

Bonny Eagle Soccer Club

Coach's Handbook

2012 Season

The purpose of this document is to help orient new coaches to travel soccer and the Bonny Eagle Soccer Club. While we will attempt to keep this document current, the Board of Directors of the BESC reserves the right to implement policy changes which may make portions of this document obsolete. For the most current version of this document, please visit www.besoccerclub.com

Table of Contents

Revision History	2
Table of Contents.....	2
Recommended Pre-Reading	4
Club Philosophy & Coaching for the BESC.....	5
Player Development Mission	5
BESC Board of Directors	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Assignment of Coaches	7
Coach Selection	7
Quantity of Coaches.....	8
Coaching Roles.....	8
Director of Coaching.....	8
Age Group Director	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Head Coach	9
Assistant Coach	9
Coaching Mentor	9
Expectations	10
Getting Started.....	11
Volunteer Disclosure Form.....	11
Coaching Certification	11
Courses	12
Enrollment.....	12
Completion.....	12
Reimbursement	13
Advanced Licenses.....	13
Tryouts, Team Selection, & Player Notification.....	14
Tryouts	14
Evaluations.....	14
Team Selection	15
Notification of Players.....	16
Organizing for the Season	17
Team Administrator	17
Collecting Contact Information & Reconfirming Commitment.....	17
Selection of Tournaments	18
Game Schedules.....	18
District/State Scheduled Games	18
Additional Games	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Open Scheduling Meeting.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Other Means to Schedule Additional Games.....	19
Schedule Home Game Fields & Times	19
Parent's Meeting	20
Starting the Season	23

Equipment Needs.....	23
Practice Fields and Time.....	23
Uniforms.....	24
Lobster Classic Organization	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Official Rosters.....	24
Player Passes	24
Player Picture	24
Player Signature	25
Retaining Passes.....	25
During the Season	27
Clinic Participation.....	27
4v4 Lobster Classic Preparation.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Away Games.....	27
Home Games	27
Referees & Referee Assignors	28
Field Preparation	28
Referee Fees.....	28
Reporting Results.....	28
Game Cancellations	29
Game Situations.....	30
Shortage of Referees.....	30
Referee Concerns.....	30
Parent Concerns.....	31
“Blow-Outs”	32
Player Discipline.....	33
Team Photographs.....	33
Team Web Site Administration (Optional)	34
Wrapping Up The Season.....	35
BESC Banquet	35
Awards.....	35
Slide Show.....	35
U14 Sweatshirts.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Equipment Return	35
During the Off-Season	36
Winter Leagues	36
Spring Leagues	36
Premier Teams.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Useful Information.....	37
Bonny Eagle Soccer Club	Error! Bookmark not defined.
FIFA.....	37
Soccer Maine.....	37
US Youth Soccer	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Recommended Pre-Reading

The Bonny Eagle Soccer Club (BESC) has developed two companion documents to address the common questions about the BESC most often raised by parents and by referees. The *Bonny Eagle Soccer Club Parent's Handbook* in particular should be read prior to reviewing this document. As most coaches are first and foremost parents in the club, that handbook will address a wide variety of the common questions that coaches have. It also helps to outline the expectations that parents are likely to form about coaches. All the BESC handbooks are available on our web site.

Second, Soccer Maine produces two handbooks, one for the non-results oriented age groups (U11 and down) called the *Fall Travel League U-10 & U11 Handbook* and one for the results oriented age groups (U12 and up) called the *Fall Travel League U12-U14 Handbook*. These handbooks contain the state contact information, FIFA rule modifications appropriate for the age groups indicated, code of conduct and Zero Tolerance policy information, state tournament dates and district playoff information, etc. This document also doesn't attempt to duplicate the information contained in these documents, which can be found online at:

<http://www.soccermaine.com/pages/01handbooks.html>

The purpose of this document is to describe the BESC policies and operations in support of our coaches. The concept is to provide a written source of information to help our coaches more easily work with the club, spend less time on "administration", and spend more time coaching.

This document is not intended to be a set of drills, practice plans, or coaching points. That information can be obtained through the coaching education, from the BESC Director of Coaching, through peer coaches, or a variety of good manuals and web sites available online.

Please submit suggestions for improving this document to the BESC Director of Coaching.

Club Philosophy & Coaching for the BESC

The Bonny Eagle Soccer Club (BESC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing a competitive and fun soccer playing experience for the youth of Bonny Eagle District. The BESC plays what is commonly referred to as “travel soccer.” We generally seek players that have demonstrated proficiency in playing soccer at the Community Services level, are committed to attend practices and improve their skills, are highly “coachable”, and enjoy competing hard against quality opponents. We expect no less in terms of qualifications from our coaches.

In general, we seek the most highly qualified coaching candidates we can find. In general the qualifications we are seeking include:

- Has played soccer as a youth and up through an advanced age group, such as high school, college, or professionally.
- Continues to play soccer currently.
- Has soccer coaching experience.
- Has youth coaching experience.
- Has an even temperament, doesn't get overly excited, and keeps things in perspective.
- Has a player development philosophy similar to the BESC's philosophy.
- Is dependable and committed to making this a fun learning experience for the players.
- Is a respected role model, and sets a good example for our players to emulate.
- Can perform the administrative tasks and communicate effectively with players and parents

Not every coach meets all points for these criteria. Often, willing parents that have a solid understanding of youth sports in general are asked to coach in the club, with the intent of educating them on the game of soccer. As rule, the more criteria that a coaching candidate possess, the more desirable they are to have in our club. Some of the criteria, including setting a good role model for the players, dependability, and overall commitment to the players are firm requirements of the coaching role and are not negotiable attributes.

While the BESC recognizes that coaches expend an enormous amount of time and energy in the course of a season, it is our contention that coaching for the BESC is a privilege. The Bonny Eagle Soccer Club continues to be one of the top clubs in the State of Maine and a model for many others to follow. We have some of the best youth athletes in the State of Maine, and it is a significant responsibility to serve as their mentor, often for many consecutive seasons. Further, we instruct our players that they are “ambassadors” for the town of Bonny Eagle District, and the actions of our coaches and players speak loudly for the character and the quality of our town. Our coaches are expected to be the epitome of sportsmanship and grace under pressure for these young athletes.

Player Development Mission

Our mission is to provide a fun and competitive youth soccer playing experience, focused on player development. The choice of the term “player development” is very

specific. Our objective is to get the most out of each member of the club, and help them develop to the best of their potential. The objective isn't to "win at all costs". Winning will come through the development of fundamentally sound, mentally strong, skillful and committed soccer players.

Accordingly, the BESC wants to place far less emphasis at "winning" at younger age groups. This philosophy is in alignment with the philosophy of Soccer Maine, where all games played at U12 and below are not results oriented. Our policies regarding player attraction, team selection and cuts, and games and opponents are all reflective of this philosophy. Our coaches are expected to embrace this philosophy, and focus energies on fun and skills development. At older age groups our primary focus is still skills development, but we begin to use state competitions as a measure of progress and development. Accordingly, we begin to segment our players by ability levels, to allow the coaches to train players of like skills and abilities in the fundamentals and tactics appropriate for their current level of development. This segmentation of players is reevaluated annually at the tryout process, as some players progress faster and others not as fast. Our club will foster a system that promotes advancement of players based upon merit, and rewards hard work and player development. Overall this approach builds a strong incentive system for players to improve their skills and develop the soccer attributes we are seeking.

Another important philosophical distinction is that we are not the soccer program of last resort. In situations where soccer skills are significantly lacking, there are legitimate safety concerns, or the player exhibits behavioral issues that detract from the ability of others to learn the game of soccer, the BESC has the latitude to cut these players from the program. As a general rule, we are less inclined to do this at younger age groups where many kids are still developing fundamental skills, including social skills, and more likely to do this at older age groups once development has been assessed and a track record of ability and effort has been determined. The above notwithstanding, it is our objective to be an inclusive club and promote soccer to as many players as we can reasonably accommodate and assist. By providing a deep talent pool of quality players to high school, premier teams, and ODP, we are serving our core mission and giving many kids a rich youth soccer playing experience.

