
CLAWSON YOUTH SOCCER

RECREATION COACHES HANDBOOK

DEDICATION

This handbook is dedicated to the hard working volunteer parent coaches who are in the trenches working with the budding stars of tomorrow. We appreciate the time, effort, and dedication you give to not only the children, but also the sport of soccer. The Board Members of the Clawson Youth Soccer appreciates all that you do for the youth of our community. We hope that you find this handbook helpful with your coaching endeavors and that you refer to it often throughout your coaching career.

Many thanks!

Board Members of Clawson Youth Soccer

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

The CYS was established in 1985 by an interested group of adults that cared about providing a soccer program to meet the needs and desires of Clawson's boys and girls. The organization grew, and as more members were added, it became apparent there was a need for quality programs. First Recreational soccer and then Travel soccer (early 1990) were born, and an organization began to take shape. The CYS soon realized the players' needs were growing. Coaching education became the key to providing a developmentally appropriate soccer experience for each participant. Coaching courses were established for all coaching types—the grass roots beginner to the highly competitive travel coach. The coaching community came and learned the techniques and tactics of the game, as well as the psychological aspects and physical properties as they related to their players' ages. However, it became apparent more was necessary. Thus, an additional resource was provided in the form of the CYS Recreation Coaches' Handbook.

The CYS Board's goal is for coaches to utilize this handbook as a resource as it represents CYS's ongoing dedication to the continued development of children as players and as members of their communities. The game is all about the players. Children can play the game without coaches, but it is well known a child's experience is greatly enhanced if the volunteers, entrusted with the child's development, learn the game's nuances and more importantly understand what is developmentally and cognitively appropriate for their players.

PHILOSOPHY

The game of soccer is just that—a game. The number one reason (well documented in a number of studies) children participate in soccer is to have fun. If they don't have fun, they will soon quit. It is detrimental to the player if there is too much pressure placed on them too early to achieve a result rather than simply experiencing the sheer joy of a youth game.

Youth soccer is not about how many wins and losses are accumulated. And, it is surely not about how many trophies are collected. Yet, some misguided coaches think just the opposite. Most people would agree children do not think like adults. Then why do we expect them to play like adults? Proper soccer development means children playing age appropriate activities, so they are able to experience, comprehend, and execute the game as it relates to where they are in their cognitive development. It is about playing all the different positions on the team, so the player learns all the skills necessary to develop in the game. It's about receiving equal playing time, so the players are all given equal opportunity to learn. It's about learning the techniques of the game through a variety of fun games where players have as much contact with a ball as possible and learn at their own rates.

The CYS wants you to respect the game of soccer, respect the players, the opponents, the referee, and the parents. Go about your teachings in a thorough, positive, yet humble manner. Players should come out of their experience with the coach as better people and better citizens, not just better soccer players. So please take the responsibility of instructing CYS impressionable youth with a great deal of care and joy. And, enjoy the handbook in the manner it is intended.

PLANNING FOR THE SEASON

PARENT ORIENTATION MEETING

All Coaches are encouraged to establish effective lines of communication with the team parents early in the season by holding a parent orientation meeting. This may take the form of a casual discussion in your living room, or it could be combined with a team outing or picnic. Whatever the format, the time you invest will pay dividends for all concerned throughout the season. If a meeting is impossible, then the following information could be put in a letter to parents/players. But, a face-to-face meeting is preferred.

PURPOSE OF A PARENT ORIENTATION MEETING

- Enables parents to understand the objectives of the team.
- Allows parents to become acquainted with you, the coach.
- Inform parents about the nature (and inherent risks) of the sport.
- Articulate your expectations of them and of their children.
- Enables you to address any parents' concerns.
- Establishes clear lines of communication between you, parents, and players.
- Allows you to obtain parental support (assistant coaches, team parents, etc.).

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN ORGANIZING THE MEETING

- Hold it early in the season, preferably before the first team practice.
- Having the players present is optional. However, if they are not present then it is advisable to hold a meeting with your players and clearly explain to them what you explained to the parents.
- Be prepared and be organized to conduct the meeting efficiently.
- Prepare any handouts you would like to distribute, for example:
 - ✓ Team roster
 - ✓ Schedule of practice and games
 - ✓ Clawson Youth Soccer rules
 - ✓ Team goals/rules
 - ✓ Summary or outline of the meeting

IMPORTANT POINTS TO COVER

COACH INTRODUCTION

- Introduce yourself and assistant coaches (or ask for volunteers at this time).
- Give background information about yourself (why you are coaching, experience).

COACHING PHILOSOPHY

- Discuss the value of the sport and the health benefits to the children.
- Discuss the philosophy of age appropriate activities.
- State the importance you assign to having fun and developing technique.
- State how you evaluate player development through skills and not winning.
- Discuss any team rules and guidelines (e.g., must be there 15 min. before kickoff).
- Let them know that all players will receive equal playing time.

TEAM GUIDELINES

- Specifics of the program (e.g. players must appear with proper shoes/boots and properly inflated ball).
- Practice schedule (How many per week? How long?) Note: The length of your practice should be as long as you're game. You should practice twice to every one game.
- Game schedule (How many? When do they begin?).
- Discuss how players must respect opponents, coaches, officials, and the game itself.
- Required equipment (shirts, socks, shorts, shin guards, water bottle).
- Recommended size of ball and soccer shoes/boots.
- Inherent risks (soccer is a contact sport, albeit a relatively safe one).
- Briefly discuss rules of the game.

