



MANAGER'S MANUAL

New England Over The Hill Soccer League

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Disclaimer: This document represents the opinions, experience and advice of an experienced team manager participating in the NEOTHSL. It can be a valuable resource for a team manager. This document may not represent the current rules and policies of the NEOTHSL as defined in the League Constitution & Rules of Play. NEOTHSL is neither bound nor necessarily endorses the positions and guidance contained herein.

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New England Over The Hill Soccer League

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Preface

We have over 6,000 players on about 300 teams in our League, and as Team Managers, we play a crucial role. This Manager's Manual is intended to help us, and our Assistant Managers, as well as future Team Managers and Assistant Managers, to keep our League running well.

The pleasure of serving as a Team Manager or Assistant Manager is that, within the established guidelines as described in this Manual, we can not only enjoy the game of soccer as a player, but also form and develop a group of fellow players who share a common team culture.

Whether you are currently involved with managing an existing team, considering getting involved in managing an existing team, or considering forming a new team, it is suggested that you read this Manual cover to cover. Also, study the League Constitution & Rules of Play posted on the League web site, at www.othsl.org.

As you will see, there is a lot to the job of managing a team in this League. It is our hope that this Manual will help make the job easier. If you have comments or suggestions for changes or additions to this Manual, please share them with your Division Director or the President of the League.

And most importantly of all, enjoy! Enjoy managing your team, enjoy the relationships, and enjoy playing soccer!

HFADGH (Have Fun And Don't Get Hurt),

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim Bricker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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I. League Organization

The New England Over The Hill Soccer League is for adult soccer players 30 years of age and older, and is run entirely by volunteers. With about 300 teams, we are one of the largest – and perhaps the largest! – adult soccer league in the country.

The League is organized as a Massachusetts corporation and registered with the IRS as a not-for-profit organization. We are a member of the Massachusetts Adult State Soccer Association (MASS Soccer), and through MASS Soccer, we are affiliated with the United States Soccer Federation (USSF).

Age Groups

The teams in the League are currently organized into six Age Groups:

- Over 30
- Over 40, also called Masters
- Over 48, also called Seniors
- Over 55, also called Veterans
- Over 62
- Over 68

A player is eligible for an Age Group if he will be the specified age by December 31st of the calendar year (for example, a player who is only 54 at the start of the Spring season but will turn 55 by December 31st of that year can play both Spring and Fall in the Over 55 Age Group). And note that for calendar year 2022 only, the Over 68 Age Group will function as if it were Over 67.

As time goes on, the Age Group limits may change, as the League endeavors to achieve similarity with other Leagues and to accommodate the growing numbers of our older players.

Divisions and Sections

Each Age Group is divided into Divisions based on performance, and into Sections according to geography. The top teams are in Division 1, the next strongest in Division 2, and so on. Most Divisions have at least a North and a South Section; some have North, Central and South. The geographic splits are driven by need rather than by any absolute boundary. For example, a team based north of Boston could be assigned to a South Section if most of the teams in the Division are still farther north.

New teams are placed in the lowest Division in their Age Group to start. Teams get promoted or relegated each season from one Division to another based on their performance and according to rules established by the Board of Directors. In most cases, after a season the first place team moves up a Division for the following season and the last place team moves down a Division for the following season. In some Divisions, the top two teams are promoted and the bottom two are relegated, in order to maximize the potential for balanced competition.

Game Schedules

There are two seasons per year. The Spring season runs from April to June, and the Fall season runs from September (or late August) to November. The Fall season sometimes has to start on the

last weekend of August to allow the playoffs to be held before Thanksgiving. There are playoffs at the end of each season for the top teams in each Division.

Games are scheduled to be played on Sunday mornings, and the schedules for each season are posted on the League web site www.othsl.org before each season begins. When fields are unplayable due to inclement weather or other conditions, games can be rescheduled by mutual agreement of the two Team Managers, subject to guidelines posted in the Rules section on the League web site.

Sections (e.g., Masters 3 South or Seniors 3 North) usually have either 6 teams or 8 teams. In a 6 team Section, each team will play the other 5 teams twice per season for a total of 10 games per season. In an 8 team Section, there will be two flights of 4 teams each. Each team will play each of the other teams in their own flight twice per season, and each of the teams in the other flight once per season, for a total of 10 games.

