

Parent & Coach Guidelines

Shadow Creek & Pearland Soccer

Shadow Creek & Pearland Soccer is a nonprofit organization open to Pearland and all of the greater Houston area.

The Club's focus is on excellence of play and good character. Having fun, building character, and learning how to play the game well is our primary focus, along with winning gracefully and losing with honor.

For our Recreational League (R-League) we do not formally keep score during the games. Most players will keep score, but parents should focus on individual and team achievement goals—dribbling well to open space, around the defense, passing to an open player, making 3 connected passes, helping your teammates by running back on defense, taking an awesome shot on goal, scoring and preventing a score.

There are many achievements in soccer that are worth praising, so if you focus on what was done well during the game and some points of improvement, players will also focus on the positive and improving.

Although soccer is a game with a winner and loser, the United States Soccer Federation officially promotes soccer at the younger ages to be small sided with no score keeping. Although our Club does not keep official scores in the recreational program, our select teams ages 8 and up play in a Houston area competitive league that keeps scores and standings.

We encourage a fast-paced game with few interruptions and maximum participation by everyone. Our focus is on keeping the game fun for kids. The best thing about Shadow Creek & Pearland Soccer is the youth want to keep playing each year because their friends play, teams are balanced, and the positive atmosphere coming from parents on the sideline.

Speaking about the sideline, please remember to keep your chairs 4 feet from the line.
Safety first !

Primary Focus of Parents Should Be Fun

All parents should be familiar with the Club's Coach/Parent/Player Discipline policy at the end of this document. We have worked very hard to create a competitive and fun family atmosphere. This means positive comments only with no yelling at referees or players.

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Play format & Rules

All players must play 50% of each game

U5-U6 = 3 v 3 Ball size: = #3 Kickins instead of throw ins
 U8 = 4 v 4 Ball size: = #3 Throw ins **OR** Kickins
 U10 = 7v 7 Ball size: = #4 Throw ins & Offsides
 U12 = 7 v 7 Ball size: = #4 (or 8v8)
 U16 = 8 v 8 Ball size: = #5 (or 7v7 or 9v9)

- U5-U8 there is no goalkeeper, score keeping, use of hands, or penalty kicks.
- **Parents or coaches are not allowed on the field of play or behind goals.**
- No “parking” players in front of goal. Teams move up field like in basketball.

U5-U6	U8	U10	U12-U16 (intra club)
3v3 play 6 Roster 20x30 field size 4, 8 minute quarters 3 minute half time	4v4 play (5v5) 7 Roster 24x36 field size 4, 10 minute quarters 3 minute half time	7v7 play (or 8v8,9v9) 11 Roster 40x60 field size 2, 25 minute halves 5 minute half time	7v7 play (or 8v8,9v9) 11 or higher Roster 50x70 field size 2, 30 min 5 minute half time

U10-U16: No player can play goalie for more than 50% of the game. Each player must play at least 50% as a non-goalie. This means a goalie that plays the entire 1st half should play on the field the entire 2nd half.

U10-U16: No punts from goalie & Circle Rule: on all goal kicks **& keeper possession** (keeper catches ball), defense must move back to the circle. We encourage coaches to teach your goalie to wait for the defense to back up so the ball can be rolled out to the side near the flags where teammates are waiting to receive the ball and make a pass. This rule is supported by many MLS youth coaches to encourage build up from the back instead of “kick-ball” where the other team usually gets the ball and returns back down the middle to score.

>FIFA rules apply for fouls except all fouls will be direct kicks.

>Guest players: should only be used when a team is short players.

Player Equipment

Parents: each player needs a water bottle and ball for games and practices.

Uniforms: shirt, shorts, and socks are provided by the club.

Shin guards: all players are required to have shin guards. Socks must be worn on the outside and entirely cover the shin guard.

Shoes: cleats are definitely good for traction during wet days, although some kids find them uncomfortable. Turf sport shoes are like running shoes but with a deeper tread. No metal cleats. No sandals. No baseball cleats allowed.

Ball: each player must bring their own ball to each practice.

