

Merrimack Valley Soccer League



**MVSL**

For more information, directions and schedules, please visit [www.mvsl.org](http://www.mvsl.org).

## Table of Contents

Section I: General Rules	Page 3
Section II: 3 <sup>rd</sup> /4 <sup>th</sup> Grade: Rule Exceptions	Page 6
Section III: 5 <sup>th</sup> /6 <sup>th</sup> Grade: Rule Exceptions	Page 9
Section IV: 7 <sup>th</sup> /8 <sup>th</sup> Grade: Rule Exceptions	Page 12
Section V: FIFA Disciplinary Sanctions	Page 15
Section VI: SafeKids Program for MVSL	Page 16
Section VII: Volunteer Disclosure Statement	Page 17
Section VIII: Coach Code of Conduct	Page 18
Section IX: Parent Code of Conduct	Page 19
Section X: Gamesmanship	Page 20
Section XI: Insurance Information	Page 21

**Merrimack Valley Soccer League**  
*Section I: General Rules*

Item	Key Points
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Players must play on teams in their home town if their home town has teams in the league. Players may play for other towns if no home town teams are offered, and teams may use players from other towns to fill out rosters.</li> <li>• Teams must be made up of players from grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. Players must play in their correct grade level.</li> <li>• Exceptions to the above must be approved by the League Board.</li> </ul>
Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• League representatives are responsible for obtaining parental permission for player participation.</li> <li>• League representatives are responsible for having all of their volunteers sign the “Disclosure Agreement”.</li> <li>• Each town must show proof of insurance. Every player must be insured.</li> <li>• Towns cannot hold the league, its officials and/or coaches and referees liable for any injuries incurred while involved in the program.</li> </ul>

**FIFA vs. League Rules:** The league will play FIFA rules with the following notes/exceptions:

Item	Key Points
Game Time	<p>Every player must have the opportunity to play a minimum of one full half.</p> <p>The clock may be stopped on goals and when the ball is not available for play. The clock may be stopped for injuries when the injured team has possession of the ball. This is at the discretion of the referee. On weekends many games may be scheduled on the same field so it is best to keep things moving along.</p>
Uniforms	All team uniforms must be the same color and have numbered shirts. Goalkeepers must have a distinctive colored shirt from the other players on his team.
Jewelry	Players will not wear jewelry of any sort including rings, bracelets, or earrings. Taping over earrings including posts is not acceptable and will not prevent the post from being driven into the skin when hit by a ball or another player’s body (i.e. elbow, knee, hand, or foot). This rule is for player protection to prevent physical harm and for everybody’s well-being related to Bloodborne Pathogens and compliance with the Universal Precautions approach to infections control.

**Merrimack Valley Soccer League**  
*Section I: General Rules*

Item	Key Points
Sportsmanship	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Foul language shall be reason for ejection (Red Card), especially if directed at an opposing player or referee.</li> <li>2. A player thrown out of the game (Red Card) may not return, but a substitute may replace him/her.</li> <li>3. Anytime a player receives a Red Card, league officers will decide if s/he is eligible to play in the next game. Both coaches and referee(s) are expected to call one of the league officers to report the infraction. In tournament games, the player will be automatically suspended for the remainder of the tournament.</li> </ol>
Injury	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Any injured player must leave the game (this includes goalies). The player may return on the next eligible substitution. The opposing team may substitute a player.</li> <li>2. Players with open wounds are not eligible to play.</li> <li>3. Shirts with blood must be removed or sprayed with a solution of 5% bleach.</li> <li>4. Each Town/ Program should have their own guidelines of handling injuries. Additional insurance information can be found on the website: <a href="http://www.mvsl.org">www.mvsl.org</a>.</li> </ol>
Concussions	<p><b>All coaches must review the concussion protocol in the handbook for each age division. Any player that sustains a concussion, or is suspected of having a concussion, must have a doctor's note to return to play or practice.</b></p>
Hard Casts	<p>Players with hard casts are eligible to play within certain guidelines:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Player must provide a doctor's note to the home Program Director prior to any play.</li> <li>2. Parents/guardians of the injured player must provide the home Program Director with written permission for their child to play. The written note must include an acknowledgement that the league insurance company will not cover the player should they re-injure or further injure the initial injury during play, and that they understand and accept full responsibility for any additional injury sustained as a result of play.</li> <li>3. Casts must be padded/wrapped completely. Padding/wrapping must be checked prior to the start of the game and periodically throughout the game to insure the padding/wrapping remains intact and that no hard or sharp areas have become exposed.</li> <li>4. Coaches/player must notify referee of the cast before the game so he/she can observe player to be sure they do not use the cast to their advantage, or in a manner dangerous to other players.</li> <li>5. Coaches/referees must instruct player to play conscientiously and make every effort not to contact another player with the cast.</li> </ol>

