

# Richardson Soccer Association



## *Parent and Player Handbook*

## **Welcome!**

Whether your family is a new or returning member, welcome to Richardson Soccer Association! We sincerely hope your involvement in our soccer program will result in positive experiences and memories for you and your children.

RSA endeavors to provide our players with a nurturing developmental environment and constructive athletic program which helps build their self-confidence while enhancing their awareness of the importance of cooperation, teamwork and fair play. Consequently, we believe RSA offers participants an opportunity to learn a few of life's important lessons, make lasting friendships, and understand the benefits associated with establishing and working toward the fulfillment of goals.

Since we all lead busy lives, we must prioritize the use of our time. You have already made a good choice by involving your family in RSA. Participating in RSA is a positive and rewarding way to show our children that their happiness and development is our priority, and that we care and want to be involved in their lives. Together we can make this a year our children and each of us will remember as the best of times.

Much of our association's success depends upon the level of volunteer support we receive from our members. We could not exist without your help, and we hope you will pitch in to make it possible this season.

RSA values participant, spectator, and visitor safety. We encourage a respectful and enjoyable social environment for all member families. RSA also provides each of us an opportunity to help develop our community into something special - a friendly, close-knit neighborhood.

During game-day excitement, please remember we are all neighbors, and that soccer is supposed to be both a fun and, more importantly, constructive learning experience for our children. We ask that you remain supportive of the association and your team, respectful of referees, association officials, and other teams, and patient and understanding when concerns arise.

Thank you in advance for your time, interest, and support in making your Richardson Soccer Association's upcoming season a success!

Sincerely,

Richardson Soccer Association  
Board of Directors

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# Contacts

Richardson Soccer Association (RSA) is an all-volunteer organization, with the exception of our registrar.

The RSA office is located at 651 North Plano Road, Suite 421, Richardson, TX 75081 in the Richardson Tech Center. The mailing address is address is P. O. Box 851552, Richardson, TX 75085-1552.

The office hours vary based on the time of year and specific needs; current hours can always be found on the association website.

You can reach the registrar by phone during office hours at 972-234-2571, or via email (preferred) at [registrar@richardsonsoccer.org](mailto:registrar@richardsonsoccer.org).

Our website address is: <http://www.richardsonsoccer.org>

Volunteer board members and administrative volunteers are available to assist our members and teams. Current board members are always listed on the RSA website. Questions or concerns should first be taken up with the team coach but if they are unable to assist then contact information for our current Board Members and other key volunteers is as follows:

<b><u>Position</u></b>	<b><u>Email Address</u></b>
President	<a href="mailto:president@richardsonsoccer.org">president@richardsonsoccer.org</a>
Treasurer	<a href="mailto:treasurer@richardsonsoccer.org">treasurer@richardsonsoccer.org</a>
1 <sup>st</sup> VP A & D	<a href="mailto:vp-of-ad-rules@richardsonsoccer.org">vp-of-ad-rules@richardsonsoccer.org</a>
2 <sup>nd</sup> VP-Referees	<a href="mailto:vp-of-referees@richardsonsoccer.org">vp-of-referees@richardsonsoccer.org</a>
League Commissioner	<a href="mailto:leaguecommissioner@richardsonsoccer.org">leaguecommissioner@richardsonsoccer.org</a>
Secretary	<a href="mailto:secretary@richardsonsoccer.org">secretary@richardsonsoccer.org</a>
Member-at-Large	<a href="mailto:member-at-large@richardsonsoccer.org">member-at-large@richardsonsoccer.org</a>
Registrar	<a href="mailto:registrar@richardsonsoccer.org">registrar@richardsonsoccer.org</a>
Referee Assignor	<a href="mailto:assignor@richardsonsoccer.org">assignor@richardsonsoccer.org</a>
Webmaster	<a href="mailto:webmaster@richardsonsoccer.org">webmaster@richardsonsoccer.org</a>
Girls Commissioner	<a href="mailto:girlscommissioner@richardsonsoccer.org">girlscommissioner@richardsonsoccer.org</a>
Boys Commissioner	<a href="mailto:boyscommissioner@richardsonsoccer.org">boyscommissioner@richardsonsoccer.org</a>
<b><u>Field Condition Information:</u></b>	
RSA (Twitter)	@SoccerRSA

All Board positions are available annually. If you are interested in serving in a volunteer position on RSA's Board of Directors, or as a Division Commissioner, please contact any member of the RSA Board for more information.

