATION

The East Side Soccer League (ESSL) is a volunteer organization, comprised of communities in the greater Lansing area offering quality recreation soccer opportunities for youth. The principles of good sportsmanship, team play and equal opportunity are basic to the organization. The East Side Soccer League is dependent upon community support in organizing, coaching, and refereeing. All players, spectators, coaches, referees, and other volunteers must display these principles.

## II. ELIGIBILITY

Participation is open to boys and girls who will have enrolled in grades 2<sup>nd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> when school begins each fall.

## III. REGISTRATION

Registration is held each year before the fall season begins. All players who register during the time limits set each year for open registration are assured a place on the team. Following registration, players will be added to a waiting list and will be placed on a team as spaces become available. Refunds will be granted only if the player withdraws prior to the start of the season.

## IV. TEAM FORMATION

Teams will be formed according to grade. (New 2017-18)

1. Second Grade and Third Grade games will be played on fields with either 6×12 or 6×18 goals. Currently, most community fields have 6×12 goals. However, the new national standards allow either 6×12 or 6×18 goals.
2. Second Grade and Third Grade games will be played 7v7 (instead of 6v6). Each team will have 7 players on the field, including a goalkeeper. If one team has a small roster compared to the other, than the coaches should consider having the larger team loan players to the smaller team so that the game is fair and enjoyable for all of the participants. If both teams have small rosters, the coaches should consider playing with a smaller format, such as 6v6.
3. Fourth Grade games and up will be played 9v9 (instead of 8v8). Each team will have 9 players on the field, including a goalkeeper. If one team has a small roster compared to the other, than the coaches should consider having the larger team loan players to the smaller team so that the game is fair and enjoyable for all of the participants. If both teams have small rosters, the coaches should consider playing with a smaller format, such as 8v8.

Reminders about recent rules changes (past several years)

1. All divisions: Heading the ball is not allowed. A purposeful header shall result in an indirect free kick awarded to the opponent at the spot of the infraction.
2. Second Grade and Third Grade divisions: On a goal kick, the opposing team must drop back behind the mid-field line until the goal kick is taken. At that point, the opposing team may pursue the ball.

If there are a small number of registrations in some grade groups, it might be necessary to combine grades.

Any request for a player to play in an older age group from the above must be made by the parents in writing to the president of ESSL. Requests will be considered only if the following three conditions are present:

1. Players are of the same family;
2. Birth years are consecutive (i.e., 1984-85);
3. It can be verified that the maturation and skill levels are appropriate to compete in the requested division.

Under no circumstances will children younger than grade 3 be allowed to play up. Under special circumstances it may be possible for a child to play in a lower grade league. Request for playing in a lower grade league should be submitted to ESSL President in writing.

Team assignments are governed by the geographic location of the player's residence with a desired maximum of 14 players per team (8 v 8) and 10 players per team (6 v 6). An attempt is first made to place players on teams with members of their elementary school. Teams are restructured each fall with team composition likely to remain the same for spring play. Players on the waiting list will be added to teams for spring play as openings become available.

## V. PLAYING SEASON

The East Side Soccer League plays a split season with games in the fall scheduled from early September through the end of October and games in the spring scheduled from mid-April through late May.

## VI. UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

1. Each player must obtain a community chosen ESSL approved jersey or two ESSL approved T-Shirts. Jerseys are to be reversible with a community wide chosen color and white for the reverse side. Each jersey is to have a screen printed number on the back. T-Shirts will follow the same guideline, one shirt will be a community wide chosen color and the other will be white. Both are to have a screen printed number on the back. The jersey/t-shirt is required for game participation for both fall and spring seasons.
2. Logo front is optional and must have the community name. The entire community will have the same jersey/shirt and is based on the community not the team. Players may not add patches, names, or any other items to their uniforms.
3. The jersey must be visible at all times. Additional clothing may be worn under the official jersey.
4. Regulation soccer shoes, gym shoes or sneakers are permissible. Shoes' soles may have either solid detachable studs, or molded rubber or plastic studs. Studs must be less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch long and have no sharp edges.
5. Referees will check cleats to be sure no metal parts are exposed.
6. Players will not be allowed to wear any jewelry. Referees will check to see that players are not wearing any jewelry of any kind to include watches and plastic hair restraints. Request for an exception to the above rule shall be submitted to the ESSL President in writing or e-mail.
7. Players with rigid casts/splints will not be allowed to play.

## VII. PARTICIPATION

One of the main philosophies supported by ESSL is to give every player the opportunity to play. Players present prior to the start of each game or arriving during the first quarter and in proper uniform shall play at least two quarters of the game. If a player arrives during the

second or third quarter, the player must play a minimum of one quarter. Exceptions to this rule are as follows: 1) A coach suspends players from game participation for unexcused absences from games or practices; 2) A player may also be suspended for unruly or unsportsmanlike conduct or malicious destruction of property. Such suspensions must be reported and approved by the Community Board Member and ESSL president. In all cases the parents should also be notified of the action.

