

Hello Sterling Youth Soccer,

I hope this message finds you well. It has been a long and challenging winter, but we are coming out the other side with a renewed sense of optimism. The weather is getting warmer and the snow is melting, and it seems like it would be fun to be outside again\.

Since we've all been cooped up all winter, Sterling Youth Soccer has decided to offer a new recreational spring soccer program for 2021. This program will be something different than we've ever offered before but will be most similar to our program last fall. This program was created based on interest from our pre-season survey as well as the general availability of our Board members.

Some of the key details for the season are:

- We will be offering the following levels:
 - o PreK/K (coed, up to 30 players)
 - o Grade 1/2 (coed, up to 40 players)
 - o Grade 3/4 (boys, up to 18 players)
 - o Grade 3/4 (girls, up to 18 players)
 - o Grade 5/6 (girls, up to 26 players)
 - o Grade 5-8 (boys, up to 26 players)
 - o Grade 7-10 (girls, up to 30 players)
- Season Details
 - o **Registration closes on April 2nd**
 - o Activities will be on Sunday afternoon.
 - o Season runs from April 25th to June 13th (no games on Memorial Day weekend).
 - o There is a flat \$50 fee for all players and all players will receive a shirt (bright-colored to avoid need for shared pinnies).
 - o Each age group may be slightly different, but in general there will be a period of practice/drills followed by a scrimmage. Most groups will not have assigned teams.
 - o All activities will be in Sterling. There will be no travel to play other teams/towns.
- Registration **priority is for Sterling-based players**. See below for more information about our prioritization process for this season.
- This program is not designed to be a replacement for Mountain Soccer Club, which provides competitive soccer for Sterling players in grades 3 and above. Our program is recreational, and activities on Sundays should allow players to participate in both programs.

It wouldn't be a communication from me if there weren't some FAQs, so here we go...

Q: How does Covid impact the season?

A: We will continue to follow the guidance of Mass Youth Soccer (which is subject to change). Based on the current situation, the following rules are in-place:

- Masks are required for players, coaches and spectators. Players must wear their masks at all times, unless taking a mask break while practicing appropriate physical distancing (at least 6 feet separation). Players can **ONLY** wear ear-loop masks (no gaiters). Masks with vents or mesh are not allowed.
- All spectators are expected to observe proper mask wearing and physical distancing.



- Per Mass Youth Soccer, spectators are limited to 2 adults per player.
- There are no longer any rule changes required for soccer. This means that throw-ins, corner kicks, and normal physical contact are allowed. This is different from how we played in the fall, but is in alignment with Mass Youth Soccer and Mass guidelines.

Q: Wait...we won't need to modify the rules for the spring?

A: Nope, rules modifications are no longer required on the field. We will still be enforcing appropriate mask wearing and distancing on the sidelines.

Q: Why is there a limit on the number of players who can register?

A: We have several restrictions that we don't usually have in the fall season. These restrictions have combined to limit our capacity.

- We have reduced support from the board members due to other commitments. We've historically been a fall-only program and therefore there are some conflicts.
- We have less coaches than normal due to conflicts with other sports.
- There is reduced field availability since Lower Griffin is unavailable (booked by baseball and softball). We will be using a combination of Houghton, Muddy Pond and Upper Griffin fields.
- There is less available time since we are trying to avoid conflicting with traditional "spring" sports.

Q: How will you handle it if there are more players than available slots?

A: Our registration system is setup to change to "waitlist" after the maximum number of players have registered.

Q: So how will you prioritize registrations?

A: Based on survey results from earlier, we hope to have enough slots for all interested players. However, if that isn't the case, we will be using the following approach:

- Our first priority will be players from Sterling. We expect there may be interest from surrounding towns, and we believe that it is important to prioritize our town first. Therefore, all players from **outside Sterling MUST** register in the "**NON-STERLING PLAYERS**" group (same registration link, just select the proper group further in the process). This is a no-cost registration as payment will be handled when a slot is available.
- After registration has closed on April 2nd, we will contact members of the NON-STERLING PLAYERS group based on the following:
 - o Priority will be provided first to players who have played with Sterling Youth Soccer before.
 - o All other registrations will be prioritized based on the date/time that they were received.



Q: So, where to I go to register?

A: Registration is now open until April 2nd. This link should take you directly to the [Spring Soccer 2021 registration page](#).

Q: What if I have any additional questions?

A: Reach out to me at sterlingsoccer.president@gmail.com and I'd be happy to help.

Brent Powers

President, Sterling Youth Soccer

