



OUTDOOR SOCCER LEAGUE RULES

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SECTION 1 – SPORTSMANSHIP AND SPIRIT SCORES

Sportsmanship and the CVSSC:

The CVSSC endeavours to make all games as safe and fun as possible, emphasizing the 'Spirit of the Game' no matter the sport or level of play. All players are expected to play with an overriding emphasis on sportsmanship, fair play and a fun-first approach. Players, or teams, that do not play by these values may face league discipline, including suspension or expulsion from the leagues.

Spirit Scores Explained:

To help ensure that teams adopt a sportsmanlike manner in games, the CVSSC collects post-game sportsmanship ratings known as 'spirit scores' from team captains in most leagues. In these 'spirit scores,' team captains are grading their opponents on a 0-5 scale on how fair and fun they were to play. These scores are kept private until the end of the regular season, but are used for the following purposes: (1) The first tie-breaker in the standings, thereby rewarding the more sportsmanlike team in the event of a tie; (2) Identifying whether a team may need to be addressed in regards to their behaviour, rules knowledge, or for safety concerns during the season; (3) Putting together an objective, peer-sourced review of each team to help support any decisions by the league to reward the most sportsmanlike teams in the CVSSC and/or discipline the least sportsmanlike teams.

Reporting Scores and Spirit Scores:

Captains can report the spirit score and game score to the CVSSC coordinator after the game, where possible. If there is no CVSSC representative, or that rep is unavailable, please send the information to Scott Petersen (Director, CVSSC) at scott@comoxvalleysports.ca within 24 hours of your game. If you do not report these scores within 24 hours, whatever game score is submitted will be used by default and the opponent will receive an automatic 5 for spirit score.

Reporting Sportsmanship Concerns:

Captains are encouraged to communicate with each other before games, and during stoppages in play, if any issues need to be resolved. If not sufficiently resolved by the opposing team, please contact the CVSSC coordinator at an appropriate time for help, when possible. If you deem the issue requires further action, please send a summary of the incident to the league at the email address above.

SECTION 2 – WEATHER AND CANCELLATION POLICY

Indoor Sports Weather Policy:

The CVSSC is unlikely to cancel indoor games due to weather conditions, unless they result in the facility being closed or otherwise inaccessible. Teams will be contacted via the 'cancellation call' protocol below when that is the case.

Outdoor Sports Weather Policy:

While spring and summer in the Comox Valley can be absolutely stunning, these seasons can also be full of erratic weather, with conditions differing wildly from one part of the valley to another. The CVSSC will cancel and re-schedule games when it's believed the weather or field conditions may compromise safety or playing experience. However, since field space and available game nights are at a premium, players should expect to play through some wind/rain during an outdoor sports season for most sports.

- **Weekday Sports** – The initial decision on whether to play or cancel the games will take place by 4 p.m. on game nights. Unless notified of a cancellation via the 'cancellation call' protocol below, please proceed to your game as scheduled. The field coordinator and team captains can consult with each other on whether to delay the start time and/or cancel the games if the weather or field conditions have worsened.
- **Weekend Sports** – Unless otherwise notified before game time via the 'cancellation call' procedures below, teams should show up to the field for their game times regardless of weather. A call on whether to postpone start time, play or cancel, will be made by the team captains (in conjunction with the coordinator, when applicable).

Cancellation Call:

When games are cancelled, the CVSSC will notify its players via the following methods:

- **Facebook Posting** – When games are cancelled, a notice will be posted on the CVSSC Facebook Page at www.facebook.com/ComoxValleySports/ for all players to see. Typically, weather cancellations will be posted around 4 p.m.
- **Captains Email** – Once games have been cancelled (weather, gym closure, field closure, etc...), the CVSSC will send out an email to team captains and singles teams. This is typically only possible if the decision is received/made by 4 p.m.
- **Coordinator Phone/Text** – When cancellations are last-minute, or that decision is reached at the field/ beach courts, we will attempt to contact team captains and singles via phone call or text. Beach volleyball is a bit more weather dependant than most sports and more likely to have the info delivered this route.

