

FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAME,¹

On the sidelines the other day a spectator asked, "Can they cross the halfway line?" She was speaking about the defenders. The coach had them playing between the goal area and the halfway line. The ball was 60 yards away in front of the other goal.

While some coaches enjoy the security of having the defenders stay on the defensive half of the field, this is not how the game should be played. Let me be clear: this is **BAD SOCCER!**

Even with small-sided games (3v3 or 5v5) some coaches make the mistake of placing a player in front of the goal. For a large part of the game these players stand and wait. They are not involved in the flow of the game. Why not try to win the ball farther up the field? Why not engage players at all times during the game?

GOOD SOCCER demands that players are always moving, always adjusting relative to the position of the ball. In other words, at any level of soccer, no player should stand still and wait.

Here's a question: If your team plays a 4-4-2 formation, how many defenders are there? The answer is 11! When the opposing team has the ball every player should be involved in trying to win the ball back and start a counter-attack. Likewise when the team is in possession of the ball all of your players should be on attack, working together to possess and score goals.

In **GOOD SOCCER** the defenders are involved in the attack. They move up into positions of support. They help the team keep possession. They can receive support passes (back passes). Good defenders will often overlap or combine with midfielders to set up scoring chances. On the best of teams the midfielders and defenders are switching positions during the flow of the game.

LET THEM CROSS THE HALFWAY LINE!

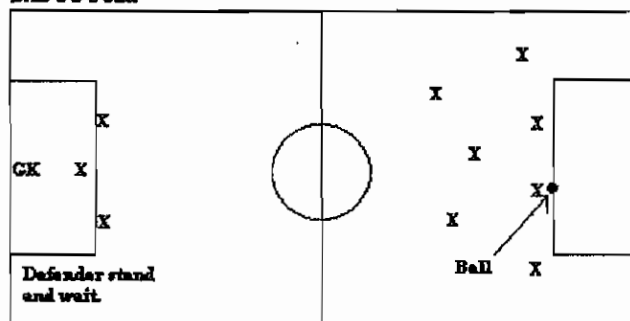
The first step is to have your defenders move up the field with the ball. The distance between the last defender and the forwards should rarely be more than 40 yards (for full-size 11 vs. 11 soccer). One defender should, whenever possible, try to win the ball BEFORE it crosses the halfway line. The other defenders can fall back in support and protect the space between the ball and the goal.

Here's the catch: playing good soccer might cost you some goals. At the youth levels, having a player stay back might actually win you some games. The player, after all, is in a good position to block shots. So why change? For one, you are trying to develop good all-round players. For two, your team is also trying to score goals. The farther down the field you gain possession, the better the scoring chances and the less your team has to work to achieve such. Lastly, if you play with goalkeepers, the goalkeeper should be encouraged to play like a "last defender," coming out of the box to close space between him/her and the defenders.

The goalkeeper should be encouraged to come out of the penalty area (the box) and play the ball with the feet. For many good teams, the goalkeeper acts like a "sweeper-keeper." As the ball moves away from the goal, the goalkeeper moves out from goal toward the top of the box. If a long pass comes at him/her the goalie runs out and kicks it away or to teammates with the feet.

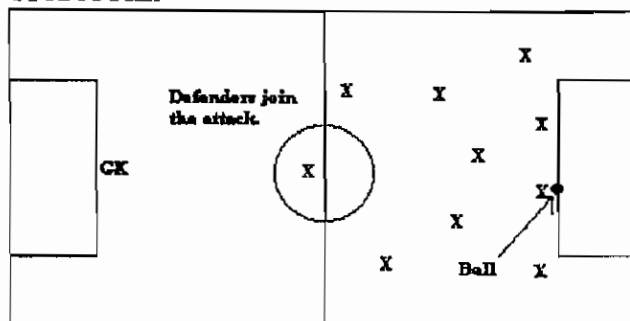
In short, any player can go anywhere on the field. Don't take my word. Go out and watch good teams play. Watch some Sting (competitive) teams play. Watch East, Central or LCCC play sometime. Watch the movement of all players at all times! For the love of the game, let them cross the halfway line.

BAD SOCCER



Too much space between ball and defenders!

GOOD SOCCER



Good distance between defenders and ball

¹ Printed in the Colorado State Youth Soccer Assoc. newsletter; written by State Recreational Director Colin Schmidt

The Youth Soccer Coach

By Mike Berticelli,
printed in Soccer Journal 7/8-2000

You donate your time for the good of our youth,
But you scream and you yell and are often uncouth.

The ref is just twelve and still learning the game,
But you call him a jerk and say he's not sane.

The parents are screaming and follow your lead,
As you sprint up the sideline at uncontrollable speed.

You jump as you yell, "Pass, pass the ball!"
You turn red as you bellow, "Ref, make the damn call!"

"You're the left back now, get in your position,
If you don't, we might lose and ruin our tradition!"

Positions are needed so we look like a team,
'Cause they're miniature pros, or so it does seem.

The fullback is bored, he picks at his nose,
While the others run wild and kick with their toes.

You scream for a goal, no matter how it goes in,
Skill doesn't matter, just as long as we win!

The parents go crazy as the ball nears the goal,
Their advice and instructions will soon take their toll.

You see, Junior feels pressure, he's not having much fun,
We tell him to pass, when to shoot and to run.

He came here to play and to use his own mind,
'Cause soccer's the most creative game that you'll find.

Imagination is needed on the part of each child,
Solving problems on the field is what makes them go wild.

A week of long practice, while just standing in line,
Waiting to shoot, using one ball at a time.

This just doesn't cut it, and for some it's too late,
Make your practices fun, don't be the coach that they hate.

They come to "play" soccer, not to "work" at the game,
Their excitement is something we don't want to tame.

Maradona has moves that are beyond comprehension,
The coach taught those moves while threatening detention.

He learned from his friends and tried copying others,
While playing in games, without coaches and mothers.

Soccer is different, not like baseball at all,
We don't need positions, just give them the ball.

They first must learn skill, it's the meat of the game,
If they can't dribble or shoot, then who should we blame

Skill must be learned through repeated trials,
If motivation is present you will see them run miles.

Fun games are the answer to encourage repetition,
They laugh and they scream and enjoy competition.

Without the skill to dribble past an opponent at will,
Your players may win, but their growth will stand still.

I dream of the day when the fans just cheer,
And losing the game doesn't bring out a tear.

When practice is fun, not dull and so boring,
And playing the game means more than just scoring.

I know you mean well and you donate your time,
But bury your ego and try something sublime.

Call all the parents and ask for their aid,
You're teaching their kids and not getting paid.

Your goal's to develop a youngster with skill,
Not a team that must win or some fancy new drill!

You see, players are not judged by their wins and losses.
Instead they are judged by their shots, heads and crosses

Scholarships are given to players with great names,
Not those on youth teams who never lost games.

A pro player gets paid 'cause his skills are real fine,
Not because his team never lost when he was just nine.

It's time to bring soccer to new heights in this nation,
The future's in players, not a coaching citation.

Let's start to say "dribble" and stop yelling "pass!"
You'll then see our players go to the head of the class.

I hope you're concerned, but not really offended,
It's the need for more skill that I have defended.

You're giving your all, from the good of the heart,
Why not make sure the kids get the right start?

Table of Contents

Section I

Truth in Sport ~~~~~ 1 - 5

Section II

Structure of the World's Most Popular Sport ~~~~~ 6 - 11

Section III

Planning for the Season ~~~~~ 12 - 17

Section IV

Laws of the Game ~~~~~ 18 - 30

Section V

Practice Guidelines ~~~~~ 31 - 44

Section VI

Small-Sided Soccer ~~~~~ 45 - 48

Section VII

Practice Activities ~~~~~ 49

Practice Plans ~~~~~ A - NN

Section VIII

Game Guidelines ~~~~~ 50 - 61

Section IX

Coach Liability and Player Safety ~~~~~ 62 - 69

Coaches Code of Conduct

Safety

1. My first responsibility is the health and safety of all participants.
2. It is recommended that coaches become certified in basic first aid.
3. Be prepared to handle first aid situations, as well as medical emergencies at all practices and games:
 - Have and know how to use a properly supplied first aid kit. (can be reimbursed by club or used as a write-off on year end taxes)
 - 911 Emergency procedure/telephone location
 - Location of nearest emergency medical facilities.
 - Always carry emergency medical release forms.
 - Follow up all injuries with parents/guardians.
4. Know and understand the Laws of the Game (found in section IV).
5. Inspect players' equipment and field conditions for safety reasons.
6. Utilize proper teaching and instructing of players regarding safe techniques and methods of play.
7. Implement appropriate training programs to assure players are fit for practice and competition (Section V).
8. Supervise and control your players, so as to avoid injury situations.

Player Development

1. Develop the child's appreciation of the game.
2. Keep winning and losing in proper perspective (i.e. MLS players are not playing professionally because of their win/loss record at U12).
3. Be sensitive to each child's developmental needs.
4. Educate the players to the technical, tactical, physical, and psychological demands of the game for their level (found throughout this manual).
5. Implement rules and equipment modifications according to the players' age group (section VI).
6. Players need to have fun and receive positive feedback.
7. Practice should be conducted in the spirit of enjoyment and learning.
8. Strive to help each player reach his or her full potential and be prepared to move to the next stage of development. The majority of youth players advance to the next level (ie. U10, U12, U14) because of their birth date and rarely because of their skill level. So do the kids justice and educate yourself beyond just this manual by watching other coaches, attending coaches' meetings/clinics, or just going to the library and checking out a book or two.

Ethics

1. Strive to maintain integrity within our sport.
2. Know and follow all the rules and policies set forth by the club, state and national associations.
3. Work in the spirit of cooperation with officials, administrators, coaches and spectators to provide participants with the maximum opportunity to develop.
4. Be a positive role model.
5. Set the standard for sportsmanship with opponents, referees, administrators and spectators.
6. Keep sport in proper perspective with education.
7. Encourage moral and social responsibility.
8. Just say no to drugs.
9. Coaches, as we expect of our players, should continue their own education in the sport.

Coach Contract

1. I understand that this is a recreational league and will abide by the above principles.
2. All players in good standing play at least half of every game.
3. I understand that all players **must** be registered with C.S.A. for insurance purposes. If I allow an unregistered player to participate, I (the coach) assume liability for any injury that may occur.
4. I understand that there is **no slide tackling** permitted in the league and I will teach and enforce the rule with my players.
5. I understand that violations of league or club rules and standards of play may jeopardize my team's participation. I understand that I am responsible for the conduct of my players and spectators. A red card against a player for serious foul play or violent conduct – specifically, for fighting or attempting to injure another player – can also result in sanctions being assessed against the coach.

Coaches are responsible for reporting, in writing, any game problems to the club Board of Directors. This can be done in the drop boxes located at both Cahill and North Park storage sheds.

I agree to abide by these rules and the spirit of the game.

Coach signature

Printed name

Date

Respect the Game and All of its Participants

For the good of the game and for all good that the game offers our children. While soccer is a game for our children, parents play an important role in whether the game results in a positive, fun, and rewarding experience. Our primary role as parents – as adults – is to be role models of sportsmanship and to respect and support the participants of the game: the **player**, the **referees**, and the **coaches**. The example we set for our children is more important than the result of any single game.

Respect the Players

Without teammates your child has no team. Without opponents there is no competition. The opposing team is not the enemy; it is a group of children much like your own. The game is not a war it's a fun, recreational activity. Cheer for your team, not against the other team. Applaud all outstanding performances. Recognize good sportsmanship. Be modest in victory, graceful in defeat. The team wins and loses together. Working with others and being part of a team is more important than winning (or losing).

Respect the Referees

Without referees it's hard to enforce the rules and near impossible to have intense yet fair play. Horrid behavior, by parents and coaches, on the sideline has resulted in a huge turnover of young, capable referees. Over 50 percent of referees retire in a year or less.

The referee is under pressure to make split-second, judgment calls. The referee is a human being and therefore will make mistakes. This doesn't give adults the right to throw a tantrum on the sideline. Referees are not to be criticized. They are not to be blamed. If we behave in ugly and hateful ways on the sideline, what kind of example are we setting? If we don't change our behavior toward referees, we will continue to have a shortage of referees – let alone good referees. Not all things in life are fair. How do we want our children to handle unfair situations they will face in life?

Respect the Coaches

Coaching, like parenting, is an extremely difficult vocation. Communication between coaches and parents is very important. Please choose the right time and place to communicate. Do not confront a coach immediately before, during or after a game or practice. These can be hectic, emotionally charged times. If you have concerns or questions set up an appointment. Talk at a time that is convenient for both parties. Do not give instructions to your child or others during the game. You may be confusing the players and working against the tactics or skills that have been taught in practices. When conflicts do arise handle them in a mature, adult manner. Stay in control of your emotions. Avoid unsportsmanlike gestures and language. In other words, don't act like a child who doesn't know better. If you come across a participant – referee, coach or player – who is not good for the game let the appropriate people know. Write your concerns down and give them to the club's Board of Directors.

Value Statement for Youth Sports ¹

Youth sports programs provide an enjoyable learning environment for the physical, social, and personal development of youngsters. The values of youth sports programs include:

- Promoting fitness
- Developing new skills
- Instilling a desire to succeed
- Teaching responsibility and commitment
- Teaching cooperation
- Preparing one to deal with success and failure
- Providing an outlet for the release of energy
- Building character through discipline
- Teaching how to cope with the realities of life
- Instilling positive attitudes toward authority
- Providing a fun and enriching experience

The likelihood that youngsters will realize positive sports values is enhanced when adult sports leaders take the responsibility to serve as facilitators of desirable sports outcomes.

This can be achieved when coaches assume a role as teacher and carry out lesson plans, which develop skills progressively, emphasize positive sports values and encourage life-long interest in sports participation.



“Truths” About Children and Sports

1. Fun is pivotal; if it’s not “fun”, young people won’t play a sport
2. Skill development is a crucial aspect of fun; it is more important than winning even among the best athletes
3. The most rewarding challenges of sports are those that lead to self-knowledge
4. **Intrinsic rewards** (self-knowledge that grows out of self-competition) are more important in creating lifetime athletes than are **extrinsic rewards** (victory or attention from others).

Coaching Your Own Child

Many coaches are parents, but the two roles should not be confused. Unlike your role as a parent, as a coach you are responsible not only to yourself and your child, but also to the organization, all the players on the team (including your child), and their parents. Because of this additional responsibility, your behavior on the soccer field will be different from your behavior at home, and your son or daughter may not understand why.

For example, imagine the confusion of a young boy who is the center of his parents' attention at home but is barely noticed by his father/coach in the sport setting. Or consider the mixed signals received by a young girl whose soccer skill is constantly evaluated by a mother/coach who otherwise rarely comments on her daughter's activities. You need to explain to your son/daughter your new responsibilities and how they will affect your relationship when coaching.

Take the following steps to avoid problems in coaching you child:

- Ask your child if he/she wants you to coach the team.
- Explain why you wish to be involved with the team.
- Discuss with your child how your interactions will change when you take on the role of coach at practices and games.
- Limit your coaching behavior to when you are in the coaching role.
- Avoid parenting during practice or game situations, to keep your role clear in your child's mind.
- Reaffirm your love for your child, irrespective of his or her performance on the soccer field.

¹ U.S.S.F. National Youth License course material

Reasons for Participating In and Dropping Out of American Youth Soccer ²

A nation wide survey of 18,000 children, ranging in age from 10 to 18 conducted by Vern Seefeldt, Martha Ewing, Steve Walk, Tim Hylka and Charles Trevor

Ten most frequently listed reasons for participating in soccer for boys and girls.

Boys

1. To have fun
2. For the excitement of competition
3. To improve my skills
4. To get exercise
5. For the challenge of competition
6. To stay in shape
7. To do something I'm good at
8. To play as part of a team
9. To win
10. To learn new skills

Girls

1. To stay in shape
2. To have fun
3. For the excitement of competition
4. To get exercise
5. To do something
6. To go to a higher level of competition
7. To play as part of a team
8. To improve my skills
9. For the team spirit
10. To meet new friends

Reasons for dropping out of soccer, ranked according to mean importance.

Boys

1. I was no longer interested
2. It was no longer fun
3. I was tired of playing and practicing
4. This sport conflicted with other sports
5. Practices and games were boring
6. My coach was a poor teacher
7. I wanted to participate in other activities
8. Coach only played his/her favorites
9. I did not like the coach
10. Too much emphasis placed on winning

Girls

1. I was no longer interested
2. It was no longer fun
3. I wanted to participate in other activities
4. This sport conflicted with other sports
5. I was tired of playing and practicing
6. This sport required too much time
7. Practice and games were boring
8. My coach was a poor teacher
9. There was too much pressure
10. I never felt like I belonged to the team

Children's perceptions of changes that would induce them to play soccer again, ranked according to mean importance.