Water: each player must bring a full water bottle to each practice and game.

Safety: no player may wear equipment dangerous to one's self or others. This includes casts and jewelry.

Earrings are specifically prohibited, including posts for pierced ears. Prescription glasses are permitted.

Team Formation

For the R-League we use a team formation formula.

Gender

Age (grade level)

School

Practice location (FAR East Pearland v West and other)

Ability (Beginner, Good, Very good, Advanced)

Coach

-School: we try to put at least 2 players together from same school but not always possible.

-If a school has a lot of beginners U8 and up, some of those players will be on different teams.

-Ages 4 Pre-K: school is not a factor – we look at practice location instead.

-U5 & U6 coed: we try our best to place at least 2 girls on each coed Pre-K and K team.

- Practice location: we aim to not place FAR East and West Pearland player on the same team. If you register LATE, we cannot guarantee an opening with your location preference.

-Ability is rated by parents during registration-A mix of all levels is ideal.

-COACH: parents indicate if they help head coach or assistant. Each team needs either 1 head or at least one assistant instead of a head coach if at all possible. It's not always possible because of low # of volunteers or other factor.

Priority #1:

Siblings: twins or in siblings in same age group league.

Example siblings on same team: 1st and 2nd grade BOYS will be placed on the same team.

Example siblings NOT on same team: 2nd and 3rd grade –

2nd grade plays U8 4v4 – 3rd grade plays U10 7v7.

We do not recommend moving a sibling up into an older group to be on the same team. Pre-K and Kinder siblings should not be on the same team. Moving 2nd graders into the grade 3&4 league is also usually a big negative. While it's convenient for parents, it's not good for player development. The younger player ends up competing with players 2 years older (U8 & up) and the fun and success is diminished.

Open spots: after teams are announced, you are welcome to recruit neighbors or player school friends for open spots on your team.

Community & Character

Our League atmosphere is community, kindness, and respect. The R-League is competitive with an emphasis on learning and fun. We know that players and parents count the score, but we don't officially keep scores to help keep a chill atmosphere.

Only positive comments from parents and coaches. Give supporting words even after mistakes. Respect referee calls even when they are wrong. If there are consistent problems, send us a message so we can educate and improve the referees.

There is no room for player or parent use of inappropriate language, comments, and behavior to others. We rarely have required a player/parent to drop out of the league. Please review the Club's policy and the end of this document.

Low Roster # Game Day

Vests in the coaching bag can be used to let one team borrow a player from another.

Example, a U8 team A has 3 at game time. Game is 4v4. Team B has 7 players. Team B can send one (or 2) player to team A first half. 2nd half the Team B sends a different player to help Team A 2nd half.

U6 teams with 1 or 2 players can also borrow a player but a practice vest is needed.

Teams should always have their coach bag with game vests either in car or at the field.

Balancing the Game & Adding Extra Player

Use these guidelines when the game is 6-0. Recreational sports is intended to develop player ability, build character, and maximize enjoyment. A 10-0 game is not helpful.

<U8, U10, U12, U16> (Does not apply to U5/U6)

- 1) Weaker team SHOULD add an extra player after 6-0.
- 2) Put your strongest player on defense—focus on passing the ball out to teammates.
- 3) Your strongest player can take a break from play for 10 minutes.
- 4) Who has not scored? Tell your team to help player X & Y to score. Give your weaker players a chance to score and your strong players the challenge to help others.

Sometimes a coach will refuse to play an extra player. Do not penalize your own players by playing with “fewer” players. Stick to the 1-2-3-4 strategy above. If your U8 team is able to pass well, give them a specific goal of 5 passes before scoring.

U5 & U6: A team with 2 strong players can try to play each at a different time but also experiment with putting strong players together on the field so your next group will be mostly weaker players. This will give a chance for the other team to engage more. Give encouragement to dribble and don't worry about the score.

NOTE for U5/U6: scores can be very lopsided as there are some teams with players who do not engage and one good dribbler can score a lot of goal at ease. This is just the nature of Pre-k and Kinder soccer. Competition gets more balanced in U8 league.

