Team Work / Cooperation

A team is a group of people organized to work together to accomplish a certain task. We tend to think of team as a group of people but the word originally came from the practice of having a group of animals such as oxen working together to pull a plow.

Understanding Team Work:

In sports, we think of teams working together in a much more complex way than just the brute strength or individual skill that each player brings to the team. Sports teams share a common purpose or mission – to win the game. Due to the competitive nature of playing against another team with the same objective, winning becomes a much more challenging and complex endeavor. The two teams must engage in on-the-field problem solving and must effectively handle adverse situations. To do this well, effective teams learn to blend the individual skills of each team member in a way that maximizes each member's strengths and minimizes each member's weaknesses. Successful teams learn to create an environment of trust and commitment that encourages each member to go beyond their own personal limitations, creating a synergy that inspires and motivates everyone to a higher level of performance.

Connection to Soccer:

Soccer is perhaps the ultimate team game. On offense, players must combine their skills and talents, through the roles they play to create scoring opportunities for each other. They must learn to think the same way and to "see" the game the same way in terms of their spatial awareness and timing. On defense players help and support each other to make it as hard as possible for the opposing team to score. The ultimate goal for any team is this – ***for the sum to be greater than the individual parts.*** This means that when you put all the players on the field, the team performs better than you would expect by simply judging the amount of individual talent represented by the players.

How to Develop Team Work:

Everyone from Fortune 500 companies to schools and religious organizations are interested in improving the effectiveness of their teams. Programs such as adventure courses, rock wall climbing and zip lines all encourage team members to face their fears, learn to communicate more effectively, blend the skills and talents of team members and depend on each other for strength and encouragement. Below is a list of practical suggestions to do to come together and form a more unified team.

- **Dive in** – make the full commitment to being a great teammate.
- **Share Vision** – talk to each other about what you see. The idea is to get everyone on the same page thinking a like. In order to do this you must constantly be asking this question of each other – what did you see?

- **Share ideas** – when you have an idea you must share it with your teammates. For example - What do you guys think of this idea (insert whatever the idea is)?"
- **Share Goals** – remind yourself and your team constantly of your team goals. You must keep this front and center or individual goals will start to creep in.
- **Recognize Unselfishness** – you should recognize unselfish play every chance possible. This has to be highly valued by each member of the team. Being unselfish should be just as important, if not more so, than scoring goals.
- **Practice Accountability** – hold yourself and others accountable for mutually agreed upon "standards" for things such as effort, determination, focus, etc. These are all things you have control over.
- **Remember You're Never Alone** – It's always a team effort regardless of the outcome positively or negatively.