

BATH PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT
SOCCKER RULES (GRADES 1-6)
2026

OFFICIAL RULES

All games shall be played in accordance with the rules of the United States Youth Soccer Association (USYSA); however Bath Rec. rules shall take precedence in cases of conflict.

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Grade 1/2: (6) players each (No Goalkeeper) (6v6 due to numbers)

Grade 3/4: (7) players each, one of whom shall be the goalkeeper.

Grade 5/6: (8) players each, one of whom shall be the goalkeeper. (8v8 due to numbers)

All player numbers on the field may be adjusted on game day to ensure the game gets played! Discuss this with the opposing team prior to start of the game.

- The goalkeeper shall wear a different color shirt than the uniform color of the players on his/her team; as well as the opposing team.
- The referee shall be notified when a team changes the goalkeeper during a game.
- All teams must meet the minimum requirement for a team to start the game. If a team does not have the minimum number of players to start the game, teams may and should borrow players from the opposing team in order to make an even game. Coaches should ask players to switch teams and should applaud their help and sportsmanship.
- EQUAL PLAYING TIME – Each player must play at least 50% of the game

SUBSTITUTION

Substitutions can be made during ANY stoppage. There is no limit to the number of times a player may enter or leave a game.

Coaches wishing to make substitutions shall notify the referee. The referee may elect not to grant the substitution at a particular time in a game if, in the referee's opinion, substituting by the coach is delaying the game or intended to delay the game, particularly during the closing minutes of a game. Coaches should attempt to keep the games moving and able to be completed within the time allotted for the game and shall conduct their substitutions promptly.

DURATION OF GAMES

The duration of play will be as follows: UPDATED 2024

Grade 1/2: Four 10-Minute Quarters (Running time, 3-minute break between quarters)

Grade 3/4: Two 20-Minute Halves (Running time, 5-minute halftime)

Grade 5/6: Two 25-Minute Halves (Running time, 5-minute halftime). If a game is tied at the end of regulation the game will go to a 5-minute overtime. If still tied after OT the game will result in a tie.

START OF PLAY

At the beginning of the game, the choice of ends or initial kickoff will be decided by coin toss.

The game starts with the kickoff. Ball can go in any direction as long as it moves.

All games shall start at the scheduled time. (Please make sure you tell your team to arrive early on game days).

CONDUCT OF PLAYERS, COACHES AND SPECTATORS

COACHES, SPECTATORS AND PLAYERS SHALL NOT DISPUTE CALLS MADE BY THE REFEREE. Coaches, players, parents or spectators who are verbally abusive to referees, players or each other may be ejected by the referee or site supervisor and will be asked to leave the premises.

If, in the referee's opinion, a player or coach is not conducting himself or herself in a proper manner; such as yelling at the referee, use of profane or abusive language directed at another, display of violent or dangerous play - The player and/or coach shall be given a warning; if another occurrence happens the player and/or coach will be removed from the game.

If the conduct is extremely violent, dangerous and intentional in nature, the referee may eject a player and/or coach without a prior warning. An ejected player and/or coach shall immediately leave the premises.

If play is stopped because a player has been ordered off, the game shall resume by awarding an indirect free kick to the opposing team where play was stopped.

The coach is not otherwise permitted on the field of play during the game, except when an injury has occurred upon signal from the referee or upon obvious serious injury after play has stopped. Coaches must stay in coach's box during play.

Coaches, players and spectators are not allowed behind the goals or goal line. Spectators must remain at least five feet from the sideline for safety purposes. We ask that spectators do not sit or stand on the bench side of the field. Let the coaches coach and the players play.

OFFICIALS

The referee's decision during play shall be final. The referee should communicate all calls made during the game. The referee should explain the call to the younger players. Play shall be stopped for all serious injuries.

Coaches, players and spectators shall not argue or dispute a referee's decision during the game.

QUESTIONS about specific calls should be held until the end of a quarter, half or game and made to the referee in a calm manner. It is not the responsibility of the referee to explain his or her calls during the game or to instruct the coaches on the rules of the game.

