



Rancocas Valley Soccer Club Player / Parent / Coaches Handbook

This handbook has been developed to communicate to players, parents, and coaches about the procedures, policies, and expectations of the Rancocas Valley Soccer Club (RVSC). Our parents and players are required, at the time of player registration each season, to read the current version of this handbook and sign an agreement to abide by the RVSC's policies. This document cannot fully cover every situation or question that may arise; in all instances, the Board of Directors of RVSC will be the final decision-maker in all club operations, according to the organization's adopted Bylaws.

Our Mission

Our mission at Rancocas Valley Soccer Club is to foster the mental, physical, emotional, and social growth and development of our youth through the sport of soccer at a wide variety of ages and competitive levels.

About RVSC

The Rancocas Valley SC (RVSC) is a non-profit competitive and recreational youth soccer club whose primary focus is to provide a total, well rounded and positive soccer experience for the player, coach and parent. The emphasis will be on the education, technical development and sportsmanship of our players and coaches so that their experience with RVSC will encourage them to continue their participation in soccer with renewed enthusiasm and a sense of accomplishment.

RVSC strives to encourage and assist in the development, growth and improvement of soccer at all levels within the community. It is our firm belief that the only way

RVSC can survive and grow is through the active participation of you, the people involved in soccer.

RVSC is a member of United States Soccer Federation through the following National Governing Bodies (NGB), United States Youth Soccer Association (USYSA), US Club Soccer and United States Amateur Soccer Association. The league that the team plays in will determine which NGB the membership falls under. Through the membership with USYSA the club is part of NJ Youth Soccer.

RVSC's colors are navy, white, and red. The Club's logo (shield) is considered to be intellectual property and is not to be utilized without the approval of its Board of Directors.

RVSC aims to field competitive soccer teams for boys and girls in the U7 through high school age groups. Players must meet the eligibility requirements to be registered with RVSC through the respective leagues they play for.

RVSC provides a recreation division for boys and girls ages U4 to U13 ages.

RVSC will select coaches, secure training locations, and register players with NJYS as well as applicable leagues such as the South Jersey Soccer League (SJSL), South Jersey Girls Soccer League (SJGSL), Eastern Development Program (EDP), and United States Youth Soccer (USYS) managed by EDP. RVSC maintains player/coach credentials, collects player fees, and conducts other activities as deemed necessary and appropriate to ensure the proper operation of the Club.

RVSC is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors as outlined in the Bylaws.

RVSC Travel Players

Participation in travel soccer imparts an expectation that the player is serious about his/her soccer career. Consequently, RVSC players are expected to: Attend practice faithfully; and notify their coach or team manager if they are to miss a practice. Be prepared to practice, including having proper gear as outlined by your team trainer/coach.

Practice is the most critical component of your training and you are expected to take it seriously, work hard, and pay attention at all times. Players who miss practices, come late/leave early, or who are regularly disruptive may have their playing time limited or may be dismissed from the Club at the discretion of the

team trainer/coach. Attend scheduled events and tournaments. Players must notify their coach/team manager if he or she will miss a scheduled event.

Training Recommendations and Expectations for Players:

- Be “coachable.”
- Be a good teammate; encourage others, respect your opponents, and referees, and maintain a positive demeanor.
- Accept wins and defeats with equal grace and goodwill.
- Become a student of the game; watch soccer on TV and in person, listen while others are being instructed, become familiar with different styles of coaching and game strategy, and teach the game to less experienced players.
- Players at this level are expected to take an increasing level of responsibility for themselves. The Club expects that questions about playing time and position should first be directed from the player to the coach in a positive fashion. A player who is disappointed by not receiving enough playing time should ask the coach for a conference. At the conference, the Club suggests the player approach the coach as follows, “Coach, what do I need to do to get more playing time?”

The soccer year runs from August to July. Any player who is rostered and subsequently registers with the Club is expected to remain with the Club through the end of the soccer year. The High School Club season runs October-June. RVSC will release players within the transfer window as set by NJ Youth Soccer transfers to other clubs/teams will not be automatically extended but will be considered after a conference including the player, parent(s), coach(es), and Director of Coaching.