**Merrimack Valley Soccer League**  
*Section I: General Rules*

Item	Key Points
Make-up Games	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All games should be played as scheduled, except for severe weather conditions (lightning). In the event of severe weather or poor field conditions, the home team will decide whether to play or not.</li> <li>2. When possible make up games should be played on the following Sunday.</li> <li>3. Decisions not to play weekday games should be made by 4:00 pm. Decisions not to play a Saturday game should be made by 11:00 am for grades 3-6 and by 8:00 am for grades 7/8. Program Directors and coaches should be contacted.</li> </ol>
Referees	Home team is responsible for providing qualified referees. Two referees are recommended for each game.
Coaches	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be the best coach you can be, there are many sources available to you. Take a NHSA coaching clinic if available.</li> <li>2. Read a good how-to book or just go watch a game. There are a lot of High School games to see, maybe in your own town.</li> <li>3. Visit a good website such as:   <div style="text-align: center;"> <a href="http://www.soccernh.org">www.soccernh.org</a> <a href="http://www.fifa.com/en/index.html">http://www.fifa.com/en/index.html</a>  <a href="http://usyouthsoccer.org/">http://usyouthsoccer.org/</a> <a href="http://www.granitestatesoccer.com/">http://www.granitestatesoccer.com/</a>  <a href="http://finesoccer.com/index.html">http://finesoccer.com/index.html</a> <a href="http://www.eteamz.com/soccer/pills/jpill.htm">http://www.eteamz.com/soccer/pills/jpill.htm</a> </div> </li> <li>4. Practice is the time for coaching. Let the players have the game.</li> <li>5. Control yourself; don't yell at your players or the referees. They are just trying to do their best.</li> <li>6. Remember your players look to you for a leading example, be the best that you are.</li> <li>7. Game Logs: Coaches in 5/6 and 7/8 divisions must keep a log of game scores for submission to their Program Director in early October. This information will be used to determine tournament placements.</li> </ol>
Spectators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Spectators are limited to being on the side of the field opposite the team bench.</li> <li>2. People (adults and kids) not on the team should not be on or near the team bench area or on the ends of the field.</li> <li>3. Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their players AND their fans.</li> </ol>

**Merrimack Valley Soccer League**  
*Section I: General Rules*

<b>Item</b>	<b>Guideline</b>
Tournaments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. End-of-season tournaments will be held for 5/6 and 7/8 grade divisions ONLY.</li><li>2. The league will determine tournament locations once the season begins. Program Directors will notify their coaches of tournament specifics (e.g., locations, dates and times).</li><li>3. Win-Loss records determine team placement within tournament brackets. There will be up to three different brackets within a grade/division.</li><li>4. Tournaments will follow “Bow Tournament Round Robin” format: Five points for a win, three points for a tie, and one point for each goal up to three additional points per game.</li><li>5. Trophies will be awarded to the first and second place teams in each division. Ribbons are awarded to all tournament participants.</li></ol>

Merrimack Valley Soccer League  
Section II: 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Grade Rule Exceptions