The breakdown for referees to be provided per game will be as follow:

Grade 1/2: (Coaches will serve as referees)

Grade 3/4: 1 Referee, 1 Assistant Referee

Grade 5/6: 1 Referee, 2 Assistant Referees

EQUIPMENT

A player shall not use anything that is dangerous to the player or other players.

- No players wearing a cast of any kind on any part of his/her body may participate in a game.
- No metal cleats, boots, or sandals are allowed.
- No jewelry of any kind is allowed (earrings, necklaces, smartwatches, bracelets, etc.; with the exception of medical bracelets)
- All players are required to wear shin guards at all times, for all grade levels.
- Grades 3-6 are required to wear a mouth guard (encouraged for grades 1&2).

For any violation of the above; the player shall be ordered off the field and shall not return without reporting to the referee during substitution to verify that the player's equipment is acceptable and safe.

Team members shall wear the same color shirt, except for the goalie who shall wear a color different from his/her teammates and the opposing team

Both teams shall bring a suitable game ball: Grade 1/2: Size 3 Soccer Ball, Grades 3-6: Size 4 Soccer Ball

SCHEDULING AND INCLIMENT WEATHER

Schedule changes are the responsibility of the Bath Parks & Recreation Department. Cancellations and other scheduling information will be available at www.bathrecreation.com and on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/bathparksandrecreation/

Games will be played whenever possible. Teams should report to the field as scheduled unless otherwise notified. Referees shall immediately cease play in the event of dangerous weather conditions, such as lightning. If the game is halfway through completion, it will be ruled a complete game. If not, an attempt to reschedule the entire game will be made.

If lightning is seen or thunder is heard, games will be stopped immediately.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

In determining if a goal has been scored or if the ball is out of play, the WHOLE BALL must cross the entire line. Same rule applies to the sidelines and endlines. A player can be out of bounds and play the ball if the ball remains in play.

To determine a foul or penalty kick for intentional use of hands, the referee's judgment must be that the handling of the ball was INTENTIONAL and not unavoidable or accidental.

In applying the ADVANTAGE RULE, the referee may refrain from calling a foul if the player fouled or his/her team retains possession of the ball.

A DIRECT FREE KICK means a goal can be scored directly from the kick. The referee shall signal an INDIRECT FREE KICK by raising one arm. When the ball is kicked the referee shall hold the arm up until it has touched another player on either team (this includes the goalkeeper as the 2nd player).

If a team is awarded an indirect free kick the ball must be touched by another player before a goal can be scored. Another player must touch the ball before the kicking player can again touch the ball. Players shall stand 10 yards away from all free kicks. If a foul occurs in the box it will result in a penalty kick (goalie and shooter only).

On THROW-INS, the player must be outside the field of play, not touching the sideline. Penalty is loss of ball, except in 1st and 2nd grade games, where a second attempt is permitted before loss of ball.

The GOALKEEPER is permitted to hold onto the ball for five seconds and must get rid of the ball during that time. Any time taken while recovering balance is not counted. Penalty is INDIRECT free kick at the point of infraction.

In 1st & 2nd grade OFFSIDES shall not be enforced, OFFSIDES will be enforced for grades 3-6. Penalty kicks will be called only when the penalty committed was clearly intentional, to the disadvantage of the other team and clearly prevented a goal from being scored.

A DIRECT FREE KICK is awarded for the following offenses INTENTIONALLY committed:

- Kicking or attempting to kick
- Tripping
- Jumping at
- Charging dangerously or violently
- Charging from behind UNLESS the opponent is obstructing
- Striking or attempting to strike
- Holding
- Pushing
- Handling the ball

An INDIRECT FREE KICK is awarded for the following offenses:

- Playing dangerously (includes kicking above the waist, while on the ground or any other act dangerous to the player or other players on the field).
- Charging fairly, but when the ball is not within playing distance.
- Intentionally obstructing the opponent.
- Obstructing or interfering with the goalkeeper.
- When a goalkeeper holds onto a ball for more than five seconds.
- Players staying “even” with the last defender (assuming the goalkeeper is behind the last defender) will not be considered offside.