If there are not enough teams available for a full complement in a Division or Section, the League may schedule more than two matches each season between teams to fill out a 10-game schedule, or some teams may end up with a bye week or two bye weeks in a season.

Division Directors and League Officers

Contact information for all members of the Board of Directors is available on the www.othsl.org League web site. Don't hesitate to contact them if you have a need, but please respect the fact that they are all volunteers.

As Team Manager, you report to a Division Director. A Division Director can run more than one Division, and many do. The Division Directors have seats on the Board of Directors of the League and represent their respective Team Managers at Board Meetings. Therefore, the first path for a Team Manager to voice any concerns, complaints or suggestions to the League is through his Division Director.

The League Officers include the President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. There are also others involved in running the League, including a Registrar, a Referee Coordinator, Referee Assigners, a Webmaster, and Standing Committees. Their duties and responsibilities are described in the League's Constitution, which is posted on the League web site, and their contact information is posted on the web site, along with the contact information for the Division Directors.

II. The Team Manager

The Team Manager is fully responsible for forming and running his team, within the guidelines outlined in this Manual and in the Rules of the League as posted on the web site. The tasks required to form a team, and run a team, both in-season and between seasons, are described in Sections V through X of this Manual.

Typically, the Team Manager plays for his team, although that is not necessary. He can be younger than the team's age requirement if he is not a player on that team.

An individual can serve as a Team Manager for more than one team, but if he does, he will need to be available to attend the games for each of his teams or be sure to have an Assistant Manager fully trained to run the team or teams whose games he cannot attend himself.

There are two paths to becoming a Team Manager:

1. Form a new team. By virtue of beginning the process, as described later in this Manual, you typically become the *de facto* Team Manager.
2. Take over an existing team. Usually this happens because you are asked to do so by the current Team Manager, maybe because he is retiring from soccer or moving to an older Age Group. Preferably, you have already served as his Assistant Manager, or have worked closely enough with him to learn the ropes.

III. The Assistant Manager

Every Team Manager must have an Assistant Manager. The Team Manager carries full authority to choose his Assistant Manager and makes the assignment simply by inputting the Assistant Manager's name on the team's roster page on the League web site. A team can have two Assistant Managers.

The most essential job of an Assistant Manager is to be available when the Team Manager is not. If a League Official, another Team Manager, a Referee, or even a member of your own team is trying to contact the Team Manager and cannot, he will try to contact the Assistant Manager. Therefore, as Team Manager, you must endeavor to keep your Assistant Manager current on everything related to the management of your team.

In addition, the Assistant Manager is expected to assist the Team Manager in a cooperative way in any aspect of forming and running the team for which the Team Manager requests assistance. Also, a good Assistant Manager can be an excellent sounding board for a Team Manager whenever issues arise with players or outside parties.

Like the Team Manager, the Assistant Manager typically plays for his team, although that is not necessary. He can be younger than the team's age requirement if he is not a player on that team. A person can serve as an Assistant Manager for more than one team.

A Team Manager's choice of an Assistant Manager can be very important. Besides being helpful with the many duties required to run a team effectively, a good Assistant Manager, particularly one younger than his Team Manager, becomes the logical person to succeed the Team Manager if he should move up to an older Age Group or for any other reason decide to relinquish his position.

IV. Team Identity and Team Name

Team Identity

As Team Manager, you are able to determine your team identity – its ethic, its spirit, its objectives – from the outset.

Some teams are run to be as competitive as possible, seek to recruit and retain top players, and always seek to win and be promoted to the highest Division. They give maximum playing time to the best players.

Other teams are more socially oriented. They like to win, but they provide more equal playing time and give more emphasis to making sure every player has fun. While the different types of teams all seek to play with good sportsmanship and minimize the risk of injury, the differences between teams can be significant.

The key is to define what type of team you want to run and be consistent in your message to your current players and your recruits to maintain that type of team.

Team Name

Naming your team gives you the opportunity to begin to establish your team identity.

When naming a new team, it might help to study the names of other teams in the League, or teams in other sports. The following list may help in thinking about a team name:

- Naming the team after your town
- Naming it after a professional sports team
- Naming it for a favorite animal or mascot (lions, bears)
- Naming it for a characteristic (warriors, strikers, etc.)

