

TOPSoccer Coaching Certification Course



TOPSOCCER

*The Game for **All** Kids!*®

Course Goals

- Familiarize TOPSoccer coaches with players' disabilities
- Enhance comfort level with organizing and implementing inclusive training activities
- Increase effectiveness when utilizing Buddies
- Identify unique safety, risk management issues and concerns

Course Agenda

- Introductory Discussion
- Player's Disabilities
- Coaching Qualities
- Coaching Strategies
- TOPSoccer Buddy
- Safety, Risk Management

What is TOPSoccer

TOPSoccer (The Outreach Program for Soccer) is a community-based soccer program for athletes with disabilities that significantly impair their ability to participate in recreational soccer programs

TOPSoccer provides children and adults with special needs the opportunity to play soccer in a structured environment that is safe, fun, supportive and inclusive

Why do people play TOPSoccer?

Explicit:

- Have fun
- Make friends
- Improve fitness
- Develop new skills
- Be on a team

Implicit:

- Gain self esteem
- Enhance social skills
- Manage stress, pressure, success, disappointment
- Learn to compete

Is Coaching TOPSoccer Different?

- Does it matter how many years you have been coaching?
- Do your licenses/credentials matter?
- Do you need to be:
 - an educator or medical professional?
 - a parent or closely associated with someone with special needs?

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Player Disability Types

Non-Physical

(cognitive or developmental)

- Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)
- Down Syndrome
- ADHD
- Others

Physical (*orthopedic*)

- Cerebral Palsy (CP)
- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
- Muscular Dystrophy (MD)
- Visual (blind)
- Aural (deaf)

Non-Physical: Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs)

- Definition: Group of developmental disabilities defined by significant impairments in social interaction, communication, and the presence of unusual behaviors and interests
- Thinking and learning abilities vary from gifted to severely challenged
- Characteristics may also include:
 - Preoccupied or focused on specific things (perseverate)
 - Heightened sensory systems
 - Problems with sequencing

Non-Physical: Down Syndrome

- Definition: Genetic disorder associated with delay in cognitive ability, physical growth, and particular set of facial characteristics
- Common characteristics include:
 - Vision, hearing, speech impairments that impact communication (including short temper)
 - Physically exhibit low muscle tone and can become tired quickly
 - Sociable/ physically expressive (hugs)

Non-Physical: Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

- Definition: Chronic condition marked by persistent, developmentally inappropriate levels of inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity
- Characteristics may also include:
 - Disorganization
 - Distractibility
 - Stimulation seeking

Non-Physical: Others

- Disabilities may impact player's ability to self-regulate or control their emotions; often viewed as 'acting out' or 'misbehaving'
 - Sensory Processing Disorders
- Players may exhibit:
 - Wide range of emotions, behaviors
 - Frustration level visible to everyone
 - Can be easily agitated; triggers can vary
 - Difficult to reason with once triggered
 - Capable of high level of play

Physical Disabilities: Cerebral Palsy (CP)

- Definition: Disorder of muscle tone, movement, or posture caused by brain damage before, during, or following childbirth
- Characteristics may include:
 - Impaired motor control, balance, coordination
 - Difficulties in speech
 - Quick to dehydrate, fatigue
 - Strong socially, cognitively

Physical Disabilities: Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

- Definition: Permanent or temporary impairment of cognitive, physical, and psychosocial function resulting from bump, blow, jolt, penetrating head injury
 - Motor vehicle accidents
 - Severe slips, trips, falls
- Can range in scope from mild (concussion) to severe (memory loss)

Physical Disabilities: Muscular Dystrophy (MD)

- Definition: Group of muscle diseases that results in increased weakening and breakdown of skeletal muscles over time
 - Thirty different genetic disorders that are usually classified into nine main categories or types
- Physical therapy, braces, and corrective surgery may help with some symptoms

Physical Disabilities (cont.)