Boys

1. Practices were more fun
2. Coaches understood players better
3. I could play more
4. The coach understood the sport better
5. The coach was a better teacher
6. Games/practices were scheduled at different times
7. The coach didn't yell as much
8. There was less emphasis on winning
9. There were more leagues so other players were closer to my ability
10. The sport did not take so much time

Girls

1. Practices were more fun
2. Practices or games did not conflict with social life
3. Practices or games did not conflict with studies
4. Coaches understood players better
5. I could play more
6. The coach was a better teacher
7. The coach understood the sport better
8. Games/practices were scheduled at different times
9. The sport did not take so much time
10. There was less emphasis on winning

² U.S.S.F. National Youth License course material

Organization of World and U.S. Soccer

Please refer to the accompanying organizational chart as you read about the various national and international soccer organizations, of which, you are now a part!



FIFA

The Federation Internationale de Football Association serves as the international governing body for soccer. FIFA annually publishes the Laws of the Game, the international guide for referees.

United States Soccer Federation (U.S.S.F.)

One of 169 member national soccer organizations within FIFA, the USSF is the governing body for soccer in the United States. USSF is composed of four (4) divisions: Professional, US Amateur Soccer, Referee Association (not listed on chart) and US Youth Soccer.

United States Youth Soccer Association (U.S.Y.S.A.)

The youth division of USSF is composed of 55 member state organizations (one in each state and two in California, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas). USYSA is divided into four (4) geographical regions, administration is by an elected eight member Board of Directors, including a director from each region. Currently, there are approximately three (3) million youth players between the ages of five (5) and nineteen (19) registered in the U.S.

Wyoming State Soccer Association (W.S.S.A.)

The Wyoming State Soccer Association (WSSA) is our state component of the national and international soccer organizations (FIFA, USSF and USYSA). WSSA is made up of approximately 25 member clubs. Administration is by a Board of Directors, made up of club representatives and an elected Executive Board. WSSA offers a wide array of playing opportunities through a variety of programs.

Recreational Soccer

Recreational soccer is a program offered to youth players of all ages, with emphasis on fun, fitness, and skill building in a less competitive environment. Recreational soccer is administered through the state and local clubs.

The local club here in Cheyenne, known as Cheyenne Soccer Association (C.S.A.), has been affiliated with the above associations and providing recreational soccer to local Cheyenne youth for 23 years as of this print. In its inception (during the mid '70's) the club began with under a 100 players and by the mid '90's CSA was experiencing its largest enrollment of over 1,400 youth players.

Currently, because of societal factors and coaching constraints, the club is experiencing its lowest enrollment in ten years. The focus of the club is to get back to those numbers of the mid '90's. Obviously, some factors are out of our control, but it is coaching and the proper education of such for which we have control. All that is required is a little extra effort on your part to read this manual and adhere to its principles, as it has been laid out in an age-specific format. Also, spending a little extra time bettering yourself as coach, just as we expect our players to spend a little time on their own, attending clinics seasonally.

The WSSA Recreational program serves to promote recreational soccer for all youth soccer players throughout the state. The Recreational program is guided by the philosophy that "Recreational soccer should be organized so that 1. participants experience soccer in an environment of fun, based upon equal playing time and balanced team competition, 2. players develop the skills necessary to play soccer with confidence, 3. all players, coaches, and spectators demonstrate good sportsmanship, and 4. any and all

eligible youths (subject to reasonable terms of registration) are accepted as participants.” Recreational soccer teams and games are governed by the WSSA General Rules of Play and FIFA Laws of the Game, as well as by applicable CSA rules.

Developmental Program

A program administered locally for recreational players to participate in the state (WSSA) league. Players **are not** selected, but are rostered on a first come, first serve basis. Those players wishing to participate should contact the club for contact information, as contacts change frequently. The WSSA league takes place in two (2) seasons, spring and fall, with six (6) games scheduled for each season. Games are typically played on three (3) Sundays' spread out over two (2) months, with two (2) games being played on each day. Travel is to be expected, but typically no further than Casper. The WSSA Board administers the league statewide, taking responsibility for formulating specific rules of competition, scheduling games and referees. Developmental teams and games are governed by WSSA Competition Rules of Play and FIFA Laws of the Game.

Advanced Program (Sting)

A competitive program offered to youth players U11 (under 11) through U18, who are selectively rostered by a tryout process, to teams based on a number of considerations to include, but not limited to, skill and ability, potential, desire and attitude to name a few. Though playing time is not guaranteed, coaches are instructed that game experience is critical in player development, which having fun and development are the programs two main points of emphasis.

In player development, the environment and opportunity for participants to maximize their potential couldn't be better as teams participate in both the Colorado State Youth Soccer Association (C.S.Y.S.A.) and W.S.S.A. leagues.

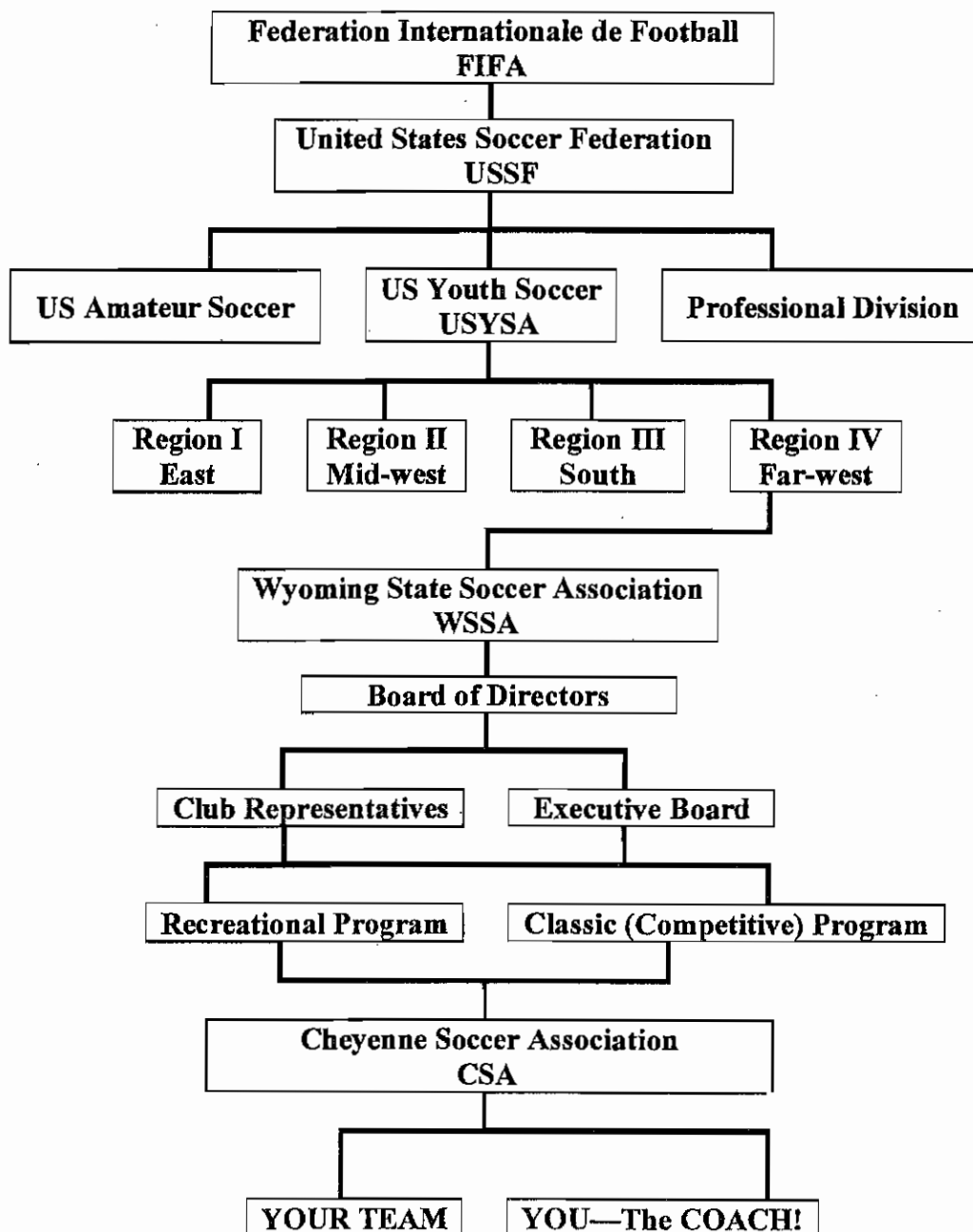
The WSSA and CSYSA Boards administer their leagues separately, taking responsibility for formulating specific rules of competition, scheduling games and referees, and organizing statewide qualifying and championship tournaments. Sting soccer teams and games are governed by WSSA & CSYSA Competition Rules of Play and FIFA Laws of the Game.

Olympic Development Program (O.D.P.)

The Olympic Development Program was organized by USYSA to identify and train a pool of players to represent the United States in international competitions for youth national teams. Within Wyoming all age-eligible players, both male and female, for State Association Teams are welcome as this is a great opportunity for players to attend clinics/camps (usually one weekend every 3 to 4 weeks throughout the Fall) ran by nationally recognized coaches. There are approximately 100 to 150 players involved in Wyoming ODP each year. For more information contact the CSA Board of Directors for State Administrator information.

TOPSoccer (The Outreach Program for Soccer)

TopSoccer is a cooperative program involving USYSA and Special Olympics International and has programs established throughout the United States. TopSoccer trains young people with disabilities to play soccer and provides team access to existing sports organizations for people with disabilities.



Soccer Resources

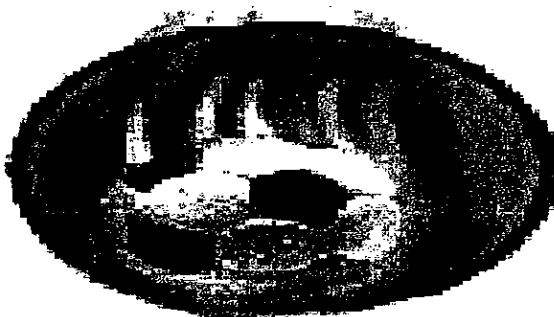
- 'Soccer Journal' – monthly magazine published by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America
- 'Success in Soccer' – BI-monthly magazine
- 'Soccer America' – weekly magazine published for the soccer follower
- the Laramie County Library holds an array of books for all age levels
- www.nscaa.com
- www.youthsoccer.com
- www.us_soccer.com
- www.socceronline.com

National, State and Local Coaching Education

Within the United States there are two educational structures the United States Soccer Federation (U.S.S.F.) and the National Soccer Coaching Association of America (N.S.C.A.A.). Both offer a number of courses, each focusing on specific age groupings. They are similar in material taught, but differ in the philosophical approach to educating coaches.

Coaches wishing to attend courses are required to begin with the "F" License or State Diploma courses, however, exceptions are considered based on coaching experience and/or playing experience. Once a course is passed there is a one-year 'practical application' period required before attending the next level or course. For local and state courses' participants receive a license or diploma (pass the course), so long as one is in attendance for all hours taught.

<u>USSF Licenses</u>	<u>Hours Taught</u>	<u>NSCAA Diplomas</u>
<i>National courses</i>		
A -----	50	Premier Course
B -----	50	Advanced National
C -----	50	National Diploma
Y -----	30	National Youth Diploma
<i>State Courses</i>		
D -----	30	Advanced Regional
E -----	15	Regional Diploma
F -----	6	State Diploma
<i>Local Courses</i>		
Module 1 -----	5 1/2	
Module 2 -----	5 1/2	
Module 3 -----	5 1/2	
Miscellaneous -----	1-2	



National Courses (A, B, & C) & (Premier, Advanced National & National Diplomas')

These National Courses are directed at a national constituency. The courses are designed for the experienced coach working with the advanced or Senior level player with an emphasis on training those players within a team concept designed to produce a successful environment. These courses are taught over a eight (8) day period and are not for the feint of heart, however, none-the-less are very powerful in the knowledge gained.

The "C" License or National Diploma

The primary focus is on the 4v4 model. The topics covered, but not limited to, are: passing and receiving (long & short), shooting and heading, practice teaching form, technical training, team management, team tactics, 1v1 - 2v1 defending, 3v1 -3v2 attacking, small-sided games, flank play, goalkeeping, crossing, care and prevention of injuries, abbreviated Laws of the Game, coaching parents, match analysis, psychology and fitness.

The "B" License or Advanced National Diploma

The primary focus is on the 8v8 model with the application of principles gained from the "C" or National courses. The curriculum includes such things as: team organization and training, advanced methodology, analysis and understanding systems of play.

The "A" License or Premier Diploma

The pinnacle of the coaching education structure in the U.S. They advance the concepts gained from the "B" or Advanced National courses within an 11v11 model.

The National Youth "Y" License or Diploma

These courses are designed for the youth coach working with players' 5-12 years of age. The overall objective of the course is to help coaches create the optimal learning environment for kids at this developmental age. Emphasis is placed on the basic methods of coaching youth and understanding the physiological and psychological differences of coaching children. The course emphasizes the game of soccer as the teacher and the coach as the facilitator. The curriculum focus is on the organization of a practice session, teaching proper technique, team management, basic concepts of attack and defense, small-sided games and understanding the laws of the game. Information about safety, prevention and care of injuries is also provided.

State Courses (D, E & F) & (Advanced Regional, Regional & State Diplomas')

The USSF (D, E & F) courses are more commonly offered as instructors are only required to hold two (2) licenses higher than the course they instruct. For example, in conducting an "E" license an instructor must hold a minimum of a "C" license. Whereas with the NSCAA courses (Advanced Regional, Regional & State) an instructor must be part of the NSCAA coaching staff.

The "D" License or Advanced Regional Diploma

The focus is more on the U12 to U14 player. This course is a 30 to 32 hour course taught over two weekends, typically a couple hours on Friday evening, all day Saturday and half to three-quarters of a day on Sunday. The first weekend is a review of concepts from the "E" course. In the second weekend time is spent advancing concepts from the "E" course. Topics covered include, but not limited to: Technical skills, passing (on the ground & in the air), receiving (ground and air balls), shooting, heading, controlling, dribbling & shielding. Tactics, defending & attacking 1v1, 2v1, 1v2, 2v3 & 3v2, methodology to coaching youth and parent administration, Technical and Tactical practice progression form, abbreviated Laws of the game, goalkeeping, care & prevention of injuries, small-sided games, psychology and fitness.

The "E" License or Regional Diploma

The focus is more on the U10 to U12 player. This course is 15 to 18 hours in duration and taught over a Friday evening, all day Saturday and half to three-quarters of a day on Sunday. Topics covered include, but not limited to: basic Technical skills, passing, receiving, shooting, heading, controlling, dribbling & shielding. Basic Tactics: attacking & defending 1v1, 1v2 & 2v1, methodology to coaching youth and parent administration, Technical practice progression form, abbreviated Laws of the game, basic goalkeeping, care & prevention of injuries, small-sided games, psychology and fitness.

The "F" License or State Diploma

The focus is geared for the parent/coach who may be exposed to soccer for the first time. This is an introductory course approximately five (5) to six (6) hours in length. The course covers the philosophy of coaching youth players, the laws of the game, the games approach to teaching technique, care and prevention of injuries, coaching parents, teaching games, positional concepts (team shape), and positive vs. negative reinforcement.



Local Courses

Soccer has only increased in popularity in the last ten (10) years within the U.S., which means you, as a coach, may or may not have been fortunate to participate in the sport as a youth. Combine this with the fact that everyone's lives are quite busy in today's society and we get kids/players falling short of their full potential, due to the lack of quality, age specific trainings/practices. Understanding this, CSA offers a number of courses/clinics each season geared for the coach who may or may not have experience with game, but who also lack the time to commit to any of the above courses.

The Modules' listed below are an extension of the National Youth courses (see above) with the same principles, theories and concepts being taught. However, the modules are considerably shortened in duration because each focuses more on age specific material within an age group or two.

Module 1

Focuses on the U12 player and skill development both individual and within small groups of four (4). This course is approximately five (5) to six (6) hours in length and conducted over a two (2) to three (3) day span.

Module 2

Focuses on the U8 and U10 player. Emphasis is placed on skill development both individual and within groups of two (2) to four (4) players. This course is approximately five (5) to six (6) hours in length and conducted over a two (2) to three (3) day span.

Module 3

Focuses on the U6 and U8 player. Emphasis is placed on individual skill development. This course is approximately five (5) to six (6) hours in length and conducted over a two (2) to three (3) day span.

Parent Orientation Meeting ¹

All coaches are encouraged to establish effective lines of communication with team parents early in the season by holding a parent orientation meeting. Regardless, of how many years you have either coached or have coached this particular team it is imperative that the following information be discussed and/or redefined. This meeting or "the Mother of all Meetings" may take the form of a casual discussion in your living room, or could be combined with a team picnic. Whatever the format, the time you invest will pay benefits for all concerned throughout the season. If a meeting is impossible, the following information could be put into a letter to parents/players, but a face to face meeting is preferable.

