



## **Welcome Parents and Players to the 2024 Branchburg In Town Soccer Season!**

By way of this email, THANK YOU on behalf of the entire Branchburg In-Town Soccer Board, for joining us this season! We are excited to get back on the field shortly!

Below you will find the basics on the season structure, and what to expect on the field.

If you have any questions, please email us at [bitsoccer@gmail.com](mailto:bitsoccer@gmail.com) or find any of the Red Shirts on the field.

Interested in joining the board next year, we are always looking for more volunteers.

**There is a LOT of information in this email, so please be sure to review it carefully!**

### **SEASON:**

Our Season starts Saturday, September 7<sup>th</sup>, and runs 9-weeks through Saturday, November 2<sup>th</sup>. (November 9<sup>th</sup> has been reserved as a rain out date)

### **TEAM AND GAME STRUCTURE:**

**Below you will find a breakdown by division of times and games for SATURDAY SCHEDULES. PLEASE SEE TRAINING SECTION FOR MONDAY NIGHT SCHEDULE.**

**ALL TIMES BELOW ARE GAME START TIMES, PLEASE PLAN TO HAVE YOUR CHILD ON THE FIELD, GAME-READY, AT LEAST 15 MINUTES PRIOR TO THE START TIME.**

#### **TOPSoccer:**

- GAMES: TOPSoccer practices at 9am on Saturdays.
- FORMAT: TOPSoccer is a flexible, child specific environment format, and will be assisted on field by our Trainers from Strive in Sports, along with our TOPS Trained Coaches, and our TOPSoccer Buddies
- LOCATION: TOPSoccer takes place on Field 4

#### **Pre-K:**

- GAMES: Pre-K practices at 9am on Saturdays.
- FORMAT: Pre-K is a scrimmage format and will be assisted on field by trainers from Strive in Sports, as well as several of our BITS Referee's.
- LOCATION: Pre-K takes place on fields 6,7 and 8.

- On the day of the first session, all players should report to field 8, to meet the trainers, and be separated into their groups.

### **Kindergarten:**

- GAMES: Kindergarten Plays at 10:45am.
- FORMAT: Kindergarten will begin the season with the trainers from Strive in Sports, working on skills with the trainers, and the volunteer coaches. As the season progresses, Kindergarten will begin to separate into round robin games, and learn game play.
- LOCATION: Kindergarten takes place on fields 6, 7 and 8.
- For week one, all players should meet on field 8

### **1<sup>st</sup>and 2<sup>nd</sup>Grade – (Coed and Girls Divisions):**

- GAMES: 1<sup>st</sup>and 2<sup>nd</sup>Grade plays at 12:30pm
- FORMAT: 1<sup>st</sup>and 2<sup>nd</sup>grade team formation is taking place over the next week – your child will be placed on a team, and groups will play small sided games with BITS referees and parent coaches.
- LOCATION: 1<sup>st</sup>/ 2<sup>nd</sup>COED plays on Fields 7, 8, 9 or 14 depending on week. 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>Grade Girls play on Fields 13 and 13A with modified goals

### **3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>Grade – (Coed and Girls Divisions):**

- GAMES: 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>Grade Divisions play at 10:45am
- FORMAT: 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade team formation is taking place over the next week – your child will be placed on a team, and groups will play small sided games with BITS referees and parent coaches.
- LOCATION: 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>COED plays on Fields 9, 10 and 11 depending on week. 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>Grade Girls play on Fields 13 and 13A

### **6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>Grade (Coed and Girls Divisions):**

- GAMES: 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> Grade Divisions play at 9:00am
- FORMAT: 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>grade players will have a pick-up style scrimmage. Teams will be different each week. BITS referees and coaches will be on the field.
- LOCATION: TBD pending final rosters, and Department of Public Works confirmation of how fields are being lined.

### **TEAM FORMATION:**

Coaches are working this week to finalize team rosters, all teams will be contacted by a coach or the league by the end of the week.

### **COACH CERTIFICATIONS:**

First and foremost, thank you coaches for volunteering!

Many of you have already completed the requirements for coaching, but if you have not already, please take a moment to register with the NJYS State site and complete the required Safe Sport and Concussion training.

## [Recreational Coach Registration \(2024-2025\)](#)

When associating with a club, please ensure that you are choosing Branchburg In-Town Soccer, not Branchburg Travel Soccer Club

Additionally, all coaches are required to consent to BITS performing a background check – we appreciate this cooperation in advance

For any questions, please see the NJYS portal at:

<https://www.njyouthsoccer.com/Default.aspx?tabid=734487>

**Coaches Training will take place at White Oak Park at 6:30pm on Wednesday, September 4<sup>th</sup>. While this training is optional, it is highly recommended, especially for first-time coaches. Our trainers from Strive in Sports will be on hand to give advice, and walk coaches through training and game scenarios, and coaches will have time to meet and get to know each other.**

### **UNIFORMS:**

**Uniform Pickup is scheduled for Wednesday, September 4th from 4-8pm at White Oak Park.**

- Distribution will take place at the BITS Soccer shed – (furthest garage to the left, in the main parking lot)
- To ease the process at pickup, attached is our uniform pickup form, **PLEASE HAVE THIS WITH YOU AT THE TIME OF PICKUP!**
- Each player will be receiving (1) (Pre-K) or (2) (K-9) jerseys this season, one BLUE and one WHITE, to be used for “home” and “away” games. All game schedules will notate blue or white jerseys for each week, where applicable.
- **We will have an ice cream truck at uniform pick up!!**

You will need to provide you child with the following items:

- Dark colored athletic shorts (or pants)
- Soccer socks (any color, but this must be soccer socks to cover shin guards properly.)
- Shin guards (for K through 9th grade, optional for PreK and TOPS.)
- Grades 1-9 SHOES: SOCCER-Specific Cleats. No other shoes will be allowed, cleats with a front spike will not be allowed, and children will not be allowed to play.
- Pre-K, K and TOPS SHOES: Soccer Cleats or Athletic Sneakers.
- GOALIES: If your child would like to play in goal as a goalkeeper please have them wear a bright shirt under their pinnie and keep a pair of goal keeper gloves in their bag.

