

Vardar North



Club Guidelines

These guidelines are subject to change based on changing needs of the Vardar North Soccer Club or to accommodate changes in the MMYSL, MSPSL, or MSYSA rules and regulations.

Overview:

Based out of mid-Michigan, **Vardar North** is an extension of the VardarStars Program affiliated with the Saginaw Township Soccer Association (STSA). **Vardar North** was established in 2004 to provide the highest level of competition and training in mid-Michigan for the most dedicated and talented players in the area. **Vardar North** coaches pride themselves on total player development: technical, tactical, physical and psychological.

Congratulations and welcome to the **Vardar North** family! We are committed to excellence. We pride ourselves on having the most determined players, dedicated parents, and distinguished coaches.

Directed by Drago Dumbovic, the **Vardar North** coaching staff (see below) differentiates this Club from other local travel club options by having coaches who have played at either the collegiate level or professionally. **Vardar North** coaches are not volunteers. They are professional coaches.

Training is conducted year-round. During the regular season, teams practice in Midland, Bay City and Saginaw, and elsewhere depending on the availability of fields. During the off-season teams practice at Drago's SportsPlex, Kokomo's, the Barn, or other facilities, with occasional training opportunities in Detroit.

Additional services available to **Vardar North** players include:

- Goalkeeper Training
- Bonus Skill Building Clinics
- Access to Collegiate Role Models (at Saginaw Valley State University)
- Winter Fitness Training
- Access to College Recruiting (for Older Players)

STRUCTURE:

The following Governance Board structure is being put in place to support the operations of the **Vardar North** Soccer Club:

- Program Director (Drago Dumbovic)
- Managing Director (Robert Meeks)
- Secretary
- Treasurer (Sue and/or Mike Teasdle)
- Communications Director
- Administrator/Head Manager

Additional roles are listed and described under the **Roles and Responsibilities** on page 5.

TEAMS:

The current **Vardar North** program consists of competitive girls and boys teams, ranging in age from U12-U17. In accordance with the Michigan Youth Soccer Association (MSYSA) and mid-Michigan Youth Soccer League (MMYSL) , boys and girls under 13 years of age will compete at the mid-Michigan level. Boys and girls 13 years of age and older may play in the Michigan State Premier Soccer Program (MSPSP). Younger teams may play up an age bracket to find more competitive play in the local market.

The **Vardar North** Soccer Club is large enough to offer opportunity and challenge to elite athletes, yet small enough to offer a personal approach; giving each child the kind of immediate and direct guidance and training that is carefully tailored to their individual needs. We believe the “quality” of our teams is more important than the “quantity”, and are adamant that there are “no weak links.” Every player matters!

COACHING STAFF:

Drago Dumbovic (Program Director):

Drago serves as the Program Director for **Vardar North** and head coach. Drago opened *Drago's SportsPlex* and *Drago's Soccer Academy of Excellence* located in Midland in 2001. Prior to owning his businesses, Drago was head coach of the Detroit Rockers from 1999-2001 and served as an assistant coach for the Rockers during the 1998-99 campaign.

Drago played professional soccer from 1983 to 1999 for several teams including the Detroit Rockers and Detroit Neon. He was named an all-star, six times and set several new league records during his playing career. He also won an NPSL Championship with the Detroit Rockers in 1992. Born in Croatia, he started playing soccer professionally at the age of 16 in Yugoslavia.

In addition to his current role as Program Director, Drago also directs the men's and women's soccer programs at Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU). Furthermore, Drago provides the indoor training facilities for the winter training sessions.

Liviu Gligor:

Liviu played professional soccer for ten years: initially in the Romanian Division, four years of semi professional soccer in Germany (Fortuna Dusseldorf), and one year in Israel. His biggest achievement as a player was selection to the National

U17 team. He has had seven years of high school coaching and led the John Glenn high school boy's soccer team to the North East Michigan Conference Championship in 2005-2006.

Art Moody:

Art has been coaching college soccer in Detroit and mid-Michigan since 2002. He has a Bachelor's Degree in Health and Physical Education.

Nigel Roberts:

Originally from Trinidad & Tobago, Nigel has more than ten years coaching experience. He has coached both locally and internationally and has played at both the collegiate and the semi-pro levels. He also hosts the Soccer Academy Television Show which is aired internationally.

