

# **2025**

## **Pulaski High School Boys Soccer Player/Parent Handbook**

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## **I. Coaching Philosophy**

Teach, Learn, Improve, Succeed

- The basis for any successful athletic program is the manner in which athletes are taught and understand what is expected of them. We focus on setting standards, not rules, that players can aim to meet and uphold. Playing, organizing, and conducting ourselves to a “Pulaski Boys Soccer” standard of quality allows us to achieve success beyond just winning.
- Coaching staff will be consistent with their approach and provide athletes with a blueprint of technical and tactical skills learned in training they can apply to match situations.
- Sports present unique challenges and opportunities to overcome them. Analysis of challenging game situations will allow us to anticipate these situations in the future and create a more efficient decision making process. This helps us to grow and develop into better individuals and ultimately a better team and program.
- Our approach to success will be in our never-ending pursuit of improvement. Each practice, game, and season will present opportunities for both coaches and athletes to improve their skills. Consistent improvement will lead to consistent success.
- Coaching staff will provide an up tempo atmosphere in training and practices which will allow for creativity and be welcoming of varying skill levels to allow each athlete the proper foundation for development.

Respect, Professionalism, Sportsmanship

- Coaching staff and players will adhere to a high level of professionalism while representing Pulaski High School in all aspects of the soccer program on and off the field. Our goal is to ensure we always maintain a positive reputation for our school and community.
- Players and coaches will have respect for each other, the game, their school, and their opponent.
- Respect and maturity are important lessons during an athlete’s high school career. Being part of an athletic team should serve to promote these values.

## Discipline and Accountability

- Discipline will be a focus in games, practices, and all activities related to soccer. Whether a player is the leading scorer or the last substitution off the bench, the rules of the game and the rules of the team apply to everyone.
- Coaches will take a firm, but fair approach to discipline matters. Learning from mistakes is part of life no matter what age. Players must understand the rewards or consequences they receive are based on choices they make on and off the field.
- The most successful teams in any sport are the ones willing to work the hardest, give the most effort, and allow teammates to appropriately hold each other accountable for mistakes.
- *“Discipline yourself, so others won’t have to.”* - John Wooden, 10-time NCAA champion basketball coach

## Knowledge is power

- Knowledge of opponent’s key players, opponent specific game plans, and situational objectives (set pieces, restarts, corner kicks) are all tools the coaching staff will use to give our players the best advantage to be successful. Knowledge creates confidence, confidence builds a pathway for success.

Coaches, coach. Players, play. Referees, officiate. Parents, cheer.

- These are the responsibilities of these individuals. If an individual tries to take on another role (ex. Players try to coach, parents try to ref) it does not result in a positive situation that will help that team. When everyone involved in the program does their part to help the team it sets us up for success.

## II. Lettering Requirements

Players wishing to earn a varsity letter in soccer must fulfill the following requirements:

1. Play in 10% of matches on the varsity schedule
2. Attend all practices (unless excused)
3. No disciplinary proceedings or behavioral concerns
4. Remain academically eligible
5. Return all school equipment/apparel without damages

Coaching staff reserves the right to make exceptions to the above requirements in cases of injury, illness, or other circumstances approved by the coaching staff.

### **III. Practices**

Practices will be every day (except for weekends and match days). Times and locations can be found on the practice and game calendar. Players expecting to practice must have the following:

1. Soccer shoes
2. Shin guards
3. Soccer socks (that cover shin guards)
4. Appropriate clothing for soccer (refer to section VII)
5. Water or other appropriate beverage

All players must be on time to practice. On time is defined as the player being dressed for practice with soccer shoes and shin guards on at the time practice begins. On time does not mean showing up unprepared just as practice is about to begin. Players who are late or not prepared for practice without prior approval from coaching staff will face consequences.

Players who need to miss practice must have a valid reason and obtain permission from the coaching staff at least one day prior. Exceptions can be made in extreme situations.

Players must attend school during the day to be allowed to practice that day.

Players must arrange their own transportation to and from practices.

Practices will be 1.5 or 2 hours in duration at the times and locations indicated on the practice calendar.

### **IV. Games**

Players must attend school the day of a game to be eligible to participate. Varsity players are required to arrive at home games approximately 1 hour prior to game time for pre-game meeting. JV players must arrive at the field 45 minutes prior to home games. Away game departure times will determine when players need to arrive. Staff will inform all players of bus times prior to the day of the match. Departure times can also be found on the boys soccer website.

Pre-game warm-ups will begin approximately 45 minutes prior to the match. All players are required to be ready at this time to participate in warm-ups.

Both Junior Varsity and Varsity matches are 80 minutes in duration (2 x 40 min halves).

