



Swedesboro-Woolwich Soccer Association

Handbook (rev 2020 v2)

Board Members

- ❖ Terms are for 3 years
 - Names are entered in Oct
 - Voting occurs in Nov
 - Dec new positions go live

Member	Primary Role	Additional Role
Jeff Bonapfel	President	Director of Coaching / Training Coordinator / Rec Coordinator
Michael Verdi	Vice President	Micro Coordinator
Casey Gregory	Secretary	Boys & Girls Coordinator
Alicia Newton	Treasurer	
David Capozzolo	Fields & Equipment	Co-Travel Coordinator
Chris Lewis	Co-Travel Coordinator	Ref Coordinator
Bryan Verdi	Co-Registrar	Assistant Micro Coordinator
Chris Cavaliero	Co-Registrar	
Paul Glowiak	Media / Communication	Fundraising

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****Please Note: This handbook is designed to give valuable information about the Swedesboro-Woolwich Soccer Program. It is meant to lay out the foundation of our program, answer commonly asked questions, and address typical scenarios. This handbook tries to account for all items and scenarios however if a specific item or scenario does arise and falls outside of the scope listed below, the board officials will discuss next steps along with the solution. The handbook will also be updated as deemed necessary by the board.*

We thank the SWSA Community for their commitment and dedication to making our soccer program the best it can be.

Our Commitment

Mission Statement

Our mission is to promote the game of soccer for the children of Swedesboro, Woolwich, and local communities; to teach the players to enjoy the game while learning good sportsmanship, team play, and overall life skills.

Philosophy & Core Values

Children participate in soccer to have fun and to learn and play the game of soccer. SWSA is focused on fostering and promoting interest in the game of soccer to all of our members. We believe in teaching the techniques of the game through a variety of fun games and drills where players have as much contact with a ball as possible.

Healthy competition is good and players must learn to be humble winners as well as gracious losers. Players, coaches, and parents are expected to show and teach proper sportsmanship regardless of the situation.

Soccer is an excellent opportunity for a player to learn what it means to be part of a team. It is fundamental to any team sport that players support each other while striving to achieve a common goal.

We recognize that some families view soccer as a game and others view it as a sport. Our program is designed to offer a competitive as well as a recreational aspect to it.

Our goal is for players to establish a solid foundation of soccer as they progress through our program, from Micro/Rec into Travel. This will develop an excellent childhood foundation that we hope grows into a life-long passion for the game of soccer.

Resources

SWSA Contact Information

Address:

PO Box 270

Swedesboro, New Jersey 08085

Website:

www.swsasoccer.org

Related Youth Soccer Information Sources

- ❖ New Jersey Youth Soccer - www.njyouthsoccer.com
- ❖ South Jersey Soccer League - www.sjsl.org
- ❖ South Jersey Girls Soccer League - www.sjgsl.org
- ❖ EDP Soccer - www.edpsoccer.com
- ❖ US Youth Soccer - www.usyouthsoccer.org
- ❖ US Soccer - www.ussoccer.com
- ❖ GotSoccer - www.gotsoccer.com

Terminology

Age Groups (U#) - This term refers to the age division where a player is placed for the season. The “U” stands for “under”; therefore, U10 would be an Under 10-year-old division. In youth soccer the player’s age for a particular playing season, which is August 1st to July 31st of the following year, is determined by the calendar year they were born in. To view our birth year matrix, please visit:

<https://www.swsasoccer.org/birth-year-matrix/>

EDP – Elite Development Program (Formerly Eastern Development Program)

First Touch Program – For U4 soccer players. The program is designed to bring in the youngest of players, get them touching the soccer ball, and give them the excitement and experience that comes with playing soccer.

Full-sided team – a travel team that will play 11 players (10 field players and a goalie) on the field for a game.

Micro program - The Micro program is a recreational “in-house” program for U8, U7, U6, and U5 (Micro also houses our U4 First Touch program). The program is designed to give players a chance to play for different coaches and styles as well as with/against different teammates. This allows the player to develop their skills across a larger spectrum, giving them a better background in preparation for the travel program.

NJYS – New Jersey Youth Soccer

Playing up - Players can play up in age from their normal u-X age if allowed by their respective league and approved by the board. Typically, they may play up in age by 1 year, 2 years requires special consideration.

Small-sided team (9v9) – For U11 & U12 Travel teams, these teams will play 9 players (8 field players and a goalie) on the field for a game.

Small-sided team (7v7) – For U8, U9 & U10 Travel teams, these teams will play 7 players (6 field players and a goalie) on the field for a game.

