

Livingston Soccer Club

In-Town Rules

Fall 2026

• REFEREE JUDGMENT/DISCRETION

- The referee is solely responsible for:
 - Time management (including stoppages of play)
 - Interpretation of rules,
 - Cautions to players and coaches,
 - Exercising judgment in discharging his or her duties
- **DECISIONS OF REFEREE ARE FINAL AND MAY NOT BE REVERSED** ○
- NO PLAYER/COACH MAY QUESTION OR ARGUE A REFEREE'S CALL** ○
- A BOARD MEMBER WILL NOT OVERRULE A REFEREE'S DECISION**

• DURATION OF PLAY

- Official time is kept by the referee
 - 1st Grade Festivals and 2nd Grade Festivals: 3 Games @ 15 Minutes each = 45 Minutes
 - Festival break time is limited to 5 minutes
 - 3rd/4th Grade Girls and Boys: 4 Quarters @ 11 Minutes = 44 Minutes ▪
 - 5th/6th Grade Girls and Boys: 2 Halves @ 25 Minutes = 50 Minutes
 - 7th/9th Grade Girls: 2 Halves @ 25 Minutes = 50 Minutes
 - 7th/9th Grade Boys: 2 Halves @ 35 Minutes = 70 Minutes
 - HS COED: 2 Halves @ 35 Minutes = 70 Minutes
- The halftime break is limited to five minutes
- All quarter breaks are limited to two minutes each
- Referees and coaches are instructed to begin play on time
- There is no added time to be played during the game (An exception can be made to allow for a penalty kick)
- A game is considered official when one half or more has been completed
- A Board Member will direct the referee when to shorten, lengthen, suspend, cancel a game (Not subject to protest)

Number of Players on the Field

Division	Number of Players
1B, 1G, 2B, 2G	5v5 Festivals
3-4 B	7v7
3-4 G	7v7
5-6 B	9v9
5-6 G	7v7
7-9 B	11v11
7-9 G	7v7
HS COED	11v11

• PLAYER ATTIRE

- The Livingston Soccer Club team jersey **MUST** be worn over any other garments
- Shin guards are **REQUIRED** and must be worn under the socks
- Cleats are recommended, but not required, for safety purposes
- Metal cleats and baseball and football cleats/spikes are **PROHIBITED**
- Metal/hard jewelry is forbidden to be worn by players during games/practices with the exception of a medical alert bracelet.
- Jewelry **MUST** be **REMOVED** prior to the start of the game
- Earrings, necklaces, chains, bracelets, wristwatches, rings, anklets, etc. Earrings can be replaced with rubber flat earring studs but cannot be metal earrings taped over.
- Long hair **MUST** be tied back so it is not in player's face any time during the game
- Hard casts are also not allowed to be worn during a game
- Coaches are responsible for adherence and must communicate to all players/parents

• START OF GAME

- The referee will determine the side each team defends and which team kicks off to start game. Typically the home team kicks off first. (No coin toss)
- All coaches of each team must stand on separate halves of the same side of each field
- All coaches must remain between the half line and a point 10 yards from the half line
- When one team has fewer than the maximum number of players:
 - For **Grades 3/4 through 5/6, Girls 7/9 and COED (or 7v 7 or 9 v 9 teams)** no team may play with more than **1** player in excess of their opponent at any time, not to exceed the maximum
 - For **Boys 7/9 (or 11 v 11 teams)**, no team may play with more than **2** players

in excess of their opponents at any time, not to exceed the maximum.

For small sided games, (7v7, 8v8, 9v9) at least 5 players are needed to have a legal game. For a large sided game, (11v11) at least 7 players are needed for a legal game. ***There is no sharing of players between teams in grades 3 to 9. Standings are kept and if there are enough players, a legal game is to be played.***

• KICKOFF

- The ball may travel forward or backward to be in play.
- The kickoff is signaled by the referee's whistle
- The kickoff is to alternate teams at the beginning of each quarter, period or half
- The kicker **CANNOT** touch the ball a second time until it has touched another player
- A goal **CAN** be scored directly from a kickoff

