



St. Marys Minor
Soccer Club

Association and Coaches' Handbook



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“At a young age winning is not the most important thing... the important thing is to develop creative and skilled players with good confidence.”

“Young players need freedom of expression to develop as creative players... they should be encouraged to try skills without fear of failure.”

- Arsene Wenger (Manager, Arsenal English Premier League)



1.0 Introduction

The St. Marys Minor Soccer Club is a community based, volunteer driven organization, with a history of providing quality soccer programs in our community. The St. Marys Minor Soccer Club is committed to promoting community participation and fitness for players of all ages, development and excellence, and a life-long passion for soccer. We provide players with excellent playing facilities, knowledgeable coaches, and the opportunity to better themselves through sport. Teams and training are adjusted to meet the needs of all players regardless of ability.

The St. Marys Minor Soccer Club accomplishes its mission, goals and priorities through collaboration and partnerships with the Soccer Ontario, Elgin-Middlesex Soccer Association, and other local Soccer Clubs, The Town of St. Marys, Tim Hortons Canada, and Canadian Tire Jumpstart, through the support and participation of local community groups and businesses, and through the time and efforts of community citizens who serve as Board members, volunteers, team coaches and staff. These partnerships help us provide an affordable, high quality soccer program for our local communities.

Our five priorities for 2020-2030 are: Respect and Inclusion, Participation, Player Development, Partnerships and Resources

These strategic priorities support the three goals of physical and social-emotional well-being, excellence and passion.

- *Well-being:* The St. Marys Minor Soccer Club is focused on physical activity and active living aimed at the overall health of our children, youth and adult players. Soccer is a highly physical activity, providing the necessary cardiovascular, strength and multi-directional movement necessary for the optimal growth and development. This goal includes ensuring the sport offers a cross-gender, low-cost and accessible activity that can be played at varying degrees from the purely recreational to the highly competitive.

- *Excellence:* The St. Marys Minor Soccer Club is committed to building a culture of excellence for players and coaches who wish to reach their competitive and development potential. The St. Marys Minor Soccer Club recognizes that development takes many forms, and children and youth who have a desire to excel should be provided with the best possible environment to help them realize their potential. In this spirit, The St. Marys Minor Soccer Club will, through its player development programs, ensure that St. Marys players and coaches wishing to aspire to higher levels have the required resources.



- *Passion:* Soccer is the most played sport in the world and the sport which enjoys more organized players in Canada than any other. A passion for the “beautiful game” will result in a broad array of positive physical, social and health outcomes for all involved. Building on positives and its increasing allure and popularity, the St. Marys Minor Soccer Club is committed to providing activities and opportunities that help inspire a passion and love for the sport of soccer, and community pride in St. Marys teams.

This guide has been designed to provide a general outline of what coaches and the team officials can expect during the summer soccer season and answers many of the questions that are posed to the club executives each year.

2.0 Coaching Philosophy

The purpose of this handbook is to establish a clearly defined policy of acceptable philosophy and conduct for St. Marys Minor Soccer Club coaches, players, and fans. St. Marys Minor Soccer Club embodies the spirit of inclusion, fair play, sportsmanship and participation. In accordance with St. Marys Minor Soccer Club guidelines, all coaches must agree to conduct themselves according to the philosophy below.

RIGHTS:

Coaches must respect and promote the rights of every individual to participate in sport.

Coaches:

- Will create an environment where every individual has the opportunity to participate in the sport.
- Will create and maintain an environment, which is accepting and free of fear and harassment.
- Will treat all children with respect, being positive and constructive at all times to all players and referees.
- Promote the concept of a healthy lifestyle on and off the pitch.

RELATIONSHIPS:

Coaches must develop a relationship with participants based on openness, honesty, mutual trust and respect.

Coaches:

- Avoid any behaviour that constitutes any form of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional neglect, bullying).
- Should promote the inclusion, welfare and best interests of all their athletes.



- Must take action if they have a concern about the behaviour of an adult towards a child. Actions should include contacting [SMMSC player safety contact](#) and working to report, investigate and remediate the issue.
- Should communicate with other organizations and individuals in the best interest of the athlete.

PERSONAL STANDARDS RESPONSIBILITIES:

Coaches must demonstrate proper behaviour and conduct at all times.

Coaches:

- Must be fair, honest and considerate to everyone participating in the session.
- Must be a positive role model for athletes at all times.
- Must promote fairness and sportsmanlike conduct before, during and after a game and practice. This includes but is not limited to: shaking hands with the opposing coach after each game, having my team members shake hands with the opposing team, encouraging my team members to cheer positively and in a sportsmanlike manner. Coaches will not tolerate negative cheering, trash-talking, abusive language or displays of anger or disrespect by a team.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS RESPONSIBILITIES:

Coaches must commit to ongoing training that ensures safe and correct practice at all times to maximize benefits and minimize the risk to participants.