#### VIII. PRACTICE

League teams are limited to three practice hours per week. Coaches are encouraged to devote at least half of each practice to drills on basic skills (i.e., ball handling, passing, shooting, and goal keeping).

#### IX. GAMES – CANCELLATION – POSTPONEMENT

1. A minimum of 6 players for 8v8 and 4 for a (6v 6) small sided shall constitute a team. A game cannot commence or be continued if one or both teams cannot field enough eligible players. Home teams provide the game ball.
2. Soccer games are seldom cancelled. Each team must report to the field as scheduled unless notified by the Community Leader or the ESSL president that the game has been cancelled. This rule applies under all conditions.
3. A game will be cancelled when there is a danger to the players, such as unanchored goals or excessive water on the field.
4. A game will be suspended due to temporary weather conditions, such as hail or high winds. The game will resume when there is no longer a danger to the players.
5. A game will be suspended due to thunder or lightning. The game will resume after no thunder or lightening has occurred for 30 minutes.
6. A game which has been suspended for 45 minutes will be cancelled. Coaches will apply these same rules to practices.
7. Coaches may postpone games only after obtaining permission from the ESSL designated Community Board member. Permission for postponements will be granted only if one coach cannot field a team because of competing scheduled activities and/or holidays. When a postponement has been approved, the coach initiating the request must notify the opposing coach, the chief referee, and the designated Community Board Member and make arrangements to reschedule the game. Should the referee and/or opposing coaches show up without being notified, the team requesting the postponement will forfeit the game.
8. Coaches are encouraged to reschedule forfeited games so that players will have their proper game playing time, even though the rescheduled game will not affect their standings.
9. Games or practices cannot be held without adult supervision (age 18 or over). It is the coach's responsibility to make sure that another adult is present at any scheduled team event if the coach cannot attend.

#### X. PLAYER GUIDELINES

1. Players must be registered to participate in ESSL activities.
2. Players shall obey all league rules and shall put forth their best efforts.
3. All players must show good sportsmanship. This includes respect for the referee, coaches, opposing players, spectators and fellow teammates.
4. All players are responsible for attending scheduled practices and games. Failure to notify your coach when absence is necessary and may result in the loss of game playing time.

5. Verbal abuse, offensive language, game interference or unruly conduct against the referee, linespersons, opposing players or fellow teammates will not be tolerated and may result in the loss of playing time or suspension if a red card is given during a game.
6. Any player yellow carded must leave the game. The player (or substitute) may not re-enter the game until the next stoppage of play.
7. Any player ejected (red-carded) from a game shall be automatically suspended for the next regularly scheduled league game. Further penalties will be determined by the ESSL president after consultation with the referee, community leader, and other involved parties.
8. If a player displays an unwillingness to adhere to these requirements the privileges of playing in the ESSL program may be revoked after consultation with the coach, community leaders and the ESSL president.

#### XI. PARENT OR GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Parents must arrange for transportation to and from games and practices. This is not the responsibility of the coach.
2. Parents should inform the coach of any medical problems (e.g., allergies, asthma, injuries, etc.) that may affect the health and safety of the player.

#### XII. COACHES GUIDELINES

1. The coach is responsible for being knowledgeable about the FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) Laws of the Game and the ESSL modifications.
2. Only two coaches are allowed on the sideline, during the game.
3. Coaches are encouraged to use positive coaching techniques that instruct players in the basic skills and laws of the game and encourage sportsmanship.
4. Coaches are responsible for calling their team together and arranging practices.
5. Coaches are encouraged to devote at least half of each practice session to drills on basic skills.
6. Coaches must make arrangements to have an adult (age 18 or over) at all practices and games.
7. It is the coach's responsibility to complete the Player Accident Report and submit it to the ESSL president for any injury involving a team member.
8. Coaches are to report any malicious destruction of property and equipment to the community representative.
9. Coaches may not add, delete, or transfer players from their assigned team. This is the responsibility of the community representative on the ESSL board.
10. Coaches are asked to display respect for the referees. Introduce yourself before the game. Do not openly dispute calls or show your displeasure to your players or spectators.
11. Coaches are strongly encouraged to attend the educational clinics conducted by the chief coach and chief referee.
12. Repeated violations of coaching conduct, ethics or club rules may result in the loss of coaching privileges.
13. At the conclusion of the game, the team will shake hands.

#### XIII. REFEREE GUIDELINES

1. Referees assigned ESSL games will need to be approved by the chief referee of the community.
2. Referees will wear black or the pennies provided.