RVSC is committed to player development. We want our players to improve their soccer skills and game knowledge. However, the overriding goal of our Club is the development of young men and women of character. Therefore, we expect our players to maintain good academic standing, be good citizens of their communities, respectful towards parents, teammates, coaches & referees, and be responsible to their families and friends. RVSC players must remember that they represent their families and our Club when attending any team events, and should always display an attitude and behavior that represents us well. The use by players of alcohol/tobacco, profanity, physical violence, or verbally abusive language will not be tolerated and may be grounds for dismissal from the Club. The use of social media, club communication platforms, or private team chats in any negative way could also result in dismissal from the club.

Players who receive a red card/ejection from a game may be asked to confer with the coach(es) and the DOC or the Board to discuss the incident.

RVSC Recreational Players

Participation in recreational soccer is for players just learning the sport or seeking a less competitive environment. The fall recreational soccer season runs from late August to early November. The spring recreational soccer season runs from late March through early May. Inclement weather may affect these seasons.

Practice is the most critical component of your learning and you are expected to work hard, pay attention at all times, and have fun. RVSC recreational players are expected to attend practices and be prepared with the proper gear as outlined by your team trainer/coach.

Practice Recommendations and Expectations for Players:

- Have Fun
- Listen to their coaches and be respectful
- Be "coachable."
- Be a good teammate; encourage others, respect your opponents, and referees, and maintain a positive demeanor.
- Accept wins and defeats with equal grace and goodwill.

If a player is not going to be able to attend practice and/or games, they must notify their coach or team manager in a timely manner. All parents and players are expected to mark their availability in the app the club uses to communicate.

Players who receive a red card/ejection from a game may be asked to confer with the coach(es) and the DOC or the Board to discuss the incident.

RVSC Parents

RVSC is proud and thankful that parents choose us for their player's training and development. We welcome parent involvement in our club, however, we feel that players develop best when there are some boundaries to parental involvement. The Club relies on parental support, including:

- Maintaining a positive, respectful, and supportive environment for all players, parents, coaches, and referees.
- Encourage player autonomy – help your player help him/herself, rather than always rushing to solve his/her problems.

- Providing timely and reliable transportation for players to/from practice and games.
- Submitting paperwork and payments requested by the Club and/or your team managers or coaches in a timely fashion.
- If a parent attends an event after being banned, the player may be removed from the Club immediately.
- To maintain a positive and constructive environment for all concerned, the Club has identified some parental behaviors that are detrimental and will not be tolerated. This list is not exhaustive but is meant to be a common-sense guideline. Parents who do not follow this code of conduct may be banned from Club activities, including practices and games without additional formal warning.

Parent/guardians of RVSC players agree to:

- No coaching from the sideline.
- No degrading or berating of any player, parent, opponent, coach, referee, or tournament official.
- No use of profanity during a game.
- Wait 24 hours to email coaches about game-related questions or concerns.

All parents /guardians who have questions or concerns relating to a game situation (playing time, roster assignment, position, substitutions, etc.) **are to wait 24 hours before asking to speak with the coach.** At that time the parent/guardian should email the coach, briefly outline the area of concern, and ask for a conference. If there is an issue that cannot be resolved by conferencing with your player's coach, parents may request a conference with the Director of Coaching. If the issue cannot be resolved by the Director of Coaching, parents may then request a conference with the club President, or as a final resort, may reach out to the Board of Directors with their concern.

A PARENT/GUARDIAN SHALL NOT CONFRONT A COACH, REFEREE, PARENT, PLAYER, OR OTHER GAME OFFICIAL IN A PUBLIC FORUM. This includes approaching coaches unannounced before or after a training session or game whether walking off the field or in the parking lot. Failure to allow the 24-hour cooling-off period may result in immediate dismissal from the Club.

ANY PARENT WHO WITNESSES OR BECOMES AWARE OF AN EVENT OR CIRCUMSTANCE THAT REPRESENTS AN IMMEDIATE AND SERIOUS THREAT TO THE SAFETY, HEALTH, OR WELL-BEING OF A PLAYER SHOULD IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY THE COACH, DIRECTOR OF COACHING OR A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

This includes but is not limited to concerns about physical safety, serious injury or the threat of serious injury, sexual misconduct, physical abuse, verbal abuse, bullying/taunting, and hazing.