Assignment of Coaches

It is the job of the BESC Coaching Director to identify and recruit the best available coaches to the program. Consistent with our philosophy of player development, we believe that development best occurs with coaching excellence. Just as players are assigned to teams for the current season only and are reevaluated (tryout) annually, coaching assignments are made for a one season period. Every year, the Coaching Director in conjunction with the Board of Directors will recommend a slate of coaches to support the teams to be formed. In some instances, a coach for a team or age group will be asked to take a different assignment, or to step aside to allow a more qualified candidate to work with the players. When making these decisions, the overriding concern is for the benefit of all the players involved.

For prospective new coaches, the criteria we apply to selecting coaches are provided in the *Parent's Handbook*. For existing coaches, assignment of teams is also based upon:

- past coaching performance as evaluated by BESC Coaching Director other objective expert coaches
- parent and player feedback
- peer feedback from other coaches

Coach Selection

Assignment of coaches to teams is based upon many factors. The BESC Coaching Director maps the available coaching pool of resources for a particular age group and gender with the estimated number of teams we can field in that age group based upon registration numbers. Our objective is to get a highly qualified and capable head coach over every team we field in the club. In the case where an excess of coaching talent exists, the BESC Coaching Director will consider available options, such as moving a coach to a different age group if another sibling also plays in the club, moving the coach and player up one age group, or carrying excess assistant coaches.

For competitive age groups, additional factors come into play such as the relative talent level of the coach's child playing in that age group. In the situation where an excess of volunteer coaching talent exists, the following criteria shall be used by the Board of Directors to make a selection of head coach and assistant coach as appropriate:

- Placement of the coach's child on teams through objective tryout scoring, if there are multiple children involved and the objective scoring would normally place them on different teams.
- Demonstrated knowledge and commitment to the game of soccer and coaching soccer, as evidenced by state licensing level, soccer playing experience, years plus level of soccer coaching experience.
- Coaching ability, as judged by BESC Coaching Director and peer review of practice organization and overall skills development of the players.
- The ability to relate to players and parents, including feedback from both relative to ability to coach, consistent application of BESC philosophies, and clarity of decisions and actions relative to each player.
- Administrative ability, such as organization, timeliness, ability to schedule appropriate opposition, motivation skills, and communication.

Just because a coach has been involved with a team or age group for a number of years is not a firm guarantee that coach will continue with the team, if in the judgment of the Coaching Director and Board of Directors there is a different coaching combination that would better help the players develop overall. Please also note that “wins and losses” is purposely not emphasized in the list above, consistent with a player development mission overall. The BESC Coaching Director shall make the final recommendation of coaches to the Board of Directors, with the final authority to decide on the particular coaches belonging to the board overall. Based upon that approval, coaches and assistants are placed on the official state roster by the BESC Registrar.

In general, we strongly discourage two existing, qualified head coaches from combining to coach a single team. Our objectives are best served by getting the highest quality coaches over the greatest number of players. An exception to that shall be when the children of two qualified head coaches both score high enough in tryouts to make a Challenge Cup team. The BESC shall not require one coach to move to the Anthem Cup team unless that coach agrees to do so for the benefit of all the players involved.

Quantity of Coaches

The BESC requires one person be appointed “head” coach (or age group director) for each team. The head coach is ultimately responsible for overseeing the development of all the players on that team. The head coach may delegate certain responsibilities, but is viewed by the club as the single focal point for the development of the young athletes that form that team.

Each head coach may appoint one or two “assistant(s)” coach(es) for each team. If the head or assistant coach is unavailable, another may fill in for that practice or game and if, and only if, they have successfully filled out and passed the Volunteer Disclosure Form process, and with the permission of the head coach and remaining coach. If both the head coach and assistant coach are unavailable, then the practice or game must be rescheduled.

Head coaches may request a particular assistant coach work with them, but the BESC Board of Directors reserves the right to reassign assistants to meet the objectives of the club overall. At least one of the assistant coaches must be licensed.

Coaching Roles

The BESC supports the following coaching roles within the club. Not all roles apply in each age group or for each season.

Director of Coaching

This Board of Director position is usually held by an experienced and highly trained coach within the club. This person has the primary responsibility to improve the overall coaching talent within the club, and is the primary resource to the other coaching positions in the club.

Head Coach

The head coach is the person appointed by the BESC that is responsible for overseeing the overall operation of an individual team and the development of all players on that team. The primary responsibilities of the head coach are described within this document, but include items such as assisting with tryout and team selection processes, collecting player fees, assisting with clinics, communicating with players and parents, scheduling opponents, planning and executing practice plans, as well as traditional coaching duties.

Assistant Coach

The assistant coach performs a subset of the head coaching duties as delegated by the head coach or age group director. They share the responsibility for development of all the players on the team, and fulfill the head coaching duties if the head coach is unavailable and should be certified.

Coaching Mentor

This is an experienced head coach appointed to help a less experienced head coach in a variety of ways including suggesting talent-appropriate opponents, offering coaching technique tips, assisting with development of practice plans, and advice or guidance on general club operations. In this document, there is frequent reference to consulting the BESC Director of Coaching (BESC Coaching Director) for more information. In virtually every instance, a Coaching Mentor can be consulted instead if that is more convenient for you.

Expectations

Regardless of the coaching position, there are common expectations the BESC has of its coaching staff, most of which are “common sense” expectations. Failure to meet these expectations can be a reason for dismissal from the club.

Expectations include:

- Coaches are expected to be as committed to coaching as the players are committed to playing. Coaches that are consistently absent or unable to make the time commitments necessary to perform the job are not serving the club and the player development mission.
- Coaches are expected to be positive role models for our players. Behavior which would not be tolerated in players will not be tolerated in our coaches. In particular the Soccer Maine Zero Tolerance policy is taken very seriously by the BESC. The Zero Tolerance policy can be viewed online at the Soccer Maine web site at <http://www.soccermaine.com/pages/04zerotolerancepolicy.html>.
- Coaches shall conform to the policies and philosophies of the BESC. Coaches that wish to coach in programs that offer radically different approaches are free to seek opportunities outside of the BESC.
- Coaches are expected to curb personal desires to win games, and focus on player development. A coach’s desire to win a particular game shall not outweigh the benefit of developing players, young athletes in general, and the principles of good sportsmanship. Please note that we are not telling our coaches not to try to win a particular game, but to balance that effort against the player development mission we carry.
- Coaches will behave in an ethical manner at all time, and not knowingly violate the FIFA Laws of the Game or Soccer Maine rules regarding player eligibility, tournament rules, recruitment, or additional requirements as may be established in the future and as described in the appropriate Soccer Maine Coaching Handbooks.
- Coaches are expected to communicate openly and honestly with parents, players, and BESC Board members.
- Coaches shall treat all players equally, fairly, and without bias within the guidelines and policies we have adopted. Coaches will not single out individual players for ridicule or in any way intentionally encourage players to exit the Soccer Club for reasons not approved by the BESC Board of Directors.
- Coaches will not put their needs or the needs of their children on the team ahead of the needs of the entire team. Preferential treatment of the coach’s own child is unfair and prohibited.

If a coach is found to be in violation of the above expectations, the BESC Director or Coaching or other board member will work with the coach to bring him or her into compliance. Consistent or flagrant violation of these expectations will result in referral of the coach to an BESC board appointed disciplinary committee, which will recommend a course of action to the Board of Directors up to and including removal from the BESC club and banishment from coaching within the club.

Getting Started

Being a new coach can be overwhelming at first, but there is an extensive support structure behind you to help make the process easier. All coaches new to Bonny Eagle Soccer Club, and certain returning coaches based upon age group, will need to accomplish the following tasks.

