



Player Development Overview presented by:

Director of Player Development

**Written by:
Kia Zolgharnain**

“There are many people, particularly in sports who think that success and excellence are the same thing and they are not the same thing. Excellence is something that is lasting and dependable and largely within a person’s control. In contrast, success is perishable and is often outside of our control....if you strive for excellence, you will probably be successful eventually....people who put excellence in first place have the patience to end up with success....An additional burden for the victim of the success mentality is that he/she is threatened by success of others and resents real excellence. In contrast, the person fascinated by quality is excited when he/she sees it in others.”

Introduction: Common Vision + Focused Actions = Amazing Results

This document is part a proposed implementation piece, and part an informational and educational tool. It not only suggests changes, but also attempts to educate and explain why and, thus hopefully build the consensus that will promote change.

Youth Soccer's initial objective has always been the welfare of **children**. All of our efforts should be only for the kids. During the past 20 years, our country has exploded into the world soccer scene. However, for the most part with the exception of a few like Mia Hamm and Brad Freidel, and Landon Donovan we have failed to produce **world class** players. The following excerpts from an article best summarize this:

“A Sports Culture Run Amok” – By: Sam Snow, Director of Coaching Education for US Youth Soccer

Across the country, millions of children are being chewed up and spit out by a sports culture run amok. With pro scouts haunting the nation's playgrounds in search of the next LeBron or Freddy, parents and coaches are conspiring to run youth-sports leagues like incubators for future professional athletes. Prepubescent athletes are experimenting with performance-enhancing drugs. Doctors are reporting sharp spikes in injuries caused by year-round specialization in a single sport at an early age. And all too often, the simple pleasure of playing sports is being buried beneath cutthroat competition.” If I had to sum up the crisis in kids' sports,” says J. Duke Albanese, Maine's former commissioner of education, "I'd do it in one word-adult." Some adults, Albanese says, are pushing children toward unrealistic goals like college sports scholarships and pro contracts. According to National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) statistics, fewer than 2% of high school athletes will ever receive a college athletic scholarship. Only one in 13,000 high school athletes will ever receive a paycheck from a professional team. "There is a terrible imbalance between the needs kids have and the needs of the adults running their sports programs," says Dr. Bruce Svare, director of the National Institute for Sports Reform. "Above all, kids need to have fun. Instead, adults are providing unrealistic expectations and crushing pressure. "As a result, Svare says, at a time when an epidemic of obesity is plaguing the nation's youth, 70% of America's children are abandoning organized sports by age 13."The only way to reverse this crisis," Svare argues, "is to fundamentally rethink the way America's kids play organized sports."

The City of North Ridgeville is a very unique community. It is a wonderful community to raise children. It is our intention to add to the quality of life through positive experiences for the children. There is nothing more gratifying than to see happy children. Soccer is a game of love, passion, beauty, skills and honor. These values will be the corner stone of this association in order to serve the children. It is my hope that all of the adults lead the children by example on and off the field. It is my hope to keep smiles on all their faces every time they walk on and off the field. There is little room for politics or negativity around the children and the game itself. As we move forward, I ask all of you to join us, in order to best support our children. On behalf of the staff and the association, I thank you in advance for the opportunity to work with your children.

Sincerely,

Director of Coaching and Player Development
Everett E. Palache

“Level with your child by being honest. Nobody spots a phony quicker than a child”. - Mary McCracken

Youth Policy:

It is our intention to develop a quality youth development program for the 4 to 14 age groups to maximize the full potential of these players. But at the youth level, **the player must come first!!** We would like to incorporate a “**whole athlete**” approach to training. Our goal is to help athletes become "whole" in their approach to sport and wellness. Without optimal health in both body and mind, the athlete cannot reach his or her potential either in sport or in life. We encourage balance between athletics and other areas in one's life. These principles include nonviolence, truthfulness, self-study, commitment, dedication and transformation. Every decision made by the association and the coach should be in the best interest of the **individual** players. Players should experiment with different styles of play and be exposed to variety of different skills. It is our hope to prepare players for the next level. In America, the next level is collegiate. Every effort should be made to prepare players for this next stage; emphasis is in preparation rather than just winning state championships. The team is there to serve the player’s ambition, not the other way around.

There are many complex issues associated with top level youth play, such as players playing up, the tryout process, coaching selection criteria, paid coaches, relationship between the association’s first tier and lower tier teams in the same age group, etc. Every effort should be made not to label children. Although grouping is necessary for competition and for teaching purposes, we must be very careful not to impose a class distinction between children. Each player will receive training t-shirts and will be required to only wear these training t-shirts during training sessions. The coaching staff then can easily identify and monitor each player for developmental purposes. It is our hope to once unite the entire association. The final stage for any team is performance through harmony.

We must never lose sight of the fact that players want to play, and that they have the right to play. And in order for players to reach their potential, they have to play. This means that even at the top select level, every player should play in each game. This doesn’t mean that players should be guaranteed equal playing time, but rather that player will have to compete for more playing time, with the best and most committed getting more time than the rest. Players should be rewarded based on performance and attendance. This approach satisfies both the basic youth sport convention that everyone must play and the need to create a **healthy competitive** environment where players are constantly monitored, evaluated and challenged to do better to earn more playing time.

