



Recreational Soccer

Coaching Handbook



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Mission

The Southern Chester County Soccer Association Recreation League is committed to providing a safe environment for children to learn positive messages on teamwork and fair play. Through the hard work of our volunteers, we are committed to providing a positive and encouraging atmosphere for children of all ages and skill levels. Understanding that these lessons are important to a child's development we place great care in the coaching and organizing of the various divisions in order to better serve the community.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide consistent guidelines for the volunteers charged with coaching and organizing the teams that make up our league. By providing clear and concise guidelines on how to teach, motivate, and instruct players of all abilities we strive to create balanced divisions that encourage fair play.

Team Make Up

Each player shall be registered and paid for each season, before they can be placed on a team. A list of properly registered players will be made available to you from the Age Commissioner for your division. No player shall be placed on a team unless placed by the Age Commissioner. No coach is authorized to accept a player based upon a parent's statement. All player placements or trades must be authorized in writing by the division's age commissioner (email will suffice) with the approval of the league. The Age Commissioner sorts players by age, school, township, and skill levels based on the information they are provided on the registration forms.

Team Management

There will be a number of adults willing to volunteer their time and effort to make the season successful. Send out an email to all parents, listing the specific activities you would like them to sign up for. Those activities could include:

Assistant Coaches

Even if you have a formally designated assistant coach, you may have other parents with experience or interest that can help out at practice or during games. This is especially important if you and/or your assistant find it a challenge to make all practices or games. Having additional assistants also gives you the opportunity for more effective, small group drills at practice. **Only one Head Coach and one Assistant Coach may be on the sideline with the players during a game.**

Snack/Refreshment Coordinator

It is a good idea to provide oranges or other refreshments at half time during games as well as a snack after the game. Have someone coordinate this activity by assigning parents snack duty for each week of the season.

Team Picture Day

Team Picture and individual pictures will be listed on the schedules and parent/coach letters. The team picture is covered in the registration fee, and the individual pictures are an additional cost.

Cancellations

Remember to call all team members ASAP after receiving your rosters. Give specific information such as your name, phone number, time and day of practice and the exact directions to the place of practice. After calls have been completed, check in with your commissioner. Encourage your parents to address any unresolved problems first by notifying you, then by sending an e-mail to rec@sccsasoccer.com. You should forward any issues to your age group commissioner.

In case of game cancellation, attempts will be made to notify you as soon as possible. If you haven't been called or emailed and you question the field situation, please check the web site at www.sccsasoccer.com.

Foul Weather

Generally speaking, rain will not cancel a game, but **soaked fields** are what usually causes games to be cancelled. Cancellations will be listed prominently on SCCSA's homepage

Cancellations are made at the discretion of the Unionville School District and SCCSA and make-up games are usually not likely.

Lightning Policy

The SCCSA Board representative on-site at the event, the coach in charge of a game, or SCCSA recreation or travel referee, will make the final determination to suspend, continue, or resume a soccer game based on the following guidelines:

- **If a lightning detector is present, it will be the sole determiner for continuing play.**
- Be aware of how close lightning is occurring. The flash-to-bang method is the easiest and most convenient way to estimate how far away lightning is occurring. Thunder always accompanies lightning, even though its audible range can be diminished due to background noise in the immediate environment, and its distance from the observer. To use the **flash-to-bang** method Count the seconds from the time the lightning is sighted to when the clap of thunder is heard. Divide this number by five to obtain how far away (in miles) the lightning is occurring. If you see lightning and it takes 5 seconds before you hear the thunder, then the lightning is 1 mile away from you (5 divided by 5 = 1 mile). Following the model, if you hear thunder after 10 seconds, the lightning is 2 miles away, 15 seconds – 3 miles, 20 seconds – 4 miles, 25 seconds – 5 miles, 30 seconds – 6 miles etc. Get to a safe location if the time between the lightning flash and the rumble of thunder is 30 seconds or less.
- Lightning awareness should be increased with the first flash of lightning or the first clap of thunder, no matter how far away. This activity must be treated as a wake-up call. The most important aspect to monitor is how far away the lightning is occurring, and how fast the storm is approaching, relative to the distance of a safe shelter.

