



Alexandria Soccer Association
Travel Program
HANDBOOK FOR TEAMS AND PARENTS

Second Edition v2

ASA Travel Program

Handbook for Teams and Parents

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1 – Overview

The Travel Soccer Program is an important component of the Alexandria Soccer Association (ASA), the club that sponsors youth soccer in the City of Alexandria. The purpose of this handbook is to inform parents so that they understand:

- The mission, objectives and policies of ASA’s Travel Soccer Program
- How we operate our travel teams
- How we make decisions on our teams
- How to advise and guide their son or daughter regarding his or her participation on our teams
- How they can contribute to the success of the team.

We believe this handbook will guide teams and promote the positive and fun environment that players and parents seek when they join a travel soccer team. This handbook is also intended to help parents and, by extension, the players themselves understand the commitment families make as their sons and daughters join one of our teams. It also describes the objectives and operations of our teams, all of which operate in accordance with this handbook.

For the purpose of this handbook, we define the “team” as the coaches, parents and players of any one of our teams. The term “group” will refer to all the coaches, parents and players affiliated with our travel soccer teams in a particular age group of boys or girls. The term “parent” or “parents” will refer to the parent(s) or guardian(s) responsible for the day-to-day care of the player.

ASA considers its officials, coaches, managers, players, and players’ parents to be members of the club.

2 – Mission and Objectives

The ASA Travel Soccer Program exists to provide the Alexandria community’s most talented youth soccer players, irrespective of financial means, the opportunity to:

- Learn how to play the game of soccer at a very high level
- Develop individual skills to realize their full potential
- Play in a successful and positive team learning environment
- Develop a fuller understanding of sportsmanship, responsibility and personal accountability
- Have a lot of fun in achieving all of this.

3 – Travel Program Governance

The Travel Program is governed by the Travel Program Executive Committee, which includes the Travel Commissioner, the ASA’s representatives to each of the leagues in which our teams play, a treasurer and two at-large members. The Travel Commissioner is the chief officer of the travel program and serves on the ASA Board of Directors. All

policy decisions of the program are made by the Travel Commissioner and/or the full travel committee and are subject to the club by-laws of the ASA.

4 – Our Teams

ASA teams play in the National Capital Soccer League (NCSL), the Washington Area Girls Soccer League (WAGS) or the Old Dominion Soccer League (ODSL), the premier boys and girl's leagues in the Washington metropolitan area.

ASA operates boys and girls travel teams at age levels from U9 to U19. At least one, but preferably two, boys and girls U9 teams will be established each year in the spring to prepare for the inaugural season in the fall. When there are two U9-U11 teams of the same gender in the same age group, ASA will seek to hire a single coach or team of coaches to lead both teams and will operate the teams as a single operational entity as much as possible.

5 – Adult Roles on the Team

Each of our teams has a coach and a team manager. The responsibilities of the coach and the manager are outlined below:

Coach

The Coach is responsible for the composition of the team and is the leader on the field. He/she is also responsible for developing the players individually and as a team. Specifically, the coach:

- Manages practices and determines the team's training regimen
- Makes all game decisions including formations, player positions, playing time and game strategy
- Is the only representative of the team authorized to address officials before, during, and after games
- Recommends tournaments, off-season training programs, and other development activities
- Makes all roster decisions and evaluates and selects new players when needed
- Generally communicates to the parents through the manager; occasionally addresses the parents on overall direction and performance of the team
- Communicates with individual parents periodically to discuss their player's progress
- Completes a formal player evaluation form at the end of each season for each player (U9-U14 years).

The coach does not have any responsibility for the operation of the team beyond his work on the field. In the absence of the coach at a practice or game, the coach will work with the manager to designate a replacement. Teams in the same U9-11 age group, either boys or girls, will have the same coach if at all possible.

Coaches **must**:

- Create a positive learning environment for all players
- Contribute to a positive community environment for the parents, players and coaches of the group
- Treat all players, their parents, team managers, opposing teams, referees, tournament officials, league officials, ASA officials, and other coaches with respect, fairness and courtesy at all times
- Use good judgment in discussing the performance, skills or progress of any player, generally holding such discussions privately with the player or parents
- Respect the role of the manager as the chief of team operations and principal communicator to the parents
- Publicly and privately support the mission, objectives, policies, rules and values of ASA and the league at all times.

A single egregious violation of this policy or a pattern of such behavior may result in removal of the coach from the team, group or Travel Program.

Manager

The Manager is a parent responsible for overall operation of the team. The manager:

- Represents the team within the club and the league and to opposing teams
- Serves as the liaison between the coach and the parents
- Ensures that the team, its officials and players are properly registered
- Arranges for practice fields and sets the practice schedule in coordination with the parents, the coach and ASA
- Selects other parent coordinators and assigns tasks
- Works with the Director of Coaching in the selection of a new coach should the position become vacant
- Coordinates all team operations with the help of other parent coordinators
- Makes key operating decisions (with input from the coach and the parents, as appropriate) about team policy, tournament selection, practice schedule, coach's employment and salary, budget, roster size and other important issues
- Keeps the parents and coach informed of developments
- Addresses all issues regarding the team raised by individual parents.

Groups of teams in the same age group, either boys or girls, will have a lead manager who sets the long-term direction of the group with the coach, coordinates operations across teams, and drives the group to operate in a unified manner as much as possible. The Travel Commissioner will select the lead manager from among the team managers.

Managers **must**:

- Treat all players, their parents, team managers, opposing teams, referees, tournament officials, league officials, ASA officials and other coaches with respect, fairness and courtesy at all times

- Promote a positive community environment among players, parents and coaches of all teams in the group
- Refrain from discussing the performance, skills or progress of any player
- Respect the role of the coach as the chief of field operations and player personnel
- Publicly and privately support and adhere to the mission, objectives, policies, rules and values of ASA and the league at all times
- When they arise, inform the Travel Commissioner of any issues within the group that may cause significant dissatisfaction to parents, players, coach or club, or any issues that could result in disciplinary action by the league or the club
- Not allow his or her responsibilities to -- or interest in -- any other youth sport conflict with the best interests of ASA, the group of teams or the team.

