



# RED RIVER VALLEY UNITED SOCCER CLUB

Competitive Program  
Player & Parent Handbook

**"For the strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength of the wolf is the pack." – Rudyard Kipling**

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## Introduction

Red River Valley United Soccer Club (Red River Valley United or the Club) provides opportunities for players at every level to develop in a fun, challenging and respectful environment. The Club serves West Fargo, Fargo, Moorhead and surrounding communities. Clear and consistent communication is very important. This document, along with the web site (<http://www.rrvunitedsc.org/>) will help provide clarity and details about the club's expectations for players and parents. This handbook will provide members of the Club with its policies and expectations. As a Club member, you are responsible for reading the handbook and website to understand the expectations, rules, and regulations.

## Program Overview

We offer programs for various levels of soccer, depending on the age group. Each level requires differing levels of commitment and should be considered when deciding which level to play.

## Try Outs

There is no fee for try-outs, but registration is required for new players. See the website for specific details about dates, times, and locations of try outs. Registering for try-outs is not a commitment to play, nor is it a commitment from the club to offer a place on a team. All players new to the club must register for and make every effort to attend try-outs. If your child cannot attend for any reason (e.g. out of town), please contact the Club by emailing [club@rrvunitedsc.org](mailto:club@rrvunitedsc.org)

## Individual / Full Season Registration

The full soccer registration year runs approximately August 1st to July 31st. Red River Valley United breaks this full year into three seasons:

- Fall (August – October)
- Winter (January-March)
- Spring/Summer (April-June)

\* Seasons may vary depending on weather, tournaments, or other considerations. See website for additional information on season fees, calendars, etc.

## Player Placement

Families should ensure they are familiar with program policies, fees, requirements, etc. prior to attending try-outs, and should contact the club with any questions.

- Each family will be notified via email of the tryout outcome within one week of the last tryout
- Families should be ready to accept an invitation to join the program within 48 hours of the invitation and should be prepared to pay the minimum fee due at that time
- Player evaluation will be based on technical, tactical, physical, and psychological development level
- New players to the club will be evaluated at try-outs for the upcoming season
- Existing club players will be evaluated on an ongoing basis
- Failure to place policy
  - Registration of your child, at any time in the registration process, does not guarantee a place in the Program.
  - There may be instances where your child will not be offered a place in the program. Such instances include, but are not limited to, the inability to offer a suitable program due to lack of players, late registrations, unsuccessful payments, missing payment deadlines, and/or inappropriate fit of the player's skill level in a competitive program.

## Team / Pool Placements

Where numbers allow and especially at younger ages, Red River Valley United operates player pools, which work in this way:

- Each season, teams or pools for age groups are formed once registrations are completed. The Club uses a combination of teams/player pools to establish appropriate environments for player development.
- All players in an age group /player pool practice at the same day, time, location.
- Early in a season there will be focus on integrating new players, assessing performance levels (technical, tactical, physical, and psychological), and training as a combined group.
- As a season progresses, practices will be designed to develop players according to their needs. This may mean a greater emphasis on skill development for some, while others focus more on tactical or physical development. Players are likely to be grouped in those sessions according to their performance / ability levels.
- Teams for games and tournaments will be planned and announced ahead of time, with the aim of placing each player in an environment that is right for them. Often – but not always – this will mean an ‘A’ team playing against higher bracket opponents, and a ‘B’ team playing against lower bracket opponents.
- The teams will not be named ‘A’ and ‘B’ and will not be set in stone; there will be movement between them.
- Our goal is to establish pools where the number of players is divisible into teams for games. For example, at the 9 v. 9 age groups a minimum 9 players are needed for a team and maximum roster size is 14; ideally a pool would have 12>14 or 24>28 players. To accomplish this, some age groups may be combined (some players playing ‘up’ a year).
- If it does not work out to have a pool where the number of players divides into teams, not every player would go to each tournament / play each game. In an example of 19 players in a pool, the club may send 12/13 players to each of 3 tournaments, such that every player attends at least two of the tournaments.
- At older age groups (U13+) and dictated by registration numbers, Red River Valley United may set up individual teams for an age group rather than a player pool.