Coaches:

- Will provide a safe and fun environment, which maximizes potential and minimizes risk or damage to the athlete.
- Will approach game officials with respect and communicate this expectation to players and fans.
- Will use positive language or actions and provide feedback in a positive way that empowers athletes to grow as players..
- Will actively promote the positive benefits to society of participation in sport.
- Will gain the qualifications appropriate to the level at which they coach.
- Will contact [SMMSC player safety contact](#) if an injury needs to be reported.

3.0 St. Marys Minor Soccer Club League Policies

The St. Marys Minor Soccer Club follows the Policies, Rules & Regulations of the Ontario Soccer and Elgin Middlesex Soccer Association. A full copy can be found in Appendix A. A copy of this document may also be obtained at [EMSA Policies and Procedures](#).



4.0 St. Marys Minor Soccer Club Coaching Policies

The St. Marys Minor Soccer Club follows the Canadian Soccer Association (CSA) Long Term Player Development strategy which is intended to provide each child with the opportunity for all-around growth and development, within a fun play environment. The role of the St. Marys Minor Soccer Club and its coaches, no matter the level of soccer played, is to help the players to be the best they can be, both as players on the field, and as citizens in our community.

Phase 1: Developing a "Love for the Game" (Age 5 to 7)

Phase 1 is not only the starting place for the program – it is the most important place! The One-with-One program provides an opportunity for parents to sign their children at the age of 5. The One-with-One uses an age-appropriate, child-friendly environment by starting out with fun, non-intimidating activities and games where the parent and child take the child's first steps (kicks) in soccer together.

Phase 2: Developing a "Love to Learn" (Age 8-12)

The years between eight and 12 have been called the "Golden Age of Learning". This is a time when children have become coordinated and well balanced and want to know more and do more. They are inquisitive, but in a very positive way. Phase 2 is the optimum time to develop the skills and to begin to develop the game savvy that will be so important in the later soccer years.

Phase 3: Developing a "Love to Compete" (Age 13 and Above)

Phase 3 is the first time in the LTPD program when the competitive aspect of soccer takes on any real importance. This is the graduation phase – moving into 11 vs 11 play. Even then LTPD downplays a result-oriented approach in the early stage of Phase 3. Maximizing abilities and minimizing deficiencies in a team format is the way for a coach to get results. But in doing so it limits the development opportunities of each player as they get positioned according to their strengths and weaknesses. As the "Team" concept becomes more important, and one team tests itself against another, the coach should be careful not to stifle and stereotype players too early by placing them in permanent field positions.

A more detailed version of this plan is available on the Soccer Canada and Ontario Soccer websites: [Soccer Canada Pathways](#) [Ontario Soccer Grassroots](#) [Ontario Soccer Talented Pathway](#)



Penalties & Suspensions

Should any parent(s), guardian(s), or player(s) disagree with the decisions of any coach with respect to any of these guidelines, complaints should be forwarded to the St. Marys Minor Soccer Club in writing. SMMSC adheres to a 24 hour policy. Coaches are asked to inform their player's families of the policy at the beginning of the season.

The Executive shall investigate the incident and listen to all parties. We seek to find a resolution that ensures that the season can continue positively. The Club's decision will always be final.

The St. Marys Minor Soccer Club teams represent the Town of St. Marys and surrounding municipalities and as such, should be expected to behave in a way that will make our Town proud of our soccer organization. It is therefore necessary to set out a code of conduct that all players and coaches should be expected to abide by. This code will be reviewed, by the coach, with the players at the start of the season and reinforced throughout the year.

Playing Time Policy

It is the policy of the St. Marys Minor Soccer Club that the role of the Club and its coaches, no matter the level of soccer played, is to help the players to be the best they can be, both as players on the field, and as citizens in our community.

Regardless of player caliber, every child should have equal playing time in each game at the Tier 3 Level.

While every effort will be made to ensure equal playing time for each player in each game at the Tier 1 and 2 level, equal playing time is not a given and cannot be expected during each game. Playing time is earned on a practice to practice and game to game basis and is subject to the following:

- the player adheres to the teams' practice schedule and other Club and team rules set out and communicated by the coach;
- the player's effort and dedication at practices meets the requirements of the team;
- the player commits to his/her best effort within a game;
- the player follows the coaches' instructions within the team's system of play, and,
- the game situation.