A single egregious violation of this policy or a pattern of such behavior may result in removal of the manager from his or her position.

Selection of the Coach and the Manager

Coaches are selected for all teams by the Director of Coaching and approved by the Travel Commissioner. At the end of any season, a team or group of teams (if two or more teams are operating together) may remove the coach with a majority vote of the parents and the approval of the Travel Commissioner. Once approved, the team(s) will inform the Director of Coaching of the vacancy. ASA may remove a coach for any reason at any time with the approval of the Travel Commissioner.

The Travel Commissioner will select the manager. The team may remove the manager with a majority vote of the parents and the approval of the Travel Commissioner. ASA may also remove the team manager for any reason at any time with the approval of the Travel Commissioner.

Other Roles and Parent Involvement

All teams have a treasurer, an assistant team manager, a team sportsmanship liaison, a uniform coordinator, and an assistant coach, and may have an equipment coordinator, a registrar, a fundraising director, and a tournament and camp coordinator. These roles are discussed in Appendix A. Qualified parents may also serve in the role of assistant coach for any team. Parents may only serve as head coach of an ASA ODSL team with the approval of the Director of Coaching. A parent may serve as interim head coach for an NCSL or WAGS team with the approval of the Director of Coaching.

All families are expected to contribute their time in one way or another to support the operation of the team. This could include helping transport other kids to games when their parents cannot make it, calling other parents as part of a formal or impromptu phone tree, providing snacks, participating in fundraising activities, putting up or taking down goals on our home field, or acting as a sideline official.

6 – Team Formation and Composition

Roster

In U9 and U10, each ASA team will have 12 slots on the roster. Each team will fill roster slots through open tryouts in late May or June. Existing players in an age group may be asked to move from one team to the other at the discretion of the coach at the end of each season. Over time, the team will need more players as the number of players on the field increases to 8 in U11 and to 11 in U12. The chart below shows the number of field players, the maximum roster size, and the target roster size for each age group:

Age Groups	Field Players	Max. Roster Size	Target Roster Size
U9-U10	7	12	11-12
U11- U12	8	14	12-14
U13-U16	11	18	16 to 18
U17+	11	22	18 to 22

Tryouts

During the months of May and/or June of the U8 year, ASA's Director of Coaching and/or the assigned coaches hold a number of tryout sessions over a period of weeks and selects players for the new boys and girls U9 teams. To be eligible, a player must turn nine years old between August 1 and July 31 of the U9 year.

All existing teams must hold open tryouts in May or June for the following year's team and may hold tryouts at other times of the year, subject to league rules, to fill vacant spots on the team. Teams must advertise the tryout dates, times and location on the ASA and league website. **The parents of all new U9 players are required to read this handbook prior to a player's acceptance as a member of any of our teams.**

Playing in a Higher Age Group

A player may try out for a team at the next age level including U9 (subject to league rules) if no travel team exists in the player's own age group or if the player can demonstrate skills and maturity that are extraordinary for someone of his or her age. The number of players playing up on one team is governed by the rules of the team's league, but typically cannot exceed two players per team in the U9-U11 years.

Teams at the U12 level or below must receive approval from the ASA Travel Committee prior to registering an underage player. Teams at the U13 level and above do not need approval from the ASA Travel Committee unless the invited player would be moving from another ASA team and the manager or coach of that team objects to the movement of that player. Teams must abide by the decision of the Travel Committee. If time is of the essence and a decision must be made prior to the next meeting of the Travel Committee, the Travel Commissioner may decide on behalf of the Travel Committee.

Player Retention

With each new team, ASA seeks to build a cohesive group of girls or boys that stays together for years to come. There will be times, however, when a player's continued membership on the team will become untenable for one or more of the following reasons:

- The player has not demonstrated the playing ability to make the roster in the next season, given the quality of existing and candidate players, as judged by the coach
- Lack of ability to be effective within our team environment or show appropriate respect to our coach or other parents
- Lack of commitment to the team as evidenced by repeated unexcused absences or frequent late arrivals at practices and/or games or ongoing conflicts with other activities that hinder the team's ability to achieve its objectives
- Repeated instances - or a single egregious instance - of poor sportsmanship or other negative behavior considered to be not in the best interests of the team or ASA by the player or his/her parents
- Repeated violation of the policies delineated in this handbook by the player or his/her parents
- Lost interest in playing soccer or playing with the team.

When these situations arise, the coach or parent should raise the issue with the manager and the manager will discuss the situation with the player's parent or guardian. It will be the manager's responsibility to resolve the matter in a manner that is fair to the player, the coach and the team; sensitive to the player; and respectful of the parent(s). These issues should be raised when they arise, but except in the case of repeated instances of poor sportsmanship, the team will strive to delay decisions regarding player status until the end of that season. Parents are encouraged to do the same since it is generally difficult for a team to fill an open slot during the season.

New Players

From time to time, a player will leave the team for one reason or another, opening up a slot for a new player. The manager and the coach will be responsible for identifying candidates for the slot. ASA travel players will receive consideration first for any open slots on any of our teams. The pool of candidates for any open roster slot need not be limited to existing ASA travel players, so we encourage parents to submit names of candidates who do not yet play for the our travel teams.

The coach will be responsible for trying out the candidates and may decide to invite candidates to play on the team as guest players during tournaments. This will facilitate the evaluation of candidates under game conditions and allow the coach to assess the candidates' fit with the rest of the team.

