

LEAGUE SCHEDULING



During the planning process, you should always schedule your league dates at least a year in advance. Now you are at the point where you have started registration and it is time to use our program calendar to plan your league schedules for the season. If you have planned your league dates out already you know what days and times your games and practices will take place. Here are eight guidelines on scheduling your league.

1. **Be Consistent:** The most important thing about your game & practice schedules is that they are consistent. Once a team has their practice days and times it should stay the same all season. Game times for each division should be the same days and in the same time range all season. Once your teams are in the routine things will start to run itself and there will be less risk parents or coaches miss something or get confused on a scheduled day or time.

2. **Schedule Out the ENTIRE Season:** Avoid trying to schedule week to week or even just half of the season at a time. Get the entire seasons schedule done and to the teams at your coaches meeting. Discuss the schedules with them and make any adjustments at that time. Once you finalize them, stick to it.

3. **Consider Your Facilities:** When creating schedules, you always want to consider the constraints on your facilities so you don't have too many people all arriving and leaving at one time. Do things like space out or stagger game times on each field so you have a constant flow of people in and out of the facility. This will help with parking, restrooms, seating areas, concessions, etc.

4. **Don't Make Changes:** You may run into scenarios where coaches ask you to change games around after the season has started based on a conflict or special request. This should always be avoided. The reason is that when you are operating a game you have so many involved between parents, coaches, referees, and any other staff or volunteers. If you are constantly changing game times you risk it causing others to not be available for the new time. It also makes you look unorganized, is a headache for you to manage and will frustrate your participants.

Make it clear to coaches at the coaches meeting that once it's finalized it will not be changed for those reasons. Encourage them to have assistant coaches or worst case have another parent step in for a game if it comes down to it. This is another reason to make sure to set clear and concise expectations for your parents and coaches to participate in your program before the season ever starts. The only time a schedule should ever be changed is for weather issues or other unavoidable unforeseen events that would affect the entire league not just a single team request.

5. **Always Schedule Make Ups:** Let your parents and coaches know the scheduled make up dates before the season even starts. If you scheduled in planned make-ups prior to the season, then it will be much easier for you, the parents, and coaches to anticipate it and make up the game. Dropping unplanned make-up game times on them will run the risk of no one being able to make the new time which will cause a headache for you and your teams trying to figure it out on the fly.

6. **Use a League Scheduler for Games:** Using a scheduling system will take all the headache out of scheduling as well as make it much faster and streamlined. Do your research to find the right system that works for you. The bottom line is, if you are still scheduling manually by hand, stop and go find a system that will work for your program.

7. **Schedule Changes:** If a schedule change happens due to a cancellation, make sure to get this information to the coaches and parents as soon as you can. Send it out to the entire league in as many different ways as possible to ensure they get it and don't miss the reschedule. Also, don't forget to inform referees, staff, and any other volunteers involved in the program. There are many moving parts to a schedule change so it should not happen unless absolutely necessary for something such as inclement weather, not because a team's coach and best player cannot attend.

8. **Communicate:** Communicate your schedules to everyone involved in your league that includes parents, staff, and coaches. Make sure they are updated regularly and easily accessible all season.

Sound scheduling will show you have a well-run and organized program that will provide the necessary structure to make it as easy as possible for parents and coaches to follow. Take your scheduling serious and you will see your program will start to run itself once the season starts.