Volunteer Disclosure Form

Soccer Maine requires all soccer volunteers that come into frequent contact with the players and youth involved in the sport to complete a volunteer disclosure form. This form is used to validate against sex offender registries and other known, public data bases to help protect the youth involved in our sport. Filling this form out is mandatory. The BESC Registrar is your key contact point and the person the completed forms need to be provided to. These forms are kept confidential by the club, but a copy must be filed with Soccer Maine. At the start of the season, we will also post specific link information within the “For Our Coaches” section of the web site.

This form must be filled out annually. Even if you coached with the BESC in previous years and completed the form, a new form must be completed at the start of every fall season.

Contact the BESC Registrar with any questions about the Volunteer Disclosure Form.

Coaching Certification

It is a Soccer Maine requirement, and Bonny Eagle Soccer Club policy, that all coaches must be certified at the appropriate age group level. Coaches that are not certified will not be permitted to be on the sidelines at Soccer Maine sponsored tournaments and festivals. Each team may have no more than three coaches on the sidelines, but must have at least one or will be forfeited from the competition. Coaches should retain their proof of license and carry this document along with player passes to all such tournaments. For coaches that achieve certification near the tournament date, please make arrangements with the certification class leader to obtain a letter indicating successful completion of the course in lieu of the proof of license.

Certification is managed by Soccer Maine, and classes are held at times and locations of their choosing. The BESC Board works with Soccer Maine to ensure sufficient classes are held in dates and locations convenient to Bonny Eagle District, but as a club we do not control these decisions.

Courses

Certification level requirements are:

Age Group	License	Description
U9 & U10	U10 Youth Module	A four hour course that addresses the most basic of situations and skills
U11 to U14	"E" License	A sixteen hour course, often taught in four 4-hour segments, which teach basic skills and tactics, with field time mixed with classroom exercises.
	"D" License	A forty hour course, including a field examination that must be passed to achieve the license, which covers advanced tactics. While not required to coach in the club, the BESC will reimburse coaches wishing to take the course (with concurrence of the BESC Coaching Director) and waive the player fee for the first child in the club if a head coach of a team.

The E license course has a prerequisite the U10 Youth Module. The D license course has a prerequisite the E license course. Coaches should retain their license information and provide a photocopy of successful course completion to the BESC Registrar.

Enrollment

To find the current certification course schedule, and to get enrollment information, first visit the Soccer Maine web site at:

<http://www.soccermaine.com/pages/01coachingcourses.html>

If no information is available, or if course information is out of date, then contact the Soccer Maine Coaching Director as indicated online at the Soccer Maine directory at:

<http://www.soccermaine.com/pages/01directory.html>

Please note that many courses are scheduled late summer and early into the season, so continue to recheck the Soccer Maine web site for updated course information. Finally, as course announcements are sent to the club presidents, these e-mail messages will be forwarded to all the coaches involved.

Completion

All education courses need to be completed prior to participation in Soccer Maine festivals and championships, which are normally contested from mid-October to early November.

You must attend all segments of a course to complete certification. However, with prior permission of the course instructor, you may miss one session and make up that same portion of the agenda at a different location. If you need to have this flexibility, you must work with the class instructor directly. The BESC cannot intervene in this matter.

To help us track certification attainment, please notify the BESC Registrar via e-mail when you have successfully completed any course, and provide a photocopy of your certificate as soon as you receive it.

Reimbursement

The BESC will reimburse you for the cost of these courses if you are appointed as a coach for the particular age group. Please note that the BESC will not reimburse you for taking courses above your current level (e.g. taking an E license course while still a U10 coach), unless you have the prior approval of the BESC Coaching Director.

Advanced Licenses

While not required by Soccer Maine or the BESC, there are many additional levels of licensing available to coaches. In keeping with the BESC philosophy of attracting and training top level coaching talent, the BESC funds a limited number of "D" license courses for coaches in the club. If you are interested in becoming D license certified, contact the BESC Coaching Director to find out if budget exists for the BESC to pay for the license. D license course information in Maine is posted to the same web site location as noted above, however many of these courses are offered out of state as well.

As an incentive to promote advanced education, the BESC has adopted a policy of refunding the equivalent of the first child tuition annually for all D-licensed head coaches, D-licensed age group directors, and D-licensed Director of Coaching. This credit applies to the season once the D-license is earned. If the D-license is earned mid-season, the Board of Directors shall have the authority to grant a full, partial, or no refund depending upon what point during the season the license is earned.

This credit is not applied to D-licensed assistant coaches. Also, there is no direct payment of the player fees to a D-licensed coach that doesn't have any child in the club. For questions concerning application of the fees for D-licensed head coaches, contact the BESC Treasurer.

Tryouts, Team Selection, & Player Notification

Tryouts

The BESC Coaching Director determines the dates, drills, scoring method, and roles needed for all BESC tryouts. Tryouts are normally held in May or June every year.

Past coaches will be asked to communicate tryout information to all parents, usually via an e-mail distribution list. All coaches should contact players, who in the opinion of the coach show soccer aptitude, a willingness to learn more, and a desire to play at a more competitive level, and provide them appropriate information about the BESC and the tryout dates.

All coaches are expected to attend all age-appropriate tryout sessions if requested by the BESC Coaching Director. The BESC Coaching Director will appoint coaches to serve in one of several capacities:

- **Evaluator** – These coaches are responsible for evaluating and grading each of the players in a particular age group. There are two types of evaluators. Independent evaluators are those coaches invited by the Coaching Director to grade the players for an age group that they do not coach nor have children playing in. Age group evaluators are those coaches invited by the Coaching Director to grade the players for the age group they coach. The BESC may use either or both independent and age group evaluators to get multiple evaluations of the players to help best assess the overall capabilities of the players. This is more critical at the U12 and higher age groups, where separation of players by ability level is performed. In general all evaluators are the more experienced and more highly certified coaches within the club. The BESC may also use evaluators from outside the club. Instructions for scoring the tryouts will be provided to all evaluators as the tryouts approach.
- **Drill Leader** – These coaches are responsible for organizing the players and helping them execute the specific drills associated with the tryouts. Coaching should be kept to an absolute minimum, allowing the evaluators to judge core skills and playing ability. The drill leader is responsible for ensuring all players have an equal opportunity to be judged, for making sure different combinations of players are frequently used, and for explaining the drills and refereeing the associated games as they are executed.
- **Administration** – These coaches will assist board members and others with tasks such as registration, meetings with parents, recording scores, and any other organizational tasks that may need to be done at the field.

Evaluations

Evaluators must turn in all scores, and these scores will be computed by an appointed board member. Because of past issues with scores becoming divulged to players, who then use them as a point of ridicule in the worst of situations, the scores are confidential and individual scores are kept to the Coaching Director, Registrar, and President only. This group may, in specific instances where a right to know outweighs privacy concerns, share limited information with additional BESC personnel as required. The scores shall be used only for the purpose of team selection. It is expressly forbidden to share scores

with individual players or parents. If questioned about the score of a particular player by that player or his/her parents, you may refer them to the Coaching Director who will discuss in general terms their relative positioning compared to the age group as a whole, and the strengths and weaknesses for this player as determined in the tryout. The Coaching Director will not make comparisons to other specific individuals and their scores, nor make comments on the relative strength and weaknesses as determined in the tryouts of other players. The Coaching Director will not indicate which evaluators scored the player highest or lowest, but may indicate the general degree to which the tryout scores were alike or dissimilar without revealing how individual evaluators scored the player.

Team Selection

Head coaches will participate in the team selection process in certain defined instances. For the U9 through U11 age groups, team selection will be done by the board to balance teams. This may mean a coach has substantially different players than the previous year. Head coaches will receive team rosters and may raise concerns at that point with the Coaching Director and Registrar. However, only significant and tangible reasons to force a roster change will be considered. Changes for convenience, friendships, or other factors not related to our team selection criteria will not be entertained. Assistant coaches may participate in the absence of the head coach only.