Purpose of the meeting include the following:

- Enables parents to understand the objectives and goals of the program
- Enables parents to become acquainted with you, the coach
- Informs parents about the nature (and inherent risks) of the sport
- Informs parents of your expectations of them and their child
- Enables you to address any concerns of the parents
- Establishes clear lines of communication between you, parents, and players
- Allows you to obtain parental support (assistant coaches, team parents, etc.)

Things to consider when organizing the meeting:

- Hold it early in the season, preferably the first team practice
- Having the players is optional
- Prepare any handouts you would like to distribute, for example
 - Team roster (with names of parents and players, telephone numbers)
 - Schedule of practices and games
 - General rules or copies of items found in this manual
 - Summary or outline of the meeting
- Be prepared and be organized to conduct the meeting efficiently

Important points to cover in the meeting:

- Coach introduction
 - Introduce yourself and assistant coaches (or ask for volunteers at this time)
 - Give some background information about yourself (why coaching, experience)
- Coaching philosophy
 - Discuss what you consider to be the value of this sport
 - Discuss your methods for teaching skills (describe a typical practice)
 - State the importance you assign to having fun and developing skills
 - State the unimportance of winning and losing.
 - Discuss any team rules and guidelines, disciplinary procedures
 - Discuss your philosophy regarding player rotation, substitution, playing time
- Specifics of the program
 - Practice schedule (when and how many per week?, how long?)
 - Game schedule
 - Minimum playing time (CSA mandates that every player plays at least half of every game)
 - Equipment required (shirts, socks, shorts, shin guards) or recommended (ball, soccer shoes, water bottle)
 - Inherent risks (soccer is a contact sport, albeit a relatively safe one)
 - Medical insurance (CSA provides a secondary coverage)



- "Save" Time and Hassle, Inform the Parents -

- Team management
 - Ask for volunteers as assistant coaches
 - Ask for volunteers as team parents
 - Snack schedule
 - Phone calling coordinator, set up telephone tree and/or carpooling system
 - Field supervisor (once or twice a season for two (2) hours)

Discuss COACH'S responsibilities, for example:

- Demonstrate leadership and good sportsmanship
- Treat each player fairly
- Have organized practices and teach soccer fundamentals appropriate to the age group
- Provide a safe environment (arrive at practice on time and remain after practice until every child is picked up by an authorized adult, ensure that the player's equipment conforms to FIFA and club guidelines)
- Contribute positively to the development of each player's self-esteem
- Help each player set individual and team goals that are realistic
- Give parents a schedule of practices and games in a timely fashion
- Allow each player to play half of every game at a minimum
- Respect the referees, know the rules and conduct yourself in a controlled manner on the field

Discuss PLAYER'S responsibilities, for example:

- Attend practices/games regularly and to arrive on time
- Bring proper equipment to each practice and game
- Inform the coach in advance if it is necessary to miss a practice/game
- Make each practice a challenge to improve
- Work toward good sportsmanship and teamwork
- Respect the referees
- Be supportive of all teammates all of the time

Discuss PARENT'S responsibilities, for example:

- Transport your child to and from practices/games on time
- Be supportive of all the players (criticism does not improve performance)
- Help your child understand that he/she is contributing to a team effort
- Focus on mastering skills and having fun, not on winning
- Avoid material rewards for your child (the reward is the fun of playing!)
- Attend games and cheer the team
- Refrain from criticizing opponents, be positive with all players, as they're also a team of children just like your own
- Respect the referees (they will make mistakes, but they are doing their best; if you feel you are better qualified, contact CSA and arrangements can be made to certify you)
- Refrain from coaching your child during games (try to understand and respect the differences between the roles of the coach and the parent)

Answer any questions from the parents

VOLUNTEER SIGN-UP SHEET (sample)

COACHING STAFF

TEAM PARENT (volunteer coordinator)

PHONE TREE COORDINATOR

GAME SNACK/TREAT COORDINATOR

END-OF-SEASON PARTY COORDINATOR

FIELD SUPERVISOR

Suggestions for Dealing with Parents

Coaching is exciting and rewarding, but occasionally you may experience difficulty with parents. Some parents may want their child to play more, others may question your judgment as a coach. Whatever the concern, a parent is generally just looking out for their child, often at your expense. Don't be discouraged. There are some things you can do to open up communication and make dealing with parents a positive aspect of your coaching duties.

1. HAVE A PARENT MEETING – the “Mother of all Meetings” to discuss your plans and expectations for the season. See pg. 12 for tips on how to do this well. Encourage questions from the parents and let them know that you have given a lot of thought to the upcoming season.
2. EXPRESS APPRECIATION FOR THEIR INTEREST AND CONCERNS – this will make them more open and at ease with you.
3. ALWAYS LISTEN – to their ideas and feelings. Remember, they are interested and concerned because it is their children that are involved (if you have a preference for a certain time to voice these concerns, such as after practice, make this clear at the Parent Orientation Meeting). Encourage parental involvement!
4. KNOW YOUR OBJECTIVES – and do what you believe to be of value to the team, not to the parents. No coach can please everyone!
5. KNOW THE CLUB AND GAME RULES – be prepared to abide by them and to explain them to parents.
6. HANDLE ANY CONFRONTATION ONE-ON-ONE AND NOT IN A CROWDED SITUATION – try not to be defensive. Let the parent talk while you listen. Often a parent will vent their frustrations just by talking. Listen to their viewpoint, then thank them for it.
7. RESIST UNFAIR PRESSURE – it is your responsibility as coach to make the final decisions. This doesn't mean that you can't still listen to parents.
8. DON'T DISCUSS INDIVIDUAL PLAYERS WITH OTHER PARENTS – the grapevine will hang you every time. Show the same respect for each player on the team that you want the parents to show toward you.
9. ASK THE PARENTS NOT TO CRITICIZE THEIR CHILDREN DURING PRACTICE OR A GAME – don't let your players be humiliated, even by their own parents.
10. DON'T BLAME THE PLAYERS FOR THEIR PARENTS' ACTIONS
11. BE CONSISTENT – if you change a rule or philosophy during the season, you may be in for trouble. At the very least, inform players and parents of any change as soon as possible.
12. BE FAIR – most important – if you treat all players equally and with respect, you will gain their respect and that of their parents as well.

Remember that you will be dealing with all types of children and with parents having different backgrounds and ideals. The challenge for you as a coach is to address these differences in a positive manner so the season will be enjoyable for everyone involved.

Coach Equipment

1. A large bag for all of the items listed below!
2. Players' *MEDICAL RELEASE FORMS* – you must have these with you at all practices and games; verify that the emergency information is there.
3. *MEDICAL KITS* – a simple kit for games and practices is a good idea for every coach. A kit should include:
 - Ice (and 'zip-lock' bags) **
 - Band aids
 - Vaseline
 - Sterile pads
 - Adhesive tape
 - Elastic wraps
 - Antibiotic ointment
 - Bee sting relief ointment

** If you use chemical cold packs, be careful about applying them directly to skin, some types are exceedingly cold)

4. *PUMP* and inflating needle – sometimes the game ball is as hard as a rock or too soft and may need a little "tuning", the same goes for the balls kids bring to practice.
5. *SHIN GUARDS* – a spare pair of old ones will cover for a forgetful player.
6. *SPARE SHIRTS* – (2) for your goalkeepers (U-10 and above) – having two (2) extra shirts of different colors (each contrasting to with your team shirts) insures that you will always have a keeper's shirt that contrasts with both the opponents and referees shirts.
7. *GOALKEEPERS GLOVES* – U-10 and above – an inexpensive pair is a useful addition to your game bag
8. *BALLS* – CSA provides each team with one ball. This serves for team warm-ups and can be used as a game ball. The leather or synthetic leather soccer balls are best; avoid the hard plastic-skinned balls, which are unpleasant to kick or head. Each player should have (but not mandatory) his/her own ball and bring it to practice, but bring any old spares that you may have to practice because someone is likely to forget theirs.
9. *CONES* – or pylons to set up small areas for practice activities, as obstacles for dribbling, or to mark boundaries for a scrimmage field. Cones of a different color (or with some added duct tape) will make a distinctive goal.
10. *WHISTLE* and a *CLIPBOARD* – for practice plans, medical release forms, substitution schedules, etc.
11. *WATER* – should be available during practice and at the game. Have the players bring their own water bottle (but have extra for the occasional 'forgetful player'). Alternatively, have you team parent organize a schedule among the parents to provide water and cups.
12. A simple *SNACK* – schedule should be organized by the team parent for game days. Discourage turning snacks into a financial hardship for some parents. Orange or apple slices, or seedless grapes are good choices.

Player Equipment

Ball

Encourage each player to have his/her own ball and to use it often, not just during team practices. This can be done a number of ways, preferably showing new skills or moves that will be addressed at the next practice. This gives them time on their own to develop at their own pace, but also allows you the opportunity to witness and congratulate any improvements made between practices. Players will not derive maximum benefit from practice unless they each have their own ball for warm-ups and individual skills.

Soccer balls come in a variety of sizes, each designated by a number:

- Size #3 – smallest standard size, for the youngest players (U-6 to U-8)
- Size #4 – intermediate size, appropriate for U-9 through U-12
- Size #5 – largest standard size, for U-13 to adult

Shin Guards

An absolute requirement for games and should also be worn for all practices.

Soccer Shoes

Recommended, but not required. Baseball or football type shoes with square or rectangle cleats are not legal for soccer. Soccer cleats for most recreational play must be rubber or molded plastic (no metal cleats), and no less than 3/8 inch in diameter. Check, regularly, your players' shoes for illegal cleats, protruding nails, or sharp edges and rectify any problems before a referee discovers a violation and one of your players is forced to sit out a game.

Water Bottle (with player's name on it)

Fresh water should be available to your players at each practice and game. It is easier for the coach if each player provides his/her own water bottle.

Shirts, Socks, Shorts

Shirts are provided by CSA.

¹ Oregon Youth Soccer Association Recreation Council. The Official AYSO Handbook; by V. Fortanasce, L. Robinson, J. Ouellette

Summary of the FIFA Laws of the Game

What follows is a discussion of the laws of soccer and philosophy of officiating the game. It is intended as an introduction to the rules for the participants, especially the coaches, and was prepared by Dennis Owen, a certified referee in the Tigard Soccer club in Oregon. Official print of the FIFA Laws of the Game can be found on the Internet (see Section II - Soccer Resources for web addresses).

Soccer is a simple game. It has only a few rules and they are simple – mostly. The core of the rules and refereeing is the “philosophy of the game”. Boldly stated, soccer is a game played by gentlemen (and gentlewomen) and the REFEREE IS ALWAYS RIGHT. Arguing with the ref. is definitely not allowed. If you have a complaint with a game official do not take it to the referee on the field. Find the field director, or call CSA to voice a complaint to the Referee Assignor or Coaching Director after the game.

There are seventeen laws. Modifications for younger players can be found in Section VI Small-sided Soccer.

Law I

Defines the size and markings of the field. The markings are part of the area they enclose. The corner flag is part of the field and may not be removed or bent by a player taking a corner kick..

Law II

Defines the ball (size, weight, pressure)



Law III

Defines the number of players and limits substitutions. Free substitutions are allowed at the following times: at half time, after a goal is scored (by either team), on a goal kick (by either team), on your own throw-in, or after an injury (for the injured player only). At stoppage of play when you are allowed to substitute, you must get permission from the referee before sending any players onto the field. At half time, if you change goalkeepers, you must notify the referee.

Law IV

Regulates the players' equipment. All players at all levels of soccer in the world are now required to wear shin guards. Shoes must not represent a hazard to other players. This means no metal cleats, no ragged cleats, no toe cleats, no square or rectangle cleats – only soccer or turf shoes. No earrings or hard hair fasteners are permitted.

Law V & VI

Deal with the role and conduct of the referee and assistant referee.



- Assistant Referee

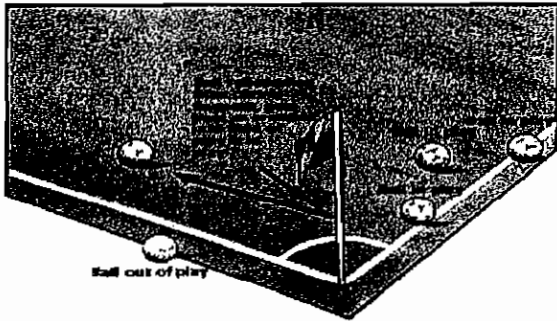
Law VII

Sets the duration of the game.

Law VIII

Defines the method of starting play. The kick-off at the start of the game and the second half, and after a goal, is taken from the center of the midfield line. The ball must travel forward its own circumference to be in play. The second touch on the ball must be by a player other than the kicker. If the kick-off does not go forward, it shall be retaken. If it is touched again by the kicker before any other player, an indirect free kick shall be awarded to the other team. A goal cannot be scored directly from a kick-off. The visitors call the coin toss and the winners of the coin toss select side to defend, while the

loser of the toss gets kick-off. The teams change ends at half time. All players must be in their own half of the field at kick-off. On a drop-ball, the ball must touch the ground before it can be played.



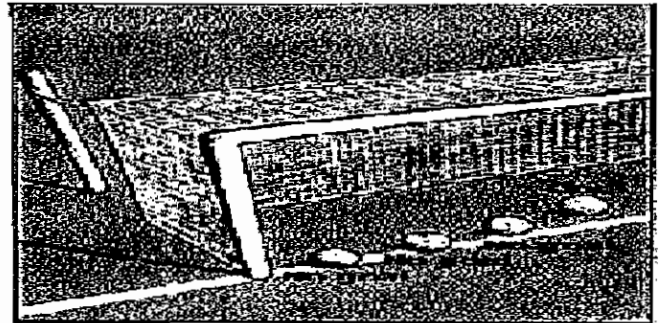
Law IX

Defines when the ball is in or out of play. The ball is out of play when it has completely crossed the goal line or touchline (sideline) whether on the ground or in the air. On the line – any of the ball on or above any of the line – is in play. The ball in the air, entirely across the line is out of play and cannot be “saved” by a heroic play. With games involving younger players, the ref. may blow the whistle

when the ball goes out of play. No matter how obvious the infraction appears to you, play on if the whistle doesn’t blow. Remember if the ref. didn’t see it he/she may have missed it or may have been screened. From his perspective it may have looked entirely different.

Law X

Defines a goal. As in Law IX, all of the ball must pass over all of the goal line. A goal is scored if the ball was played legally by either the attacking or defending team. The ball in the hands of the goalkeeper can pass over the line and score. A shot in the air when the whistle signals the end of the half or the game cannot score.



Law XI

Defines offside. This law is the exception, it is not simple, is widely misunderstood, and is not always correctly enforced. To try and make it simple: an attacking player must first be in an offside position before there can be an infraction. OFF-SIDE POSITION the player must be: in the attacking half of the field, ahead of the ball (the ball is always on-side), ahead of the second to last defender (normally, but not necessarily the goalie and a fullback), and be interfering with play or seeking to gain an advantage (for example, the player who just took the corner kick is not seeking an advantage by being on the goal line near the corner flag, whereas the player screening the goalie from getting to his/her teammate’s shot at the far post is interfering with play). All of these conditions must be met for an offside position. For an off-side infraction to be called, an attacking player must be in off-side position AT THE MOMENT THE BALL IS PLAYED (kicked) BY A TEAMMATE, either to the player who is off-side (gaining an advantage) or past that screened-off goalie (interfering with play). The player who runs past his defender *after the ball is played* for a breakaway opportunity on the goalie is not offside. If an attacking player is carrying the ball on



a scoring run and has a teammate in off-side position but does not pass, his shot will count if it scores, as long as the off-side player was not also interfering. There is no offside directly from a corner kick of throw-in. Once the ball is touched in play, the offside rule applies. If the ball comes directly from a goal kick, or is controlled and played by a defender, there is no offside. In the Cheyenne Soccer Assoc., we do not enforce the offside rule for U6 or U8 games. This however, does not allow coach to take advantage by stationing players in the offside position in front of the goal. Taking such advantage would violate the spirit of the game and be considered ungentlemanly conduct.

Law XII

Deals with fouls and misconduct. This one law on just three pages of the rulebook is the heart of the referee's job. *There are nine (9) offenses, which result in DIRECT FREE KICKS.*

1. Kicking or attempting to kick an opponent.

2. Tripping on opponent. Every time a player goes down it is not necessarily true that a foul was committed. Two players come together and try to play the ball, one wins and the other goes down. It happens often without there being a foul. By the same token, a player who succeeds in winning the ball is not entitled to go through the play and also take his opponent's legs, "But I got the ball first" is a refrain commonly heard following a whistle. It is entirely irrelevant.