RVSC Coaches/Trainers

Coaches and trainers are selected by the Club and must agree to follow policies and procedures of the Club, NJYS, US Youth Soccer, and other applicable agencies including any league rules your team participates in. Decisions about roster assignments are to be made by the team coaches in consultation with the Director of Coaching (DOC). Playing positions and playing time are at the coach's discretion. Each coach is free to develop his/her own set of rules/expectations for the team, as long as those rules/expectations do not conflict with Club policy or mission. Coaches should consult with the DOC when developing said rules/expectations. Coaches are encouraged to clearly share those expectations with players and parents at the start of each season.

The Club expects coaches to attend team practices, games, and tournaments in which his/her team participates. The club also expects coaches to show respect towards parents, players, opposing coaches, and referees. However, many of our coaches have obligations to college, high school, or ODP (Olympic Development Program) teams as well as other personal commitments that may occasionally preclude their participation in some Club events. In cases where a coach will be absent, it is the coach's responsibility to ensure that a suitable substitute coach/trainer will be present at the event. Coaches are required to attend mandatory meetings called by the DOC.

The coach's primary responsibility will always be player safety and well-being.

Coaches will conduct themselves as professional leaders and set a positive example for team members and parents.

The following rules of conduct apply at games, practices, tournaments, and anywhere or at any social occasion when the team and RVSC image could be impacted.

- Coaches will refrain from using foul language.
- Coaches will not complain nor confront a game day official in an aggressive manner of any type before, during, and after a game.

- Coaches will not slap, push, grab in a rough manner, or otherwise physically abuse players at any time. Any report will be submitted to the US Center for Safe Sport.
- Coaches will not instruct players to intentionally foul another player in a manner that could seriously injure opposing players.
- Coaches must attempt to shake hands with the opposing coach after the game regardless of the outcome or conduct of the game.
- Coaches will refrain from directing negative comments to players or coaches of the opposing team.
- If a coach receives a red card during a contest, he/she will immediately leave the field in accordance with FIFA rules without continued retaliatory comments.
- Coaches will instruct players and parents not to direct negative comments to referees and opponents and will monitor their comments to referees and opposing team players and parents during game situations.
- Coaches will instruct players about appropriate conduct, including their conduct at motels and hotels when playing in a location requiring an overnight stay.

Team Managers

The team manager is a critical part of the success of Club teams. As soon as possible after a team is formed, the coach will identify a responsible parent/guardian to serve as team manager. The team manager will be the primary communication link between the team's parents and the coach regarding necessary paperwork, schedules, player availability and things of that nature. Other communications regarding specific concerns or issues regarding coaching decisions, playing time, etc., should be taken up with the coach directly. The team manager will notify team members about practice times and locations, and tournament schedules; this will require the manager to maintain an up-to-date contact list for all team members. The manager will also help the Club with other tasks such as collecting paperwork, getting parent signatures on releases, registering for tournaments and/or leagues, securing team hotel reservations when required, etc. The team manager will be provided with the official team roster and player passes and will be responsible for checking in the team at tournaments as required; this often necessitates arriving early at the tournament site.

The team manager, in conjunction with the coach, may also make arrangements for their team to play in friendly games, leagues or additional tournaments as well as team-bonding events that are not paid for by club dues. In this case the manager

and/or coach will make all of the necessary registration arrangements and collect from team parents any fees associated with these additional events.

Additional Information/Policies

Uniforms: The official team uniforms will be decided by the Board of Directors and will be required to be purchased by every Club player and be worn at all team games. Any deviation from the official Club uniform must be approved by the Board.

Guest Players: The regular use of guest players is discouraged. However, the Board recognizes that in some instances guest players will be needed, such to make an adequate roster for an event in which a number of regularly rostered players are not available or in an instance where a coach is recruiting a potential player to the Club. In cases where a guest player will be used, the coach or team manager should discuss this and obtain approval from the Director of Coaching. Also, the manager must work with the guest player to secure the guest player's pass card from his/her Club.

Scheduling and Use of Fields:

The Club will work with coaches to set a schedule of practice times and field locations. Any deviation from this schedule must be reported to and approved by the Club's Director of Coaching. Use of RVSC fields and practice facilities is a privilege. We rely on all of our players, parents, and coaches to ensure that facilities are used respectfully and kept clean.