Item	Guideline
Game Format	6 v 6; Depending on team size, coaches can agree to play 5 v 5 or 7 v 7.
Game Duration	2 - 25 minute halves, with a 5 minute half time
Overtime	No
Coin Toss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direction of play will be decided by a coin toss prior to the start of the game.</li> <li>• The visiting team will call the coin (heads or tails) in the air.</li> <li>• The team that wins the coin toss will choose which goal to defend in the first half. The other team will get the ball to start the game.</li> <li>• Kick off will then alternate at the start of the second half. In addition, teams will switch ends.</li> </ul>
Equipment and Uniforms vs. Pinnies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All players must wear shin guards (covered by a sock) and a mouth guard</li> <li>• Soccer cleats only. Cleats may not have a toe cleat/stud. No metal.</li> <li>• If both teams have the same color uniforms, the visiting team must wear pinnies.</li> </ul>
Ball Size	Size #4
Field Set-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 45-60 yards long x 35-45 yards wide (per USYS 6v6)</li> <li>• Side and end lines should be marked.</li> <li>• A clear goalie area should be marked; 6 yards from each goal post and 6 yards deep.</li> <li>• A center circle should be marked; 8 yard radius</li> <li>• Field size should be adjusted for 5 v 5 or 7 v 7 games.</li> <li>• Spectators and teams sit on opposite sides of the field.</li> </ul>
Goal Size	Ranges between 5' – 7' high and 7' – 12' wide
Throw-ins	Yes; players will be given two chances to do a correct throw-in.
Offsides	No
Sliding/ Slide tackles	Not allowed. Sliding and slide tackles will result in an indirect kick.
Substitutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allowed by both teams on any stoppage of play for a ball out of bounds (over end or sideline) and after a goal.</li> <li>• Any player injured, where play is stopped, must be substituted. S/he may re-enter the game at the next appropriate time to substitute.</li> <li>• Any time a player enters a game, s/he must stand at mid-field and wait for the referee to signal him/her into the game.</li> </ul>
Goal Kicks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The kick is taken from a marked line midway between the end line and midfield.</li> <li>• All players on non-kicking team must be no closer than midfield.</li> <li>• <b>The non-kicking team may not cross the midfield line until the ball has crossed, or until a second player from the kicking team touches the ball</b></li> </ul>
Heading	<b>Not allowed.</b> When a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick will be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If the header occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred.

Merrimack Valley Soccer League  
Section II: 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Grade Rule Exceptions

Item	Guideline
Corner Kick	<p>The kick is taken midway between the goal and corner flag.</p> <p><i>This location must be clearly marked and discussed with visiting coach and referee before start of game.</i></p>
Direct Kicks	No; all kicks will be indirect, no closer than 15 yards to the goal.
Indirect Kick	<p><i>The following rules are NOT exceptions but exact rules from FIFA and listed here for informational/reference purposes.</i></p> <p>An indirect kick is awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper, inside his own penalty area, commits any of the following four offences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• controls the ball with his hands for more than six seconds before releasing it from his possession</li> <li>• touches the ball again with his hands after he has released it from his possession and before it has touched another player</li> <li>• touches the ball with his hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him by a team-mate</li> <li>• touches the ball with his hands after he has received it directly from a throw-in taken by a team-mate</li> </ul> <p>An indirect free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if, in the opinion of the referee, a player:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• plays in a dangerous manner</li> <li>• impedes the progress of an opponent</li> <li>• prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands</li> <li>• commits any other offence, not previously mentioned in Law 12, for which play is stopped to caution or send off a player</li> </ul> <p>The indirect free kick is taken from the place where the offence occurred.</p>
Penalty Kicks	<p>No; all kicks will be indirect, no closer than 15 yards to the goal.</p> <p><i>Must be clearly marked and discussed before start of game.</i></p>



**Merrimack Valley Soccer League**  
*Section III: 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Grade Rule Exceptions*

Item	Guideline
Game Format	8 v 8; each team will have a maximum of eight players on the field, including the goalkeeper.  Teams must have a minimum of five players on the field.
Game Duration	2 - 30 minute halves, with a 5 minute half time
Overtime	No
Coin Toss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direction of play will be decided by a coin toss prior to the start of the game.</li> <li>• The visiting team will call the coin (heads or tails) in the air.</li> <li>• The team that wins the coin toss will choose which goal to defend in the first half. The other team will get the ball to start the game.</li> <li>• Kick off will then alternate at the start of the second half. In addition, teams will switch ends.</li> </ul>
Equipment and Uniforms vs. Pinnies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All players must wear shin guards (covered by a sock) and a mouth guard</li> <li>• Soccer cleats only. Cleats may not have a toe cleat/stud. No metal.</li> <li>• If both teams have the same color uniforms, the visiting team must wear pinnies.</li> </ul>
Ball Size	Size #4
Field Set-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 70-80 yards long x 45-55 yards wide (per USYS 8v8)</li> <li>• Side and end lines should be marked.</li> <li>• A clear goal area should be marked; 6 yards from each goal post and 6 yards into field of play.</li> <li>• A clear penalty area should be marked; 14 yards from each goal post, and 14 yards into the field of play</li> <li>• A center circle should be marked; 8 yard radius</li> <li>• Spectators and teams sit on opposite sides of the field.</li> </ul> <p>If the same field is used for 8 v. 8 and 11 v. 11 games, two sets of lines are required. Lines for 8 v. 8 field should be a non-white color (e.g., orange, blue, yellow).</p> <p>Note: Full size goals brought in to the 18 yard line at both ends of a full size field is acceptable. Keep the field size appropriate to the number of players playing (if using less than 8 v 8). It is acceptable to move the goals (and end lines) and sidelines in. Most fields are too big.</p>
Goal Size	6 1/2 to 8' high x 18-24' wide (7' x 21' recommended)
Throw-ins	Yes; players will have one chance to do the thrown-in correctly.
Offsides	Yes; the 5th/6th grade division is where offsides is introduced to league players (i.e., not a rule in 3rd/4th grade division). Given it's a new rule to most players, officials will typically warn players 1-2 times before calling an offside foul.
Sliding/ Slide tackles	Not allowed. Sliding and slide tackles will result in an indirect kick.
Heading	Limited heading in practice. Players should do no more than 15-20 headers per week