3. Jumping at an opponent.

4. Charging an opponent in a violent or dangerous manner.

5. Charging an opponent from behind. It is NOT true that soccer is a non-contact sport. These two rules provide for, and strictly regulate, the contact that is allowed. Legal charging is contesting for position to play the ball by two players shoulder to shoulder and under control with arms down and the ball within playing distance.

6. Striking or attempting to strike an opponent or spitting at him/her.

7. Holding an opponent.

8. Pushing an opponent. Under the letter of the Laws of the Game, no pushing is allowed. As a practical matter, many referees who see two players both using their elbows to gain space will call no foul. It is a bad habit since not all opponents will join in and not all refs. will let it slide.

9. Handling the ball. This rule prohibits carrying, striking, or propelling the ball with the hand or with the arm below the normal shoulder seam. It prohibits intentional play, except by the goalie in his/her own penalty area. It does not cover accidental contact by the ball against a player. It does not require that an infraction be called any time the ball changes direction in flight, that could be either hand ball or ball to hand, depending on intent. The forearm block by girls making a chest trap is no longer allowed. Too many girls became adept at controlling the ball instead of just protecting themselves.

Any direct kick foul committed by a member of the defending team in the penalty area will result in a penalty kick. In this case it is the position of the player that is crucial. The ball need not have advanced into the penalty area.

There are seven (7) additional fouls that are penalized by an INDIRECT FREE KICK

1. Charging fairly, but with the ball not within playing distance. Again dealing with what contact is legal. You cannot run a player off a spot with a legal charge unless the ball is at your feet and you are both trying to play it.

2. Dangerous play. Players are required to play under control and in a safe manner. You cannot kick the ball when the goalie has contact with it – that's dangerous to the keeper. Most dangerous play calls result from either high foot or low head. You cannot attempt to play the ball while you are on the ground because you could get kicked in the head and you are not permitted to endanger yourself. You may not kick a ball in the air so as to bring your opponent's head in danger. Note that high kicking is not defined in relation to the kickers waist, but in relation to the other player's head. **In CSA slide tackling is prohibited.** In soccer, "tackle" means taking the ball and has no reference to the opponent.

3. Intentionally obstructing an opponent when not playing the ball. You cannot run between your opponent and the ball or use your body as an obstacle merely to prevent a play on the ball. You cannot be called for obstruction if the ball is within playing distance. Choosing not to play the ball for tactical reasons with the



ball in playing distance is considered to be an act of playing. The obstruction rule does not entitle a faster player to run over a slower player when both are going for the ball. Every player is entitled to the space they occupy and are protected by the rule against dangerous play.

4. Charging the goalkeeper. Because of the extra danger associated with the goalie position, there is extra protection under this rule. You cannot play the ball while the keeper has contact with it. Deliberately or violently charging the keeper can result in a red card.
5. Play by the goalkeeper, which is designed to slow the play of the game. The keeper is not allowed to stall while the clock runs. The rule says that the ball must be released into play within five (5) to six (6) seconds. The goalie may not touch the ball again after releasing it into play until it has been touched by a teammate outside the penalty area or by an opponent anywhere.
6. Goalkeepers touching the ball with their hands after it has been kicked to them by one of their teammates. This is the “no pass back” rule. The ball may legally be directed to the goalkeeper by a teammate using the head, chest, or thigh, so long as the player has not popped the ball into the air themselves with intention of doing so.
7. Goalkeepers touching the ball with their hands after parrying the ball to seek position or time advantage.

In awarding a free kick the referee will indicate the direction the kick will go. For an indirect kick, the ref. will hold his/her hand above his/her head until the ball is touched a second time. On any infraction, if the referee deems that blowing the whistle will take away a clear advantage from the attacking team, he/she may grant that advantage. This is done by loudly calling “Advantage – play on!” and using a forward sweeping gesture with the hands to indicate to both sides that the infraction was noted.



In addition to awarding the opposing team free kicks, the referee may penalize infractions with official cautions (yellow card), or by sending a player off (red card). *There are four (4) causes for issuing a caution.*

1. If a player enters the game without permission of the referee (or changes places with the goalie without notification).
2. For persistent infringement of the rules of the game. If the same player keeps tripping and pushing, it can result in a yellow card. This is to keep the game from becoming dangerous through retaliation.
3. For dissent by word or action from any decision of the referee. The referee is always right. If the referee didn't see it or didn't call it, then it didn't happen, no matter how it looked to you. If there is any question, the referee is ALWAYS right. This is officially the law of soccer. It is even more true in CSA where we have young people as game officials for many of our matches. If you have complaints about referees, take them to CSA, see the field director, or call the club's referee assignor or coaching director.
4. For ungentlemanly conduct. It is under this provision that the philosophy of the game is enforced. Any infraction of the spirit of the game that seeks to gain an unfair advantage or displays a lack of sportsmanship can be sanctioned with a yellow card. Seeking unfair advantage might cover such things as getting a boost on a teammates shoulders to take a header, calling for a back pass from an opponent, encroaching inside ten yards on a free kick, kicking the ball away when your team is called for a foul to create time to set the defense, deliberately and/or deceptively handling the ball to gain or kill an advantage (such as tapping the ball into the goal in a crowd on a corner kick). Lack of sportsmanship might be displayed by such things as committing a really excessive foul, arguing with or taunting your opponent in such a way as to threaten the conduct of the game, committing an “attitude” foul (the ref. missed his foul on me, so I'll get even – probably with interest), jumping at an opponent taking a throw-in, following the goalie in an effort to harry the drop kick. A coach or player

on the sideline can be guilty of ungentlemanly conduct. The coach is responsible for all of the parents and spectators on the team's sideline.

There are three (3) reasons for which a player may be sent off (red-carded).

1. For violent conduct or serious foul play. The distinction here is that violent conduct occurs when the ball is not in play, whereas serious foul play occurs when the ball is in play. Either one would cover deliberately kicking another player (note: player, not opponent), striking or spitting at another player. A really excessive or dangerous foul could be also sanctioned as serious foul play. To allow the attacking team to press its advantage, special rulings have been issued on infractions in two situations. On a play such as a breakaway against the keeper, any infractions by the defense which denies the opportunity **MUST** be treated as serious foul play. Also, a handball by the defending team which denies an obvious scoring opportunity must be treated as serious foul play.
2. For using foul or abusive language. Some refs. will use a yellow card for ungentlemanly conduct first, in an effort to control poor choices in verbal expression.
3. For persistent misconduct after receiving a yellow card. A second yellow card offense is cause for being sent off. If, in a continuous sequence, a player commits two yellow card infractions (for instance, being guilty of ungentlemanly conduct then arguing vigorously about the call), he/she may be both cautioned and sent off before play resumes.

Law XIII

Defines free kicks, which are either direct or indirect. A goal cannot be scored from an indirect free kick unless the ball is first played or touched by another player of either team. For the ball to be in play following a free kick, it must first travel its own circumference. The kicker may not play the ball again until it has been touched by another player. A free kick by the defense inside its own penalty area must pass outside the penalty area before it can be played, it cannot be kicked directly to the goalie inside the penalty area to be drop kicked. All players on the opposing team must be away from the ball a distance equal to the radius of the center circle (10 yards on a full size field). The referee will signal an indirect free kick by raising his/her arm above his/her head until the ball is touched a second time. A play sometimes executed on an indirect free kick, with a player of the attacking team just stepping on the ball and then a teammate kicking it at the goal, will not produce a legal score if it succeeds because the ball did not go into play by first traveling its circumference between touches.

Law XIV

Defines the penalty kick. Under Law XIV a direct free kick infraction committed by a defender in the penalty area shall be penalized by a penalty kick. The penalty kick shall be taken from a spot twelve yards from the center of the goal. All players except the kicker and the goalkeeper shall be outside the penalty area and ten yards from the ball until the kick is taken. If the goalie moves before the kick and a goal is not scored, the kick shall be retaken.



Law XV

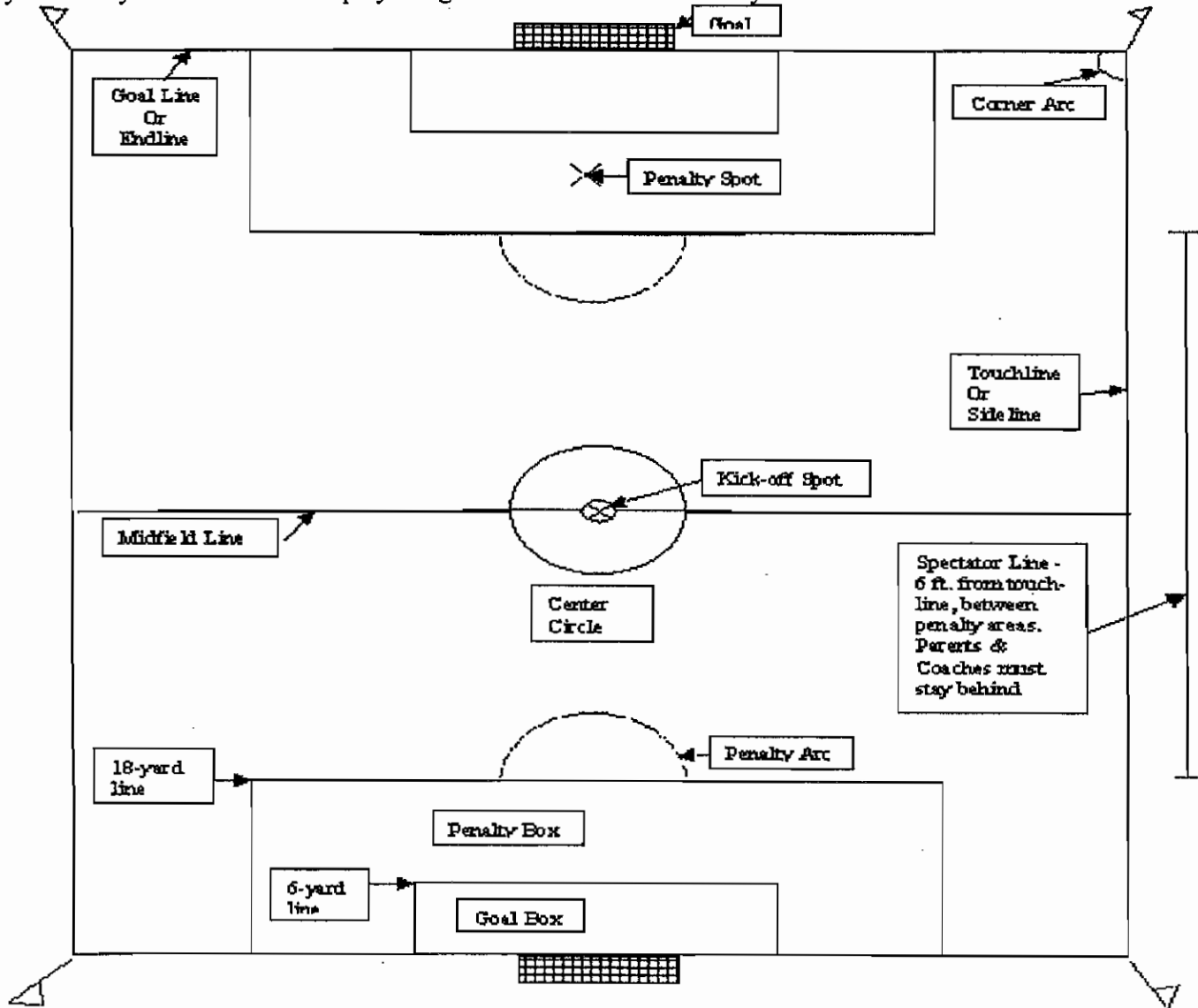
Defines the throw-in. When the whole of the ball passes over the touchline (sideline), a player of the team opposite the team which last touched the ball shall throw it in at the point where it went out. The throw must come from behind the head and directly over the head with both hands on the sides of the ball with equal force. Both feet must be in contact with the ground, either on or outside of the touchline. If the throw is taken from a spot nearer the defender's goal than where the ball went out, the throw shall be retaken by the opposing team.

Law XVI

Deals with goal kicks. When the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, not in the goal, last played by a member of the attacking team, a goal kick is taken by the defending team. From any point on the six (6) yard line (goal box), it shall be kicked into play beyond the penalty area by any member of the team. The ball cannot be played again until it is out of the penalty area – all of the ball across all of the line. All players on the opposite team must remain outside the penalty area until the ball passes beyond the line. If the ball does not go beyond the line, or is played before it can, or if a player of the opposite team encroaches, then the kick shall be taken again.

Law XVII

Deals with corner kicks. When the whole of the ball passes over the end line, not in the goal, last touched by a member of the defending team, a corner kick shall be taken by the attacking team. The whole of the ball is placed within the quarter circle at the corner flag nearest where it went out and is kicked into play from there. The flag cannot be moved. Players of the opposing team must remain ten yards away until the ball is in play. A goal CAN be scored directly from a corner kick.



Regulation Field (U-12 and above)

Glossary of Soccer Terms

Advantage Rule: a clause in the rules that permits the referee to refrain from stopping the play for a foul if the team that was fouled already has possession of the ball and is in a good attacking position.

Assist: one player passes to another and he/she scores.

Assistant Referee (linesperson): person (often a parent volunteer) who assists the referee, one asst. referee is assigned to each touchline. Their primary responsibility is to indicate when the ball is out of play (i.e. when the whole of the ball crosses the whole of the touchline or goal line). The asst. referee also signals which team has the right to put the ball in play again by using their flag to show the direction of play for the restart.

Attacking Team: the team that has possession of the ball.

Back: a defender.

Beat: to get the ball past an opponent by dribbling, passing, or shooting.

Behind the Defense: the area between the last man (of the opposing team) and his/her goal.

Caution: see "Yellow Card."

Center: a cross or pass from a player located near the sideline toward the middle of the field; used to get the ball closer to the front of the goal.

Central Defender: a player who plays in the middle of the defense

Charging: a method of unbalancing the player who has possession, or is attempting to gain possession, of the ball. The maneuver of using a "shoulder" (actually from elbow up to and including the shoulder) against an opponent's shoulder to gain an advantage is permissible only when the ball is playable (i.e. within 3 feet).

Chip: to lift or kick the ball in the air.

Clear: the act of moving the ball out of the vicinity of one's own goal area by throwing (goalkeeper only) or kicking it (generally up the touchline).

Cleats: the plastic, or rubber "studs" in the bottom of a soccer boot used to provide traction; term also used to refer to the boots themselves.

Corner Kick: a kick made by the attacking team from the corner arc on the side of the field where the ball went out of play. A corner kick is awarded when the ball is last touched by a defensive player and goes out of play over the goal line without resulting in a goal. Opponents must be at least ten (10) yards away from the ball when the kick is taken. A goal may be scored directly (without being touched by another player) from a corner kick.

Counterattack: an attack launched by a defending team soon after it regains possession of the ball.

Cross: see "Center."

Dangerous Play: play that is likely to cause injury. Examples are high kicking, playing while lying on the ground, or playing the ball while it is in the possession of the goalkeeper.

Defender: the backs: fullbacks, center backs, stopper, sweeper. Also, expected to assist in the attack by pushing up to the half line (with or without ball) and looking to push even further (closer to the opponent's goal) as needed (when an advantage, in numbers, can be gained).

Defending Team: the team that does not have possession of the ball.

Deflection: the ricochet of a ball after it hits a player, post, or referee.

Direct Free Kick: a free kick from which a goal can be scored directly (i.e. without first being touched by another player). It is awarded for substantial infractions of the rules (see Summary of the FIFA Laws of the Game, Law XII, this section). Opponents must be at least 10 yards away from the ball (opposing players may stand on their own goal line between the goal posts) but the player taking the kick may do so without waiting if he/she wishes. The ball is not in play until it has traveled its own circumference. The ball must be stationary when kicked and the kicker may not touch the ball a second time until it has been played by another player (of either team).

Diving Header: a ball struck by the head of a diving player.

Drop Ball: a ball held by the referee and allowed to fall directly to the ground between two opponents. The ball is in play after it touches the ground. A drop ball restarts the game after play is stopped for no penalty situation (i.e. after an injury). The ball is dropped where it was last in play or at the nearest point outside the penalty area. A goal may be scored directly from a drop ball.

Drop Kick: when a goalie kicks the ball from his/her penalty area by dropping it from his/her hands and kicking it before it hits the ground.

Endline: see "Goal line"

50/50 Ball: when the ball is in a position that either team has a chance of getting to the ball first and gaining possession.

Fake or Feint: a "dummy" move meant to deceive an opposing player; used by a ball carrier to make a defender think the ball carrier is going to dribble, pass, or shoot in a certain direction when he/she is not.

Far Post: the goalpost furthest from the ball.

