

## YMCA of Greater Charlotte Youth Soccer Family Playbook Fall 2024

Our soccer league is an exciting and welcoming league for youth athletes ages 3-18. This league is played throughout the YMCA branches in a regional model and will focus on practices that encourage athletes to love their sport and develop the fundamental skills needed to play the game.

The Y league is a true recreational soccer program where we promote at least 50% playing time in games for our athletes throughout the season. In addition to our regular season's program, players will have opportunities to attend clinics and other technical training sessions throughout the season.

- **What does the regional model consist of?**  
Our association's regional model promotes a wide variety of teams and exciting experiences to compete, grow, and improve skills! Athletes will have games and practices at the branches within their region, throughout the season. And the chance to compete against other YMCAs within our association footprint.
- **What are the different regions?**  
When registering, double check what region you are registering for using the list below:
  - **North Region:** Lake Norman & Lowes
  - **Central North Region:** Keith, McCrorey, Simmons, & Stratford Richardson
  - **Central South Region:** Dowd, Harris, & Johnston
  - **South Region:** Brace, Morrison & Steele Creek
- **Can I sign up in any region?**  
Yes, you are welcome to register for any region, but note that our regions are set up intentionally to be geographically close to another.
- **When will registration open?**  
Registration for Fall 2024 opens 6/1/23 for Members and 6/15/23 for Non-Members.
- **What are the soccer league prices?**  
All pricing is available online at [www.ymcacharlotte.org](http://www.ymcacharlotte.org)
  - My Y Program Pricing provides a scholarship to members meeting the household income requirements. Please check in with your closest YMCA branch to see if you and your family qualify.
  - **Late registration period begins August 7<sup>th</sup> which comes with an increase in registration fee**
- **What divisions are being offered?**  
**Registration and team placement is determined by the grade level the participant is currently in\***
  - South Region: 3-4 Little Kicks-High School Coed, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade-High School Girls

### **Does the YMCA have soccer for athletes 3-4 and 4-5 years old?**

Yes- Our 3-4 Little Kicks and Kindergarten age divisions are for our youngest athletes ranging from 3-5 years old. Soccer players in these age groups will learn the best parts of soccer through our Practice-Play model. *Athletes that are age 4 may choose to play in the 3-4 Little Kicks or Kindergarten division based off family determined development and skill level.* Both our 3-4 Little Kicks and Kindergarten teams will meet with their volunteer coaches and team one day a week on Saturday throughout the season. Teams will spend their time together practicing skills, working as a team, and having fun, followed by elements of playing real games! There are no weekday meets for 3-4 Little Kicks or Kindergarten players unless communicated out specifically from the league. Making your family's experience easy and filled with fun!

### **Does the YMCA have soccer for older athletes looking for more competition?**

Yes, in our 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade and High School level soccer leagues, players will encounter a higher level of competitive recreational soccer. For athletes who sign up for this age group, players can expect to learn about teamwork and leadership while expanding on agility and skill development. Our 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade and High School soccer players will experience all the sport's excitement while representing the YMCA of Greater Charlotte in the Mecklenburg Area Recreational Soccer (MARS) League or amongst other YMCA age-appropriate teams. MARS is made up of other YMCA teams, joined by several other local organizations to form an elevated community soccer experience. Teams will play full 11v11 FIFA rules on full-size fields. For divisions 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> and High School your season will kick off with practices and then transition into practices and games. Games may be scheduled on Saturdays and/or Sundays at a YMCA branch or other recreational fields. YMCA uniforms are included in the registration fee, however shin guards and cleats will need to be purchased and should be worn for each practice and game.

- **What are the meeting days and times for each age group**
  - 3-4 Little Kicks and Kindergarten will only meet on Saturday for weekly Practice/Play session.
  - 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Grade practices may take place Monday-Friday between 5:00-8:00pm for 55 minutes.
  - 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade and High School divisions **may** practice up to twice a week.
  - 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Games will take place Saturday between 8:00am-7:00pm.
  - 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> & High School teams may have games on Saturday & Sunday
- **Will practices and games be held at the branch I register at?**

Practices and games will be held at YMCA facilities where field space is available or at CMS facilities where agreements currently exist within your region. Please note: If there are not enough teams in certain age divisions, teams may be scheduled to interleague with teams within the association and play at other YMCA branches that are not in your region.

Practice and game schedules will be released in advance of the start of the season via our YMCA's league platform Playerspace.
- **How will practice and game locations be determined?**

Practice locations will be determined by the region you sign up for. Practices can be held at any of the branches within the region but will be consistent throughout the season.