The coach will select new players based on:

- Demonstrated soccer ability and skills
- Past performance on other teams, particularly our own teams
- Potential as a soccer player

- Personal maturity
- Ability to learn and play within our team environment
- Potential fit of player and parents with our existing players and parents
- Commitment of player and his parents to playing with the team
- Ability to meet all ASA and league requirements.

When the coach selects a new player, the manager will communicate the decision to the team's existing parents and will extend the offer to the new player's parents. The parents of all new players will be required to read this handbook prior to a player's acceptance as a member of any of our teams.

We will not select players based on a family's ability to pay the team's full fee, rather ASA and the team will commit to supporting players with financial limitations to the extent practical. Families with financial limitations must make their situation known to the manager, who will determine the level of subsidy in consultation with the ASA Travel Commissioner and the team's treasurer. In particular, ASA and the team will make every effort to minimize costs for families whose player is on the free and reduced lunch program at his/her school.

The parents of all new players are required to read this handbook prior to a player's acceptance as a member of any of our teams.

7 – The Soccer Calendar and League Play

The soccer year begins in August and ends in June. Key activities during the soccer year are listed in the chart below:

Activity	Timing
Fall practice begins	August (first week)
Pre-season tournament	Late August and/or Labor Day Weekend
Fall season	September (second weekend) to November (second weekend)
Fall tournament(s)	Columbus Day weekend or post-season in November
Winter training or indoor soccer	November to late February
Spring practice begins	Late February or first week of March
Pre-season tournament	March
Spring season	April (first weekend that is not Easter) to June (second weekend)
Spring tournament(s)	Memorial Day weekend or post-season in June
Summer training or camp	As scheduled on a year-to-year basis

No league games are scheduled on Labor Day, Columbus Day, Easter or Memorial Day weekends. Most of our teams play in tournaments on Columbus Day and Memorial Day weekends.

League Schedules

A league season – either spring or fall -- generally consists of 8 or 9 games, played once per week on Sundays. During some seasons, the team may have one weekend where it

plays on both Saturday and Sunday. Occasionally, the team may have a bye weekend when there is no scheduled game. Games cancelled due to weather are rescheduled for a subsequent Saturday during the season, most often on the next weekend.

Each of the travel leagues publishes schedules each spring and fall season. While the manager will distribute the schedule along with a contact list and directions to each game site, parents and players can also visit the league's website, either **WAGSL.com**, **NCSL-soccer.com** or **ODSL.org**, depending on the team. Each of the league sites contains the schedule, information on league rules, directions to fields, game results and division standings.

Game Rescheduling and Forfeits

The league reschedules games that are cancelled or ended early due to weather. The leagues and ASA do not distinguish between a regularly scheduled game and a rescheduled game. ASA and its teams have no influence over the scheduling of NCSL and WAGS make-up games since the leagues use field and referee availability as their criteria for setting the date and time. Therefore, teams must honor the date and time of a rescheduled NCSL or WAGS game just as much as a regularly scheduled game.

NCSL and WAGS coaches and managers should never contact the league to discuss rescheduling a game. They should also recognize that agreements made with an opposing team's coach or manager to reschedule a game at a particular time and place will not be honored by the league without their approval. ODSL teams are encouraged to contact the opposing manager and see if he or she is willing to reschedule the game. The opposing team has no obligation to agree to reschedule the game.

The team manager and the coach should do everything in their power to field a team for all games. The leagues consider forfeiting a regularly scheduled or make-up game to be one of the most egregious offenses that a team can commit. A forfeit:

- Results in an automatic loss of the game, which affects the team's record and its ability to move up or maintain its position in its division
- May affect a newer team's first placement within the league's division structure, a very serious consequence, particularly if the team is slotted in the lowest division initially
- May affect the club's ability to enter new teams in the league in the future, an even more serious consequence
- Has an impact on the scheduled referees and reduces the number of games for our scheduled opposing team, its players, coaches and parents and any of the ASA team's players who were committed to playing the game.

A team must forfeit if several of its players will be absent from the game due to a commitment to a school, religious, or scouting event, or any other activity that would preclude their attendance at the game. **A team must never forfeit a game so that several of its players may participate in a game, practice or tryout in another sport.**

Teams in danger of forfeiting should check the league rules to determine what constitutes a forfeit. A team may be able to fulfill its commitment and still play the game even it is short of the standard number of players on a side.

If a team has determined that it must forfeit the game, the manager must notify ASA's league representative and the opposing team's manager as soon as possible.

Team Records and Standings

Official league records of wins, losses and ties are not posted in U9-U10 in NCSL, in U9-U11 in WAGS or in U9 in ODSL. The record of the team in the first season when records are posted will determine its placement in a league division in the following year.

Each league has multiple divisions, with Division 1 being the highest. Each division has up to 10 teams. Once slotted in a division, the team can “move up” or “move down” a division based on its season record. After initial placement in a division, each team will set an annual goal to maintain its division status or “move up”.

Records are based on a points system. A team is awarded 3 points for a win and 1 point for a tie. Generally, the two or three teams in a division (except Division 1) with the most points move up a division and the bottom 2 or 3 teams move down. Teams finishing in lower half of the last division of WAGS or NCSL are subject to being dropped from the league.

8 – Practices and Games

Practices

Practices are the most important factor in the team's ability to achieve its objectives. It is also one of the principal vehicles for developing individual skills during the year.

Practices are run by the coach, whose objectives are to:

- Teach players the skills and sense for the game that they need to develop into top-notch, team-oriented soccer players
- Teach the players the principles of sportsmanship, responsibility and accountability
- Build a strong sense of team among the players and coach
- Prepare the players for upcoming games.

Practices begin in August prior to the fall season and in March prior to the spring season and continue through the last week of each season. The team will practice 2-3 times per week, generally on weekday afternoons or evenings. Teams of the same gender and age group will practice together to the extent possible. Prior to the beginning of each spring and fall season, the team managers will work with the parents and the coaches to set the practice days and times, subject to field availability. Practice times may be changed when Daylight Savings Time begins or ends.