SECTION 3 – EQUIPMENT, SET-UP, AND CLEAN-UP

Equipment:

- **CVSSC Equipment:** The CVSSC's bag of soccer balls, inflation equipment, corner flags and boundary cones (as well as a small first aid kit) will be brought to the games by a league coordinator.
- **Players' Equipment:** Please bring a pair of soccer cleats (no metal cleats allowed) to the games for proper traction on the field, while shin guards are welcome but not required. Teams may inform the CVSSC of a team shirt colour in their registration form, but are requested to have a back-up team colour available at each game just in case. A list of team colours, and their priority over that colour, is available on the first page of the league schedule – with the priority of wearing that colour determined by order of registration each season. Please look at your opponents' colour each week to help avoid confusion at the games. Goalies provide their own gloves, if desired.

Field Set-Up:

- Please arrive at least 15 minutes early to help set-up the fields and goals and to warm up so that games can start as close to the start time as possible.
- Field dimensions for our outdoor soccer leagues will vary slightly depending on available field space at each location, but will run approximately 86 meters long by 42 meters wide. Boundary markings are typically identified via pre-measured and maintained white 'X' markings to signify where field cones, corner flags and the soccer goals will be placed for game play.
- Any spots on the field deemed dangerous should be noted to the coordinator and reported to the CVSSC to have it dealt with by the city/school district.

Field Clean-Up:

- At the end of the evening, please help collect the boundary cones, corner flags and soccer balls and return to the coordinator's gear station. If we are required to move/lock up the soccer goals, the coordinator will help direct where they go.
- Please make sure to clean up after yourselves and your team. This includes any garbage, water bottles and clothing. The CVSSC is not responsible for any clothing, water bottles or valuables left behind at any sports or events.

SECTION 4 – ROSTERS, SUBS AND DEFAULTS

Rosters:

- There is no maximum number of players that can be on a roster, but teams are advised to include all players they expect will play on their roster when registering.
- A registered team can bring in additional players that are not on their roster during the season. They must fill out a waiver prior to playing.
- In the spirit of sportsmanship, players are expected to have played with the team during the regular season to be able to play with them in the playoffs.
- In the playoffs, teams that are playing for a chance at first place (typically the top 4 teams) can only field players that have played at least 1 regular season game for them. Teams outside the top 4 may bring in subs via the usual sub rules.
- Individual team rosters and league information will be emailed out within 48 hours of first scheduled game.

Subs:

- The CVSSC will attempt to post a publicly available 'Subs List' within the first 2-3 weeks of the regular season starting. The subs list can be accessed via a link on each sport's individual page on the website at www.comoxvalleysports.ca.
- Teams may also contact Scott at the CVSSC for a list of potential subs at scott@comoxvalleysports.ca.
- Teams may bring in subs whenever they are short players. Those subs must fill out a waiver prior to playing.
- In the spirit of sportsmanship, teams are expected to bring in subs of a similar skill level to those missing. Bringing in 'ringers' for games is heavily discouraged.
- Team captains are advised to run any subs past their opponents before the game, for their approval. This is designed to give a team a say in which player(s) they get to play and avoid the possibility of a ringer swinging the game result.
- Teams may borrow player(s) from another team (such as a team in a previous time slot), as long as said player(s) are needed to make a game happen, and meet the subbing requirements (similar skill level of player(s) replacing, and agreed upon by opposing team).

Defaults:

- If a team is unable to field the minimum number of players (4 players, with at least 1 female) within 15 minutes of the scheduled game time, the result will go down as a 7-0 victory for their opponent.

- Any team that defaults more than once in a season can face further league discipline, including potentially being removed from the league.
- Because the leagues are about playing, and having fun, an opponent may waive their right to a default victory before the game and choose to play. They may even loan players to make it happen. But both teams must agree before the game whether the result will count in the standings. That decision cannot be reversed after the fact.

*If a game is a default, please split up players and play for fun. The idea is to have as good of a time as possible, each time out. Ask the coordinator for ideas or help to make it work if you need it.

SECTION 5 – MATCH PLAY AND FORMAT

Game Format:

- Each game night is a 75-minute time slot. Please arrive early to change, warm up and stretch before taking over the field for your time slot and start your games promptly. Teams have the option of a short halftime, if they wish to take it. If one team desires a halftime, then teams must take a break when it's called.
- Games will finish as soon as the time slot is complete and/or the coordinator blows the whistle. The team with the higher score will be awarded the win. There are tie games in the regular season, but tied games in the playoffs will proceed to a shootout.
- **Playoffs Shootout Procedure:** Any game tied within the final 5 minutes will stop and proceed directly to a shootout. Please notify a coordinator to help, if this is the case, though teams may also agree to proceed on their own. (a) Teams will each pick three shooters, with at least one female in those three shooters, and do RPS to determine which team shoots first. (b) Shots from both teams will take place from the decided upon penalty marker (typically the free throw line on the basketball key 15 feet away). (c) Goalies must have at least a portion of their body touching the goal line to start each shot. (d) If the game is still tied after all initial players in group have shot, teams must alternate guy and girl shooters in unison in a sudden-death format until one team wins. (e) Each player cannot take a second shot until all players of the same gender have already shot once.
- Games are 6-on-6 (including the goalie), with at least two female players among each team's six players. A female goalie does not count towards the female minimum on the field.
- Teams must be able to field at least four players for the game to count, with at least one of those being female. If a team has only 1 female member, they play with one less player on the field.
- All games are self-officiated, with players calling their own fouls. Team captains are responsible for making sure their teams know/follow the rules, make the correct calls, and should always address any issue(s) with the other team's captain first, and then the CVSSC coordinator if further help is needed.

Mercy Rule: If a game hits a score differential of 7 goals at any point (ie. 10-3, 8-1, or 12-5), that is considered the final score, scorekeeping is stopped and teams are encouraged to play on for fun. This is to discourage stronger teams from running up the score in a mismatch, as there is no benefit in the standings.

SECTION 5 – GENERAL RULES

Starting the Game:

- During warm-up, team captains should meet to discuss any issues, decide who gets first ball or choice of side with a game of RPS (rock, paper, scissors) and get their game started promptly. If there is a halftime, first possession of the second half flips to the other team. And in case there is a competitive advantage to being on one side of the field (sun, wind, field conditions, etc...) teams will switch sides at half if either team requests it.
- The opening kick-off to the game, or a half, will take place at the center of the field. The first touch can travel in any direction. Opposing players should give at least 10 feet (3 meters) of space to allow the ball to be put into play off a kick-off. The first touch must be a pass, not a shot, and as such a goal cannot be scored off the first touch.
- A similar kick-off from the center of the field will re-start play after each goal.
- Before starting the game, both teams should make sure the playing surface is free of any garbage, bags, water bottles or other obstacles that could affect play and/or safety.

Boundaries and Re-Starting Play:

- Field cones and corner flags will mark the playing boundaries, while the two cones placed along the goal line will also mark the approximate goal crease boundary within which the goalie can use his/her hands.
- When the ball goes out of bounds, possession goes to the team that didn't touch it last. Throw-ins (must follow proper technique, two hands on ball, feet planted, ball thrown from behind head) will be used for any ball that exits play on the sidelines. The thrower cannot touch the ball again until it's touched by another player. Goal kicks and corner kicks will be used for balls that completely exit play at the end-lines.
- Off any foul or infraction (including hand balls), the ball is put back into play from either the nearest corner or from the site of the infraction – as long as the infraction is at least 15 feet from the goal. These are all indirect kicks, which means another teammate must touch the ball first before a goal can be scored.
- When a ball is being put back into play with an indirect kick or throw-in, the opposing team must give at least 5 feet of space.

General Game Play Rules and Guidelines:

- **Heading the Ball:** Players are allowed to head the ball, but should exercise caution.
- **Substitutions:** All subbing for players (excluding the goalie) is done 'on the fly.' This simply means players can freely sub on and off during the game action. A player must be within 10 feet of the general bench area before their substitution can enter play, unless it is for injury reasons. No competitive advantage should be gained by location of the substitution. The keeper can only be substituted in stoppages in play.
- **Goalie Interference:** Players cannot interfere with the goalie in the crease or intentionally attempt to set a stationary screen (block the goalie's vision by standing directly in front of their line of sight). Offensive players can pass through the crease, take a ball into the crease, poke at a loose ball, but should do their best to avoid contact with the goalie at any point. If a goalie is unable to attempt a save due to blatant interference from the opposing team, it is no goal.
- **Cherry-picking Rule:** There are no off-sides in the CVSSC league. However, players are not allowed to 'cherry-pick' which is loosely defined as hanging out deep in the offensive zone looking for long passes even when the other team has possession in their end.
- **Subs Bench:** All players not playing on the field are expected to do their best to refrain from interrupting the play, and stay off the playing surface as much as possible. This extends to any water bottles, personal possessions, additional balls, etc... All of these should be stowed safely away from the game action.
- **No Playing 'Advantage':** There is no 'advantage' in CVSSC soccer leagues. If a foul occurs (including a handball) the player is expected to call the foul and play is stopped, regardless of whether stopping play favours the fouling team. This is meant to avoid confusion and confusing plays, and is meant in the spirit of sportsmanship and fair play.
- **Shooters Guidelines:** Not all players shoot with the same velocity, and not all goalies have the same comfort level with being in net. If shot velocity is an issue for a goalie, it is up to their captain to broach the issue with the opposing team's captain. For the fun and safety of all, including the goalies, hard-shooting players may be asked to tone down their shot or at least keep it below knee height to avoid injuring someone.
- **Pace of Play:** Players are asked not to waste game time by repeatedly punting the ball out of bounds or taking their time putting the ball back into play, particularly in close games. Putting the ball out of bounds for a stoppage and regroup is perfectly acceptable. Punting the ball a great distance out the sidelines to waste time is unnecessary.

