

## ERIE PREMIER SPORTS - Friday Night Rec-Social Soccer

(Revised 3/15/21)

Welcome to Erie Premier Sports Friday Night Rec-Social Soccer. This league is truly unique to the Erie area as it is the only league that limits both player and team strength and emphasizes fun and fitness over winning and competition. As such, we don't have standings, or have playoffs. Additionally, there are several rules in place designed to minimize injuries and ensure fun for all. These rules are listed below:

### THE LEAGUE – GENERALLY

**Teams:** Teams consist of 5 field players plus a goalkeeper. At least two of the field players must be female. The goalkeeper is gender neutral.

**Score:** As this is a non-competitive league there are no team standings and no playoffs. However, if a team is leading by 5 or more goals, they must remove a player until the score differently is back to 4.

**Equipment:** Soccer shoes (cleats, turf, or indoor) are encouraged. Gym shoes are also acceptable. No other shoes (boots, football cleats, etc.) are permitted. Shin guards are encouraged but not required.

**Eyeglasses:** A player wearing eyeglasses is at risk of serious injury if a ball strikes the player in the face. As such, sunglasses are not permitted. If a player insists on wearing prescription glasses during play, they assume all risk of injury resulting from wearing eyeglasses.

**Game Times:** Games consist of two 25 minute halves with a 2 minute halftime. For the Fall, Winter, and Spring sessions, games are played indoors and times are 6:40, 7:40, 8:40, and 9:40. A 10:40 game will be played if there are more than 8 teams in the league. Summer outdoor games will be scheduled with times agreed on by captains.

### ROSTER RULES

**Players:** All players must be at least 15 years of age or older. Players under the age of 18 must have their roster signed by a parent/guardian. Proof of age may be required. As this is a recreation-social league, players with advanced skill or competitive attitudes are not permitted in the league. The league director can ask a player to stop playing and it's the captains' responsibility to reimburse their player. Factors to be considered include foot skills, speed, physical style, competitive attitude, the make-up of the rest of the player's team, etc.

**Team Shirts:** Captains must pick their team color prior to the first game. All players on their team should make every effort to wear a shirt that is substantially the team color. While some variations are acceptable, and occasionally forgetting a shirt is understandable, players should avoid wearing striped shirts or shirts that may confuse the referee or players from the other team. Always forgetting your shirt is unacceptable. Goalies must wear a shirt color that is different than their own team color and the opposing team.

**Roster management:** Captains are expected to manage player and team strength. The league director has sole discretion to remove any player or league inconsistent with the intention of the league. In addition to regular team members, captains are encouraged to have subs on standby whom can be called when needed. Subs should on the same level of play as the absent player as to avoid claims of "stacking." All players must sign the roster waiver. Each team should submit their completed roster by the second game of the session. Captains are responsible for having new/substitute players sign the roster prior to the start of the game. Failure to do so will result in the player being ineligible to play the remainder of that game.

**Players on multiple teams:** Players should not be on the roster of more than one team. If a captain knows in advance that players are needed and no players on his/her roster are available, the captain should try to contact a player from the "approved sub" list which will be provided early in the session. If a player is still needed, a captain may ask a player from another team but MUST get permission from the captain of the opposing team **before** the game begins. Try avoiding putting the other captain in a "I guess/no win" situation. Failure to get this permission will result in the player being ineligible to play during that game. A team cannot ask a guy to sub if they have 5 guys on already present.

● **Goalkeeper Exception:** A player may be on two rosters as a goalkeeper. The player must play as goalkeeper on both teams at all times.

## **BALL OUT-OF-PLAY RULES**

**Bringing a ball back into play:** When a ball goes out of play, it will be brought back into play with a throw-in. Proper technique must be followed, team captains are responsible for letting their teammates know the proper technique of a throw-in (Both feet on the ground, ball goes behind the head and then forward, both feet behind/on the line). Only exception could be against the net on the entrance side, at least one foot needs to be behind /on the line. This should not be abused, but as a courtesy due to the lack of space.

**Indirect kicks:** All balls are brought into play with an indirect kick OFF THE PLAYER'S OWN TEAM. This includes fouls, corners, dangerous plays, hitting the ceiling, etc. Scenario: A indirect free kick on the dot must be touched by two players on the attacking team to score a goal. The purpose of this rule is to discourage kicking the ball excessively hard at the goalie or defenders in front of the goal. An indirect goal not touched by two players on the same team will result in a goal kick.

**Stand back:** When the ball is brought back into play with a kick-in (foul/net), opposing players must stand back at least 10 **feet** from the player kicking the ball back into play. For a corner kick, an opposing player cannot be outside the box on the ball side to allow space. When the ball is kicked in from the dot outside the goal box, opposing players must stand back 3 feet inside the box **OR 10 feet outside the box**. "Excessive power kicks" are not allowed to thread the needle, severe contact could result in a card. (See next page)

## **DURING PLAY RULES**

**Goalie playing the field:** The goalie cannot carry (dribble) the ball outside of his/her own goal box under pressure. Outside of his/her own goal box, the goalie is allowed to receive the ball, but may only take enough touches (1-2) to pass or clear the ball. The goalie is not permitted to carry the ball down the field. The goalie can never leave his/her own quarter of the field (Half of their half). Goalies also cannot go "cleats first" into a tackle to save a ball. Goalies should not try to create a "mesh point" on the outside of the box to attempt a save with their body/hands, but can one touch clear a ball between the dot and edge of box (with no body contact). Goalies should not also challenge or contest a ball outside of the box, which includes pressuring an open player or attempting to win a 50/50 ball. Violations will result in the opposing team gaining possession at the spot where the violation is called.