TEAM MANAGEMENT

- Select volunteers as assistant coaches.
- Appoint parents to assist with team duties (snack schedule, help with nets/flags).
- Set up telephone tree and /or car-pooling system.

COACHES' RESPONSIBILITIES

- Demonstrate leadership, good sportsmanship, respect, and coach with humility.
- Treat each player fairly.
- Organize practices and teach the game through age appropriate activities/games.
- Provide a safe environment i.e. Inspect playing surface.
- Arrive at practice on time and remain until a parent picks up every child.
- Contribute positively to the development of each player's self-esteem.
- Give regular feedback to players.
- Distribute a schedule of practices and games in a timely manner.
- Allow each player to play half of every game.
- Respect referees, know the rules, and conduct yourself respectfully on the field.
- Continue to seek coaching education.
- Define player Responsibilities:
 - ✓ Attend practices/games regularly, and arrive on time.
 - ✓ Bring water to each practice and game.
 - ✓ Have your own ball and make sure that it is properly inflated.
 - ✓ Inform the coach in advance if it is necessary to miss a practice or game.
 - ✓ Try your best at each practice.
 - ✓ Work toward good sportsmanship and teamwork.
 - ✓ Respect the referees.
 - ✓ Be supportive of teammates all of the time.
- Answer questions from the parents.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Do not coach your child during games.
- Transport your child to and from practices and games on time.
- Be supportive of all the players (Criticism does not improve performance).
- Help your child understand that he/she is contributing to a team effort.
- Focus on mastering skills and having fun, not winning.
- Avoid material rewards for your child (The reward is the fun of playing!).
- Attend games and cheer the team.
- Refrain from criticizing the opponents; be positive with all players.
- Respect the referees (They will make mistakes, but they are doing their best).

CODES OF CONDUCT

COACHES, PLAYERS, PARENTS/SPECTATORS, AND REFEREES

It is a privilege to be a part of the United States Soccer Federation, United States Youth Soccer Association, and Clawson Youth Soccer. Your actions as a coach shall always reflect upon our organization and its affiliates.

COACHES:

Coaches and assistant coaches are expected to maintain a higher level of sportsmanship, professionalism, and integrity both off and on the field. A coach's primary responsibility is for his/her players to have fun, to develop soccer players, and to instill a passion for the game. The performance of coaches is not measured in wins and losses, but rather in what is taught to players in terms of technique, sportsmanship, and fair play. Coaches must maintain respect for the game as well as the referees. Coaches are charged with the responsibility of controlling their players and parents at all times during a match. Coaches lead and teach by example; players will be a reflection upon each individual coach.

Coaches and assistant coaches are expected to:

- Have a basic knowledge of the game and to pursue coaching education allowing you to better develop your players through CYS Coaching Clinics.
- Use positive reinforcement when dealing with players, never use foul or abusive language, and never abuse a player mentally, verbally, or physically.
- Have respect for the authority of the referee and his/her assistants. You should not harass, abuse, or berate the referee during or after the match. You should not enter the field of play without the referee's permission.
- Exhibit good sportsmanship both off and on the field. You should teach your players the rules of the game, fair play, and proper game behavior.

PLAYERS:

Children play soccer to have fun, to learn and develop a passion for the game as well as to improve their skills. Players have a responsibility to their team, coach, and soccer organization. They are representatives of the CYS as well as the team, coach, parents, and the community. Players must maintain a high level of sportsmanship and fair play.

Players should:

- Play within the laws of the game and spirit of the game.
- Be on time and prepared for matches and training sessions.
- Display self-control in all situations and should not use foul or abusive language at any time—before, during, or after a game, or training session.
- Train and play to the best of their ability, have a positive attitude, and encourage others to do the same.
- Show respect towards the referee and his/her assistants as well as toward the opponents.
- Not harass, abuse, or berate a referee for any reason.

PARENTS/SPECTATORS:

Parents/Spectators must set the example for the children by exemplifying the highest standards of sportsmanship. Parents/Spectators participate in a game by watching, cheering, and supporting the efforts of all participants of the game. Soccer must be fun! The game is for the children. Their participation and enjoyment of the game is the most important element.

Parents have responsibilities to the coach, team, and soccer organization they are a part of. Parents/Spectators should have respect for their coach, all children on the team, and the authority of the referee and his/her assistants.

Parents/Spectators are expected to:

- Have respect for the authority of the referee and his/her assistants. They should not harass, abuse, or berate the referee during or after the game. They should not enter the field of play.
- Have respect for the coach and his/her assistants; they should never criticize a coach in a public manner. Do not coach from the sideline; let the coach do his/her job no matter how much you may disagree. If there is a problem, talk to the coach or the Division Manager/Director of Player Development at a later point in time.
- Have respect for all players. Cheer in a positive manner, not negative. Encourage your team and don't berate the other team. Cheer in a way to reward the good play of both teams and promote fair play.
- Not to use foul or abusive language toward any one for any reason.
- Have a responsibility to learn the rules of the game and the spirit of the game.
- Get involved with the organization and promote the game in a positive way.
- Demonstrate the utmost in sportsmanship and integrity; they are the role models for their children.