Weak Teams Become Stronger Spring Season

Our main focus is to create balanced teams with even skill level for good competition. But balancing is never perfect. With 12 or more teams in an age level there are usually 1 or 2 stronger teams and 1 or 2 weaker teams. We will do our best to remedy weak teams for next season and in some cases during the current season.

--All weak teams will be seeded with advanced players the following season.

Example: Fall White team loses every game.

a) Spring season 7 players return leaving 4 opens spots. If new advanced and very good players register, then 2 advanced and 2 very good players will be added to the team.

b) Spring season 7 players return but no advanced players register and the very good players are not that outstanding. 1) Advanced U8 guest players can be added to your team.

Practices & Coaching

Coaches of all ages consider these super important components of every practice:

- Dribble dribble dribble dribble and shoot at the goal.
- No LINES and No LECTURES.
- Positive encouragement.
- 200 ball touches per player per practice. If < 200, then coaching plan should be improved.

U5 & U6 Coaching

30-40 minute practices should be simple with two parts:

- 1) Fun games: each player uses his or her own ball continuously (20-25 minutes).
- 2) 1v1 & 2v2 challenges.
- 3) Game: let them play, stopping only 1 time to make a point (10-15 minutes).

- fun activities where players learn by using their own ball.
- dribble dribble dribble dribble and shoot at the goal.
- No LINES and No LECTURES.
- Positive encouragement.
- 300 ball touches per player per practice.
- Game time management: see below.

U5-U6 Games: Why does the Club have a "Toss-In" Rule?

#1 reason: to increase playing time. U5-U6 games are 32 minutes, with each player getting only 16 minutes of play. If 2 minutes are spent setting up corner kicks and another 3 minutes for goal kicks and kickins from the sideline each half, that gives each player only 9 minutes of play for the entire game! Referee toss-ins keeps the game moving.

U8 Coaching

- 30% of practice still one player one ball.
- Upgrade to fun games with 2 players 1 ball.
- Pass to your own team members while dribbling toward the goal.
- Shape, defense, head up to see teammates.
- 300 ball touches per player per practice.

U10 & Up Coaching

- Increase skill training and strategy.
- All players move up together on offense and back on defense (like in basketball).
- No gap should exist between defenders and rest of the team.

- Pass BACK to your own team members if you are facing your own goal.
- Shape, defense, head up to see teammates.
- 400 ball touches per player per practice.

Game Strategy: No Players Standing by Goal When Team Has the Ball (offense)

- Primary defensive player is fine, but
 - 1) Rotate players in the defensive role.
 - 2) While on offense, defender plays offense and MOVES to midfield when ball is advanced.
 - Imagine an NBA team playing 4 players up on offense and one player guarding his own goal. That would be silly. Same concept applies to 4v4 soccer and all soccer for that matter.
- High scoring game: if one player has scored a lot of goals, rotate player back to defense to focus on passing ball up to teammates.**

Parent & Coach Comments During Games

Players who hear their name being called constantly while on the field will either 1) tune you out and play the game, or 2) look to the sidelines and stop playing the game. Games are for fun, so best to let them play. Congratulate your child after a great play.

Parents want to cheer for their children—do give praise but avoid CONSTANTLY calling your child's name first and then making a comment. This is not helpful and becomes a distraction.

Good: After a good kick, stop, or shot, "Great shot Jamie!" **Or** "Do that again"
Not Good: "Jamie get the ball," "Jamie get the ball," "Jamie go, Jamie go, go"

Parents need to have fun too, so cheers and praise is exciting, but the best way is to cheer and praise after a goal, when the ball goes out of bounds, or during a break. This also includes the coach! It is the responsibility of the coach to ensure that all comments from the sidelines are positive (including from the coach).

-Coach Comments

Do your coaching during practice and at halftime. One or two coaching points during the game is fine, but constant instructions becomes a negative for players on the field and parents watching.

The best attitude is for the coach to be the manager of fun. Instruction is limited (especially during game days) with 100% positive comments.