SJSL – South Jersey (Boys) Soccer League

SJGSL – South Jersey Girls Soccer League

SWFC – Swedesboro Woolwich Football Club. The SWSA is affiliated with the SWFC but does not have oversight on how their teams are selected. The SWFC is designed to provide their players an opportunity to participate in a higher level of gameplay and competition. The SWFC will operate with their own board of directors, by-laws, charter and handbook. The SWFC will provide a monthly update on financials and club news at a regularly scheduled SWSA board meeting.

SWSA – Swedesboro-Woolwich Soccer Association

Rec Program (formerly Youth Development Program or REC) – This program is for U9-U10 players interested in developing their skills and playing games in a less competitive environment than the Travel program. Games are played with participating teams from local towns, and are “coach referee” format to provide in-game instruction while keeping play organized and fun.

Travel program - The Travel program is a highly competitive program designed for those players who are interested in playing soccer at a higher level than is found in our recreational programs. The Travel program offers advanced training for the individual and team utilizing highly qualified professional trainers. The primary goal of the SWSA Travel program is to create a positive environment for our members where player development is the central theme and objective. Providing a highly competitive environment for our members to help them pursue their soccer career as well as preparing our members to increase their level of play - be it to the next age bracket in premier travel, select travel teams, the players respective High School soccer team, or to collegiate level and beyond- are two of the primary goals of SWSA Travel soccer.

Registration

The SWSA Board will establish Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer registration dates for each league (Travel, Rec, Micro, First Touch) we offer. The typical registration timeline for each season is as follows:

- ❖ Fall during late Q1 / early Q2
- ❖ Winter during mid Q4
- ❖ Spring during early Q1

Exact dates, times, and locations are communicated through various means. Examples of the media that we may utilize are:

- ❖ SWSA official website (www.swsasoccer.org)
- ❖ SWSA social media pages (Facebook, Instagram)
- ❖ email sent to each returning member via Mailchimp
 - *if you have unsubscribed from Mailchimp you won't receive these notifications*
- ❖ community website with the approval of local officials
- ❖ distribution via the schools
- ❖ posting throughout the town in local businesses
- ❖ road signage throughout the town

Additionally, the township office has contact information for the soccer board if needed.

We have soccer teams beginning with U4 through U18 if our registration numbers allow. The U4 through U8 Micro groups, along with U9-10 Rec, are filled on a first-come-first-served basis. Travel teams are filled and allocated through group evaluations and tryouts. A player who tries out for a travel team and does not make a team will be placed in Micro/Rec for U8 through U11, or potentially placed on a separate travel team in the next age bracket up. Every effort will be made to provide playing alternatives for these players. Our number one goal is to get every player placed on a team. All others not placed on a travel team will be given a refund of any registration fees.

Player Information required at registration for Rec and Travel (First Touch and Micro some but not all requirements):

- ❖ Birth Certificate – current players for Swedesboro-Woolwich may have a birth certificate on file.
- ❖ Medical Information – to include insurance carrier, policy number and allergies or pertinent medical information regarding your child’s health.
- ❖ Picture – (passport size) – travel players only (age 8 and up). We will have one if your son/daughter had their picture taken last season with the soccer program.
- ❖ Player Membership form.
- ❖ Code of conduct.
- ❖ Non-refundable Fee – to be announced each year, paid by check or cash at the time of registration. There is an additional charge for first time travel players for their uniforms (yours to keep).
- ❖ Uniform sizes
 - First time travel player – shorts & shirt
 - Micro and Rec player – shirt only

A player will be considered registered only if payment and all paperwork is completed and received by the board via appropriate applications used (i.e. - Sports Engine).

Late registrations will be accepted only if there is a spot available in your child’s age bracket. A late fee may be assessed.

Fees collected for registration are non-refundable (but depending on circumstance could be transferred to a future season). A refund request may be approved by a majority vote of the SWSA Board if there are extenuating circumstances.

Player Dress Code

Practice

- ❖ All players are required to wear shin guards and the appropriate soccer shoes (cleats or sneakers). Players are not allowed to practice without shin guards, regardless of the nature of the drills or practice exercises, for player safety.
- ❖ It is recommended that players wear athletic shorts or sweatpants. They should not wear clothing with zippers or buttons.
- ❖ Players should not wear game uniforms to practice unless instructed by the team coach.