REFEREES

Referees (including Assistant Referees) are responsible for the safety of the players and coaches during a match. Referees must know the laws of the game and enforce them fairly. They have the responsibility for upholding the laws and spirit of the game. Referees should show respect for the players, coaches, spectators, and the game itself.

Referees are expected to:

- Always maintain the utmost respect for the game.
- Conduct themselves honorably at all times and maintain the dignity of his/her position.
- Always honor an assignment or any other contractual obligation.
- Attend training sessions, meetings, and clinics so as to know the Laws of the Game, their proper interpretation, and their application.
- Strive to achieve maximum teamwork with fellow officials.
- Show respect for other referees, coaches, and players and never promote criticism of them.
- Be in good physical shape.
- Control players, coaches and Parents/Spectators effectively by being courteous and considerate without sacrificing fairness.
- Do their utmost to assist fellow officials to better themselves and their work.
- Not make statements about any game except to clarify an interpretation of the rules.
- Not discriminate.

COACHES' EQUIPMENT

Equipment Bag: Coaches should prepare a large BAG for all of the items listed below!

Players' MEDICAL RELEASE FORMS! - You must have these with you at all practices and games; verify that the emergency information is there.

MEDICAL KITS - A simple kit for games and practices is a good idea for every coach. A kit should include, but not limited to:

Ice (and 'zip-lock' bags) Band aids Vaseline
Sterile pads Adhesive tape Elastic wraps
Antibiotic ointment Bee sting relief ointment

PUMP and inflating needle: Sometimes the game ball is over inflated or too soft and may need adjusting. The same goes for the balls players bring to practice.

SHIN GUARDS: a spare pair of old ones will cover for a forgetful player!

SPARE SHIRTS: (2) for your goalkeepers - Having two extra shirts of different colors (each contrasting with your team shirts) insures that you will always have a goalkeeper's shirt that contrasts with the opposition colors.

GOALKEEPER'S GLOVES: An inexpensive pair is a useful addition to your game bag.

BALLS: If possible, have a good quality ball available for the games. This can be used as a game ball if none is provided. The leather or synthetic leather stitched soccer balls are best; avoid the hard plastic-skinned balls, which are unpleasant to kick or head. Each player should have his/her own ball and bring it to practice. However, bring any spares you may have to practice because someone is likely to forget one.

CONES or PYLONS (about a dozen): Use these to set up small areas for practice activities, or to mark boundaries for a game field. Cones of a different color or size will make a distinctive goal.

BIBS/ PENNIES/VESTS: These are used to divide up teams for activities and games.

CLIPBOARD or NOTEPAD: Some coaches prefer these for practice plans, medical release forms, substitution schedules, etc.

WATER: A coach should have water available during practice and at the game. Have the players bring their own water bottles (but keep an extra bottle in your bag or cooler for the occasional forgetful player). Alternatively, have your team parent organize a schedule among the parents to provide water and cups.

The team parent should organize a simple SNACK schedule for game days. Discourage turning snacks into a financial hardship for some parents. Orange or apple slices, or seedless grapes are good choices. Make sure that all orange peels, apple cores, and grape stems are picked up and placed in an appropriate receptacle.

PLAYER'S EQUIPMENT

BALL: Encourage each player to have his or her own ball and to use it often, not just during team practice. Players will not derive maximum benefit from practice unless they each have their own ball for warm-ups and individual exercises. The ball should be properly inflated.

Soccer balls come in a variety of sizes, each designated by a number:

- Size #3 - smallest standard size, for the youngest players (e.g. U-6 to U-8).
- Size #4 - intermediate size, appropriate for U-9 through U-12.
- Size #5 - largest standard size, for U-13 to adult.

SHIN GUARDS: Shin guards are an absolute requirement for games and practices (the pull-on “legging” type with foam padding that protects the front of the leg from ankle to shin is an excellent shin guard). Shin guards with plastic inserts offer additional protection, especially for the older player.

SOCCER SHOES/BOOTS: Soccer shoes/boots are recommended, but not required by most clubs. Baseball or football type shoes with square or rectangular cleats are not allowed for soccer. Soccer cleats for most recreational play must be rubber or molded plastic (no metal cleats), and no less than 3/8 inch in diameter.

WATER BOTTLE (with player's name on it): Fresh water should be available to your players at each practice and game. It is easier for the coach if each player provides his or her own water bottle.

SHIRTS, SOCKS, SHORTS: One or more of these items may be provided for each player by your local club. Be sure that you are aware of your club's policies with respect to uniforms and inform your players and parents of any requirements.

METHODOLOGY / THEORY OF COACHING

WHAT IS PLAYER DEVELOPMENT?

The concept of player development is essential to the long-term growth and improvement of the player. Player development demands that “the player is central” to all decisions made regarding practices and games. The coach who believes in player development will ensure that the following objectives are met:

- Games and activities that are age appropriate. The child wants to participate in because they are fun and enjoyable.
- Players being exposed to playing all positions.
- Every player has a ball for practice.
- Activities designed to maximize the number of touches on the ball by each player.
- Rules and field size modified for players according to their age group and abilities.
- Equipment modified for players according to their age group and abilities.
- Activities designed to promote decision-making. (Not just doing drills).
- De-emphasize winning/losing. We do not need to keep standings, statistics, etc.
- The game is already in each child; we as coaches need to create an environment to unlock the game within each child to reach his or her full soccer potential.

