A Guidebook for Team Managers

Eastern Massachusetts Women’s Soccer League (EMWSL)

*(Last updated May 2016)*

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# About EMWSL & the Manual for Team Managers

Since the 1980s, the Eastern Massachusetts Women’s Soccer League (EMWSL) has promoted organized soccer among women throughout the greater Boston region. With more than 1,000 players and over 40 teams each year, EMWSL relies on team managers to ensure that the league operates smoothly.

It should be noted that for some teams, a coach serves in this capacity; however, this manual uses the term “team manager” to refer to all individuals who serve as the primary organizers and leaders of a team within the league.

Perhaps most important, we believe that the role of team manager is one that should be fun and rewarding. The guidance provided in this manual is intended to simplify the work and amplify the fun! It is intended to be a resource and reference for those managing (or transitioning into leadership of) an existing team, as well as those (considering) starting up a new team. We also encourage team managers to review the League rules and by-laws.

If you have comments or suggestions for changes or additions to this Manual, please share them with your Division Director. And most importantly of all, enjoy—Enjoy managing your team, enjoy the relationships, enjoy playing soccer!

# Team Manager Tasks At A Glance

### Before the Season Starts

* Make sure your Divisional Director has accurate contact information for all designated team managers.
* Verify account access to the various systems used to manage league logistics.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **System** | **Primary Purpose** | **Point Person** |
| EMWSL account  | Online payments | Game Scheduler, Divisional Director  |
| Mass Soccer account – *designated as Team Manager*  | Online roster system (with Mass IDs) | Divisional Director |
| US Officials  | Referee assignments, official game details | Referee Assignor, Divisional Director |

* Secure your field and obtain certificate of insurance, if required.
* Communicate field details (location, field share, date restrictions) to Game

Scheduler and Divisional Director.

* Pay deposit by due date, generally about 6-8 weeks prior to season’s start.
* Update your roster by checking for expired Mass IDs, adjusting existing players,

and recruiting new players.

* Communicate schedule and pertinent details about season with team.
* Visit your field a week prior to your first home game to check field conditions and check that it’s been lined.

### During the Season

* Pay season balance prior to the second game of the season.
* Check US Officials weekly for referee assignment and accuracy of game

details.

* Send game reminders to your team weekly.
* Monitor and manage player availability for each game.
* Communicate regularly and early with your opponent and your team if you suspect

that your game may be unplayable for any reason. Alert your team ahead of time if they should expect a last minute update about the game (e.g. inclement weather).

* Notify the assigned referee(s), Divisional Director, and your opponent’s team

manager in the event of a forfeit or cancelation.

* Reference the Game Day Check List to make sure you are prepared.
* Share feedback and communicate any serious incidents to Divisional Director.

### Beyond Season Play

* Attend League meetings, biannually every February and August plus summer planning meeting each May.

Familiarize yourself with the full set of [EMWSL Guidelines & Policies](http://www.emwsl.org/Guidelines%26Policies).

# General League Information

## Divisions of Play

The EMWSL generally organizes league play into three divisions ranging from highly competitive to somewhat competitive. All divisions have players of all ages. The top division is typically comprised of current or former college-level players who have continued to actively play soccer, while division three is primarily made up of players who have had some soccer or sports-playing experience.

During the summer season, the divisional structure is usually modified to prioritize travel/geography while carefully taking into account the skill level of each team. Division 1 tends to expand due to the influx of current college players and highly competitive summer-only teams.

## New Team Registration

The EMWSL welcomes new teams throughout the year and will make every effort to accommodate those interested in playing with us. Entry into the league depends on several factors, including the league’s assessment of the new team’s ability to successfully form and manage the team (e.g. build a roster, secure a field). A new team's placement in a division is decided using information from the new team, the judgment of the Board, and current divisional breakdowns. In addition to the standard fees associated with the season and league, all new teams must pay a bond to secure the league from taking on outstanding team payments or debt.

## League Meetings

Each year, the EMWSL holds 2 mandatory League meetings, one in February and the other in August. One optional meeting is held in May to plan details related to the summer season. A representative from each team must be in attendance at each of these meetings despite which season(s) your team participates. If a team is not represented, that team is assessed a $100 fine. Important information is voted on and dispensed at these meetings. Attendance at these meetings also gives your team a voice. New teams are eligible for incorporation to the EMWSL after one season of play and attendance at two League meetings.

