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# MISSOULA Y SOCCER LEAGUE FAMILY HANDBOOK



Please read thoroughly: Important information

# Welcome to YMCA Youth Soccer League!

Dear Parents and Soccer Participants,

Welcome to the Missoula Y Youth Soccer League, a recreational soccer league where kids can have fun through athletics. Our goal is to build a community where everyone has opportunities for youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility through Y Sports.

In Missoula Y Youth Soccer, your child will learn the fundamentals of soccer, as well as sportsmanship, teamwork, and the Y core values of Caring, Honest, Respect and Responsibility. Missoula Y Soccer League is an incredible opportunity to help your child and others have an amazing soccer experience! Parents are asked to support all players and their families this season by offering encouragement, positive affirmation, and being present and engaged at games.

Thank you for making our community a stronger and healthier place to live and play!

Sincerely,

Katie Grutsch  
Director of Youth Sports

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## General League Information

Y Youth Soccer is open to all children ages 4 to 14. We host both a Spring season (mid-April/May) and a Fall season (mid-September/October.)

Each season teams will have one practice per week (scheduled by your volunteer coach) and one game per week on Sunday afternoon.

Grade	Pre-K	Kindergarten	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	4 <sup>th</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Middle School
Division	Co-Ed	Co-Ed	Boys Div/Girls Div	Boys Div/Girls Div	Boys Div/Girls Div	Co-Ed
Players on Field	4v4	4v4	6v6	7v7	7v7	9v9
Game Time Length	6-minute quarters	8-minute quarters	8-minute quarters	10-minute quarters	20-minute halves	25-minute halves
Ball Size	3	3	3	4	4	5
Goal Keeper	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Coach on Field	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Referee	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

## Equipment

Thanks to our league sponsors, all players receive a soccer jersey that they get to keep at the end of the season! The jersey is included with your registration fee.

### Other Equipment Needed:

- Shin guards are required for games and practices
- Cleats are strongly encouraged but not required
- Players should wear clothing that is comfortable to run and play in (and appropriate for the weather)
- Bring a water bottle to games and practices
- Bring a ball to practices if you have one (not required)

### Cleat Exchange

The Y Soccer Program offers a cleat exchange for players who need a pair of cleats for the season. We have a variety of sizes, but cleats are given out on a first come, first serve basis. The cleat exchange will be at the Y Soccer Tent every Sunday during games!

## Practice & Game Information

Teams typically practice once per week. Practice location and time are determined by your volunteer coach. Your coach will contact you to provide information on practice location and time. You should not expect to hear from your volunteer coach until at least two weeks prior to practices starting.

Games are held on Sunday afternoons at Fort Missoula Regional Park. You will receive your game schedule at the first practice of the season.

## Parent Code of Conduct

- Reinforce the idea that sports a game for fun, teamwork, exercise, and learning.
- Provide positive feedback/encouragement for all players
- Referees/Coaches/Opponents should be treated respectfully and regarded as honest in intention.
- Practice the Y's core values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility
- Keep winning/losing in perspective, and help your child do the same.
- Help your child set challenging but realistic performance goals rather than focusing only on "winning the game."
- Drugs, tobacco, e-cigarettes, vaping and alcohol are not allowed at Y Youth Sports events.

Unsportsmanlike conduct and negative outbursts toward Referees/Coaches/Opponents will not be tolerated. The Y reserves the right to remove parents from the game/program should they violate the code of conduct.

## Registration & Cancellation Policy

Registration is available both online and in person at the YMCA. Spring Soccer registration opens on February 1 and Fall Soccer registration opens July 1.

During registration please provide a current email address and cell phone number. The Y uses email and the PlayerSpace app to contact families with league updates. This information will also be listed on the team roster for your child's volunteer coach to contact you with season schedules.

If you need to cancel your child's registration, please contact the Y Youth Sports department. If we receive your request during regular registration, you will receive a refund minus a \$10 cancellation fee. If we receive your request during late registration, you will receive a 50% refund. One games have started, no refunds will be given (with the exception of injuries with a doctor's notice.)

## Volunteer Coaches

All Y Soccer League coaches are volunteers. We could not be more appreciative of the role they play in our league, and we ask that you show the same appreciation! All Y coaches have completed concussion training, sexual abuse prevention training, and received a background check. If you're interested in volunteering, please contact the Youth Sports Department for more information.

## Team Formation

Teams are formed by the Missoula Y, rather than coaches or school groups. We build teams based on location, school attending, and requests. Divisions are determined by grade, gender, and the number of kids playing in each grade level.

We will always do our best to accommodate your child's team request; however, there are no guarantees. During late registration, we will accommodate your request if possible; but team placement will be dependent on the size and space available on the currently formed teams.



## Team Formation (continued)

Switching teams once the teams are built will only be allowed if there is space available on the other team, and if it still leaves the original team with enough kids to fairly compete in the games. All switches require director approval.

## Game Schedules

Schedules will be issued to coaches after they have received their team roster. Copies will also be available at the YMCA Welcome Center and on your team page on PlayerSpace. The Director of Youth Sports will notify coaches if changes are made to the schedule.



## Practice Schedules

Teams typically practice once per week. Practice location and time are determined by your volunteer coach. Your coach will contact you to provide information on practice location and time. You should not expect to hear from your volunteer coach until at least two weeks prior to practices starting.

