

# OPTIMIST SOCCER LEAGUE

Noon Optimist Club of Niles  
PO Box 63  
Niles, MI 49120

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## SOCCER SIGNALS

Volume XXXII, Number 1 - January 2010

### Optimist Soccer League

A youth project of the Niles Noon Optimist Club  
with the assistance of the Niles-Buchanan YMCA

[www.nilesoptimist.org/osl](http://www.nilesoptimist.org/osl)



**Optimist Soccer will be ALL Co-Ed this year  
due to declining participation  
in the all-girl divisions.**

**LEAGUE OFFICE:** Robb and Michelle Morse are now the primary contacts for all questions regarding the Optimist Soccer League. Please, no calls before 9:00 AM or after 9:00 PM. Call **269-240-7189**. This is a local Niles phone number.

The Buchanan contact is Louanne Wesner at **695-3098**

The Niles-Buchanan YMCA is still affiliated with our league and we thank them for their continued participation and support, but they no longer take calls nor answer questions regarding Optimist Soccer. **Registrations and payments are still accepted at the YMCA**

**SEASON SCHEDULE:** We have attempted to keep our season limited in length so that our youth can also experience other sports programs during the summer months. This season's first games will be played on April 12th, with the season ending on May 27<sup>th</sup>. All teams are scheduled for 8 games during the season.

About half the games are played on Saturdays. Practice schedules are set by each team's coach. Most Niles and Buchanan teams should expect to play at least one game in Cassopolis this season. **A complete game schedule and directions to all soccer fields will be mailed to all registered players and coaches with the second edition of Soccer Signals. The player's team number will be printed on the upper-right hand corner of that mailing label.**

**PARTICIPATION:** Every player's coach and teammates are counting on **ALL** the players to show up for games. Forfeiting a game because too many players failed to show up is unfair to everyone – your coach, your teammates, the other team, the referees, and the parents. **Please consider that by signing up for Optimist Soccer, you are making a commitment to all these people to do your part in making sure your coach is able to field a complete team for each game.**

### COMMITMENT TO RECREATIONAL SOCCER:

The Optimist Soccer League stands for sportsmanship above all else. The league does not keep standings, and there is no championship awarded. There are other leagues and travel teams available elsewhere for those who are interested in a more competition-oriented experience. We strongly discourage running up the score, and ask all coaches to assist us in providing **ALL** the teams with a positive soccer experience.

### COACHES NEEDED:

All teams **MUST** have at least one coach 21 years of age or older on the roster. Furthermore, there must be at least one adult 21 years of age or older present during every practice, and on the coaches' side of the field during every game. Note that this could be a parent of a player if necessary – it does not necessarily have to be the listed adult coach. This also does not rule out a younger assistant coach acting as head coach during a game, so long as there is an adult present at the team's bench. **If you are interested in coaching a team, indicate it on your player's registration form or call Robb or Michelle at 269-240-7189.**

### REFEREES NEEDED:

Optimist Soccer League referee positions are open to anyone who is at least 15 years old. The pay varies according to the division worked. We especially need more adults willing to officiate. Some training is provided. We also provide referee shirts, whistles, and other necessary equipment. **If you are interested in being a referee, call Mark Tumbleson at 269-695-2685.**

### REGISTRATION FEE: Please register prior to the Wednesday, February 3rd deadline and save money!

Our registration fee is \$40 for one player, \$65 for two players living in the same household, \$75 for three players, \$85 for four, \$95 for five...

**LATE REGISTRATIONS:** The late registration fee is an **additional \$10.00 per player** for any registrations postmarked or taken to the Niles-Buchanan YMCA after February 3, 2010.

We recommend MAILING your registration form(s) in **NOW!** The addresses are on the back page of the player registration form.

#### PLAYER REGISTRATION FORMS:

**ONE PLAYER PER FORM!!** Please print clearly, fill out both sides including shirt size, and **SIGN THE INSURANCE DISCLAIMER.** Additional forms are available at [www.NilesOptimist.org/osl](http://www.NilesOptimist.org/osl) at the Niles-Buchanan YMCA, or at the Buchanan Public Library.

#### On-Site Registration Days:

- **Niles** – Sunday January 31 from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM, at the **Niles-Buchanan YMCA** at 905 Front Street in Niles
- **Buchanan** – Saturday January 30, 10 AM to 1 PM, at **Buchanan High School**
- **Cassopolis** – Mail-in Registration or go to the Niles-Buchanan YMCA.
- **All Other Communities** - Players from any other community are welcome to register to play in the Optimist Soccer League. Mail your completed registration to the address for the community for which you wish to play.