# Managing a Team

## Welcome

On behalf of the EMWSL Board of Directors, we welcome you to a leadership role within the league. Serving as a team manager is fun and rewarding. At the same time, we recognize and appreciate that it can be a good deal of work too! We hope this *Manual for Team Managers* serves the dual purposes of creating efficiency and providing support that simplifies the roles of both team managers and Divisional Directors as well as the rest of the Board of Directors. We are all generously volunteering our time to ensure that women across Massachusetts enjoy the game of soccer in a competitive and friendly environment!

## Communicating with the League

The [EMWSL Board of Directors](http://www.emwsl.org/bod) is comprised of various volunteer positions that are responsible for managing the League. Each division has a Divisional Director who supports all teams in the respective division and provides general oversight of key logistics.

* The Divisional Director serves as the primary point of contact for team managers and team managers are expected to include Divisional Directors on just about all of their communications with the League.

This chart provides an overview of who to contact based on common situations:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Situation involves:** | **Who to Contact:** |
| EMWSL log-in/account  | Game Scheduler  |
| Online payments, deposit and balance | Divisional Director |
| Mass Soccer registration or rosters  | Divisional Director |
| Field assignment information  | Game Scheduler, Divisional Director |
| Certificate of Insurance  | Mass Soccer (once you complete form) |
| Issues with scheduling/game details  | Game Scheduler, Referee Assignor, Divisional Director \*If urgent and last minute, contact opponent’s team manager and referee as appears in US Officials) |
| Forfeits and cancellations  | Referee assignor, Referee, Divisional Director, Opponent  |
| US Officials system | Referee Assignor  |
| Serious incident  | President, Vice President, Divisional Director  |
| General feedback and questions  | Divisional Director  |

## Season Registration

The EMWSL soccer year begins with the fall season. A registration period occurs three times per year: fall, spring, and summer. All significant dates for the year are proposed and approved at the League meeting in August. Teams are required to submit the deposit by the due date in order to guarantee inclusion for each season.

### Online Payments

2. Once logged-in:



1. Go to the [league website](http://www.emwsl.org) and log-in.



## Fields

### Securing a Field

Every team is required to secure a field for their home games. Your field must be within the route 495 belt and must be approved by the Board if it has not been used by the league within the past year. It is important that you begin the process of securing a field early! With the rise in popularity of both soccer and lacrosse, fields are in high demand and very difficult to come by. We recommend that you have a good lead on securing a home field *before* registering a team into the League. However, the Board will make every effort to support you with locating a field if this presents a difficulty.

It is a team’s responsibility to make sure that the field is maintained appropriately. This includes visible lines, mowed grass, and goals with nets. If, at any point in time, there are concerns about a field’s condition and/or safety, please notify your Divisional Director.

### Cambridge Fields

The league provides central coordination for all fields owned by the City of Cambridge. Each season, we typically have access to a limited number of fields. All requests for securing a City of Cambridge field must be directed to the D3 Divisional Director.

### Certificate of Insurance

Some field owners (cities, towns, institutions) require teams to submit a Certificate of Insurance in order to utilize fields. To request a Certificate of Insurance, team managers must [complete the required form](http://www.emwsl.org/insurancecertificate) and submit by email to the MASS Soccer contact listed on the form.

## Mass Soccer Registration

All players are required to register and sign a liability waiver with Mass Soccer. They will subsequently receive a player passcard/ID with a Mass Soccer registration number. Team managers will need to obtain this player registration number in order to add a player to the online roster system. Player passcards must be renewed every two years.

As you recruit new players, be sure to notify them of this important registration requirement. You are encouraged to use the drafted templates below to communicate with and support both first-time registrants and players who need to renew their registration.

### Email Template – New Player/First-time Registrant

Dear <insert name>,

<Insert customized language about your team and your interest in this player>

Before I can add you to our roster, you will need to register with Mass Soccer. This is a requirement of the League and is a simple process requiring you to create an account with an email address, upload a photo/headshot, verify your age using a government-issued ID, and pay a $25 fee for two years. When you get to the [website](https://reg.mass-soccer.org/accounts/login/), there will be a box in the bottom right-hand corner that says, “Need to create a new account?”—just click “Start here!” You can also use these [step-by-step instructions](http://www.emwsl.org/MASSRegistrationTutorial) if you need help, but if you have any trouble just let me know!

