

New Haven Youth Soccer: Parent's Guide: Recreational Program

Welcome! For those of you who are new to NHYS, we are delighted that you and your kid(s) are joining us and we look forward to having you in the NHYS community for many years to come. This document is designed to give you an overview of how the program works, along with the basic philosophy and policies that guide us. If you have questions that are not answered here, please contact Nate Roberts at **NHYSrec@gmail.com**

Who should play at this level?

The rec program is for children in grades K-8. Normally, kids under 6 play in our Kindergarten/U6 clinic. We do not currently offer programs for children over 14 except for a competitive travel team which plays in the spring.

What will kids do?

For this age level, we offer a low-key program aimed at developing soccer skills and introducing age-appropriate levels of competition. Kids participate in one or more practices each week and play games on Saturday mornings. For most age divisions, coaches will choose up teams at the field on Saturday mornings, keeping the atmosphere less formal and less competitive.

When and where do they play?

Our program runs in fall and spring. The fall season starts in early September and goes to early November. The spring season runs from early April to mid-June. Normally, kids register in the fall and automatically are eligible to play in the spring. If you receive financial aid, you pay once in the fall and once in the spring.

Each week during the season, we will offer "clinics" according to a schedule found on our website. These are practice sessions in which kids can work on fundamental skills for 60 minutes. Kids may attend as many clinic sessions as they wish (or as parents are able to transport them to!)

Please note that there are no requirements for attendance or participation. It is normal for kids to miss some games and practices because of school and family commitments, as well as other activities. We do ask that families tell coaches if they expect to miss a game, so that the coach can plan accordingly.

What should they bring?

For practices and games, kids should wear soccer shoes with rubber or plastic studs (no metal!!) and shin guards under long socks. Each child should also bring a water bottle and a ball (size 3 for U7/U8, size 4 for U10/U12, size 5 for U14). Please put your child's name on balls, water bottles, and any outerwear.

How do clinics work?

At the clinic, one of our professional coaches will lead participants in a variety of games and drills designed to develop fundamental skills. Usually these will involve dividing kids into small groups, to maximize each child's time on the ball. To make clinics work effectively, we ask parents to bring their kids on time, to supervise behavior as needed, and to help out as needed with making the clinic run smoothly. (Depending on the age of the kids, this may involve retrieving balls or helping kids to understand the drills.)

What happens in the event of bad weather?

We hold practices even in drizzle or light rain. If there is heavy rain, however – and definitely if there are thunderstorms – we will generally cancel activities. We also cancel when field conditions are poor (e.g., muddy, snowy, or waterlogged) and when the City of New Haven or our other hosts (e.g., schools) tell us that fields are closed. This can sometimes occur after heavy rains, even though the sun is shining; playing on fields in these conditions can cause long-term damage to the grass.

To learn whether practices and games will be held, please check the NHYS web site (www.NHYSoccer.org).

Are uniforms required?

For Saturday games, participants will need to wear our red-and-white reversible jerseys, which are intended to be re-used from season to season until kids outgrow them. These will be available for sale at the fields in the first few weeks of the season. As noted above, participants should also wear soccer shoes, long socks, and shin guards. Kids normally wear shorts to play soccer, unless temperatures are very cold. They do not need to wear the red-and-white jerseys for practices or clinics.

What is New Haven Youth Soccer?

NHYS is a non-profit organization whose goal is to promote and advance youth soccer in New Haven. We help boys and girls in grades K-8 to learn soccer and to have fun. We offer both recreational and competitive programs for boys and girls of all levels of experience and abilities.

NHYS is a volunteer-run organization, and we welcome volunteers for any and all aspects of the club's operations. We are the local affiliate of the Connecticut Junior Soccer Association (CJSA) and the US Youth Soccer (USYS), the largest member of the United States Soccer Federation (USSF). The organization is funded by registration fees, donations from individuals and community organization, and the City of New Haven.

Our programs are open to kids from all backgrounds, communities, and schools. Kids do not need to live in New Haven or to attend school in New Haven to participate in our recreational programs. We hold strongly to a philosophy that our programs should be open to all children, regardless of their families' ability to pay. As a result, we offer full and partial scholarships for all our programs.

What are the goals of the program?

- To offer all kids in the community an opportunity to play in a safe, healthy, and enjoyable situation, appropriate to their age and skill level.
- To help all kids develop soccer skills, to acquire a love for the game, to make friends, and to learn sportsmanship, cooperation, and teamwork.
- To build our community by bringing together kids from all backgrounds and uniting them on the soccer field.
- For our competitive teams, to provide high-quality coaching and to offer opportunities to compete against fairly matched opponents; and to seek success at the highest level possible, but without compromising our values or ideals of fair play.