At a minimum, SCCSA strongly recommends that by the time a flash-to-bang count of 30 seconds, all individuals should have left the field of play and reached a safe structure or vehicle. Avoid using the telephone, except in emergency situations. People have been struck by lightning while using a land-line telephone. A cellular phone or a portable remote phone is a safe alternative to land-line phones, if the person and the antenna are located within a safe structure or location, and if all other precautions are followed.

When considering resumption of activity, SCCSA recommends that everyone should ideally wait at least **30 minutes** after the last flash of lightning or sound of thunder before returning to the field.

First Aid

First Aid kits are available at the playing fields during games and also located at the Commissioner's tent.

Be sure to ask parents to identify any pre existing medical conditions that a child may have. Also be sure that the coach or designated parent has a charged cell phone in case of emergencies.

Heat Related Problems

Problem	Symptom	Treatment
Muscle Cramps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spasm of muscles in legs, arms, or the whole body• Pain in cramped muscle	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stop playing immediately• Rest in cool, shaded area• Drink plenty of fluids• Apply ice to affected area• Stretch the muscle
Heat Exhaustion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cold clammy skin• Profuse sweating• Dizziness, fainting• Abdominal or leg cramps• Rapid weak pulse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stop playing immediately• Place youth in cool shade• Drink lots of cold water• Remove excess clothes and equipment
Heat Stroke	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hot, dry skin• Lack sweating• Unconsciousness• Very high temperature• Pounding pulse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This is a true emergency!• Call 911 immediately• Attempt to cool body without harming the youth

The first aid acronym “**R.I.C.E-R**” stands for a procedure used for sprains, fractures, dislocations, etc. It is the first step in treating an injury and should be used in the first 24 to 48 hours.

- **Rest-** Immobilize the injury, prevent child from moving the injured part.
- **Ice** –Apply an ice pack to cold snap to injury for 20 minutes every 1 to 2 hours. This should be done for the first 48 to 72 hours after the injury.
- **Compression** – Apply a light compression wrap, such as an ACE bandage, to the area during and after applying ice. This will decrease any internal bleeding and swelling. Be careful not to wrap too tightly, which may cut off circulation.
- **Elevation** – Keep the injured area elevated while applying ice and compression. This will limit bleeding and swelling to the injury. **If a fracture is suspected, do not elevate the body part, treat with ice and seek medical care.**
- **Referral** – Be sure to have a youth seen by a physician. Do not attempt to manage injuries on your own.

Head Coaching

Being a soccer coach means that you are responsible for the well being and care of the players in your charge.

It is the responsibility of the Head Coach to:

- Know and understand the rules of the game as they apply to the safety of players such as shin guards covered by socks must be worn by all players. Balls should be properly inflated, no jewelry, and **no baseball cleats may be worn by any player.**
- Ensure that the field surface is safe for practice or play.
- Ensure all players **see equal playing time.**
- Proper teaching and instruction of players regarding safe techniques. This applies to both field players and goal keepers. This should be done using progression drills to ensure that the children begin with fundamentals.
- Direct Assistant Coaches to implement the practice plans you have prepared.
- Instill a sense of fair play and sportsmanship in your practices as well as in games.
- Allow for adequate water breaks during training.
- It is encouraged to allow players experience all aspects of playing the game. This includes exposure to all of the positions on the field. This can be accomplished in a practice setting to minimize the discomfort of something new. Players will generally express an interest in a particular position but be sure to expand their knowledge of all positions. The exception to this is goal keeper.
- Try to avoid forcing a child to play goalie if they do not want to. If no one wants to volunteer, then be sure to explain how important the position is and everyone will have to pitch in.

Player Development

The concept of player development is essential to the long term growth and improvement of a player. If done properly, the player will remain positive and enthusiastic about soccer and team sports in general. A coach who is committed to player development will ensure that the following objectives are met:

- Games and activities are used so that players want to participate because they are fun.
- Every player has a ball for training. **You will be provided balls, but instruct kids to bring their own to ensure everyone has one.**
- Games and activities are designed to ensure the maximum number of touches on a ball for every player.
- Practices should be designed to teach sound techniques and how they would translate to a game.
- Keep competition and fun as the main ingredients of your practices.
- Educate players to respect the game, teammates, opponents, referees and coaches.
- Use examples of situations seen in previous games.