ROLE OF THE COACH

Coaches take on many roles when leading a team. However, youth coaches need to understand their role within the overall player development process. Inexperienced coaches often identify with coaches of older aged teams where the priority and objectives for that age group may be different. Coaches who understand the player development process and the differences that exist between age and ability characteristics are more likely to positively influence and effect the development of the player.

The role of the youth coach based upon principles of player development is:

AS A FACILITATOR

- Set up the conditions and environment for learning.
- Players need to receive positive feedback from the coach.
- Coaches must be enthusiastic about what they are doing.
- Practices should be conducted in the “spirit” of enjoyment and learning.
- Activities need to be geared towards the players achieving success, with success measured by FUN.

AS A POSITIVE ROLE MODEL

- Demonstrate respect for team members, opponents, referees, parents, spectators, and opposing coaches.
- To have a responsibility to the game itself.

AS ONE WHO UNDERSTANDS WHO THEY ARE COACHING

- Children are not defined by chronological age only.
- Each child matures and develops at his/her own pace.
- Treat each child as an individual.
- Recognize that their needs are different and they participate for different reasons. Some may be there because their older brother and sister play and it’s expected in the family. Some may play because a parent is a frustrated athlete and wants to live through his/her child. Some may play because all their friends do, and they want to be with them. Others may play because they actually enjoy the sport.

COMPONENTS OF COACHING SOCCER

TECHNIQUE (RECEIVING, DRIBBLING, PASSING, SHOOTING, HEADING,)

- Technique is the most important component, because it is the introduction of the player to the ball. And, the game will always boil down to individual ball mastery.
- Activities should be with the ball, should be FUN and game-like. Learning takes place through self-discovery.

PSYCHOLOGY

- The development of a positive attitude about all aspects of the game.

TACTICS (PLAYER'S DECISIONS)

- Activities should promote decision-making.

FITNESS

- Appropriately organized activities and small-sided games will provide players with the necessary physical requirements to meet the demands of their game. There is no need have players do any unnecessary running without a ball in recreational practices.

“TRUTHS” ABOUT CHILDREN AND SPORTS

The four underlying concepts provide a number of truths about children and sports that have been identified in other research.

- Fun is pivotal; if it's not “fun,” young people will not play a sport.
- Skill development is a crucial aspect of fun. It is more important than winning, even among the best athletes.
- Intrinsic rewards (self-knowledge that grows out of self-competition) are more important in creating lifetime athletes than are extrinsic rewards (victory or attention from others).
- The most rewarding challenges of sports are those that lead to self-knowledge.

PRINCIPLES OF YOUTH COACHING

- All activities should be age appropriate.
- Give clear, concise brief instructions and correct information.
- There should be a flow of simple to complex activities that is appropriate for the ability of the players and the topic of the practice.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate practice area.
- All activities should promote decision-making.
- All practices should finish with a small-sided scrimmage.

AGE GROUP CHARACTERISTICS

Before we are able to effectively coach the children that have been entrusted to our care, we need to understand the characteristics of whom we are developing. It is imperative that you understand that when you are dealing with children, that you take the time to comprehend where they are currently in their own development. To understand the following information better, it is recommended that you attend a National Youth or State Youth Course in your area.

U6

From a physical perspective (psychomotor), children in this age group perform activities at full speed. Then they need frequent rests and then they go again. Movements such as running, hopping, skipping and maintaining balance are not fully developed at this age.

From a mental perspective (cognitive), they have a short attention span; can only perform one task at a time and only if it's given with basic instructions. They don't have a clear understanding of the team concept and tactics are useless. Everything revolves around themselves and the ball.

From a social (psychosocial) standpoint the children need to feel secure in practice and in games. The coach needs to be sensitive in selecting activities that allow social interaction with the other players in their group. They are easily bruised psychologically. Elimination games are highly discouraged. They will also tend to exaggerate their accomplishments-let them.

U8

This is the stage where players begin to understand the concept of passing to a teammate.

From a physical standpoint they still lack a sense of pace and tend to exert themselves hard and then drop. They are now starting to develop some physical confidence in themselves and they are still into running, climbing, rolling and jumping.

From a mental perspective they feel if they tried hard then they performed well (regardless of the activity's outcome). They are beginning to show a limited ability to tend to more than one task at a time.

From a social perspective they have a great need for approval from adults and like to show off individual skills. Negative comments carry great weight. Their playmates start to emerge and they will start to move towards small groups. They want everyone to like them at this age. You should be positive with everything that you do.

U10

Children at this age are typically in grades 4 and 5 and may have been playing soccer for half of their life.

From a physical standpoint they gain a lot of strength, endurance and power during this period. Some children will grow faster than others and can approach 5 feet and weigh upwards of 80 lbs. or more. Be aware of the differences and how you match them up with each other during activities.

From a mental perspective they have the ability to remember and follow complex instructions, which enables them to solve higher-level problems. They will begin to think in advance and anticipate actions or ball movements.

From a social perspective players will begin to initiate play on their own and are becoming more serious about their soccer. Peer group belonging and pressure generated by peers becomes more significant. The need to belong becomes important.