While parents are welcome to attend practice, they should stay off the field and should not participate unless called upon by the coach. Parents may have informal conversations with the coach before or after practice as long as it does not interfere with the coach's work.

In addition to practices, the team may schedule scrimmages with other teams to prepare for regular season games or tournaments.

Games

ASA teams have five objectives for games:

- Execute in the games what the coaches teach in practice
- Work as a team to win the game
- Exhibit the highest degree of sportsmanship
- Protect players from unsafe playing conditions
- Promote a positive environment where the players can have fun and be proud of their collective and individual efforts and accomplishments.

While each team will aim to win, we will not do so exclusively at the expense of other objectives outlined in this document.

Games are played in two halves with varying lengths based on the age group as shown below:

Player Year	Time per Half
U9-U10	30 (25 in ODSL)
U11	30
U12-U14	35
U15-U16	40
U17+	45

Players should be at the field with the coach, fully dressed and ready to warm up at least 45 minutes prior to game time unless otherwise directed by the manager. We encourage parents to give themselves extra time when driving to away games.

Half of our league games are played at home in Alexandria. ASA travel teams play either at Potomac Yards Field, Ft. Ward Park, Minnie Howard Park, or Ben Brenman Park. In some cases, home games may be played outside of Alexandria to accommodate the scheduling of referees. Away games are played at destinations usually within a 15-45 minute drive in U9 and U10 and usually within 15-60 minutes in U11 and beyond. Occasionally, an away game may require a trip of over an hour.

Player's Responsibilities

At every practice and game, players should:

- Show up on time ready to respect and listen to the coach(es)
- Bring a water bottle or sports drink
- Bring the player's team backpack and soccer ball (if not supplied by the team)
- Bring the alternate uniform (games only)
- Wear shin guards, socks over the shin guards and soccer footwear, and be appropriately dressed for the weather conditions.

In addition to attending games and practices, every player is responsible for practicing on his or her own outside of the regular team practice sessions

Game and Practice Attendance

Being selected to play on an ASA travel soccer team provides a girl or boy with a special opportunity to play at a high level even at a young age. All players and parents should recognize that a decision not to attend practice or a game affects the entire team. During the spring and fall seasons, the team only plays 8-10 regular season games. Since there are so few games and the team's success largely depends on its record in game play, we expect players to attend all regular season games. Games that are cancelled due to weather and rescheduled are still considered regular season games. The expectation for attendance is the same for those games as it is for games that are not cancelled.

Attendance at practice is just as critical to the success of the team, but more critical to a player's individual development since most of any coach's teaching is performed during practice sessions.

While the team expects all players to attend all games and practices, it understands that players have other responsibilities that may require them to miss a game or practice occasionally. Players can be excused from a game or practice, with prior notification, for any of the following reasons:

- Prearranged family trip or important family event, issue or emergency
- Illness or injury
- Major event in another sport, for example, championship or all-star game (but not a regular season game, scrimmage or practice)
- Major event in a non-athletic activity, for example, school trip, play, concert or recital, or major scout event
- Academic reasons
- Religious observance or event.

The following are never approved reasons for missing a practice or game:

- Player does not wish to play or practice that day
- Parents do not wish to transport, or arrange for transportation, for the player.

If the player cannot attend a game or practice, the parents should contact the manager or coach as soon as they know of the conflict. If the player's parents are not able to transport the player to a practice or game, the player's parents should make arrangements with another player's parents to give him or her a ride. Parents can always call the manager for assistance in this regard.

Guest Players for League Games

Guest players are not permitted to play league games for our teams in NCSL or ODSL. However, WAGS allows a team to use up to three guest travel players from other travel teams in the same club during its league games. Coaches should use this provision primarily as a way to avoid forfeits or situations where the team would otherwise have two or fewer substitutes. The WAGS guest player provision should never be used as a way to increase a team's chances of winning a game. Under no circumstances should a guest player be used as a replacement for another player who is ready and willing to play in that game. Coaches are also encouraged not to play guest players to such an extent that their participation in the game significantly reduces the playing time of players on a team's roster.

Playing Other Sports

Playing multiple sports can cause conflicts that hinder the development and success of the team overall as well as the individual player. While ASA does not prohibit a travel player from playing two sports in one season (as some travel clubs do), the team expects each player to make the team's games and practices a high priority among extracurricular activities. This will become increasingly important as a team moves to U11 and beyond. A player may be allowed to attend a regular practice in another sport that is scheduled at the same time as soccer practice, but only with prior approval from the coach. However, regularly missing practice for this reason may affect the player's playing time in games. Parents are responsible for any other ongoing conflicts their player may have. **ASA prohibits a player from playing three sports in one season.**

ASA strongly recommends that teams avoid having more than two players on the same team in another sport that is played during the fall or spring soccer seasons. Having multiple players on the same soccer team and the same team in another sport gives rise to potential game conflicts than can result in forfeited games.

Playing Time

ASA believes that kids join sports teams to play games, not just practice. While our teams are committed to giving all players significant playing time in each game, inevitably, some players will play more than others. Decisions on playing time will always be within the sole discretion of the coach, however, parents should know that our teams strive to make the experience as positive as possible for every player and their parents, regardless of the player's role on the team. The level of a player's commitment to the team, as evidenced by attendance, promptness, effort and behavior at practice and games, will be considered in our coaches' playing time decisions. If a player or parent is disappointed with playing time or other issues related to game play, the parent should contact the manager to discuss.

Coach's Schedule Conflicts

From time to time, the coach will have a conflict. In those cases, the coach and manager will work to change the time, assign the assistant coach to fill in, or, in the case of a practice, cancel it. The team will not cancel games due to the coach's absence.

