



CITY OF
**SOUTH
PORTLAND**
Parks, Recreation
& Waterfront

2025 FALL SOCCER LEAGUE

South Portland Parks and Recreation Youth Sports Philosophy

South Portland Parks & Recreation is committed to providing a high quality youth sports experience for our participants, parents, coaches, and spectators. All of our youth sports leagues are driven by the same core philosophy, to introduce and develop the skills needed for lifelong enjoyment of sports in a setting that is inclusive, engaging, and centered on promoting sportsmanship and having FUN! We feel strongly that all players should have the chance to participate, and that player development, not winning, should be the ultimate goal.



Program Objectives

- **To provide a safe, positive and fun soccer experience for all children.**
- **To allow players to participate in an environment that does not put any unnecessary pressure on them from parents or coaches.**
- **To build skills and sportsmanship**

Cancellation Procedure

- Game cancellation will be made no later than 7:00 a.m. on Saturday mornings. If possible, we may make the decision late Friday afternoon. In either case, all league participants will receive an email, but it is always good to follow up with your team to make sure they are aware.
- Cancellations will also be posted on our website (www.sopoparksrec.com).
- Grades 5/6 Division Only: If a team has an away game and we cancel games in South Portland, this does not mean your AWAY game is canceled. Hosting communities will contact the coordinator if games are canceled and they will relay that information to the affected teams. If you have a home game and it is canceled, our department will call the away team to let them know we have called off games for that day. Coaches do not have to make that call.
- It is the coach's decision to cancel a weekday practice if the fields are too wet or the forecast predicts unsafe playing conditions. If the fields are closed due to unsafe conditions, coaches will be notified by 2:00 p.m. It is the coach's responsibility to notify all players if the practice has been canceled.
- **The coaches DO NOT have the authority to cancel games – this decision is left up to Community Programs or the host site.**

Fall Soccer League Guidelines & Information

- The League will consist of three divisions. All teams will be formed by gender and grade. Division I: Grades 1 and 2, Division II: Grades 3 and 4, Division III: Grades 5 and 6
- Division I and Division II will play all games at the Wainwright Fields on Saturday mornings. Division III home games will be played at Wainwright, and away games at various surrounding towns.
- Players should wear shin-guards, mouth guards and bring water to all games and practices.
- Players may wear sneakers or rubber cleats. No metal cleats are allowed.
- Jewelry is not allowed at games or practices. If a player has a medical medal, it must be taped securely to his/her body while playing. Players with a hard cast on any part of his/her body cannot participate in games or practices.
- Any player who uses unsportsmanlike behavior will be removed from the game. This includes inappropriate language, disrespectful attitude, gestures, remarks to coach or referees, yelling at teammates or coaches or anything that the coach would deem as inappropriate and unsportsmanlike.
- All players who attend practices and fulfill their obligations to the team shall play a minimum of ½ the game, regardless of their athletic ability.
- Play offs do not occur in this league
- Head coaches must be on a coaches list with the Recreation department in order to coach. All coaches must agree to, and be subject to a criminal background check in order to coach in this league. Adults who are not in coaching compliance with this department should NOT be coaching at games or practices.
- Coaches will not question officials during the process of the game.

- Games will be canceled in the event of continual rain, unplayable fields, or any other reason which the department feels would be hazardous to players.
- Players can only be added to a roster by the Recreation Department Staff. Coaches should be directing any child interested in playing to the Recreation Department for proper placement.
- Division I (Grades 1/2): Games are Coach Officiated. One coach from each team should be on the field with the players. Teams will switch goals at halftime.
- Division II & III (Grades 3/4 & 5/6): Coaches are not allowed on field and must remain on sidelines during games. These games will have 1 or 2 referees officiating their games. Teams will switch goals at halftime.

League Rules - DIVISION I (Grades 1/2) and II (Grades 3/4)

- Games will be played in 2- 20-minute halves, running time. A five minute break will be taken at the half.
- DIV I - 6 v 6, with smaller goals and smaller field space being used. Emphasis will be on fun and instruction. We do not play with a goalie at this level – WE DISCOURAGE the coaching method of placing defensive players in the goal.
- DIV II - 8 v 8 including goalie, from each team. Modifications may be made if one team does not have enough players to put 8 on the field. Coaches should work together and be flexible.
- Substitutions may be made on a thrown-in for either team, after a goal is scored, after a timeout, or at the half way mark during the half.
- The clock may be stopped if there is an injury on the field. This will not be counted as a time out. Coaches should have all of his/her players away from the injured player as soon as possible.
- Each team may be granted one time out per half. Time out can be called when the ball is OUT of play. (out of bounds, or after a goal is scored, for example)
- Heading is not allowed.
- We do not call offside. Cherry Picking is discouraged.
- There are NO penalty kicks.
- Throw-ins- If a player commits an infraction on a throw-in, the official shall explain the proper method and allow the player another attempt. In division one, the emphasis is on instruction.
- Indirect Kicks- All infractions result in an indirect kick. Opponents must be at least 7 yds away from the ball. A goal may not be scored until the ball has been played or touched by a player on either team.
- Goal Kicks- opponents must be on their own half of the field when the kick is taken.
- DIV II – If a defensive player kicks the ball back to the goalie, the goalie cannot pick up the ball with his/her hands. The result will be an indirect kick for the opposing team.

League Rules - DIVISION III (Grades 5/6)

- Each team will play with 9 players per team (including goalie)
- Games will consist of TWO 25 minute running halves with a 5 minute break in between
- Each player must play a minimum of 25 minutes per game
- Games will be played on youth sized fields: width- 40yds TO 50yds, length - 70yds TO 80yds. Using youth sized goals no larger than 7'H X 21'.
- Individual substitutions can be made during any dead ball situation (i.e. Ball out of bounds or goal scored) however the clock will not stop during the change
- Off sides **WILL** be called
- Yellow or Red Cards may be issued for serious infractions
- Upon receiving a yellow card the player is required to leave the field and cannot return until the next stoppage of play
- Players receiving a red card will be required to leave the fields, the team will play the remainder of the game short-handed and the player will be suspended for the next scheduled game.
- All infractions will result in an indirect kick – there will be NO direct kicks at any point during the game.
- Goalies are required to wear a shirt/pinnie that is a different color than his/her teammates
- Slide tackling will not be allowed
- No heading.

Tips for Parents of Athletes

- **Applaud good plays by your team and by members of the opposing team**
- **Encourage your child to be gracious in victory**
- **Help your child turn defeat into victory by working toward improvement**
- **Focus on fun and participation rather than winning or losing**
- **Over celebrating a victory is considered taunting and unsportsmanlike**
- **Ask your child if they had fun**
- **Focus on positive**

Spectators/coaches are expected to treat players, coaches, parents and officials with respect. No personal, non-performance related comments will be tolerated. Show respect for the decisions made by contest officials. **THEY ARE KIDS THEMSELVES!** You will be removed from the field if necessary.

Refrain from giving instructions during a game or practice. This is confusing and un-nerving for players to hear someone other than the coach yelling out instructions during a game. You can volunteer to coach next season!

REMEMBER – The players are watching the actions of their parents and coaches. Demonstrate and encourage good sportsmanship and behavior.