U12

Children at this age are on the edge of childhood and adolescence. It can present a multitude of problems, but also an abundance of potential.

From a physical standpoint strength and power become a major factor in their performance. Their muscles mature and they realize how much more they can do on the field. Their coordination significantly improves and it shows up in the execution of child's technical ability.

From a mental perspective the educators refer to the U12 as the fertile period for learning. They can sequence thoughts and perform complex tasks. A coach can expect his players to understand the game and use teammates to solve problems. They are usually eager to learn.

From a social perspective whether a child enters puberty early or late is significant. Girls tend to form cliques while boys take a more broad approach to team relationships. The manner in which they feel about themselves can determine how they relate to their teammates. Sometimes popularity influences self-esteem.

ORGANIZING A PRACTICE AND SAMPLE LESSON PLANS

In order to be able to give your players the best you have, you must prepare properly before arriving at practice. If you turn up at practice and "wing" your session, then the players will soon realize that you are cheating them out of a terrific learning experience. Some coaches believe that all they have to do is turn up; roll a ball out, pick sides and the game will teach them all they need to know-not exactly.

It is well documented that in a 90 minute game the ball is in play, on average roughly 2/3 of the time or about 60 minutes. Since there are two teams then each will have the ball about 30 minutes. And, with 11 players on the respective teams, each player will handle the ball between 2-3 minutes. That's 2-3 minutes in a 90-minute match! So if you think the game will teach them all they need to know, then you are in for a big letdown. The game will highlight what skills the players must grasp, but it is up to you to construct practice sessions that give them repetitions, choices, maximum touches on the ball all in a challenging environment that improve those skills. And, then plug it back into the game to see if your coaching is having an effect.

In order to run an efficient practice, you must be organized and observant. Arrive at your practice before the players do, so you can layout the cones, have the bibs ready and go over in your mind your practice. One activity should flow into the next one with a minimal amount stopping and reorganizing. Observe what the players are doing. How they are working? Are they having fun? Are they getting maximum touches on the ball? Don't stay in one activity too long (especially for the younger ages), but yet long enough so they understand what you are asking of them. Do not have elimination games where players have to sit out if they don't perform something well (for example, their ball gets kicked out of the area). You will always end up with the lesser skilled players leaving the activity early, thus drastically cutting down on their opportunities to improve. Allow the players to continue to play and to find their own level within your format.

The following are four individual, age specific, lesson plans. They are designed so that you see the organization of the age-appropriate activities, the key points associated with each, and the instructions that go along with them. There are also other games, exercises and activities that we have added at the end of the lesson plans in order to

give you additional help. However, we feel that it is very important for you to understand more than simply regurgitating what you see here. We want you to seek out coaching education classes, seminars, and other resources that allow you to comprehend the art of coaching. We want you to construct your own lesson plans, understand what the children of your age group are capable of, grasp age appropriate activities, and then deliver to your players a quality soccer experience.

COACHES' ACTIVITIES CHECKLIST

- Activities Fun/ Age Appropriate
- Organized/ Clear Objectives
- Involvement (All Players Active)
- Creativity/ Decision Making
- Spaces Appropriate size for ability and number of players
- Coaches Feedback Appropriate- Clear/ Brief/ Concise/ Positive

PRACTICE PLANS

AGE APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES

GAME DAY GUIDELINES

GAME PREPARATION

The Day Before The Game: Prepare the lineup and substitution schedule. Remember that over the course of the season, all players should have the chance to: 1) play different positions; 2) be captain; 3) start and finish games; 4) play goalkeeper. These things are important to your players (ask them!); they will notice.

Check team equipment (balls, net, flags). Check the field location!

Game Day: Remember to bring your equipment bag and substitution schedule, Have a good quality ball with you to use for the game.

Have your team arrive at least 15-20 minutes before your scheduled kick-off time to properly warm-up. It is important to stress this message to parents as well as players.

Field Preparation: Determine who is responsible for setting up and taking down the nets and corner flags. If the responsibility is yours, arrive early enough to get the job done before warming up your team. You may want to organize the team parents to handle the nets and flags for you.

Team Warm-Up: Simple passing, dribbling, shooting exercises, maximize touches. Have an assistant work with the players who will be goalkeepers for this game. Introduce stretching and flexibility, so players understand how to prepare their body in the future.

Rules: Rules, which amend or modify the FIFA Laws of the Game to accommodate the age and skill level of your players. It is your responsibility as a coach to know what is expected of you, your players, the officials, and the spectators. You should know the rules and should carefully consider the spirit, which underlies them.

Referee: Meet the referee and make note of his or her name. Ask any questions you may have about game duration, allowable substitution times, etc.

COACHING FROM THE TOUCHLINE

Simple, even-keeled, encouragement from the sidelines is preferred. Naturally, the assistant coaches are not expected to remain mute during the games, but their information should not contradict the head coach's. Enlisting assistants to help on the sidelines with player substitutions is generally acceptable, but only the designated coach should communicate with the referee.

It is important to realize that although we as coaches are permitted to instruct from the sideline, this is not a license to take over the game from the players. Coaching is best done during practice time, not during the game. Let the players make their own decisions on the field, so they develop a feel for the game.