# History, Goals and Purpose

*Established over 40 years ago as a non-profit organization, RSA provides a youth soccer program serving the families of the city of Richardson and the surrounding areas.*

Richardson Soccer Association is a member of the North Texas State Soccer Association (NTSSA), the non-profit organization established to govern soccer in the North Texas area, and an affiliate of the US Youth Soccer Association and the US Soccer Federation.

In conjunction with City of Richardson and their Parks Department, RSA has played a significant role in the development of its local soccer complexes. RSA contributes funds annually to our local fields and complexes.

Richardson Soccer Association operates with the following goals in mind:

- ◆ To provide a healthy and emotionally nurturing program for youth, with an emphasis upon developing a positive self-image, building of self-confidence, and challenging each individual to succeed.
- ◆ To offer positive experiences and constructive activities for family members through soccer and related activities.
- ◆ To enhance member players' appreciation of teamwork, establishing and working toward goals, fair play, and accepting responsibility.
- ◆ To create a sense of "community" within our association and the RSA area.

The Richardson Soccer Association was founded to provide the youth of Richardson the opportunity to learn and play the game of soccer. The Association's activities are based on the philosophy and mission which emphasizes fun, education, and sportsmanship as the principal direction:

- ◆ Promote the game of soccer
- ◆ Emphasize enjoyment, sportsmanship and personal accomplishment in young age groups and competition in upper age groups
- ◆ Provide the opportunity for all youths of Richardson to learn and play soccer regardless of ability or physical disabilities
- ◆ Limit the amount of stress placed on the players
- ◆ Develop soccer abilities in players and coaches
- ◆ Accomplish the previous philosophies in an environment of cooperation, sportsmanship and mutual enjoyment

## **Member Benefits**

Please remember the following benefits provided by your registration fees are coordinated by volunteer board members and offered at the most reasonable price possible. Feel free to contact RSA to volunteer your time and talents for a successful season!

- Two Seasons (Fall and Spring – each season's fees billed separately)
- Six-game seasons for ages U4-U5, and eight- to ten-game seasons for ages U6-U19
- Team tee-shirts for new U4-U6 players
- Team ball, flags and cones provided to each coach/team
- Game scheduling
- Insurance coverage
- Safety/Risk management
- Richardson's best fields
- Referee training and scheduling
- Coaching clinics and support
- Awards, trophies and recognition
- Tournaments
- Sponsor development
- Administrative duties
- Community coordination
- Indirect community benefits

# Team Structure

Each team needs a variety of volunteers to function successfully. Since many hands make for light work, every parent should be prepared to provide support to either their team and/or the association by filling one or more of the positions listed below. All teams must provide at least the following positions to participate in the season:

## **Coach**

This individual is the team leader, responsible for teaching and developing soccer skills to their assigned players. The coach (or co-coaches) organizes and conducts practices and directs players during games.

## **Assistant Coach**

While not required, each team should endeavor to have more than one coach. Whether they are co-coaches or assistants, they help during practices and games, and are in charge in the coach's absence.

## **Team Parent**

This individual(s) helps the coach by communicating with the player's parents about practices, games, and other team activities, and by keeping teams organized. As Team Parent, getting the work done doesn't mean you do all the work. Just like soccer, you have to pass the ball around and play like a team. We suggest you delegate these jobs among ALL parents on your team. Every parent should be prepared and willing to help your team and/or the association in some small way,. The Team Parent's job is to:

- Assist the coach with communication to team families as necessary
- Schedule providers of your team's snacks/beverages
- Coordinate your team's photos, if desired (Check RSA's "Resources" page for suggestions)
- Coordinate the end-of-season team party and awards, if desired and/or earned
- Transition your job to next year's Team Parent

## **Association Volunteers**

These individuals represent their team to help in the operation of the association. RSA needs volunteers for one-time assignments (like airing up game balls) as well as more involved jobs, like coordinating tournaments. RSA appreciates our volunteer's support and flexibility. To volunteer, call the RSA office at 972-234-2571.

*RSA endeavors to provide volunteer board members to help coordinate the team positions listed above. Please feel free to contact a Board Member if you have questions or concerns. Literally thousands of details must be coordinated and completed during the season, and everyone's cooperation, support, and patience is appreciated!*

# Team Formation Guidelines

Players that have properly registered with the Richardson Soccer Association will be assigned to a team in the following way:

- ◆ By the Assignment Committee (Division Commissioner, Executive Board Member and a Volunteer who does not have a relative in the age group where players will be assigned).
- ◆ Teams will be formed or filled using the following guidelines:
  - Reassignment Request (player requesting to return to home school team from the prior season)
  - School Team
  - School Area
  - Geographic Area
  - Blind Draw
  - Team Size
  - Team Balancing
  - Late Registration
- ◆ Age Considerations: Eligibility for play in each division will be based on the age of the player on December 31<sup>st</sup> of the current soccer year "soccer year", which runs from August 1<sup>st</sup> – July 31<sup>st</sup>. For example, if your player will turn 7 years old in September, they are considered a "U7" player for that soccer year. Current age divisions and the birth dates that fall within them can always be found on the [RSA website](#). **A player without proper proof of age cannot be assigned to a team.**
- ◆ Players playing up will only be placed on a team after everyone else of the correct age in that age group has been assigned to a team.
- ◆ The Under 4 and Under 5 Age Group teams may have boys and girls on the same roster. All other Age Groups shall have teams formed of one gender. The League Commissioner may, when necessary due to number of players, form co-ed teams in any age group.
- ◆ Former Players: A player sitting out (unregistered) for one or more seasons is not automatically returned to their former team.
- ◆ Decisions made by the Registration Team Formation Committee are reviewed by the League Commissioner and are final.
- ◆ Refund Policy: Players not offered a team will receive a full refund. Registration fees may be refunded (less a \$10.00 processing fee) up until the first scheduled game; after the first scheduled game, there will be no refunds.

**The above guidelines are taken from the RSA Rules and Bylaws. Consult the current Rules and Bylaws document on the RSA website for any updates.**



# The Season and What to Expect

## NAMING YOUR TEAM

Typically, the coach or the team will choose the name and the colors; team names may be reviewed by the League Commissioner and rejected if they may be construed as offensive.

## PRACTICES

Officially, practice may begin when a team's roster is complete. Each player is expected to participate in each practice and families should inform the coach or team parent if their child cannot attend any team activity. Players should bring a water bottle and must wear shin guards during each practice. Age groups U4-U7 may practice a maximum of twice per week, no more than one hour per practice. Age groups U8 and older may practice a maximum of twice per week, no more than ninety minutes per practice. Prior to the first game, the older age groups may practice a maximum of three times per week. PLEASE make sure that your child arrives at practice on time and is PICKED UP on time.

## UNIFORMS

Players are required to wear a team uniform including jersey (shirt), shorts, shin guards, knee length socks that cover shin guards, and shoes. The association provides game tee-shirts for all new players in the U4 – U5 age groups at no charge. RSA can provide game tee-shirts for U6 and above for a fee, or these teams may choose to purchase their own jerseys. Team uniforms can be purchased online, or at local soccer stores but coaches should contact RSA to determine any color conflicts. In the case of a color conflict, the home team will be asked by the referee to wear pennies over their jerseys or change jerseys.

## GAMES

Games typically are played on Saturdays and generally begin in mid-September in the fall and late February in the spring. The number and length of games played by each team depends upon the age division and the number of teams in the bracket. Schedules should be available a week before play begins, and can be found on the Schedule/Standings link on the RSA website. Coaches will set player's preferred arrival time and each player should bring a water bottle and must wear shin guards during each game. Players cannot play without shin guards. Players wearing braces or retainers are suggested to wear a mouth protection device. IF YOUR CHILD CANNOT ATTEND A GAME OR WILL BE LATE, PLEASE NOTIFY YOUR COACH AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

## GAME PROCEDURE

- Home Team - You are home team if your team is listed first on the schedule
  - ✓ Provide the game ball
  - ✓ Sit on the north or east side of the field
  - ✓ Change jersey color or wear different color practice bibs in the event that there is a color conflict
  
- Visiting Team - You are visiting team if your team is listed second on the schedule
  - ✓ Sit on the south or west side of the field

- Both Teams
  - ✓ Bring lawn chairs; there are not always two sets of bleachers at the small fields
  - ✓ Make sure that trash has been picked up following your game

## **SCORES**

The score for U4 - U8 games is not officially kept but scores may be monitored in order to determine brackets for teams in future seasons. Coaches (or their designated representative) for U9 and above teams are required, win or lose, to report the score of their game to RSA by depositing the game card in the designated location at each field, or at the RSA office, within 24 hours of the game. Failure to do so may result in the game being counted as a "loss." RSA is not responsible for any incorrectly recorded games resulting from such failure.

## **WEATHER**

While RSA makes every attempt to be timely in their responses concerning game cancellations due to weather changes, it is critical that coaches and parents be prudent and use their best judgment concerning their children and possible risks while playing. Weather in one area of the city may be different than in other areas. We all know Texas weather can change at a moment's notice. Please don't ever wait on RSA to cancel a game if you have concerns about your child's safety. Further, when at the field, the center referee has the authority to stop play, if in his opinion the weather presents a danger to the participants and fans.