Take care when naming your team to choose a name that is not only consistent with the team identity you are trying to establish, but also will feel right for many years.

V. Primary Tasks for Running a Team

Whether you are forming a new team, taking over an existing team for the first time, or running your existing team for another season, there are four basic tasks required in preparing your team for League play:

- a. Registering the team with the League
- b. Getting a field
- c. Getting (and keeping) enough players
- d. Maintaining your roster

For a new team, it's quite a challenge, because you essentially have to do the first three things at once. The first two may require financial commitments that you don't want to make until you are

sure that you have enough players, but if you wait too long to make the commitments, it may be too late to recruit the players.

For an existing team, the challenge is to be sure that you don't assume that you will be okay next season just because you were okay last season. All of these tasks need to be repeated season after season.

a. Registering the team with the League

To register your team, you must pay the registration fee either online through PayPal or with a check sent to the Registrar at the address provided on the web site. The amount and due date for registration fees are set by the Board of Directors and announced on the web site and through an email to all Managers. Typically in the past, the due dates were December 1st for the Spring season and July 1st for the Fall season. Recently, the League has had an annual registration fee rather than a separate registration fee for each season.

Referee fees from any playoff matches for the prior season are deducted from the registration fee as described on the web site. For new teams, any deposit you may have made (see below) is deducted from the registration fee for your first season.

Much of the team's registration fees is passed on to the State Adult Soccer Association. These payments provide for insurance coverage and affiliation fees. Most of the remaining amounts collected goes to paying for the season-end finals.

In addition to paying the registration fee, you must provide the following information to the League: your team's shirt color, home field location (and directions), field-sharing arrangements with other teams if applicable (if you and another team will be sharing a field such that when you are Home, they are Away, and vice versa), and home game start times. You also need to provide your player roster, not to the League but rather to MASS Soccer, as described below (and you must continually update your roster during and between seasons, through MASS Soccer).

Potential new teams must first apply for a spot and then wait for an opening. To apply, send your application along with an application fee to the Registrar, per the instructions on the web site, indicating your Team Name and Age Group. Sometimes new teams can be accommodated immediately; other times new teams have to wait as long as several seasons to be accommodated.

When you are approved as a new team, you need to register your team and add your roster at the MASS Soccer web site, reg.mass-soccer.org, which you can access directly from the Team Registration link on the left-hand side of the www.othsl.org web site.

b. Getting a field

You will need a field assigned to you for the five two-hour slots on Sunday mornings for which you are scheduled for home games. If you will be field-sharing (see below) with another team, the League will coordinate the ten-week season such that each of you has the field for your five home games. If you do not need to share your field with another team and can reserve your field for all ten weeks of a season, then you will be all set for whatever five weeks your games happen to be home games.

Getting a field can be a challenge, especially for a new team, given the number of teams, both youth and adult, that are vying for field time. Generally, existing teams are given priority for renewal on their established fields, but that is not guaranteed. Do not assume that you have a field for next season just because you had it last season.

Most teams play on town fields, but private schools, local colleges, and club teams also have fields for rent occasionally. For many of these fields you may be required to submit a field usage permit request several months ahead of each season. Be wary of missing these deadlines.

Also, many towns have special requirements, like that the person requesting the field must be a resident of the town, or that a certain percentage of the team's players must be residents of the town. Some schools and colleges will restrict their field usage to alumni. Many towns, schools, colleges and club teams will require certificates of insurance (available from the League – for teams already registered with a web page on www.othsl.org, there is a link on their page, on the right-hand side, to request an insurance certificate) before permitting use of their fields, and new, current insurance certificates are generally required every year.

Make your field choice wisely. Here are some factors to consider:

Time slot. The choice of what time to play your regularly scheduled home games is up to you as Team Manager. Unless you have a strong personal preference, poll your players to find out what they prefer. Typical start times are 9:00 AM or 10:00 AM, but any time on the hour or half hour between 8:00 AM and 11:00 AM is acceptable to the League. Your choice of time may affect both the availability of a field and the availability of players, so consider these factors when making your request.

Field sharing. The most efficient use of a field occurs when two teams split the use of a given field, such that when one has a home game the other has an away game. Your willingness to participate in a field sharing arrangement may increase your likelihood of getting a field. But the trade-off is that then you cannot offer an opponent to play on your field when theirs is unplayable. Consider the trade-offs when deciding whether to request a field for every week in a ten week season or for field sharing with another team.

