



FOS Fall 2025 Coaches Meeting

Important Dates

Wednesday, August 6 th	6:00pm – 7:00pm – Lower Division Coaches Meeting 7:30pm – 8:30pm – Upper Division Coaches Meeting 11:00am – 12:30pm – Cleats Exchange (Front of Eldersburg Elementary) Practice Schedules Sent (<i>if not sooner</i>)
Saturday, August 9 th	Shooting Stars Session #1
Wednesday, August 13 th	8AM – Field Setup (Eldersburg Elementary) (RAIN DATE) 8AM – Field Setup (Eldersburg Elementary)
Friday, August 15 th	2:00pm – 5:00pm – Referee Training (Optimist Hall Upstairs)
Saturday, August 16 th	PRACTICES CAN BEGIN THIS WEEK
Sunday, August 17 th	6:30pm – 8:45pm – Coaches Training – (Starts at Optimist Hall Upstairs)
Monday, August 18 th	Shooting Stars Session #2
Thursday, August 21 st	9:00am – 12:00pm – Referee Training (Optimist Hall Upstairs)
Friday, August 2 nd	2:00pm – 5:00pm – Referee Training (Optimist Hall Upstairs)
Saturday, August 23 rd	TBD – Uniform Pickup (Freedom Optimist Hall Upstairs)
Sunday, August 24 th	Shooting Stars Session #3
Thursday, August 28 th	11:00am – 12:30pm – Cleats Exchange (Front of Eldersburg Elementary)
Friday, August 29 th	Shooting Stars Session #4
Saturday, August 30 th	OPENING DAY
Friday, September 5 th	1 st Picture Day at ORMS
Saturday, September 6 th	2 nd Picture Day at ORMS
Saturday, September 20 th	3 rd Picture Day at ORMS (<i>tentative</i>)
Saturday, September 27 th	Medals available for pick-up for younger division players only (Eldersburg Elementary Shack)
Saturday, October 4 th	Upper Divisions – Championship Games Lower Divisions – Last Week of Games Field Tear Down at Eldersburg Elementary
Saturday, November 1 st	Upper Division All-Star Games and Senior Game Field Tear Down at Practice Fields and Freedom Park
Saturday, November 8 th	
Sunday, November 9 th	

Background Checks

- All Head Coaches, Assistant Coaches and Team Parents are required to complete the background check. No exceptions. If you do not have a valid background check completed by the time of your first practice you are not allowed on the field with the players.
- All parents that “help out” on consecutive weeks must register as an assistant coach and complete the background check. The county will allow helpers to participate only once; anymore and they need to register.
- Go to our website at www.freedomOptSoccer.com and click the tab at the top “For Coaches”. You will find a link to the background check here.
- Badges must be displayed when you are on the field with the players.

Recruiting Assistant Coaches/Team Parents

- Assistant Coaches and Team Parents often step forward after the beginning of the season. They play very important roles on the team and will help tremendously.
- If a parent steps forward and starts helping out, tell them to register. Registration for volunteers will remain open for those volunteering during the season.
- Your team parent usually takes care of all team communication, first aid needs, uniform handout, email reminders, and end of the season party/trophy hand out.

Weather Policy

- Check the Freedom Area Rec Council Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/Freedomarearec> to check on field availability. On weekdays the message is updated by 4pm, on weekends by 7am.
- At the first sound of Thunder OR the first sight of Lightning — All outdoor recreation council activities are to be stopped and the participants *must clear the fields to a protected area* and wait 30 minutes before activities can resume. Any additional occurrence restarts the 30-minute count until activities can resume.
- Heat: Approx. 30 minutes prior to the start of the activity, temp and heat index reading should be taken from www.weather.com or a comparable source. The following are to be followed:
 - Heat Index: 80-89-Use caution. Monitor athletes carefully for necessary action.
 - Heat Index: 90-104-Use extreme caution. Remove helmets and other equipment if possible.
 - Heat Index: 105-129-Practice shortened. Low intensity and limited conditioning.
 - Heat Index: 130 & above-No practices or games. Activities should be rescheduled
- EXTREME COLD TEMPERATURES: Department sponsored youth activities:
 - Temperatures above 32 degrees: no restrictions
 - Temperatures between 13 – 31 degrees: Indoor breaks every 20-30 minutes
 - Temperature or wind chill is below 13 degrees: No outdoor activities; Wind chill may be calculated by entering temperature and wind speed at www.weather.gov/epz/wxcalc_windchill
- AIR QUALITY (AQI Color), AirNow, Department sponsored activities:
 - **GREEN**: Good, values of index, 0-50. Air quality is satisfactory, and air pollution possess little or no risk.
 - **YELLOW**: Moderate, values of index 51-100. Air quality is acceptable. However, there may be a risk for some people, particularly those who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.
 - **ORANGE**: Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups, values of index 101-150. Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is less likely to be affected. For practices, take more breaks and do fewer intensive activities. Watch for symptoms and take action as needed.
 - **RED**: Unhealthy, values of index 151-200. Some members of the general public may experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects. Take longer breaks or move activities inside. Watch for symptoms and take action as needed.
 - **PURPLE**: Very Unhealthy, values of index 201-300. Health alert. The risk of health effects is increased for everyone. Move indoors or reschedule outdoor activities.
 - **MAROON**: Hazardous, values of index 301 and higher. Health warning of emergency conditions: everyone is more likely to be affected. Move indoors or reschedule outdoor activities.