Players expecting to participate in a game must have at a minimum the following on game day:

1. Soccer shoes
2. Shin guards (with NOSCAE seal on front)
3. Uniform (Jersey, Shorts, Socks)

See section VII “Uniforms, Attire, Equipment” for other approved clothing articles.

JV players will be responsible for being ball boys for varsity home matches. Coaches will select the players the week before so they may plan accordingly.

## **V. Playing Time**

Every player will receive the opportunity to play during the season. Games present players with conditions and challenges that can not be simulated in practice, and therefore provide an ideal situation for improvement. However, there is not an equal playing time policy. This is especially so at the varsity level, but is also an important concept at the junior varsity level as we prepare younger players for the performance expectations of varsity level soccer. Playing time will be determined by a combination of the following:

1. Player skill level and performance (compared to teammates)
2. Opposition's skill level
3. Work ethic, performance, and attitude in practice and in games
4. Ability to apply techniques and tactics learned in practice to game situations

Coaching staff will not honor playing time requests or demands from parents/guardians. Players are encouraged to approach the coaching staff with playing time concerns. Approaching the coaching staff may not mean an automatic increase in playing time. However, talking with the coaching staff can help players have a better understanding of what they can do to achieve more playing time. This usually involves the sharing of ideas between coach and player and setting some goals. How the player responds to the coach's suggestions and applies it to their approach for practice and games can result in an increase in playing time.

It should also be noted that a reduction in playing time (ex. a starter losing their starting spot) may not necessarily be reflective of something they did wrong, but rather a reward for a teammate who has earned the opportunity to play more.

There may be situations when reduced playing time may be the result of a punishment (ex. late to practice, inappropriate behavior in practice or game, etc) but the majority of playing time and lineup changes are based on the performance of the players themselves in relation to their teammates. Playing time should never be taken for granted! It can change drastically from game to game. Players are encouraged to set a goal of consistent performance to the best of their abilities no matter what their skill level.

It is far more difficult to keep your spot on the field than to earn it. Earning your spot is based on potential, keeping your spot is based on performance!

## **VI. Travel**

Players are to display appropriate behavior on the bus while traveling to and from away games. Players who fail to do so will face consequences or lose the privilege of traveling with the team. Buses are to be left in the same condition as they arrived in. No garbage will be left on any bus surface.

Players are responsible for being on the bus at the time specified by the coaching staff. Players are encouraged to ride the team bus home. However, parents may consent to a travel waiver as part of athletics registration which allows players to ride home with their parent/guardian. In that case, players must inform a member of the coaching staff that they will not be on the team bus and are riding home with a parent. Players who do ride the bus are responsible for arranging transportation home from Pulaski High School after away games.

At certain games the team will stop for a meal either before or after a match. Players will be required to stay in the facility of choice until coaching staff allows the team to return to the bus. Players will be responsible for the purchase of their own meal during these situations unless otherwise noted by the coaching staff.

## **VII. Uniforms, Attire, and Equipment**

Each player will be issued school provided jerseys, shorts, warm-up jacket, warm-up pants, bag, and parka. It is the player's responsibility to properly care for uniform items throughout the season and return them in the condition they were issued.

Uniforms are only to be worn at games and other functions approved by the coaching staff. Players should not wear uniform items at practice or for recreational purposes. Players will incur any and all replacement costs due to lost uniform items and/or any damage to uniforms that was not soccer related.

Players are responsible for purchasing socks on a year-by-year basis. Coaching staff will inform players of the cost for socks before the season begins.

Players using school equipment (i.e. balls, ball bags, cones, pinnies, etc.) must do so in an appropriate fashion. Players will be responsible for damage caused to school equipment from misuse or negligence.

Approved Game Clothing:

1. Jersey, shorts, socks, soccer shoes, shin guards
2. Warm-up Jacket/Pants
3. Parka
4. Warm-up shirt (pre-game)
5. Compression Shorts (must match short color)
6. Tape on socks (must match sock color)
7. Long sleeve (must match jersey color)
8. Head bands (must be white, red, or black)
9. Athletic braces (must comply with WIAA)

Un-Approved Game Clothing:

1. Any tops/bottoms not listed on left
2. Jewelry of any kind
3. Wristbands
4. Any other articles not approved by coaching staff

Approved Practice Clothing:

1. Soccer shoes and shin guards
2. Socks (must be white, red, or black)
3. Short/Long Sleeve T-Shirts (must be white, red, gray, or black)
4. Jackets and Sweatshirts (preferably white, red, gray or black)
5. Shorts (preferably black, red, or gray)
4. Winter hats (preferably black, red, white, gray)
5. Gloves
6. Any items listed in Approved Game Attire *except* game uniforms

Un-Approved Practice Clothing:

1. Cut off shirts and tank tops
2. Apparel depicting or promoting illegal activities
3. Jewelry of any kind
4. Baseball caps
5. Sunglasses
6. Jeans
7. Inappropriately fitted clothing
8. Any other articles not approved by coaching staff

## **VIII. Injuries & Illness**

Players who have suffered an injury should report it to coaching staff immediately. Players will be referred to athletic trainer for treatment. Players who do not report injuries in a timely manner risk jeopardizing their athletic experience with further injury. An athletic trainer will be on hand during all varsity matches to treat any in game injuries. Her information is listed below.

