

Downers Grove Park District Youth Soccer
Player, Parent and Coach Manual



Spring 2026

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Dear Players, Parents and Coaches,

Welcome to the Downers Grove Park District Youth soccer program. This manual is intended to serve as a guide to prepare you for the outdoor season. Information regarding policies, rules of play, expectations and code of conduct are detailed within the manual. The success of the youth soccer program is reliant on volunteer coaches, and the Downers Grove Park District greatly appreciates the time, energy and effort you dedicate to the children of our community.

The Park District believes that the most important objective of our program is to give our players, coach and parents positive experience through the game of soccer. Even though this is a recreational soccer league, players will naturally become competitive. As a part of the Downers Grove community, it is the collective responsibility of the Park District staff, parents, players and coaches to create an empowering culture where learning and having fun is the focus of our program, not winning.

Please take a moment to read through all the information in the manual to ensure you are prepared for the season ahead. All soccer resources are provided on our website under the youth soccer page.

On behalf of the Downers Grove Park District, thank you for taking the time to help make this season a success. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns throughout the season. Thank you for your continued support of our youth soccer program.

Sincerely,

Liz Frazier

Liz Frazier
Athletic Supervisor
Downers Grove Park District

Benefits for Participating in Youth Sports

Represents the Downers Grove Park District's PLAY for L.I.F.E. Philosophy

Leadership
Imagination
Fulfillment
Enjoyment

- Developing physical fitness and athletic skills.
- Builds character which enables children to participate in social interactions and builds skills such as teamwork, leadership, and responsibility.
- Teaches discipline.
- Develops a lifetime pattern of regular physical activity.
- Creates positive personal awareness and achievement.

Team Formation

In general, our goal is to keep players from the same school on the same team. Schools may however be split or combined based on enrollment numbers and roster maximums. New teams are created every season, and returning players are not guaranteed the same team from season to season. The following criteria is used to form teams:

1. School Attended
2. Grade
3. **Mutual** Friend Request*
4. Balance of Gender
5. Roster Size
6. *Date Registered*[^]

** A non-mutual friend or coach request will not be guaranteed*

[^] Only used if roster sizes grow too large

Equipment

1. Reversible navy/white Downers Grove Park District jerseys must be worn for games. **They are available at Soccer 2000 (224 Ogden Ave).**
2. Shin Guards must be worn, with soccer socks covering the shin guards.
3. Gym shoes or soccer shoes with molded cleats are required. Baseball, football, track, or golf cleats are not allowed.
4. Goalkeeper jersey must differ in color from both teams on the field.
5. No jewelry of any type is allowed.
 - a. Players who cannot remove jewelry may cover them with bandages for the game
 - b. Medical alert jewelry such as bracelets or necklaces are not considered jewelry but must be secured to the body
6. Players may not participate if wearing a cast of any type.
7. Athletic pants and/or athletic shorts are strongly recommended.
8. Players in need of eyewear during games must wear either sports goggles or have their glasses securely fasten while playing.

Playing Rules- All Levels

1. Only registered Downers Grove Park District soccer players are allowed to play in the league, there shall be no outside players playing on a park district team. If needed, coaches may borrow players from another Downers Grove Park District soccer team that is in the same division.
2. Players should arrive no more than 15 minutes prior to their game, due to limited parking at game sites.
3. Teams may play short-handed by up to two players. Teams are allowed to use players from the opposing team or other teams in the park district if they are short-handed. Under no circumstance may an unregistered player participate in a park district game.
4. If both coaches and the referee agree, the number of players on the field can be altered.
5. There are no time-outs, overtimes, or tiebreakers at all levels.
6. During games, coaches and players occupy one sideline. All parents and other spectators occupy the opposite side of the field.
7. Downers Grove Park District Youth Soccer does not keep standings or records for the awarding of championships. No awards or trophies of any type are awarded.
8. Home team wears WHITE; Away team wears BLUE

*Note: all games are governed by FIFA and U.S. Soccer rules and regulations with local exceptions adopted.