Team selection for U12 and up will be based solely on tryout score. Head coaches will be consulted to choose among players that are tied in scoring for the remaining spot(s) on the roster, and whether they wish to add the top scoring goalkeepers to the roster based upon the score from a tryout specific to that position. Negotiation for players who score lower than the last spot available on the roster are not permitted.

Team selection will be facilitated by an assigned BESC board member, and will be conducted in a method of the Board's choosing to be consistent with the selection philosophy for the age group. Specific information will be provided prior to the team selection meeting. Team selection is targeted to be completed no later than two weeks upon the completion of tryouts.

Final approval for all teams and the associated selection of players rests with the Board of Directors. Upon the completion of team selection, the Board will set a date to approve the teams as selected or make necessary changes. Coaches should not communicate selection information to players until notification from the Board has been received.

Guidelines for Playing Time

At the U10, U11 and U12 age groups, coaches should strive to provide all players equal playing time during a season.

At the U13 and U14 age group, coaches will use discretion in playing time but all players should play at least 15 minutes of each half of game.

At all age groups, players may receive less playing time for failing to participate in all practices and games, or for disciplinary reasons.

Notification of Players

Once the Board has approved the team selection, head coaches are expected to contact all players on their roster within one week and notify them of their placement on the team. **This must happen within one week of the final board approval of the team selections.** Please realize that the process of trying out for the BESC can be a difficult and anxious experience for the players involved. Timely communication from all the coaches can lessen the anxiety of many players, who will not have a large gap in time between their friends hearing from a coach and their receipt of a phone call. If the head coach is unable to make the calls in a timely manner, the assistant coach should conduct the phone calls instead. Remember, it's preferred to call and let them know not to worry and then follow up with more information than to leave them hanging.

The BESC Registrar can provide the coaches with the telephone numbers for each player on their roster if that information isn't provided at the team selection night. Coaches are expected to contact the registrar to get the specific information needed, as many coaches have the necessary information from past years.

Probably the most difficult task for any coach in the club is to call the players who regrettably need to be cut from the program. This task falls to the head coach for the group involved. If multiple head coaches are in the age group, then this task may be divided among the players as appropriate. While there is no easy way to do this, we suggest that the coach thank the player for wanting to be part of the club, to provide some factual basis for what specific skills or abilities most need improvement, to encourage the player to continue to develop these skills by playing for Bonny Eagle District Community Services or Middle School program, and to encourage the player to tryout again in the future once they've worked on these skills. For specific information on the BESC policy regarding player cuts, please reference the Parent's Handbook.

Please remember that for many players and parents, the notification process is their first experience with an BESC coach. By using a reassuring and confident tone, you can go a long way to setting a great first impression with the club.

Organizing for the Season

There are several activities involved in planning your season and preparing for the first set of games. These tasks can be done in any order, but all are important items to accomplish.

Team Administrator

While the Board of Directors tries to simplify many of the administrative tasks and offload our coaches, there is a certain amount of communication and coordination that must be done by each team. Appointment of a good volunteer team administrator can offload the coaches and improve the flow of communication. Ideal qualities in the team administrator are:

- Willingness to perform the role
- Communication skills
- Organization skills

The tasks offloaded to the team administrator vary by team and head coach, but may include:

- Coordination of volunteers for tournaments
- Dissemination of directions, schedules, and team communication
- Reporting game results to the coaching director
- Coordination of team pictures and banquet activities
- Management to the BESC team web site
- Planning team meetings and end of season gathering, if desired
- Gathering of necessary paperwork
- Distribution of uniforms, merchandise, and other items ordered through the BESC
- Collection of coaching items needed for the season

Collecting Contact Information & Reconfirming Commitment

The BESC Registrar will provide you with much of your team contact information, but when calling and notifying the players on your team it is a good idea to gather and validate information such as e-mail addresses, name spelling information, addresses, and additional phone numbers. On occasion some players try out for the BESC, and subsequently decide not to commit to the club for the season for one of many possible reasons. For this reason, it is a good idea to validate as you call that the player is committed to playing the season.

The contact information should be retained by you, allowing you to build a distribution contact list in e-mail. You may also wish to provide this to your team administrator, so they can manage the overall communications if you so desire.

If you learn of any players that drop from the program after team selection, please notify the BESC Registrar as soon as possible. The BESC incurs fees for these players in Soccer Maine registration fees and uniform orders if this information is captured in a timely fashion. If you become concerned about the number of players on your team,

consult with the BESC Coaching Director to see if there are options to shift some players to your team prior to rosters becoming frozen.

Selection of Tournaments

The BESC traditionally funds every team to participate in two tournaments every year. This level of participation in tournaments is unmatched by most other clubs. The tournaments are:

1. Columbus Day Tournament of coach's choosing. Traditionally the BESC sends many teams to Sanford, ME for their tournament
2. U10 Festival, U11 Festival, Anthem Cup, or Challenge Cup tournaments.

Game Schedules

There are games that are organized by Soccer Maine on your behalf that are played against opponents within a league to which you are assigned. These are considered League Games, and are normally scheduled for each of six Sundays of the regular season. Then there are games that you are free to schedule on your own against opponents of your choosing. These are Open Scheduling Games, and normally Saturday dates are left "open" for scheduling of these games. Each of these are explained in more detail below.

League Games

To simplify arranging game schedules, Soccer Maine will take all the teams registering for a competition level (Challenge or Anthem Cup), an age group, and gender, and break them into up to four leagues. These leagues will consider geography, but in some instances, such as "U13 Boys Anthem Cup", it is possible that the "league" will consist of teams from across the entire state due to the limited numbers. Leagues normally will consist of four to seven teams per league, depending on the overall registration numbers across the state. Soccer Maine will appoint a "league director" who will be responsible for creating and publishing a league schedule. That schedule will be given to our club, and the BESC cannot control the teams formed as part of the league, the order of teams played, or the location of play.

League schedules should be created and published roughly mid-August. The most current information on league composition can be found in the appropriate Soccer Maine *Fall Travel League Handbook*.

Within each league, Soccer Maine will establish an appropriate game schedule for all six Soccer Maine approved weekends of play, which begins the weekend preceding Labor Day going up to the first weekend of league playoffs, excluding Labor Day and Columbus Day weekends. Soccer Maine has mandated that all league games be played on Sunday, leaving Saturday dates open to schedule other opponents as may be desired. That said, there will be situations where some teams must play on Saturday in order to build out a viable league schedule. In general, all teams will normally be scheduled for six (6) to ten (10) league games, with one or two games played each

Sunday for the six league play weekends indicated. As a coach, these games will be scheduled for you against like age & gender opponents from the other clubs.

Sometimes the league games will be played in a “round-robin” format. The host club for the games will play the first and last (third) games of the round robin. Visiting team #1 will play the first and second games, and visiting team #2 will play the second and third games. Home games are divided equally among all the clubs. In a ten game schedule with six weekends of play, each team should expect to be home not more than two of the weekends, meaning most teams will play at home two out of the six Sundays. It is possible some teams will only play home one Sunday out of the six, while a lucky few will get to play home three of the six.

The games times and fields will be set for you by the BESC Field Coordinator. Once established, the BESC Coaching Director or other Board member will forward you the schedule. The schedule must be played as provided. However, if you have any specific concerns about the schedule or wish to implement some schedule changes, then please consult the BESC Coaching Director for advice and counsel on how to accomplish this.