• OUT OF PLAY

- The ball is out of play when it completely crosses over the line, either on ground or in the air
 - If the ball crosses the touchline, it is put into play with a throw-in
 - If a ball crosses the goal line, it is put into play with a goal kick (if attacking team last touched it) or a corner kick (if defending team last touched it)
- The line judge signals out of play by raising the flag
 - Referee may ask line judge to determine possession (point the direction ball is played)
 - The referee is responsible for making the final decision

• THROW IN

- A throw in does **NOT** need a stoppage of play/whistle, but must be made in following manner:
 - Both feet must be on the ground when the ball is released
 - Part of each foot must be either on or behind the touchline when the ball is released
 - The throw in must start behind the head and released in front of the head
 - The player must use both hands
- The player **CANNOT** play his/her own throw in; it **MUST** touch another player first
- A goal **CANNOT** be scored directly from a throw in
- If the ball is thrown to the goalkeeper, s/he **CANNOT** play the ball with his/her hands
- The referee will award a throw into the opposing team if a player executes an improper throw in. No "re-do's" on improper throw in's.

GOAL KICK

- A goal kick is a direct kick that does **NOT** need a stoppage of play/whistle, but must be made in the following manner:
 - Any player can take the goal kick

- All **opposing** team members **MUST** stay outside of the penalty box
- For Grades 3/4 playing 7v7, a, “**Build-up Line**” will be used that is halfway between the mid-line and the top of penalty box. On goal kicks/throws, the opposing team must start with all players behind this line. The opposing team can proceed once a second player touches the ball or the ball comes to a complete stop. This is not used for Grades 5/6 or 7-9 that may be playing 7v7.
- The ball may be placed anywhere within the goalie box
- The ball may **not** be moved after it is placed in position
 - The ball may be played to a teammate within the penalty area. A goal kick is "in play" and the opposing team can enter the box ***as soon as the kick is taken.***
 - The referee will call for a re-kick if the ball is played within the penalty box by an opposing player who was in the penalty box at the moment the kick was taken.

• CORNER KICK

- A corner kick is signaled by the referee and placed at the closest corner
- It does **NOT** require a stoppage of play/ whistle and may be taken by any player
- If ball curves behind goal line, possession reverts to the opposing team for a goal kick

• PENALTIES

- The referee has the authority to penalize players for **ANY** infraction
- Referees are instructed to **refrain** from imposing a penalty in cases where doing so would give an advantage to the offending team, or where doing so would take away an existing advantage
 - In this case, the referee should allow the “offended” team to “play on”

• SUBSTITUTIONS

- Coaches are allowed to make an **UNLIMITED** number of player substitutions during the game
- Substitutions may only take place ***after getting the referee’s permission***
- A team may substitute during any stoppage (throw-in, goal kick, after goal, after the end of a period/quarter/half ***and including direct and indirect kicks and corner kicks***)
- No team can substitute in the final minute of a quarter or half. The only exception is due to injury.

• HEADING

- **1ST-6TH GRADE:** There is to be ***no heading*** of the ball by any player - other than the goalkeeper. Any incident deemed by the referee as **intentional heading** will be considered an indirect free kick to the opposing team where the infringement occurred

• OFFSIDE

- A player is offside if s/he is in an offside position **AND** actively involved in play

○ The referee determines if a player is offside at the **TIME THE BALL IS PLAYED, NOT RECEIVED**

- It is **NOT** an offense in itself to be in an offside *position*
 - A player is in an offside position when s/he is nearer to the opponent's goal line than both the ball and the second-to-last defender (Goalkeeper included)
 - A player is **NOT** in an offside position if:
 - The player is in his/her own half of the field of play
 - The player is even with the second-to-last defender
 - The player is even with or behind the ball
- A player is involved in active play if, in the opinion of the referee, at the moment the ball is played by a member of that player's team, s/he:
 - Interferes with active play,
 - Interferes with an opponent, or
 - Gains an advantage by being in that position
- A player cannot be offside directly on a throw in, goal kick or corner kick
- If a player is deemed offside, play is restarted with an indirect free kick to the other team where the infringement occurred