3. It is the responsibility of the referee to insure that the game is properly and safely conducted, and to impose the Rules and Regulations of competition as defined by the FIFA Laws of the Game with ESSL modifications as noted in Sections XVII and XVIII.
4. The referee can caution players or coaches (using yellow card) and eject players or coaches (using red card). Infractions will be reported to community representative.
5. The referee has the right to stop the game if warranted by the weather or inappropriate behavior by players, coaches, or spectators is warranted. Referees will report all forfeited, postponed, terminated, or cancelled games to the community leader.
6. If a player is injured, the referee may stop play to insure the welfare of the player, even if the ball has not gone out of play.
7. The referee does not have to explain his or her judgment of a play.
8. Before each game begins, the referee will give instructions and inspect the players and equipment.

#### XIV. SPECTATOR CONDUCT

Spectators should cheer positively and encourage both teams. Leave the coaching to the coaches and the refereeing to the referees.

#### XV. ACCIDENT REIMBURSEMENT

ESSL does not carry accident insurance. Injuries in soccer sometimes occur. Therefore, all players are encouraged to have accident insurance.

#### XVI. LAWS OF THE GAME

The current laws of the game as specified by FIFA will be used in all games with the following modifications as outlined in sections XVII and XX.

#### XVII. ESSL Special Rules for all grades

1. Players with rigid casts or splints will not be allowed to play.
2. Instinctive protection of oneself should not be considered a handball.
3. If a player wishes to register in a community other than their home community, the player must register as an individual. The player will then be added to the player pool of that community and will be subject to the team formation procedures of that community.
4. Teams and coaches are on the team side of the field between the midfield line and the penalty area. Spectators are on the opposite side from the players. At no time is a spectator or coach to be located on or behind the goal line.
5. During game play, all players, coaches and spectators shall remain at least one yard away from the touch line (side line) and shall not occupy the area beyond the goal line (end line).
6. The coaching box, within which coaches may freely move during game play, is defined as the area along the sideline from the top of one goal area (six-yard goal box) to the Mid-field line of the designated team side.

#### XVIII. Special ESSL Rules for Grades 2 and 3

1. The Field –35-45 yards wide by 45-60 yards long. Goals – six feet high by twelve feet wide.
2. Each player must play at least half of each game unless exceptions have been cleared prior to the game

3. No charging of the goalkeeper when he or she has possession of the ball. (Possession is one finger on the ball.)
4. No slide tackling is allowed. An indirect kick shall be awarded to the other team.
5. The ball – Size four.
6. Number of players – Ten per team (optimum). Six against Six with minimum of four players to play the game.
7. Referee – Minimum of one referee, optimum of two per field.
8. Game time – Four 10 minute quarters. Each quarter starts with a kick-off.
9. Off-sides – There is no off-sides rule for grades 2 and 3.
10. Shin Guards are required for games and practices. Hard shin guards must be covered by the player's socks.
11. Teams will be issued goalkeeper jerseys. Goalkeepers must wear a jersey of a color which distinguishes him/her from other players and the referee.
12. Free Kicks – All free kicks are indirect and are taken with the opposing team at least ten yards away from the ball. No free kicks shall be taken by the attacking team within the defending team's goal box.
13. Penalty Kicks – None
14. Throw-in – A second throw-in will be allowed if the player commits a foul on the initial attempt with the referee explaining the proper method before the second attempt is made.
15. Corner Kicks – Opponents must be at least ten yards from the ball.
16. Substitution is from the centerline on any throw in or goal kick.
17. Instinctive protection of oneself should not be considered a handball.
18. (Goal kick only) The opposing team will need to be behind the midfield line until the goal kick is made, at that point the defense can attack the ball. (New 2014 Fall)

#### XIX. Special ESSL Rules for Grades 4 and 5

1. The Field – Rectangular (Min. 45 to Max 55 yards wide) and (Min 70 to Max. 80 yards long).
2. Goals – 7 feet high by 21 feet wide or 8 feet high wide by 24 wide.
3. No charging of the goalkeeper when he of she has possession of the ball. (Possession is one finger on the ball.)
4. Each player must play at least half of each game unless exceptions have been cleared prior to the game
5. No slide tackling is allowed. An indirect kick shall be rewarded to the other team.
6. Substitution is from the centerline on any throw in or goal kick.
7. For intentional handballs within the goal keeper's box, a penalty kick shall be awarded, and a yellow card will be issued to the offending player.
8. The ball – Size four.
9. Number of players – Fourteen per team (optimum). (8) vs (8) with minimum of five players to play the game.
10. Referee – Minimum of 2 referees, optimum of 3 per field.
11. Game time 2 (25) minute halves.
12. Instinctive protection of oneself should not be considered a handball.