**As always, no jewelry will be allowed. This includes earrings, necklaces, bracelets, rings, watches, etc.**

**For girls that have newly pierced ears, we cannot make an exception to this rule, we understand that the beginning of the school year is a popular time for ear piercing - all earrings MUST be removed prior to the start of the game.No tape or bandaids will be allowed over earrings.**

- ***No exchanges will occur at Uniform Distribution, there will be an exchange window set up at the beginning of the season.***

## **REFEREE CORNER:**

**Referee Training will take place on September 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> at White Oak Park, from 6-7:30pm.**

- All referee parents were contacted by our Referee Director on 8/13; please see instructions on how to register for referee training, and what information the referees need to provide to Mr. Parry.
- Referees do not have to attend both days, but they do need to attend one, to be eligible for field assignments.
- If there are shifts / days that referees will be unable to report for a shift, please email them to Mr. Parry at [stephenparry@pvh.com](mailto:stephenparry@pvh.com)

## **TEAM SNACKS and THE SNACK SHACK:**

Please note that the Snack Shack is anticipated to be open during our fall season. Team snacks are at the discretion of parents and coaches within individual teams, BITS does not oversee team snacks.

## **PICTURE DAY:**

Picture Day will be 9/28 in the BCMS cafeteria. Please try to get there before your teams game that day. Team pictures will be put together by the photography company so no need to be there at the same time. If you have multiple children playing at different times, you can bring them together before either game.

## **TRAINING:**

- **Pre-K and K:** Our youngest divisions only training, takes place during their Saturday session. Pre-K and K do not have additional weekly practice or training
- **GRADES 1-9:** Training and Practices will take place in several formats this year:
- **MONDAY NIGHT TRAINING:** Our Strive in Sports Trainers will be holding Monday clinics on 9/9, 9/16, 9/23, 9/30, and 10/7.
  - These will be on a divisional rotation schedule between times, either 6-7 pm or 7-8pm.
  - 9/9 – 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6pm, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> at 7pm
  - 9/16 – 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> at 6pm, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7pm
  - 9/23 – 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6pm, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> at 7pm
  - 9/30 – 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> at 6pm, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7pm
  - 10/7 – 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6pm, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> at 7pm
  - Monday Night training takes place on WOP Field 4 (with lights)
- **COACH-LED PRACTICE:** Each coach for grades 1-9 may elect to hold a weeknight practice
  - Please note, practices are not scheduled by BITS, they are at the coaches discretion, and are most frequently one night per week for grades 1-9.
  - The league will forward a field availability schedule to all coaches

## **Sponsor:**

We are excited to have Tutor Doctor with Laura Keane as a BITS sponsor this year. If you have any tutoring needs, contact info in the attachment. Laura will also be set up near the snack shack on 9/7 with a prize wheel and giveaways for the kids.

## **Red Bulls Game 9/7:**

**BITS Night at the Red Bulls game is going to be 9/7. The game starts at 7:30pm and tickets will be \$22 per person. They are reserving a section for us. Link for tickets is below. Hope to see everyone there!!**

<https://fevo-enterprise.com/event/Branchburgtown2>

## **Finally, a note on our club philosophy, and 2024 Initiatives**

Our philosophy as an organization, is to **provide a fun and safe environment for the children of Branchburg to play soccer**. Please keep that in mind as you come to the park on Saturdays; we have a prideful reputation as an organization.

Please be kind to coaches and referees. The coaches are parents just like you, and the referees are our children. Encourage those around you to be supportive of those who are playing, coaching, or refereeing a game. **THIS IS NOT THE WORLD CUP, IT IS REC SOCCER.** Your kids are on the field because they want to have fun. **They won't remember the score, they will remember how you made them feel during or after the game – make it a positive experience for your child!**

This season, **Branchburg In-Town Soccer has joined both the YELLOW WRISTBAND INITIATIVE, and the DON'T COACH FROM THE SIDELINES CAMPAIGN.**

### **YELLOW WRISTBAND INITIATIVE**

Misconduct towards game officials is becoming more prevalent in our games. To draw attention to and help put a stop to this behavior, Youth Soccer Leagues in New Jersey, with the support of the New Jersey State Referee Committee, are introducing The Yellow Wristband Initiative for minor referees. As a primary goal, The Yellow Wristband Initiative is aimed at increasing awareness about the presence of minor (e.g. under the age of 18) referees in our game. Through the initiative, Branchburg In-Town Soccer will be providing yellow wristbands for all referees and TOPS Buddies under the age of 18. We expect adults to show the encouragement and respect that the minor deserves as they learn their craft. [Learn more.](#)

### **DON'T COACH FROM THE SIDELINE CAMPAIGN:**

New Jersey Youth Soccer is proud to join US Youth Soccer and 24 additional state associations to launch a *Don't Coach from the Sidelines Campaign* targeted at improving sideline etiquette from spectators and coaches. Leveraged by the membership of the 24 state associations that are involved with this initiative, more than one million players and 100,000 coaches will directly receive the messaging of the national campaign. [Read more.](#)

Thank You for all the support you give to the club throughout the year.

We wouldn't have a season or a successful club without you, so we truly appreciate our soccer family coming together.

MUCH MORE TO COME!

**Your 2024 Branchburg In-Town Soccer Executive Board: (The Red Shirts)**