



ELGIN MIDDLESEX SOCCER ASSOCIATION

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Player Recruitment and Anti-Poaching Policy

1. Purpose

This policy establishes clear expectations and procedures to ensure that all player recruitment within the District and its affiliated Clubs is conducted ethically, respectfully, and in accordance with Ontario Soccer and Canada Soccer regulations.

It is designed to prevent player poaching, discourage aggressive or coercive recruiting tactics, and promote collaboration and respect among Clubs.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All Clubs, teams, coaches, managers, technical leads, and volunteers operating under the jurisdiction of the District.
- Any recruitment, communication, or interaction with registered players, parents, or guardians for the purpose of influencing player movement between Clubs.

3. Definitions

Poaching:

Any attempt to induce, persuade, or encourage a player currently registered with another Club or team to transfer, without the knowledge and consent of that player's current Club or before the end of the current playing season.

Aggressive or Inappropriate Recruiting Tactics include, but are not limited to:

- Unsolicited contact (in person, by phone, text, email, or social media) with registered players or their parents.
- Pressuring a player or parent to make a decision before the official open period or without proper release.
- Offering inducements such as reduced fees, equipment, or guaranteed positions to influence a transfer.
- Making negative or misleading statements about another Club, coach, or player experience.
- Approaching players at matches, practices, tournaments, or other events for recruitment purposes.
- Prohibiting players to tryout for other teams during your own tryout process.

4. Guiding Principles

- Player movement must prioritize the player’s best interests and development.
- Clubs and coaches are expected to communicate transparently and respect existing player–club relationships.
- Recruiting must occur only during approved open tryout / player evaluation periods and through permitted channels (e.g., public tryout postings).
- The District supports a collaborative development environment.

5. Permitted Recruitment Activities

Recruitment is permitted only when:

- The player is not currently registered with another Club for the current season, or
- The player’s current Club has provided a written release or consent to approach, and
- The contact occurs during an open tryout period or through a public invitation (e.g., website, social media post, or open session).

All Clubs must ensure that:

- Invitations to open tryouts are publicly advertised, not directed at individual players registered elsewhere.
- Any contact initiated by a player or parent (not the Club) is documented and reported to the current Club if discussions progress toward registration.

6. Prohibited Conduct

The following behaviours are strictly prohibited:

1. Directly or indirectly approaching a registered player to discuss potential transfer without prior written consent.
2. Recruiting through intermediaries (parents, assistant coaches, team officials).
3. Using match officials, referees, or event staff to facilitate introductions or solicitations.
4. Holding “invite-only” sessions that include registered players from other Clubs without notice.
5. Using offers of financial benefit, gifts, or promises of playing time to entice a player.
6. Publicly or privately disparaging another Club, coach, or player.

7. Reporting and Investigation

- Any suspected poaching or inappropriate recruiting must be reported in writing to the discipline@emsadistrict.com.
- Reports should include names, dates, communications, and any supporting evidence.
- The District will:
 1. Acknowledge receipt within 5 business days.
 2. Notify the alleged Club and request a written response.
 3. Conduct an impartial review, which may include interviews and document review.
 4. Issue a finding and recommended sanction within 30 days, where possible.

8. Sanctions

Confirmed violations may result in one or more of the following:

- **Written warning** or education requirement for the offending coach or Club.
- **Suspension** of the individual coach or team official from District-sanctioned events.
- **Fines** or administrative penalties as determined by the District Discipline Committee.

Repeated or severe offences (e.g., systemic poaching, multiple reports) may result in your club being placed under review.

9. Appeals

A Club or individual sanctioned under this policy may appeal the decision through the District's formal appeal procedure, following Ontario Soccer's published guidelines and timelines.

Effective Date

This policy takes effect as of **April 1, 2026** and remains in force until amended by the EMSA Board of Directors.