Games

- ❖ All Travel players are required to wear their SWSA uniform to all games and tournaments. This includes the shirt, shorts, and socks. If this uniform is not worn, it is at the discretion of the referee whether the child can play.
- ❖ Travel, Rec, Micro, and First Touch players must wear shin guards under their socks. The socks must completely cover their shin guards.
- ❖ Travel, Rec, Micro, and First Touch players must wear soccer cleats or sneakers.
- ❖ Players may not wear anything that can be dangerous to him or herself or to another player. Upon agreement by the referee (in Travel) or both coaches (in Rec, Micro, and First Touch), a field player wearing a forearm, wrist or hand cast may be permitted to play after it is determined that it is covered with appropriate padding. Goalies may not wear hard casts of any sort.
- ❖ Travel, Rec, Micro, and First Touch players are not allowed to wear jewelry such as earrings, necklaces, bracelets, rings, or watches.
- ❖ Travel, Rec, Micro, and First Touch players may wear cold-weather garments under their jersey, such as a long-sleeved t-shirt. The colors must match other players on the team that have chosen to wear the same (black is our preferred color). Players may wear cotton or wool gloves/hats. Players are not allowed to wear leather gloves or gloves with clips or zippers. Pants may be worn underneath the game shorts at the referee's discretion.
- ❖ The goalkeeper must wear colors that distinguish him/her from the other players and referees. Goalkeepers do not have to wear the team jersey under the goalie shirt.
- ❖ If the uniform colors of the teams playing are similar, and the referee states that they are too similar, the home team is required to change uniforms. Our alternate jersey (red/black or white/red) would be used, otherwise pinnies would be necessary if we are the home team.

Other

SWSA Jackets and Apparel - Team jackets & other SWSA apparel are available for purchase through our uniform vendor, *MVP Sports* (store.mvpsports.biz).

Travel Program

Players

The Travel program requires a substantial commitment of time during a large part of the calendar year. Players on a Premier “Black” team are expected to make soccer the primary commitment over other sports during the Fall season. We strongly encourage the player to retain the same commitment level during the Winter and Spring seasons as well. Additionally, Travel players should be prepared to attend all soccer-related team activities during the Winter and Spring seasons.

Uniforms

- ❖ Travel team players are required to purchase their uniforms.
 - Uniforms are purchased through *MVP Sports* (store.mvpsports.biz).
- ❖ Uniforms may be reused for additional seasons.
- ❖ SWSA may request to have a player’s number changed to comply with the SJSL/SJGSL uniform numbering policy (all players on a team must have a unique number). SWSA will incur the cost of having the uniform modified.
- ❖ SWSA reserves the right to change the uniform model at the beginning of each soccer season.
- ❖ A younger family member may “inherit” an older sibling or friend’s uniform, provided the number does not conflict with another team member. If so, the parent may incur the cost to change the number

Coaching

Coach selection for the travel program is based on volunteers. Although it is rare that we have to decide one coach over another, if we have an excess of coaches, the board will review and decide the best candidate from those who have volunteered. This will be at the board’s discretion. To volunteer, the parent must fill out a form on the SWSA website requesting consideration.

Once the board has decided, they will either discuss and decide on assistant coach(s) or defer this to the head coach to make the decision. The board recommends one assistant (or two depending on the situation and preference of the head coach) per team.

The board does look for some or all of the qualities below in a coach but it is not mandatory or required:

- ❖ Parents who have volunteer for coaching or who have assisted with the Micro Program
 - The Micro Coordinators may also recommend someone who is a good fit
- ❖ Parents who have prior soccer experience
 - Coaching
 - Playing
- ❖ Parents who have experience working with children
- ❖ Parents who can dedicate enough time to the role of coach

Coaches are responsible for the core items listed below. Other responsibilities may be added at any time. *All coaches must commit to the playing season, which is August 1st to July 31st of the following year.* Failure to comply with these responsibilities will result in removal of coaching duties.

- ❖ Prior to the Season:
 - Ensure they are appropriately licensed (per travel league requirements)
 - Complete all necessary forms as designated by the Board of Directors, State of NJ, Swedesboro-Woolwich and the Affiliated Organizations
 - Print and laminate all player cards prior to the start of the season.
 - Pickup all issued equipment and uniforms to distribute to the team prior to the first game.
- ❖ During the Season:
 - Line fields on their assigned weeks
 - Maintain the teams' gotsoccer page with the current roster.
 - Monitor and ensure the care of all facilities when in use, including the cleanup of all trash following practice and games.
 - Coaches must ensure that all team players are picked up after practice and games prior to leaving the field.
 - Participate in all fundraisers including distribution of fundraiser items and collection of money to be returned to the Club by posted deadlines.
 - Attend all Mandatory Coaches Meetings.
 - Report any problems directly to the President or Vice President of the Executive Committee.
 - Oversee team members at practices and games and provide adult supervision.
 - Teach the fundamentals, good sportsmanship, and rules of the game.
 - Coaches are responsible for 100% of any fine or penalty that they receive in relation to their team or the game in which their team is playing.