Why does Red River Valley United Soccer Club operate player pools?

- To develop strong team spirit for all players in an age group
- To give greater flexibility to develop players at their own pace
- To encourage competition as players, strive to play at a high level
- To allow mixing of teams to provide more game opportunities

## Team Name

Red River Valley United doesn’t assign team names, except as required at tournaments. All our players, teams, and pools share the Wolfpack identity... “For the strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength of the wolf is the pack!”

## Guest Players

### A request for a Red River Valley United player to guest play for another club

- In some circumstances, other clubs may request a player or players to play for them to help fill a roster for a specific event.
- This request must be communicated to the player’s coach, team manager, and the executive director.
- Approval should come from the executive director (with input from the coach). The team manager will assist with required administration.
  - Consideration will be given to scheduled Red River Valley United events and the best decision for the player, the team, and the club.
- If the host club is registered under a different sanctioning body (e.g. US Club Soccer), the player may need to apply for a player card with the host club and would be responsible for any associated fees.

## **A request for a non-Red River Valley United player to play with a Red River Valley United team**

- In some circumstances, Red River Valley United may need to add players from other clubs to fill a roster spot for a specific event.
- This request must be communicated to the player's coach, team manager, and the executive director.
- Approval should come from the executive director (with input from the coach). The team manager will assist with required administration.
- For a sanctioned tournament:
  - If the player already has a USYS player card with their 'parent' club, the guest player needs to get that player card to the Red River Valley United SC team manager.
    - A USYS Medical Release waiver is also needed
      - If the player does not have a USYS player card, the guest player will need to get to the Red River Valley United team manager:
    - Proof of date of birth
    - Photo
    - USYS Medical release
  - If the guest player is a guest at the request of Red River Valley United (i.e. Red River Valley United is short on players and asking for guest player help), there will be no fee to the guest player
  - If the guest player is a guest at the request of the player (e.g. visiting from out of town; looking for additional playing opportunity) they will need to pay fees to cover:
    - Tournament fee (pro-rated)
    - Player card fee (if applicable)
    - Other fees if applicable (to be communicated by executive director)
- The number of practices (if any) the guest player will attend prior to the event should be agreed upon prior to attending any practices. Typically, this will be restricted to the week leading up to the game / event.

## **Financial**

Players will only be allowed to participate in Red River Valley United programs if one of the requirements below has been met:

- Participation fees have been paid.
- A scholarship request has been received by the Club, and communication has been made with the scholarship applicant about payment terms.

## **Fees**

Please see the website for current information regarding fees. The Club will make efforts to collect past due fees, as appropriate, with potential for removal of current and future playing privileges. Please remember that the Club is a non-profit organization that relies on player fees to operate. Timely payment reduces the effort and cost to the Club.

## **Refunds**

All refund requests must be submitted via the Club web site (see Refund Form). Refund requests will be reviewed and decided upon by the refund committee. The Club will review the refund request based on the circumstance of each situation. The following are considerations to initiate a refund:

- Failure to be placed on a team (see player placement policy – a full refund will be given).
- Serious injury
- Move out of the area

## **Other considerations**

- No discounts will be given for players who are not able to attend all events.
- No refunds will be granted for previous seasons for any reasons.
- Any refunds, if granted through the refund committee, may be subject to a processing fee, and may be minus any expenses already incurred (including uniform costs).

## **Scholarships**

Red River Valley United Soccer Club is committed to providing opportunities to our area youth. The Club offers a limited number of scholarships to players each season whose families do not have the financial means to pay for their child's registration fees. We ask that families carefully consider the ability to pay registration fees, as the monies allocated for these hardship requests are limited and will be awarded to those families with the greatest needs. Please complete and submit the Scholarship request form on the web site.