Reza Saffarian:

Reza is a former semi-pro and college player who began his semi-pro career as a teenager in the mid 70's in Tehran, Iran. His coaching career began in the mid 1980's while living in Chicago, IL. Since 1989 he has been affiliated with the Saginaw Township Soccer Association (STSA). From 1997 till 2000 Reza served as the Head Men's Soccer Coach for Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU). In addition, Reza has coached at Nouvel Catholic Central High School and is currently the Coach and Player Development Coordinator for the STSA travel program. Reza holds the highest coaching license issued by the National Soccer Coaching Association of America (NSCAA). His licenses include the National Diploma, Advanced National Diploma, and the Premier Diploma. In 2004, he earned his premier diploma as being one of the 40 coaches in the US who were invited to attend the International Premier coaching course in Lillishell, England.

Steve Walker:

Originally from England, Steve was the captain of the Saginaw Valley State University men's team, where he played for four years. Steve has been a soccer coach for at least 12 years in both England and the United States. He has coached in over 35 different states in the U.S.. Steve played for three years as a semi-professional in England prior to coming to the U.S. and was selected to the National pool of soccer players as a U14. He has been head coach for boys and girls for two years at Saginaw Nouvel and took the boys to the District finals and semi-finals in his first two years, respectively, at Nouvel. He is currently the head coach for the Saginaw Heritage girl's high school soccer team. This past year, he led his U12 girls Vardar team to an undefeated, unscored upon season.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES:

Program Director:

- Liaison with the local travel programs;
- Oversees all teams, players and coaches;
- Evaluates and helps with the development of coaches and players, sets team goals;
- Assists with practice coverage and game coaching if needed;
- Deals with any and all team/parent/player issues;
- Collects feedback from parents regarding coaching performance at the end of each season;
- Provides guidance to the Managing Director on **Vardar North** operations.
- The Director of **Vardar North** and the Managing Director will meet at least two times per year with each team individually to discuss with them what is working and what is not working as well as any other topic of interest or concern to the team.

Managing Director:

- Administrator of the **Vardar North** Board;
- Oversees all operations of the Vardar North Soccer Club.
- The Managing Director and the Director of **Vardar North** will meet at least two times per year with each team individually to discuss with them what is working and what is not working as well as any other topic of interest or concern to the team.

Team Coach:

- Assigned to a team by the **Vardar North** Program Director. Renewal of the coaching contract will be determined based on the Program Director's assessment);
- Arrives at practices and games on time;
- Organizes training and game schedule;
- Conducts two to three (2-3) training sessions per week during the regular season, and at least two (2) training sessions per week during the off season;
- Attends all games and scrimmages unless a prior arrangement has been made with the Program Director;
- Attends coaching meetings and clinics as set by the Program Director and gains more experience through attending licensing courses;
- Makes himself/herself available to parents and players to provide feedback and answer team related questions;
- Provides a personal, written evaluation of every player at the conclusion of the fall season and meets with every player and parent to discuss this evaluation;

- Communicates on a regular basis with players and parents with regards to performance, playing time, and any changes to the training/game schedule;
- Relays any issues that arise to the Managing Director or Program Director
- Coordinates responsibility for the following duties with the team manager:
 - How practice/games/changes will be communicated to the team
 - Who will carry pass cards, medical release forms, permission to travel forms, first aid kit, etc.
 - Who will perform team scheduling
 - Who will fill in game reports and call/e-mail them in
 - Collection of extra fees (i.e. indoor, team building, travel, etc.)
- Any request to be released at any time from the Vardar North program must be reviewed and approved by the Vardar North Governance Board prior to the coach signing any said release

Administrator/Head Manager:

- Provides mentoring and ensures that all team managers have the information they need to support individual teams and coaches;
- Works with the Club secretary to standardize processes across the teams (registration, tournaments, hospitality, photos, etc.).

Team Manager (See Manager's Manual):

Although this is a volunteer position, it is a vital one to the successful functioning of our Club. The managers act like employees because they become answerable to, and are supported by, the coach and the Administrator/Head Manager in their tasks.

Each team will be assigned a manager who will be responsible for coordinating the above mentioned activities with the team coach as well as passing on information from the **Vardar North** office.

- A manager's position is a one (1) year appointment (but they may be asked to remain longer);
- Managers must attend quarterly **Vardar North** meetings to review responsibilities and go over any issues that may have arisen and may be asked to meet with Governance Board as needed;
- Managers:
 - do not have any input with regard to playing time or other field matters;

- do not sit with the team, (unless requested to by the coach), but do sit with the rest of the team parents on the sidelines during the games;
- are the appropriate people for parents to air their grievances to as well as to the Managing Director or the Program Director.