- Visual (blind and vision impaired)
 - High functioning in other senses, cognitive abilities
 - Usually requires multiple Buddies (one on each side especially in group activities)
- Aural (deaf and hard of hearing)
 - High functioning in other senses, cognitive abilities

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Group Activity – 5 minutes

- Break into pairs/groups
- Without using written words draw a picture of the qualities of a good TOPSoccer coach



Qualities Of A Good TOPSoccer Coach

- Fosters safe, enjoyable environment
- Excellent planning/organizational skills, reliable
- Good communication skills
- Inclusive, adaptable
- Fair and Fun
- Knows the game (can assess, demonstrate)

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Communication Strategies

- Use person first language
 - “child with ASD” NOT “autistic child”
- Use “first & then” strategy
 - “first get a ball, then dribble to a cone... then...”
- Be encouraging, not patronizing
- Be expressive, enthusiastic
- Listen, watch, and ask questions to confirm
 - 90% of information is non-verbal

Communication Strategies (cont.)

Avoid:

- Handicapped
- Afflicted by
- Normal
- Hearing impaired
- Retarded

Use:

- People with disabilities
- People who have...
- Neurotypical/able-bodied
- Hard of hearing
- Developmentally delayed

Watch what you say; set the example

Program Strategies

- Provide continuity from week-to-week (consistent format, know what to expect)
- Utilize simple to complex progressions – activities to scrimmages
 - OR: play-practice-play!
- Plan activities where all participants can be involved – wheelchair-enabled, walkers, crutches

Program Strategies (continued)

- Involve parents to understand player traits, behaviors, health issues (check in regularly)
- Make a personal connection with your players (and encourage Buddies to really connect)
- Network and learn from other coaches
 - TOPSoccer sessions at AGMS
 - TOPSoccer symposiums (regional)

Activity Strategies

- Limit 'standing-around time'
 - If the line is too long split group into 2 or more
- Provide immediate, positive reinforcement
- Limit surprises; let them know what to expect
- Encourage decision making; engage the mind not just the body

Activity Strategies (continued)

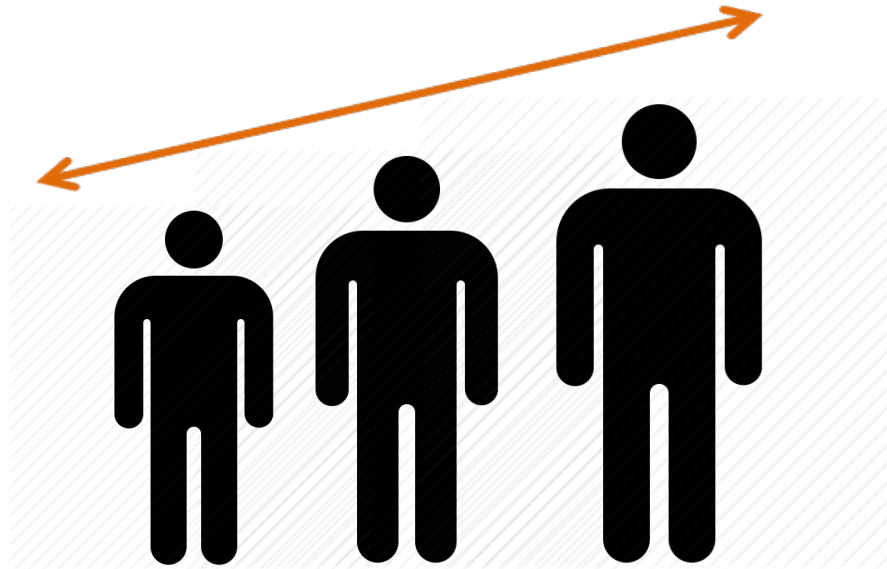
- Give simple and clear directions – KISS (*Keep It Simple, Silly!*)
- Work on one skill at a time – dribble, then dribble and shoot – progression accordingly
- Use visual cues (don't just rely on verbal)
 - Colors, numbers, flash cards/ social stories
- Evaluate, adjust and adapt

Activity Strategies (continued)

- Have a favored, 'go to' activity
 - Duck-duck-goose, red light-green light, etc.
- Encourage the players to overcome adversity; with perseverance should come success (growth mindset)
- Challenge positively and enthusiastically
 - If a player is doing well, 'raise the bar' a bit

Activity Strategies (continued)

This:



Not this:



Allow individuals to participate at their own personal level!

Coaching Strategies For Players With Non-Physical Disabilities

- Assume that they understand more than they can communicate/verbalize
- Monitor pacing of effort/activity level and provide more frequent breaks if necessary
- Learn through modeling/mirroring – Buddies!
- Be wary of over-stimulation and activities with a lot of contact

Coaching Strategies For Players With Non-Physical Disabilities (cont.)