- It is the Coach's responsibility to make sure that designated field duty times are covered.
 - If parents assigned to cover such duties do not show, it is the Coach's responsibility to cover the designated times.
 - Coaches are responsible for all communications to the parents of their teams (i.e. SWSA Bylaws, games, meetings and other rules, regulations, and information deemed important.)
 - At least one team coach must be present at every practice.
 - A paid trainer does not serve as a Coach.
 - Enforce rules as set forth by the league and the Bylaws of the SWSA Board.
 - The penalty for the branch of the SWSA Bylaws shall be determined by the Grievance Committee.
 - This penalty may include immediate suspension of the offending individual from participation in the soccer program.
 - All coaches are to recruit from their team volunteers.
- ❖ Pre-Game:
- Carry player medical release forms to each practice and game.
 - In the event of an accident, an Accident Report must be completed by the Coach.
 - Contact visiting coaches about field location, time of game, and uniform color.
 - Print out two copies of the gameday card and bring it to the game.
 - Pay the refs at each game.
 - Funds will be provided to the coaches at the start of each season.
- ❖ Post-Game:
- Report scores to the league after every home game.
 - Fill-out referee evaluations

Cards

All players must be carded for their team to participate, hence the need for a photograph of the player. The cards serve two purposes: 1.) Proof of identification and 2.) Cards can be withheld if the player commits a flagrant foul or conducts themselves in an inappropriate manner on the field. The player is not allowed to play in any subsequent games until the card is returned. All coaches are carded and are responsible for not only their behavior but also the behavior of the player's parents during the game. A coach whose card is taken is subject to both a monetary fine and/or a suspension depending on the severity of the behavior.

Teams & Tryouts

Teams are placed in various flights based on the age and experience of its players and the past performance of the team. The minimum age group that a team can play in is based on the oldest player on the team. Therefore, a team with one 12-year old and fourteen 10-year olds would be placed in a U-13 division.

It is a privilege to be selected to a travel team and players are expected to play for the team for which they have been selected. The Board may approve certain circumstances in which a player may play for another team.

There are many ways to create teams in youth sports. The method used to create teams is a function of the goals of the program. The objectives of the SWSA when it creates its traveling teams are:

- ❖ Comply with the rules of NJYSA,
- ❖ Participation of players
- ❖ Allocation of players to teams according to soccer ability.
- ❖ Place teams in a grouping that will allow games as close in ability with other teams as possible

Teams will be created via an evaluation or tryout. The evaluation will be conducted every year with all players being returned to the evaluation pool. The Board will run the evaluation with a staff of independent trainers. The evaluation/tryout results will determine where a player is to be placed. In order to earn a spot on a “black” team, a player must be present for at least one evaluation session and be chosen for a “black” team by the coach and evaluators. A resident registering late is not guaranteed a spot on a travel team. The following guidelines will be used to determine the number of teams at each age group.

- ❖ Players will be placed in the age group they tried out in. You may try out in more than one age group. The player will need to make the “Premier” or “black” team if attempting to play up. The player may be placed on the “Red” team with Board approval.
- ❖ Suggested team sizes are 11-12 players for a small-sided team (7v7), 14 players for a small-sided team (9v9), and 15-16 players for a full-sided team. Rosters may be expanded at the request of the coach or the board.
- ❖ If the number of players does not support pure age teams, the following actions will be taken:
 - Players may be asked to play at their lowest age eligibility. They are then part of that age’s player pool. Players are **not** required to play in the younger age group.
 - Players will be asked to “play up” so that the team numbers meet the above guidelines. These players will be part of the older age group player pool. These players are **not** required to enter the older age. If the player does not play up he/she will be placed in the younger age group.

Age groups may be combined and teams will be created from the combined pool. An example is if there are 23 - U12 girls and 22 - U11 girls. These two groups could be combined to form one pool of 45 players (3 teams of 15 players each). Any U10, U12 or U14 player would still be considered playing up if they were on an older team.

- ❖ According to NJYS the following restrictions apply:
 - U7 players may not play travel soccer
 - U8 Players may not play on a full-sided team
 - U9 Players may not play on a full-sided team
 - U10 Players may play on a full-sided team but only the U11 age and a majority of the players on the team must be U11
 - A U9 team may have U8 players on it
 - U10 team may have U8 and U9 players on it.

The board will make every attempt to place all players who try-out for ages U8 through U12 on a travel team (whether on black, red, and/or within their age group or in a different age group). Any player not placed on a travel team will be placed in our Rec/Micro programs and refunded any difference in the registration fee. If a new uniform was ordered, the amount paid for it will be refunded as well. U13 and up players that are not placed on a travel team will be refunded the full registration fee and anything paid for a new uniform in the same registration year.

GENDER PLAYING RULES

- ❖ 38.0.1 Only girls can play on girls' teams as regulated by the SJGSL and NJYS rules.
 - 38.0.2 Girls are permitted to play on boys' teams providing compliance with the following rules:
 - The boy's team has space and the current head coach is in agreement.
 - The coach and parents agree on the girl playing on a boys team.
 - The player must follow all other rules as all other players.
 - Must abide by the playing up rules as set forth by SWSA
 - If the numbers don't allow it, we look to balance the teams.