Field Use and Inclement Weather

Access to local fields is managed by the Alexandria City Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs (RPCA). As an "affiliated" group of RPCA, ASA enjoys broad access to City fields. Prior to each season RPCA assigns ASA its fields and issues a permit for the days and times when ASA can use them. Once fields are assigned to ASA, the club assigns selected fields to the Travel Program, which in turn schedules practice times for each team.

RPCA has the authority to close City fields on any day due to inclement weather. Parents and coaches may call the Youth **Sports Hotline at 703-883-4697** on any weekday after 3 pm to find out if the fields have been closed.

The City charges a fee for each player on the roster for use of the fields during the spring and fall seasons. An additional charge is levied for non-residents. RPCA also issues permits to ASA and charges an hourly fee for use of City fields in the off season.

Teams must follow the following rules related to field use:

- Teams are prohibited from using City fields except as assigned and in full compliance with any permit issued to ASA by RPCA.
- Teams may never use any field that has been closed by RPCA for any reason
- Teams must not use the fields or facilities of any other local jurisdiction or any public or private school at any time without written authorization
- Teams must not practice in the goal boxes of any natural turf field
- Teams must lock fields when they are the last to use them on any day
- No manager, coach, parent or player may contact RPCA at any time to reserve its own fields, discuss the closing of fields, or register any complaints about field assignments made by ASA or the Travel Program.

Teams are also encouraged to report unauthorized use of any field by any ASA or non-ASA group to the Travel Commissioner or ASA Fields Coordinator.

Goals and Equipment

ASA supplies the goals, nets and flags for small-sided games (U9-12 age groups) played on natural turf fields, including Potomac Yards and Brenman Softball. Goals for these games are stored at homes of members of the Travel Program. Goals for games played on synthetic turf ("turf") fields or for full-sided (U13 and older) games on natural turf fields are located permanently at the game fields, including Minnie Howard, Fort Ward and Brenman Soccer. Full-sided game nets and flags for natural turf games at Brenman Soccer are stored at the home of a member of the Travel Program. Information on equipment storage locations is published prior to each season.

As required, teams playing the first game of the day at a game field must pick up the required equipment from the storage location for their game field and set up the field at least one hour prior to game time. Teams playing the last game of the day must take down the equipment and return it to the assigned storage location immediately after the end of the game. Teams may not choose to hold onto equipment after any game. Small-sided goals used on turf fields must be removed from the field after the last game of the day. All equipment used on turf fields must be carried, not dragged off the field, to prevent damage to the playing surface.

Set-up and take-down assignments are listed with league schedule information on the league websites.

Referee Attendance at Games

ASA assigns referees for ODSL home games, but not for ODSL away games, or for any NCSL and WAGS games, home or away. NCSL and WAGS have complete responsibility for referee assignments and attendance. From time to time, the assigned referee may not arrive for the game. Team managers must know the league rules governing the absence of referees and act accordingly. NCSL and WAGS teams should not call the Travel Program officials about referee absence. ODSL teams may contact the ASA referee assignor on game days, but should also refer to ODSL rules.

STAR Referees

NCSL, in the U12-14 years, and WAGS, in the U12-13 years, supplement their group of regular referees with parents from travel teams. By a deadline prior to each season, each NCSL and WAGS team in those age groups must identify three parents or other relatives, 18 years or older, to serve as Special Team Assistant Referees (STAR refs). STAR refs must be certified at team or personal expense at the US Soccer Federation levels prescribed by the league. STARS must bring their referee uniform to games and be prepared to serve as an assistant referee if there are fewer than three league-assigned referees in attendance. Team Managers should ensure that at least one STAR is present at each league game. The leagues will reimburse the team for games worked by their STARS if the team submits a reimbursement form by a deadline after the season ends. Coaches may not serve as STARS.

9 – Tournaments

Tournament play represents 25-50% of all the games our teams play, so participation in them is important. Tournaments benefit our teams in the following ways:

- Afford kids the opportunity to play more games in a concentrated timeframe to execute what they have learned in practice and build their confidence in game situations
- Afford the coach the opportunity to evaluate players, formations, strategies and positioning prior to the start of a league season
- Afford new and existing teams an important opportunity to prepare for regular season play

- Furnish another opportunity for the kids to bond with each other, achieve together, and have a lot of fun
- Enable the team to evaluate candidates for the team in the future under game situations.

All ASA teams will play in at least two tournaments in each of the spring and fall seasons.

The major tournaments in Virginia and Maryland take place on Labor Day, Columbus Day and Memorial Day weekends and on non-holiday weekends in August, November, March and June. The manager will work with the coach, the club and the parents to determine which tournaments the team enters prior to the start of each season. The tournament coordinator will execute the decisions of the team by pre-registering the team, registering the team the night before the first game, and arranging for any logistics.

Generally, tournaments are held on a Saturday (two games) and Sunday (one game). If the team does well, it may play in a second game (the championship) on Sunday. In some cases, in tournaments that occur on a holiday weekend, there may be two games on Sunday and a championship game on Monday. All players are strongly encouraged to attend the tournaments we enter, however, ASA recognizes that playing on holiday weekends in particular may place an undue burden on a family.

Under the rules of most tournaments, the team may invite guest players to play with the team. Guest players must be players registered with the ASA house league or travel program or with travel soccer teams from other clubs. The team will invite guests at the coach's discretion, but in general:

- Teams should favor players from another ASA team when inviting guest players
- Invite other players as guests who are candidates to join the team in the subsequent season
- Ensure that the playing time of guest players will not significantly reduce the playing time of the team's regular players (although it should be noted that tournaments are tiring and having extra players can be helpful).

10 – Off Season Activities

ASA views the off-season periods (mid-November through February and mid-June through early August) as times for players and their parents to catch up on family, vacation and other activities, but also one that offers players an opportunity to work on their skill development. So, while players will be expected to participate in off-season activities, attendance at any given off-season game, scrimmage or training session will not be mandatory unless agreed upon by a majority of the team's parents. The team's off-season activities may include indoor soccer and/or training in the winter months and team training or camp in the summertime. The coach will propose these activities to the manager, who will work with the parents to make team decisions.