- Game locations will be determined by each region. Some branches may only hold a certain age group on game day due to field sizes, others may offer multiple age groups.
  - Although we do our best to accommodate all teams, it is possible that teams within our older age divisions may be interleague with neighboring regions, requiring travel between surrounding branches for games throughout the season.
  - Team practice times are primarily dependent on the volunteer coaches' availability and preference. To guarantee your practice day and time we encourage you to sign up to COACH!
- **I have a special request regarding what team I would like to be on, can I communicate that to the league director?**
    - All special requests for our Fall season must be submitted by **Sunday August 6<sup>th</sup> which is also the last day before late registration pricing begins**
    - Requests can be in the form of preferences for *one friend requests, one coach requests, or one day of the week you CANNOT practice.*
    - To have the best chance to get your request please make sure you and any friends or requested coaches are registered before the request deadline. We encourage families to put enter request preferences in at the time of registration.
    - Although we do our best, please understand that not all requests may be honored for a variety of reasons, but we make every effort to accommodate as many as possible.
- **How does my athlete receive a team uniform?**
    - The YMCA will provide your jersey as part of your registration fee. Jerseys will be distributed the second week of practice. **Players must wear shin guards, cleats and black shorts for game days (not provided by the YMCA).**
    - Teams will be assigned Home Team or Away Team for each game. Make sure your athlete wears the appropriate jersey color corresponding with the team assignment.
      - Home Team: Lighter Color
      - Away Team: Darker Color
- **Do I need to purchase any gear or equipment for my athlete?**
    - YMCA jerseys are included in the registration fee; however **shin guards and cleats** will need to be purchased and should be worn for each practice and game.
    - The YMCA will also provide all balls and cones necessary for the season. You can buy one for your athlete – remember to label it with your athlete's name!
      - Soccer Ball Sizes Per Division:  
Size 3: 3-4 Little Kicks, Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Divisions  
Size 4: 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Grade Divisions  
Size 5: 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> & High School

- **What are the season dates?**
  - Participant Special Request Deadline : **Sunday August 7<sup>th</sup>**
  - Team assignments released by: Week of August 26th
  - Game schedules posted by: Week of September 9th
  - Practices start: Week of September 3rd
  - Little Kicks and Kindergarten Team Meet & Greet: Saturday September 7th
  - Game Day 1: September 14th
  - Game Day 2: September 21st
  - Game Day 3: September 28th
  - Game Day 4: October 5th
  - Game Day 5: October 12th
  - Game Day 6: October 19th
  - Game Day 7: October 26th
  - Make up/Post-Season: Week of October 28th – November 2nd

**PLAYERSPACE: How will I see league and schedule details for my athlete's team?**

- Our YMCA partners with PlayerSpace, a sports league management and communication platform that connects players, parents, coaches and sports directors.



**PlayerSpace** We will use PlayerSpace as our primary communication platform for sharing game schedules, team rosters, cancelations and all other important information. Before the season starts, parents will receive account login information from the Sports Director in their respective region. When you receive your family account login information email, be sure to activate your account to receive communication about the upcoming season.

**PlayerSpace, allows athletes and families:**

- Convenient 24/7 online access to league information such as schedules, practice times and team information
- Emails and texts with updates on important information including schedule changes and cancellations
- The ability to post and share pictures and videos on your team's page!

**For the best experience we encourage you to download the PlayerSpace app for Apple or Android. Use the QR Code to the left to download now!**

- **I am interested in becoming a volunteer coach – who do I contact?**
  - Our youth sports programs rely 100% on the dedication and efforts of our volunteer head coaches, assistant coaches, and team parents. Passionate volunteers help the YMCA expand our impact and positive reach in the community.
  - Please visit the following link and send your regional representative an email. Contacts can be found below. <https://www.ymcacharlotte.org/mission/join-the->

[mission/become-a-volunteer/coach-youth-sports](https://www.ymcacharlotte.org/mission/become-a-volunteer/coach-youth-sports)

- **I am a returning coach; how can I secure my spot to coach?**
  - Regarding the same process for returning coaches, please visit the following link and send your regional representative an email.  
<https://www.ymcacharlotte.org/mission/join-the-mission/become-a-volunteer/coach-youth-sports>
- **Who do I contact if I have questions?**
  - Individual branch front desks can answer basic information as well as register you for the program.
  - Specific program questions can be sent to the following:
    - North: [NorthSportsRegion@YMCACharlotte.org](mailto:NorthSportsRegion@YMCACharlotte.org)
      - Ryan Swengros can also answer regional questions at [Ryan.Swengros@YMCACharlotte.org](mailto:Ryan.Swengros@YMCACharlotte.org)
    - Central North: [CentralNorthSportsRegion@YMCACharlotte.org](mailto:CentralNorthSportsRegion@YMCACharlotte.org)
      - Charles Young can also answer regional questions at [Charles.Young@ymcacahrlotte.org](mailto:Charles.Young@ymcacahrlotte.org)
    - Central South: [CentralSouthSportsRegion@YMCACharlotte.org](mailto:CentralSouthSportsRegion@YMCACharlotte.org)  
Logan Spaulding can also answer regional questions  
at [Logan.Spaulding@ymcacharlotte.org](mailto:Logan.Spaulding@ymcacharlotte.org)
    - South: [SouthSportsRegion@YMCACharlotte.org](mailto:SouthSportsRegion@YMCACharlotte.org)  
Andrew Maronich can also answer regional questions at [Andrew.Maronich@ymcacharlotte.org](mailto:Andrew.Maronich@ymcacharlotte.org)
- **Youth Sports Refund Policy**
  - Participants can receive a refund if requested in writing prior to the first day of practice.
  - Refunds will not be given after the first day of practice.