Football: name for soccer in most countries except the United States.

Formation: the arrangement of players on the field; for example, in eleven-a-side soccer, a "4-4-2" formation means a team is playing with one goalkeeper, four defenders, four midfielders, and two forwards (the goalkeeper is not listed--every formation plays with just one goalkeeper). Other common formations include: the "4-3-3", the "3-5-2", the "3-4-3", the "5-4-1", etc.

Forward(s): the attackers, strikers, wingers who function primarily closest to the opponent's goal whose major responsibility is to score goals. Also, expected to help in defending in the opponent's half to a bit beyond the half line.

Foul: a violation of the rules for which an official assesses a free kick or penalty.

Free Kick: see Direct free kick and Indirect free kick

Fullbacks: defender who play near the touchlines--a left back and a right back who functions primarily closer to one's own goal whose major role is to repel attacks by the opposing team. Also, expected to

assist in the attack by pushing up to the half line (with or without ball) and looking to push even further (closer to the opponent's goal) as needed (when an advantage, in numbers, can be gained).

Give and Go: player with the ball passes to a teammate and runs into open space (either to receive a return pass or to take an opponent with him/her).

Goal: A one-point score occurring when the whole of the ball passes entirely over the goal line, between the vertical goal posts and under the horizontal crossbar. A goal is not scored if, the ball was not touched by another player (of either team) after an indirect free kick, goal kick, kick off, or throw-in.

Goal Area: Area (20 x 6 yd. on a full-size field) marked within the penalty area and directly in front of goal, from which all goal kicks are taken.

Goalkeeper (U-10 and above only): Player who functions primarily in the penalty area and whose major responsibility is to prevent the opponent's shot's from entering the goal for a score. The goalkeeper is the only player allowed to touch or pick up the ball with his/her hands, and may only do so when the ball is within his/her own penalty area. The keeper is the team's last line of defense (when they don't have the ball), but when the keeper has the ball he/she is the first line of offense (think distribution).

Goal Kick: Taken by any defending player to restart the game after the ball goes out of play over the goal line, having been last touched by an attacking player. It may be taken from any point on the six (6) yard line (line running parallel to goal). All opposing players must stand outside the penalty area. To be in play, the ball must leave the penalty area (in bounds), otherwise the kick is retaken.

Halfback: an (outdated) term for a Midfielder.

Halftime: the intermission between the two periods or halves of a game.

Hand Ball: a foul where a player other than the goalie touches the ball with his/her hand or arm.

Hat Trick: three goals scored in a game by a single player.

Indirect Free Kick: A free kick from which, a goal cannot be scored until the ball is touched by another player. It is awarded for technical and minor infractions of the rules (see Summary of the FIFA Laws of the Game, Law XII, this section). Opponent's must be at least 10 yards away from the ball (opposing players may stand on their own goal line between the goal posts), but the player taking the kick may do so without waiting if he/she wishes. The ball is not in play until it has traveled its own circumference. The ball must be stationary when kicked and the kicker may not touch the ball a second time until it has been played by another player (of either team).

In Play: when a ball is within the boundaries of the field and play has not been stopped by the referee.

Injury Time: time added on to the end of any half due to player injuries, substitutions, or intentional delays by a team.

Kick Off: Officially begins the game at each half and restarts play after a goal is scored. The ball must go forward (into the opponent's half of the field) and is in play after rolling its own circumference (about 1 to 2 feet). The player kicking off must not play the ball again until it has been played by another player (of either team). Opponents must be at least 10 yards away from the ball in their own half of the field when the kick off is taken.

Loft or Lob: a high-arching kick.

Marking: Guarding or covering an opposing player (with or without the ball) when he/she moves into your area of play to prevent him/her from passing, receiving, or shooting the ball.

Match: a soccer game.

Midfield: the region of the field near the center line.

Midfielder(s): Player(s) who functions primarily between the Forwards and Defenders whose principle job is to link the three (3) lines both in attacking and defending.

Near Post: the goalpost closest to the ball.

Net: the mesh draped over the frame of the goal to catch/stop the ball when a goal is scored.

Nutmeg: when a player pushes the ball between the legs of a defender (opponent).

Obstruction: when a defensive player uses his/her body to prevent an offensive player from playing the ball.

Offensive Player: see "Attacker."

Offensive Team: see "Attacking team."

Officials: the referee and two assistants who officiate a soccer game.

Offside: Offside is defined as occurring at the moment the ball is played by one of the attacking players to a teammate. A player is in an offside position if he/she is nearer to the opponents' goal line than the ball, unless: (a) the player is in his/her own half of the field, or (b) there are at least two opponents (one may be the goalkeeper) nearer the goal line than the player.

A player is penalized if he/she is in an offside position AND if, in the judgment of the referee, the player is: (a) interfering with play or with an opponent, or (b) seeking to gain an advantage by being in that position.

A player is not declared offside: (a) merely by being in an offside position, (b) if they receive the ball directly from a goal kick, a corner kick, a throw-in, or a drop ball, or (c) if the ball is last played by an opposing player.

On-side: the opposite of offside.

Open: a player who does not have anyone marking him/her.

Out of Bounds: when a ball is outside the boundaries of the field.

Out of Play: see "Out of Bounds."

Overtime: or "extra time" is the periods played after regulation when the game ends tied.

Passing Lane: a position in which a player is able to receive a pass without the ball being intercepted by an opponent.

Penalty: short for penalty kick; also, a punishment given by the referee for a violation of the rules within the penalty area.

Penalty Arc (U-12 and above only): The arc at the top of the penalty area, no player may be within this area while a penalty kick is being taken.

Penalty Area: Large area (18 x 44 yd. on a full size field) in front of goal in which any of the "direct kick" fouls by the defending team result in a penalty kick. Also defines the area where the goalie can use his/her hands. The penalty area includes the goal area.

Penalty Kick: Awarded to the attacking team if the defending team commits a direct free kick violation within the penalty area. Penalty kicks are taken from the penalty mark. The opposing goalkeeper must stand (without moving his/her feet) on the goal line, between the goal posts, until the ball is kicked. The player taking the kick must kick the ball forward and may not touch the ball a second time until it has been played by another player (of either team). The ball is in play after it has traveled its own circumference. A goal may be scored directly from a penalty kick.

For any infringement of the penalty kick rules by: (a) the defending team, the referee will allow the kick to proceed, but if a goal does not result, the kick will be retaken, (b) the attacking team, other than the player designated to take the kick, if a goal is scored it will be disallowed and the kick retaken, (c) by the player taking the penalty kick, committed after the ball is in play an opposing player will take an indirect free kick at the point where the infraction occurred.

The referee's whistle always starts the taking of a penalty kick. Any penalty kick taken prior to the referee's whistle will be retaken using the referee's whistle as the proper start for the kick.

Penalty Mark: A mark on the field, from which penalty kicks are taken, also called the penalty spot. It is located 12 yards from the goal line, equally spaced between the goal posts.

Pitch: a British term for soccer field.

Play On: a term used by referees to indicate that the advantage rule has been applied and no stoppage is to be called.

Possession: control of the ball.

Post: goalpost.

Receive (Receiving): when a player uses his/her body to slow down and control a moving ball, using his/her chest, thighs, head, or feet.

Red Card: a card that a referee holds up to signal a player's removal from the game.

Referee: The official who is in complete charge of the soccer game. The safety of the players is the referee's main concern. He or she is responsible for keeping time, enforcing the Laws of the Game, stopping and restarting the game for penalties or injuries, cautioning or banishing offenders (including coaches or spectators) and ending the game, if necessary. All decisions by the referee are final!!

Save: the act of a goalkeeper in blocking or stopping a shot on goal.

Score: to put the ball into the net for a goal; the tally of goals during a game.

Scorers: players who score goals.

Set Play: a planned play from a "dead-ball situation" such as a corner kick or free kick.

Shielding: a way for the player in possession of the ball to protect it from a defender by keeping his/her body between the ball and the defender

Shin Guards: shin pads that protect the front of a player's legs.

Shooting: when a player kicks the ball at the opponent's net in an attempt to score a goal.

Short-Sided or Small-Sided Game: a game played with fewer than eleven players per side.

Shot: a ball kicked or headed at the opponent's net in an attempt to score a goal.

Shutout: preventing the opposition from scoring any goals in a game.

Sideline or Touchline: the line that runs along the length of the field on each side.

Slide Tackle: sliding on the ground feet-first to make a tackle on an opposing player who has possession of the ball.

Soccer Field: see also "Pitch." Please see page 23 for diagram of a generic soccer field. For U6 & U8 a field diagram is located in Section VI - Small-Sided Soccer.

Square Pass: a pass made by one player to a teammate alongside him/her.

Stopper: the defender that marks the opposition's best scorer with the aim of "stopping" him/her from scoring. Also, responsible for aiding in the attack.

Striker: a team's best-scoring center forward.

Substitution: replacement of one player on the field with another player not on the field.

Support: a position of help, players are in support when they are open for a pass.

Sweeper: the defender that plays closest to his/her own goal behind the rest of the defenders; this is an optional position.

Tackling: a method of gaining possession of the ball by use of the feet. Unnecessary roughness and use of the hands are not permitted.

Throw In: Taken to restart the game after the whole of the ball crosses the outside edge of the touchline. The throw in, by any member of the team that did not touch the ball last, is taken at the point where the ball went out of play. The thrower must face the field and throw the ball with equal strength by both hands, in one continuous motion from the back of his/her head and over the top of his/her head. When the ball is released, the thrower must have some part of both feet on the ground on or behind the touchline.

Touchline: see "sideline"

Volley: a ball kicked by a player before it hits the ground.

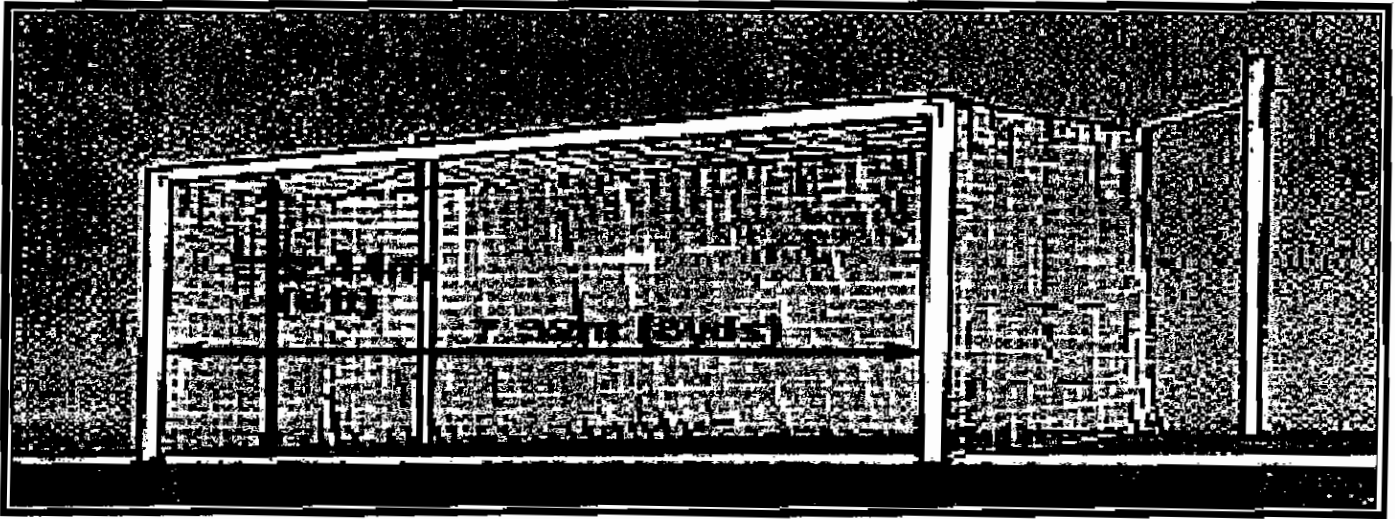
Wall: a line of defending players standing together to protect their goal against a close free kick.

Wings: the areas of the field closest to the touchline.

Wingers: the attacking players who play along the wings with the aim of crossing the ball in to the forwards.

World Cup: the international soccer competition held by FIFA every four years between the top national teams in the world

Yellow Card: a card that a referee holds up to warn a player for dangerous or unsportsmanlike behavior; also called a caution; two yellow cards in one game earns a player an automatic red card, signaling his/her removal from the game.



Regulation Size Goal (U-12 and above)

Planning

The way to have a successful practice is to plan. Your practice planning should begin before you first get together with the team and should continue throughout the season as you plan for each practice.

Pre-season

- Location – there is no specific location for each team to practice, generally it is a first-come, first-serve basis at Lions Park and Cahill. We do ask that, because of limited space, that teams share space if the parks are full. Also, because teams are, for the most part, put together based on where they attend elementary school we ask that you, the coach, select a location based on convenience for the majority.
- Duration – the length of practices should be based on the age of the team and therefore the length of attention span.
 - U-8 → 45 to 60 minutes
 - U-10 → 1 hr to 1 ¼ hrs
 - U12+ → 1 hr to 1 ½ hrs
- Frequency – C.S.A. rules mandate that there be no more than three (3) meetings per week with the team. This is also to include games! So what that means is two (2) practices per week, unless your team has a game that week, then that counts towards a meeting.
- Objectives – there are two (2) main objectives for any soccer practice **1. to have fun, and 2. to learn to become better soccer players (or development)**. In order to achieve the second objective, it is important that you adhere to the teaching goals (found later in this section) for the season. As proficiency in these skills determines the amount of success players have in developing the added skills as they progress in age. You will ordinarily have only four (4) to six (6) practices before the first game. Since you will not have time to teach everything, choose a couple of topics (found later in this section) and build your practices around these topics. If you have doubts about whether your team is ready for a new tactic, skill, or concept, introduce it after you have seen it used by some of your players.
- Assistant Coaches – identify one or more, as assistants are extremely valuable. They make it possible to divide players into smaller groups so that each player gets individual attention. Parents who would like to help out but feel they lack the necessary skills should be encouraged to attend practice to help shag balls and direct traffic. It is hard to have too many helpers, especially with younger players. The “mother of all meetings” is an excellent time to solicit help.
- Wyoming Weather – prepare a bad weather contingency plan. Inform your players and parents before the season whether you will practice in the rain (snow, wind, etc.) or cancel practice. Even if you plan to practice in the weather, you should not have practice when conditions are dangerous, for example when there is lightning or if the field has become too wet to permit safe play. If you do need to cancel practice due to adverse weather, have an organized plan to inform parents. Again, the “mother of all meetings” is the time to set up a telephone tree, which can make this job much easier for either yourself or a team parent.

Practice Plans

Have a written plan for each practice (see Section VII). You cannot have a good practice if you do not have an idea of what you want to accomplish and all the nuances that accompany your topic. The plan may be written out in detail, or it may just be notes jotted on the back of an envelope, but it should really be written. Writing down your plan will help you think through the equipment and setup you will need for the topics to be covered. Save these plans as a record of performance and to help develop a progressive program for the season. As you plan your practices with the information that follows, remember these *TIPS TO KEEP PLAYERS' INTEREST AND AVOID BOREDOM*.

- Minimize the amount of talking that you do
- Get all of the players involved
- Turn “drills” into games (activities)
- Give players many touches on the ball (ie. dribbling, kicking, catching, throwing the ball)
- Give players many chances to shoot and score
- Insure success, that is players accomplishing the task of the game
- Upon achieving success, difficulty (pressure) should be turned up slowly
- Let the kids PLAY!
- Avoid the three evil “L’s”
 - Lines – get all players involved, thus giving them many touches on the ball
 - Laps – sending players on a jog around the park (field) does nothing relevant to soccer, instead warm players up by starting with a game (found in section VII)
 - Lectures – the amount of talking (coaching) should be based around players’ attention span (U6 & U8 don’t have much). As a senior level (high school) coach my talking within activities is usually kept to 30 seconds to a minute.

** One of the most important practice considerations **

- Keeping it simple and focused. If you are trying to teach a new skill, your practice should concentrate on a single major topic (i.e. dribbling). Rather than on many different topics as this will only confuse, rather than reinforce.

Practices should follow a progression of: warm-up, activities (games), scrimmage and cool down.

- Warm-up – plan so that each player uses a ball. Incorporate games and exercises that emphasize a lot of touches (repetitions) and are geared around the topic you’ve selected for the day. For all players up to the U-12 age group there is **no need for conditioning** as the activities (games), if structured and controlled appropriately, provide adequate exercise for game preparation.
- Stretching – throughout the warm-up is best or at the end of the warm-up. Younger players don’t need a lot of stretching, but it is a good habit to begin early and also good opportunity to teach them about the importance of properly taking care of ones body. Try to use stretching exercises that require a ball (i.e. roll the ball around both legs while stretching hamstrings), again, the kids will enjoy it more and it increases their familiarity with the ball.
- Games (activities) – replacing the infamous term of “drills”, but none-the-less these should be appropriate for the skills you are teaching. Limit the number of games in a given practice and don’t spend too long on any one game (activity). Remember that a child’s attention span is limited! Can change the complexities of the games, which still keep the attention by: number of balls used, number of players, size of grid, number of goals, etc.