- Indirect free kicks will be given for any infraction outside of the goal crease (this also applies to when a goalie illegally plays the ball with his/her hands). Possession is given to the team that was fouled at the point of the infraction. Opposing players must stand at least 10 yards from the ball on a free kick.
- Goals cannot be scored directly off indirect free kicks, without a teammate touching it.

Outdoor Goalkeeper Rules:

- **Subs at Stoppages:** Goalies can only sub at a stoppage in play, in a definitive changing of roles between players. Another player cannot randomly assume goalie duties and use their hands in net without a proper changeover.
- **Goalie Crease:** The crease is defined by the two crease cones to either side of the goal (approximately 6 paces to the side of each net) and about 12 paces out from the net. The goalie must have at least a part of their body in the rectangular crease to touch the ball with their hands. Goalies are allowed to play a ball into their crease to pick it up.
- **Goalie Restrictions and Pulling the Goalie:** Goalies can leave the crease to join the play, but cannot cross half. Goalies cannot score. Goalies CAN use drop-kicks in our outdoor soccer leagues. Players cannot pull the goalie for an extra attacker that can cross half. One of their players must always be filling the 'goalie' role, though they can push up the field as far as half, without crossing.
- **Pass Backs:** Goalies cannot pick up a ball intentionally passed back to them off the foot of a teammate. However, if the ball is headed, kneed or deflected back to them, they may use their hands to control the ball if in their crease.
- **Pace of Play:** Goalies should try to put a ball back in play within 5-10 seconds of gaining control.
- **Goalie Infraction Penalty:** If the goalie creates an infraction, possession is given to the opposing team for an indirect kick from either the closest corner (a corner kick) or nearest side at half.
- **Goalie Goals:** Goalkeepers CAN score on long shots from their side of half in our outdoor soccer league.

Fouls, Infractions and Penalties:

All games are self-refereed and players are expected to call their own fouls, know how to enforce the penalties, and play with the proper focus on having a fun, safe game with both their teammates and opponents. Captains are responsible for making sure their players know and follow the rules, and are playing in a safe and fun manner. The penalty for infractions is an indirect free kick from either the closest corner or point of infraction (as long as it's at least 15 feet out from the goal).

- **Slide Tackles:** Not allowed in any CVSSC soccer league. Please do your best to stay up on your feet at all times. Slide tackles are dangerous, contentious, and strictly forbidden.
- **Handballs:** A handball in the CVSSC is considered the elbow and below. However, players are encouraged to use their hands to protect their face, groins and chests with no penalty. These are considered unavoidable and play continues.
- **Obstruction/Holding/Pushing:** Holding onto a player's jersey, body, impeding their progress, or pushing them out of position is not allowed. Each player is entitled to their personal space.
- **Reckless/Overly Physical Play:** Any player being overly physical or unsafe in a game should be asked to leave the game and reported to the coordinator for further discipline. Everyone has their moment(s), but putting other players' safety at risk is unnecessary.
- **Rough Play and Verbal Abuse:** Physical contact unrelated to game action and verbal abuse runs in direct opposition to what these leagues are about and can be met with ejection, suspension and expulsion from all CVSSC leagues.
- **No Playing 'Advantage' (Repeated From Above):** There is no 'advantage' in CVSSC soccer leagues. If a foul occurs (including a handball) the player is expected to call the foul and play is stopped, regardless of whether stopping play favours the fouling team. This is meant to avoid confusion and confusing plays, and is meant in the spirit of sportsmanship and fair play.
- **Team Communications:** (a) Team captains are advised to keep in touch with each other throughout the game if there are any issues that pop up, and make any changes as necessary. It is important that these communications be kept civil, with the idea of 'fixing' any problems and not placing blame. If needed, the next step is to involve the coordinator; (b) Teams should refrain from yelling at each other for any reason, and if anything needs clarified, work together to pause the game action and sort it out; (c) If a game is going very well, let the opponent know how much fun you're having. Indoor soccer is a fast, amazing sport, with so much great stuff happening constantly, and everyone loves to hear good things.
- **Sportsmanship and 'Funnest' Teams:** Play to have fun. Each game should be a good time for everyone involved on both teams. And if you play a team that was above-and-beyond terrific to play against, please let the coordinator and/or CVSSC management know.