Other Means to Schedule Additional Games

Other means to find possible opposing coaches include:

- Speak to an experienced BESC coach in your age group, and ask them for contact information for other coaches they know that might be appropriate competition for your team. Likewise, you can attempt to combine games and opponents. For example, one U11 boys coach might agree schedule round robin games or “share opponents” for multiple Bonny Eagle District teams if all head coaches agree.
- Keep a list of age group coaches from the prior year, and call these coaches to find out if they still coach the team and would be interested in playing your team.
- Wait for the listing of coaches statewide to get published, and then contact these coaches. While in theory this would be the most effective means to find opponents, there are many clubs that are very slow to publish their information and this listing often comes out long after the season has started and schedules are full. However, using the prior year listing and assuming all coaches move up one year in age group can be a valid help for some of the older teams.
- Go to the Soccer Maine web site (<http://www.soccermaine.com>) and click the “Clubs Online” link in the left navigation pane. This will bring you to a listing of the club web sites, and most provide a directory for their coaching staff online.

If all of the above fail, you can contact the BESC Coaching Director for advice. However, it is generally the responsibility of the head coach to find and schedule any additional games, if they are desired. Further, the BESC Board strongly encourages our U11 and up teams to use these additional games to play the most challenging teams you can find and schedule.

Schedule Home Game Fields & Times

For district games, coordinating of home field locations and game times will be done on your behalf. For any of the additional games, if the BESC will be the hosting club, we need to ensure adequate field space is available. The BESC Field Coordinator is the

contact point for this. Provide the date you want the game to be played, the opponent(s), the number of games involved, and any known time restrictions. The Field Coordinator will attempt to honor all game requests, but on occasion more teams will request access to fields than we can support for a given date. In this instance, games will be honored first come, first served up to a team home game maximum, which is dependent upon the fields available and the number of teams using that type of field configuration in the club. After this maximum is reached, teams not yet at their maximum will be given a higher priority when conflicts arise. League games take priority over open scheduling games.

The Field Coordinator will set game times. Our field game times will fall into fixed blocks to maximize field use and the number of games we are able to support in a given day. While you may request certain times, the Field Coordinator will also organize game times to run games consecutively, which allows us to more effectively assign referees to multiple games and keep the facilities open.

Once the Field Coordinator has confirmed the game times with you, you should contact the opposing coach and provide them the game time and field location information. Home games are usually played at one or more of the following:

- U12 through U14
 - Tory Hill Field – Saturday and Sunday
 - Middle School – Sunday mostly, with occasional Saturday access
- Hollis Rec Field – Sunday mostly, with occasional Saturday access
- U11
 - Tory Hill Field – Saturday and Sunday
- U9 and U10
 - Weymouth Park Field – Saturday and Sunday

Combined, the tournament games, district games, and additional games constitute the entire fall travel soccer season.

Parent's Meeting

One of the first activities for the coaching staff is to hold a meeting for the parents and the players combined. If the parents and players are all experienced with the BESC, this often can be more of a formality. If this is a new experience for all involved, it's a critical first introduction to the club.

At this meeting, you have several key duties.

1. Discuss your coaching qualifications. Explain what you personally hope to get out of the season, and how you will measure "success" in terms of our objective of player development. If appropriate, you can also ask the parents and the players to identify their objectives for the season.
2. Communicate your coaching philosophies. It is important that you explain how you will handle playing time, positional play, team dynamics and discipline, expectations of the players, and expectations of the parents.
3. Review the commitment expectations. Travel soccer is absolutely meant to be fun, but we also expect more in terms of attendance and involvement than Community Services. In particular, players are normally expected to be at all

- practices and games unless excused (illness, injury, academic priority). Parents are expected to bring players to events on time.
4. More information. The Parent's Handbook and other information is available on the BESC web site. Questions should first be brought to your coach, and then to any Board member if the coach cannot resolve the issue for you.

We have provided a sample discussion outline on the following page, which can be used to help you build your own discussion agenda for the parents meeting.

Parent's Meeting Agenda

1. Collect contact information (parent names, e-mail, cell phones, etc.)
2. Welcome to Bonny Eagle Soccer Club. We are a "travel soccer" club, under the Soccer Maine state organization, which in turn is a member of US Youth Soccer. We are a "competitive" program, with higher levels of commitments and expectations for our players, coaches, and parents alike.
3. Our mission is "player development", which is defined as helping each player reach their greatest soccer potential. We do this through extensive training and game experience using licensed soccer coaches augmented by paid soccer professionals.
4. Describe your soccer experience, goals, and objectives for the season.
5. U9 through U11, all games and tournaments are considered "non-result oriented." That means the players are all still competing hard to win, but as a coach staff we will still rotate kids around, and may not always have our "strongest" players in the right positions during games. No state champions are declared for these age groups. U12 through U14 do have state championships, and during tournaments we may attempt to "match up" and test our development of players in critical game situations.
6. Player and parent commitment is critical. We need the whole team at all practices and games, as often as possible. If you cannot attend a practice or a game for a valid reason such as illness, family emergency, unique academic (school) events, etc., please contact a coach as soon as possible.
7. The season will begin with clinics the start of August. Team practices will also begin in August. League games start the last weekend in August and with the exception of Labor Day, run every weekend through October. U13 & U14 will run into November. Schedules should be out shortly.
8. Our expectations of all BESC parents are clearly stated in the Parent's Handbook which is on the BESC web site, but bears repeating. However, again, remind them that this is a volunteer based club and the more volunteers are willing to do will only improve the club.
9. Other?

Starting the Season

As the first set of practices and games begins to approach, there are some coordination items that you will need to be aware of and help manage.

Equipment Needs

The BESC Equipment Director should be able to order you all the necessary equipment, and provide this to you prior to your first practice in early August. The following equipment is supplied to you by the BESC. You are expected to return all equipment once you no longer coaching in the BESC or once the equipment is no longer required. Additional equipment not listed on this page is the responsibility of the players. Note, not all equipment listed is new, such as soccer balls, and coaches are expected to reuse previously issued equipment until the useful life is exceeded.

Item	Quantity	Description
Game Balls	Two per team	Game balls are higher quality than practice balls and should be reserved for game situations. Again place "BESC" and coach's name on the ball.
Pinnies	One per rostered player	Pinnies are used in practice situations to help identify teams for small sided games, and in game situations if the opponent has substantially similar colors to the SBESC uniforms.
Cones	About 20	Used to denote playing space, goals, and any other purpose for training.
Ice Packs	5-7 per team	Used to keep on hand for medical needs
First Aid Kits	One per team	Used to keep on hand for medical needs
Corner Flags	4 per team	Used for home games. One flag per corner of the field to mark out the field dimensions

Again, coaches are expected to reuse equipment from previous years, and to return all equipment once their ongoing coaching commitments to the BESC have come to an end. Unsafe or worn equipment can always be turned into the BESC Equipment Director for replacement. Equipment costs for the BESC are very substantial, and your help in managing these costs effectively helps us keep the player fees more affordable.

You should contact the BESC Equipment Director for any of these items prior to your first practice and arrange for a mutually agreeable time to pick everything up. The BESC Coaching Director will manage the distribution of coaching jackets, and you will be notified if there is ample supply to distribute a new one to you.

Practice Fields and Time

Who? Referee Assignor?

Practice Location

All practices will be held at the Tory Hill area in Buxton located at the intersection of Rt. 202 and Rt. 112. The club is graciously granted use of both the big Weymouth Park field and Pinkham fields free of charge.

Uniforms

Uniforms will be handed out by coach or team administrator at the first practice.

Official Rosters

Prior to tournaments, all BESC head coaches should obtain from the BESC Registrar an official, stamped state roster. Coaches should check the roster carefully to ensure all players are listed, the information on the roster is accurate, and that the roster bears the stamped signature of the State Registrar for Soccer Maine. Any roster discrepancies should be immediately reported to the BESC Registrar for correction. Roster changes requested after the official Soccer Maine roster freeze date, as identified in the appropriate Soccer Maine *Fall Travel Handbook*, cannot be made. Any player not listed properly on the official roster will not be allowed to play in any subsequent tournaments and festivals.