Playing Time

The focus of the program is to develop individual skills and help each player reach their maximum potential. Most of this development occurs during team practice sessions and for those players that take

the time to practice their skills at home on their own time. Some players develop faster than others do, and the coaches have the discretion to field players based upon the coach's determination of what is best for the team. Parents must understand that travel players are not guaranteed equal playing time and must be supportive of the coaches' decisions.

Out of Town Policy

The U8, U9, U10 travel teams should be made up of 100% of members that reside within the Kingsway High School district. Players may be allowed to participate from other boundaries with Board approval. The U11 and above teams can include non-Kingsway District residents subject to certain limitations. The limitations are as follows: The roster must not exceed 40% of non-Kingsway District residents. (Example: roster size is 15; you may not take more than six players from outside the Kingsway District) The Board may approve certain instances where this number may be waived.

Games & Refs

The SJSL/SJGSL is responsible for the location and referee schedules for each game. The SJSL/SJGSL is governed by an executive board and our program sends representatives to each meeting.

Trainers

All travel teams will be assigned a paid trainer that is selected and/or approved by the SWSA board. The travel teams will have one mandatory session with a trainer per week and one coach led practice session.

All trainers are required to hold a valid, non-volunteer pass for the season they are training.

All paid coaches are required to hold a valid, non-volunteer pass for the season they are coaching.

Traveling (Spring Teams)

A full soccer year includes the spring season, however, fall registration does not cover the expense. The spring season will have a separate registration. Games are played with girls on Saturdays and boys on Sundays usually beginning the 1st weekend in March. The season has 8- 10 games and games are not

played on Easter Sunday. Canceled games may be rescheduled. The same rules, as in the Fall Season, for carding a player are in effect. Player's whose team will not be playing in the Spring season may contact the traveling coordinator or check the web page to see if there are any other possibilities for playing.

Tournament Policy

The traveling coordinator is the point of contact for all teams wishing to compete in any tournaments and should assure that enough patches/pins are available for distribution. Patches/pins are to be purchased by any team participating in a tournament. Coaches are responsible for all paperwork required to participate in tournaments as well as the financial arrangements involved. *SWSA does not offer financial support of tournament fees or patches.*

❖ Eligibility Requirements

- The tournament must be sanctioned by US Youth Soccer or an associated organization (e.g. New Jersey Youth Soccer).
- The team must be a Swedesboro-Woolwich Soccer Association team.
- All players on the team roster must be asked to play in the tournament.
- Guests may join teams depending upon tournament rules, however, guests may not replace currently rostered players unless that player decides not to participate.

Rec Program (formerly REC)

This program is for U9-U10 players interested in developing their skills and playing games in a less competitive environment than the Travel program. Older ages may be included if the numbers warrant inclusion. Our Rec teams participate in a Local Rec Travel league, which offers home and away games with several neighboring towns. Games are “coach referee” format, to provide in-game instruction while keeping play organized and fun.

There are 2 sessions per year; Fall and Spring.

Rosters

Rosters are determined by the Rec Coordinator(s) of all eligible players. When creating the rosters, several items are taken into account)including but not limited to the following:

- ❖ Age
 - Eligible U9 and U10 birth year players are combined into one U9/10 age group.
- ❖ Gender
 - We strive to form separate boys and girls teams, where possible, to format similar to the Travel program. Coed teams are formed when numbers warrant, or when the other participating towns are limited to coed teams.
- ❖ Player Skill Level
 - Player experience will be provided by the parent during registration.
 - All skill levels are welcome
 - We strive to balance the experience level of all teams when forming rosters.
- ❖ Coaches get their own child/children on their roster.
- ❖ Special Requests
 - Can be made by the parent during registration or by contacting the Rec Coordinator.
 - We will try our best to accommodate, however these will be determined on a case-by-case basis in conjunction with our program philosophy and the details outlined above.

Coaches

Coaches are necessary for the Rec program to work each season. Ideally, each team will have a head coach and assistant coach volunteer. The games are “coach referee” format, with 1 coach from each team on the field, typically in their defensive half of the field.

- ❖ We encourage parents to coach, whether you have prior experience or not.
- ❖ We will try and pair experienced coaches with inexperienced coaches.
- ❖ Coaching volunteers will be required to submit to a background check prior to coaching.

Practices & Games

- ❖ Weekly practices will be held during the season, run by the volunteer coach(s).
 - Practices are typically 60 minutes.
- ❖ Weekly training sessions will be held during the season, run by a professional trainer.
 - Training sessions are typically 60 minutes.
 - Trainers focus on improving foot skills and help prepare players for Travel soccer.
- ❖ Games are played on the weekends and include home and away games
 - Games in the Fall are typically played on Saturday mornings.
 - Games in the Spring are typically played on Sunday mornings.
 - Games are 60 minutes in length.
 - There are typically 4 home games and 4 away games each season.