Merrimack Valley Soccer League  
Section III: 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Grade Rule Exceptions

Item	Guideline
Substitutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allowed by <b>both teams</b> on a ball out over the end line (goal kick and corner kick) and after a goal.</li> <li>• Allowed by <b>the team in possession</b> (i.e., throwing) on a throw-in. Opposing team is allowed to substitute <b>ONLY IF</b> the team in possession substitutes.</li> <li>• Any player injured, where play is stopped, must be substituted. S/he may re-enter the game at the next appropriate time to substitute. The other team may also substitute one player at this time.</li> <li>• Any time a player enters a game, s/he must stand at mid-field and wait for the referee to signal him/her into the game.</li> </ul>
Goal Kick	The kick is taken on the goal line at the top of the goal area.
Corner Kick	<p>The kick is taken at the intersection of the goal area and the end line, or any marked place between there and the actual corner of the field.</p> <p><i>This location must be clearly marked and discussed with visiting coach and referee before start of game.</i></p>
Direct Kick	<p><i>The following rules are NOT exceptions but exact rules from FIFA and listed here for informational/reference purposes.</i></p> <p>A direct kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following seven offences in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless or using excessive force:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• kicks or attempts to kick an opponent</li> <li>• trips or attempts to trip an opponent</li> <li>• jumps at an opponent</li> <li>• charges an opponent</li> <li>• strikes or attempts to strike an opponent</li> <li>• pushes an opponent</li> <li>• tackles an opponent</li> </ul> <p>A direct kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following three offences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• holds an opponent</li> <li>• spits at an opponent</li> <li>• handles the ball deliberately (except for the goalkeeper within his own penalty area)</li> </ul>

Merrimack Valley Soccer League  
Section III: 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Grade Rule Exceptions

Item	Guideline
Indirect Kick	<p><i>The following rules are NOT exceptions but exact rules from FIFA and listed here for informational/reference purposes.</i></p> <p>An indirect kick is awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper, inside his own penalty area, commits any of the following four offences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• controls the ball with his hands for more than six seconds before releasing it from his possession</li> <li>• touches the ball again with his hands after he has released it from his possession and before it has touched another player</li> <li>• touches the ball with his hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him by a team-mate</li> <li>• touches the ball with his hands after he has received it directly from a throw-in taken by a team-mate</li> </ul> <p>An indirect free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if, in the opinion of the referee, a player:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• plays in a dangerous manner</li> <li>• impedes the progress of an opponent</li> <li>• prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands</li> <li>• commits any other offence, not previously mentioned in Law 12, for which play is stopped to caution or send off a player</li> </ul> <p>The indirect free kick is taken from the place where the offence occurred.</p>
Penalty Kick	<p><i>The following rules are NOT exceptions but exact rules from FIFA and listed here for informational/reference purposes.</i></p> <p>A penalty kick is awarded if any of the above ten offences is committed by a player inside his own penalty area, irrespective of the position of the ball, provided it is in play.</p>

**Merrimack Valley Soccer League**  
*Section IV: 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Grade Rule Exceptions*