- Demonstrate – “show” as much as possible to paint a clearer picture of your minimum verbal instruction. If you feel uncomfortable demonstrating techniques, don’t hesitate to enlist your more skillful players, or perhaps older soccer players, to help you. Depending on the level you are coaching, junior high or high school players may be useful for this purpose.
 - MAXIMIZE the number of touches for each player by running activities with several small groups at the same time, **NO CHILD LIKES TO STAND IN LINE WAITING!**
- Small-sided Games (i.e. 3 v 3, 3 v 2, 5 v 2, etc.) – an excellent practice tool. They help keep everyone involved and, by reducing the size of each playing field, you can have two games going at the same time.
- Scrimmages – activities or games should be organized to progress into a controlled scrimmage (i.e. extra points if every member of one team have all entered into the opponents half, when a goal is scored, or specific number of passes accomplished, etc.). Follow up a controlled scrimmage with an open scrimmage (no restrictions). Remember that the kids signed up to play soccer!
- Be Prepared – to change plans! Weather, field conditions, the number of players who come to practice, can all affect your plans. Be flexible and adjust to conditions. You may also need to extend the time spent on a particular activity if the players are having difficulty acquiring a particular skill. If it is especially hot, allow for more frequent water breaks and reduce the duration of physical intensity of practice.
- Analyze – after the season starts it is helpful to take a few minutes of practice to discuss the previous game, emphasizing what your team did well, what can be improved upon and what the goals should be for the coming week. Which will also help you determine what to work on each week.
- Homework -- Encourage your players to work at home on one (two maybe) of the activities introduced in practice. Have tests (for lack of a better term) periodically and record scores to chart individual performance and improvements. For ages U10 and below avoid competing players against other players. Competing against themselves is more tangible and attainable.

Player Management

LOOK OUT FOR THE KIDS! Come to practices a few minutes early to set up and to be there for early drop-offs. The coach (or another parent) **must** stay at the practice site until all children are picked up. If the parents are persistently late, then settle the problem with the parents, **DON’T GAMBLE WITH THE SAFETY OF THE KIDS**. Consider having a contingency plan (i.e. pick up the player at your house?) and announce it at the “mother of all meetings”. If a player must leave the field to use a restroom, send an assistant coach or another parent along.

Team Discipline

At the first practice it is valuable to establish team rules concerning attendance, listening carefully, respecting teammates, etc. You will be most successful if you do this with the cooperation and consent of the players themselves. Make it clear to all what the penalty will be for breaking team rules (i.e. time out from practice or a scrimmage). This is also a good time to set realistic team goals for the season (i.e. to have fun, to work together as a team, to practice good sportsmanship). Notice that winning of any sort is not mentioned.

Some other ideas on team discipline:

- Keep your players busy so they don't have time for mischief. IF YOU HAVE KIDS STANDING IN LINE, YOU ARE INVITING DISASTER!
- Be positive, say "please walk" instead of "don't run"
- Try to deal with problems before they get worse
- Speak with the culprit first, before resorting to other disciplinary measures
- If time outs don't work, then talk to the parents, ask them to attend practice, if necessary. Make sure though that what you think is discipline is not perceived by the player as a positive reinforcement--for example sitting them out (time out) may be just what they desire.
- Player(s) who are persistent distractions, try enlisting their help as an "assistant," to move cones, shag balls, or anything that occupies the player
- Never discipline athletes for making errors when they are playing
- Never use physical activity--running laps or doing push-ups--as discipline. This only causes players to resent physical activity, something we want them to learn to enjoy throughout their lives
- Discipline sparingly. Constant discipline and criticism cause players to turn their interests elsewhere and to resent you as well.

Alternatives to Practice

Instead of a practice, take your team to a soccer game. East, Central and LCCC have programs that are very exciting to watch for younger players. Check with the administration building or at the main offices of each respective school for schedules. The high school programs participate in the Spring, while LCCC soccer takes place during the fall. Renting or borrowing a soccer video is another alternative, especially for older teams.

Main Points to Remember for a Successful Practice are:

1. BE PREPARED – have a plan for what you will cover during the practice.
2. Be ready to ADAPT on the spot. No practice ever goes exactly as planned.
3. Keep it SIMPLE – give a short demonstration with a minimum of talk, then have the players work on the activity or skill. MAXIMIZE touches for each player!
4. Make it FUN – sometimes the activities in books just don't work for you and/or your players. Don't fight it to the point of frustration. Be prepared to switch to something you know they can handle.
5. Strive for a PROGRESSIVE acquisition of basic skills. Begin with relatively simple activities; add movement and then opposition to simulate game conditions. Always consider the age and skill level of your players. The percentage of time spent on practice without opposition should decrease, as players become older and more skillful. Restricting space and number of touches are other ways to make activities more challenging.
6. Use players NAMES frequently. Encourage and instruct each player individually. Acknowledge specific things each player is doing well.
7. Treat players with RESPECT. Do not demean.
8. Always have time when the players JUST PLAY.
9. Always BE SAFETY CONSCIOUS with your players.
10. Every once in a while ASK YOURSELF, "why am I coaching?" and "how do I measure my success?" This will help you evaluate your techniques and your progress.
11. Use your VOICE to create excitement and to demand attention. Increase volume to make certain points.
12. Lastly, KEEP PERSPECTIVE. It's not about winning and losing. It's about participating. It's about playing with friends and learning soccer skills.

Communicating As a Coach ¹

Coaches often mistakenly believe that communication involves only instructing players to do something, but verbal commands are only a small part of the communication process. More than half of what is communicated is nonverbal. So remember when you are coaching: Actions speak louder than words.

How to Send More Effective Messages

Young athletes often have little understanding of the rules and skills of soccer and probably even less confidence in playing it. So they need accurate, understandable, and supportive messages to help them along. That's why your verbal and nonverbal messages are so important.

Verbal Messages: Spoken words can have a strong and long-lasting effect. And coaches' words are particularly influential because youngsters place great importance on what coaches say. Think back to your youth and how many specific things' coaches said that you can recall.

Whether you are correcting misbehavior, teaching a player how to kick the ball, or praising a player for good effort, you should consider a number of things when sending a message verbally. They include the following: 1. Be positive and honest, 2. State it clearly and simply, 3. Say it loud enough, and say it again, and 4. Be consistent.

Be Positive and Honest ~ Nothing turns people off like hearing someone nag all the time, and athletes react similarly to a coach who gripes constantly. Kids particularly need encouragement because they often doubt their ability to perform in a sport. So look for and tell your players what they did well. But don't cover up poor or incorrect play with rosy words of praise. Kids know all too well when they've erred, and no cheerfully expressed cliché can undo their mistakes. If you fail to acknowledge players' errors, your athletes will think you are a phony.

A good way to correct a performance error is to first point out what the athlete did correctly. Then explain in a positive way what he/she is doing wrong and show him/her how to correct it. Finish by encouraging the athlete and emphasizing the correct performance.

Be sure not to follow a positive statement with the word "but." For example, don't say, "That was a good location on your pass, Kelly. But if you follow through with your kick a little more, you'll get more zip on the ball." Saying it this way causes many kids to ignore the positive statement and focus on the negative one. Instead, say something like "That was good location on your pass, Kelly. And if you follow through with your kick a little more, you'll get a little more zip on the ball. That was right on target. That's the way to go."

State It Clearly and Simply ~ Positive and honest messages are good, but only if expressed directly in words your players understand. "Beating around the bush" is ineffective and inefficient. And if you do ramble, your players will miss the point of your message and probably lose interest. Here are some tips for saying things clearly:

1. Organize your thoughts before speaking to your athletes.
2. Explain things thoroughly, but don't bore them with long-winded monologues.
3. Use language your players can understand. However, avoid trying to be hip by using their age group's slang.

Say It Loud Enough, and Say It Again ~ Talk to your team in a voice that all members can hear and interpret. A crisp vigorous voice commands attention and respect; garbled and weak speech is tuned

¹ Coaching Youth Soccer; American Sport Education Program; Human Kinetics Publishers, 2001; pgs. 10-16

out. It's OK--in fact, appropriate--to soften your voice when speaking to a player individually about a personal problem. But most of the time your messages will be for all your players to hear, so make sure they can! An enthusiastic voice also motivates players and tells them you enjoy being their coach. A word of caution, however: Don't dominate the setting with a booming voice that distracts attention from players' performances.

Sometimes what you say, even if stated loudly and clearly, won't sink in the first time. This may be particularly true when young athletes hear words they don't understand. To avoid boring repetition and yet still get your message across, say the same thing in a slightly different way. For instance, you might first tell your players, "Mark your opponent tighter!" If they don't appear to understand, you might say, "When your opponents are in scoring range, you can't give them the chance to shoot or pass the ball forward." The second form of the message may get through to players who missed it the first time around.

Be Consistent ~ People often say things in ways that imply a different message. For example, a touch of sarcasm added to the words "Way to go!" sends an entirely different message than the words themselves suggest. Avoid sending such mixed messages. Keep the tone of your voice consistent with the words you use. And don't say something one day and contradict it the next; players will get their wires crossed.

Nonverbal Messages: Just as you should be consistent in the tone of voice and words you use, you should also keep your verbal and nonverbal messages consistent. An extreme example of failing to do this would be shaking your head, indicating disapproval, while at the same time telling a player "Nice try." Which is the player to believe, your gesture or your words?

Messages can be sent non-verbally in a number of ways. Facial expressions and body language are just two of the more obvious forms of nonverbal signals that can help you when you coach.

Facial Expressions ~ The look on a person's face is the quickest clue to what he/she thinks or feels. Your players know this, so they will study your face, looking for any sign that will tell them more than the words you say. Don't try to fool them by putting on a happy or blank "mask." They'll see through it, and you'll lose credibility.

Serious, stone-faced expressions are no help to kids who need cues as to how they are performing. They will just assume you're unhappy or disinterested. Don't be afraid to smile. A smile from a coach can give a great boost to an unsure athlete. Plus, a smile lets your players know that you are happy coaching them. But don't overdo it, or your players won't be able to tell when you are genuinely pleased by something they've done or when you are just putting on a smiling face.

Body Language ~ What would your players think you were feeling if you came to practice slouched over, with your head down and shoulders slumped? Tired? Bored? Unhappy? What would they think you were feeling if you watched them during a contest with your hands on your hips, your jaws clenched, and your face reddened? Upset with them? Disgusted at an official? Mad at a fan? Probably some or all of these things would enter your players' minds. And none of these impressions is the kind you want your players to have of you. That's why you should carry yourself in a pleasant, confident, and vigorous manner. Such a posture not only projects happiness with your coaching role but also provides a good example for your players, who may model your behavior.

Physical contact can also be a very important use of body language. A handshake, a pat on the head, an arm around the shoulder, or even a big hug are effective ways of showing approval, concern, affection, and joy to your players. Youngsters are especially in need of this type of nonverbal

message. Keep within the obvious moral and legal limits, of course, but don't be reluctant to touch your players, sending a message that can only truly be expressed in that way.

How To Improve Your Receiving Skills

The communication process isn't just about sending messages, but also about receiving messages as well. Too often very good senders are very poor receivers of messages. But as a coach of young athletes, you must be able to fulfill both roles effectively.

The requirements for receiving messages are quite simple, but receiving skills are perhaps less satisfying and therefore underdeveloped compared to sending skills. People seem to naturally enjoy hearing themselves talk more than hearing others talk. But if you read about the keys to receiving messages and make a strong effort to use them with your players, you'll be surprised by what you've been missing.

Attention!: First, you must pay attention; you must want to hear what others have to communicate to you. That's not always easy when you're busy coaching and have many things competing for your attention. But in one-on-one or team meetings with players, you must really focus on what they are telling you, both verbally and non-verbally. You'll be amazed at the little signals you pick up. Not only will such focused attention help you catch every word your players say, but also you'll notice your players' moods and physical states. In addition, you'll get an idea of your players' feelings toward you and other players on the team.

Listen Care-Fully: How we receive messages from others, perhaps more than anything else we do, demonstrates how much we care for the sender and what that person has to tell us. If you care little for your players or have little regard for what they have to say, it will show in how you attend and listen to them. Check yourself. Do you find your mind wandering to what you are going to do after practice while one of your players is talking to you? Do you frequently have to ask your players, "What did you say?" If so, you need to work on your receiving mechanics of attending and listening. But perhaps the most critical question you should ask yourself, if you find that you're missing the messages your players send, is this: Do I care?

Providing Feedback

Your players will be looking to you for feedback all the time. They will want to know how you think they are performing, what you think of their ideas, and whether their efforts please you. Obviously, you can respond in many different ways. How you respond will strongly affect your players. They will respond most favorably to positive feedback.

Praising players when they have performed or behaved well is an effective way of getting them to repeat (or try to repeat) that behavior in the future. And positive feedback for effort is an especially effective way to motivate youngsters to work on difficult skills. So rather than shouting and providing negative feedback to players who have made mistakes, try offering players positive feedback, letting them know what they did correctly and how they can improve.

Sometimes just the way you word feedback can make it more positive than negative. For example, instead of saying, "Don't shoot the ball that way," you might say, "Shoot the ball this way." Then your players will be focusing on what to do instead of what not to do.

Communicating with Officials and Opposing Coaches

How you communicate with officials will have a great influence on the way your players behave toward them. Therefore, you need to set an example. Greet officials with a handshake, an introduction, and perhaps some casual conversation about the upcoming contest. Indicate your respect for them before,

during, and after the contest. Don't make nasty remarks, shout, or use disrespectful body gestures. Your players will see you do it, and they'll get the idea that such behavior is appropriate. Plus, if the official hears or sees you, the communication between the two of you will break down.

Make an effort to visit with the coach of the opposing team before the game. During the game, don't get into a personal feud with the opposing coach. Remember it's the kids, not the coaches, who are competing. And by getting along well with the opposing coach, you'll show your players that competition involves cooperation.

Positive Coaching: Is the glue that bonds the learning process together by creating an atmosphere both in games and practices where children feel comfortable taking risks and trying new skills and techniques without an overriding fear of failure. Mistakes are part of the learning process and if children are to develop as players and people, they must be assured that they will not be snapped at for every mistake.²

Characteristics of U-8 Children³

Psychomotor Development

The process of acquiring physical skills as related to mental ability to recognize cues and respond with the appropriate action.

- Emphasis of fundamental movement skills:
 - Locomotor – walking, running, jumping, hopping.
 - Nonlocomotor – bending stretching, twisting, pulling, pushing, reaching.
 - Basic Manipulative – throwing, catching, striking.
- Skeletal system is still growing; growth plates are near joints, thus injuries to those merit special consideration.
- Cardiovascular system is less efficient than an adult's; a child's heart rate peaks sooner and takes longer to recover to full resting rate.
- Temperature regulation system is less efficient than adults; children elevate their core body temperature more quickly with activity and take longer to cool down than adults.
- There is perceivable improvement in pace and coordination from U6 to U8, however the immaturity of a U8's physical ability is obvious

Cognitive Development

Is mental development, which includes not only memorization, but also creativity and problem solving.

- Concrete operational stage of development.⁴ This is the age of rules during the preadolescent years. Rules play a significant role for youth at this age. Rules provide the basis for cooperative play with playmates.
- Limited ability to attend to more than one task at a time; the simple task of controlling the ball demands most of their attention capacity, thereby leaving little to no capacity for making additional decisions.
- Concept of time and space relationship is just beginning to develop and will be limited by capacity to attend to multiple tasks.
- Limited experience with personal evaluation; effort is synonymous with performance, "If I try hard, then I performed well" regardless of the actual performance.

² The Official AYSO Handbook; V. Fortanasce, L. Robinson, J. Ouellette; Simon & Schuster, 2001; pg. 22

³ USSF National Youth Licensing Curriculum

⁴ Jean Piaget, Swiss Psychologist and Developmental Theorist (1896-1980 A.D.)

- Beginning to categorize information; some relationships that "do" exist are not recognized and some relationships that "do not" exist are assumed.

Psychosocial Development

The development of the sense of self in relation to others. It covers a range from individual awareness, to pairs (playmates), to small groups and to large groups.

- Self-concept and body image are beginning to develop; very fragile.
- Great need for approval from adults such as parents, teachers and coaches. They like to show individual skills.
- Easily bruised psychologically by both peers and adults; negative comments carry great weight.
- Like to play soccer because it is "fun"; intrinsically motivated (see Section I).
- Their universe is expanding from home to the neighborhood.
- True playmates emerge with the inclination toward partner activities.
- Team identity is limited; "I play on Coach Bob's team" or "I play on the Tigers" - club and league concepts are non-existent.
- There is desire for social acceptance; they want everybody to like them.
- The influential person is most likely their father or significant parent.