Divisions

Pee Wee – Pre-K – Kindergarten

1. Game duration:
 - a. Pee Wee – four 8 min quarters (3-minute halftime)
 - b. Pre-K & Kindergarten – four 10 min quarters (3-minute halftime)
2. Number of Players: 4v4
 - a. Can play 5v5 if both teams have more than 10 players present at game time; Must be agreed upon by both coaches
3. Ball Size: #3
4. Field size: 20 x 30 yards
5. Substitutions are allowed on the fly
6. There are no offside for this level
7. No penalty kicks
8. Ball out of play on sidelines will result in a kick in
9. Ball out of play on the end lines will result in a corner kick or goal kick depending on which team kick it out
10. Defensive players should be at least 3 yards from the opposing team on all restarts (kick ins, throw ins, goal kicks, corner kicks and free kicks)
11. Slide tackling **will not** be allowed
12. **No goalkeeper is used at this age level**
13. Games are monitored by the coaches. One coach per team is allowed on the field.
14. No intentional heading allowed - Free kick will be given to opposing team

1st – 2nd Grade

1. Game duration: four 12 min quarters (3-minute halftime)
2. Number of Players:
 - a. 1st Grade – 4v4
 - i. Can play 5v5 if both teams have more than 10 players present at game time;
Must be agreed upon by both coaches
 - b. 2nd Grade – 5v5 (or 4v4 if shorthanded)
3. Ball Size: #3
4. Field size:
 - a. 1st Grade – 20 x 30 yards.
 - b. 2nd Grade – 30 x 35 yards
5. Substitutions are allowed on the fly
6. There are no offside for this level
7. No penalty kicks
8. Ball out of play on sidelines will result in a throw in for 1st – 2nd Grade
9. Ball out of play on the end lines will result in a corner kick or goal kick
10. Defensive players should be at least 3 yards from the opposing team on all restarts (throw ins, goal kicks, corner kicks and free kicks)
11. Slide tackling **will not** be allowed
12. **No goalkeeper is used at this age level**
13. Games are monitored by the coaches. One coach per team is allowed on the field.
14. No intentional heading allowed - Free kick will be given to opposing team

3rd – 4th Grade

1. Game duration: two 25 min halves (5-minute halftime)
2. Number of players: 7v7 (6 field players and 1 goalkeeper)
3. Ball size: #4
4. Field size: 40 x 55 yards; Goal size: 6.5 x 18
5. There can be no coaches on the field at this age level
6. Substitutions are unlimited and can occur at any stoppage.
7. Offside will be enforced
8. Legal slide tackling will be enforced
9. Throw-ins: There will be one re-throw for each team
10. Pass back to the GK will be enforced
11. Sportsmanship rule: if a team is up by 3 goals, the opposing team can play with an extra player. Once the lead is less than 3 goals, the extra player must be removed.
12. The build out line will be applied to this division
 - The build out line is used to promote playing the ball out of the back
 - When the GK has the ball, either during the play or from a goal kick, the opposing team should move behind the build out line
 - GK can play the ball right away or once the opposing team is behind the build out line. The GK can pass or throw/roll the ball to a teammate. **NO PUNTING**
 - After the ball is into play by the GK, the opposing team can cross the build out line and play resumes as normal
 - A restart from the GK's hands or goal kick will take place if the opposition infringes inside the build out line
13. Games are officiated by a center referee
14. No intentional heading allowed - Free kick will be given to opposing team

5th – 6th Grade

1. Game duration: two 30 min halves (5-minute halftime)
2. Number of Players: 9v9 (8 field players and 1 goalkeeper)
3. Ball Size: #4
4. Field size: 50 x 75 yards; Goal size: 7 x 21
5. There can be no coaches on the field at this age level
6. Substitutions are unlimited and can occur at any stoppage
7. Offside will be enforced
8. Legal slide tackling will be enforced
9. Legal heading will be allowed
10. Throw-ins: The throw attempt should be legal, or a violation will occur
11. Pass back to the GK will be enforced
12. Games are officiated by at least one referee
13. Sportsmanship rule: if a team is up by 3 goals, the opposing team can play with an extra player. Once the lead is less than 3 goals, the extra player must be removed.