Being a team manager can be a real challenge at times. Parents are encouraged to be as supportive as possible!

Parents (See also Code of Conduct; Appendix A):

The **Vardar North** Soccer Club is a “family affair” where parents are expected to be supportive and committed to the program. We thank you for entrusting your child’s soccer development with us and ask that you adhere to the guidelines below.

- Parents must have a positive, nurturing influence on their child’s soccer development and conduct themselves in a sportsman-like manner when attending games (or any **Vardar North** activity);
- Parents are encouraged to engage in positive discussion with the coach/manager in order to attempt to schedule **Vardar North** events around family commitments (i.e. vacation, school events, holidays, etc.), as well as decide a course of action for extra indoor league play, extra training, etc.;
- Parents are expected to monitor their child’s standing on the team through seasonal evaluations from coaches;
- Parents are considered “ambassadors” of the **Vardar North** program and as such, are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a manner consistent with all Vardar programs;
- Parents must:
 - support their child and their teammates with positive reinforcement;
 - treat the parents and players of the opposition with respect;
 - never coach from the sidelines or give instructions, only provide encouragement;
 - never express criticism of players on the team or their opponents;
 - never openly criticize referees during game;
 - never confront the coach/manager, the Managing Director, or the Program Director or any **Vardar North** board member with an emotional issue in front of players or directly before/after a game or training session (a 48-hour cool down is recommended);
 - make sure your child arrives at all training and games on time and are picked up promptly after the training or game ends.

Player Expectations:

Becoming a member of **Vardar North** is a major commitment for players. Each player must sign and abide by the **Vardar North Code of Conduct for Players** (See Appendix A). Players are expected to play and practice nearly year round. The season starts in July and ends in late June (this will vary for girls and boys of high school age)

Players are expected to practice and play during the winter season. While players may participate in other sports during the winter season, there is still an expectation to practice at least once per week and play with their team during league play. Soccer should be considered their top priority. This requires significant time management on the part of the player. If for some reason a player needs time off, they should take this time off during the months of November and December.

Injured Players:

While unable to play, injured players are still expected to attend all training and games. The only exceptions are when practices or games conflict with previously scheduled therapy and/or the team coach approves an exception.

Tardiness:

Players are expected to be on time for games and practices, dressed and ready to play. For regular season games, players are expected to arrive sixty (60) minutes prior to game-time, unless otherwise instructed by the coach. Players will enter and leave the field together as a team. Players must arrive at practice on time and be ready to fully participate when practice starts.

Attire:

Players are expected to wear their Vardar uniforms to all team events (on and off the soccer field). Each player will dress the same for practice. The uniform for practice will be decided by the team captain in conjunction with the coach. Players are responsible for labeling all equipment, either in permanent marker or, if agreed to, stamped or embroidered by local vendors. If a player loses any part of their uniform, they will be expected to replace the lost item at their expense.

Soccer Ball:

Each player will be provided a soccer ball. They are expected to bring this ball to every practice and game. If a player loses their soccer ball, they will be required to replace the ball at their expense. They must replace the ball with the same ball as the lost one. No other brand of soccer ball will be allowed on the field of

practice. If a soccer ball is found to be defective, the manufacturer will be asked to replace the ball.

Playing Time:

Playing time and starting positions are earned. The determination of who starts and plays the majority of the time is the coach's decision and is based on a number of complex factors. Other players will be worked into the line up, but there is no guarantee of 50% playing time. The discipline of players who consistently miss practice, or are late to practice, will be at the discretion of the coach and could include not starting, up to dismissal from the team. Concerns over playing time should be addressed to the coach, separate from games or practices.

Age Group Expectations:

U9-U12 mid-Michigan Players

- At this age group, players may consider playing for a team other than their Vardar team but their number one priority should be their Vardar team. Furthermore, the player must obtain approval from their coach prior to participation on a team other than their Vardar team.
- During the fall season (August-October) and spring season (April-June), there will be a minimum of two (2) mandatory practices per week. Players are expected to participate in all league and tournament games. Conflicts with practices may result in reduced playing time.
- During the winter season (November-March), there will be a minimum of two (2) mandatory practices per week at the SportsPlex, Kokomo's, the Barn, or other facilities and league participation. Players may, at this age, participate in another sport, but they also are expected to attend at least one (1) practice per week and play with their team in league play. Other arrangements may be made at the discretion of the coach.