Once you have registered (or if you already have a Mass Soccer ID), please email me the registration number so I can add you to the roster.

### Email Template – Renewal Instructions

Dear <insert name>,

I noticed that your Mass Soccer player ID card is expired and wanted to share these instructions for renewing it. Please let me know if you need any help!

1. [Log-in via your account](https://reg.mass-soccer.org/accounts/login/) (email and password).
* Passwords can be reset (an email will be sent to the address you initially registered with);
* The registration ID number can be used as a user name (in lieu of email), but the password is still required;
* Players who have forgotten their password and user name should contact the State Admin by email at Registrar@Mass-Soccer.org.
1. Once logged-in, you will be prompted to validate the information on the account, sign the waiver, and pay for the renewal. Some pictures will be rejected (e.g. too dark, image is unclear), but otherwise the same photo from prior registration can be used.
2. Once the registration is processed, your registration number should automatically renew on the roster. Please confirm that you’ve renewed so I can make sure you are activated on the roster again.

## Team Rosters

### Player Recruitment

Maintaining depth on your roster is critical to being a successful team manager and enjoying a fun season. The effects of a limited roster can lead to low morale among your team because of playing short-handed and it can cause frustrations across the league when roster issues lead to forfeits. Therefore, it is important to keep abreast of your teammates’ intentions each season. Injuries, pregnancies and parenting, job conflicts, a season of weddings—we all experience conflicts that may keep us off the pitch for weeks or seasons at a time.

As necessary, team managers are encouraged to recruit new players. The best time to recruit is generally around two months prior to the season’s start, though keeping a lookout year-round can be valuable! Use your networks and teammates to identify new players.

The League also receives new player requests. The profiles of “free agents” are emailed out by the New Player Coordinator regularly. Please notify the New Player Coordinator upon successfully adding a new player to your roster from the League’s distribution list of new players. If you are in desperate need of new players and are regularly struggling to field a team, please reach out to your Divisional Director—the Board can often be a great resource to problem solve.

### Accessing Rosters

The League uses an online roster management system that is directly integrated with the Mass Soccer registration process. When you become a team manager, your Divisional Director will need to designate you as a team manager within the online roster system in order to give you access to editing your team’s roster.

The EMWSL separates its rosters into two separate “Leagues” within the roster system—one is called “EMWSL” and is used for the spring/fall seasons; the second is called “EMWSL Summer League” and is used exclusively for the summer season. Under “Teams I Manage,” you may have two rosters listed for your team, depending on what season(s) your team plays in:



Once you have access, you will be able to assign (or remove) additional team managers. We recommend that each team have 2-3 players designated as team managers in the roster system. This will make sure that your team is not overly reliant on you—let’s face it, we are all juggling life’s commitments! All players designated as team managers in the roster system will be able to add/drop players, make last-minute changes on game days, and have the ability to print the game day roster.



### Editing your Roster

When you are ready to edit your roster, make sure you click on the correct season under “Teams I Manage.” You can only add/drop players from one season’s roster at a time, so this is important. Next, scroll down until you the following:



Insert the Mass ID number of the player you wish to add into the box and click on “Request roster addition.” An email will automatically be sent to the player prompting them to approve the request in order to be added to your roster. To approve, the player must log into the [Mass Soccer registration website](https://reg.mass-soccer.org/accounts/login/) and under “Teams I play for,” they will see a “Pending Roster Addition” link. The player must click this link to accept the invitation to join the team.

When invitations are made for a player to join, an email will also automatically be sent to all designated team managers in the roster system. A similar automated message is sent to communicate when a player has accepted. We recommend you verify that the player appears on the roster as an active player once you receive notification of their acceptance. Players who you have invited but who have not accepted or declined will be listed under the “Pending Transfers” section of your roster.