A FEW THINGS TO AVOID:

Don't continually shout instructions - they often reach the players too late (the action has moved to a new situation), and may be distracting.

Don't send one of your assistants to instruct from the opposite touchline to "cover the field." It is doubly distracting to the players (often the instructions coming from opposite sides of the field differ!). It is irritating and disrespectful to the other team if they are located there.

Don't send a parent or assistant to coach from behind the goal line. Coaches and spectators do not belong there! The coach can be "cautioned" for allowing this infraction to occur.

A FEW GOOD IDEAS:

Your sideline coaching should be limited. Prepare your players to think for themselves as much as possible. Take notes of situations and skills that your team has problems with and work on them during practice.

Watch how the opposition plays and point out to your substitutes anything that can be to your team's advantage (e.g. all their goal kicks go to a certain area, their defense plays far back or far forward, etc.).

Remind the players going into the game for whom they are substituting and what is expected of them.

The less time spent shouting and the more time observing, the better understanding you will develop of your team, and the more information you will have to help them during your next practice.

Remember that as coaches we are in a supporting role. It is the kids' show!

POSITIONS

In the younger age groups, each player should be given the opportunity to play both offense and defense. The idea of a 7 or 8-year-old defensive specialist is absurd.

Don't emphasize positions too much. Sometimes players will ask you if a particular position (such as fullback) is allowed to score - YES or, if a fullback is ever allowed to cross the halfway line - YES. Younger players often get the erroneous belief that they are assigned to a particular place on the field and are not allowed to leave it, no matter what the situation. This does not mean that players should all wildly chase the ball, but don't inadvertently teach your players inflexibility in the name of positions.

In the 3V3 and 4V4 games the kids will tend to follow the ball like bees around honey. Give them either a forward or defending name (so they get used to the terminology) but don't get too worried if they are not staying in their positions. They don't have the psychological capacity yet to understand conceptual ideas and tactics.

In the 6v6 game, you may play 3 defenders and 2 forwards along with the goalkeeper. Or if it's the 8v8 game then you might play 3 fullbacks, 2 halfbacks, and 2 forwards and one goalkeeper. It is important to try and place the players in a system (line-up) to evenly cover the field.

Caution against inflexibility: your forwards should know that they may at times have to help the defense, and that they shouldn't stay so far up field that the defenders can't clear the ball to them. Also, a defender should know that if he or she has the ball in midfield and has a clear path into the attacking area, the player doesn't have to relinquish the ball but can continue into the attacking zone. A teammate can fill in for the attacking defender until he/she is able to recover.

Don't make the mistake of placing all of your best players on offense. If you have only weak players on defense, the other team may spend most of the game in front of your goal while your forwards wait in vain for the ball that never comes.

Another common mistake: Don't play your defenders too far back. If they are positioned at the edge of your own penalty area while the ball is down at the other end of the field, then when the other team clears the ball you will have given up a significant amount of space without a contest. Instruct your defenders to step up and challenge for the ball. You want your team to move up and down the field as a unit without too much space between them. Also, you don't want your defenders too near your own goalkeeper. They will often block his/her view and keep the opposition onside at all times. If one of your defenders is standing next to the goalkeeper, an opposing forward can be positioned near your goal without any fear of being called offside.

PARENTAL BEHAVIOR

During the game parents should:

- Cheer for all members of the team, not just their own child.
- Allow the coaches to coach – do not shout instructions to the players.
- Do not yell at members of the opposing team.
- Do not yell at the opposing coach.
- Do not yell at the referee.
- Stay off the field of play.
- Keep two yards off the touchline.

SUBSTITUTIONS

The coach's main duty, besides watching out for the welfare of his or her players, is to keep track of playing time and to substitute players in and out so that every player plays a comparable amount of time. Know the situations when it is permissible to substitute.

CYS requires that each child play at least 50% of a game in recreational soccer. Know rules and abide by them. Explain to your parents (e.g. at the Parent Meeting) when you can legally substitute players during a game. Prepare a fair substitution schedule before each game, follow it as best you can, and keep it on file for the season.

We strongly recommend that coaches prepare their lineups before the game and substitute between periods or, for older players, midway in each half and at half time. Remember: Keep an eye on your watch!

TIP: Have the substitutes sit together, near you, and away from the parents, so you know exactly where they are when you want to make a change.

Rotate players, particularly in young age groups. Don't limit forward positions to a few; everyone should have a chance to play defender, midfield, and forward. All players should be encouraged to try goalkeeping, but no player should be forced to play the position. Giving each player some goalkeeping experience during practice scrimmages will increase their confidence to try it during a game.

HALFTIME

- Move the team into a shaded area when possible.
- Make sure they all have their water bottle.
- Keep the team together, away from the parents, so you are able to focus the group.
- Give positive feedback about the team's performance.
- Do not criticize individual players.
- Make only one or two statements regarding points to concentrate on in the second half.
- Ask the players if they have any questions.
- Have a team huddle and cheer before restarting the game.

AFTER THE GAME

- Immediately after the game, applaud both teams.
- Line up with your team to shake hands with the opponent.
- Shake hands with the referee.
- Players should thank the referee.
- Hand out refreshments
- Forget about the game results and only give praise and encouragement.
- Do not criticize and recap the game.
- Check for injuries.
- Have everyone clean up the area before leaving.
- Remind them the time of the next game or practice.