In the event of inclement weather, always assume that the game will be played. Coaches will be notified if fields are unplayable via electronic means. In the event that rain falls during the day, coaches can check the RSA Twitter and Facebook feeds for up-to-date field condition status. Links to these social media options can be found on the [RSA website](#).

# Sportsmanship and Conduct

RSA and your coach ask your cooperation in abiding by the rules and guidelines players, coaches, referees, and spectators are required to follow. FIFA, US Soccer, North Texas State Soccer Association (NTSSA) and Richardson Soccer Association (RSA) set these guidelines forth.

In order to help us provide a fun and positive experience for everyone, we ask that each family sign and return to their coach the "Parent Sportsmanship Agreement" at the end of this manual.

## **Conduct Policy**

### Policy Statement

The RSA Executive Board wishes to provide a wholesome playing environment for the mutual enjoyment of all players, coaches, spectators and officials. To provide this environment, the Board will not condone actions by players, coaches or spectators which are detrimental to the conduct of the game. Criticism of the referee, linesmen or players, from the sidelines or field, is regarded as unsportsmanlike. Players, coaches or spectators responsible for such action will be subject to disciplinary action.

### Authority

All members and participants in soccer within the jurisdiction of Richardson Soccer Association have requested to participate in our program; therefore, they have agreed to abide by the Bylaws and rules of RSA and NTSSA as well as those of the USSF. The RSA bylaws provides that it has jurisdiction over all members, players, coaches, team representatives and administrators who choose to affiliate as well as spectators.

### Enforcement and Punishment

Enforcement of this policy shall be by the RSA Executive Board and other designated League Officials, including the League Commissioner, Division Commissioners and members of the Appeals and Disciplinary Committee, as charged by the Board. These officials are authorized to observe the conduct of coaches, players and spectators, and to speak to those persons whose actions are contrary to the Philosophy and goals of RSA, as specified in the RSA Soccer Guide. The intent of such action by a League Official is to serve as deterrent to the offender. The offender may be required to leave the playing field area and/or be subject to disciplinary action. A member or participant in the Association must appear before the Disciplinary Committee, League Official or RSA Executive Board for disciplinary action when requested to do so. Possible disciplinary actions that may be taken by the Association include, but not limited to:

- ◆ reduction of playing time of the offender for one game
- ◆ probation of the offender for a specific period of time
- ◆ suspension of the offender for the next soccer game
- ◆ suspension of the offender for more than one game, the remainder of the season, or other period of time
- ◆ suspension of the offender from RSA sponsored activities forever

## Specifically Prohibited Conduct

Some specific actions which are prohibited while engaged in any RSA soccer related activity are listed below. Offenders will be subject to severe disciplinary action by RSA and/or NTSSA. No player, coach or spectator shall:

- ◆ use foul or abusive language
- ◆ harass league officials, referees or linesmen
- ◆ harass opponent's players (belittling or derogatory comments)
- ◆ harass opponent's coaches or spectators
- ◆ be guilty of violent conduct (i.e. threatened, attempted, or actual physical violence) towards another player, league official, referee, linesmen, coach or spectator
- ◆ have in their possession or consume alcoholic beverages at a game or practice field (City of Richardson ordinances)

## Conduct of Spectators

Each RSA team is responsible for the conduct of its spectators. The referee has the authority to caution and/or send off the coach for the misconduct of the spectators associated with the team. Therefore, the coach is expected to control his spectators. The Association will take appropriate action toward any identifiable unruly spectator. If the spectator is not identifiable the Association will take action against the team itself. Possible actions for misconduct of spectators include:

- ◆ assess the offending spectator's team at least 12 and not more than 40 caution points
- ◆ report spectator to the Parks and Recreation Department
- ◆ require team to forfeit any games at which the spectator is present on the touch-line
- ◆ require offending team to pay for presence of police at its games
- ◆ revoke or refuse registration to the offending team
- ◆ cause the spectator to be placed under a peace bond

## Coaching Area

A coach may convey tactical instructions to players during the match, however, all coaches, parents, spectators and substitutes shall remain within the boundaries of the technical area\*, whether marked or not, and will not be permitted in the area behind the goals or along the goal-lines.

\*The technical area is defined as extending 10 yards in each direction from the half-way line and up to one yard away from the touch-line. On U-8 and smaller fields the area shall be eight (8) yards in each direction from the half-way line and up to one yard away from the touch-line.

# Soccer Rules

## RSA Rules and Laws of the Game

Please refer to RSA's Rule Book, posted under the "General Information" tab on the [RSA website](#) for a thorough overview of the rules of Richardson Soccer Association and the laws of the game.