Teams are prohibited from holding any off-season practices or training sessions at any facility or field for which it does not have a permit from the government or other institution that owns or controls use of the field.

11 – Uniforms

All teams wear uniforms that are approved by the Travel Commissioner. The official uniform set includes one white jersey with black numbers, one red jersey with white numbers, one pair of red shorts and two pair of red socks. The ASA logo is placed on the left breast area of each jersey. A team may add a pair of white shorts to the uniform set at their own discretion and may wear warm-ups in the club colors of red and black. Each age group should keep extra uniform sets for guest players who join a team for tournaments.

All ASA teams must wear the official club brand (currently Adidas) and work directly through the club's official uniform and backpack vendors. The club does not stock, store, or distribute uniforms.

ASA teams generally wear red at home and white at away games. In cases of conflict at game time, the home team must change its jerseys so all players must bring both uniform sets to all games. The manager is responsible for coordinating uniform colors with the manager of the opposing team for each game.

12 – Team Communications and Decisions

The coach and the manager make the key decisions on behalf of the team, but should use good judgment to solicit input from the parents, when appropriate. No principal operating decision may deviate from ASA Travel Program policies without the approval of the Travel Commissioner or the by-laws of the ASA without the approval of the ASA President and the Travel Commissioner.

Players should speak to the coach directly when they have questions. Parents may contact the coach directly, but only occasionally, to discuss their player's skill level or development. When asked to do so, parents should respond promptly to the team manager or the coach as they strive to meet a variety of deadlines or make time-sensitive decisions.

The team will have parents' meetings before and after each season. Other meetings will be scheduled as needed. If the coach or any parent believes that the parents need to meet, they should contact the manager. The manager will keep parents apprised of all developments and will furnish all the information parents need on an ongoing basis. To ensure that the coach can focus his or her full attention on the success of the players in practice and games, the manager will coordinate communication between the parents and the coach.

13 – Team Finances and Player Fees

Travel soccer teams incur the following types of expenses:

- Coach's salary and expenses
- League (WAGS, NCSL or ODSL) and club (ASA) fees
- City field use fees
- Club fees
- Off season training and indoor soccer league fees
- Tournament registration fees
- Uniforms and backpack purchases
- Miscellaneous expenses for purchases of items such as equipment and first aid supplies.

Most teams have paid coaches, but they can be volunteers, with the approval of the Director of Coaching. Each season, the parents will decide on the coach's fees (if applicable), the amount of dues, player subsidies, and payment schedules. In the future, ASA may employ all travel coaches itself. If or when that occurs, the club will set and pay coach salaries and include those costs in its charges to teams.

Payments

Parents must pay their fees in full prior to the first league game each season. Failure to pay fees may result in suspension from the team until fees are paid, or with the approval of the Travel Commissioner, removal from the team altogether.

Teams must reimburse ASA for all expenditures made on their behalf by the payment due date. Such expenditures include those for league fees, Virginia Youth Soccer Association fees, fees charged by the City of Alexandria for use of fields and facilities, ASA player fees, Alexandria City non-resident fees, uniforms, backpacks, patches, and magnets.

ASA subsidizes scholarship players, those on the free and reduced lunch program in the public schools. Seasonal fees will be offset by credits for scholarship subsidization.

When a team is not timely with its payments to ASA, the Travel Commissioner may decide not to register the team in its league or deny access to practice fields, with the approval of the ASA President.

Refunds

ASA frowns upon premature departures of players that result in open roster spots at inconvenient times before or during a season. When a player leaves a team for any reason during a season or pre-season period, including the first U9 season, the parents may petition the team or group for a refund of a portion of fees paid. The team manager will have the discretion to decide if a refund is warranted. If the refund request is rejected, the parent may appeal to the Travel Commissioner, who may overturn the

decision. The Travel Commissioner's decision will be considered ASA's final decision on any refund petition that is appealed.

When petitioned for a refund, the manager should consider:

- Reason for the departure
- Timing of the departure
- Financial and roster impact on the team
- Budget resources already consumed
- Parent's handling of the situation (i.e., whether or not the parent was honest, forthright, and respectful of team and club interests in the way they handled the situation)

In granting a refund, a manager may reduce the pro-rata share of the team funds by an amount equivalent to the player's pro-rata share of any funds donated to the group or team or resulting from other team fund raising efforts.

14 – Player and Parent Conduct

No successful travel soccer team achieves its objectives without a high degree of teamwork. Our teams emphasize teamwork in all that they do, on and off the field. In practices and games, team play will be emphasized over individual achievement. All players will be expected to demonstrate a team orientation.

ASA believes that all officials, players and parents associated with our teams should exhibit appropriate respect and good sportsmanship at all times, on and off the field. A team's coach, manager, players and parents are all individually responsible for their behavior. The manager and the team sportsmanship liaison (TSL) will address issues regarding parent behavior, while the coach and parents should address the behavior of individual players. Appendix B contains the NCSL and ODSL Parent Codes of Conduct.

Parents will support the team's coach and players and contribute to creating the most positive environment possible for all involved. Parents must also be respectful of all other parents in the team or group.

The following parent behaviors are strictly forbidden and are cause for immediate removal of the player and parent from the team or group with the approval of the Travel Commissioner and the ASA President:

- Approaching a coach on at the site of any game or practice to complain or question the Coach's decisions or performance
- Publicly and willfully denigrating, intimidating or threatening the league, ASA, or any of their officials, the group, its teams, other ASA groups or teams, the coach, the managers, other parents or groups of parents, or any player or group of players in any forum, **including email**
- Recruiting parents to start another team or group, or to move to another club (also strictly prohibited by WAGS)

- Willful violation of ASA policies or by-laws or any attempt to undermine the vision and direction of ASA or the Travel Program
- Frequent breaches of acceptable behavior at games, practices, parent meetings or team events
- Any behavior that undermines the community of ASA teams, players, parents and coaches
- Refusal to pay fees
- Being removed from the sidelines of any game or tournament by a referee
- Any other single instance of egregious behavior.