REFEREE RELATIONS

The referees have varying degrees of experience and ability. There may be times when your game is in the hands of a novice referee, possibly handling a game for the first time. Go easy on the referee! He or she has a hard job and they are usually teenagers. Just remember, it could be your child out there someday. How would you want them to be treated?

Set the example by treating all referees with respect, and insist that your players and parents do the same. Accept their decisions as part of the game. Don't make calls for them, shout at, or argue with them. Teach your players to focus on improving their own play and that of the team, not on criticizing the officials.

Coaches (and especially parents) need to be careful not to overreact to some of the inevitable bumping and incidental contact that occurs in a soccer game. Contrary to some misconceptions, soccer is a contact sport. Legal contact is clearly defined in the rules of the game.

There will inevitably be calls with which you disagree. Don't let it become a distraction for you or your team. Over the course of the game the "bad" calls will probably even out. If the referee does a good job, be sure to let him/her know and thank them after the game, regardless of the result.

The rules and officiating of soccer are rooted in the philosophy and spirit of the game. Soccer is a gentlemen's (and gentlewomen's) sport. The referee is in charge. Dissent is not allowed or tolerated. Unfair or unsportsmanlike advantage is not sought nor taken.

SPORTSMANSHIP / GAME ETIQUETTE

Teams should share one side of the field with the parents of both teams on the opposite side if possible. Pacing up and down the touchline, which is not a great idea under the best of circumstances, is extremely irritating if it means running in front of the opposing coach and screaming over his coaching. The best solution is just to quit pacing. But, if you must pace then you should remember to stay in your own half and not to go in front of your opponent's bench. A little consideration for others will increase everyone's enjoyment of the game. Then line up your squad and lead them across the field to congratulate the opposing players and coach. Teach your players to win humbly and to lose graciously.

Winning and losing: The outcome of the game will not be a life-or-death matter for your players unless adults teach them that it is. The children come to play; it is only adults who come to keep score. If you don't believe that, ask some players coming off the field what the score is. They often don't know (and don't really care that much) who is ahead. If your team is typical, you will have players at the end of games asking "Did we win?" even if the game was completely one-sided, and, by the time of the next team practice, many of your players will not remember who won, much less remember the score. It is, after all, only a game. What is important is that the players have fun, give a good effort, and accept the result in a sportsmanlike manner.

Finally, remember that, as coach, you are responsible for the behavior of your spectators (parents and others) as well as your own and that of your team. Spectators must be educated about the proper place to stand to watch the game. All spectators should remain between the two 18-yard lines (marking the penalty area) and 2 yards behind the touchline. This provides a clear line of sight for the assistant referee (even if you don't use assistant referees at your level of play, it is a good idea to get the spectators into the habit of watching from well off the touchline). No one should ever be closer to the goal than 18 yards, and never directly behind the goal area.

RISK MANAGEMENT

COACH LIABILITY AND PLAYER SAFETY

As a volunteer coach you will have the care, custody, and control of someone else's children for 30-50 hours this season. In this capacity you have the potential both to create and to prevent accidents and injuries. You should be aware of your responsibilities as a coach. Attention to these aspects will help minimize your personal risk, and prevent sports-related injuries. Your responsibilities include:

Providing adequate supervision (general and specific to the game) - The health and safety of your team members are entrusted to your care. You must provide adequate supervision to avoid foreseeable accidents and

injuries. NEVER leave players unattended! NEVER leave after a game or practice until parents or guardians have arrived!

Sound planning - Carefully plan your practices and exercises so players progress and learn new skills. Construct written practice plans and keep them on record for the duration of the season.

Warning players of inherent risks - Players and parents must know, understand, and appreciate the risks they are likely to encounter in soccer. Inform them at the parent orientation meeting.

Providing a safe playing environment - Be certain that practice and playing fields are free of hazards (e.g. holes, rocks, broken glass or other debris) and that equipment (e.g. goal posts) is in proper condition. Warn your players NOT to hang from the goal cross bar!

Evaluating players and determining any limitation required participation - Be sure players are physically capable of performing the required skills, this includes mental and physical. Evaluate old injuries as carefully as you can before letting players return to action.

Providing proper first aid - Have a first aid kit available along with a plan, which outlines emergency procedures. Know where to find emergency help and a telephone (put a couple of quarters in your first aid kit or have a cellular phone on hand). Don't attempt to provide aid beyond your qualifications. ALWAYS have your players' medical release forms with you - they should provide emergency phone numbers as well as permission for you to obtain emergency medical aid in the event a parent/guardian cannot be reached. Be aware of liability issues concerning transporting players.

Respect the civil rights of your players on and off the field. Consider the factors of the game as it relates to officials and spectators. Keep good records of an event especially in the case of an injury.

It is to your advantage to have a 2nd adult in attendance at practices. This reduces the risk that you could unjustly be accused of inappropriate behavior. Coaches who successfully perform the above duties not only reduce their personal risk, but also demonstrate to parents and other coaches, his/her desire and willingness to act responsibly.

CARE AND PREVENTION OF INJURIES

“AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN A POUND OF CURE.”