Eligibility requirements:

- The family can provide the required equipment for the players' participation including- uniforms, shoes, and shin guards. If not, please note this on the scholarship request form.
- The family commits to participating in at least 80% of scheduled practices and games.
- The scholarship request is received prior to the registration closing date (Late requests must be approved by the Board).

The Red River Valley United Soccer Club Scholarship Program covers only the Registration Fee for the player. Therefore, it is very important that a player and family review the potential additional expenses prior to committing to play competitive soccer.

- Scholarships will not be granted for registration fees that have already been paid.
- Late or incomplete application submissions may result in participants not being placed on a team.
- Eligibility for our scholarship program does not guarantee that you will receive assistance. Funds are limited and will be awarded per the approval of the Red River Valley United Soccer Club Board of Directors.
- The Board of Director designee(s) shall review all requests and all inquiries will be kept strictly confidential.

## **Uniforms**

Uniform orders will be placed at the time of registration for the season and payment will required at that time. Uniforms will be used / renewed in two-year cycles. Additional information about uniforms can be found on the Club's web site.

## **Jersey Number**

To avoid number clashes if / when players play 'up' an age group, Red River Valley United will allocate odd numbers to players born in odd calendar years, and even numbers to players born in even calendar years. Players are not able to 'request' specific jersey numbers.

## **Code of Conduct**

Developing youth in our community with a passion for soccer is our primary focus. We strive to prepare youth who understand the value of treating others with respect, giving your best effort and always looking for ways to improve. We seek to challenge the players to become stronger players on the field and engaged community members off the field. Ultimately, we expect players, parents, coaches, and club representatives to represent the Club and its values through integrity and honorable behavior.

## **Player Code of Conduct**

All players commit to:

- Treat all others with respect
- Give their best effort at all times
- Fully engage in the United to Serve program
- Maintain good attendance at practices, games and events
- Offer praise and encouragement to teammates
- Avoid acting as a 'bully' in any way and report any bullying to the coach or their parent
- Learn the rules of the game
- Be humble and open to learning (open to being coached)

## **Parent Code of Conduct**

As a parent/guardian of a Red River Valley United Soccer Club player, I agree to lead by example to include:

- I will respect a 24 hour "cooling off" period and will not approach a coach with issues/concerns immediately after a game/event/practice. Instead, I will reach out to the coach to ask to set up a time to discuss my issues.
- I will respect the rights, dignity, and worth of every player, regardless of their abilities, gender, religion, or cultural background.
- I will not treat any player in an unfair, unjust, or discriminatory manner.
- I will respect the decision of coaches, officials, and club administrators and teach my player to do likewise.
- I will remember that my player participates in the sport for their own enjoyment, not mine.
- I will raise any issues or concerns with my player's coach, Parent Advisory Committee member, or club staff, whichever is appropriate.
- I will report any inappropriate actions by my player's coach, trainer, or other adult to the club's leadership.
- I will not question the official's judgement in public. I will not approach a referee before, during, or after a game.
- I will not criticize or yell at my child for performance or losing a competition.
- I will remember that children learn best by modeling - I will recognize and reward good players' performances by both my child's team and the opponent.
- I will teach my child that doing one's best is as important as winning so that my child will never feel defeated by the outcome of a game or event.
- I will support my child by offering praise for competing fairly and for honest effort.
- I will encourage my child to play in the spirit of the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility.
- I will support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from youth activities.
- I will respect and show appreciation for the coaches who give their time to provide sporting activities for my child, understanding that I have a responsibility to be a part of my child's development.
- I will respect and show appreciation for the other parents who share these standards of behavior.
- I will refrain from criticizing calls and performance of referees, coaches, players.
- I will attend and participate as a spectator, not as a coach. I will not shout instructions from the sideline.

## **Coach Code of Conduct**

See full Coaches Handbook on the website for additional information.