Grass or turf. The newer artificial turf fields are frequently playable when grass fields are not, but they can be more difficult to book, and teams scheduled on turf fields in high school stadiums, for example, may be subject to being pre-empted for major school events.

c. Getting (and keeping) enough players

It is generally considered that a team must have at least 15 players at a bare minimum, and preferably 18 or 20 or more, to be viable, since on any given week it can be expected that some players on the team roster may be unavailable due to family commitments, business travel, injury, or other reasons.

Teams can have up to 30 players on their rosters. Typically, teams in the older Age Groups carry more players on their rosters, since older players tend to have more commitments which make them miss games.

The number of players you choose to carry on your roster will determine not only whether you have enough players to compete in each game, but also how much playing time each player gets. This is a very important trade-off, and one you should consider seriously as you fill your roster each season, because over-staffing your roster will make it difficult to retain players who feel that they are not getting sufficient playing time.

Another consideration in filling your roster is the position each player is qualified and willing to play. Typically, the goalkeeper spot is tough to fill, and having a good keeper as well as a back-up keeper is difficult to achieve but very valuable. If too many players all want to play forward or all want to play defense, you may be understaffed even though you have a high number of players on your roster.

Sources of players

In order to do the best job filling your roster, and keeping enough players on your roster, you should consider a number of sources of players:

- Referrals from your current players or new players already committed to joining your team
- Local off-season pick-up games
- Word-of-mouth, even from friends of yours who do not play soccer
- A listing on the League web site that your team is looking for new players
- An ad in your local newspaper (frequently free)
- An ad you might post on the bulletin board of a local health club, sporting goods store, town hall, deli, supermarket, etc.

In our League, it is generally considered to be in bad taste to “steal” players from other teams, whether you are a new team or an existing team. If you have identified players you want to recruit from other teams, the accepted common courtesy is to talk with that team’s Team Manager about it, and jointly decide on a course of action. Common sense dictates that taking players from teams can set a precedent that could come back and haunt you in the future.

Deciding whom to add and whom to keep

As Team Manager, you have the unilateral and final say as to who may play on your team. In recruiting players, you will be well served to have a clear definition of the type of player you want, so that you can make good choices about adding players, and so that each player with whom you speak knows what type of teammates to expect. Be prepared to answer these and other questions:

- Do you want only players from your home town?
- Do you want only highly skilled, experienced players?
- Do you want only players you have seen play in the past?
- Do you want only players who already know others on your team?
- Will you require tryouts?
- Do you want only players who are committed to playing most weeks?
- Will you take players who can only play one position?
- Do you want only players who have a profile similar to yours regarding how badly they want to win vs. how much they just want to be out there to have fun?
- Do you want to add new players only if they are at the lower end of the eligible age range for your team?

Closing the deal

When you have successfully recruited a new player, and he has agreed to join you, one way to seal the deal is to ask him for a check in payment for his dues for the upcoming season. Then, announce him and introduce him to your teammates and add him to your roster on the MASS Soccer web site. If he was formerly playing for another team, he will be automatically deleted from that team’s roster at MASS Soccer’s web site when he officially accepts the invitation to be put on your roster.

If you are running an existing team, do not assume that everyone who played on your team this season will return next season. Some may decide to play for another team and not tell you. Others may be moving out of state and forget to tell you. Others may decide they just don’t want to continue their soccer career. Consider asking your current players for a check for next season at the end of this season, so you can know in advance whether to expect them to return.

d. Maintaining your roster

The MASS Soccer web site holds the official roster for each team. All players must be entered on a team’s roster on that web site before they can play. And to be eligible to be placed on any roster,

each player must first have a current MASS Soccer ID Card, which he must bring to every game for referee check-in. As Team Manager, you should be able to guide each prospective player and each current player in the method to obtain a current MASS Soccer ID Card.

Consider asking each player to purchase two MASS Soccer ID Cards, not just one, and giving you the spare, so that you can keep a full set of your players' ID Cards and bring them to every game. That way, if a player ever forgets to bring his ID Card to a game, you can provide the spare for his check-in.

You need to print two copies of the roster from the MASS Soccer web site to bring to each game – one for the referee and one for the other Team Manager. But these rosters have only the players' names, photos and MASS Soccer ID numbers, so you should keep a separate list for yourself of the names, dates of birth, addresses, email addresses and phone numbers for all of your players (and prospective players).