Games rescheduled due to inclement weather

- Games will be automatically rescheduled. The rain dates available are Sunday 9/21, 10/5, and 10/26.
- FOS cannot cancel games until the day of the game. Even if it rained for 4 days straight and flooding has occurred, we have to wait to the day of to make the announcement.
- If fields are closed, we will post it on Facebook, the website, and send an email to the entire league.

Parking at Eldersburg Elementary

- Do not park on the grass by the school.
- Do not park by the doors in the fenced in area of the school.
- Do not park on the grass by the playground or by the soccer shack. That area needs to be left open for emergency personnel and is reserved for board members.
- Do not park along Johnsville Road.
- We would like to avoid parking on the side streets across from Eldersburg Elementary as the residents have not been happy with people parking on their lawn and blocking their driveways as well as their mailboxes.

Parking at Springfield

- Park in the gravel parking lot.

Parking at Freedom Park

- Do not park on any of the grass, anywhere. Additional parking is available past Field 3 in the back paved lot.
- Do not park on the grass by the shacks. This area is reserved for emergency personnel and board members

Eldersburg Elementary Snack Shack Helpers

- There will be a Snack Shack hosted by Boy Scouts 733.

Freedom Snack Shack

- There will be a Snack Shack hosted by the Lions Club.

Field Clean-up

- Please inform your team to clean up after themselves at the end of your games. Walk the field and pick up any trash or items left behind. Lost and found items can be dropped off at the soccer shack.

Referees

- Referees have the final say on the field, period.
- Do not yell at, argue with their calls or make any comments to referees. Tell your parents to not argue calls, make comments to referees, ask them to explain calls, etc.
- If you have an issue with a referee, please email Adam Maisano, the Referee Coordinator at refereecoordinator@freedomoptsoccer.com.
- You cannot and should not address the referees on the field if you do not agree with a call. Do not ask for a meeting to discuss. If you have any immediate safety concern at the field, go find a Board member at the field. If it's not an immediate safety issue, find a Board member after the game.

Uniforms

- Uniform pick-up will be August 28th — Coaches' shirts and uniforms for the entire team need to be picked up by a single designated person (Coach, Asst. Coach, Team Parent, or another designated person). Please DO NOT instruct your team to meet you at the Hall during pick-up to get their own uniform.
- Some Coaches' shirts will be available at the coaches meeting for those without a shirt. We are ordering 50th anniversary Coach shirts based on your registration, which will be distributed with uniforms.
- Coaches' shirts are only ordered for registered Head Coaches and Assistant Coaches. If a parent steps up and offers to coach after you begin practice, they must register as an Assistant Coach and an email will be sent to order a coaches' shirt if requested.
- Players must wear their jersey on the outside of hoodies or jackets during inclement weather. Socks must be worn on the outside of leggings and match their uniform color.
- No jewelry is allowed. Necklaces, bracelets, and earrings must be removed prior to game or practice. If a player just had their ears pierced and cannot remove their earrings, then a band aid must be worn over the lobe of the ear.
- All players must have shin guards, worn underneath their socks, not strapped overtop of the socks.
- Cleats are optional. All cleats worn on the field must be soccer cleats. No center toe spike on cleats is allowed. They must be cut off in order for the player to participate. Cleat cutters will be available at the soccer shack.
- Additional socks will be available for purchase at the soccer shack for \$5.00.