U13-U18 Premier Players

- **By this age, we expect that you have made soccer a primary sport and are willing to dedicate yourself to a higher level of training and time commitment.**
- During Fall (Aug-Oct) and Spring (April-Jun) Seasons, there will be three mandatory practices per week. Players are expected to participate in all league and tournament games (typically 3 tournaments per year). Conflicts with practices may result in reduced playing time.
- Some tournaments, especially showcase tournaments, may require extended travel. Players unable to participate due to financial reasons will be replaced by a guest player for that tournament if alternative funding cannot be found.

- During Winter (Nov-Mar) Season, there will be two mandatory practices per week at the Sportsplex, Kokomo's, Barn, or other facilities and league participation. Players who participate in a second sport are required to attend at least one practice per week and to play with their team during league play. Players are also encouraged to participate in cross training but are not required to do so. Obviously, this requires significant time management on the part of the player.

Try-Outs:

All players must go through the tryout process regardless of age or tenure with **Vardar North**. Players will be expected to try-out in their grade-appropriate bracket. Some players, based on ability, team structure or need, may be asked to move up an age bracket. **This is an exception.** All attempts will be made to field competitive grade-appropriate teams. Furthermore, playing for **Vardar North** and a second club is strongly discouraged and may lead to reduced playing time on the **Vardar North** team.

Each year, new and existing players will be evaluated. As the program expands, it is likely that some athletes will be displaced. All players are encouraged to try out for **Vardar North** and other local travel teams. We want all athletes to have a soccer home! Even if you are a returning **Vardar North** player, you will need to compete to keep your position.

Fees:

The fee for U9 and U10 players will be \$400 per year and is payable in full at the time of signing with Vardar North. This fee includes league and association fees, coach's salaries, and uniforms (training and game). Each team will be responsible for tournament fees and the cost will be divided equally among the players. Winter training fees are not included in the yearly fee.

Current player tuition is approximately \$1,100 per year (\$800 for high-school age players) and is due at the time of a player signing with their Vardar North team. Tuition goes toward the following expenses:

- Vardar Fees
- League Fees (Saginaw Township Soccer Association administration, fields, and referees)
- Coaches Salaries
- Tournaments (all teams are expected to play in the 7/11 and Vardar Cup Tournaments) in 2007 (high-school age players may be exempt from this requirement). Teams may play in other tournaments, but any tournament in which they participate must be of a high caliber and highly respected. If there are any questions about the quality of the tournament, contact the

Director of Coaching. Furthermore, the team will be responsible for all fees associated with the tournament.

Uniform kits are not included in this fee. Uniform kits normally range from \$300 to \$350. Included in the uniform kit are two pairs of game shorts, shirts, and socks, a warm-up, a ball and bag. In most cases this is a one time expense.

Indoor fees for the winter season are not included in tuition, nor are additional tournaments. Furthermore, current player tuition may change as the program expands.

Fundraising:

Given the growth of the program, the need for additional equipment and the player interest in participating in more tournaments, **Vardar North** will be conducting fundraisers. All families are expected to participate in all club required fundraising activities. Each team will be encouraged to organize their own fundraising activity, but they must obtain Club approval of the activity first.

Conflict Resolution:

Conflicts can arise in any number of ways. For example, these conflicts can occur between, but are not limited to, the coach and the player, the coach and the parent, the parent and the Club, the coach and the manager, the manager and the parents, etc.

Vardar North has established a process for resolving these conflicts. First and foremost, the club will follow Rule 2: *Disciplinary Ruling and Minimum Punishments* as published in the Rules and Regulations of the Michigan State Premier Soccer Program (<http://www.mspsl.org/rules.asp>). For situations not covered under these rules and regulations, the **Vardar North** club will form a Conflict Resolution subcommittee from the Governance Board. This subcommittee also may include ad hoc members at the discretion of the Board.

The subcommittee will evaluate the conflict and gather information from all parties concerned. This will include those in conflict and possibly others who may add to the understanding of the situation. Following a complete evaluation of the conflict, the Conflict Resolution subcommittee will make a recommendation to the Governance Board as to what action should be taken to resolve the conflict.

The Governance Board will evaluate the recommendation from the Conflict Resolution subcommittee. The Board can either accept the recommendation or decide on another course of action. It is expected that in most cases the Board will accept the recommendation. The Governance Board will then discuss the recommendation with the Program Director who will make the ultimate decision on the resolution of the conflict.