ROYAL YORK FOOTBALL CLUB

SOCCER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT CLUB

Royal York Football Club – Playing Time Policy

Applies to all RYFC programs.

Purpose

To set clear, consistent expectations for player playing time across club programs, while recognizing that match conditions can occasionally affect substitutions.

Core Definitions

- **Equal Playing Time:** Coaches aim to distribute minutes as evenly as possible across the roster (over the match and/or across the season when game flow makes exact equality difficult).
- **Fair Playing Time:** Minutes are allocated in a manner consistent with the program's competitive and developmental objectives, considering factors such as performance and commitment.

Playing Time Standards by Program

Program Category	Ages	Playing Time Standard	Notes
House League & Recreational	Varies	**EQUAL**	GK minutes may be exempt **only if the player voluntarily agrees** to play GK.
Festival Programs	U8	**EQUAL**	Same GK voluntary exception applies.
Grassroots Technical Programs	U6–U12	**EQUAL**	Same GK voluntary exception applies.
Development Rep Level Programs	U9–U12	**FAIR**	May reflect **skill/ability, commitment, attendance, training engagement, tactical needs**, and other reasonable coaching factors. GK voluntary exception applies.

Program Category	Ages	Playing Time Standard	Notes
Competitive Rep (I-Model & District)	U13+	**FAIR**	May reflect **skill/ability, commitment, attendance, training engagement, match strategy/performance needs**, and other reasonable coaching factors. GK voluntary exception applies.
OPDL Programs	U13–U17	**As per Ontario Soccer / OPDL guidelines**	Determined by OPDL coaching staff in accordance with Ontario Soccer guidelines.

Goalkeeper Playing Time (All Programs)

- Goalkeeper playing time may be treated separately from equal/fair field playing time only when the player voluntarily agrees to play goalkeeper.
- Coaches should develop goalkeepers appropriately for the program level while respecting player willingness.

Practical Limitations

Coaches will make best efforts to follow this policy, but minor variances may occur due to:

- Injury, safety considerations, or return-to-play protocols
- Continuous run of play limiting substitution opportunities
- Match conditions and tactical necessity
  When variances occur, coaches should make reasonable efforts to balance playing time in subsequent matches where applicable (especially in equal-playing-time programs).

Communication Expectations

- Coaches will communicate the relevant playing time standard (equal or fair) at the start of the season.
- Playing time discussions will not occur during matches.
- For “fair playing time” programs, coaches may provide general rationale (e.g., training attendance, role responsibilities) without debating decisions in real time during matches.