Rosters typically remain open until midnight before the second game of each season, although there are exceptions, as explained in the League Rules as posted on the www.othsl.org web site.

The Team Manager is responsible for ensuring that each player on a team which he manages meets the League's age requirements. Referees are instructed to check in all players for every game by verifying their identity via the MASS Soccer ID Card, but have no way of verifying the player's age. Each player is required to supply a government-issued ID showing his age to obtain the MASS Soccer ID Card, but the Team Manager maintains responsibility to question any player if he has reason to believe that a false ID might have been used.

Inactive players should be dropped from the rosters since they would otherwise increase the League's insurance costs, eventually affecting your Registration Fees.

Cutting players

The time between seasons is a good time to take a critical look at your roster and decide whether you should consider cutting any of your current players before the next season. Making these decisions early will allow you to focus on recruiting any new players you may need.

You can cut a player from your roster whenever you feel it is appropriate, and for whatever reason you determine. If you are planning to cut a player, you should pay him the courtesy of telling him as soon as practicable after you have made the decision. In situations which might be controversial, you should have your Assistant Manager or someone else from your team with you when you notify the player.

If you are thinking of cutting a player for disciplinary reasons or because he is causing problems with the team, you should consider discussing it with him before taking the final action. Again, in such cases you should have your Assistant Manager or someone else from your team with you for the discussion.

If you are thinking of cutting a player because his skill level is not sufficient for your team, you should consider offering to help him find another team on which to play.

If you cut a player in the middle of a season, or if a player is injured or moves out of town mid-season, you may want to consider giving him a pro rata rebate on his playing fees. It's up to you as Team Manager to decide what is appropriate.

VI. Additional Tasks

Beyond the four basic tasks described in Section V, there are many other tasks required for running a team, and they fit in the following categories:

- a. Getting the equipment
- b. Handling the finances
- c. Keeping track of things
- d. Managing other activities

If this list seems overwhelming, don't be bashful about asking your Assistant Manager or someone else on your team to help with some of these items.

a. Getting the equipment

Uniforms

-- What will be included? Every player must wear the five S's: shirt, shorts, shin pads, socks and shoes. All teams must provide shirts with numbers on the back. Some teams provide shorts; others just specify the color. Some provide socks; others just specify the color. Few teams provide shin pads or shoes.

-- What kind of shirts (and shorts)? Cotton T-shirts and shorts are the least expensive; uniforms with moisture management systems are the most expensive. Cost, comfort, availability and the ability to duplicate the items when more are needed are all factors which should be considered.

-- What will they look like? You have the complete authority to decide on the design of your uniform. If you are a new team, you might want to avoid choosing colors similar to those of the other teams you will be playing in your first season, but of course that's always a moving target because of promotions and relegations.

-- Where to buy them? The two main alternatives are local sporting goods stores and the Internet. Frequently someone on your team or someone you know on another team will have a local contact to help you. Buying locally will permit you to see your choices before you purchase.

-- How many to buy? Buy more than you think you need, because you will need them in future seasons.

-- When to buy them? Buy your first set as soon as you know you are starting a team, because they will take longer to get than you expect, and you cannot start your first season without them. And buy more shirts long before you run out – you'll need them.

-- What size? And what numbers? When you start your team, you might want to try to assign numbers and get shirts to fit each individual player. After that, many teams either buy all their shirts XL or buy a certain percentage of each size, hoping to accommodate all new players. Generally numbers are given out sequentially, although if a new player requests a special number, you can provide that number as you see fit.

Alternate-color shirts

According to League Rules, if two teams show up at a game in shirts of similar color, the home team must wear alternate-color shirts. The alternate-color shirts are not required to have numbers on them. In order of increasing cost, options include:

- Pinnies
- T-shirts
- Reversible team shirts
- A full set of alternate-color team shirts

If possible, shy away from using see-through or sleeveless pinnies, because if your teammates wear them over your normal team shirts, the color of those shirts will show through, and make field play confusing because the other team will be wearing the same color.

It may be a good idea to bring your alternate-color shirts to all home games, just in case the opposing team shows up unexpectedly in the same color shirt as your team's shirts.

