

Southern Illinois Middle School Soccer (SIMSS) Rules and Guidelines

Updated: 3-14-2021

Organization and Guiding Principles

Mission: To establish a competitive middle school soccer program in Southern Illinois that will be recognized by the Southern Illinois Junior High School Association (SIJHSA) and participating member schools.

SIMSS Board: Each participating program will appoint one voting member to serve on the board who will take active participation at the scheduled meetings. A program may have one additional board member when that member is serving as the League President but not the SIMSS rep for their community. Other interested parties may attend and take part in the meeting but may not vote. A board member that is unable to attend a scheduled meeting may send a single representative to speak and vote on their behalf at the meeting. Some votes may be taken via email. No response means you are abstaining from voting on the issue.

The program will be run similar to other SIJHSA middle school sports programs to help foster support and ease transition to full sanctioning by the SIJHSA and participating school districts.

The season for both boys and girls will be in the Spring. **Informally, programs may also be active in the Fall. However, these games are not SIMSS sponsored games and should not be represented or referred to that way.** Primarily, sanctioned middle school sports are a single season and that should be a guiding principle for us as well.

Participating programs must be in the general SIJHSA area and approved by SIMSS Board. Conference makeup: Currently, there is only one conference. With anticipated growth, there may be additional conferences in the future.

Until program is school and/or state sanctioned, all participating programs and players must be connected to an organization affiliated with the Illinois Youth Soccer Association or other insured organization.

There is no organizational fee to participate. However, each participating program is responsible for their own costs for uniforms, referees, field maintenance, etc. See sample team budget information below.

To foster and promote mission, teams should use the team name and colors of the local school district, i.e. Harrisburg Bulldogs, Carterville Lions, etc. Players are encouraged to wear their jerseys at school on game days or on Friday's for weekend games to help promote the program within the school.

To limit jersey costs, only a single jersey is required. Jersey colors will be submitted to SIMSS prior to season start. When a jersey conflict exists, please try to arrange for pennies.

Programs and/or coaches knowingly violating the rules for unfair advantage or conduct considered by the SIMSS Board to be unacceptable may be suspended from participation.

Player Eligibility

Similar to high school soccer, SIMSS has only Boys and Girls Divisions. There is not a Coed Division. Girls can play on a boys team only when there are not enough girls for a girls team. Boys may not play on a girls team. **However, programs are strongly encouraged to develop both boys and girls teams when possible.** SIMSS is a feeder program for current or future high school boys and girls soccer programs. Programs may not create coed teams for the purpose of competitive advantage over other teams when the program is able to support both a boys and girls program. This is a middle school program. It is not defined by the traditional recreational model of fifth/sixth and seventh/eighth grade divisions. Don't

leave out your sixth graders (5th if needed for JV teams). It only takes a handful of players from each age group in order to create a team.

Players must be enrolled in the school district they are representing except circumstances noted. Players in middle and junior high feeder schools that do not have their own high school district must play for their feeder high school district program unless they have enough players to form their own team, in which case, those players must play for their middle school they attend. Private school students whose school has a SIMSS team must play for that school's team even if they live in another school district. If a private school does not have their own team, then those players must play on a school district's team or coop in which they live. Home school students must play on a team in their school district or coop in which they live. Club and select players may participate as long as they meet all other eligibility requirements. **No SIMSS program coop can be formed between communities that have separately recognized IHSA soccer programs. Any coop of School Districts must be approved by the SIMSS Board in advance of the season on the league provided form.**

It is recommended that a player be enrolled in at least 6th grade for Varsity (5th for JV) and may not be enrolled in greater than 8th grade and a maximum of 15 years of age as of March 1 of current Spring Season. Players must meet both the age and grade requirements to participate.

Programs may form JV teams. 8th graders may not participate in a JV match unless both teams agree in advance. During regular season, boys teams can have non-8th grade players playing in both a Varsity and JV match. Programs with girls teams may not have girls playing in both the girls and boys division, i.e. you cannot ask Suzie to play with the boys today just because she is available when she normally plays in our girls program. This is the same way it works in high school. Girls can only play on a boys team when there is not a girls program for them to play in.

Birth dates and school grade should be collected for all players to verify eligibility. Each team should submit a roster and coop to the league prior to season start on the league provided forms.

Regular Season Matches

In general, we will follow FIFA rules with the following clarifications and modifications for league play:

<http://www.fifa.com/aboutfifa/officialdocuments/doclists/laws.html#laws>

Each team can roster up to 18 players for a game. Teams may have more than 18 players for player development etc. as long as only 18 participate in any given match. Any exceptions must be approved by the opposing team(s).

The host venue will be responsible to provide a safe, properly sized (within reason) marked field (Goal: 8 Feet x 24 feet, Width Min: 50 Yards/Max: 100 Yards, Length: Min: 100 Yards/Max: 130 Yards).

Games will be 11 v 11 with 35 minute halves with a 10 minute half time. Game time will be shortened to 30 minute halves when a team is playing more than one match that day. Ball size will be #5 provided by the home team. A team must have at least 9 players to start a game and must finish with at least 7 players. Otherwise, the opposing team wins by forfeit. The opposing team who is not short players is not required to play down but may do so in the spirit of a more competitive game. A JV match can be 9v9 format if needed.