Equipment

Participants in the Rec program are required to have their own cleats and shin guards, for their own safety and protection. A water bottle and size 4 soccer ball are recommended.

Uniforms

Participants will receive a numbered game jersey and matching soccer socks included with their registration fee. Black shorts may be worn to complete the uniform for games.

Micro Program

The Micro program is a recreational, “in-house” program for U5-U8 soccer players. The objective to the Micro Program is to encourage players to learn the game of soccer by getting the most touches possible. The program is designed around the player so we foster an environment where the players will experience multiple player and skill types, training styles, and coaching styles. We want players to experience all different kinds of people to set them up for greater success in the Travel Program. A Micro soccer player must be 4-years-old January 1st or after to be able to participate in the program.

Rosters

Rosters are determined by the Micro Coordinator(s) of all eligible players. When creating the rosters, several items are taken into account) including but not limited to the below list:

- ❖ Age
 - Birth year and month are considered.
- ❖ Gender
 - We strive to separate girls and boys to mirror travel however that is numbers permitting.
- ❖ Player Skill Level
 - Provided by the parent during registration.
- ❖ Sessions Played
 - Provided by the parent during registration.
- ❖ Coaches get their own child/children.
- ❖ Special Requests
 - Can be made by the parent during registration
 - We will try our best to accommodate however these will be determined on a case by case basis in conjunction with our program philosophy and the other items above. Requests may be honored if they suit the program but are not guaranteed.

Coach's trades are not an option for the Micro program. Any player changes must go through the Micro Coordinator for assessment and evaluation.

Players

- ❖ Players should come prepared to every practice. This requires:

- Being dressed appropriately, ready for soccer and dressed for the weather
- To always be wearing shin guards and cleats (sneakers if indoors)
- Having their own ball (with name written on it)
- Bringing water bottle

Coaches

Coaches are necessary for U5-U8 and for the program to work.

- ❖ All coaches are volunteers.
- ❖ We encourage parents to coach, whether you have prior experience or not (we encourage anyone interested to sign up regardless of level of experience).
- ❖ If we have an excess of coaching requests, we will pair coaches together to have more than one coach per team.
 - We will try and pair experienced coaches with inexperienced coaches.
- ❖ Coaches are required to complete online classes and background checks to be eligible to coach the Micro Program.
- ❖ For supplies, we will provide coaches with the tools they need at the micro level to make them successful in the program. This includes coaching tips and other information.
 - Please reach out to your micro coordinators for help and with any questions.

Trainers

Trainers are a critical piece to the Micro Program and every player will be assigned one. For training days, you won't necessarily be practicing with your team but rather with other trainers/players to give additional experiences with vast teaching styles and player types.

Seasons

There are 3 sessions per year: fall, winter (Indoor), and spring. Practices for fall and spring are typically held at Walter Hill School Fields. Games for fall and spring are usually at Walter Hill School Fields or at High Hill Park. For the winter season, practices and games are either at the Margaret Clifford School's Gymnasium or at the Walter Hill School Gymnasium. **Players, coaches, and their families for the first practice session are not allowed to enter the schools early before their scheduled time begins. Additionally, all players, coaches, and family members must be out of the schools by the ending time of the last session.**

Fall

- ❖ Registration occurs June – July.
 - Rosters and schedules are created and distributed by mid/late-August.
- ❖ Season starts early September (after Labor Day) and goes until early November (8 weeks, not including makeups)
 - Any weather-related cancelations try to get made up however this is tentative depending on scheduling factors (including Holidays, available fields, coaching/training availability, etc) and deteriorating weather as we enter the winter months.
- ❖ 1 - coach's led practice a week
- ❖ 1 - training led practice a week
- ❖ 1 - game Saturday Mornings (Coach led)
- ❖ U7/U8 play together and U5/U6 play together.
 - We try to separate gender to simulate the travel experience more (numbers permitting)

Winter

- ❖ Registration occurs November – December.
 - Rosters and schedules are created and distributed by late-December.
- ❖ Season starts early January and goes until early March (6 weeks + bye weeks, not including makeups)
 - Any weather-related cancelations try to get made up however this is tentative depending on scheduling factors (including Holidays, available space, coaching/training availability, etc) and deteriorating weather during the winter months.
- ❖ 1 - training led practice a week
- ❖ 1 - game Saturday (Coach led)
 - Time of games depends on the availability of gym space but typically is in the afternoon.
- ❖ U7/U8 play together and U5/U6 play together.
 - We try to separate gender to simulate the travel experience more (numbers permitting)

Spring

- ❖ Registration occurs January – February.

