

**WE ASK THAT ALL PARENTS PLEASE READ THESE CAREFULLY AND COMPLETELY**

**Gilford Parks and Recreation Department  
2020 Gilford Youth Soccer Fall Program**

Rules & Regulations/General Program Guidelines  
For Players, Parents, and Coaches

**Please review separate COVID-19 Safety Procedures that must be followed this season!**

1. We must try to begin all practices/games at the scheduled start time - **5:30 PM**. Due to the progressively decreasing daylight, it is **IMPERATIVE** that we start playing on time. **Please try to get children to their scheduled field 10 - 15 minutes before practice/game time.** There may be times where we will be delayed starting due to waiting for all players to show up to play. In spite of this, we ask that you please be patient and continue to be punctual throughout the season.
2. All Major and Minor teams will be scheduled for three initial practices beginning the week of September 8<sup>th</sup> with games to start later the following week. Grades 3-5 will be playing primarily on Monday and Wednesday evenings and Grades 1-2 will be playing Tuesday and Thursday evenings. **Please be sure to note the location of each practice/game,** as we will be using fields throughout the Gilford Village area. The “Village Field I” is located at the Village Field between the Bandstand and the Tennis Courts and “Village Field II” is located between the Varsity Baseball Infield and the Cal Ripken Youth Baseball Field. The Cemetery field is located on the grassy area to the cemetery side of the Elementary School Parking Lot. The Imagination Station Field is located behind the Elementary School, beyond the Imagination Station Playground. The “HS Practice” Field is located in the left field of the Varsity Softball Field, adjacent to the parking lot at the High School.
3. Games in the Grades 3-5 Division will consist of two 20 minute halves, with a 5 minute halftime. Games in the Grades 1-2 Division will consist of four 8 minute quarters with a five minute halftime. Coaches may however come to a consensus to shorten these periods due to a shortage of players, late start time, darkness, etc. Parents on the sidelines can be asked to help keep the time at each game.
4. Coaches should give all players equal playing time and equal rest. The minimum playing time for each player is ½ of each game they attend. The minimum playing time may be reduced, for reasons of injury, illness, tardiness or disciplinary action. **Players will be expected to make every attempt to attend all scheduled games AND practices.**
5. The teams as they now exist carry approximately 13-14 players in grades 3-5 and 13 players in grades 1-2. Games are scheduled to be played 9v9 (Goalie included) for grades 3-5 and 7v7 (Goalie included) for grades 1-2. Unfortunately, not all players are always present at each game. In these situations coaches in each division may come to a tentative agreement **before** the game how many players will occupy the field. This decision will be driven by how many players are present on each team at start time. Substitutions may be made freely during the game, on any whistle/stoppage of play.

6. Coaches should keep the games fairly low-key in the beginning of the season. We have approximately 117 children (7 teams plus 3 PeeWee Groups) participating in the program this fall. Their experience ranges from the first time kicking a soccer ball to having played 2-4 years and participating in summer soccer camps and travel leagues. Some may take longer to grasp a principle or skill while others may already possess such skill. Once the season has progressed some, and the players are more comfortable on the field, more technical skills, plays, etc., can be employed, and rule violations will be called more tightly, particularly in the Major Division.

7. Coaches should be aware of any potential head injuries that may result in a concussion. Any child who has taken a severe blow to the head and/or is complaining of concussion like symptoms should be removed immediately from the game or practice and their parents should be notified. Any player displaying obvious concussion symptoms should seek immediate medical care. Any player who has been diagnosed with a concussion will not be able to return to play until they have been given the okay by a physician. When in doubt, sit them out! For more info and online training, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/training/index.html>

8. We encourage each team to recruit parent volunteers to assist with the refereeing of each game. During most games however, the coaches will also need to help referee on the field. During the game, coaches should attempt to keep their players in their respective positions. Coaches/Referees are encouraged to stop play as necessary to explain rule infractions. This is a time to learn where to be and to not run freely around the field. Discipline is important for safety reasons as well as for learning to play fairly.

#### **Rule Specifications:**

##### **A. Slide Tackling**

1. There will be no slide tackling allowed at any level. If a player leaves his/her feet while going for the ball, a penalty will be called.

##### **B. Hand Balls**

1. **Grades 1-2 Division-** Deliberate hand balls will be called coaches/refs should remind/instruct players on the rule. If contact is incidental, play on.
2. **Grades 3-5 Division-** Hand balls will be called and enforced. (If a players arm is tight against the body and incidental contact is made, it should be a play on)

##### **C. Throw-Ins**

1. **Grades 1-2 Division-** During an illegal throw-in, play will be stopped, the coaches/refs will remind the player how to perform a proper throw-in and the player will try again. Only stop each play once per throw-in to keep the game moving as much as possible.
2. **Grades 3-5 Division-** All illegal throw-ins will be enforced and will result in a turn over. However, coaches/refs should explain the infraction and make sure the player understands what they did wrong.

##### **E. Off-Sides**

1. **Grades 1-2 Division-** Blatant Off-Sides will be called, coaches/refs should remind/instruct players what they did wrong, and no infraction will be enforced.
2. **Grades 3-5 Division-** Off-Sides will be called and enforced. Coaches/refs should explain the infraction and make sure the player understands what they did wrong.