Teaching Soccer Techniques

Soccer players do not automatically know how to execute the various techniques (skills) associated with the game. Even after learning the basic skills, players need to learn how and when to use the techniques they have learned in a game situation. Our job as coaches is to teach our players the basic techniques and give them the knowledge of the game and confidence in themselves that will help them reach their full potential as soccer players. *Here are some tips to help you teach the fundamentals to your players.*

1. Explain the importance of the technique... (keep it short!) – the players are more apt to want to learn if you tell them how and when the technique fits into a game setting.
2. Give 3 or 4 key points - to help the players perform the technique.
3. Demonstrate the technique - if you are unable to do it, ask one of your better players to do it for you.
4. Organize the team into small groups - the smaller the better, depending upon the technique and the amount of help you have.
5. Practice the technique - observe the players trying to do the technique.
6. Make corrections as necessary - be POSITIVE and try to point out when the technique is being done well, however, you must correct technique that is being done incorrectly. You can do this without directing your corrections at any particular player. If none of your players can perform the technique, you need to reconsider whether it is appropriate for their age and experience level.
7. Practice under match conditions - in order to tell if the players can do the technique in a game situation, increase the difficulty by adding a defender, making their space smaller, or by speeding up the pace of the activity. Small-sided games work well to show whether a technique has been learned

Teach Using Progressions

The basic idea in teaching soccer techniques is to start simple and increase the level of difficulty.

- Start with the simplest elements of the technique. Let the players learn initially without any pressure.
- Gradually add more elements of the skill.
- Gradually increase the difficulty level of the activity. Increase difficulty (pressure) by:
 - Increasing the number of players executing the skill in a limited area
 - Reducing the space available for executing the drill
 - Specifying the direction the player must move

- Adding a passive defender (“shadow defense”)
- Adding an active defender
- Finally, perform the skill in the way it would be used in a game.

Soccer Techniques for U-8 (Teaching Goals)

Seven (7) and Eight (8) year olds should have fun and develop an appreciation for the game of soccer. Listed below are some techniques, which you can reasonably expect to introduce to these aged players. The major emphasis should be on getting comfortable with the ball while introducing basic techniques. “Coaching” should be kept to a minimum, teach through enjoyable games and activities. Basic tactics, those which revolve around pairs (or small groups), can be introduced at this age and are found later in this section.

There are six (6) skills that accompany the game of soccer and that can be mastered by players who practice them regularly, they are: dribbling, shooting, passing, receiving (ball control), heading, and tackling. In the previous pages we defined characteristics of the U-8 player(s). This was done to help you, the coach, gain a better understanding of which of these skills carry more importance at particular ages and why.

Dribbling (both feet)

Dribbling is performed by maintaining control of the ball with the feet and weaving in and out of opposing players. The sight of a player using dribbling skills to beat an opponent and score a well-earned goal is one of the most exciting plays in soccer.



A player pushes the ball far enough in front of him/herself that he/she can run comfortably without the ball getting caught up under his/her feet, but not so far that he/she loses possession. Dribbling requires a combination of **close control** to keep the ball away from opposing players, **speed** to outrun pursuing opponents, and strength to **shield** off any challenges. A player controls the ball with four (4) parts of the foot: the outside (the area near the little toe), the inside (near the big toe), the instep (shoe laces), and the bottom (the ball of the foot).

Dribbling past opponents is an amazing feeling for a player and always draws cheers of excitement from spectators. But it's important that kids know not only how to dribble but also when to dribble. Dribbling incurs a higher than normal risk of losing possession but, when used at the right time, can create that vital extra space for a ‘killer’ pass or shot on goal. Dribbling in your own half of the field, then, runs an unnecessary risk of losing possession in a dangerous area yet offers little potential reward. Dribbling in the opponent's half of the field, however, particularly the attacking third, offers a much greater potential reward (a shot on goal) yet has a much lower risk. Even if the ball is lost, the opposing team still has to take it to the other end of the field to make you pay for losing possession on a dribble.

Many people view dribbling as an art or talent that a player is born with, but it is a skill that can be acquired and improved upon. Players need to remember the following key points on how to beat an opponent:

- Keep it simple – don't try to dribble the ball around every opposing player.
- Incorporate a feint, or fake, with a change of direction to unbalance the opponent.
- Try to cut the ball toward the back of the opponent rather than his/her front so he/she can't get a tackle in.
- Employ a change of pace from slow or moderate during the move to an explosive burst at the end.
- If the opponent is retreating, then attack at speed.

Passing and Shooting

Passing is a very important skill. If players do not have the ability to accurately pass the ball to teammates, the team will quickly lose possession and spend most of the game chasing after the opposition, continually trying to win back the ball.

Passing is kicking, pushing, or heading the ball to a teammate or to a space where a teammate can run on to the ball. A player may lightly tap the ball to a teammate several feet away or kick it strongly across or down the field. Most players pass the ball either using the instep (laces) of the foot for power, the outside of the foot for a short, deceptive flick, or the inside of the foot to "push" the ball.

- Very important to **train both feet**.

Inside-of-the-foot – The simplest, most accurate, and most frequently used form of kicking. Identifying the body mechanics remember 'the toe to nose approach'.

- **THE APPROACH** – first the head should come up to see where wishing to kick the ball, next there should be a hop onto the plant foot.
 - **PLANT FOOT** – toe pointed in direction (toward target) wishing to kick; beside the ball, with room for the kicking foot to swing unobstructed.
 - **PLANT LEG, KNEE** – bent (relaxed)
 - **HIP** – facing target
 - **SHOULDER** – facing target, but more important, if wishing to keep ball on the ground – slightly over ball, if wanting ball to go into air – slightly back
 - **HEAD** – down
 - **SHOULDER** – above
 - **HIP** – above
 - **KICKING LEG, KNEE** – bent (relaxed)
 - **KICKING FOOT** – ankle locked (for younger or less experienced players ask them to point their toe up, which will keep their ankle from acting like a 'wet noodle' when they strike the ball); strike with the inside of foot and meeting the ball in the center (from top to bottom)
 - **FOLLOW THROUGH** – bringing the knee towards the chest and then moving towards the target (with body momentum, as well!)
- ** Younger children have a tendency to straighten their kicking leg on the follow through and this **must** be corrected as this can result in knee damage over time!!



Outside-of-the-foot – Can be used in two ways, but mostly as a "flick" for a close, supporting teammate. The second way (a bit more advanced) would be used for greater distances (or power), which will cause the ball to bend or swerve (round an opposing player or defensive wall, for example). If used for greater distances the above principles apply. If using as a "flick" it is done more within the dribbling stride and pushed to the teammate.

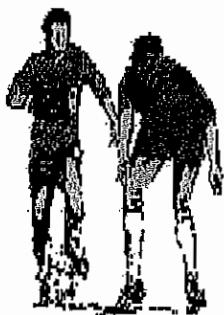
Instep (shoe laces) – Is ultimately what the game of soccer boils down to. All the other skills count for little if you can't score goals. Close-range efforts can be executed with the above principles. However, most goals will eventually be scored by shooting hard and accurately on goal.

To combine power and accuracy, a player needs good technique. Like any other skill in soccer, shooting is developed through regular practice. Kids can practice in groups, each taking turns at

shooting and playing keeper, or they can practice on their own, shooting the ball at a target on a wall, for instance.

The above mechanics will differ only in the following areas:

- PLANT FOOT – slightly closer to the ball (forcing the body more upright and the kicking leg to swing straight back and straight though).
- KICKING FOOT – the toe should now be pointing straight down, so as to strike with the shoe laces and a 'locked ankle'.



Tackling (both feet)

Tackling, along with intercepting a stray kick, is the most common way of gaining possession of the ball. Knowing when to tackle is as important as knowing how to tackle. A player shouldn't commit him/herself to a lunging, rash tackle. Using his/her weight to the utmost advantage, he/she should adopt a crouched (bent at the knees), one foot forward and one foot back, balanced stance and then strike hard for the ball, meeting it determinedly with the inside of his/her foot and forcing it away from his opponent's possession.

Tackling is not just taking the ball from the opponent, but also retaining possession of it after the tackle. Players should try to come away from the tackle having won the ball cleanly and in a position to look up field to find a teammate who is in space (or moving to) and looking to receive a pass.⁵

Teaching proper technique is essential as it reduces the possibility of injury to either the defender, making the tackle, or the attacker, the unsuspecting dribbler.

The key to tackling and winning the ball is timing and delaying until the appropriate moment. A few cues which indicate when to tackle: the dribbler has pushed the ball and/or pushed the ball a bit further than playing distance, dribblers' head is down, or the dribbler is a bit off balance.

When one of the cues is recognized and the defender has made a decision to tackle (remembering not to lunge). The decision of what type of tackle to use follows. There are three types of tackles, of which only two are legal in CSA, so we'll only speak of these two: the Block tackle, and the Poke tackle.

Block Tackle: Players should use this tackle when an opponent is dribbling directly at them. Instruct them to quickly close the distance to the dribbler. As they do so, they should position their feet in a staggered stance (above), and get in a slightly crouched stance. This will help them to be in position to react quickly to the dribbler's move.

They should tackle the ball by blocking it with the inside surface of the foot. Tell them to position the foot sideways and keep it firm (toe pointed up) as they drive it into the ball. Remind them to play the ball, not the opponent, when tackling.

Poke Tackle: Players should use a poke tackle when they are approaching an opponent from the side or from slightly behind. As they near the dribbler they should reach in with a leg, extending the foot, and poke the ball away with their toes (remembering not to commit the whole body, lunge). Again, remind them to play the ball, not the opponent.

Differences in good and great defenders (experienced and less-experienced) is the ability to have purpose behind the poke (beyond just taking the ball away), such as, poking the ball to teammates, poking the ball into space where it can be recovered by oneself or a teammate.

⁵ The Official AYSO Handbook; V. Fortanasce, L. Robinson, J. Ouellette; Simon & Schuster, 2001

Receiving (both feet)

Is bringing the ball under control with the inside or outside of the foot or allowing it to bounce off the chest, head, or thigh at an angle that deflects it to the ground to be controlled by the feet. Because the ball rarely leaves the ground in a U8 practice or game it is not necessary to devote an entire training session to receiving the ball out-of-the-air. Instead incorporate this in short bouts (a few minutes here, and a few minutes there), just enough to raise their awareness of the skill.

Controlling the Ball with the Foot

The most common way for a soccer player to control the ball during a game is by using his/her foot--either the inside or the outside of his/her foot. To control the ball with the **inside of the foot**, a player follows the path or flight of the ball toward him/her and lifts his/her foot even with the ball so that it hits the inside of the foot between the ankle and the toes. Just as the ball strikes the foot, the player moves it backwards, keeping the inside of the foot touching the ball to cushion it against the ground.

Controlling the ball with the **outside of the foot** gives a player more time to assess his/her options for the next move. The outside of the foot-- again, between the ankle and the toes-- makes contact with the ball just as it touches the ground, making the ball immediately available for a pass or dribble.

A players' "first touch," is the most important touch in soccer. So to begin to teach the U8 player to receive the ball "with direction" and more importantly "in a direction away from pressure (opponents)" would be invaluable as they progress in age.

Basic Tactics

Understanding that the U8 player is beginning to comprehend working in pairs we can begin to teach some basic tactics revolving around groups of two. With the added element of a teammate we must continue to reinforce dribbling, passing, and shooting and introduce more concepts of when and why of such for the player with the ball (also known as the First Attacker).

For the teammate without the ball (also known as the Second Attacker), we can begin to teach making space or movement for support and, as stated above, receiving of the pass if and when it comes.

On the defensive side of the ball proper tackling was taught at U6 and should be reinforced continually throughout the season. However, with the added understanding of the second teammate we can begin to teach the defensive tactic of applying pressure on (challenging) the ball.

Making Space

This is an essential aspect of good passing. When a player has the ball and is looking to make a pass, it's important that his/her teammates move to a position where he/she can deliver it, a position away from a marker (member of the opposite team who might intercept it). Good players continually move around, trying to shake off the attention of a marker or draw the marker out of position in order to create space for a teammate. Players without the ball need to work just as hard as the player with the ball.

Coaches need to remind their players not to stand too close to a teammate with the ball and make sure there isn't an opposing player between him/her and his/her teammate with the ball, which would make it easy for the pass to be intercepted. Instinctively, young kids bunch or swarm around the ball, all following it from one end of the field to the other. As they mature, players naturally develop more awareness of their surroundings and learn to spread out across the field. Coaches can help by using practice sessions to demonstrate the value of players finding space away from the ball. Coaches can play practice games of 3 versus 2, for example, in which one team always has an extra player. If the extra player moves away from the ball, his/her team will find it much easier to maintain possession of the ball.

Pressuring the Ball

When pressuring the ball defenders are moving into a position that: stops the forward progress of the dribbler, forces the dribblers head to go down (to focus more on the ball), thus taking away the vision of the field, begins the process of tackling the ball (above).

The key point to this tactical concept is that there is only a need for **one** player (defender) to do this at a time, who we'll term the first defender. Having more than one defender step up to do this runs the risk of teammates colliding with each other. The second player can now be instructed to back this "pressuring" player up (a couple of yards) and to be prepared to step up and take over the role of "pressuring the ball" if the first defender gets beat.



One of the most important keys to "pressuring the ball" is the speed at which the first defender closes down the dribbler. Too fast and the dribbler pushes the ball right by them. Too slow and the dribbler gets closer to the defending teams goal (closer to shooting and scoring). So there needs to be a balance /a mix of the two speeds. Closing down the space between dribbler and first defender very quickly (up to 3 yards), when this three (3) yard barrier is reached the speed is then slowed for the defender to delay forward progress and inching closer to the dribbler to begin the tackling process.

Micro-Soccer

Micro-soccer, or small-sided soccer, is the most appropriate introduction to the game, because boys and girls playing U12 and under aren't ready to cope with the demands of a full 11-a-side game. Small-sided games for the U8 age group are played 5 against 5 (5 v 5), on smaller-sized fields, shorter playing times, and smaller balls, which are much easier for children to control and therefore help build confidence in the players.

The use of fewer players on a smaller playing area ensures that players participate more in the game, which in turn helps them develop skills and techniques faster. More touches of the ball means more fun and more opportunities for improving play and learning the game. The more individual success children experience on the soccer field, the more self-esteem they develop off it and the more likely they are to want to return for the next season.

Children under 12 relate more readily to smaller groups of players (as defined in Section V). They also have a limited attention span, which precludes prolonged periods of activity. Most important, children focus best when learning activities are fun. Small-sided soccer is always fun and interesting because the players are always in the vicinity of the ball. They cannot "hide" in a game or have the unfortunate experience of the ball rarely appearing in their part of the field.

More Benefits Received Through Small-Sided Games

- More time/attention with coach.
- More practical space to be successful.
- More actual playing time.
- Energetic workouts due to playing both offense and defense.
- Required to make more decisions.
- Experience repeating game situations more frequently.
- Work rate and involvement of player stays consistent.
- While learning both offense and defense, a player will become more complete and will understand more readily the roles and importance of teammates.

Special Considerations for 7 and 8 Year Olds

- The boys and girls must be regarded as young children -- NOT AS MINI ADULTS.
- The fun activity factors must always be kept in mind.

Specific Rules

1. Playing Time: All players are entitled to play at least one half of each game for which they suit up. CSA understands that failure to attend practice, disciplinary action, sickness or injury might be cause for an individual to play less than one half.
2. Spectator Location: Spectators, coaches and waiting players must be between the goal lines and at least three (3) feet behind the touchline.
3. Code of Conduct (section I): CSA considers good conduct by coaches, parents and children to be an extremely important part of the soccer experience. The referee is responsible for calling the game, but the coach is responsible for the behavior of spectators and team members.

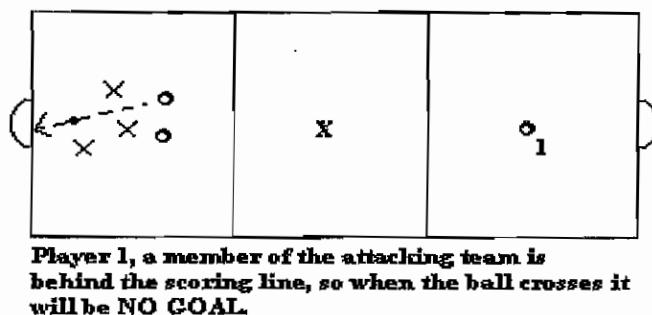
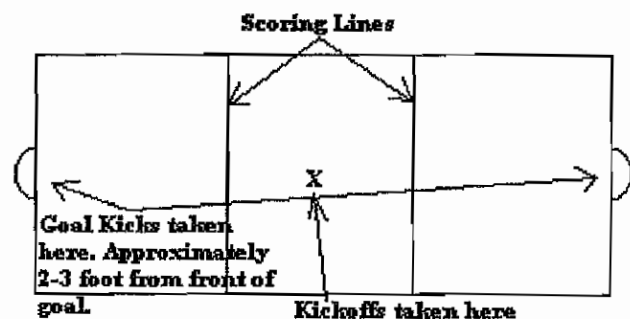
Neither the referee nor the children should be subjected to negative comments from anyone. Remember that referees have a difficult job at best and provide a valuable service that contributes to a successful soccer season. CSA wants all soccer participants- coaches, referees, and children treated with respect so they will return the next season.