After the roster freeze date, you should obtain another official roster from the BESC Registrar. This will be identical to the other rosters, but additionally bear the stamp "FROZEN" at the top to signify no further changes can be made. The official "frozen" roster is required at the season ending district playoffs, state championships, and U10/U11 festival competitions.

Also make an extra copy of the official roster. Rosters you turn in at any tournament or festival are retained by the tournament hosts, and will not be returned to you. If you misplace or lose your last copy of the official roster, contact the BESC Registrar to obtain another copy.

Player Passes

In addition to rosters, every player and coach on each team must have a valid player pass. The player pass contains a photograph and signature of the player, which is used to validate the individual player claimed on the roster with the player at the field. Player passes are only used at certain tournaments and not league play, but it is still a good practice to have the player passes with you at all times. The BESC Registrar will provide you with all the player passes matched to the official team roster. Each player pass must bear the stamped signature of the Soccer Maine state registrar.

Player Picture

On the back of each player pass, you must affix a picture of the player. It must fit within the space allotted, which is approximately 1.5"x2". From experience, a team administrator or other parent should take a digital photo of each player and coach on the team. If you then print the images using the "Photo Printing Wizard" that is part of the Windows XP and other operating systems, and select "Contact Sheet Prints" (35 per

page), the photos are usually just about the right size to affix to the back of the player pass. Use a glue stick or other permanent means to affix the picture. If you have questions on how to best address the photo requirement, please discuss this with the BESC Registrar.

Player Signature

Also on the back of the pass, each player must sign the pass. **It is very important that the signature on the back match exactly the name as printed on the front of the pass!** Signatures using nicknames or spellings different than what is shown on the front may result in that player being declared ineligible for end of season play. Ensure players use cursive. For younger players where cursive writing can be a significant challenge, have that player attempt to do it the best they can. In the end, if there is a challenge about the legitimacy of a certain player, their signature may be used to demonstrate they signed the pass originally issued.

Retaining Passes

Player passes should always be retained by the coach. Replacement passes are very difficult if not impossible to obtain. For that reason, many coaches use plastic sheets or lamination to protect them and ensure photos stay affixed. Passes may be surrendered to a tournament director, but coaches should also reclaim any passes prior to departing a tournament.

At any tournament that checks rosters and player passes, please plan to have your entire team arrive early, very often one hour to 30 minutes prior to the start of your first game. Players should line up in the order listed on the official roster, with player passes in hand. Tournament officials will then match the pass information and photo with the player and the roster. More information on proper tournament procedures will be provided by the club that is hosting the particular tournament you have selected. Based upon historical precedent:

Date	Hosting Club/Tournament	Roster/Pass Requirements
Labor Day	Cumberland Kick-Off	Neither rosters nor player passes required
	All Others	Check with tournament officials
Columbus Day	Falmouth	State signed roster and player passes are required
	Patriot Crossroad Challenge	State signed roster and player passes are required
	Sanford	State signed roster and player passes are required
	York Harvest Cup	State signed roster and player passes are required
	All Others	Check with tournament officials
October / November	U10 Festival	State signed roster, with "Frozen" stamp, and player passes are required
	U11 Festival	State signed roster, with "Frozen" stamp, and player passes are required

	Anthem Cup (District & States)	State signed roster, with "Frozen" stamp, and player passes are required
	Challenge Cup (District & States)	State signed roster, with "Frozen" stamp, and player passes are required

Upon conclusion of the season, coaches should retain the player passes if spring league play is planned. The player passes also serve as proof of registration and insurance for the players, if playing in indoor winter facilities that are licensed and covered by Soccer Maine. Any questions concerning rosters and player passes should be referred to the BESC Registrar.

During the Season

Now you are ready to play the first set of games. Here is some helpful information to keep the season running smoothly.

Coaching Clinic Participation

Our coaches are expected to participate in any coaching clinics. The BESC Coaching Director will organize clinics to help improve the overall coaching capabilities of our staff. Information on the clinics, their timing, and contribution of ideas or drills to share in clinics will be communicated at various points during the season.

Away Games

As a rule, one of the coaches or the team administrator should call the home coach to validate the game information. The key information to obtain is game time and game location with directions. The BESC web site contains directions for a great many of the field and towns that have been used in the past. However, there are always new clubs and existing clubs with new fields joining the leagues. Therefore, it is good practice validate all this information. Nothing is more frustrating than driving to another town, only to find no opponent to play. Direct communication with the home team coach is the best way to reduce the odds that this occurs.

The Board of Directors will provide our coaches with a list of other club's coaches, phone numbers, and (if available) e-mail addresses as soon as the information is gathered by Soccer Maine and distributed to everyone. We suggest trying to validate games 72 to 48 hours prior to the date and time of the game, unless you have heard from the home coach prior to this.

Home Games

One of the coaches or the team administrator should call the visiting head coach(es) to validate the game information. You should ensure the visiting teams know the game time(s), field directions, and that you have "emergency" contact information such as a cell phone number in case of a last minute change. We ask that these calls occur no later than 72 hours prior to the game. Generally it is good practice to call early the week prior to the game, so there is no confusion and ample time to make adjustments if necessary.

If playing a round robin, it is customary for the home team to play the first and last games. This is done because the home coach is responsible for ensuring the field is set up prior to the first game, and cleaned up after the last game.

Referees & Referee Assignors

The role of the referee assignor is to appoint referees for all home games. The appropriate referee assignor for your age group will locate and assign referees for all your home games.

One of the coaches or the team administrator should contact the BESC referee assignor 24 hours prior to the appropriate home game, if you haven't been contacted earlier, to validate referees are assigned and to get the referee contact information in case of game cancellation. In general our referee assignors locate game referees between one week and 72 hours before the designated match, so don't expect communication much before that. Once referee assignments are confirmed, the assignors will communicate the assignments to referees and coaches.

For insurance reasons, coaches may never assign their own referees. Doing so voids the insurance policy carried by Soccer Maine and exposes the players, coaches, the referee(s), and the club to potential lawsuits.

Field Preparation

The BESC coaches are responsible for the preparation of fields. A field set-up day will be planned each year where all coaches are expected to participate.

Immediately prior to any home game, coaches should quickly walk the field and remove any debris that could potentially cause injury or alter the course of the game, such as sticks or trash. Coaches should also validate that the nets are properly positioned and anchored so they won't tip over (usually with sandbags placed to weight them down).

Having the nets anchored with sandbags is required, and our referees are instructed not to permit a game to begin until this has occurred!

Each coach will be given a set of corner flags from the BESC Storage Shed and place them at the corner of the field for each game. These should never be left at the field.

Referee Fees

Payment of referee fees will be the responsibility of the coaches at each home game. You will be responsible for collecting money from the visiting team in order to pay the referees at the end of each game. This might be a good assignment for the team administrator.

Reporting Results

The BESC asks coaches to keep track of results and periodically report these results to the Director of Coaching. The purpose for collecting this information varies, and includes:

- Used for seeding purposes in district playoffs for age groups U13 and higher
- Used for bracketing teams with like ability at the U10 thru U12 festivals
- Used to assess our overall competitiveness

- Used to determine where investments in additional training may be most beneficial

The BESC Board does not use game results to compare coaches or teams. The results are kept in confidence, and used solely for legitimate Soccer Maine or BESC player development purposes.

Game Cancellations

Game cancellations naturally occur during the course of a season for a variety of reasons. If a home game is cancelled, for any reason, you need to notify the Field Coordinator and the Referee Assignor both so the game slot can be freed for another team and referees are not assigned to the game. Cancellations made once the referee assignments have been posted and communicated should be communicated by the head coach directly to the referees. For any cancellation made 48 hours or less before the game start time, you should phone as well as e-mail everyone involved.

In general, travel soccer games are played in conditions that community services soccer might cancel. That said, most game cancellations occur because of increment weather or unplayable conditions, which are game time decisions. The decision to play or not play a game ultimately rests with the hosting coach. In the event weather appears it might affect play for a given date, you should plan to contact the opposing coach at a set time and make a determination prior to commencement of travel if at all possible.