Coaches and assistant coaches are expected to maintain a high level of sportsmanship, professionalism, and integrity both off and on the field. All coaches are required to complete a background check as a Red River Valley United coach. A coach's primary responsibility is for his/her players to have fun, to develop as soccer players and to instill a passion for the game. The performance of coaches is not measured in wins and losses, but rather in what is taught to players in terms of technique, sportsmanship and fair play. Coaches must maintain respect for the game. Coaches are charged with the responsibility of controlling their players at all times during a match. Coaches lead and teach by example; player's actions will be a reflection upon each individual coach.

## **Grievance Procedure**

Red River Valley United believes most concerns and/or complaints as it relates to Red River Valley United can be and should be adequately addressed internally by the Red River Valley United's coaches, Director of Training and Development, the Executive Director, and/or the Board of Directors. Red River Valley United encourages direct, honest, respectful, and professional communication among coaches, players, and parents. Parents have the right to make complaints about issues regarding the treatment of their child but must follow the procedures set forth below.

### **Procedure for issues regarding soccer coaching actions or decisions**

If a Red River Valley United player or parent has an issue with their coach regarding a coaching action or decision, the following steps should be followed:

- Any player or parent that has an issue with a coaching action or decision, should first wait at least 24 hours following the event to address the issue. This provides all parties time to process the circumstances at issue.
- Following the 24-hour waiting period, the player and/or parent should contact their head coach to discuss the issue. Please approach this discussion objectively and with an open mind to differing opinions.
- If the issue is not resolved after speaking with the head or lead coach, the parent/player should contact the appropriate age and gender Parent Advisory Group (PAG) representative or the Director of Training and Development.
  - Parent/player should email or discuss with the PAG representative or the Director of Training and Development the following information: name of the person making the complaint, player's name, coach's name, age group, a detailed description of the issue at hand, steps taken to resolve the issue, along with a recommended solution.
  - The Parent Advisory Group representative or Director of Training and Coaching will deliver the issue to the Red River Valley United's appropriate BOD designee.
    - PAG representative or Director of Training and Coaching will provide an update within a reasonable period relative to the nature of the issue. Typically, this should be within 1 week of providing the information.

### **Procedure for questions regarding Tournaments or practice**

Please contact the designated Team Manager for logistical or general questions.

### **Procedure for general issues regarding Red River Valley United Soccer Club**

If a Red River Valley United player or parent has a general issue with the Club, to include suggestions for improvement and/or information about policy violations, the following steps should be followed:

- Parent/player should email or discuss with the PAG representative the following information: name of the person making the suggestion/complaint, player's name, coach's name, age group, a detailed description of the issue at hand, steps taken to resolve the issue, along with a recommended solution.
- The Parent Advisory Group representative will deliver the issue to the Red River Valley United's PAG BOD designee.
  - PAG representative will provide an update within a reasonable period relative to the nature of the issue. Typically, this should be within 1 week of providing the information.

## **Right to Refuse**

Red River Valley United believes in making every effort to work through issues, however, in effort to protect the players, families, and organization; the Club reserves the right to refuse any participants (including, but not limited to: players, coaches, referees, family members, spectators) for any reason. These restrictions may include (but are not limited to) restricting the individual from attending / participating in club activities including practices and games.

# Safety

## General

Safety is of the utmost importance to Red River Valley United. Coaches are required to notify a parent or guardian if the player is injured or is ill during a practice or a game. Parents, players, and coaches are expected to communicate any injuries to each other when known to evaluate and agree upon a plan on how to best protect the player. Safety is the responsibility of everyone and any unsafe act or situation should be stopped immediately and reported.