- Maintain the same player-Buddy pairing throughout the season; familiarity is comforting
- Communicate expectations and let them know what will happen in advance of it happening; transitions may be difficult
 - Consider using social stories, activity boards

Coaching Strategies For Players With Non-Physical Disabilities (cont.)

- Can be impulsive, easily agitated and distracted
 - Allow for 'bad days,' have patience, refocus and repetition
- 'Meltdowns' may have numerous triggers: fairness, physical contact, lack of success, changes to environment (coach/Buddy not showing up)
 - Safety first/stay calm
 - Remove from environment (water break; not a time-out)
 - De-escalate and re-engage
 - Empower Buddy to handle situations as they arise

Coaching Strategies For Players With Non-Physical Disabilities (cont.)

- For 'high energy' and other 'attention' needs:
 - Channel players' high energy in positive way
 - Pick up equipment, as fast as they can
 - Include them in demonstrating activities
 - Frequently check for understanding (have them verbally explain the activity)

Coaching Strategies For Players With Physical Disabilities

- High cognitive ability (understand instructions)
- May require stability, balance, coordination support
- Adjust activities based on physical abilities



Group Activity: (10 Minutes)

Develop A TOPSoccer Program Activity

- Break into 3-4 small groups
- Develop a TOPSoccer training session activity (using the board/paper) that lasts 10-15 minutes and can be used with all players
- Present the activity to the class - spokesman
- Group votes on which 1-2 activities to use in field session

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What is a TOPSoccer Buddy

- Friend
- Protector (safety)
- Training partner
- Behavior model
- Facilitator/mentor
- Liaison (to parents, coaches, peers)



Role of Buddies

- Looks out for the safety of player
- Demonstrates desired skill, activity
- Encourages athletes and celebrates success
- Reinforces coaching points (technical, tactical)
- Encourages decision-making
- Provides stability in chaotic environment

Role of Buddy For Players With...

Non-Physical Disabilities

- Explain activities in 1-2 step sequences
- Allow for more time to react, respond
- Be alert for cues of over-stimulation (hands on ears, flapping hands, etc.)
- Learn warning signs and de-escalate (remove from area, calming words and manners)
- Don't take it personally if player has a bad day

Role of Buddy For Players With...

Physical Disabilities

- Use voice, hands and arms to guide player
- Create a safety zone for all players
- Provide balance and stability
 - May need multiple Buddies

Coach-Buddy Interactions

- Prepare Buddies before session
 - Provide lesson plan
 - Give reminders for safety, support
 - Discuss special player situations, behaviors
- Engage Buddies throughout session
 - Reinforce positive behaviors (praise in public)
 - Offer suggestions for improvement (criticize in private)
- Debrief Buddies after session – short and sweet
 - Problems, successes
 - Ideas for next week

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Safety, Risk Management Basics

- Prioritize player safety over everything
- Ensure the playing environment is safe, schedule appropriate and adequate breaks/stoppages
- Use proper equipment, ensure goals anchored
- Have a basic first aid kit (with ice) and emergency action plan (written) and concussion training
- Require parent or guardian be present at all times
- Group players by ability and size

What To Do When An Injury Occurs:

- Control the environment – avoid additional injuries, do not be in a hurry to move the player
- Be calm, ask questions, gather input (unbiased)
- Communicate with parent or guardian
- Call 911 if injury appears to be severe
- Document, communicate the event to appropriate authorities
- Follow-up with parent or guardian in 24 hours

Recap

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Call to Action!

- You are part of a big, national family of dedicated volunteers (young and old)
- The players and their families need this program for all the reasons mentioned earlier
- Relationships are started and fostered through TOPSoccer – players, parents, buddies
- It will change your life for the better, in ways you never expected!

US Youth Soccer TOPSoccer



**You will make a
difference in
many lives**

*The Game for **All Kids!***®

USYS TOPSoccer Committee

TOPSoccer Chairs

- National: Ray Robinson
- East: Ed DeMulder
- South: Dave Robinson
- Midwest: Shawn Danhouser
- West: Sandy Castillo



TOPSOCCER

www.usyouthsoccer.org/programs/topsoccer