• CAUTIONS BY THE REFEREE

- A player or coach is to be **cautioned** and shown the **yellow card** by the referee for committing any of the following infractions:
 - Unsporting behavior,
 - Committing a foul with reckless disregard for the safety of other players
 - Showing dissent by word or action,
 - Persistently infringing upon the rules,
 - Delaying the restart of play,
 - Failing to respect required distance when play is restarted with a corner kick or free kick,
 - Entering or re-entering the field of play in opposition to the rules, or
 - Deliberately leaving the field of play without the referee's permission
- A player or coach is to be **sent off** and shown the **red card** by the referee for committing any of the following infractions:
 - Serious foul play, including a tackle from behind,
 - Violent conduct,
 - Spitting at or biting at an opponent or any other person,
 - Denying a goal or an **obvious** goal scoring opportunity by *deliberately* handling the ball (a handball offense). This does not apply to the goalkeeper in the penalty box,
 - Denying an **obvious** goal scoring opportunity to an opponent moving towards the

- player's goal by an offense punishable by a free kick or penalty kick,
 - ANY offensive, insulting, abusive or foul language or gestures, or
 - Receiving a second caution (**yellow card**) in the same game
- If a player or coach is shown a **red card**, s/he must leave the complex
- Any player or coach receiving a **yellow or red card** is subject to the LSC Enforcement Committee

• FOULS/MISCONDUCTS/FREE KICKS

- A **direct** free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following offenses:
 - Kicks or attempts to kick at an opponent,
 - Trips or attempts to trip an opponent,
 - Jumps at an opponent,
 - Charges at an opponent,
 - Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent,
 - Pushes an opponent,
 - Tackles an opponent to gain possession, making contact before touching ball,
 - Tackles an opponent *from behind*,
 - Holds an opponent,
 - Spits at or bites an opponent, or
 - **Intentionally** touches ball with the hand or arm (except for goalkeeper in penalty box)
- An **indirect** free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following offenses:
 - Plays in a dangerous manner,
 - Impedes progress of an opponent,
 - Fails to allow for space during goalkeeper possession/throw in
 - Delay of game by the goalkeeper
 - Hand ball in the penalty area by the goalkeeper on a deliberate pass back to the goalkeeper by a teammate
 - Intentionally heading the ball (1st-6th grade; HS Co-Ed only)
- The referee signals an **indirect** free kick by raising one arm straight up in the air and keeping it raised until a second player touches the ball
 - During an **indirect** free kick, a goal can only be scored after touching a second player before crossing the goal line
 - If the ball goes directly into the opponent's goal, a goal kick is awarded
- The referee signals a **direct** free kick by holding one arm out in the direction where free kick is to be made
 - A goal can be scored from a direct kick without touching another player
- All free kicks are to be taken from where the infraction occurred
 - The ball must be stationary
 - The kicking team may either request ten (10) yards of space or kick the ball immediately
 - If a team requests ten (10) yards, the kick can only be taken after a whistle
- A player may **NOT** re-kick a free kick until another player touches the ball

- If this occurs, an **indirect** free kick will be awarded to the opposing team
 - A team **CANNOT** score **against itself** directly from any free kick
- If this occurs, a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team

• PENALTY KICK

- Any **direct** free kick within the defensive penalty area results in a penalty kick
 - The ball is spotted on the “penalty spot”,
 - All players except the kicker and goalkeeper must be behind the 18-yard line,
 - No other players may enter the penalty area until the ball is kicked,
 - The goalkeeper must keep at least one foot on any part of the goal line until the ball is kicked,
 - The kick is started with the referee’s whistle, and
 - The ball remains in play if a goal is **NOT** scored and ball does **NOT** go out of bounds

• INJURIES

- Referees are instructed to stop play with a whistle for an *appearance* of an injury to a player
 - For all age groups, the referee will stop play, immediately, for any head/neck injuries
 - For 1st thru 4th grade, the referee will stop play, immediately, for any injuries
 - For 5th-12th grade, the referee may continue play during a goal scoring chance for other injuries
- When play is stopped, coaches should direct players to **walk in place** rather than take a knee
- If there was no infraction and the ball was in play during stoppage, play will resume with a dropped ball to the team that had possession at the time of stoppage
- Injury time is only given if substantial time was lost; must be directed by a Board Member