- Rosters and schedules are created and distributed by Mid-March.
- ❖ Season starts late March and goes until late May (7 weeks, not including makeups)
 - Any weather-related cancelations try to get made up however this is tentative depending on scheduling factors (including Holidays, available fields, coaching availability, etc) and deteriorating weather as we enter the winter months.
- ❖ 1 - training led practice a week
- ❖ 1 - game Sunday Afternoons (Coach led)
- ❖ U7/U8 play together and U5/U6 play together.
 - We try to separate gender to simulate the travel experience more (numbers permitting)

Moving Up Game

The Moving Up game is played by the players in our Micro Soccer League (U7/U8) who are eligible to play for the Swedesboro-Woolwich traveling team next year. Typically, the Moving Up game will be made up of SWSA players but could involve another local soccer program who also will be moving up next year. This game was established to give the children moving up to the traveling program a taste of what soccer at the next level is like. Teams are formed based on the number of signups and preferably we try to keep the teams gender separate just like on the traveling level.

Players are NOT required to play in the Moving Up game to be eligible for the traveling program the following year. The Moving Up team rosters have NO bearing on the formation of the teams formed for the following fall season. Children who want to play travel will still need to tryout in order to be placed on a team, regardless of participation in this game.

First Touch Program

In association with the Micro Program, the Micro Coordinator also maintains the pre-cursor to getting ready for Micro (and ultimately travel). The First Touch Program (U4) is for children who turn 3-years-old within a given calendar year. These players are eligible to play in that particular season as long as they are 3 at the start of the first session.

The First Touch Program is exclusively trainer based and utilizes these soccer trainers to introduce the beginner players to the enjoyment of soccer by engaging them with games that set the foundation for a successful soccer journey. The program is designed to get them touches on the ball but also get kids on the field to just play and experience the game through teamwork and partnerships.

We encourage parents to actively watch from the sidelines when deemed possible. We understand that at this age many children have a tough time focusing on the game and ask that parents help find ways to redirect the children to get back on the field. **We also encourage parents who want to help or even coach in the future to let the program coordinators know so the coordinators can prepare the trainers for assistants.** We have no set coaches for this age group.

The program takes place 1 day a week in the Fall (Saturdays) and 1 day a week in the Spring (Sundays). Both seasons are typically held in the morning hours or early afternoon. There is no season in the winter for this age group. Both the fall and the spring run for 7 or 8 – 1-hour sessions starting early September for the fall season and late March for the spring season.

Inclement Weather

Soccer may be played in all kinds of weather, from sunny and hot days to cloudy and rainy days. Playing in all kinds of weather is beneficial for the players since it does help them prepare for all types of soccer conditions they may experience in their soccer careers and being able to adapt to their environments. The traveling, Rec and micro coordinators are responsible for evaluating the playing fields in conjunction with the township. Practices and games will be canceled if the field conditions are either too dangerous for the players or would cause damage to the fields.

The traveling, Rec or micro coordinators will notify the coaches if the games are to be canceled or relocated via:

- ❖ the Band App
- ❖ mass email
- ❖ and/or posting on the SWSA website
- ❖ and/or posting on official SWSA social media pages

Only traveling games may be relocated. Do not assume that if one game has been cancelled in a league, they all will be or that if one programs games are cancelled, another will be (ie Micro is cancelled but travel may still be on, home travel games are cancelled but some away games may still be on).

If practice is in session and a weather-related incident begins, we ask that all coaches use sound judgement to determine if it should continue or be postponed/canceled.

if there is a sudden change in weather during the game, the referee has the final responsibility to postpone or suspend the game due to inclement weather conditions. Coaches should be in constant communication with the referees during this time.

In any case (whether practice or games) should the lightning alarm sound, soccer play should immediately stop and be suspended regardless of the referees ruling. **It is the coach's responsibility to protect the children.**

Responsibilities

Player

- ❖ To be prepared for practice or game by having the appropriate equipment and clothing.
 - This responsibility falls on the older players but we do ask Mom & Dad to help the younger players.
- ❖ To give one's best effort and to try to reach that player's potential.
- ❖ To support your teammates.
- ❖ To enjoy the best game in the world.

Parent

- ❖ To make sure your player is on time for practice and games.
- ❖ To inform the coach when your player cannot make it to a practice or game.
- ❖ To show support for the player and team by remaining at practice and even helping the coach when asked.
- ❖ To be a role model for good sportsmanship by:
 - Showing enthusiasm without criticizing
 - Cheer good plays by both teams
 - To support coaches and referees
- ❖ To use club/league mechanisms to address issues with a referee or coach.
 - **DO NOT TAKE MATTERS INTO YOUR OWN HANDS.**
- ❖ Make sure the player has appropriate equipment and clothing for games.
- ❖ Be positive regardless of the outcome of the game.
- ❖ Pay for any fines imposed in the club or coach due to the parents conduct on the conduct of their child/children.