If you are the home coach, use your judgment as a guide. Here are some helpful questions to ask in making the decision to cancel a game or not.

- Are the conditions dangerous, such as lightning, and is there increased risk of injury because of these conditions?
- Will playing on the fields do significant damage to them, hindering play later in the season?
- Are the playing conditions on the field likely to change the outcome or how the game is played, such as significant standing water?
- Can the game be easily rescheduled?

If the answer to any of the above questions is true, then it is probably wise to cancel the game. If you are the visiting coach, and feel strongly that the conditions are dangerous, then you have the right to refuse to play the game. In some instances the BESC will be liable for full payment of the referee fees, but the club will stand beside the decisions of our coaches who err on the side of safety.

If you cancel a home game, you need to contact the opposing coach, all your players, and the assigned referees. It is very important to contact the referees if games are cancelled, because the BESC must pay them by Soccer Maine mandate if they appear for a scheduled game, regardless of whether the game is played or not. Accordingly, failure to communicate with referees will count as two games (because referee fees are not split) toward your team's maximum number of games allowed. Contact with these individuals should be done by phone call and direct conversation and not e-mail or web site posting, which usually aren't as consistently checked (unless you have pre-arranged to use these mediums with all involved). Your team administrator and coaching staff can help perform the phone calls to distribute the burden of communication.

Finally, within 72 hours, you should communicate the cancellation to your referee assignor and the field coordinator. The communication is necessary so we avoid overpayments to referees and the district for cancelled games. Communication via an e-mail message is fine for this purpose.

Game Situations

Shortage of Referees

The BESC and the referee assignors work very hard to make sure we have the best qualified referees available to work all games. However, as can happen on occasion, a referee will sometimes not appear for a game for a variety of possible reasons. If playing a game with only one referee (U10 and below), the BESC Head Coach should first attempt to call the referee based upon information provided to you by your assignor. If no response or the referee will not attend the game, then you may work with the opposing coach to determine if a suitable, knowledgeable, and objective adult can and will serve as referee. Ideally this volunteer will be a US Soccer Federation certified referee. The game should be played as a “scrimmage”, and results are not official. Safety of the players is most important, and at the youngest age groups the referee does as much “instruction” as actual officiating. If a suitable volunteer cannot be found, then the game should be cancelled.

At U11 and higher, there is a three referee system used. If one or more referees don't show up, then the head coach should first attempt to call the missing referee. If that fails to resolve the situation, then of the remaining referees one will serve as the “center” referee for the match. The other referee will serve as an assistant referee. If there is a willing, knowledgeable, and objective adult that can serve as a “club linesman”, that person may fill in if the opposing coach and referees present agree. The club linesman role is limited to assisting the center referee with out of bounds and offside situations. They may not call fouls or contribute to other on field decisions.

In all cases, please report missing referees promptly to the referee assignor. Missing a confirmed game is a serious offense for our referees, and such behavior can result in refusal by the BESC to assign this particular referee any future games.

Referee Concerns

If you are concerned about the competency of a particular set of referees, it is inappropriate to confront the referees during the course of play or berate them from the sidelines. Our preferred method of addressing these situations is to have the coach calmly and factually discuss any concerns with the center referee during halftime. Comments such as “I'm getting concerned the play is becoming too physical” or “can you ask your assistant referees to pay closer attention to offside calls” would be acceptable, and most referees accept it in the spirit of cooperation it's being offered. Asking for clarification on a ruling during the game is also appropriate. Comments such as “you really blew that call,” “I'm going to see you never referee another game again,” or “your assistant referees are horrible” are inappropriate and not helpful to the players.

While this may seem common sense, our club unfortunately has to deal with situations where our coaches express these exact comments every season.

Expressing concerns at the end of the game directly to the referee, other than for rule clarification, is generally not helpful either.

If as a coach and upon having “slept” upon the situation for 24 hours believe there was a case of clear incompetence involved, you should express the concerns to the BESC President and BESC Director of Referees for both home games and away games. For our home games, feedback on quality of referees is helpful so we know who is advancing in this profession. For away games, we will provide through the club president channel appropriate feedback to the referee assignor of the home club so they too can improve.

Please keep a few points in mind. Most of our referees are very young adults, and it can be very intimidating to talk back to an adult coach. They are learning to be good referees, but are going to make mistakes same as young soccer players make mistakes playing the game. It is very important to teach our players to play the game as it is called, and adapt their style of play accordingly. Also, referees are paid but their pay generally covers the cost of referee uniforms, education, and related items. Most are doing this job for a love of helping the kids, improving their knowledge of the game, and a passion for soccer. One overbearing coach can dampen that enthusiasm very quickly. Please take an approach of working to help make our referee pool better, which serves our club best in the long run.

Parent Concerns

If a particular parent or fan is overly boisterous, or unruly in behavior, it’s the head coach’s responsibility to help address that situation. In general, there are three situations that need to be addressed. First, the parent or fan is acting in a way that it is a significant distraction to the learning and fun for all the players on the team. Second, the parent or fan is acting in a manner that is clearly contrary to the zero tolerance policy (whether or not the zero tolerance policy is invoked by the referee). Third, the parent or fan is clearly under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or is using tobacco products on school grounds. In any of these situations the head coach should:

1. Attempt to speak to the parent or fan one on one and let them know they must immediately alter the behavior. If there is a group of parents or it’s a general warning to all parents, it can be done in group settings.
2. If the parent or fan refuses to change their behavior, then the practice or game should be stopped (with the referee’s consent) and will not resume until the offending individual moves to a distance away (e.g. parking lot) such that they are no longer an influence on the game or practice.
3. If the parent or fan still refuses to change their behavior, the remainder of the game or practice should be cancelled (with the referee’s consent), and you should notify the BESC Board of Directors for appropriate disciplinary action.
4. If you have a legitimate concern of physical or verbal abuse, you should contact the Bonny Eagle District police department to ensure order is retained.

In general, the BESC Board should be informed of any significant event that happens that the field that may need to be addressed or demonstrates a continued behavior that

reflects poorly on the BESC. Situations that are exceptions and are handled in a civil manner without the need to invoke the zero tolerance policy don't necessarily need to be reported unless there is a history of this behavior. Any situation where the zero tolerance policy is invoked, should have been invoked, or any parent, player, fan, or coach needs to be removed from the field must be brought to the attention of the Board of Directors promptly.

“Blow-Outs”

On some occasions, as may happen with differing philosophies and capabilities relative to youth soccer, BESC teams may be on the winning or losing end of a lopsided match. If this occurs, the following are guidelines you may use to help manage the situation.

If the BESC team is overmatched, the other coach may perform certain actions to manage down the score. Do not construe these actions to embarrass the Bonny Eagle District team. With your players, stress small victories, and encourage the kids to focus on the small victories towards improved skills. Examples include trying to win back possession of the ball, to execute a certain number of successful ball control passes, to focus on getting shots on goal (instead of goals), or any other measure that can be counted and are personal challenges requiring execution of techniques taught in practice. Remind the players that we aspire to improve, and playing the best teams helps make all our teams better.

If the BESC team overmatches the competition, we generally ask our coaches to impose a greater challenge on our players to make the effort to score a greater burden, and demonstrate a greater level of skill than the game might normally otherwise require. In general, the preferred method is to voluntarily play a “man down” such that the BESC team has fewer players on the field than the opponent, creating a more balanced match. This should be done in as subtle a manner as possible, and you should generally let the center referee know this is your intent so undue attention is not accidentally called to this situation. Other possible options to increase the scoring difficulty include:

- Playing “1”, “2” or “3” touch maximums to force passing and movement
- Requiring a minimum number of passes (often 5 or more) prior to any shot
- Shots may only be headers, or must be played with any part of the body other than feet
- Shots must be from beyond a certain distance (such as outside penalty area)
- Shots must be played with opposite foot

In general, the BESC does not recommend that we tell the players to stop shooting and scoring all together. Doing so removes the overall incentive in playing the game, and is a significant deterrent to the fun our players experience on game days. We believe increasing the level of difficulty mandated can still accomplish the player development mission, and preserve the goal of not embarrassing or discouraging a less skilled opponent.