Regular Season Games Ending in a Tie - will end in a Tie. The following point system will be used: 3 points for a win, 1 point each for a tie, and 0 points for a loss. In the case of a forfeit by one team, where rescheduling is not possible, the team not forfeiting the game will be awarded a score of 1-0 for 3 points. In the case of a rain-out, where reschedule is not possible, the game is removed from the schedule with no score for either team. A game that is called due to bad weather where at least one half has been played, the score when the game was terminated will be the final score. If one

complete half is not finished, then the game may resume another time or the game is simply cancelled. **The host venue is responsible to report game results for all games at that location back to the league.**

Because teams will play a different number of games, a win percentage will be calculated. A tie counts as half a win. Calculation: $(\text{number of wins} + (\text{number of ties} \times .5)) / \text{number of games played}$

No limits on the number of player substitutions.

Handballs will be at the discretion of the referee. Girls may not cross their arms across chest to knock down an air ball. This is a handball at the spot of the foul. Referees will make the determination whether an infraction has occurred on any type of defensive action to protect head, face, etc. from serious injury.

Slide Tackling (an attempt to tackle the ball away from an opponent while sliding on the ground) is allowed.

According to FIFA Law 12 - Fouls and Misconduct: A player is guilty of serious foul play if he uses excessive force or brutality against an opponent when challenging for the ball when it is in play. A tackle that endangers the safety of an opponent must be sanctioned as serious foul play. Any player who lunges at an opponent in challenging for the ball from the front, from the side or from behind using one or both legs, with excessive force and endangering the safety of an opponent is guilty of serious foul play. Advantage should not be applied in situations involving serious foul play unless there is a clear subsequent opportunity to score a goal. The referee must send off the player guilty of serious foul play when the ball is next out of play. A player who is guilty of serious foul play should be sent off and play is restarted with a direct free kick from the position where the offence occurred (see Law 13 – Position of free kick) or a penalty kick (if the offence occurred inside the offender's penalty area).

Additionally, it should be noted, there are many other types of serious misconduct other than those listed above.

A player receiving an immediate red card will be ejected and cannot be replaced for the rest of the match. An ejected player, coach, or fan shall not participate in the next scheduled match for that team. The team receiving the red card will only have to play short handed during the match the red card was given. **A player receiving a second subsequent yellow card in the same match will also receive a red card and ejected from the current match and may NOT be replaced by another player on the team. The player receiving the subsequent yellow/red card is NOT allowed to play the next scheduled match for their team.** A league match report should be completed by the center referee and submitted to the league any time a player, coach, or fan is ejected from a match. A pattern of unsportsmanlike behavior could result in additional action by the SIMSS board.

Recent Changes Rules Changes

Goal kick: In the past, the team taking the goal kick could not touch the ball until it had left the penalty area. Now, a player from the team in possession may reside in or enter the penalty area and touch the ball as soon as it is in play. For the ball to be considered in play it must have been kicked and clearly moved. This change is meant to speed up the play of the game.

Free Kicks: When there is a 'wall' of three or more defenders, attackers are not allowed within 1 yard of the wall. If an attacker is inside that 1-yard area when the kick is taken, the defending team is given an Indirect Free Kick from the spot of the infraction.

Referees

Host venue will arrange for three trained HS Age or above referees (center, and two AR's). One referee, usually the center, must be 16 years or older and certified. The two teams playing in the game will share equally the cost of the referees. The Referee pay is: Center: \$34 ; AR's (x2) \$20 each = \$74 per game. Each host venue should do their absolute best to have three referees at all games. However, in the event only two referees can be obtained, the pay for two

centers is \$34 to each referee. Having only one referee should be completely avoided. The head coach for each team playing in the contest is responsible to pay their half (\$37 - three tens, one five, two ones recommended) in cash to head referee. These rates will be adjusted as needed in the future. The league has a resource link for referees in our area on the SIMSS League website. Center referee is strongly encouraged to fill out the league provided match report at each game so any reoccurring problem with a coach, player, or parent can be identified. Host venue is responsible to return the match reports to the league.

Championship/Playoffs

The regular season game results (scores, win percentage, etc) will be used to seed/place teams for the SIMSS Championship and/or Playoffs. There may be multiple boys and girls divisions for more competitive play.

You must enter your SIMSS team that played in the regular season. You cannot combine players from multiple teams to create a new team for Championship/Playoffs.

Teams will be seeded by the SIMSS Board.

Only SIMSS teams may participate.

There will only be boys and girls divisions. There is no Coed Division. However, some boys teams may have girls on them. Boys may not play on a girls team.

An individual player may only play for one team.

To be eligible, a player must have participated in at least 50% of the teams regular season matches. Matches where the player missed due to illness or injury are excluded from the calculation.

You can only roster up to 18 players.

Players must meet all other qualifications of SIMSS.

All teams must pay the entry fee of \$250 in order to participate.

Any exceptions must be approved in advance of team entry.

Coaches should be prepared to document any players eligibility should a player's eligibility come in question. The Championship Tournament Director will have final say on any determination of eligibility.

Programs may be required to show proof of insurance and/or liability waivers for each rostered player.

See the specific rules for SIMSS Championship for more details.

Estimated Team Budget for Games

Approx. 12 regular season games @\$37 = \$444 ; Middle School Championship Entry Fee = \$250 ; **Game Budget Total: \$694 per Team (does not include uniform or other costs of your program)**