(coaches/referees should make an attempt to remind/instruct players of off-sides during the course of play to prevent them from committing a violation)

## F. Field, Goal and Ball Sizes

1. **Grades 1-2 Division-** Smaller goals (6'X8') will be used and play will take place on a shortened field (Except for the Imagination Station Field where the regular goals will be used). Size 3 soccer balls will be used.
2. **Grades 3-5 Division-** Larger goals will be used and play will take place on the larger fields. Size 4 soccer balls will be used.

9. For safety/crossing purposes, we ask that parents please drive and park appropriately. Parking is available at the Gilford Village Field, in the Elementary School parking lots, and even in the Middle/High School parking lots, if necessary. There should be more than ample parking for all involved. Please drive cautiously along Belknap Mountain Road and in the Village Field when going to and from fields, as many children are out and about at this time. Also, at the Elementary School, please be sure to park in the designated parking lots/areas only – near the Imagination Station field, cars must remain behind the gated area, in the parking lot.

10. For safety purposes, **at no time should a child ever be allowed to climb on any of the goals.** If the goals on the fields are moved for any reason, they must be put back in place at the end of the game.

11. In the case of inclement weather, **unless otherwise notified by the Parks and Recreation Department or a coach,** players **and** coaches should show up for the games/practices. The coaches will make the final decision at the field prior to game/practice time whether or not to play. If the weather is extremely poor by 4:00 - 4:15 PM, and the coaches agree early to a cancelation or are notified of a cancelation by the Parks and Recreation Department, the coaches will try to notify their players. If in doubt, you may call the Parks and Recreation Department Office directly at 527-4722, or call the Parks and Recreation Department Program/Announcement Line at 527-4723. Also, due to inclement weather, games/practices may have to be stopped prior to completion. We will try to re-schedule any games cancelled or disrupted due to inclement weather. Re-scheduling will be primarily left up to the individual coaches, with notification to the Parks and Recreation Department to secure field space. Most Friday evenings and Saturdays are available for make-up games and practices. There is also some free field space on mid-week evenings as well.

12. We **strongly** encourage all parents to stay and watch the games/practices. This is important in terms of support for the kids and also in regards to having someone (parent, grandparent, etc.) available in the event of an injury or inclement weather. Parents who do not stay **must** be prompt picking up their children at the end of each game/practice. It is not the responsibility of the coach to have to transport a child - nor should a coach have to stay because a parent is late picking up his/her child. At least one coach must try to stay at the field until all team members have been picked up. Please, let's all try to work together to be punctual.

13. Parents on the sidelines will be asked to help on occasion with health screening, timing, officiating, and watching the sidelines. The coaches can't do it all, **so please try to cooperate if asked to help out.**

14. The scheduling of any extra practices is left up to the individual coaches who must coordinate these practices through the Recreation Department. Again, they are volunteers, and they will do their best to fit in convenient practices.

15. **Please help to pick up any litter/trash left on the field after the games** - every little bit helps! And please,...no glass bottles. Parents not involved with coaching or assisting the teams are asked to pitch in and help make sure the fields are clean at the end of each game/practice.

16. **ALL** children - players and spectators - are expected to behave appropriately while at the fields. There should be **NO CLIMBING ON THE BACKSTOPS, FENCES, GOAL POSTS, NETS, OR DUGOUTS.** No other inappropriate or unsafe behavior should be allowed. Parents must be sure to watch all their children, as the coaches are involved with the games and should not be expected to have to deal with such situations. Again, parents that are not involved with coaching or assisting the teams are asked to help out in this area.

17. Appropriate attire for the players is important. **Shin guards and mouth guards are required for all players.** **Cleats (no baseball cleats) are required** for the **3<sup>rd</sup>- 5<sup>th</sup> graders** and are **strongly recommended** for the **1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders.** Shorts or sweatpants should also be worn, depending on the player's individual preference. **Team t-shirts should be worn at all games.**

18. The basic philosophy of the program is for all the kids to have fun, while at the same time learning and developing soccer skills, learning to cooperate and to compete, and developing a true sense of sportsmanship. It is important to remember that sportsmanship involves **all** of us - teammates, opponents, coaches, parents, spectators, and officials. The coaches and the officials/referees do not have an easy job. While we may not always agree with all of their decisions, we must remember that they are volunteers and that they are doing the best they can as fairly as possible. Inappropriate/unsportsmanlike behavior is not acceptable in this program. Please let's all try to keep this in mind throughout the season.

19. Any items that are lost or found that are turned in during the course of the season will be kept at the Parks and Recreation Department Office at the Town Hall.

As the season progresses, any comments, suggestions, ideas, volunteers, etc., are gladly welcome. We are constantly striving every year to make changes and improvements to the program - but we can really only do it with your help!

And speaking of help, we still have some teams that could use some help and assistance with coaching the children. Please step forward if you can help in any way – the volunteers we have now can't do it all! Everyone has busy schedules, but we're all here for the kids, so give a hand where you can! Thanks!!!

Any questions,...call the Parks and Recreation Department Office at 527-4722 or check the Program Announcement Line at 527-4723.

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