If a player is already on the roster of an EMWSL team and you initiate an invitation for that player to join your team, the same process takes place. However, since double rostering is not allowed in the League, this is considered a transfer request. An automatic email is sent to the team managers of the existing team to notify them that a player has been invited to transfer teams. Before accepting the invitation, the player will also see a message that warns them that they will be dropped from their initial team if they accept the new invitation.

Once a player appears on your roster, you will have the following options for each player:

* **Drop** – this option completely removes the player from the roster.
* **Deactivate** – this option keeps the player on the roster, but they will not appear on the game day roster and are therefore not eligible to play, until they are activated. Players with this status will appear in a darker gray area at the bottom of the roster. The deactivate option is a useful way to keep players on reserve who may be injured, on maternity leave, or temporarily unavailable for other reasons.
* **Activate** – this option allows you to move a player who is deactivated back onto the game day roster.

### Roster Restrictions

(Roster Size) The League allows you to roster up to 30 active players and 10 deactivated players at one time, totaling 40 players. At a minimum, teams are required to have at least 15 players on their rosters to register. As a general rule of thumb, we recommend that teams roster between 18-20 players per season to be viable during the spring/fall seasons and carry a larger roster in the summer.

(Age Limitations) In teams that register as Division I, players must be at least 17 years of age by the earlier of the first game they play in or the end of open registration. For teams registering to play in all other Divisions, players must be at least 18 years of age by the earlier of the first game they play in or the end of open registration. The one exception to this is that non-Division I teams may have a maximum of three (3) players that are under 18 years of age so long as those players are at least 17 years of age by the first game they play in.

(Roster Freezes) The League generally only freezes rosters during the summer season. The date is usually earlier in D1 than the other divisions and teams will be notified in advance.

### Game Day Rosters

In advance of each game, be sure to print your game day roster. The game day roster has photos of all active players. Once you click on a team name under “Teams I manage,” the new window will bring you to your roster but your game day roster is still one click away. At the top of the screen, you will see the following—click on HERE to open your game day roster:



A couple of helpful tips:

* In the beginning of the season, it is especially important to cross reference the teammates who have indicated they will be playing against who is on the roster.
* Make sure the game day roster you print is updated with any recent changes you made. Since the roster system allows you to make changes in real time (unless restrictions/freeze have been agreed upon by the League), it is easy to show up to the field with the wrong version and have a player missing.

At each game, referees will collect your printed game day roster from each team. Game day rosters include each player’s name, date of birth, and Mass Soccer Player Passcard ID number. Referees will then use the roster to check each player in. Because game day rosters have photos, players are not required to show their passcards. However, players are expected to have one form of photo identification available to show to the referee in instances where the referee is unable to verify the player’s identity based on the roster photo.

Teams will not be able to compete without providing a copy of this roster. Likewise, only players appearing on the roster will be allowed to play. Referees will strictly enforce this.

## Referee Assignments & Game Details

EMWSL uses a referee assignment software called US Officials. Each team manager will be assigned log-in credentials to access the software. The username and password is generally sent through email each time a new manager takes leadership of a team. Only one log-in per team is allowed within the system, so teams are encouraged to use a generic log-in and share with secondary managers.

Once logged in, you can update your contact telephone number; view game information on a week-to-week basis, including your opponent's contact name and information; and update the designated contact for your team. An account holder can only view their game(s) so other than the game contacts and the referee assigner, your information is not visible to others.

Team managers are required to verify game details for each match at least one week prior to the scheduled event. Be sure to confirm the accuracy of the following game details:

* Kickoff time
* Location
* Opponent
* Assignment of a referee

League schedules generally live in two places—the league website and US Officials. In addition, there are generally multiple PDF versions of the schedule for each season before one is official and finalized. For this reason, game details entered into US Officials are considered official regardless of what appears elsewhere. Still, we ask that you report any discrepancies to your Divisional Director and the League Scheduler.

## Forfeits and Cancellations

Forfeits should be considered a last resort as they negatively affect the satisfaction of all involved. Team managers are expected to track attendance for each game and communicate with the opposing team early on, if you anticipate low numbers. Each team mt have at least seven players for the game to start and to be considered official. In the event that you cannot field a team and decide to forfeit, you must notify the opponent’s team manager and assigned referee based on the contacts in the game details listed on US Officials. Include your Divisional Director and the Ref Assignor in this communication as well. Forfeiting on the day of the game or at the field without any advanced notice to the opponent is highly frowned upon by the League, so please do your best to avoid this situation. We recommend you review the full forfeit rules in the EMWSL Guidelines if you are contemplating a forfeit.