If playing at a competitive age group in a competitive tournament or playoff situation, coaches have latitude to ensure factors such a goal differential and goals allowed are maintained to support the competitive position of the BESC team playing.

Player Discipline

The BESC gives our coaches reasonable latitude to set and enforce reasonable disciplinary penalties for players on their team. Discipline should be used in situations where the actions or behavior of one player are a detriment to the learning or enjoyment of others. Examples of this behavior would include “goofing off” in practices, picking on or action that imposes risk of injury to teammates, and refusal to follow coaching instruction. Coaches may also impose disciplinary penalties for players that have unexcused absences from practices or other critical team functions. Note that school (academic) functions take precedent over soccer, and we ask our coaches to understand these young athletes have many other important activities in their lives that need to be balanced. Disciplinary penalties should not be imposed for purposes linked to “ability”, such as a player’s inability to perform a particular soccer skill.

Penalties within the coach’s jurisdiction to impose include:

- Laps, sit-ups, or some other physical activity to release pent up energy
- Sitting out a particular drill or portion of a practice until the behavior corrects itself
- Sitting out a portion of the next game (usually not more than 50% of the game)

Coaches should make sure the player understands the behavior (cause) for the disciplinary action. Normal team discipline situations do not require notification of the BESC Board. We insist that the discipline be applied fairly and evenly to all players on the team, that the penalty be communicated and clear to all in advance, and that each situation be addressed with open and honest discussion of what behavior or actions crossed the line and must not occur to avoid future situations.

If the behavior is so egregious that these penalties are not sufficient, the coach should bring the event(s) to the attention of the BESC Coaching Director who will convene a disciplinary committee meeting as appropriate. The Board of Directors must be involved in any situations that warrant suspensions of one full game or more, suspensions from practice, dismissal from the team, or banishment from the club.

Team Photographs

Each coach (or team administrator if you delegate this function) should seek one parent volunteer to take team, action, and candid photographs during the season that will subsequently be used for the season ending banquet. In general, it’s easier to take photos at different points during the season, rather than waiting for the end of the season and possibly missing certain players or taking photographs in poor weather. More information about the number of pictures required and process for submitting them in time for the banquet will be provided by the BESC Board of Directors during the season.

Team Web Site Administration (Optional)

As part of the BESC overall web site, we establish team “sites within the site” that may be used for your purposes to communicate team specific information. Use of this team site is optional. If you intend to use it for communication purposes, a team “webmaster” needs to be appointed, authorized, and trained to use the web site functions. Contact the BESC Web Master for more information and to obtain instructions for managing the site. If you choose not to leverage this site, the BESC will load basic team information on the site and leave it static for the full season.

Wrapping Up The Season

The season has just ended, and hopefully your team has had a wonderful, fun, and successful season. Here is what happens at the end of the season.

BESC Banquet

The BESC normally holds a season ending banquet between 1 and 4 weeks upon completion of the fall state championships. The banquet is held in the Bonny Eagle High School Auditorium.

More information on the banquet will be provided as it approaches. However, coaches should attend and have the following responsibilities at the banquet:

1. Gathering players by team and general monitoring of behavior during the event.
2. Introduction of team members and presentation of awards.

As some teams elect to have their own gathering, the BESC Banquet is not used to speak about each player. It is an opportunity to celebrate the season just passed and to provide a public forum to thank the coaches, players, parents, sponsors, and volunteers who have all contributed to the success of the BESC during the year.

Awards

To commemorate the season, the BESC normally provides some award that is presented to every player in the club. Coaches will hand these out at the banquet.

Slide Show

The team pictures, taken during the season, will be turned into the BESC banquet organizer and used for the slide show presentation. Specific deadlines and instructions will be provided during the season.

Equipment Return

If you intend to coach in the BESC again the following fall, or intend to coach during the winter or spring seasons (see the “During the Off-Season” section), you may retain all the BESC equipment issued. The BESC does not have sufficient storage capacity for all equipment if it is returned, so we ask our coaches to store it securely if possible.

If you will not be returning to the BESC as a coach, or the equipment is no longer adequate (e.g. need to use size 5 balls at U13 and wish to turn in size 4 balls), then contact the BESC Equipment Director to return the items. All other equipment that can be used by future BESC players should be returned as soon as possible.

During the Off-Season

While the BESC doesn't officially sponsor winter or spring teams, we provide reasonable logistical support to our coaches and players that wish to continue to train and play beyond the fall season. Playing in the winter or spring is completely voluntary, and coaches are under no obligation to sponsor teams if represents any conflict or concerns.

Winter Leagues

Indoor winter leagues are run in Saco, Portland, and Gorham among other locations. Sessions are usually about 8 weeks, and fees for these sessions vary based upon location and field configuration (e.g. full field or half field games). As a coach, you are free to select the players you want, pick the location and age group you want to play in, and decide the per player fees to cover the session cost. The BESC will provide you the following logistics and services:

- Use of the BESC name, if desired, for your team name
- Use of BESC equipment (balls, pinnies, keeper jerseys, etc.)
- Broadcast e-mails for certain age groups regarding open slots on teams
- For Soccer Maine approved facilities (revalidated annually), coverage for insurance and liability under the Soccer Maine umbrella policy.

To get more information about sessions, dates, costs, and registration forms, see:

Facility	Location	Web Site
Gorham Sports Center	215 Narragansett St. Gorham, ME	http://www.gorhamsportscenter.com/
Sportszone	North Street Saco, ME	http:// www.smsportszone.com/
Portland Sports Center	512 Warren Ave. Portland, ME	http://www.portlandsportscenter.com/

Spring (Pine Tree) League

Soccer Maine sponsors the Pine Tree League in the spring, which are far more informal than the fall season. For spring play, as with winter, the BESC provides the same support as described above for winter leagues, plus the following additional services.

- Coordination with Bonny Eagle District Community Services to locate available field space for practices and games.
- Coordination of lining of fields.
- Referee assignment for games.

Please note that the BESC does not directly pay referees for the spring league. Coaches should pay referees directly. The BESC will simply assign referees for these games.

For more information about the Soccer Maine spring league, view the *Spring Season Handbook* available on the Soccer Maine web site (contained within the “Handbook” section).

Useful Information

Bonny Eagle Soccer Club

The most useful source of information for parents is the Bonny Eagle Soccer Club web site. The web site will contain the most current information about the season, key contact information, and for most teams the latest game and practice schedules.

Our URL is: <http://www.besoccerclub.org>

The left navigation bar has links to each of the appropriate subcategories for information.

FIFA

Many parents are new to the rules of soccer, and some of the rules are modified for the younger age groups to support player development objectives. If you have a deep desire to better understand the rules of the game, you may go to Federation International de Football Association, or FIFA, which is the worldwide soccer governing body. The current rules of the game can be found on their web site.

The FIFA URL is:

<http://www.fifa.com/en/index.html>

Rules of the game (2004):

http://www.fifa.com/fifa/handbook/laws/2004/LOTG2004_e.pdf

Soccer Maine

Likewise, the Soccer Maine web site has many useful links for parents, including a link to locate all of the other travel soccer clubs with an online web site and a document that list the “rule modifications” appropriate for U11, U10, and U9 age groups.

The URL for Soccer Maine is:

<http://www.soccermaine.com>

Online club listing:

<http://www.soccermaine.com/pages/01clubsonline.html>

Rule Modifications:

http://www.soccermaine.com/01fall_laws.pdf

The URL for US Youth Soccer is:

<http://www.usysa.org/>