Games & Coaching

Points to remember for coaches:

- Positive comments only. Try not to constantly tell players what to do.
- Coaches and other parents are not allowed on the field or behind the goals.
- All players must play at least 50% of each match. Coaches keep track of playing time.
- 4 feet from sideline – Chairs, Coaches, Parents, and Players.
- Coach is responsible to ensure that all comments from the sidelines are positive.

Substitute if a player gets too tired, has lost contact with the game, or is injured.

Substitutions can occur at any break in play (out of bounds, goal, injury) by notifying the referee and calling the players first name. The referee will direct the player to the sideline.

U6 Game duration:	4 (8) minute quarters 2 minute breaks after quarter 1 & 3 5 minute half time
Example game:	9:00 kickoff 9:04 – Substitute 3 new players 9:08 1 st quarter break 9:10 2 nd quarter start Starting players return 9:14 – Substitute 3 new players 9:18 Half-time 9:23 kickoff 2 nd half 9:31 3 rd quarter break 9:33 4 th quarter start 9:41 End

Rainouts

Heavy rain Friday and/or Saturday morning “might” require a rainout.

If there is a rainout, an email will be sent to all by 7:30 am Saturday morning.

If there is a rainout, that week’s game will be scheduled for the 1st open rainout date.

Raining but no thunder?

If it’s light rain, games will be played.

If it’s medium rain with already two rainouts, games will be played.

Thunder & lightning? If you can see lightning and hear thunder after counting to 30, everyone must leave the field and seek protection. Play can resume 30 minutes after the last thunder. If thunder continues longer than 30 minutes during scheduled game time, games will be canceled.

Everyone must leave the field if there is thunder/lightning. Remaining on the field may result in death, which has recently happened to one Houston soccer parent.

Parents & Coaches Comments to Referees

Parents and Parent coaches must refrain from complaining out load about referee calls. All referees will make some mistakes, and as the Club employs youth from the Shadow Creek area, they are likely to miss some calls. It is your responsibility to keep a positive speech environment.

If a Parent, Coach, or Player outburst involves abusive language to a referee, another player, or another parent or coach, games suspension will result with possible season or club ban. Please review at the end of this document the Houston Youth Soccer Association Coach & Parent Progressive Discipline System & Shadow Creek Soccer Club Discipline Rules.

Referees who feel verbally threatened have been asked to warn the team's coach and inform Board members immediately. Parents or players who consistently harass a referee can be red carded and required to leave the fields.

<Frequently Asked Questions>

¿When and where are practices?

¿My team cannot agree on a practice day and time, can we switch teams or get a refund?

¿Who will coach our team?

¿What if no parent can coach our team?

¿When and how do we get uniforms?

-Practice field notes-

-Equipment-

¿What size soccer ball per age?

¿After Team Assignments, then what?

¿When and where are practices?

First team meeting is decided by team parents. The location, date, and time is decided by your team. At your meeting you will need to conference with your team parents and decide on practices times. See <Practice field notes> below.

¿My team cannot agree on a practice day and time, can we switch teams or get a refund?

Switching teams or refunds are not allowed. Everyone needs to negotiate the best practice day/time for all. It may be best to meet in person to discuss. Compromise is essential. If you only have one day free, it may not be possible to secure the day you want. If no compromise can be found, a solution could be to practice on Sunday afternoons/evening or to hold 2 practices per week so everyone can make at least 1.

¿Who will coach our team?

Coaches and assistant coaches are decided and drawn from team parents. You will need to conference with your team to decide who will coach and assist.

¿What if no parent can coach our team?

If no one volunteers, decide by lottery. Kids will not enjoy the sport without some practice and leadership. Or, designate one parent to coach per week, but keep the practice time the same each week.

¿When and how do we get uniforms?

Only team coaches or representatives will come to collect uniforms at the time announced above. If no one from your team collects the uniforms, the uniforms will be available on the field at your first game, so make sure you arrive 15 minutes early and each player wears black shorts (and has shin guards)

<Practice field notes>

Pearland has many open parks and greenspaces. Your player's school yard is a public green space. York, Wilder, Shirley Brothers, Nolan Ryan are all Shadow Creek neighborhood green spaces. South Gate Park, Sunrise Creek, retention pond fields, Westside even center, and any public field in Pearland or surrounding community that is not reserved.