Characteristics of Age Groups

Age Range	Cognitive Traits
U4 to U6	Short attention span, seeks immediate gratification, may understand brief instruction, may or may not remember what goal they are shooting at or who is on their team, don't criticize, prefer "parallel" play and will not engage other players, need to be in constant motion so minimize the down time in practices.
U7 to U8	Attention span is a bit longer but still not "competitive", inclined to work in smaller groups, they will remember negative comments but can handle hints for improvement, they want everyone to like them, always in motion: scratching, blinking, jerking, rocking etc..., keep explanations brief
U9 to U10	Lengthened attention span, still in motion but not so busy, boys and girls beginning to develop differently, overall motor skill becoming more refined, becoming able to think ahead.
U11 to U12	Enjoys competition, psychological development has progressed, teamwork and coordination has improved, technical ability has increased, self appearance and peer pressure is a concern, varying stage of puberty for both girls and boys, problem solving takes place with teammates.
U13 to U14	Differences in mental development, sense of belonging and achievement, displays independence and is self critical, aware of praise, status, and personal recognition.
U15 and Up	Independent, high personal expectation, need to belong, conflicting influences between parents and peers, invincible.

The above table is a generalization of traits associated with the corresponding age groups. Individual children may possess some traits from more than one group.

Practice Planning

The job of a coach is to provide practical examples of appropriate training techniques that illustrate the points for the topic being taught. This is done by demonstrating the ability to organize, develop, and coach individuals as well as small groups. A good coach will also incorporate competition into the practices in a way that is fun and rewarding. It is also important to incorporate progression into practices. This may be accomplished by planning a practice like the sample practice shown below:

- Fundamentals – Begin by explaining the skill that will be the emphasis of the practice. (i.e. proper footwork when shooting a ball.) Players can pair up and demonstrate the skill after it has been shown by the coach.
- Match Related Activity – Build on the proper technique by having them perform the skill while running at speed. (i.e. planting the foot when striking a moving ball.) Players can move into small groups and roll the ball in front of them while running up behind the ball to shoot it. Keep the groups smaller so no one is standing still.
- Match Condition Game – this is intended to replicate a game condition in a smaller group setting. (i.e. a 3v3 situation.) Keep score.

Regardless of the age being taught, this type of progression practice is useful in allowing the players to use the skills they are learning.

Pre planning a practice is also essential to executing a successful session. There are many useful websites that give ideas for training sessions that you can use or modify to best fit your team. Be prepared that even the best plans may need to be modified depending on how they are received by the team. Especially, in the younger divisions, players may not be able to grasp an exercise and the practice may begin to slow. Substitute a drill they enjoy and are comfortable with to get things back on track.

The following is a list of some useful websites for planning practices:

www.ussoccer.com

www.epysa.org

www.nscaa.com

<http://eteamz.com/soccer/pills/jpill.htm>

Recreation League Rules and Game Format

<p>Coed U5 Division</p>	<p>U5 players will be following a circuit format for 1 1/4 hours. They will train in skills stations for 45 minutes, then play a small sided game for 15 minutes. Shin guards are mandatory, and must be covered by socks. All free kicks are indirect (must be touched by a second teammate before going in the goal). No penalty kicks. No throw-ins. The ball shall be kicked in from the point where it crossed the line. All corner-kicks shall be taken within two (2) yards from the corner cone. Offsides are not called, but discourage “cherry-picking”. Coaches can be on the field to assist player placement during play, without interfering with game play.</p>
<p>Coed U6 Division</p>	<p>Eight (8) minute quarters. Five (5) vs. five (5) recommended, no goalkeepers. Substitutions only between quarters and for injury, Shin guards are mandatory, and must be covered by socks. All free kicks are indirect (must be touched by a second teammate before going in the goal). No penalty kicks. No throw-ins. The ball shall be kicked in from the point where it crossed the line. All corner-kicks shall be taken within two (2) yards from the corner cone. Offsides are not called, but discourage “cherry-picking”. One coach from each side can enter the field to assist player placement prior to the start of play, without interfering with game play.</p>
<p>Coed U7 Division</p>	<p>Eight (8) minute quarters. Seven (7) vs. seven (7) recommended, no goalkeepers. Substitutions only between quarters and for injury, Shin guards are mandatory, and must be covered by socks. All free kicks are indirect (must be touched by a second teammate before going in the goal). No penalty kicks. No throw-ins. The ball shall be kicked in from the point where it crossed the line. All corner-kicks shall be taken within two (2) yards from the corner cone. Offsides are not called, but discourage “cherry-picking”. Coaches may not be on the field during game play.</p>
<p>Coed U8 Division & Girls U8 Division</p>	<p>Ten (10) minute quarters. Up to Eight (8) vs. eight (8) recommended, including a goalkeeper. Substitutions permitted only between quarters and for injury. Shin guards are mandatory and must be covered by socks. All free kicks are indirect (must be touched by a second teammate before going in the goal). No penalty kicks. Throw-ins are used. The thrower must face the field of play and part of each foot shall be either on the touchline or on the ground outside the touchline. The thrower shall use both hands and shall deliver the ball from behind and over his head. Give a second and third try on a “bad” throw-in after explaining how to do it properly. Offside is not called, but discourage “cherry-picking”.</p>
<p>Coed U9/U10 Division & Girls U9/10 Division</p>	<p>Twenty (20) minute halves. Up to nine (9) vs. nine (9) recommended including goalkeeper. Substitutions permitted at any stoppage of play at the mid-field area. The referee must be notified first. Shin guards are mandatory and must be covered by socks. FIFA rules apply for all fouls. Retake throw-ins one time after explaining why the first one was “bad”. If still not done right, give the throw-in to the other team. Goal kicks are taken from the 12 yard mark. Offside is called.</p>
<p>Coed U11/U12/U13 Division & Girls U11/U12/13 Division</p>	<p>Twenty Five (25) minute halves. Up to eleven (11) vs. eleven (11) recommended including goalkeeper. Substitutions permitted at any stoppage of play at the mid-field area. The referee must be notified first. Shin guards are mandatory and must be covered by socks. FIFA rules apply for the entire game. Offside is called.</p>
<p>Coed U14/U15/U16/U17 Division</p>	<p>Thirty Five (35) minute halves. Up to Eleven (11) vs. eleven (11) recommended including goalkeeper. Substitutions permitted at any stoppage of play at the mid-field area. The referee must be notified first. Shin guards are mandatory and must be covered by socks. FIFA rules apply for the entire game. Offside is called.</p>

Game Management

This section refers to the basic conduct expectations of coaches, players and spectators during games. It is essential for the coaches to maintain sportsmanlike behavior for himself, his players, and his parents at all times.

All divisions must have the coach on the sideline with his team at all times during game play.

This will be enforced by the referees for that game. This is to allow for the freedom of play and to minimize stoppages during games. For U8 through U18; all spectators must remain on one side while the players and coaches stay on the opposite side of the playing field. Coaches and officials are expected to enforce this rule. For all younger age divisions, although goalies are not used, no child should stand in front of a goal as a defensive position. This is done to encourage scoring at a young age.

Spectators are not allowed behind the goal area during the game for any division.

Follow all posted rules while on school fields such as "No Smoking", "No Dogs", etc.

Referee Respect

Sideline behavior starts with the coaches. If a coach(s) shows disrespect to the referee, assistant referee(s) and/or a flag person(s), his/her team and supporters will feed off this act. Disrespect includes verbal and physical abuse of the officials. The Coach(s) must not voice an opinion on a rule interpretation or a particular play in the game in a loud and/or obnoxious manner. If a coach has a question on a rule or a particular play in the game, the proper and respectful response should be to quietly approach the referee in between periods or at the end of the game. **At no time shall team supporters or players approach the officials.** Referees have been instructed to eject a coach or team supporter from the field area if the referee feels the level of disrespect warrants it.

Mercy Rule

Coaches should do their best not to embarrass another team by outscoring them by a wide margin. Once a team reaches a 4 goal differential, coaches **MUST** employ some or all of the following tactics:

- Put your weakest scorers up front (use this as an opportunity to let them be forwards).
- Try someone new in goal & at fullback
- Very quietly, pull a player off the field & play short. If it is still a mismatch, quietly pull off another player.
- Very quietly, tell your players they must complete 5 (or more) consecutive passes before shooting.
- Tell them they can only take shots from outside the Penalty Box (i.e., practice chip shots, lofted shots at the top of the goal mouth or power shots).
- Tell them that **ONLY** a certain player will be allowed to shoot on goal.

All of the aforementioned measures should be done in such a way so as to NOT draw attention.