## Concussion

Red River Valley United believes that it is the responsibility of every player, parent, coach, and certified medical professionals to effectively manage potential concussions. Education, awareness, and cooperation will be the key to act accordingly. The following are some basic rules to remember:

- Learn about concussions -the player, family, and coach should be familiar with the signs and symptoms of a concussion.
  - Parents & Players – Educate
    - Refer to the below link for understanding of concussions and symptoms of a concussion
    - Seek a certified medical professional’s advice if you have any suspicion of a concussion
    - Sanford's Concussion Facts Sheet
    - Fact Sheet: <http://www.sanfordhealth.org/medical-services/concussions/concussion-resources>
    - Video: <https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/training/index.html>
  - Player – notify a coach, parent or another player if you experience head contact and any symptoms of a concussion.
  - Coaches are required to complete a free online course and will have a certification of completion on file with the club
    - Link: <https://nfhslearn.com/courses/61129/concussion-in-sports>
- ‘When in doubt, take the player out.’ – it is the best practice to remove the player from competition if there are signs of head contact and symptoms that a concussion has occurred.
- Do not let the player return – the player should not return to play until he or she is evaluated and released by a certified medical professional.

## Concussion Protocol

- If a coach sees or is informed (this could be from the player, another coach, parent, spectator, or another player) of any head contact AND the player demonstrates ANY symptoms, they are removed from play.
  - Parent is notified
    - Coach completes the Concussion Notification form and parent signs
  - Player cannot return until a copy of clearance is provided from a certified medical professional.
    - Once clearance is received, it is attached to the form and sent to the Admin to be placed on file as documentation.
  - If any one of the previous circumstances occur individually (sees or hears of head contact OR the player demonstrates any symptoms), the coach notifies the parent and allows the parent to determine the best next steps.

In general, as a club we provide education, define a line at which we will defer to a medical professional and for the instances where it is unclear, we defer to the parents.

## **Weather, Lightning, Game & Practice Cancellation**

Games will generally only be cancelled by Red River Valley United due to unsafe playing conditions, including lightning or heavy rain before or during a game. Practices can be cancelled, rescheduled, or postponed by the coach or the club for reasons pertinent to their specific team, including but not limited to: Adverse weather; unsafe playing conditions; conflicting events / game schedules.

- Once a game has started, the referee has the deciding say to cancel the game due to bad weather.
  - If referees are not available, coaches should confer to cancel games.
- Once a practice has started, it is the coach's decision to cancel due to weather.
- Games and practices are allowed to continue immediately following any postponement for bad weather unless lightning/thunder was present.
- Lightning/Thunder
  - If lightning is seen or thunder is heard, games and practices should be cancelled or postponed until at least 30 minutes after the last seen or heard lightning/thunder.
    - If games are past halftime when it is cancelled, it is considered a full game.
    - If games are cancelled before halftime, the game may be made up in its entirety.
- The head referee does not need concurrence from both coaches to postpone or delay the match.
- Cancellations will be communicated via the club website and messaging tools within it.

## **Alcohol, Tobacco & Drugs**

Red River Valley United is a drug free organization. Alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and other drugs are not permitted at any Red River Valley United events, including practices and games. No coach or volunteer shall participate in any Red River Valley United activity while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Smoking or use of tobacco products is not permitted in or around youth sports practices or games

# Concussion Notification for Red River Valley United

Today, \_\_\_\_\_, at the \_\_\_\_\_ [insert name of event],  
\_\_\_\_\_ [insert player's name] received a possible concussion during practice or competition.

Red River Valley United and Staff want to make you aware of this possibility and signs and symptoms that may arise which may require further evaluation and/or treatment. You will be required to provide a return to play notice by a certified medical professional.

It is common for a concussed child or young adult to have one or many concussion symptoms.

There are four types of symptoms: physical, cognitive, emotional, and sleep.