Coaching Philosophy: Show.....Do.....Question.....Answer

There are only three primary reasons to be involved in competitive sports by adults:

- To win
- To develop
- To make money

In our opinion, it is a job of ethical youth coaches to educate and to ensure empowerment of all the children first. It is unethical to just concentrate on wins and losses or to simply collect a paycheck. Every coach not only needs to understand the game but needs to have the ability to understand how each child learns and reacts to different situations. It is the job of each coach to reach out to every player and to improve their skills and abilities. It is our hope that we, first and foremost, redefine our association as an “**educational institution**” that embraces development by providing an educated and professional staff with high level of training. The professional and volunteer staff is here to serve the children by developing them.

Coaches that will be on the staff must make the children’s welfare their first priority and be trained for their positions. Our job is to help develop independent, educated, prepared, problem solving, well rounded athletes that have a natural love, passion and respect for the game.

There is much more to this sport than organized *kick ball*. For North Ridgeville, there is no difference between good soccer players and good students. Training must be dynamic rather than static and is in line with Long Term Athlete Development . Teaching must be done through active learning, rather than passive learning. Players are encouraged to learn through guided discovery, rather than becoming robotic.

North Ridgeville’s training methodology is influenced by the concept of Total Football . Most of this belief system will be engrained in our training methods:

Please try to look at your serious youth soccer in this light:

- Attending Practices = Class room participation
- Extra training = Extra Credit
- League Games = Open Book Quizzes
- Tournaments = Quizzes
- Placement at 14 = Final Test (where did you end up)

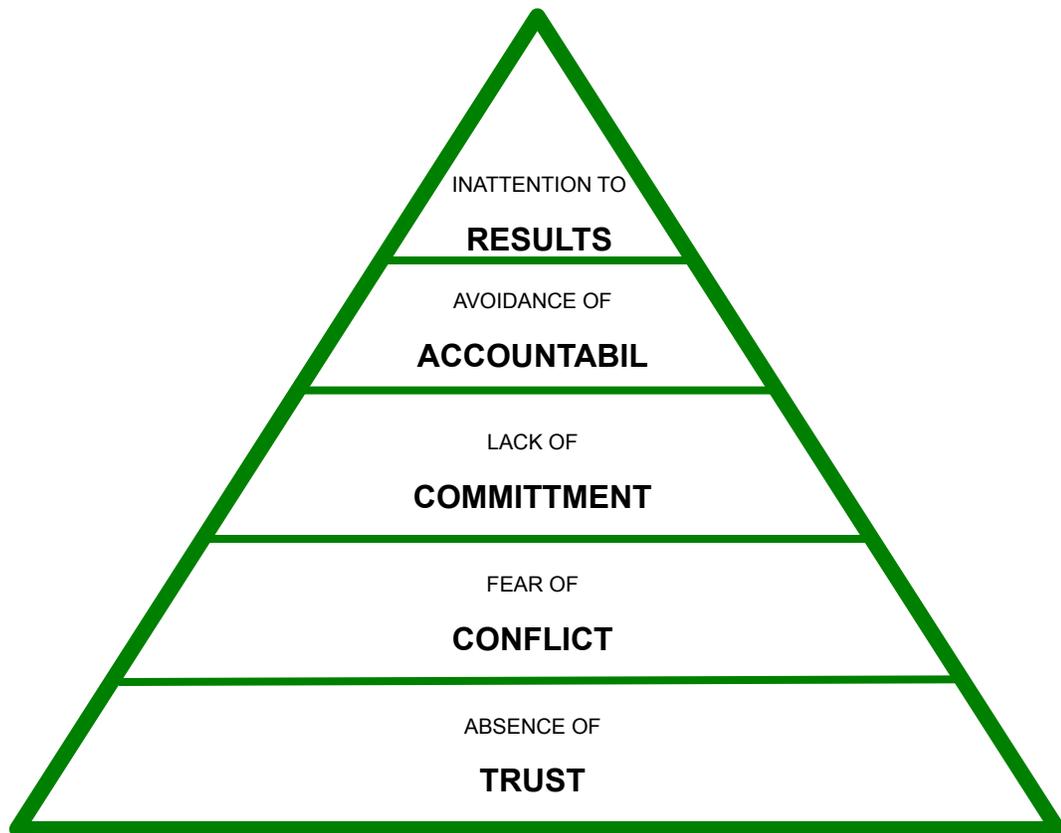
No where above winning or losing affects the final grade. Top level training and preparation and the players own desire and work rate determines that.

WANTING TO WIN IS EVERYTHING

Winning isn't everything, but wanting to is. Success is connected with continuous action. It's largely a matter of hanging on after others have let go. You're not finished when you're defeated, you're only finished when you quit. The most important quality essential to success is perseverance. It overcomes almost everything, even nature. You can have a fresh start any time you choose, for your "failure" is not in the falling down, but in the staying down. It's not over until it's over. If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again. If you've got the courage to stick it out, you can win.

Patrick Lencioni, "Overcoming the five Dysfunctions of a team":

The true measure of a team is that it accomplishes the results that it sets out to achieve, to that on a consistent, ongoing basis; a team must overcome the five dysfunctions:



The Organization

North Ridgeville Soccer Association is a non-for profit 501C-3 association. The affiliation between OYSAN and the North Ridgeville City Amateur Soccer Association has been established to provide a soccer program designed to benefit all the children in North Ridgeville and its surrounding counties. It is a volunteer based organization that has evolved to cater to over 500 players and their families. The Executive Board is made up of volunteer parents that have taken the responsibility and spend tireless hours of running the day to day matters of the association.