## General Rules of Soccer

The following general rules are offered in an attempt to familiarize you with the game of soccer for our children. It is not meant to be your only source of information. Please do not use these simplified explanations to call a game or judge whether a referee is properly officiating. Much of both playing and officiating soccer are judgmental decisions.

### Playing Time

#### ***U4 – U7***

- The game is divided into 4 quarters, each lasting 8 minutes.
- Players will be substituted after each quarter. A break will be taken at half time.
- Each player must play at least 50% of each half of the game.
- No goalkeepers.

#### ***U8***

- The game is divided into 3 periods, each lasting 15 minutes.
- Players may be substituted at any approved stoppage during the game.
- Each player must play 50% of each period.
- No goalkeepers

#### ***U9 and above***

- The game is divided into 2 halves:

<b>U10</b>	two 25 minute halves
<b>U12</b>	two 30 minute halves
<b>U14</b>	two 35 minute halves
<b>U16</b>	two 40 minute halves
<b>U19</b>	two 45 minute halves

- Each player must play at least 50% of each game
- Goalkeeper substitution is not required.

### Number of Players on Field (Including Goalkeeper) and Soccer Ball Size

U4 – U8	4 players	Size 3
U9 & U10	7 players	Size 4
U12	9 players	Size 4
U14, U16 & U19	11 players	Size 5

### Game Referees

State licensed referees will officiate every game when available. Their decisions concerning points of the game and the exercising the power granted to him/her by the laws of the game are final. She/he generally will use two linesmen or assistant referees to assist in determining when the ball leaves the field of play and which team is entitled to return it to play, and to identify off sides. Richardson Soccer Association (RSA) enforces a ZERO TOLERANCE approach to any abuse towards its referees, coaches or players by anyone verbally or physically.

### Offside

- There is no offside rule in U4 – U8
- Simplified definition: A player is in an offside position at the time the ball is played, if he/she is closer his/her opponents goal line than the ball unless:
- He/she is on their own half of the field
- There are at least two opponents nearer the goal line than they are (one is normally the goalkeeper, but does not have to be).

### Fouls & Misconduct

“Direct free kick fouls” committed outside the penalty area award the opposing team a direct free kick in the U9-U19 age divisions; a goal can be scored directly from this kick. If the foul is committed inside the penalty area a penalty kick is given.

No penalty kicks or direct free kicks are awarded in the U4-U8 age divisions and all fouls result in an indirect free kick. A goal can only be scored from an indirect free kick if the ball subsequently touches another player before entering the goal.

A direct free-kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following six offenses in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless or using excessive force:

- kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
- trips or attempts to an opponent
- jumps at an opponent
- charges an opponent
- strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
- pushes an opponent

A direct free-kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following offenses:

- tackles an opponent to gain possession of the ball, making contact with the opponent before touching the ball
- holds an opponent
- spits at an opponent
- handles the ball deliberately (except for the goalkeeper within his own penalty area)

An indirect free-kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player, in the opinion of the referee, commits any of the following offenses:

- plays in a dangerous manner
- impedes the progress of an opponent
- prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands
- player intentionally heads the ball in age group U11 or younger

An indirect free-kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper, inside his own penalty area, commits any of the following five offenses:

- takes more than 6 seconds to release the ball back into the field of play after he gains possession of the ball
- touches the ball again with his hands after it has been released from his possession and has not touched any player
- touches the ball with his hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him by a team-mate
- touches the ball with his hands after he has received it directly from a throw-in taken by a team-mate

### Advantage

If a player is fouled, the referee usually stops the play. If the fouled player or his/her team keeps possession and a stoppage might benefit the offenders' team, play may be allowed to continue.

### Out of Bounds

The ball is out of bounds when it has completely crossed the boundary line, either in the air or on the ground. It is returned to play by the opposing team in one of three ways:

- Throw-In: Ball must be thrown with both hands from behind and over the head. Part of both feet must be on the ground, either on or behind the touchline.
- Goal kick: When a member of the attacking team puts the ball out of play over the goal line, a goal kick is awarded to the defending team. It must be taken from inside the goal area, and a goal cannot be scored directly from this kick.
- Corner kick: When the defending team kicks the ball across the goal line (not between the posts) the opposing team kicks the ball from the corner arch closest to where it went out of play. A goal can be made from this kick.

### Required Equipment

- Jersey or shirt with a number on the back
- Socks that cover the shin guards
- Shin guards (if a child does not have any shin guards, he/she may not play in a game or practice)
- Shorts
- Mouth protection is optional for retainers or braces
- No baseball cleats (toe cleats)
- No jewelry