Goalkeeper shirts and equipment

Consider providing your goalkeeper with a long-sleeved goalkeeper shirt (not the same color as your players' shirts or alternate-color shirts), goalkeeper gloves, knee pads, a soft-billed sunshade hat, and any other equipment he requires – unless he prefers to provide his own equipment.

Corner flags

The home team is responsible for providing corner flags. Make sure you get corner flags that are approved for safety for the game of soccer. Also, keep a set of low-profile orange cones in the trunk of your car, in case one of your corner flags breaks, or in case you are at an away game and your opponents have forgotten their corner flags.

Soccer balls

The home team is responsible for providing at least one game ball; two or three would be preferable. Also, most teams bring about five or six extra soccer balls to every game, for pre-game warm-ups. To minimize the likelihood of losing your soccer balls, consider using a Magic Marker to write your team name on every ball.

Other useful equipment items to consider

- First aid kit with several packets of instant ice
- An AED (Automated External Defibrillator) – the League has made arrangements for Team Managers to purchase an AED at a discount, for those who are interested
- Mesh ball bag, ball pump, and a pressure gauge
- Two or three extra team shirts, for the times when one or more of your players forgets theirs
- An extra set of socks, shin guards and cleats, on the chance that they fit the player who has forgotten his
- An extra set of goalkeeper equipment
- Sunscreen, sports cream, and bug spray
- Duct tape, rope, and tie wraps to repair goal nets
- Sports clipboard and a couple of pens
- Several sports bags to carry all this stuff
- Cooler. The team may provide water and sports drinks, or you may just provide the cooler as a place for them to put what the players bring for themselves.
- Rain protection. A tarp, or plastic bags, to place down on wet ground and/or cover the players' equipment bags when it rains.

b. Handling the finances

Budgeting

There are fixed expenses which recur every season – starting with League fees, field fees, and referee fees – and there are non-recurring costs like initial uniform and equipment purchases. Then, there are various other expenses that occur from time to time like new soccer balls, etc. The revenues to pay for these expenses generally come from player fees, and some teams supplement this source of income with sponsor fees (see below).

It is important for a Team Manager to budget his revenues and expenses before his first season running a team, and every season thereafter, so that he doesn't run at a deficit that he has to make up personally, or, on the positive side, so that he has adequate surplus funds to do whatever he sees fit to do for the team.

Most teams charge \$80 to \$100 per player per season, but it's up to the Team Manager to decide. Some charge more to fund post-game or post-season social events. Some charge more to build a surplus for the future. Some charge less and provide no extras. Managers with large rosters can probably charge less; those with small rosters may have to charge more.

The start-up costs for new teams can be in excess of \$1,000 for initial equipment and supplies. Some teams charge players for uniforms; others build it into their budgets. The important thing is to have a written budget so that there are no major surprises, especially when first starting a team.

If you are able to run at a surplus, you'll have the opportunity to pay for indoor soccer practices in the winter, subsidize your field provider if necessary to expedite goal net replacements, hire a coach, provide drinks for halftime or post-game gatherings, have post-season parties, or get team hats or other items with imprinted logos, and you'll be in a good cash position to pay for next season's League and field fees even if you haven't yet received your players' playing fees.

Collecting player fees

Collection policies for player fees are totally at the discretion of the Team Manager. Most Team Managers require players to pay for their season fee before the season starts. Some collect the *next* season's fee before the end of *this* season, which is a particularly good practice, because then you'll know for sure that a player is planning to return.

Because a good goalkeeper is such a valuable commodity, some teams let their goalkeeper play for free. Some teams waive or reduce the player fee for an unemployed or financially troubled player. Some teams will refund a portion of a player's fee if he drops out mid-season. The policies are at the discretion of the Team Manager. It is suggested that the Team Manager make his players and new recruits aware of his policies.

Managing a bank account

You can run a team out of your own bank account, but a separate team bank account is usually a better choice. To open a team bank account as a business entity, go to your local Town Offices and get a Business Certificate for your team. A Business Certificate, also called a "DBA Certificate" (Doing Business As), allows you to separate your personal financial affairs from your team's financial affairs. For example, you can set up the account as John Smith dba Cambridge Kickers Soccer Team. Upon request, your bank may waive its normal monthly bank charges.