• GOALKEEPER

- The goalkeeper may touch the ball with **ANY** part of the body, but **ONLY** within the penalty box
- A ball that is *intentionally* (in the referee’s opinion) passed by a teammate with any part of their body to the goalkeeper, the goalkeeper **MAY NOT** use his/her hands to play the ball
 - If the ball is handled, an **indirect** free kick is awarded where the infringement occurred
- After picking the ball up, the goalkeeper must release the ball within *eight seconds*
 - If goalkeeper does not release ball in time, an **indirect** free kick is awarded at top of penalty box
- Once outside the penalty box, the goalkeeper is considered another field player

• **SCORING**

- A goal is scored **ONLY** when the ball completely crosses over the goal line between goalposts

BLOWOUT APPROACH- Applies only to Grades 3-HS

Age Group	Up By	Play Down
3-4, 5-6, 7-9G and HS COED	5	1 player
3-4, 5-6, 7-9G and HS COED	6 or more	2 players
7-9B	5	1 player
7-9 B	6 or more	2 players
7-9 B	07 or more	3 players

SPECIAL FESTIVAL RULES FOR GRADES 1 AND 2

- **Format:** The Format is 5 v 5 including a goalie on a roughly 25 by 30 -yard field. This means there will be 4 field players and one player serving as a goalie. Each team will split into two squads of 5 - 9 players who will play three 15-minute games. Each squad of players will need its own coach. Players are encouraged to develop problem solving through on-field experience. Therefore, coaches remain on the sideline to manage the subbing. The ending of the 15-game is signaled by a loud whistle blown by the Festival Leader.

- **Coaches remain on the Sideline:** Players are encouraged to develop problem solving through on-field experience. Therefore, coaches remain on the sideline to manage the subbing.
- **Subbing:** Subbing will be done, “On the fly,” and from the sideline at the discretion of the coach. The idea is to give all players equal playing time during a festival mini game. Goalie substitutions are the exception. For goalie subs, wait until the ball goes out of bounds then pause the game (raise your arm, hold the ball) until the new goalie is ready.
- **Kick Ins:** When the ball rolls out of bounds, it is returned to play via a kick in from the sideline at the point at which it rolled out.
- **Corner Kicks and Goal Kicks-** will be awarded accordingly by the referee when the ball goes over the endline.
- **Time between games:** There is a 5-minute break between each game. The break is also time for water and to get your squad ready for the next game. You may make changes to the players on a squad before moving on to the next game.
- **Keeping Score:** Score is not kept. The focus is not just on scoring but on meaningful touches.
- **Sharing Players:** The ideal number to play in a game is 5 v5, however a squad may begin with 4 players. Players may be loaned from one team to another with the focus on maximizing playing time for all players.

SPECIAL BUILD OUT LINE RULE FOR 3RD/4TH GRADE GAMES

- The Build Out Line is a line on the field roughly halfway from the mid-line to the penalty box on both sides of the field.
- When a goalie picks up the ball or a goal kick occurs, the opposing (offensive) team has to retreat behind the build out line. This allows more space for the ball to come out and play to develop.
- The opposing team can move back over the build out line towards the goal when a second player touches the ball after the goalie puts the ball back into play (throws, rolls, or kicks the ball) or the ball comes to a complete stop.
- The opposing team has to make a reasonable effort to move back – if the ball is put back into play before they fully cross the line, then they can resume normal play

• PLAYING TIME AND POSITIONS

- **3RD-12TH GRADE:** No player is permitted to play more than ¼ of the game MORE than any other player (barring injuries). For example, if one player only plays half of the game, then no player is permitted to play more than ¾ of that game
- **3RD-6TH GRADE:** EVERY player should have an opportunity during EVERY game to play at a position OTHER than defender and goalkeeper for at least ¼ of the game.

- **COACHES ON SIDELINES**

- There are only THREE (3) coaches allowed on the sidelines (exception – 1st grade, which may have 4). Others should remain on the spectator's side of the field, behind the "setback" line

- **LINESPEOPLE**

- Individuals acting as lines people CANNOT "coach" or otherwise instruct any players during the game, including when the ball is out of bounds.
- Unless the linesperson is an assigned assistant referee by the LSC referee coordinator, the linesperson's job is to raise a flag when the ball is out of bounds (which occurs when the ENTIRE ball is outside the line); the REFEREE is the only individual who determines which team gets possession, or if a team is offside

- **FIFA RULES**

- FIFA rules will apply in all cases not covered by these rules