

West Fargo Packers Boys Soccer 2025 Parent/Athlete Handbook



**Head Coach
Matt Crawford**

Program Philosophy

At West Fargo High School, the Packers Soccer Program is all about building something bigger than just a soccer team. We're here to help players grow—not just as athletes, but as people. Everything we do is built around three key values: Respect, Responsibility, and Work Ethic.

We believe that success and winning are results of the work we put in every day. When we show up, push each other, stay focused, and play for something greater than ourselves, the scoreboard starts to reflect that. But for us, winning is more than just a final score—it's about how far we've come as a team and as individuals.

Respect means treating teammates, coaches, opponents, officials, and the game itself with dignity. It's about creating a culture where everyone feels valued and where we lift each other up.

Responsibility is taking ownership—of your attitude, your effort, your role on the team, and your actions off the field. Being a Packer means being someone your teammates can count on.

Work Ethic is the heart of our program. We don't cut corners. We train hard, compete with intensity, and hold ourselves to a high standard every day—win or lose.

We also believe that it's okay to make mistakes—in fact, it's expected. Growth doesn't happen without a few stumbles along the way. What matters is that we learn from them and keep moving forward. Every practice, every game, and every challenge is part of your journey.

In the Packers Soccer Program, we play to win. But more importantly, we win by playing the right way—with character, commitment, and heart. When we stay true to our values, the results take care of themselves.

Mission - Vision - Purpose

Mission

To develop student-athletes who excel on the field, in the classroom, and in the community by fostering a culture of respect, responsibility, and strong work ethic.

Vision

To build a unified soccer program that inspires pride throughout West Fargo High School, empowers players to reach their highest potential, and prepares them to be respectful and resilient leaders beyond graduation.

Purpose

Our purpose is to use soccer as a platform to teach lifelong values, strengthen character, and promote personal growth while competing at the highest level and representing the West Fargo Packers with integrity and pride.

Program Pillars

Respect

- Treat teammates, coaches, opponents, officials, and the game itself with dignity.
- Embrace diversity and build an inclusive team environment.
- Support and encourage each other on and off the field.

Responsibility

- Be accountable for your actions and decisions both in soccer and in academics.
- Lead by example and uphold the standards of the program and school community.
- Prioritize self-discipline and commitment to team goals.

Work Ethic

- Strive to improve daily through consistent effort and determination.
- Embrace challenges and learn from setbacks.
- Commit to giving your best in training, matches, and personal development.

PRACTICE

Tryouts

Tryouts will be conducted beginning the morning of Monday, August 4th at 6:00 AM. Tryout practices will be twice each day, from 6:00 AM - 8:00 AM and from 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM. All students will report to the stadium field for all tryout practices.

Cuts

We are a NO-CUT program. The purpose of tryouts is to identify which team is appropriate for the development of the athlete and with the best interests of the team in mind. The participation in this program is voluntary.

In-Season Practice Schedule

Practices are scheduled around the needs of the team and scheduled games. Updates to practices will be posted in our SportsYou team app. The schedule for each team is as follows for Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Junior Varsity: 4:30 PM - 6:00 PM

Varsity: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

GAME DAY

Game Schedule

Our game schedule can be viewed on the [EDC Boys' Soccer website - WF High](#) or you can follow our updates on the school website or our team app.

Playing Time

Participation and play time is not guaranteed. All play time is earned by the athlete based on what happens in practice, academic eligibility, and adherence to school and handbook policies.

Attire

All players will dress in a manner that is in accordance with school policy. On game days, all athletes will dress as specified by their captains and coaches. This will consist of either warm up jackets, game day tops, shirt and tie, or other team apparel.

Attendance

Attendance at school is mandatory for the entire school day for participation in practice and games. All students must follow district policies when checking in and out of school. Any student who misses class on a game day will be ineligible.

Travel in Fargo

For travel purposes, all students are expected to have their own rides for away games that are in Fargo, West Fargo, or Moorhead. West Fargo Public Schools does not provide bussing or transportation for local away games.

Travel out of Fargo

All athletes will ride the team bus for away games that are located outside the immediate area of West Fargo. Athletes are expected to have their team equipment

ready before the departure time. Students will have an opportunity to have a meal before/after their game, and the students will finance their own meals. Athletes who choose to ride home will need to be released by their parent/guardian if they complete the travel waiver form. No athlete will be released with another family.

Home Games

All players should support each member and team in the program. This includes Varsity and any sub-varsity team.

Junior Varsity and C Team Expectations

All players should arrive and be ready to begin warm ups at least 45 minutes prior to the game. After the game, all players are expected to remain and support the varsity team during their game. Also, there will need to be 4-6 students that stay and help as ball collectors during the game. If you cannot remain behind at the game, you must communicate with your coach.

Varsity Expectations

All players should arrive by 5:45 PM to support the JV game at the end of their first half and remainder of the game. Players should report to the storage shed by 6:00 PM for the pre-game instructions. Players are then expected to be ready to warm up by 6:15 PM.