PREVENTION OF INJURIES

The first line of defense in the treatment of athletic injuries is to prevent them. A well-planned program accomplishes this: competition among equal ability groups, proper warm-up, and adherence to the Laws of the Game. Other factors that can lead to the prevention of injuries are as follows:

- Proper use of equipment (shin guards, no jewelry, uniforms designed for climate).
- Upkeep and monitoring of playing surfaces.
- Proper fitting shoes/boots.
- Ample water supply and sufficient number and length of rest periods.
- Avoid scheduling practice during the hottest periods of the day and when there is intense humidity.
- Full rehabilitation of an injury prior to return to play, determined by a physician.
- Recommendation of a physical exam by qualified personnel prior to participation.

The coach or assistant coach should be responsible for assisting with injuries, which includes attending a certified first aid course and knowledge of state and local ordinances.

It is recommended that the coach follow-up a player's injury with a conversation with the player's parent.

Each coach should have and know how to use a First Aid Kit that includes, but is not limited to: Team Safety and Information Card, plastic bags, and ties for ice, ice, tape, band aids, antiseptic, sterile pads, towelettes, gauze pads, elastic wrap, antibiotic cream and rubber gloves (care should be given to avoid contact with blood and body fluids and to use proper disposal of items soaked with such fluids).

CARE

The care of the injured athlete should begin the moment an injury occurs. Immediate care will reduce the severity of the injury and possibility of long-term disability. The coach, upon seeing an injured player on the field should:

- Stay composed.
- Make sure that the airway is clear.
- Determine if the player is conscious.
- Determine how the injury occurred.
- Question the player to determine the location and severity of the injury.
- If the player is unable to continue, assist him/her to the sideline unless it is a head injury, then do not move and call for emergency help.

After determining that the injury IS NOT life threatening, the nature of the injury can be further determined.

- Note the position of the injured part.
- Look for swelling and deformity.
- Compare it with the opposite side.
- Do not move the injured body part.

Treatment for minor injuries such as sprains, strains, and contusions is referred to as R.I.C.E. (Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation). R.I.C.E. treatments should occur immediately after the injury and a general rule is to ice for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off – three consecutive times. The treatment helps in three different ways:

- Applying **Ice** to the injured area causes the blood vessels to constrict, limiting circulation to the injured area.
- Applying **Compression** with an elastic bandage inhibits the accumulation of blood and fluids in the area; thereby, minimizing pain and swelling.
- **Resting & Elevating** the injured area decreases fluid accumulation, and helps to reduce muscle spasms.

SOME FAMILIAR TERMS COACHES SHOULD KNOW:

- Sprain – ligaments are bands of tissue that attach bone to bone and stabilize joints. A sprain is an injury to one or more ligaments.
- Strain – a tearing injury to a muscle or a tendon (tendons attach muscle to bone).
- Contusion – a blow to a muscle or tendon caused by an outside force, which causes hemorrhaging to surrounding tissue.
- Abrasion – a loss of surface area of skin. The area should be cleaned with an antiseptic to prevent infection. An antibiotic ointment should be applied to keep the wound moist and destroy any bacteria present.

HEAT INJURIES COACHES SHOULD BE AWARE OF:

- Heat Cramps – an involuntary contraction of muscle or a muscle group that is repetitive and rapid in nature. Care – rest, drink water, and stretching.
- Heat Exhaustion – surface temperature approximately normal, skin pale and clammy, profuse perspiration, tired, and weak, headache – perhaps cramps, nausea, dizziness, possible vomiting and possible fainting (the player will most likely regain consciousness as the head is lowered). Immediate Care – move to a cool area, air-conditioning best, have the player lie down with feet elevated, remove restrictive apparel as appropriate, cool with wet cloths or by fanning, if alert – water may be given (1/2 glass per 15 minutes), if player vomits – take

to hospital immediately and always refer to physician for further diagnosis, treatment and prior to return to activity.

- Heat Stroke – body temperature is high, skin is hot, red and dry, sweating mechanism is blocked, pulse is rapid and strong, player may lose consciousness. Immediate Care – seek immediate medical care (Call 911), while waiting; treat as above for heat exhaustion keeping in mind that if you reduce the body temperature too rapidly it can cause internal bleeding.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES WHEN HANDLING AN INJURED PLAYER:

- Avoid panic; use common sense; seek professional help.
- Check for breathing, bleeding, consciousness, deformity, discoloration, and shock.
- Dependent upon the nature of the injury, avoid moving the player.
- Inspire confidence and reassure the player; determine how the injury occurred.
- Use certified athletic trainers when available; always ERR on the side of caution.
- It is recommended that if a player has had medical attention, he/she must have written permission from the doctor to return to activities.

CYS COACHING EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Coaching Education Program is designed to give coaches, of all abilities, the opportunity to learn more about the game.

The purpose of the courses is to provide instruction in soccer coaching for any individual regardless of coaching and playing background.

Please contact CYS Director of Player Development for that information and the date, time and location of a the course.

ARTICLES

Articles will appear from time to time on the website that will be relevant to the game. There will be articles from coaches and other experts in the field that will help you to become better managers of children, communicators, organizers and coaches.

Please check back on a regular basis.

RESOURCE MATERIAL

RECOMMENDED WEB SITES

CLAWSONYOUTHSOCCER.ORG

MSYSA.NET

USSOCCER.ORG

USYS.COM

FIFA.COM