**Substitutions:** Substitutions are "on the fly." The player coming off the field must be reasonably near the player coming on the field. If this rule gets abused once, the referee will require the guilty team to only sub at mid-field during stoppages, brought on the by the referee. This includes players just subbing off being involved in the play immediately.

**Goalie Ball:** The ball will be given to the goalie whenever the goalie has "reasonable" possession of the ball. This rule is intended to protect the goalie. One hand on top of the ball constitutes as "reasonable." If the referee feels there will be contact with the goalie, a whistle will be blown to avoid injury.

**Handballs:** A handball foul will only be called if contact with the ball is intentional or if it gives the player or his/her team the advantage. A ref will not call a handball if a ball is kicked in the air and strikes another player's arms/hands while at that player's sides (natural position) and no advantage is acquired. Players are also permitted to protect their face and torso with their hands/arms without a handball being called (as long as the hand/arm is not outstretched from the body.)

**Swearing:** The league is intended to be fun and children may be nearby. Swearing (in any language) should be avoided and can be considered a foul or in a player being carded.

**50/50 Balls:** It is highly suggested to limit the play on 50/50 balls. We are not looking to challenge the ball in the air with body contact. There is also no need to body someone off of the ball to gain possession. There is no reason to put your hand to "check" your opponent. Creating a challenge to steal the ball from behind or side is highly opposed and should be avoided at all cost. We also need to be very aware that many of our players in the league may not be able to "stop on a dime", so stepping in front of a player to shield could be unsafe. If you are unsure that you are going to win the ball, backing off and playing defense is highly suggested. The player creating contact will be called for a foul.

**Dribbling:** If you are looking to dribble the ball through the rest of your opponent, this is probably not the league for you. The purpose of this league is to have a non-competitive league that new, returning, or older players can feel comfortable. Beating multiple people on the dribble only builds tension and creates unnecessary aggression that could result in a higher level of aggressiveness that we are not trying to achieve. We highly suggest passing to **all** teammates on the field and trying to move the ball up field with possession verses dribbling through the team. If you feel you are getting fouled a lot when going around someone, this is probably your sign you are dribbling too much.

## DANGEROUS PLAY RULES

In addition to the usual dangerous play rules, additional rules are in place to minimize the risk of injury.

If any of these fouls are called, the opposing team is awarded possession of the ball at the location where the foul occurred.

**Sliding:** Sliding is not allowed, even when no other players are around. This rule includes all instances of slipping, tripping, etc. Intent is not a requirement as players are expected to maintain control of their speed and body so that they stay on their feet in an upright position. If a player is on the ground, the whistle may be blown for safety.

**Knee to Ground:** A player should make every effort not to “lower their body center” to make a play on the ball. If you are going for a header, your knee should not touch the ground. If one or both knees touch the ground during a header you will be called for “going to the ground” just as above in the “sliding” section. This is for your protection.

**Goalkeeper Sliding:** Goalkeepers are not permitted to slide feet first when coming out to save a ball. The goalie is allowed to dive to save the ball while trying to avoid contact.

**High Kicks:** High kicks are prohibited, even when no players are nearby. This is defined as **ANY** kick that goes above your waistline. This also includes heels behind your back.

**Excessive Force Kicks:** Kicking the ball excessively hard is prohibited. The referee will make this call based on the force of the kick, the people in front of the ball, etc. This does not mean that every hard kick that is stepped in front of is “excessive” but trying to “thread the needle” is not necessary. It is also not “automatically” a hard shot that will be called if it is shot outside the box and the defender chooses to step in front of it and is hit by the shot. Excessive force or hard inside the box is highly inappropriate and will be called – this is to protect the keeper. As this is very difficult to call, the effort to avoid this is both on the shooter and the defender.

**Body Contact:** Pushing, bumping, etc. should be avoided. Going in “shoulder to shoulder” or even using your arm as an “arm bar” to slow down your opponent or the use of the arms for leverage or to unbalance an opposing player is considered a foul. In addition, players should avoid defending by kicking at ankles or pushing against other players. Rather, dropping back and defending is encouraged. On offense, the dribbler should air on the side of passing versus dribbling to avoid contact with the defender.

## REFEREE DISCRETION AND FOULS

**Arguing with the Referee:** Our referees are here to just help manage the game, not call the World Cup. To make the league affordable, they are paid much less than typical referees. Please keep this in mind before they decide to contest a call or lack of call. It is highly suggested the two teams play a “recreational” game and “self police” the calls in the game (out of bounds/fouls/handballs, etc) as this keeps the spirit and friendliness of the game. Additionally, keep in mind that all rules will be enforced with player safety as the ultimate goal. Arguing with the referee will not be tolerated. Red cards are likely if the league director has to get involved. Continual issues could result in denial of play.

**Disputing Calls:** The referee will not change a call based on argument from a player (see above rule “Arguing with the Referee”). The exception is if a player makes a call against him or herself or against his or her own team. This is consistent with being a “good sport.” Arguing with the other team should be avoided at all cost including escalating events.

**Yellow Card:** The player must come off the field for at least 2 minutes, but the length is referee discretion. A substitute is up to the referee based on the severity of the play.

**Red Card:** The player must leave the game and leave the facility/field area

**Two Yellow Cards:** Equivalent of a red card.

**Game Forfeiture:** The game will be forfeited without refund or possibility of rescheduling if the referee or the league director determine that players lose their temper or engage in behaviors that demonstrate a high risk of confrontation or injury.

## SUMMARY

It cannot be stressed enough: This league is about all players having fun and player safety. We all want to go to work the next day. Every player should walk on the field intending to be a good sport and just enjoying playing the game with your opponents and teammates. Keep this in mind when you choose to dribble versus passing to **ALL** your teammates, go into a 50/50 ball, before arguing with a ref, etc. This is a social league. Talk to your teammates. Talk to your opponents. Talk to the ref. Again, just have fun.