**Players who choose to seek the advice of a medical doctor (other than Pulaski High School athletic trainer) must then be cleared by that doctor prior to them resuming participation.** This clearance must be in written form and be from the doctor who treated the player.

Illnesses must also be reported to coaching staff immediately. Any illness that could be contagious to members of the soccer program must be reported. Players will be excused from practice/games due to confirmed illnesses. Again, a medical doctor written clearance must be provided before players can resume participation.

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## **IX. Role of Parents**

Parents/Guardians and family members of players will be expected to encourage players in a positive manner throughout their son's athletic experience. Parents will also be asked to represent Pulaski High School in an appropriate fashion at all soccer related functions including, games, practices, meetings, banquets, and any other team functions or events.

Conduct during games will be especially scrutinized and any spectator interfering with the match in any way will be asked to leave the grounds. Parents, family members, and other spectators should NOT:

- Question calls made by the game officials
- Engage opposing players, staff, and/or spectators in a verbal or non-verbal manner
- Suggest a course of action for our own players in an attempt to "coach" from the stands
- Engage in behavior that would reflect negatively on Pulaski High School as well as its athletic program and those involved with it

Parents wishing to discuss any aspect of their child's athletic experience should approach the coaching staff in an appropriate setting. Parents who wish to get involved with the soccer program are encouraged to do so by contacting the coaching staff regarding coordinating concessions, fundraising, and any other team operations.

## **X. Team Awards**

The following team awards will be given each season to players who have earned them:

## Varsity Soccer

- All-Conference (1st Team, 2nd Team, Honorable Mention)
- Most Valuable Player
- Most Improved Player
- Offensive Player of Year
- Defensive Player of Year
- Best Teammate Award
- Newcomer of Year
- Team Captain (to serve the following season)

## Junior Varsity Soccer

- Most Valuable Player
- Most Improved Player
- Offensive Player of Year
- Defensive Player of Year
- Best Teammate Award
- Future All-Conference Award

All-conference awards are voted on by conference coaches. All other awards are voted on by team players and approved by coaching staff.

To be eligible for varsity team captain a player must be a senior on the varsity team. JV captains can be from any grade. Varsity players must demonstrate they can lead without being granted captain status in order to be considered for the following year.

Varsity players must fulfill all the requirements for lettering (see section II) to be eligible to receive team awards. Junior varsity players must fulfill requirements 3-6. Coaching staff withholds the right to make exceptions to the above requirements in cases of injury, illness, or other circumstances approved by the coaching staff.

## **XI. Violations, Offenses, & Consequences**

The Pulaski boys soccer program has a zero tolerance policy regarding drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. Players will be suspended from athletic competition for acts which include but are not limited to the above named illegal and unlawful activities. Coaching staff will refer to Pulaski High School Code of Conduct with regards to consequences for drug and alcohol violations as well as other behavioral code violations. Coaching staff reserves the right to impose additional restrictions or consequences if deemed necessary for these offenses.

Violations of team rules or other detrimental conduct will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Other violations include but are not limited to:

- Academic violations
- Being late to practice or games
- Fighting or intimidating behavior (at games or practices)
- Inappropriate conduct on team bus or at team functions
- Damage to school or personal property
- Disrespectful or defiant attitude
- Threats to personal safety
- Conduct that interferes with school or team activities

Typically players can expect to miss playing time as a form of punishment for these types of violations. For example, a normal starter may not start the next game. Non-starters should never do anything to risk jeopardizing the playing time they get. If the violation warrants, it's possible a one or multi-game suspension be served.

Red and yellow card offenses will also be handled on a case-by-case basis by the coaching staff. Yellow card cautions are only acceptable for physical play within the rules of the game that is deemed too dangerous by the referee. Yellow cards for the following are not acceptable:

- Dissent to opponents or officials
- Intentional fouls
- Fouls with intent to injure
- Swearing

Players who receive yellow cards for these offenses can expect further consequences from the coaching staff.

Red cards offenses are never acceptable under any circumstances. Players who receive red cards will be on immediate suspension from competition until coaching staff determines an appropriate punishment for the offense.