If your daughter or son starts to show signs of these symptoms, or there any other symptoms you notice about the behavior or conduct of your son or daughter, you should consider seeking immediate medical attention:

- |                                 |                 |                                      |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| -Memory difficulties            | -Neck pain      | -Delicate to light or noise          |
| -Headaches that worsen          | -Odd behavior   | -Repeats the same answer or question |
| -Vomiting                       | -Fatigued       | -Focus issues                        |
| -Irregular sleep patterns       | -Slow reactions | -Seizures                            |
| -Irritability                   | -Slurred speech | -Less responsive than usual          |
| -Weakness/numbness in arms/legs |                 |                                      |

Please take the necessary precautions and seek a professional medical opinion before allowing your daughter or son to participate further. Until a professional medical opinion is provided, please consider the following guidelines:

1. refraining from participation in any activities the day of, and the day after, the occurrence.
2. refraining from taking any medicine unless (1) current medicine, prescribed or authorized, is permitted to be continued to be taken, and (2) any other medicine is prescribed by a licensed health care professional.
3. refraining from cognitive activities requiring concentration cognitive activities such as TV, video games, computer work, and text messaging if they are ca If you are unclear and have questions about the above symptoms, please contact a medical doctor or doctor of osteopathy who specializes in concussion treatment and management.

Please be advised that a player who suffers a concussion may not return to play until there is provided a signed clearance from a certified medical professional or doctor of osteopathy who specializes in concussion treatment and management.

Age Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Player Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

By inserting my name and date and returning this Notification Form, I confirm that I have been provided with, and acknowledge that, I have read the information contained in the Form.

Team Official/Coach Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Signed clearance should be attached to this form and returned to the Red River Valley United Administrator.

# Concussion Procedure & Protocol Info Form for US Youth Soccer Events

Concussion: a traumatic brain injury that interferes with normal brain function. Medically, a concussion is a complex, pathophysiological event to the brain that is induced by trauma which may or may not involve a loss of consciousness (LOC). Concussion results in a constellation of physical, cognitive, emotional, and sleep-related symptoms. Signs or symptoms may last from several minutes to days, weeks, months or even longer in some cases.

## CONCUSSION SIGNS, SYMPTOMS, AND MANAGEMENT AT TRAINING AND COMPETITIONS

### **Step 1: Did a concussion occur?**

Evaluate the player and note if any of the following signs and/or symptoms are present:

1. Dazed look or confusion about what happened.
2. Memory difficulties.
3. Neck pain, headaches, nausea, vomiting, double vision, blurriness, ringing noise or sensitive to sounds.
4. Short attention span. Can't keep focused.
5. Slow reaction time, slurred speech, bodily movements are lagging, fatigue, and slowly answers questions or has difficulty answering questions.
6. Abnormal physical and/or mental behavior.
7. Coordination skills are behind, ex: balancing, dizziness, clumsiness, reaction time.

### **Step 2: Is emergency treatment needed?**

This would include the following scenarios:

1. Spine or neck injury or pain.
2. Behavior patterns change, unable to recognize people/places, less responsive than usual.
3. Loss of consciousness.
4. Headaches that worsen
5. Seizures
6. Very drowsy, can't be awakened
7. Repeated vomiting
8. Increasing confusion or irritability
9. Weakness, numbness in arms and legs

### **Step 3: If a possible concussion occurred, but no emergency treatment is needed, what should be done now?**

Focus on these areas every 5-10 min for the next 1 - 2 hours, without returning to any activities:

1. Balance, movement.
2. Speech.
3. Memory, instructions, and responses.
4. Attention on topics, details, confusion, ability to concentrate.
5. State of consciousness
6. Mood, behavior, and personality
7. Headache or "pressure" in head
8. Nausea or vomiting
9. Sensitivity to light and noise

### **Step 4: A player diagnosed with a possible concussion may return to US Youth Soccer play only after release from a certified medical doctor or doctor of osteopathy specializing in concussion treatment and management.**

References: Kissick MD, James and Karen M. Johnston MD, PhD. "Return to Play After Concussion." Collegiate Sports Medical Foundation. Volume 15, Number 6, November 2005. National Federation of State High School Associations. "Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion in Sports". 2008 NFHS Sports Medicine Handbook (Third Edition). 2008 77-82.