Coaching Clinics

The St. Marys Minor Soccer Club is committed to the growth of our coaches and will pay for all coaching courses for anyone wishing to enhance their coaching abilities. EMSA/EMDSL expects that coaches hold the coaching certification for the age group that you are coaching. All coaches in the Tier 2 division must achieve a certification. The dates and times of all coaching courses offered can be found at <https://www.ontariosoccer.net/coach-courses>.

Concussion Protocol:

The St. Marys Minor Soccer Club takes player safety seriously and follows Ontario Soccer adheres to Soccer Ontario Remove From Sport Protocol. Any injuries, regardless of the age of the player, should be reported to a player's caregiver. We live by the mantr of **WHEN IN DOUBT SIT IT OUT**. Details and the Soccer Ontario protocol can be found at [Concussion Centre](#).

Injury During A Practice or Game:

1. Record details of the incident including date, time, and circumstances around the injury.
2. Ask parents to contact you the following day to update you on player condition.
3. If there has been medical intervention, complete the linked [incident report](#) and email the completed form to drhern4@gmail.com.
4. Update SMMSC Player Safety contact via the email above, if there are any changes to the player's condition..

Coaching Considerations

All coaches are asked to submit a coaching application to the St. Marys Minor Soccer Club. All coaches must participate in a screening process with the Stratford Police Force and must present the screening certificate to the Club.

<https://www.policerolutions.ca/checks/services/stratford/index.php?page=crc>

Tournaments

Teams may only participate in tournaments sanctioned by the Soccer Ontario. Teams traveling must complete a Travel Permit and pay the required fee. The permit must be approved and signed by the SMMSA. The cost of one tournament per season will be paid by association.



5.0 St. Marys Minor Soccer Club Facilities

St. Marys Minor Soccer Club works in partnership with the Town of St. Marys to develop and maintain safe and accessible training and playing facilities for our players, coaches, game officials, families and the general public. Additional information and photos of these sites can be obtained at [Parks and Trails - Town of St. Marys](#), [St. Marys District Collegiate and Vocational Institute](#), and [Holy Name of Mary St. Marys](#).

Fields:

Meadowridge Park: 186 Southvale Rd, St. Marys, ON N4X1E8

- Turf fields (training, 7v7 and 9v9 games)
- Parking
- Accessible portable washroom

Solis Park: 67 Maxwell St. St. Marys, ON N4X0A2

- Turf fields (training, 11v11 games)
- Parking
- Accessible washrooms

St. Marys DCVI: 338 Elizabeth St, St. Marys, ON N4X 1B6

- Turf fields (training, u5 programme, 11v11)
- Parking
- Accessible portable washroom
- Lighting
- Indoor training and programming in two gyms

Westward Park: 269 Jones St. W, St. Marys, ON N4X0A3

- Turf field (training, 7v7 and 9v9)
- Parking
- Accessible portable washroom

Holy Name of Mary School: 161 Peel St., St. Marys, ON N4X1C8

- Turf field (training, 7v7 and 9v9)
- Parking
- Accessible portable washroom



Call Up Policy

From time to time, players may be asked to play on another team and/or a higher age group level team. The coaches of both teams will consult to ensure the player's physical and social development and agree to the player playing. When there are more than one team in an age group, players on the other team(s) will be asked to play first. If no players are available a younger player may be asked to play up. The requesting coach can then proceed to contact the player's parents/guardians for permission for the requested player to play on the team for the length of time agreed to all parties.

- Only three call ups can be used in a game.
- Over the course of the season a player may only be called up to play three (3) times.
- If a team has 11 (u12) or 15 (u14 and up) or more players of their own, they will use this as an opportunity for players to spend more time on the field of play.
- A player thus "picked up" and joining the team temporarily should not have more field-time during a game than a rostered player on the team.

Please see [EMDSL Rules and Regulations](#) for further details or contact Richard Farmer (EMDSL Rep.)

Game Officials:

The St. Marys Minor Soccer Club works with actively recruits young players to become certified as game officials. Our Club greatly values their commitment to ensuring our players compete and play fairly. All officials, regardless of age, must be treated with respect by players, coaching staff, and spectators.

Announcements

Announcements will be made on Facebook and Instagram if games are cancelled due to weather. Coaches may also set up a team group in an app to communicate with their players and families.

Sponsorship

Sponsorship for teams representing the St. Marys Minor Soccer Club and involved in programs of the St. Marys Minor Soccer Club, is most welcomed. All sponsors of St. Marys soccer teams have to be approved by the Club.