IN- AND OUT- OF SCHOOL PLAYER EXPECTATIONS

Grades

While participating in high school extracurricular activities, a learner must be enrolled in six credit-bearing courses per semester (the passing grade will be computed from the beginning of the semester or quarter). A learner who has special permission to be enrolled in less than 6 credit-bearing courses per semester must have their eligibility approved by the principal (examples: a learner taking college classes, extended illnesses, enrolled in Community High School, or the Virtual Program).

To be eligible to participate in high school extracurricular activities, learners cannot be failing more than one course and must have zero detention hours.

To be eligible to participate in middle school extracurricular activities, learners cannot be carrying a "1" in more than one course.

Academic eligibility for a learner in high school and middle school shall be determined weekly beginning with the second week of each quarter.

Attendance

Learners at the middle and high school level MUST be in attendance for ALL enrolled courses on the day of a practice, competition, or contest to be able to participate. For weekend or non-school day contests, learners must have been in attendance for ALL

enrolled courses on the most recent school day prior. Exceptions for medical appointments (with a note from a medical professional) and special circumstances determined by the learner's administrator will be made as needed.

Practice Expectations

The practice environment is one of the best opportunities to learn and prepare for upcoming games. All players are expected to participate in practice at the best of their availability. Playing at 100% will not only help make yourself better but help improve those around you. All players should be respectful and attentive to the coaches. With added focus during practices the athletes will receive more feedback, specific instructions, and added intensity in training. Practices are meant to be enjoyed and be an escape from everyday life. Coaches expect players to be resilient and learn from their mistakes. The season is relatively quick and players should have quick memories to learn from each individual opportunity.

Lettering Policy

In order to receive a letter for Boys Soccer, players must meet one of the following criteria:

1. Players must enter at least 2 separate games during the season
2. Play in at least 3 halves during the season
3. Play in 1 State Tournament Match
4. Be a rostered Varsity member for 80% of games
5. Be a Junior Varsity player for at least 3 years
6. Other situations will be handled on individual basis as determined by the Head Coach

DISCIPLINE POLICIES

West Fargo Public School Substance Abuse

The use or possession of tobacco, alcohol, or any controlled substance (including prescription and synthetic drugs) as defined by North Dakota law is prohibited. Any co-curricular participant who is in violation of the foregoing regulation shall be suspended from participation in interscholastic contests / activities including scrimmages for a minimum of six weeks in her/his activity season.

Hazing

Hazing means committing an act against a learner or coercing a learner into committing an act that creates a risk of harm to a person in order for the learner to be initiated into or affiliated with a school-sponsored learner organization or for any other school-related purpose. Any situation that involves hazing will be dealt with by the Athletic Director, School Administration, Head Coach, and any other parties needing involvement.

Red Card/Ejections

Each individual is expected to behave in a manner that reflects positively on themselves and the school. Any individual that receives a Red Card/Ejection from a game will be handled on an individual basis. The coaching staff has a goal to have "0" red cards

during the season as it can be detrimental to the team and individual. After each match where the red card occurs, the coaching staff will meet to discuss the situation and if any additional suspensions or discipline needs to occur, beyond what the suspension from North Dakota High School Activities Association.

General Discipline

Everyone involved in this program directly reflects how West Fargo High School and yourself are viewed in the community. The expectation for any individual in this program is to conduct themselves in the highest manner. We encourage everyone to make the right decisions both on the field and in the community. As we are all humans and mistakes will happen, one lesson that we can all learn is that “every action has its consequence.” Whether that is good or bad, these decisions are not made lightly. Although final decisions are made by the Head Coach, a disciplinary committee with coaches, captains, and the program leadership group will provide input in the consequence for required situations.

PARENT EXPECTATIONS

Practice

All practices within West Fargo High School are considered closed to the outside public. The only people that are expected to be at practice during the scheduled time are the athletes. By attending the practices, parents can influence their child without recognizing it. The parent can add pressure onto their child to perform out of the ordinary, and can influence their decision making. The coaching staff recognizes on occasions parents will watch practice, which is understandable. Please do not abuse this privilege and make it a habit. If you have concerns about how practice is run or have other questions, please reach out to Coach Crawford at anytime or after practices.

Games

Parents are encouraged to attend all games, both home and away, and of all matches, whether your child is involved or not. Soccer is a team sport and we all must support each other in our best and worst moments. We encourage and support each other to make each other better. Parents should understand that equal playing time is guaranteed during games, nor is participation. If there are concerns about situations that happened during a game, it should be addressed the following day. This program has a 24 hour policy for concerns that directly influence their child, to help take some emotions away from both parties. You are all more than welcome discuss moments in games or the coaching staff perspectives after the game. There are certainly moments where the coaching staff will make mistakes, so it is possible that your point of view is correct. We accept all criticism, as it can provide learning experiences for all individuals, but want to help deescalated these conversations to help its productivity.

Fundraising and Volunteer Opportunities

Parents are a crucial part of fundraising opportunities! These funds are often used to provide meals, equipment, clothing, and other needed items for players in the team to remain competitive. Parents will be asked to help run concessions stands, take pictures

at games, and help with team meals. These opportunities may happen during or after the season.

QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

Communication with Coaches

All member of the coaching staff welcome your feedback and passion to grow the program. Feel free to discuss soccer with the coaches, but understand there may be limits to some conversations.

Appropriate conversations would include:

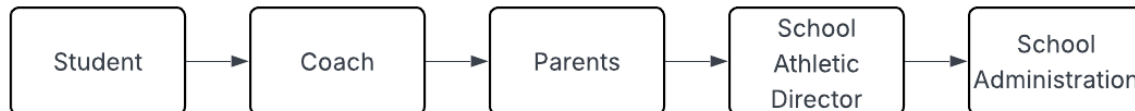
- Individual treatment and psychology of your child
- Additional information that would help us improve your child
- Concerns with child's behavior

Discussions to avoid and are inappropriate

- Playing time
- Team strategy
- Practices and training drills
- Other student athletes

Communication Chain

There are some conversations that do not remedy a problem. One of the primary skills that we as a coaching staff try to educate our athletes on is their own problem solving and decision making. This promotes responsibility in our athletes as they graduate out of high school and into the work force. We will always encourage our students to talk with their team coaches first when looking to solve a problem. If problems escalate then parents, and school administrators can be involved with scheduled meetings. When looking to schedule meetings or start a communication chain please refer to the guide below.



If there is a breach in this chain, we will always refer back to the student. For example, if a parent approaches a coach over a concern, the coach may ask if the student talked with the coach first. If that answer is no, then there first must be an athlete/coach conversation before advancing to the next level. If the parent/coach conversation cannot solve the issue, then we will refer to Athletic Director Justin Behm who will determine the next steps.

All coaches will answer your questions and concerns, but at anytime they feel uncomfortable with the situation they will ask you to reach out to Coach Crawford. Coach Crawford is available and open to your feedback of the program.

OFFSEASON

Open Gyms

Starting in January, we will host weekly open gym days where athletes can come use the facilities at WFHS and play. These are not mandatory practices, but are highly encouraged by the Boys Soccer coaches. The coaches are not evaluated, the athletes are not coached by any WF coaches due to North Dakota High School Activities Association offseason regulations. These open gyms are primarily used to allow players a chance to continue playing, improve their skills, and improve as a soccer player. While athletes are involved in other sports at WFHS, participation in open gyms are discouraged.

Summer Camps

The Middle School and High School camp typically runs from the first week of June through the end of July. The schedule for the camp is made up of one day of practice each week with one game against a local high school. This camp provides a great opportunity to get to know your teammates for the upcoming soccer season and receive instruction from the high school coaching staff. This camp is not mandatory and is not required for athletes to participate in, however, the coaching staff cannot stress enough the benefits and the opportunities to improve as a player during these offseason months with your future teammates.

Academics

The coaching staff stresses that academics will always come first. For all student-athletes, academics count throughout the school year and not just during the season. The coaching staff frequently checks the schools academic eligibility list and the progress of the students academics.

COACHING RESPONSIBILITIES

Head Coach: Matt Crawford

Varsity Assistant Coaches: Jason Mellmer, Mike Wolfer, Bryce McKinnon

Junior Varsity Head Coach: Juan Rodriguez

Junior Varsity Assistant Coaches: Ben Cleary, Bernard Musafiri

Coaching Expectations

Hours: As coach we are given autonomy over how we guide our student athletes. The basic rule is to arrive and depart the facility long enough to get your tasks done.

Off-Season: Be prepared to meet as a staff once before the start of the season. Each coach should look to attend one additional training each year. Helping with the summer camp is not mandatory, but always appreciated.

Game Day: Be at the school at least 45 minutes prior to kickoff. Have your space set up for your team to seamlessly begin warm ups and lead your pre-game instructions.

Chain of Command: All coaches in this staff are viewed as equals. All staff input is valued and feedback is encouraged. All final decisions will be made by the head coach.

Priorities of Coaching:

1. Coaching in the flow: Let the athletes play! The best tool for instruction and learning is through playing. Give as much feedback you can in the moment and give them goals to work towards.
2. Team management: Be confident in your decisions in how you guide your athletes. Be transparent in your decisions and encourage all athletes to build on their own skill sets.
3. Mental attitude: Have yourself and the team in the right mindset to put in the needed work for the day. Stress that your athletes grow in resiliency when times are difficult as they work through the problems.

Program Structure

C Team - focus on fundamentals of soccer, growth in physical skill set. Participation is not equal but emphasis is placed on growth in appropriate situations. Introduction into the WF Packers Soccer program.

JV - playing time is based on skill level, behavior on/off the field, and coachability. Practices pertain more on growth of soccer skills and skills needed to be successful at the varsity level. Emphasis is placed on winning as a product of the individual and growth of the team. Introduction into the schools weight program.

Varsity - Playing time is based on skill level, suitability into the teams gameplan, and practice performance. Emphasis is placed on winning and helping the athletes meet their goals for the season.

*Please note that throughout the year athletes may become rostered for another team. These reasons could be based on a number of factors, i.e. player improvement, team injuries, getting players more playing opportunities.