7th – 8th Grade

1. Game duration: two 35 min halves (5-minute halftime)
2. Number of players: 11v11 (10 field players and 1 goalkeeper)
3. Ball Size: #5
4. Field size: 60 x 110; Goal size: 8 x 24
5. There can be no coaches on the field at this age level
6. Substitutions are unlimited and can occur at any stoppage
7. Offside will be enforced
8. Legal slide tackling will be enforced
9. Throw-ins: The throw attempt should be legal, or a violation will occur
10. Pass back to the GK will be enforced
11. Heading the ball will be allowed
12. Games are officiated by at least one referee
13. Sportsmanship rule: if a team is up by 3 goals, the opposing team can play with an extra player. Once the lead is less than 3 goals, the extra player must be removed.

Locations

Game Field Locations:

- Concord Park (Springside & Concord)
- Ebersold Park (5923 Main St)
- McCollum Park (6801 Main St)
- O'Brien Park (6909 S. Dunham Rd)
- Washington Park (835 Prairie Ave)
- Whitlock Park (40th and Fairview)

Game/Practice Cancellation General Information:

Soccer games will be cancelled if excessive rain has caused field conditions to become poor or unsafe in the judgment of the coordinator or referee. The Downers Grove Park District's definition of poor or unsafe field conditions includes:

- Standing water on the field.
- Water surfacing or bubbling up when walking on the field.
- Field muddy to the point that footing becomes unstable.
- Presence of thunder and lightning. The Park District will utilize the Thor Guard lightning predication system.
- Sharp or other dangerous objects on the field.

When games or practice are cancelled by the Park District due to unsuitable field conditions, coaches will be responsible for notifying their teams. Coaches and parents may check the **Soccer Rainout Line # at 630-225-7272 EXT: 18 in the morning after 8:00AM on game days and after 4:00PM during the week. View online, sign up for text and email alerts or use the free app. Subscribe to the DGPD YOUTH SOCCER LEAGUE ONLY. Do not subscribe to individual fields. Go to dgparks.org to subscribe for the rainout line.**

- Soccer games WILL NOT BE CANCELLED due to light rain or sleet, hot or cold temperatures or high winds. Players should be dressed appropriately for the weather conditions that exist.
- Day of Cancellations Due to Weather – Prior to 8:00AM
 - **DGPD Youth Soccer League Rainout Line (630) 225-7272 EXT: 18 or refer to <https://rainoutline.com/search/dnis/6302257272>**
 - Extension 18 – Soccer-DGPD Youth League will be updated no later than 8:00AM each Saturday
 - Families are encourage to sign up for text and email alerts.
- Day of Cancellations Due to Weather – After 8:00AM
 - After 8:00AM, field attendants, referees, Athletic Supervisor and/or the Parks Supervisor on call will make all game cancellation decisions on site at the fields. The Rainout Line will be updated as soon as possible as weather/field conditions change.
 - Teams who are unsure of whether or not a game is cancelled, should show up at the field ready to play, unless told otherwise.

Game Change Request Procedures for Coaches:

- Keep your game changes to a minimum.
- Ask other parents on the team to fill in if you cannot attend games.
- The Park District need at least one week's notification of game change in order to provide a referees for applicable division. Referees for game changes are not guaranteed.
- If a game change needs to be made, please talk to your opponent's coach to figure out the day, time of the rescheduled game.
- Contact the Athletic Supervisor of the program with the necessary game change information. She will then figure out the location of the game and communicate this information with coaches.
- If your opponent needs to cancel, your team can play an inter squad game, the original game should not be cancelled. This allows the schedules to remain the same and teams still get to play.
- If a game is cancelled entirely due to both teams not being able to attend, please notify your teams.

Practice Make Up Request Procedures for Coaches:

- Practice make ups are not guaranteed during the season.
- Coaches must contact the Recreation Supervisor if he or she wishes to make up a cancelled practice.
- Weekday practice make ups will be handled on a case by case basis due to limited field space.

Background Check Policy

The Downers Grove Park District requires all coaches to be subjected to a background check. This is to ensure the safety of our participants. The background check is good for 1 year.

Downer Grove Park District Recreation Center - (630) 960-7250

Recreation Supervisor: Liz Frazier (efrazier@dgparks.org)

Main Website: www.dgparks.org

Soccer Information: <https://www.dgparks.org/youth-soccer>

Important Dates

April 13th: First official week of practice

April 18th: First game of season

May 23rd: No games due to Memorial Day weekend

HAVE A GREAT SEASON!