Getting Sponsors

Some teams have a Sponsor pay for the team shirts and have the Sponsor logo put on the shirts. Others have a Sponsor Board (a realtor's easel) with each Sponsor's logo printed on it, to display at every game. The most likely Sponsors will be local businesses, or the businesses of your teammates, and the Sponsorship amounts will vary, but whatever you choose to do in this regard, it can work out well. The Sponsors are glad to support a team and get some recognition for doing so, and the team is glad to have some extra funds for team use.

c. Keeping track of things

Records

Set aside a place in your home for all team correspondence and banking records. A drawer, a file cabinet, whatever. Over the years, you will amass a lot of paperwork, and it will be good to separate it from your personal papers.

Stationery

Consider making up some team stationery and envelopes with your home as the address.

Logo

Some Managers make up a team logo, to use for team shirts, for team stationery, and for countless other reasons. For ease of use, try to make a one-color logo.

Email

Many Managers get a dedicated email address for correspondence with their teammates and with the League. It's very useful to have a separate email address so your soccer emails don't get mixed in with your personal or business emails.

Web page

Some Managers set up a dedicated web page for their soccer team and find it to be a very convenient way to make announcements to teammates and allow them to communicate back-and-forth easily. Posting photos and results on a team web page can also help build team spirit.

Player contact list

Sharing a list of your players' home, cell and office phone numbers, home addresses, and email addresses can make it easier for them to contact each other about carpooling to games, socializing, networking, or whatever. And the more they are communicating with each other, the easier your job as Team Manager becomes.

d. Managing other activities

Coaching

Most Team Managers automatically take on the role of coach of their team. Some, however, specifically assign their Assistant Manager or another player to serve the function of coach. Still others hire an outside coach. Whatever your choice, make sure that your team is aware who is responsible for the coaching role.

Practices

Some teams organize mid-week practices during the fall and spring soccer seasons, and also conduct practices during the summer or winter months. Others piggyback onto local pick-up games instead of having formal team practices. Still others have no practices at all. As Team Manager, establish a habit regarding practices, and if you have them, make it clear to your players whether attendance is expected or optional.

Socializing

Beyond your role on the soccer field, as Team Manager your players are likely to expect that you are the person who would coordinate any extracurricular social activities. If that's a role you want to take on, enjoy it. If not, solicit a teammate to be the person to organize any such gatherings.

VII. Getting Prepared for the Season

The following items provide a checklist of things to do before the start of each season:

- Your field provider may require you to attend a Field Usage meeting prior to each season. Make sure you're aware of their requirements, and that your field usage is confirmed. If they can provide a field usage certificate, put a copy of it in your sports bag, so you have it with you at all home games in case someone else shows up claiming to have field privileges.
- Go check your home field a week or two before the season is scheduled to begin, particularly in the spring season, to confirm that the field looks like it will be ready for the start of the season. Check it again a few days before your first game to make sure the goals and nets are in satisfactory condition, the grass is mowed and the field is properly lined. Contact your field provider if there are any problems.
- The League has an Annual General Meeting (AGM) which you are required to attend (or to which you may send a representative from your team). Watch for an announcement by email, or consult the League web site, for the date, time, and location of the meeting.
- If you are a new Team Manager, contact the League Webmaster to get a Manager's ID and Password for the www.othsl.org League web site, and learn how to log onto the League web site. Take the time to peruse the full web site, and especially to read the League Constitution & Rules of Play. Also, learn how to enter your roster on the MASS Soccer web site as well.
- Log on to the www.othsl.org League web site and verify that your team's shirt color, field information and playing time information are correct. If your home field does not have a set of directions posted already, add them.
- Check your roster on the MASS Soccer web site. Add, delete, or edit any information as necessary.
- Make sure that each of your players knows how to access and use the www.othsl.org League web site. Encourage each of them to read the League Constitution & Rules of Play. Teach them how to view your team's game schedule and the maps to your opponents' field locations.
- Communicate with your players at least two weeks before the start of the season to be sure they know when you are starting, and to confirm that they are healthy and available to play.
- Watch for the season schedule to be posted on the www.othsl.org League web site as the season approaches. Check back frequently after the initial posting, because the schedule is subject to change up to the last minute.
- If you see something on the schedule which concerns you, like a game scheduled on a Sunday morning of a three-day holiday weekend, or a game scheduled on a day when you know there will be a conflict with a Town Fair or some other event using your home field, contact the opposing team's Team Manager and your Division Director to work out the conflict as soon as possible.
- Call your Division Director before the season begins. Share with him any concerns or suggestions you may have and solicit from him any ideas he may have to make your season as good as it can be.
- Print out several copies of a contact sheet on which you have all the critical phone numbers you may need on game days, including all the numbers you have for your Division Director, your Referee Assigner, your provider's Field Manager, and any others you think may be useful. Put

copies of this sheet in your sports bag and in your car so you have access to them at game time as needed.