Payments, Delinquencies, and NSF Charges:

A variety of options are available for payment of annual team fees and club dues. Those options can be found on the club website and will be sent by email to families of players offered a roster spot. Accounts not paid in a timely fashion are subject to late fees. Checks returned for non-sufficient funds will incur a service charge. Fees not paid in a timely fashion may result in player suspension from practices or games or, if necessary, dismissal from the Club. Payment plans are available and are outlined on the Club website.

Questions about accounts and payments should be directed to the Club Administrator.

Refund Policy:

Parents and players make a commitment to play for RVSC as a Travel, or Training player for the entire soccer year. The entire soccer year starts August 1 and runs through July 31. For a player playing for anything less than a full soccer year, you must have had a discussion with the Director of Coaching and permission granted in advance.

No refunds, partial or full, will be issued for any Travel, or Training player who chooses not to participate for any reason at any point after the commitment is made or who is suspended or removed from RVSC. The club offers playing insurance and it is highly recommended that you purchase it. The Finance Committee, at their sole discretion, may choose to issue a partial, full refund or credit in situations involving season-ending injuries, relocations more than fifty (50) miles, or other circumstances as deemed appropriate. Refund requests must be submitted in writing to the club President and must include appropriate documentation, such as proof of relocation. Under no circumstances will the initial commitment non-refundable fee be refunded.

Fundraising:

From time to time, the Club may engage in fundraising activities for the benefit of the Club as a whole, in order to pay for equipment, field maintenance, etc. Individual teams are encouraged to undertake fundraising if they wish to offset some of their team costs, such as field rentals, travel, etc. The Club Administrator should be notified of all team fundraisers, including a description of the nature of the fundraiser. All fundraisers must comply with all applicable rules and regulations (NJYS, US Youth Soccer, etc.) and must be appropriate fundraising activities for a youth sports organization. The Board of Directors reserves the right to disallow a team fundraiser if it deems it inappropriate or in conflict with Club standards.

Social Media:

From time to time the Rancocas Valley Soccer Club uses photographs of players, staff, and fans for publicity, which are posted on our website as well as social media platforms.

Tryouts / Player Placement:

The player registers for Tryouts on the club website for player placement.

RVSC conducts player placement sessions with coaching staff, DOC and independent evaluators RVSC utilizes an APP called BYGA which means phones/IPADs may be used to rate players.

Coaching staff, independent evaluators & DOC decide player placement RVSC communicates player placement via email through BYGA to who is loaded as parent/guardian.

Parents have 48 hours to accept or decline the roster spot.

RVSC follows the mandated birth year policy implemented by US Soccer unless the parent requests an exemption. If the request is to play on an older birth year team, please refer to the RVSC Playing Up Policy.

If the DOC receives a request not to follow the birth year, then a panel of 3 coaches, not from the age of the child, will review the request and make a recommendation to the Director of Coaching, however the decision belongs to the Director of Coaching. The panel will be created by the Club Administrator.

Players may decline a roster spot but will not be allowed to participate with any other teams within the club until the following tryout cycle.

Player scores and rankings shall not be shared with parents or other members of the club, due to the sensitive nature of such information. Players seeking input on their strengths and areas that need improvement may do so by making a request to the Director of Coaching. The Director of Coaching, at his or her discretion, may provide feedback based on coach or tryout evaluation comments.

Acceptance to a team confirms a player's commitment to the team from August 1 of that year to July 31 of the following year. Players may switch teams within the club only with the approval of the Director of Coaching. Such instances are done with the long-term development of the individual player in mind. It is recommended that players who accept spots on a travel team, register for the Season (which is different from the Player Placement registration) as soon as you've accepted the position.

RVSC will conduct team meetings to ensure player commitment and communicate with teams afterwards.

RVSC aims to conclude team selection within two weeks of the last tryout date for each age group.

Teams cannot card a player until the player has officially accepted their roster spot and completed the registration, including making the initial deposit and formally agreeing through that online registration process to the terms of RVSC's Player and Parent Handbook. Registration questions should be directed to the Club Administrator.

Thank you,
RVSC Board of Directors