<Equipment>

- Pair of small goals for practice, colored vests, cones, and first aid kit.
- Coaching DVD & Positive Team Parenting video link.
- Uniforms: shirt, shorts, socks
- Equipment not provided: soccer ball, shin guards, turf shoes or cleats, water bottle.

¿What size soccer ball per age?

U5/U6/U8 = size 3

U10/U12U = size 4

U14 = size 5 (adult)

¿After Team Assignments, then what?

1) One team parent needs to create an email distribution list of all team parents. Send an email to your team with a simple table (Excel or other spreadsheet seems to paste best into email).

Hunter U8						
Player	M	T	W	Th	Fr	Sun
1	5-7:30	5-7:30	5:30-7:30	5:30-7:30	X	3--7
2	5:30-7:30	x	5:30-7:30	x		
3	5:30-7:30	5:30-7:30	5:30-7:30	5:30-7:30	5:30-7:30	3--7
4	yes	yes	x	yes		
5	NA	5:30-6:30	5:30-7:30	5:30-7:30	NA	NA
6	5:30-7:30	5:30-7:30	5:30-7:30	5:30-7:30	5:30-7:30	3--4:30
7	5:00-7:00	5:00-7:00	5:00-7:00	5:00-7:00	NA	NA

a) Which days and times are best for practice. Each parent should list ALL times available.

If your team cannot agree on one day, you may have to hold two practices or try Sunday afternoons. Changing teams is not possible, so teams have work it out.

b) Practice location. York, Wilder, Kingsley playground field, South Gate Park (south from Aldi), Sunrise Creek, retention pond field (field across from tennis courts), any shadow creek field you can find, Westside even center, or any public field in Pearland or surrounding community that is not reserved.

c) Select one parent head coach and one assistant coach (spring teams may or may not have a returning coach).

Be considerate of each family’s schedule limitations when deciding as a group your practice times.

NOTE: Most teams don't practice until the week before the first game. Many people will be out of town during spring break and laborday. If you can't get an email response, try calling a team member by phone.

Coach, Parent, Player Discipline Policies & Procedures

Referees have the authority and are expected to warn Coaches of coach or parent/spectator unacceptable behavior.

1. The coach is responsible for player and spectator behavior coming from the team's sideline.
2. Referee has the authority to end a game early.
3. Entering the field of play without the permission of the referee is not allowed.

Even in a recreation league, it is understandable that emotions and excitement may bring outbursts from players, coaches, or parents, and it may be tempting to complain from the sidelines to the referee.

Repeated complaints are not allowed. The Club encourages the referee to warn the coach.

Shadow Creek – Pearland Soccer Club member at any in-house, HYSA, or STYSA event

If there is an outburst that contains verbal abusive or threatening language to a referee, another player, or another parent or coach, these rules will apply:

-Verbal abuse by a player is automatic minimum 2 game suspension.

-Continuous abusive language after a warning from the referee during a game by a coach/parent/player can result possible in an entire season or club ban.

-2nd time offense for abusive language will result in automatic entire season ban and possible club ban.

-1st time offense of entering the field and refusal to leave the field will result in immediate end of game and a minimum 2 game suspension of coach/parent/player.

-1st time offense of entering the field and "physical assault" of players or other team parents will result in immediate end of game and entire season and club ban.

Coaches, Parents, and Players will be given due process.

Coaches are required to maintain control of their players and the team's fans on the sideline.

A coach or an assistant coach may be cautioned and / or ejected by a referee for the misconduct of a fan of the team which he / she coaches.

Ejections resulting from violent conduct including but not limited to the aggression of a player towards an opponent with clearly no intent to play the ball; fighting, hitting or punching will result in a two (2) game suspension.

Team suspensions will be considered for situations including but not limited to any coach, player, substitute or spectator entering a fight in progress or committing an action resulting in law enforcement being called, or entering the field of play without the permission of the referee to participate in an altercation.