



## **SASA Player/Parent Handbook**

This handbook has been developed to communicate to players and parents the procedures, policies, and expectations of the Springfield Area Soccer Association (herein referred to as SASA or the Club). 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 SASA's policies. This document cannot fully cover every situation or question that may arise; in all instances the Board of Directors of SASA will be the final decision-maker in all club operations, pursuant to the organization's adopted Bylaws.

### **About SASA**

The Springfield Area Soccer Association (SASA) is a non-profit competitive 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 each and every player and coach so that their experience with SASA will encourage them to continue their participation in soccer with renewed enthusiasm and a sense of accomplishment.

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

SASA maintains membership in the Illinois Youth Soccer Association (IYSA) and as such follows the policies and rules of IYSA as well as the United States Soccer Federation, United States Amateur Soccer Association, and United States Youth Association.

SASA's colors are royal blue, white, and black. Its team name is SASA Spirits. The Club's logo (shield) is considered to be intellectual property and is not to be utilized without approval of its Board of Directors.

SASA aims to field competitive soccer teams for boys and girls in the U9 through high school age groups. Players must meet the eligibility requirements to be registered with SASA through IYSA.

SASA provides U5-U8 boys and girls in a development program referred to as SASA Youth Academy. In some cases, U7/U8 players may play on a JR SPIRITS semi travel team.

SASA provides a recreational league for teams and/or players ranging from U4 to &12 ages.

SASA will select coaches, secure training locations, register players with IYSA as well as applicable leagues such as St. Louis Youth Soccer Association (SLYSA), Central IL Youth Soccer League (CYISL) and Midwest Regional League (MRL), as well as maintain player/coach credentials, collect player fees, and conduct other activities as deemed necessary and appropriate to ensure proper operation of the Club.

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

## **SASA Coaches/Trainers**

Coaches and trainers are selected by the Club and must agree to follow policies and procedures of the Club, IYSA, US Youth Soccer, and other applicable agencies. 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.

## **SASA Players**

Participation in travel soccer imparts an expectation that the player is serious about his/her soccer career. Consequently, SASA players are expected to: Attend practice faithfully; notify your coach or team manager if you 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, 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, 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?"
- Players must also understand that they may be asked to play at another position from the one they are accustomed to. Sometimes this is done for development of the player, and sometimes it's done for the benefit of the team. If a player doesn't understand why s/he is playing in a particular position, we encourage the player to discuss this with the coach.

The soccer year runs from August-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 Girls Club season runs August-November, and the High School Boys Club season runs March-June. Releases for 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.

SASA 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. SASA 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.

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.

### **SASA Parents**

SASA 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:

- 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.
- 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.
- In order 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.
- If a parent attends an event after being banned, the player may be removed from the Club immediately.

Parent/guardians of SASA players agree to:

- Refrain from coaching from the sideline.
- Avoid degrading or berating any player, parent, opponent, coach, referee, or tournament official.
- Avoid using profanity during a game.

A parent /guardian who has a concern or complaint relating to a game situation (playing time, roster assignment, position, substitutions, etc.) is to wait 24 hours before asking to speak with the coach. At that time the parent should call or 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 Director of Soccer Operations, 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.

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.

### **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 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 Soccer Operations. Use of SASA 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. Teams will be responsible for regular mowing and maintenance of goal mouths on their assigned practice field.

#### Payments, Delinquencies, and NSF Charges:

A variety of options are available for payment of annual 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.

A limited number of scholarships and work exchange programs for club dues are available, and from time to time could be awarded to a family based on need, at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

Scholarship and work exchange information and applications are available on the Club's website.

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

#### Refund Policy:

Parents and players make a commitment to play for SASA as an Academy, Travel, or Training player for the entire soccer year. For high school aged players, the entire soccer year means either the fall or spring season. For all other players, the entire soccer year starts August 1 and runs thru 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 Academy, 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 SASA. 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 Finance Committee at [Treasurer@sasasoccer.org](mailto:Treasurer@sasasoccer.org) and must include appropriate documentation, such as doctor written medical absence or proof of relocation. Under no circumstances will the initial commitment non-refundable fee be refunded.

#### Multi-Child Discount:

SASA provides multi-child discounts to families with three or more players in the club. A 50% discount on dues will be applied for the third child, and a 75% discount on dues will be applied for the fourth or subsequent child. A multi-child discount application form is available on the Club website and is required to be submitted for approval before the discount will be applied.

#### 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 uniforms, 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 (IYSA, US Youth Soccer, IRS, 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 in appropriate or in conflict with Club standards.

#### Photography:

From time to time the Club uses photographs of players, staff, and fans for publicity, primarily via the Club's website.

#### Work Committee:

Parents are the backbone of the Club. Completion of work credits at the Club facility are required for all Club families. The Work Committee will establish a credit system associated with all work assignments. Effective Spring 2018, all families will be required to fulfill a minimum of 2 hours per season (fall and spring) per family. The Work Committee will work with Team Managers to track families' work. The 2 hours per fall and spring do not include club tournament work hours, which are also required and will be assigned to each team. Families may choose to forgo their work requirement by paying \$100 per season, per family. Families who do not complete their work hours, will be invoiced and expected to pay \$50 per hour not fulfilled at the end of each season.

#### Player Placement:

Player is registered for player placement

Player attends 2 player placement sessions

SASA conducts player placement sessions with coaching staff, DOC and independent evaluators

SASA utilizes an APP called Team Genius which means phones/IPADs may be used to rate players

Coaching staff, independent evaluators & DOC decide player placement

SASA communicates player placement via email through Sport Engine to who is loaded as parent/guardian.

Parents have 24 hours to accept or decline the roster spot

SASA 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 [SASA Playing Up Policy](#).

If the DOC receives a request not to follow 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 evaluator 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 with the approval of the Director of Coaching during this time. 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 than the Player Placement registration) as soon as you've accepted the position.

SASA will conduct team meetings to ensure player commitment and communicate teams afterwards

SASA 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 SASA's Player and Parent Handbook. Registration questions should be directed to the Club Administrator.

Thank you  
SASA Board of Directors

## **Acknowledgement and Agreement**

We have read the Player/Parent Handbook of Springfield Area Soccer Association. We agree to abide by its policies and procedures. We understand that failure to follow these policies may result in the player being dismissed from the Club without any refund of fees. We understand that by registering with SASA, the player will be considered a player of the Club through the end of the current soccer year. We recognize that success of the individual players and of the teams is dependent upon a serious commitment by all of the players to faithfully attend practices, games, and tournaments.

We agree to submit required paperwork and payments when due and understand that failure to do so may result in dismissal of the player from the Club. This agreement must be signed once each soccer year for each player online through our SportsEngine commitment process.

Player registration will not be complete and the player will not be placed on a roster until the online handbook acknowledgement/agreement is submitted.