Item	Guideline
Game Format	11 v 11; each team will have a maximum of 11 players on the field, including the goalkeeper.
Game Duration	2 - 30 minute halves, with a 5 minute half time
Overtime	No
Coin Toss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direction of play will be decided by a coin toss prior to the start of the game.</li> <li>• The visiting team will call the coin (heads or tails) in the air.</li> <li>• The team that wins the coin toss will choose which goal to defend in the first half. The other team will get the ball to start the game.</li> <li>• Kick off will then alternate at the start of the second half. In addition, teams will switch ends.</li> </ul>
Equipment and Uniforms vs. Pinnies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All players must wear shin guards (covered by a sock) and a mouth guard</li> <li>• Soccer cleats only. Cleats may not have a toe cleat/stud. No metal.</li> <li>• If both teams have the same color uniforms, the visiting team must wear pinnies.</li> </ul>
Ball Size	Size #5
Field Set-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100-130 yards long x 50-100 yards wide</li> <li>• Side and end lines should be marked.</li> <li>• A clear goal area should be marked</li> <li>• Spectators and teams <u>sit on opposite sides</u> of the field.</li> <li>• A center circle should be marked; 10 yard radius</li> </ul> <p>If the same field is used for 8 v. 8 and 11 v. 11 games, two sets of lines are required. Lines for 11 v 11 field should be white.</p>
Goal Size	8' high x 24' wide
Throw-ins	Yes; players will have one chance to do the throw-in correctly.
Offsides	Yes; an offsides foul will result in an indirect kick.
Sliding/ Slide tackles	Not allowed. Sliding and slide tackles will result in an indirect kick.
Heading	Limited heading in practice. Players should do no more than 15-20 headers per week

Merrimack Valley Soccer League  
Section IV: 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Grade Rule Exceptions

Item	Guideline
Substitutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allowed by <b>both teams</b> on a ball out over the end line (goal kick and corner kick) and after a goal.</li> <li>• Allowed by <b>the team in possession</b> (i.e., throwing) on a throw-in. Opposing team is allowed to substitute <b>ONLY IF</b> the team in possession substitutes.</li> <li>• Any player injured, where play is stopped, must be substituted. S/he may re-enter the game at the next appropriate time to substitute. The other team may also substitute one player at this time.</li> </ul> <p>Any time a player enters a game, s/he must stand at mid-field and wait for the referee to signal him/her into the game.</p>
Goal Kicks	The kick is taken on the goal line at the top of the goal area.
Corner Kicks	The kick is taken at the standard location (i.e., actual corner of the field).
Direct Kick	<p><i>The following rules are NOT exceptions but exact rules from FIFA. They are listed here for informational/reference purposes.</i></p> <p>A direct kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following seven offences in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless or using excessive force:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• kicks or attempts to kick an opponent</li> <li>• trips or attempts to trip an opponent</li> <li>• jumps at an opponent</li> <li>• charges an opponent</li> <li>• strikes or attempts to strike an opponent</li> <li>• pushes an opponent</li> <li>• tackles an opponent</li> </ul> <p>A direct kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following three offences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• holds an opponent</li> <li>• spits at an opponent</li> <li>• handles the ball deliberately (except for the goalkeeper within his own penalty area)</li> </ul>

Merrimack Valley Soccer League  
Section IV: 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Grade Rule Exceptions

Item	Guideline
Indirect Kick	<p><i>The following rules are NOT exceptions but exact rules from FIFA. They are listed here for informational/reference purposes.</i></p> <p>An indirect kick is awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper, inside his own penalty area, commits any of the following four offences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• controls the ball with his hands for more than six seconds before releasing it from his possession</li> <li>• touches the ball again with his hands after he has released it from his possession and before it has touched another player</li> <li>• touches the ball with his hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him by a team-mate</li> <li>• touches the ball with his hands after he has received it directly from a throw-in taken by a team-mate</li> </ul> <p>An indirect free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if, in the opinion of the referee, a player:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• plays in a dangerous manner</li> <li>• impedes the progress of an opponent</li> <li>• prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands</li> <li>• commits any other offence, not previously mentioned in Law 12, for which play is stopped to caution or send off a player</li> </ul> <p>The indirect free kick is taken from the place where the offence occurred.</p>
Penalty Kick	<p><i>The following rules are NOT exceptions but exact rules from FIFA. They are listed here for informational/reference purposes.</i></p> <p>A penalty kick is awarded if any of the above ten offences is committed by a player inside his own penalty area, irrespective of the position of the ball, provided it is in play.</p>

**Merrimack Valley Soccer League**  
*Section V: Disciplinary Sanctions (per FIFA Law #12)*  
*Yellow Cards and Red Cards*

The referee has the authority to take disciplinary sanctions from the moment a player enters the field of play until he leaves the field of play after the final whistle.

