

# FOS Spring 2026 Coaches Meeting

## Important Dates

Monday, March 2 <sup>nd</sup>	7:00pm – 8:00pm – Coaches Meeting
Saturday, March 7 <sup>th</sup>	Field Setup
Sunday, March 15 <sup>th</sup>	OPENING DAY – Practice Only & Uniform Handout
Sunday, March 22 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> WEEK OF GAMES
Sunday, April 5 <sup>th</sup>	NO GAMES – EASTER HOLIDAY
Friday, April 10 <sup>th</sup>	SHOOTING STARS OPENING DAY
Sunday, May 10 <sup>th</sup>	FINAL WEEK OF GAMES
Sunday, May 17 <sup>th</sup>	MAKE-UP WEEK (if needed)



## 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 game 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 field helpers to participate only once in a 24-hour period.
- Go to our website at [www.freedomoptsoccer.com](http://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.

## Shooting Stars

- Opening day is April 10<sup>th</sup>. Runs for four Fridays. Come out and enjoy the experience.

## 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](http://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](http://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 from the first rained out date will be automatically rescheduled for May 17<sup>th</sup>.
- 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.

#### **Field Clean-up**

- Please inform your team to clean up after themselves at the end of your games. This means what the kids leave behind in the 'bench area', and the spectators. Ask them to check their areas when leaving and pick up any trash or items left behind. Lost and Found items can be dropped off at the Board area or to a Board member.

#### **Snack Shack**

- We do not have a snack shack during the Spring season at any of the fields.

#### **Referees**

- Referees have the final say on the field, *period*.
- Do not yell at, argue with their calls or make any comments to referees.
- If you have an issue with a referee, please find a Board member, or email us with details at [refereecoordinator@freedomoptsoccer.com](mailto:refereecoordinator@freedomoptsoccer.com).
- You, nor parents, cannot and should not address the referees on the field if you do not agree with a call.

#### **Sportsmanship Award**

- To recognize the team in each division that demonstrates respect to their opponents, coaches, and referees throughout the season.
- Coaches and head referee will be asked to complete a Sportsmanship Scorecard at the conclusion of each game.
- Scores will be tallied at the end of the season.

#### **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 shack.
- Do not park along Johnsville Road.

#### **Parking at Springfield**

- Park in the gravel parking lot.

#### **Uniforms**

- Uniforms will be made available for pickup the first week of the season at the Springfield field for Coed 6-8 during their week 1 sessions, or from 7:45am - 11:45am at EES for all divisions at EES. Stop by before your session.
- One Coach, or an assigned parent, should pick up the uniforms. Parents should not come up for their uniform.
- *Give out the uniforms following the size ordered for each player.* Do not ask what size they want. Uniforms are ordered based on the size specified during registration.
- Coaches' shirts are available if you need one.
- Coaches' shirts are only ordered for registered Head and Assistant Coaches. If a parent steps up to help, they must register as an Assistant Coach to receive a shirt, if we have some still available.

- 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.* At EES we have shin guards to lend out.
- Cleats are optional. But 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 are available at the Board area at the fields.

### Player Safety

- Players cannot be left unattended after sessions. Someone must stay at the fields until every player has left.
- In case of an injury, an Accident/Injury Report needs to be filled out. Visit <https://www.freedomoptsoccer.com/accident-report> to fill out the report *within 24 hours* of any injury.
- First aid supplies are available at the Board area at the fields.

### Coaching Overview

- Referees need to be made aware of any medical conditions a player may have prior to the start of the game.
- 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 3 times, etc. We do not need to demoralize the other team and hurt kids spirit and self-esteem. As coaches, volunteers, and parents we should strive to make sure that every child on the field enjoys the game, not just our own team.
- FOS uses TeamSnap for the season. 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. Log into TeamSnap using the same email you registered with.
- Make sure you email your team as soon as possible to introduce yourself.
- Schedules will be released within the week after the Coaches Meeting.

### Practice/Games

- Opening Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup> is the one and only practice session, and uniform handout. You will share the field with another team in your age group for 1 hour. This is a day to get to know your players and for your players to get to know each other. Feel free to run a scrimmage with the other team on this day if both coaches agree.
- An equipment bag will be at the field for you to use on Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup>. Do not take the bag with you.
- For Coed 1-2 and above, you will not need an equipment bag during the season since there are only games. The referees will bring game balls for each game.
- For PreK/K and Clinic, an equipment bag will be at the field to use for your session/game.
- Every week, if you are the last session of your division on that field, return the bag to the Board area.
- The Spring season is lighter in tone. There're no scores kept, no standings, no playoffs, etc.; it's an opportunity give the kids a chance to play soccer during the normal off-season. Please keep that in mind, and reinforce enjoyment of the game, each Sunday.

### 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 (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 (*Fall season only*)
- 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!**