Northeast Select Soccer League (NESSL)
Spring 2026

Participating clubs: CFC, FC Midwest, Huntington United, Jay County, Muddy River FC, Rangers, The City, Select, Strikers, Warsaw

Play Group	Birth Years	# Players on Field
8U	2018, 2019	4v4, No GK
10U	2016, 2017	7v7 (6 + GK)
12U	2014, 2015	9v9 (8 + GK)
15U	2011, 2012, 2013	9v9 (8 + GK)
19U	2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011	7v7 (6 + GK)

Player exception forms must be used for 2018 & 2019 players club passing to 10U and 2016 & 2017 players club passing to 12U. Also, even though there is not a change in play format, the player exception form is to be used for 2014 & 2015 players to 15U and 2012 & 2013 players to 19U.

Pre-game Meeting between coaches and referees

- Review the length of each half
- Review the modified laws for the age group playing
- Review that there is Zero Tolerance for negative language or action toward anyone at the game.
- Remind referees to ask the coaches to remove spectators who go against the zero-tolerance policy. Referees are not to restart the game until the spectator is removed from the area.
- It is the referee's responsibility to warn and card (yellow and/or red) coaches who do warrant this action based on their behavior.

Pre-game Meeting with the spectators

- Remind the spectators of the new Zero Tolerance policy for negative language or action toward anyone at the game. There is no warning, this meeting is the warning. If the spectator is told to leave the field, they must be away so they cannot be heard at the field.

Players younger than the above birth years must have a Player Exception form completed and submitted for approval.

Players currently registered as Travel players are not allowed to participate in NESSL play.

Laws of the Game (not all are covered but those needed for emphasis)

Rule 1: The Field

	8U	10U	12U	15U-19U
Dimensions				
• Length	25-35 yards	45-60 yards	65-80 yards	65-80 yards
• Width	15-25 yards	30-40 yards	45-55 yards	45-55 yards
Center Circle				
• Radius	5 yards	8 yards	8 yards	8 yards
Goal Area				
• Length	N/A	N/A	5 yards	5 yards
• Width	N/A	N/A	16 yards	16 yards
Penalty Area				
• Length	N/A	12 yards	14 yards	14 yards
• Width	N/A	24 yards	36 yards	36 yards

	8U	10U	12U	15U-19U
Goal • Height • Width	 4 feet 6 feet	 6-6 ½ feet 12-18 ½ feet	 6-6 ½ feet 18 ½-21 feet	 8 feet 24 feet
Penalty Spot/Penalty Arc • Distance from goal line • Circumference of penalty arc from penalty spot	 N/A N/A	 8 yards 8 yards	 10 yards 10 yards	 10 yards 10 yards

Build Out Line:

- This line is only on the 10U (7v7) fields.
- The build out line is half-way between the top of the penalty area and the midline, parallel to the midline.
- When there is a goal kick or the goalkeeper has possession in their hands, the opponents must drop behind the build out line until the ball is distributed into play.
- The goalkeeper is not allowed to punt or drop-kick the ball.
- The build out line is also used for the offside line. Only players between the build out line and their attacking goal may be in an offside position.

Rule 2: The Ball

	8U	10U	12U	15U-19U
Ball Size	3	4	4	5

Rule 3: The Number of Players on the Field

	8U	10U	12U	15U	19U
On the Field • Maximum • Minimum	 4 3	 7 (6 + GK) 4 (3 + GK)	 9 (8 + GK) 6 (5 + GK)	 9 (8 + GK) 6 (5 + GK)	 7 (6 + GK) 4 (3 + GK)

- Substitutions – Unlimited for all age groups
- Substitutions shall be with the consent of the referee at the following times:
  - Prior to our team's throw-in
  - Prior to a goal kick by either team
  - After any goal
  - At half-time
  - If both teams have a substitute ready, both teams may substitute.

Rule 5: The Referee

- USSF or Indiana Soccer certified referee as assigned by the Indiana Soccer designee.
- One certified referee will be assigned for all 10U, 12U, & 15U games.
- Both teams pay half of each position's fee before the game.
- A USSF or Indiana Soccer certified referee must be in the center. A club linesman (preferably someone who has completed the Guardian program) may be used. At no time will a "two referee system" be permitted to referee a game.

Team Check-in

- Each team must bring two copies of the game card to each game, one for the referee and one for their opponent.
- If a player's or coach's name is not typed on the game card, the player or coach may not participate in that game.
- Coaches and managers' cards must be presented on check-in. The referee compares the picture on the card to the name on the card to match the name on the game card.
- Names are not allowed to be handwritten on the game card.

- Jersey numbers must be on the game card for each player. Jersey numbers may be handwritten on the game cards to make sure every player has a unique number for the game. Tape may be used to make sure every number is unique.
- Players' cards with the player's name, birthdate (DOB) and picture must be presented during check-in with the game cards. The name and DOB on the player's card should match the name and DOB on the game card.

Rule 7: Duration of the Match

8U	10U	12U	15U-19U
10-Minute Quarters	25-Minute Halves	30-Minute Halves	40-Minute Halves

- 10 minutes between halves, 5 minutes between quarters

Rule 8: Start of Play

- All opponents must be at least 8 yards from the ball until it is in play.

Rule 11: Offside

- Offside is in effect in all games 10U and older. For the 10U games, a player may only be offside between the build-out line and their attacking goal line.

Rule 12: Fouls and Misconducts

- Restricted Goalkeeper Distribution: **No Punting and Drop Kicks allowed for all age groups.** If there is an infraction, the referee should remind the goalkeeper and let them restart with the ball in hand.
- No slide tackling in any age group in NESSL. This is a player sliding to take the ball away from the opponent or to knock the ball away from the opponent. This does not mean the player cannot go to the ground to keep the ball in play or to gain possession.
- No intentional heading for all 10U & 12U games in NESSL.
    - If a player deliberately heads the ball, the referee will award an indirect free kick (IFK) to the opposing team from the spot of the infringement.
    - An indirect free kick awarded inside the penalty area for the attacking team must be taken on the penalty area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred.

Rule 13: Free Kicks

- All opponents must be at least 8 yards from the ball until it is in play.

Rule 16: Goal Kick

- 10U games, all goal kicks are to be taken anywhere inside the penalty area. Opponents must drop behind the build-out line until the ball is put back into play.
- 12U and older games, all goal kicks are to be taken anywhere inside the goal area. Opponents are required to be outside the penalty area.
- **The ball is live when it is played and may be touched within the penalty area by a second player.**