- Contact your teammates one more time a few days before the first game. Remind them where and when the game is to be played and remind them that they must bring their MASS Soccer ID Card to each game for referee check-in, and that they must wear their numbered team shirt and uniform and have proper shin guards to be allowed to play. Tell them how many minutes before game time you expect them to arrive.
- Give your Assistant Manager and one or two other people on your team a couple of copies of your team roster to keep in their sports bags. When the referee arrives at a game to check in the players, he or she will need two copies of your roster, so it will be good to have these extra copies of your roster in the hands of several of your players in case you miss a game or show up late to a game. For the same reason, give them copies of the contact sheet you prepared with the phone numbers of your Division Director, et al.

VIII. Prior to Each Game

During the week before each game, get in touch with the opposing team's Team Manager and verify the time and location of your game. If you need to reschedule a game, refer to the League Rules regarding notification requirements. If there is any threat of inclement weather for a scheduled game, alert your teammates in advance that they should be prepared to receive a last-minute phone call or email from you regarding a possible postponement or field change.

Go to the Show Referee Assignments link on the right-hand side of your home page on the www.othsl.org League web site. Contact your assigned referee by email to confirm his assignment and provide him with directions to your field, even though it is posted on the web site, to help assure that he can find it easily and on time. Make a note of his cell phone number so you can call him if he has not arrived at the field before game time.

If you suspect for any reason that your field may be unplayable on game day, plan on going to the field to check it out at least two hours before game time, so that you have plenty of time to communicate with the opposing team's Team Manager, with your Division Director, with your Referee Assigner and your assigned referee, and with your teammates, before it gets too close to game time.

IX. At Each Game

Game day checklist:

- Bring two copies of your team roster and CASH for the referee fee to each game.
- Bring your extra set of your players' MASS Soccer ID Cards (see the section above called "Maintaining your roster").

- Bring your corner flags to your home games and set them up.
- Put your set of small orange cones in your car before all games, in case one of your corner flags breaks at a home game, or in case your opponent has failed to provide corner flags at an away game.
- Bring your game balls to your home games, and your practice balls to all games.
- Bring your equipment bags (with your first aid kit, goalkeeper equipment, etc.) to all games.
- Greet (and pay) the referee, provide your team rosters, and gather your team for referee check-in.

If the referee has not shown up a reasonable amount of time before game time, get on your cell phone (or borrow one) and call him or her, if you have his or her numbers, or call your Referee Assigner or Division Director, or anyone else who you think can help.

Keep your team under control at all times. Make sure your teammates all understand that dissent and hard fouls are punishable offenses and are **not** to be part of the game.

Make it clear to your teammates that you are in charge, not only for organizing the team but also for running the team during the game. Establish whatever protocol you see fit for determining who starts each half, and for determining how and when substitutions are made.

During the game, set an example for sportsmanlike behavior, and feel free to talk to any of your players whose behavior you feel is inappropriate. If there is a problem that you think demands your attention, solicit the support of your Assistant Manager or another person if you feel that is necessary, but if you feel that it is appropriate to discipline a player, once you are sure of your decision, carry it out firmly and without hesitation.

X. After Each Game

If you were the home team, report your score to your Division Director by email, or enter it onto the www.othsl.org League web site, within two hours after your game, if possible. If you cannot get to the Internet to do that, phone your Division Director with your score.

As soon as you are able to access the Internet, log on to your Division Page on the www.othsl.org League web site, locate today's game, and click on the "review referee" link to rate your referee. Get in the habit of doing this after every game, the same afternoon.

Also, consider taking a few minutes to write up a Game Report and distribute it to your team via email. If you do this, identify who scored goals for your team, and who provided assists. And be sure to give credit to your midfielders, your defenders and your goalkeeper for their roles.