Parent Behavior on the Sideline

All parents are expected to provide encouragement to the team and not to disparage the play of any player, including their own son or daughter. Parents need to recognize the difference between encouragement and coaching. Some parents may be inclined at times to yell out an instruction to a player, unaware that those instructions may be in direct conflict with the coach's instructions or teachings. Parents must refrain from "coaching" any kid, including their own, from the sideline of any game.

Parents should also refrain from second-guessing the coach, particularly in public. If a parent has problems with the way the coach handles practices or games, he or she is strongly encouraged to contact the manager, who will determine how to handle the matter with the coach. Under no circumstances should a parent ever approach a coach at the game location before, during or after a game to make suggestions or register complaints.

At NCSL and WAGS games, parents and other spectators must stand or sit on the opposite side of the field from the teams. We encourage parents to sit as a group to the left or to the right of the half line at NCSL and WAGS games. In ODSL, the team's parents and players sit on the same side across from the other team. For ODSL games, we encourage the team's parents to sit on one side of the half line and the team and the coach to be on the other side of the half line. All spectators must remain at least three yards off the sideline between the goalkeeper boxes and are prohibited from standing behind the end lines.

Parents and other spectators are prohibited from stepping onto the field before, during or after a game. Under no circumstances should a parent or player address the center referee or assistant referee (also known as "AR" or "sideline ref") for any reason, including the injury of any player, before, during or after a game. If a player is injured, the referee will call upon the coach to administer to the player first. If the coach believes that the injury is serious, he/she may then call upon a parent, relative or other team official to come onto the field with the referee's permission.

In addition to all of the provisions of this section, parents are expected to sign and abide by the parent code of conduct for the league in which their child plays. Parents in violation of club or league policies relating to parent behavior may be suspended or banned from being present the sideline of their child's games.

15 – Parent Rights

ASA policies are not just intended for teams, parents and players. We expect our managers and coaches to use good judgment, listen to parent concerns, and follow the rules too.

Therefore, parents always have the right to contact the manager regarding any issue that may arise or concerns they may have, particularly if the issue or concern relates to the coach, other players, other parents, team operations, schedules, fees, policies or decisions. If the issue relates to their child's development as a soccer player, playing time, behavior or disciplinary actions by the coach, the manager shall arrange a private meeting or phone call between the child's parent and the coach. If a parent does not believe that he/she can resolve the issue with the manager or coach to their satisfaction, then the parent has the right to contact the Travel Commissioner directly.

Parents have the right to solicit information from the coach after any practice to achieve a better understanding of what is happening in practices or games as long as such discussions do not involve criticism of the coach's methods or decisions.

Parents also have the right to respectfully express opinions about the operations of the team in parent meetings and in discussions with the manager.

Parents have the right, without retribution, to express concerns to the Travel Commissioner about any actual or perceived violation of ASA by-laws, Travel Program policies or procedures, or league rules by the coach, the manager, any other parent or any other player.

16 – Removal from the Travel Program

With the approval of the ASA President, the Travel Commissioner may remove any manager or coach from their position or remove them from the Travel Program at any time for the following reasons:

- Serious or repeated violation of the league, ASA, or Travel Program policies
- Child or children placed at unusual risk of injury or other danger
- Any action or pattern of actions that is/are not in the best interests of the group, team, individual players, or ASA
- Violations of league rules, policies or codes of conduct.

The Travel Commissioner may also remove a player or parent for any of these reasons with the approval of the ASA President. Any player or parent who violates ASA policies in the process or aftermath of communicating their intention to leave the club will be considered to be removed from the club.

If the Travel Commissioner determines that a team will not be reimbursing ASA for expenditures made on its behalf or that the team or its parents have exhibited a pattern of behavior or way of operating that is at odds with the mission, vision, objectives, operations and/or policies of ASA, the Travel Commissioner may, with the approval of

the ASA President, decide not to re-register the team or group in the subsequent season. In such an instance, ASA may seek to establish a new team or group in that age group. Parents who decide not to join the new team or group may be declared “removed” from the Travel Program by the Travel Commissioner.

When a parent is removed from the Travel Program, the player is automatically removed from the Travel Program as well. A player removed from the club because of his parent’s behavior or actions may be reinstated along with his or her other parent with the approval of the Travel Commissioner and the ASA President. However, the removed parent may not participate or be present at any ASA, group or team function, game or practice.

A parent or player may be reinstated in the Travel Program at any time with the approval of the Travel Commissioner and the ASA President.

17 – Launching a New Team

From time to time, a parent or group of parents may wish to launch a new travel team for players whose U9 fall season has passed. A parent representative from the new group must receive approval from the Travel Commissioner to launch the team within ASA.

If the parent or group intends to enter the team in NCSL or WAGS, the team representative must pay ASA a deposit equivalent to the league registration fee for the next league season. If efforts to form a team are still in process when the registration fee is due to the league, then ASA will pay the new team’s registration fee.

After the league fee is paid, if the team does not register a roster of players, ASA will attempt to secure a refund for the team representative. ASA will reimburse the team representative only for the amount, if any, refunded by the league.

Appendix A – Other Parent Roles

Treasurer

The Treasurer is a parent who manages the team's finances. Specifically, the treasurer:

- Develops and distributes the proposed team budget prior to each season, including a proposal for parent fee level
- Collects fees from parents
- Proposes other sources of revenue and receives committed funds from those sources
- Manages expenditures to the approved budget and authorizes expenditures by any team official
- Drafts checks for all expenditures
- Reports back to the parents periodically on the team's finances.