SECTION 7 – SCHEDULES, SCORES, STANDINGS AND PLAYOFFS

Schedules:

Schedules will be posted online and accessible via the 'Schedule' link on each sport's page online within 48 before the first game, with team captains and singles registrants all notified via email. Each subsequent schedule update will follow the same protocol. Please double-check your schedule online before each game and notify the CVSSC of any issues or discrepancies at scott@comoxvalleysports.ca.

Scores:

Game Scores and Spirit Scores should be submitted to the CVSSC rep by both teams at the end of the game. If a CVSSC rep is not available, both teams should email the info to scott@comoxvalleysports.ca within 24 hours. If only one team submits a score, that score will be used in updating the standings.

Standings:

The Standings Page of the CVSSC will be updated on a weekly basis (typically Fridays) and can be viewed online at: www.comoxvalleysports.ca/league-standings.php. Players can click their team name to review game scores, while the standings page also has filters to allow players the ability to search the results for various seasons and years.

- **Final standings** – Are determined by number of points (two for a win; one for a tie; zero for a loss).
- **Tie-breakers** – (1) Spirit points totals (in all leagues that collect spirit points); (2) Most wins; (3) Points differential; (4) Head-to-head result; (5) Coin flip or RPS.

Playoffs:

Playoffs will be scheduled to take up anywhere from 1-3 weeks of the scheduled season. All teams make the playoffs, but often only the top four seeds have a shot at finishing in first place to allow for closer games and hopefully allow for as much fun as possible. Playoff matches will be set by the CVSSC based on the standings at the end of the regular season and teams will be notified via the 'schedule' protocols listed above.

*The CVSSC reserves the right to alter the schedule and adjust match-ups, tiers, and tweak the final standings in order to make sure everyone is playing at the level most suitable to them, and to maximize safety and fun.

SECTION 8 – WAIVERS, FIELDS AND FACILITIES

Waivers:

All players must sign a waiver, which outlines the CVSSC's liability and sportsmanship policies (among other things), before playing a game. Players need only sign a CVSSC waiver once since 2014 to be allowed to play, regardless of the number of sports or seasons they are participating in. Captains must make sure any new players and subs have signed a waiver before playing. Coordinators will typically have access to waivers they can sign.

Field and Facilities:

The CVSSC rents playing fields and facilities from various providers throughout the Comox Valley. Please be exceptionally respectful of each location, whether indoors or outdoors, to ensure the CVSSC maintains a great reputation and can continue booking many of the best fields and facilities available and offer these recreational sports leagues. Here are some important things expected from our players:

- **Smoking/Drinking:** Please follow proper protocol on smoking. And unless otherwise specified, the CVSSC establishments are alcohol free.
- **Garbage:** Please clean up after yourself before leaving – including water bottles.
- **Damages:** You will be held responsible for any damages you cause. Please be respectful of the facilities and fields we rent.
- **Footwear:** Bring clean, non-marking shoes for indoors. No metal cleats allowed for outdoors.
- **Changing and Warm-Up:** Please arrive 15 minutes early to get changed and warm up. But make sure your warm-up doesn't affect games in progress, and for indoor sports, please don't play with balls in the halls. It is disruptive and can cause damage.

Alcohol Policy:

The CVSSC rents public facilities for all its leagues and tournaments. These facilities, unless otherwise stated, are unlicensed. As such, the consumption of alcohol during CVSSC league games and tournaments (unless in a licensed area) is not legal and prohibited.

Sponsor Bars:

If players would like to socialize over some food or drink, the CVSSC sets up Sponsor Bar deals at various locations. Check out the details online at:

<http://www.comoxvalleysports.ca/sponsors.php>.