Carroll County Health Department

Katie Mack, Early Childhood Service Coordinator

Carroll County Local Behavioral Health Authority

Shooting Stars

<https://www.freedomoptsoccer.com/shootingstars>

Player Safety

- Players cannot be left unattended after practice or games. A coach or Team Parent must stay at the fields until every player has left.
- If a player was hurt then an accident/Injury report needs to be filled out. Please visit <https://www.freedomoptsoccer.com/accident-report> to fill out the report. The report needs to be submitted within 24 hours of any accident.
- The Concussion protocol was included during the registration. If you need a copy, please visit <https://www.carrollcountymd.gov/media/15091/concussion-information.pdf> for a copy.
- First aid kit supplies are available at the soccer shacks during game days.
- AEDs are available at the soccer shacks during game days.

Coaching Overview

- Referees need to be made aware of any medical conditions a player may have prior to the start of the game. If a player is an extreme asthmatic and you need to sub on the fly then let the refs know prior.
- DO NOT RUN UP THE SCORE. If you are ahead by 4 or more, pull a player, let the other team have an additional player, don't shoot without passing X times, instruct the kid who scored 4 times in 5 minutes to demonstrate passing, etc. We should not demoralize the other team and hurt kids' spirit and self-esteem. As coaches, volunteers, and parents we must strive to make sure that every child on the field enjoys the game, not just our own team.
- FOS uses TeamSnap. Do not instruct your team to download a different app to use instead.
- Every player should get equal playing time.
- Teams will be released after the Coaches meeting. If your team does not show up on the mobile TeamSnap app you will may need to delete the app entirely and reinstall it.
- Make sure you email your team as soon as possible to introduce yourself and let them know the dates for the season. As soon as games schedules are released it will automatically be populated to the TeamSnap app.

Practices

- The last weekday field update from FARC comes at 4:00pm. If it starts storming after that, it is up to the coach to cancel practice and notify their team.
- Each team is assigned ½ of a field for practice except Clinic 3. It's up to the coach to decide what time practice will start, but it's traditional to start at 6pm. You may not start earlier than 5:30pm and all players, parents, and coaches need to be off the fields by dark. At EES, this means practices will be shorter, or cancelled as we move into November.
- Practices for younger divisions teams can go up to 1 hour. Practices for the older divisions cannot be longer than 90 minutes, and cannot go past their allotted time because the lighted fields because those fields are shared with other teams.
- Coaches can choose to cancel one practice night after games begin. Please let your division coordinator know what night you are canceling so we can make that field available to other teams/leagues. You may not switch between the 2 practice nights.
- It is up to the Head Coach if/when to go down to 1 practice night a week, and if/when to cancel practices all together.
- Do NOT hold practice if it is actively raining. We need to preserve the fields as much as possible.
- Try to practice "sideways", from touch line to touch line and uses cones to create goals. When using ½ the field this simulates width, and also help limit damage to the fields, the same fields we use for games.

Player Evaluations

- For Division starting at Grade 1 we send player evaluations to be filled out towards the end of the season. Please fill them out and send them to your division coordinator by the end of the season. These evaluations help aid us in forming teams for the next season.

New Rules (<https://www.freedomoptsoccer.com/new-rules-for-fall-2025>)

- *8-second Rule:* A goalkeeper must release the ball within eight seconds of gaining possession. Failure to do so will result in the opposing team being awarded a corner kick. Being in control of the ball means having it in their hands, holding it in one hand, bouncing it, throwing it in the air or lying on it on the ground. Younger players will be given warnings, but repeated offenses will be called. In older divisions a yellow card will be issued for multiple offenses.
- *Build Out Line:* In 7v7 games (1st and 2nd grade in FOS), a “build-out” line is a line placed halfway between the top of the Penalty Box and the Halfway line. Opposing teams must move behind this line when a goalkeeper has possession of the ball or on a Goal Kick.
- Yellow and red cards issued carry into the playoffs.
- Players receiving a yellow card must sit out 2 minutes before returning.
- US Soccer Harassment and Referee Abuse Policy, “Respect the Call”. <https://www.ussoccer.com/rap>

Have a great soccer season and thank you for volunteering! This league would not be possible without you! We appreciate all that you do for the kids!