A player who commits a cautionable or sending-off offence, either on or off the field of play, whether directed towards an opponent, a team-mate, the referee, an assistant referee or any other person, is disciplined according to the nature of the offence committed.

**The Yellow Card = Caution**

The yellow card is used to communicate that a player has been cautioned.

Cautionable Offences

A player is cautioned and shown the yellow card if he commits any of the following seven offences:

- Unsporting behavior
- Dissent by word or action
- Persistent infringement of the Laws of the Game
- Delaying the restart of play
- Failure to respect the required distance when play is restarted with a corner kick, free kick or throw-in
- Entering or re-entering the field of play without the referee's permission
- Deliberately leaving the field of play without the referee's permission

A substitute or substituted player is cautioned if he commits any of the following three offences:

- Unsporting behavior
- Dissent by word or action
- Delaying the restart of play

**The Red Card = Sending-off/ Ejection**

The red card is used to communicate that a player has been sent off the field for the remainder of the game.

**MVSL NOTE: Anytime a player receives a Red Card, league officers will decide if s/he is eligible to play in the next game. Both coaches and referee(s) are expected to call one of the league officers to report the infraction. In tournament games, the player will be automatically suspended for the remainder of the tournament.**

Sending-off Offences

A player, substitute or substituted player is sent off if he commits any of the following seven offences:

- Serious foul play
- Violent conduct
- Spitting at an opponent or any other person
- Denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball (this does not apply to a goalkeeper within his own penalty area)
- Denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent moving towards the player's goal by an offence punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick
- Using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures
- Receiving a second caution in the same match

A player, substitute or substituted player who has been sent off must leave the vicinity of the field of play and the technical area.

**Merrimack Valley Soccer League**  
*Section VI: SafeKids Program for MVSL*

The following constitute the policies of Merrimack Valley Soccer League with regard to awareness and prevention of abuse within our organization.

- Merrimack Valley Soccer League is committed to provide a safe environment and to prevent child abuse and sexual misconduct.
- Merrimack Valley Soccer League will make every reasonable effort to ensure that every person involved in coaching/training a sport activity in our organization will abide by the SafeKids guidelines.
- Merrimack Valley Soccer League will make every reasonable effort to exclude any adult with a legally documented history of child abuse/molestation or any other conviction or record that would bring unnecessary risk to the health and safety of the participants of this organization. Therefore, every person applying for a position as a coach/trainer must complete an Employee Disclosure Statement (see form attached).
- Merrimack Valley Soccer League will take appropriate action on all allegations of child abuse and/or sexual misconduct. All allegations will be reported immediately to the authorities for investigation and Merrimack Valley Soccer League will cooperate fully with any such investigation.

The following represent the preventive measures of our organization with regard to abuse:

- Physical, mental and verbal abuse of any of the participants, coaches, managers, employees or volunteers involved in our sponsored activities is not permitted.
- Inappropriate touching of any kind is forbidden.
- We agree to provide more than one adult working at or overseeing every activity. If a child needs special attention (one-on-one training or an individual meeting), it will be handled with the assistance or presence of another adult.
- Coaches and trainers should not socialize with the participants outside of the sponsored activities of the organization.
- Parents are encouraged to attend sponsored activities.

By signing this statement, I acknowledge that we have adopted this program and have incorporated it into our program guidelines.

<u>/s/ Allan Kingsbury</u>	<u>Chairperson</u>	<u>July 13, 2016</u>
<i>Signature of Insured</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Date</i>



**Merrimack Valley Soccer League**  
*Section VII: Volunteer Disclosure Statement*

To be completed by each employee and volunteer who will have direct contact with youth participants.