## PlayerSpace Software

The Y Youth Sports leagues uses a league software called PlayerSpace. You will receive an email with your username and login information to access your child's team page. On your child's team page you will be able to access coach information, game schedules, team/league announcements, and much more! PlayerSpace will be used to send out league announcements and schedule changes. You can also download the PlayerSpace app to have on your phone

## Game Days

### Game Location

Games will be held at Fort Missoula Regional Park located at 36<sup>th</sup> Street and South Avenue West. A field map for specific division fields will be provided each season.

### Game Attendance

Games will begin and end at their scheduled times. It is important that players are on time and ready to play so teams don't miss out on playing time. Please make your best effort to attend all practices and games.

## Games Rules for All Divisions

- **Equal playing time is a requirement for all Y Sports, regardless of age.**
- Shin guards are required for all players.
- All game time will be a running clock. (See chart above for specific division game time lengths.)
- No jewelry, watches, casts, or baseball hats may be worn during play.
- No slide tackling (intentional or unintentional).
- Call all pushing, tripping, intentional rough play.
- No heading the ball in any age division.

## Referees

For Pre-K–Grade 3 teams, volunteer coaches will referee and monitor the games. For Grades 4–8 teams the Missoula Y will provide a center referee. Each team will need to provide a sideline referee, who can either be an assistant coach or a parent volunteer. It is expected that referees and volunteer coaches are treated with the utmost respect. The referee’s job is to make the appropriate calls on the field, but most importantly referees are there to encourage the athletes and help them learn through the calls that are made.



## Soccer Tent

Each week we will bring our soccer tent to the fields. The tent is the central hub for all things Y Soccer related. If you need to pick up your soccer jersey or check our lost and found, the tent is the place to go. We will have staff present at the tent to answer any questions and provide any of the following:

- Jersey pick up
- First aid supplies and ice packs
- Lost and found items
- Game schedule information
- Field maps
- Cleat exchange

## Weather Cancellations

Due to the nature of outdoor sports in Montana, we will often play rain or shine! If it is cold, windy, or raining, you should still plan on the Y holding games for the day. Occasionally, if the weather becomes unsafe or has the potential to damage the fields, games will be cancelled.

All cancellations are judgment calls made by Missoula Y staff and/or the Missoula Parks & Recreation Department for Field Rentals. Because weather conditions can change significantly in a short amount of time, the decision to cancel will typically not be made until game day.

In the event of a cancellation, the Y will contact your coach via email. We will also send announcements to families through the PlayerSpace app. If you are unsure if a game will be cancelled, you can call the Y at 406-721-9622.

Reasons for game and/or practice cancellation:

- State of Emergency where all roads are closed to public travel.
- Weather creates an unsafe game environment
- Air Quality reaches “unhealthy” levels
- Fields could have long term damage from play

Makeup games are not guaranteed.

## **First Aid & Safety**

### **First Aid**

It's sure to be an active time when combining youth with sports! Please be prepared that injuries occasionally occur. All Y staff will wear YMCA shirts and have first aid kits. First aid kits are available at the Y Soccer Tent. Please handle any medical situation with common sense and speed.

Blood-borne pathogens are serious concerns. Please wear gloves (available from Y staff) when handling incidents involving exposure to blood (a nosebleed, for example). Please avoid exposing others, and properly discard any blood-infected materials.

Incident Report Form

In case of an injury—major or minor—you will be asked to review and sign an incident report form. This form is a tool to track important information regarding a person's physical injuries. Please be as detailed as possible when describing the incident. Participant safety is the top priority, and we want to follow up with people as needed. Thank you for helping us keep our players safe and healthy.

### **Concussion Policy**

We have partnered with the University of Montana's Athletic Training program to establish better ways to provide education regarding concussions in youth sports.

As part of our policy all volunteer coaches complete a training educating them on the signs and symptoms of a concussion. If at any time an athlete experiences a bump to the head and experiences ANY signs or symptoms of a concussion, they must sit out the remainder of the practice or game, and may not return to play until cleared by a medical professional.

### **Picture Day Information**

The Missoula Y has contracted with the following company for this season's pictures. They will offer both team and individual pictures. Please contact the photography company with any picture-specific questions:

Mike Williams Photography  
817 S. Higgins Ave. Missoula MT 59801  
mikewphoto@yahoo.com | 406-549-4474

Portrait packets and envelopes, as well as picture day schedules, will be handed out with team schedules. The team picture schedule will be sent to coaches. Pictures will be delivered to coaches prior to the end of the season.

### **About the Missoula Family YMCA**

The Missoula Y is committed to putting Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind, and body for all. The Y is home to youth sports leagues, childcare centers, summer camps, swimming, group exercise classes and more. Since 1967, the Y has kept its promise to the Missoula community that no one is turned down due to an inability to pay. Financial assistance is available for all Y programs, including Youth Soccer League.

To learn more about Missoula Y, please visit [ymcamissoula.org](http://ymcamissoula.org), stop by the main facility at 3000 S. Russell St., or call 406-721-9622 to speak with Welcome Center staff member.

## **About Missoula YMCA Youth Soccer League**

Missoula YMCA Youth Soccer League is an equal-play, values-based program for young athletes in pre-K through grade 8. It is designed to teach soccer fundamentals and promote healthy activity. Coaches, players, and parents are expected to adhere to the Y's four core values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility.

Y soccer divisions are recreational and no score is kept. Coaches should work to develop all players throughout the season while focusing on positive sportsmanship and equal playing time rather than winning or losing.