In the event of inclement weather (rain, thunderstorms, etc), team managers are expected to decide whether to cancel the game at least two hours prior to the start of the game. Games on turf fields are generally played except during thunderstorms or extreme circumstances. For games on grass fields, the team manager is expected to use discretion and the field owner’s guidelines to make a decision. However, mere reports of inclement weather should not be automatic grounds for cancellation. The referee will make a determination regarding whether a game is playable in situations where a game is not cancelled at least two hours prior to the start of the game. Each season, the League generally has one official date held for make-up games.

## Team Communication

Communicating with your team, managing logistics, and tracking who to expect each week can be a lot of work. Yet the good news is that it doesn't have to be! Consider using a technology solution—various applications exist that streamline the process of managing sports teams.

Features include the ability to enter and update game details, add contacts (e.g. players), easily communicate with the entire team or a subset of the team, track availability of each teammate for every game, and accept payments. [Teamsnap](https://www.teamsnap.com/) is one worthy option to explore. Trust me, it will save you time and sanity, and your teammates will be grateful for having everything in one place. This also simplifies the process of having a teammate step up to lead in your absence.

## Game Day

### Arrival

Team managers should advise their teammates to arrive at the field fully dressed and ready to play no later than fifteen minutes before kickoff.

### Equipment & Game Day Check List

Team managers are responsible for ensuring that their team has the appropriate equipment to compete in scheduled matches. When you are the home team, you are expected to provide the additional equipment needed to play the match, including a back up set of uniforms. This checklist is a good reference to ensure you are ready for game day!

* Game day roster (with photos)
* Field permit
* Uniforms (2 sets, or 1 set plus pinnies)
* Game balls (2 at a minimum)
* Ball pump with needle
* 4 corner flags (or cones at a minimum)
* First Aid Kit

### Sportsmanship

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Matches in our league generally maintain a pleasant and competitive atmosphere with minimal behavioral issues. Occasionally, the emotion of the game causes players to act impulsively and unsportsmanlike. Team managers are expected to show leadership on and off the field by role modeling sportsmanship and addressing any teammates whose behavior you feel is inappropriate.

Remind your team that dissent and hard fouls are not part of the game and will not be tolerated—these are punishable offenses, either by the referee or you as team manager. During the game, it is your role to respectfully bring any major concerns or issues to the attention of the referee, during half time or as appropriate. After the game, please report any significant incidents to your Divisional Director.

## Managing Finances

As a team manager, setting up a system for record keeping and budgeting of revenues and expenses is an essential component of a well-run team. Doing so will ensure that you are not left in the red after a season and forced to make up the deficit from your personal savings. In the longer-term, it will allow you to amass a small reserve that might cover an unexpected team expense, new uniforms, or future season deposits.

### Budgeting

(Expenses) EMWSL has invoice records that you can access in order to estimate league costs for a season or a full year. You also need to factor in the cost of equipment and fields.

(Revenue) Teams generally charge between $60-$120 per player per season, with the summer typically being on the higher end of this range since it offers two games per week. It is perfectly reasonable and recommended to charge $5-10 more per player in a season to protect yourself from a player or two that does not play—best case scenario, you’ll create a reserve. Ultimately, the season cost is the team manager’s decision.

### Team Bank Account

Opening a separate team bank account is usually a wise decision and very easy to do. You can even opt to open a team bank account as a business entity to separate your personal financial affairs from your team’s financial affairs. To do so, go to your local town office and request a Business Certificate, also know as a “DBA Certificate” (Doing Business As). For example, you can set up the account as Jane Doe DBA Women United F.C. Upon request, your bank may waive its normal monthly bank charges.

### Sponsorship

Some teams find a sponsor to reduce costs. Generally, the sponsor’s logo is put on the uniforms and amounts vary. The most likely sponsors will be local businesses such as those in the vicinity of your home field so that teammates can pay frequent visits, or the businesses of your teammates.