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Street Address</b>	
<b>City</b>	
<b>State</b>	
<b>Zip Code</b>	
<b>Social Security #</b>	
<b>Date of Birth</b>	
<b>Driver's License #: State Expiration Date</b>	

1. Background in Youth Sports as Coach, Manager, Official or other type (Add sheet if needed):

<b>Position Held</b>	<b>League/Team Name</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>City/State</b>
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2. Previous Residence(s) for the last five (5) years:

3. Have you ever been convicted of a crime? If yes, please explain. Use add'l sheets if necessary.

By signing this application, I hereby verify that the information provided is true and correct.

I further certify that I understand that the intent of the **Merrimack Valley Soccer League** is to deny a position to anyone convicted of a crime of violence or a crime against another person. I understand and agree that the **Merrimack Valley Soccer League** or its affiliates may, at their sole discretion, decline to accept my application for volunteer or staff services with or without cause.

Signature

Printed Name

Date

**Merrimack Valley Soccer League**  
*Section VIII: Coach Code of Conduct*

I hereby pledge to live up to the:

1. I will place the emotional and physical well being of my players ahead of a personal desire to win.
2. I will treat each player as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development for the same age group.
3. I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for my players.
4. I will support the officials officiating each game, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
5. I will promise to review and practice basic first aid principles needed to treat injuries of my players.
6. I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all my players.
7. I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my players.
8. 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.
9. I will be knowledgeable in the rules of each sport that I coach, and I will teach these rules to my players.
10. I will use those coaching techniques appropriate for all of the skills that I teach.
11. I will remember that I am a youth sports coach, and that the game is for children and not adults.

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**Merrimack Valley Soccer League**  
*Section IX: Parent Code of Conduct:*

I hereby pledge to provide positive support, care, and encouragement for my child participating in youth sports:

1. I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and officials at every game, practice or other youth sports event.
2. I will place the emotional and physical well being of my child ahead of my personal desire to win.
3. I will insist that my child play in a safe and healthy environment.
4. I will require that my child's coach be trained in the responsibilities of being a youth sports coach and that the coach upholds the Coaches' Code of Ethics.
5. I will support coaches and officials working with my child, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
6. I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free from drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
7. I will remember that the game is for youth--not adults.
8. I will do my very best to make youth sports fun for my child.
9. I will ask my child to treat other players, coaches, fans and officials with respect regardless of race, sex, creed, or ability.
10. I will help my child enjoy the youth sports experience by doing whatever I can, such as being a respectful fan, assisting with coaching, or providing transportation.

**Please post this signed agreement on your refrigerator or message board so you can refer to it throughout the season.**

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## **GAMESMENSHP**

1) The key to keeping the score down is recognition by the coach early on. If your team scores a couple of goals early and it is evident that you have a more skilled team you should try to implement a few of these actions.

- \*Start by subbing in players every few minutes
- \*Begin to move players into new positions-(players who do not usually score should be moved up front)
- \*Have your team only take shots from outside the 18 box
- \*Have your team try to score with their opposite foot
- \*Have your team pass 3 or 4 times before you shoot
- \*Only send 3 or 4 players into the offensive zone-(Have your midfielders stay at the center line)
- \*Work the ball to the corners and have them cross it

These are some suggestions that you can use to try to keep the game enjoyable for both teams. Winning by a lopsided score is not fun for either team.

**Merrimack Valley Soccer League**  
*Section XI: Insurance Information*

The Merrimack Valley Soccer League has purchased insurance from Bollinger to cover our athlete's medical and liability concerns.

Coverage extends to all volunteers including coaches, referees and league officials.

The Medical Insurance is a full-excess policy. This means that the claim must first be submitted to any other applicable insurances or health plans first (such as the parent's own medical insurance plan) before being sent to Bollinger for payment. Any remaining balance, or the full amount if no other insurance coverage exists, will be evaluated by Bollinger for payment.

Comprehensive General Liability Insurance provides coverage for all league sports and activities, including games, practices, and scrimmages, as well as related team meetings, banquets and incidental fundraisers. Coverage also extends to coaches, managers and other soccer volunteers.

Sexual Abuse/Molestation Liability coverage requires adherence to the SafeKids Program adopted by the Merrimack Valley Soccer League and included in this handbook.

Directors, coaches and all volunteers shall review and discuss this policy.

The league chairman has a copy of the insurance policy.

Any claims or questions should be immediately directed through the Town's Soccer Director to Allan Kingsbury, Chairman of the Merrimack Valley Soccer League.

Allan Kingsbury  
Merrimack Valley Soccer League, Chairman  
allankingsbury@comcast.net  
848-7211