**REFUND POLICY:** All refund requests **MUST** be in writing and postmarked no later than March 1. Send refund requests to OSL, PO Box 63, Niles, MI 49120. If all teams are full and your child has not been assigned to a team before the second week of the season begins a refund will automatically be issued by June 1.

**DIVISIONS:** Due to declining participation in the all-girl divisions, **Optimist Soccer will be entirely co-ed this year.** We apologize for any inconvenience.

- 1 - Kindergarten - Boys & Girls (size 3 ball)
- 2 - Grades 1 & 2 - Boys & Girls (size 4 ball)
- 3 - Grades 3 & 4 - Boys & Girls (size 5 ball)
- 5 - Grades 5 & 6 - Boys & Girls (size 5 ball)
- 7 - Grades 7 & 8 - Boys & Girls (size 5 ball)

**KINDERGARTEN SOCCER:** The kindergarten teams have six players and one coach on the field during the 32 minute games (four eight-minute quarters). There are no goalkeepers and no scores are recorded. More information will be sent to all registered kindergarten players and their parents before the season begins. **No Kindergartener and No Pre-K - your child MUST be a Kindergartener to play in the KG Division!**

**TEAM UNIFORMS & PLAYER EQUIPMENT:** All players will be given their team jerseys prior to the first game. **THESE ARE YOURS TO KEEP!** We suggest all players wear their team jerseys **ONLY** for GAMES and keep them clean and neat during the soccer season. You will also need to provide:

- **\*BLACK shorts** are recommended. They are easier to find and keep nice looking for the entire season.
- **Shin Guards are mandatory** for all players
- **All players are encouraged to use a mouth guard.**
- **\*WHITE socks** are recommended. **Socks must completely cover the shin guards.**
- Either "all sport" or soccer shoes; gym shoes are good, especially for younger players. **Baseball cleats (cleat at front end of the shoe) are prohibited.** Baseball cleats can be converted by sawing off the toe cleat and sanding it smooth.

\*The color of each team's shorts and socks will be determined by that team's coach.

It is a good idea to have a soccer ball of the correct size to practice with at home and to take to your practices. The sizes we use are:

- DIVISION 1 - Size 3 ball
- DIVISIONS 2 - Size 4 ball
- ALL OTHER DIVISIONS - Size 5 ball

**VOLUNTEER COACHES NEEDED:** The OSL anticipates another large turnout at this season's spring registration. The success of our program relies on hundreds of volunteers to coach teams and maintain fields.

**You do NOT need prior soccer experience to coach,** especially in the younger divisions. OSL will provide training and reading materials to help make coaching a positive experience. All that we require is that each coach really enjoys working with youth and is dedicated to the kids having fun and a good learning experience. Coaching staff must adhere to the rules, regulations and bylaws of the OSL such as not permitting foul or abusive language during games or practices, allowing each player to participate in a minimum of 1/2 of each game, limiting the team to a maximum of three obligations per week (2 practices & 1 game or 2 games & 1 practice) and limiting practices to a maximum of 1 1/2 hours per session.

We can't do it alone--if you are willing to help, indicate so on the player registration form or contact Robb or Michelle at (269) 240-7189.

**COACHES MEETING:** The materials for every team will be distributed at the coaches meeting on March 17 in the Ballard School cafeteria. Equipment pickup is from 6:30 PM to 7:30 PM. An informational meeting for all **kindergarten** coaches and all **new** coaches will be held at 7:30 PM. If you have never coached Optimist Soccer before you **MUST** attend the 7:30 meeting.

**PARENTS / PLAYERS:** All players will be contacted by their coach within a week after the coaches meeting on March 17, provided a parent or other volunteer coach has been secured for that team.

**TEAM SPONSORS:** Business, industry and individuals are invited to sponsor one or more 2010 OSL teams. Kids love it when their family's business sponsors their team. Please indicate on your child's registration form of your interest in sponsoring their team. In case of duplicate sponsors for a team, the first sponsorship received will be assigned to that team. The sponsorship fee is \$200 per team. Sponsorship forms are available at [www.nilesoptimist.org/osl](http://www.nilesoptimist.org/osl)

**SMOKING / PETS / TRASH:** Please help keep our host sites clean by picking up trash, even if it's not yours. Most game and practice fields are on smoking-prohibited properties. **Be aware that you can be ticketed by police for smoking on school grounds, even if you are in your vehicle!** Please respect all posted rules regarding prohibitions on smoking and pets. **We discourage anyone from bringing dogs to games.**

**TROPHIES AND MEDALS DISCOURAGED:** We **STRONGLY** discourage parents, coaches, and sponsors from awarding any sort of trophies or medals to the members of their teams. Certificates are permissible. If adults affiliated with a team wish to do something special for their players, the league suggests hosting a season's-end pizza party or similar function.