

ERIE FC GUNNERS



**PARENT INFORMATION
SUMMER 2026**

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The ERIE FC Gunners program is designed to provide soccer training in an environment that combines skill development and game play. This is achieved through age-appropriate practices and games. Gunners is open to all players regardless of current skill level or prior playing experience. The Summer Program will feature a combination of skill development and game play into each weekday practice. The program has open enrollment. Players are allowed to join or cancel at any time throughout the season.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Soccer training (or practice) will mainly focus on the technical aspects of the game in order to appropriately develop individual player skills.

- Dribbling: dribbling technique, ball manipulation, 1v1 moves, turning, shielding, speed dribbling
- Passing: passing technique, short passing, long passing, weight of the pass
- Receiving: receiving technique, body positioning, receiving transition, balls on the ground, balls in the air
- Shooting: shooting technique, shooting for power, shooting for accuracy, volleys
- Goalkeeping: goalkeeping technique, shot stopping, catching, distribution
- Other: juggling, soccer agility, mobility, coordination, balance

GAME PLAY

Soccer games (including game play during practice) will allow players to apply the skills learned into a game situation. Introduction of the basic tactical components of soccer will also be coached.

- Technical: dribbling, passing, receiving, shooting, goalkeeping
- Tactical: positions, offense, defense, transitions, awareness, decision making, teamwork
- During games, coaches try to ensure a rotation of players to allow players to have breaks, and play a variety of positions. It's important for players to experience all positions, including goalkeeper.
- During the Summer Program, players will be divided into teams at each practice for the game play portion.

AGE GROUPS

US Soccer defines age groups by birth year. For example, U8 means Under-8, and is for players born in 2018. Players in this age group are 7 years old as of December 31, 2025, and will turn 8 in 2026.

SUMMER 2026 AGE GROUPS

- U5 (2021)
- U6 (2020)
- U7 (2019)
- U8 (2018)

Based on the recommendation of the coaching staff, players may play in an older or younger age group if it's a better fit for the development of the player.

FIELDS

Fields at McKean (FAM)

5220 West Rd

McKean, PA 16426

(grass fields)

Gunners Summer will be held on Fields 6 & 7.



UNIFORMS / WHAT TO BRING

The uniform kit is not required for the Summer Program, but it is available to purchase through the ERIE FC Team Store. The jerseys require a number, and players may select any number they wish (duplicates with another player is fine). Uniforms will be delivered directly to you from the uniform supplier.

WHAT TO WEAR / BRING

Soccer Clothing: Shirt, shorts, socks. Players can wear their Erie FC Gunners jerseys, but it is not required. Coaches will use pinnies to divide into teams for the game play portion.

Shin Guards: Shin guards are required and must be covered by socks.

Soccer Shoes or Sneakers: Fields at McKean is a regular grass outdoor facility. Outdoor soccer shoes, turf shoes, or sneakers are permitted (no metal cleats).

Drink Bottle: Please make sure the player's name is on it.

Soccer balls are provided by ERIE FC Gunners.

SCHEDULE / HOLIDAYS

The Gunners Summer Program is 8-weeks.

- Start: week of June 15, 2026
- End: week of August 3, 2026

PRACTICES DURING HOLIDAYS

- Since Independence Day falls on the weekend, it will not affect Gunners practices that week.

COMMUNICATIONS / TEAMSNAPE APP

We use two main methods of communication: email and TeamSnap app. Both methods are used to notify you of any changes or cancellations as it relates to schedules, announcements, weather, etc.

TEAMSNAPE

You will receive an email notification to accept the invitation to your Gunners group in TeamSnap. You are able to add as many family members as you would like to the account. All activities for each age group are added to the schedule within TeamSnap. You will follow the practice schedule according to your practice selection(s).

TeamSnap has two types of chats.

Team Chat: These messages will go to every family within the age group. This main chat is used for general communication and announcements.

Direct Message / Chat: If you have a personal request or question, please send that as an individual message to the program director or coaches. For example, if you have a schedule conflict and need to attend a different practice day, please send that message individually rather than in the team chat.

PLAYER & PARENT GUIDELINES

PLAYERS

At ERIE FC Gunners, we strive to teach players the following traits.

- Have fun and be positive.
- Be respectful to coaches. Listen and be attentive.
- Be respectful to other players. Encourage teammates and make new friends.
- Learn, work hard, and try new skills. Keep trying to improve.
- Play and practice at home.

PARENTS

At ERIE FC Gunners, we encourage all parents to follow these guidelines.

- Enjoy your child's soccer experience, but most importantly, let them enjoy the game. Be positive. At this young age positive feedback can go a long way. Celebrate good play, teamwork, hustle, and skill development. Be respectful to all players in the same manner.
- Encourage your child to learn, work hard, and try new skills. This is the discovery age of soccer, and we want players to try new things and take risks. "Failing" is ok, and try not to dwell on the negatives. Encourage your child to try again.
- Let the players play and the coaches coach. Soccer can be a very free flowing sport. We don't want "soccer robots" that only wait until a coach or parent tells them what to do.
 - Let players make their own decisions. After all, they are the ones playing the game.
 - Coaches can certainly tell players what to do on every single play. But we will balance guiding players, making suggestions / corrections, and allowing them to make their own decisions.
 - You will hear coaches saying things like: "Head up. Spread out. Find the forward. Look to score." These are ways for us to guide players in making correct decisions without specifically telling them what to do.
 - Each week, there is a different practice topic. During games, coaches may focus on correcting that specific skill since it was the weekly topic. Even though there may be multiple other things that can be corrected.
- Encourage your child to play at home. This can be with siblings, neighbors, or even you as parents. For most kids, the only time they play soccer is during an organized practice or game. Backyard soccer, pick up games, or even just practicing moves in the garage or basement will aid in the player's overall development.

FAQs

Can we cancel or take time off? Yes, Gunners has open enrollment. Players may join or cancel at any time. Please contact the program director and your billing will be adjusted accordingly.

Can we attend a different practice if we have conflict that week? Yes, we are flexible and allow players to practice on a different day within their age group if you have a conflict that week. Please send that request to the program director via email or direct message.

Can we change our regular practice day due to a schedule change / availability? Yes, if your schedule changes due to other activities, contact the program director to change your practice.

My child has little or no playing experience. Is the Gunners program still a good fit? Yes, Gunners is designed for players regardless of current skill level or prior playing experience. Don't feel discouraged if your child seems "behind" other players. Many times, players catch on quickly and you will see skill development in a short period of time.

Is there a school year Gunners program? Yes, the main Gunners program follows the school year calendar, starting in August and ending in May. The information for each new season is updated on the website in June.