Coach

- ❖ To be prepared for practice (plan) and games (substitution system).
- ❖ To set a good example by being on time and dressed appropriately.
- ❖ To understand the rules of the games and share this knowledge with the players.
- ❖ Establish criteria for the distribution of fair playing time and communicate it to the players and parents.
- ❖ To be encouraging, have patience and be positive in correcting mistakes.
- ❖ All travel coaches and assistant coaches are required to have an “F” License issued by NJYS. SWSA will reimburse coaches who acquire a license.
- ❖ To be a role model for good sportsmanship by:
 - Showing enthusiasm without criticizing
 - Welcome the other coaches and parents
 - Cheer good plays by both teams
 - Be courteous to the referees.
- ❖ Be a good listener to both players and parents.
- ❖ Control overly-enthusiastic parents politely and firmly
- ❖ Communicate any issues to the appropriate coordinator or SWSA board member.
- ❖ Traveling Coaches – Report scores and complete and submit referee evaluations in a timely fashion.
- ❖ Pay for any fine imposed to the club, team or coach for action or inaction of the coach, spectator or player.
- ❖ Attend mandatory meetings scheduled by the league and SWSA board.

Penalties

The board takes the conduct of their players, parents, and the coaches very seriously. When out at officially sanctioned SWSA events, we expect a high level of professionalism and high standard that coincides with what we believe in as a program. **We have a low tolerance for inappropriate behavior and will take swift action regarding it.** We expect all members of SWSA (players, parents, coaches, etc) to help influence the program and community in a positive way by embracing our philosophies and our mission statement through positive demonstration of these core values. **It is everyone’s responsibility.**

If at any time the board should be brought to a situation that potentially falls outside the lines of the program on any level, whether it goes against any of the below, the board will review and determine the appropriate action.

- ❖ Rules
- ❖ Morals

- ❖ Ethics
- ❖ Philosophies
- ❖ Values
- ❖ mission statement
- ❖ etc

This **action** includes the following, which will be issued via email, but is not limited to:

- ❖ *a fine levied*
- ❖ *suspension from the program*
 - *for a set or indefinite time*
- ❖ *and/or permanent expulsion from the program.*

Anyone who is issued a penalty has the **right to appeal once** to the board via email. The board will review and determine if additional communication is need, including but not limited to;

- ❖ that person being requested to attend a meeting
- ❖ a phone conversation with the president and/or board
- ❖ additional information via email
- ❖ etc

The board will then review and discuss the additional information that has been obtained. **They will then issue their final decision via email and/or in letter form.**

In addition, any unsanctioned SWSA events that do not have board approval but are functioning under the assumption and/or belief that they are SWSA sanctioned, can and will be shut down. Those individuals involved at running such events and/or participating in these events are subject to the same terms and penalties as seen above.

We encourage anyone who experiences any of the above to bring it to the board's attention for evaluation. When in doubt, please inform the board.

Feedback to the Board/Board Meetings

During the soccer year situations arise in both a positive and negative light. **We want to hear about it all.** This includes what is referenced in the “Responsibilities” section but is not limited to it. Please do not assume that the Board is aware of what is going on. The best way to bring something to light as well as resolve an issue is to make the Board aware of it so that they can address it quickly. We want to have a complete pulse on the program with where things are going well and where work is needed. The Board can be made aware using the following methods:

- ❖ Send an email to the SWSA board at: <https://www.swsasoccer.org/contact/>
- ❖ Talk directly to a Board member. (Board Listing - <https://www.swsasoccer.org/contact/>)
- ❖ Come to a SWSA Board meeting (see below for additional information)

At the beginning of all board meetings, if there are any public in attendance there is an open forum for the first 30 minutes of the session. This 30-minute session is designed for any comments/issues/questions to be asked by the public.

After 30 minutes, the open public session is closed, and the remaining portion of the board meeting is for board members only. The board reserves the right to limit time for any individual to ensure all public participants get a chance to speak as well as to ensure the meeting stays on track.

Anyone who wishes to come to a board meeting must do so either verbally to a board member and/or through the SWSA contact page at: <https://www.swsasoccer.org/contact/>. The board asks that the specific topic(s) to be discussed are disclosed in advance with as much detail as possible so research and preparation can be made, if necessary.

The person requesting to come to the meeting must give notice at least 10 days prior to the meeting in order to attend the next board meeting. The board will then notify that person via email which board meeting their items will be a topic at. The board may also request additional information from that person before a date and time are given. *Only the person, or names of people that requested to be at the meeting, will be permitted during that open forum. There are no walk-up open forum guests allowed.*

For the interest of time, as mentioned above, the board may request a list of topics and/or additional details that the person wishes to cover prior to the meeting. Anything outside of these previewed topics that comes up during the meeting without notice may be tabled for additional evaluation and discussed at a future session.