Each team must have a treasurer. Two teams operating as more of a single entity are encouraged to have one treasurer for the age group.

Assistant Coach

The assistant coach(es) is a parent(s) or volunteer(s) who:

- Helps the coach on the practice field
- Assists the coach on the team sideline at games.

Each team should have at least one assistant coach. Assistant coaches must be registered with the Virginia Youth Soccer Association (VYSA) to participate at games.

Assistant Manager

The Assistant Manager(s) is a parent who fills in for the manager at games when the manager cannot attend. Assistant managers must be registered with VYSA to participate at games. Each team must have at least one assistant manager.

Team Sportsmanship Liaison

The Team Sportsmanship Liaison is a parent who serves the team on the sideline at games to:

- Promote good sportsmanship among all those supporting our team and positive interactions with those supporting our team's opponent
- Admonish any parent, relative or friend of any of the team's players who exhibits poor sportsmanship
- Intervene in any situations that may result from instances of poor sportsmanship and work to resolve them.

Each team should have a team sportsmanship liaison.

Team Registrar

This function is particularly important for newly formed teams registering for the first time. The Team Registrar is responsible for:

- Review league registration procedures and schedule
- Gathering the necessary documentation from team players (official government birth certificate or passport and passport size photo)
- Preparing the roster and player passes
- Working with the ASA league representative
- Furnishing all documentation required to register the team with the league registrar.

Team registration is generally performed by the team manager, but a team may have a team registrar who performs this function.

Uniform Coordinator

The Uniform Coordinator is a parent who is responsible for making sure that all players are appropriately outfitted for game play. Specifically, the uniform coordinator will:

- Outfit each new player with uniforms and gear bag
- Arrange for new items for players as they grow
- Secure and distribute uniforms for any tournament guest players and collect them after the tournament.

Each team should have a uniform coordinator. Two teams operating as more of a single entity are encouraged to have one uniform coordinator for the age group.

Equipment Coordinator

The team is responsible for picking up the goals and nets from the storage site and assembling them if it plays the first game on its home field on game day. It is also responsible for taking down the goals and nets and transporting them to the storage site immediately after the game if it plays the last game on the home field on game day. The team's Equipment Coordinator is responsible for coordinating these activities. Other parents are encouraged to assist in putting up and taking down goals. The storage site for each home field is listed on the ASA web site.

A team may or may not have an equipment coordinator.

Fundraising Director

The Fundraising Director is a parent who is responsible for soliciting and securing donations from potential donors. Specifically, the fundraising director:

- Works the team's manager and parents to identify potential donors
- Recommends ASA funding for "scholarships" for players on the team who need relief from team fees

- Coordinates with the ASA fundraising director on soliciting donations, collecting pledged funds and ensuring that transactions are made appropriately
- Coordinates with the ASA treasurer to ensure that scholarship money and collected donations are transferred from the ASA bank account to the team's treasurer for deposit into the team's bank account.

A team may or may not choose to have a fundraising coordinator. Two teams operating as more of a single entity are encouraged to have one fundraising director for the age group.

Tournament and Camp Coordinator

The Tournament and Camp Coordinator is a parent who is responsible for executing the team's tournament and summer camp plans. Specifically the tournament coordinator:

- Pre-registers the team for team-approved tournaments and registers the team the day before the tournament begins (as appropriate)
- Coordinates team logistics for tournaments.
- Researches and proposes summer camps for the team (as appropriate).

A team may or may not have a tournament and camp coordinator.

Appendix B – League Parent Codes of Conduct

NCSL Parent Code of Conduct

Soccer is a wonderful sport and a passionate game. We should always remember our attitude is contagious. The referees, the players, the coaches and the fans should come together to match wits and skills. The other team is our opponent not our enemy and thus should be treated with respect.

While winning is important, playing well and fairly is the essence of the game. I/we will set a good example to my/our child in his soccer development by adhering at all times to the following:

- We will not criticize the referee openly or directly during or after games. Any criticism shall be done in writing (to my club or the NCSL), not verbally.
- We will only give positive feedback to players.
- We will cheer at all games within the spirit of fair play and shall do our best to cheer the effort regardless of the outcome. We will be mindful in "lopsided" games where cheering our own "winning" team might be misunderstood.
- We shall do our best to teach our players to become students of the game.
- We shall find the "little successes" that our children have during each match.
- We shall show the quality of our sportsmanship during and after each and every match and help our child remembers to thank the referee after the match without regard to the result.
- We shall do our very best to have our child prepared for every match.
- We shall support the learning effort of the players, the coaches and the referees by demonstrating our patience.
- We understand that improper behavior at a match may result in a parent being asked to leave the field by the referee, the TSL or a club official so the coach does not receive a yellow card caution or even a red card ejection due to the actions of the parent spectator.
- We shall leave the coaching to the coach during match. We shall do our best not to give our child instructions during the match.
- We understand that (upon review) the NCSL can, and will if necessary, suspend our individual privilege to watch our child play should we behave in a manner that is rude or otherwise offensive.
- We agree to do our best to have as much fun watching the game as the players should have playing the game.

(Signature)

Date

Printed Name (Circle one Mother, Father, Guardian)

Club Name

Team Number

ODSL Code of Conduct - Parents

Conduct yourself with honor and dignity at all times. (Your actions reflect on the team, club, community association, and soccer)

Be fair always no matter what the outcome.

Know and obey the laws of the game.

Work for the good of the team.

Accept the decisions of the officials with good grace.

Be generous when your team wins.

Be graceful when your team loses.

Believe in the honesty of your opponents.

Let them play; remember that you are not a player on this team.

Support your team, coaches and representatives. (Discuss issues in private)

Never encourage, condone or participate in any activities that may result in injuries to players and spectators, or result in damage to soccer facilities.

Develop and encourage an appreciation of the game of Soccer.

Support the soccer community.