#### XX. Special ESSL Rules for Grades 6 through 8

1. The Field – should be (Min 45 to 55 yards wide) and (Min. 70 to 80 yards long)
2. Goals should be (7 feet by 21 feet or 8 feet high by 24 feet wide)
3. No charging of the goalkeeper when he of she has possession of the ball. Possession is one finger on the ball.
4. Each player must play at least half of each game unless exceptions have been cleared prior to the game

5. No slide tackling is allowed. An in-direct kick shall be rewarded to the other team.
6. Substitution is from the centerline on any throw in or goal kick.
7. For intentional handballs within the goal keeper's box, a penalty kick shall be awarded, and a yellow card will be issued to the offending player.
8. The ball – Size five.
9. Number of players – Fourteen per team (optimum). (8) vs (8) with minimum of six players to play the game.
10. Coaching – Teams on one side of the field with one team on each side of the center line. Spectators are on the other side of the field.
11. Referee – Minimum of 2 referees, optimum of 3 per field.
12. Game time 2 (30) minute halves.
13. Instinctive protection of oneself should not be considered a handball.

#### EAST SIDE PARENTAL CODE OF ETHICS

- I will not force my child to participate in sports. However, if involved, will practice commitment and dedication.
- Review the rules with your child and explain why they are important.
- Congratulate your child for playing fairly and trying hard. He will learn the value of honesty and integrity.
- Let coaches coach: Most adults volunteer to coach because they love coaching the sport. Respect the coaches. They are volunteers.
- Congratulate the opponents when they win. Be a good sportsman.
- Thank the coaches, officials, and other volunteers who conducted the event.
- I will never ridicule or yell at my child or other participants for making a mistake or losing a competition. Encourage their effort in private.
- I will emphasize skill development and practices and how they benefit my child over winning.
- I will promote the emotional and physical well being for the athletes ahead of any personal desire I may have for my child to win.
- I will remember that children participate to have fun and that the game is for youth, not adults.\*
- I will learn the rules of the game and the policies of the league. Abide by the code of ethics.
- I (and my guests) will not engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct with any official, coach, player, or parent such as booing and taunting, refusing to shake hands; or using profane language or gestures.
- I will not encourage any behavior or practices that would endanger the health and well being of the athletes.
- I will teach my child to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence. To teach how to resolve any conflicts.
- I will demand that my child treat other players, coaches, officials, and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, color, sex, or ability. Show good sportsmanship.
- I will teach my child that doing ones best is more important than winning, so that my child will never feel defeated by the outcome of a game or his/her performance.
- I will respect the officials and their authority during games and will never question, discuss, or confront coaches at the game field, and will take time to speak with coaches at an agreed upon time and place. This should be done in private and out of earshot of children.
- I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free from drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and I will absolutely refrain from their use at all sports events.
- I will refrain from coaching my child or other players during games and practices, unless I am one of the official coaches of the team. Be a fan, not a parent.



## EAST SIDE COACHES CODE OF ETHICS

- I will place the emotional and physical well being of my players ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will treat each player as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development for the same age group.
- I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for my players.
- I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all my players
- I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my players and Referees.
- I will provide a sports environment for my team that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and I will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- I will be knowledgeable in the rules of each sport that I coach, and I will teach these rules to my players.
- I will use those coaching techniques appropriate for all of the skills that I teach.
- I understand that the EAST SIDE program is a learning program for its players, coaches, parents and referees.
- I will refrain from openly disputing calls or showing your displeasure to your players or the referees.
- I will remember that I am a youth sports coach, and that the game is for children and not the adults.

## EAST SIDE PLAYER CODE OF ETHICS

### RESPECT:

- Know all the rules of their sport. Have respect for the game.
- Respect and cooperate with their coaches, officials, teammates, administrators, opponents, and parents. Players are influenced by their parents' attitude and their coaches' commitment.
- Players should know, understand and honor the commitments that they and their parents have made to coaches, teams, and leagues.
- Respect equipment and playing sites. Do not destroy or steal anything, and properly dispose of any trash.
- Expect to be treated fairly and with respect from all involved.
- Behave properly at away games in other towns. One is representing their team and, more importantly, their town.

### SPORTSMANSHIP:

- Respect for other teams players and coaches. The need to greet/hand shakes at the end of the game.

### INVOLVEMENT:

- Always try their best to be a good player and person interacting with others. Lead by example, both players and coaches.
- Do not show off, talk trash, or taunt anyone (players, referees, coaches).
- Players need to be involved with the game and stay in the designated area for the team next to the coach.

### INFLUENCE:

- It's only a game; play to enjoy the game and to enjoy life.
- Respect team and league rules on the field
- Expect coaches, parents, fans, game officials, and administrators to provide an environment where they can learn their sport, be safe, and have fun.

Excerpts from the National Alliance of Youth Sports (NAYS)