Modified Rules of Play

New and exciting adventures begin to open up to the U-8 players' as their coordination improves and their size and strength increase. However, new challenges are often met with a mixture of enthusiasm and frustration. U-8 players' typically set unrealistically high standards for themselves, have difficulty making choices, and at times are overwhelmed by unfamiliar situations. They are at the awkward phase where they know enough to understand the complexities of the game, but still have much to learn about implementing their knowledge.

Law I - The Field of Play

The playing area will be approximately 50 yards long and 25 yards wide, about half the size of a regular field. Length-wise the field will be divided into thirds (see diagram), and called scoring lines, for a few reasons: 1. On goal kicks the opposing team must be behind the nearest scoring line, 2. On kickoffs the opposing team must be behind their own scoring line, and 3. To discourage goal tending, all players of the attacking team (the team with the ball) must cross their scoring line (nearer to opponents' goal) in order for goal(s) to count. Spectators are not allowed behind either goal or within three (3) feet of either touch line.



Law II - The Ball

Size three (3) balls will be used.

Law III - Number of Players

The game is played by two teams, each having five (5) players on the field. Each U-8 team will play each other in two 5 v 5 games simultaneously and on adjacent fields.

Substitutions are unlimited and accomplished on the fly. The coach simply calls the player being substituted for off the field. Once that player is off the field, the coach may send the substitute on the field. Permission from the referee is NOT REQUIRED.

There are **NO GOALKEEPERS**.

Law IV - Players' Equipment

1. Shirt with number (supplied by CSA).
2. Stockings (socks) which cover the shinguards.
3. Athletic shoes or soccer shoes (no metal cleats or shoes with single toe cleats).
4. Shinguards are required and socks must be covering them.
5. **A player shall not wear anything, which may be dangerous to another player or themselves.** No earrings, watches, rings, necklaces, bracelets, wristbands or casts may be worn during game play or during practices. Hair bands, if used, must be elastic, with no balls on them. Any other articles that in the opinion of the referee may endanger the player or other players are also not allowed.

Law V & VI - Referees & Assistant Referees

Each team provides a PARENT REFEREE for each game; only one referee on the field at a time, please. No assistant referees are required at this level.

Law VII - Duration of the Game

Games are played with two, 20 minute halves. Half time will be five (5) minutes in length after which each team will change sides of the field. If both coaches agree, the teams can swap fields to play the other team or players can go from one field to the other, however, the coach **MUST INSURE EQUAL PLAYING TIME TO ALL PLAYERS.**

THE GAME SHALL BE TERMINATED, REGARDLESS OF TIME REMAINING, AT THE NEXT SCHEDULED GAME TIME.

Law VIII - The Start and Restart of Play

The coaches determine which team starts the game, and the opposing team starts the second half. The kickoff is taken like a free kick from the middle of the field. The opposing players must be behind their own scoring line when the kick is taken. A goal **CANNOT** be scored directly from the kickoff.

After each goal is scored, the team that conceded the goal takes a similar free kick from the middle of the field rather than a goal kick because the field of play is so small.

Law IX - Ball In and Out of Play

Same as FIFA Laws of the Game (Section IV).

Law X - Method of Scoring

Same as FIFA Laws of the Game (Section IV).

Law XI - Offside

There is no offside law enforced for this age.

Law XII - Fouls and Misconduct

Same as FIFA Laws of the Game (Section IV). Put simply, there is no tripping, pushing, punching, holding or kicking an opponent. A player cannot pick up, hold, stop, or propel the ball with his/her hands except for throw-ins.

All infringements are punished by an Indirect Free Kick (the ball must touch another player, either team, on the field before it enters the goal) from the point of the infraction.

There are no yellow card cautions or red card dismissals at this level. The referee should simply explain to the player(s) involved why a certain action is not permitted and award a free kick.

SLIDE TACKLING IS NOT ALLOWED.

Law XIII - Free Kicks

All free kicks are indirect and taken from the point of the infraction. Opposing players must be a minimum of three (3) yards away from the ball when a free kick is taken.

Law XIV - Penalty Kicks

There are no penalty areas; therefore no penalty kicks can be awarded.

Law XV - Throw-In

Same as FIFA Laws of the Game (Section IV).

Law XVI - Goal Kicks

When the whole of the ball crosses over the goal line (end line), the goal kick is taken in front of (or just to the side to allow for running start) the goal, two (2) to three (3) foot inside the field of play.

The opposing team must be behind the nearest scoring line before the kick is taken.

Law XVII - Corner Kicks

No change from regular play (the corner kick is taken by the attacking team each time the ball is knocked out by the defense over its own goal line) except that opponents must be at least eight (8) yards from the ball when the kick is taken.

How to Use This Section

Activities

At the bottom of the page you will find a list of "Teaching Goals"/practice plans. Select a skill topic and turn to the respective page letter. Remove the page, fold in thirds and reference throughout practice. On each page you'll find a list of games, which are laid out and designed to progress you through practice starting with a warm up, then incrementally adding pressure. It may take a while to teach/explain a new game at first, but the next time it will be much easier.

Be prepared and set up your practice ahead of time, so that you may move from game to game with minimal adjustments (cone movement). This will allow you to spend around 5 to 10 minutes in each activity. Getting you to the "meat of the practice" (applying skills within game-like conditions) and ultimately to the "scrimmage." Every practice should end with a scrimmage (2 v 2 or 4 v 4) to allow players to apply new knowledge in a game situation (or what they'll face on Saturday).

Be ready to adapt

Coaching requires the ability to adapt on the spot both in games and in practices. For example, you may have to adjust the size of a grid according to the number of players on hand or if players are struggling with an activity you may have to alter the pressure: number of defenders, number of balls, size of the grid, size of a goal, number of teams etc.

Adjust for success

Players must be successful in your practice. You must manufacture success. Success increases the joy and fulfillment the players' experience. If an exercise/game is too difficult, players become frustrated and discouraged.

Don't hesitate to end or adjust a game if the players are not finding success, as this section is only a starting point. You'll be managing and running the practice(s) based on a number of factors found in previous sections. So be flexible, be creative and improvise!

Directory

DRIBBLING

<u>Plan</u>	<u>Page</u>
1 ~ ball control -----	A - B
2 ~ attacking -----	C
3 ~ ball control -----	D - E
4 ~ 1 v 1 -----	F - G
5 ~ 1 v 1 -----	H - I
6 ~ shielding -----	J
7 ~ fakes & moves -----	K - L
8 ~ attacking -----	M - N

DEFENDING

<u>Plan</u>	<u>Page</u>
1 ~ 1 v 1 -----	KK - LL

PASSING

<u>Plan</u>	<u>Page</u>
1 ~ technique -----	O - P
2 ~ technique -----	Q - R
3 ~ technique -----	S - T
4 ~ possession -----	U - V
5 ~ attacking -----	W - X

RECEIVING

<u>Plan</u>	<u>Page</u>
1 -----	GG - HH
2 -----	II - JJ

SHOOTING

<u>Plan</u>	<u>Page</u>
1 ~ technique -----	Y - Z
2 ~ technique -----	AA - BB
3 ~ technique -----	CC - DD
4 ~ attacking -----	EE - FF

GOALKEEPING

<u>Plan</u>	<u>Page</u>
1 ~ technique -----	MM - NN

Information for Game Day

Field Supervisor

Typically once, but maybe twice, a season you, the coach, will be expected to provide a field supervisor to assist CSA with the running of games. On your schedule you'll find which teams are responsible for a two (2) hour time slot on game days and this can either be performed by you or a parent on the team.

It would be difficult for the one Board member assigned as Field Coordinator to watch over every game being played, so it is imperative that a field supervisor be assigned to help us out. Field supervision is an important component, obviously for safety concerns, but also to keep games moving along as some people may plan their days around the conclusion of games.

Duties will include, but not limited to, the following:

1. If the field supervisor has the first shift of the day (8 am on weekends or 5:30 pm on weekdays) he/she should go to the storage shed (at either Cahill or North Park) to get an orange vest to wear.
2. If doing the second or third shifts, simply find the current field supervisor and relieve them by asking for the orange vest.
3. Supervise the following:
 - Games are starting and ending on time.
 - Referees are present a couple minutes before the start of each match for U10 and above age groups. If one is not present simply inform the field coordinator (Board member) and he/she will try to find one, then inform the coaches that, to start the game on time, they'll need to make arrangements for someone (themselves or a parent) to referee the game.
 - Injuries -- if an injury occurs approach to find out the extent of the injury and if it is a more serious injury inform the field coordinator. If there is any question to the seriousness of the injury, remember safety first and avoid having the player moved. Included in the registration fee is a secondary (supplementary) insurance, which covers every player. So if a doctor's visit is necessary paper work must be filled out for the claim and also Cheyenne Parks and Recreation requires CSA to submit paperwork on injuries, so the field coordinator must be informed so the CSA Board of Director's can take care of this.
 - Ask each coach to pick up garbage in his or her area after the game.
4. If doing the last shift of the day insure that equipment (goals for U6 & U8 and corner flags for U10 and above) is picked up and put back into the storage sheds. Return the orange vest to the shed and place on a shelf where it can easily be found for the next game day.

The Day Before the Game

Prepare the lineup and substitution schedule. Remember that over the course of the season, all players should have the chance to: 1. Start and finish games; for U10 and above 2. Play goalkeeper; 3. Be captain; and for U12 and above 4. Play different positions. These things are important to your players (ask them!), they will notice.

Check team equipment (balls, water jugs or coolers, first aid kit), the field location and time.

Game Day

Remember to bring your equipment bag and substitution schedule. Bring your game ball, which CSA supplied to you at the start of the season.

Have your team arrive at least 15 - 20 minutes before your scheduled kick-off time to allow for an adequate warm-up period. It is important to stress this message to parents as well as players.

Prior to the start of games, the President, Vice President, Equipment Director, and Risk Management person(s) will make the determination as to whether or not to begin games based on existing local weather conditions. During the duration of the game, the field supervisor/coordinator in consultation with the referee will make the determination as to whether to suspend, postpone or cancel the game based upon field conditions and current local weather conditions. The field supervisor/coordinator shall consult with the team coaches before postponing or canceling any game.

U6 teams will play each other in two (2) 3 vs 3 games simultaneously and on adjacent fields. U8 teams will play each other in two (2) 5 vs 5 games also simultaneously and on adjacent fields. The assistant coach or parent designated by the coach will cover one field and the coach will cover the other field. Players CAN go from one field to the other, however, the coach MUST INSURE EQUAL PLAYING TIME TO ALL PLAYERS. U10 and U12 teams will play 8 vs 8 and U14 and above shall play full 11-a side matches.

Each U6 team will have 8-10 players; each U8 team will have 12-14 players.

If for some reason your team or the opposing team doesn't have enough player's to play a game work out the exchange of players to give the kids what they've looked forward to all week, the opportunity to play.

Uniforms must be worn at all games. If weather warrants, the uniform can be worn over long-sleeved shirts, coats, etc.

Team Warm-up

Some dribbling and shooting exercises, which maximize touches of the ball. In other words, avoiding having players' standing in lines as they need to be prepared for the physical activity that will be required for the game.

Stretching isn't required at the U6 or U8 age, but to prepare them for future good habits a stretch or two can be intermittently incorporated into the warm-up.

For U10's and above it is a good idea to get your players busy playing a game or passing the ball around (anything to get the blood flowing, besides running laps) while doing this intermittently add a couple stretches at a time. So as to warm-up and stretch the muscles over a 10 to 15 minute time period and instill a good pre-game warm-up or habit.

Rules

The FIFA Laws of the Game are found in section IV and the modifications to these rules for small-sided soccer are found in section VI. It is your responsibility as a coach to know what is expected of you, your players, the officials, and the spectators. You should know the rules and should carefully consider the spirit which underlies them.

Referee

For U6 & U8 age groups each team shall provide a PARENT REFEREE for each game; only one referee on the field at a time, please.

For U10 and above, certified referees are scheduled, but often times they forget causing you the coach to make arrangements for yourself or a parent to step in to referee.

Coaching from the Touch Line

Coaching responsibilities can be rotated with assistants if you desire, but insure that the distinction of who will perform which duties is clear to all. Naturally, the assistant coaches are not expected to remain

mute during the game. They should join in with the other parents in cheering and encouraging the players. Enlisting assistants to help on the sidelines with player substitutions is generally acceptable, but only the designated coach should communicate with the referee.

It is important to realize that although we as coaches are permitted to instruct from the sideline, this is not a license to take over the game from the players. **COACHING IS DONE DURING PRACTICE TIME, NOT DURING THE GAME.**

A Few Things to AVOID

- Don't continually shout instructions - they often reach the players too late (the action has moved to a new situation) and may be distracting.
- Don't send one of your assistants to instruct from the opposite touch line to "cover the field." It is doubly distracting to the players (often the instructions coming from opposite sides of the field differ!), it is irritating to the other team if they are located there, and it is also against the rules since CSA asks that only one (1) coach instructs during games.
- Don't send a parent or assistant to coach from behind the goal line, coaches and spectators do not belong there! The coach can be "carded" for permitting such a violation of the rules.

A Few Good IDEAS

- Your sideline coaching should be limited. Prepare your players to think for themselves as much as possible. Take notes of situations and skills that your team has problems with and work on them during practice.
- Watch how the opposition plays and point out to your substitutes anything that can be to your team's advantage (e.g. all their goal kicks go to a certain area, their defense plays far back, etc.)
- Remind the players going in who they are substituting for and what their duties are and the goal that was set for the team to accomplish.

The less time spent shouting and the more time observing, the better understanding you will develop of your team, and the more information you will have to help them during your next practices.

Remember that as coaches we are in the supporting role. It is the kids' show!

Soccer Etiquette

Another aspect of sideline coaching is finding the best place to do it. Just as good fences make good neighbors, when teams establish themselves on opposite sides of the field it is often more enjoyable for both parties. It significantly reduces the potential for friction between the sides.

If circumstances require teams to share one side of the field (sun in the eyes, or shade or shelter from the rain, for example), coaches need to be aware and temper their coaching methods accordingly.

Pacing up and down the touch line, which is not a great idea under the best circumstances, is extremely irritating if it means running in front of the opposing coach and screaming over his/her coaching. The best solution is just to quit pacing. But if you must pace, or burst, then you should be the one to move to the less desirable side since you are the problem. A little consideration for others will increase everyone's enjoyment of the game.

After the game, give the other team a proper cheer (discourage cheers such as "Two, four, six, eight, who did we eliminate!", they are both arrogant and unsportsmanlike), then line up your team at midfield to slap hands in congratulations to the opposing players and coach. **Spitting on hands will not be tolerated.** Teach your players to win humbly and to lose graciously.

No league standings or scores should be kept and publicity of game and results are discouraged.

Finally, remember that, as coach, you are responsible for the behavior of your spectators (parents and others) as well as your own and that of your team. Spectators must be educated about the proper place to

stand to watch the game. All spectators should remain between the two 18 yard lines (marking the penalty area) and two (2) yards behind the touch line. This provides a clear line of sight for the assistant referees (even if you don't use assistant referees at your level of play, it is a good idea to get the spectators into the habit of watching from well off the touch line!). No one should ever be closer to the goal than 18 yards, and never directly behind the goal area.

Substituting

The coach's main duty besides watching out for the welfare of his/her players is to keep track of playing time and to substitute players in and out so every player plays a comparable amount of time.

Know the situations when it is permissible to substitute.

Players should play at least half of the game. Only injury or, under exceptional circumstances, disciplinary action should prevent a registered, present, and properly equipped player from having his/her fair playing time.

Equal playing time for all who regularly attend practice is a reasonable goal for every coach. "Everyone plays and everyone sits out" is a good rule. Don't use substitution as immediate punishment for mistakes made.

If you are still not convinced of the importance of this, consider the following. Look back to page 5, and you'll find the most common reasons for children not participating (or for ending their participation) in sports. The top two factors are that they were no longer interested and they were no longer having fun, to sum this up they were not getting to play. In another survey of more than 500 recreational players, 75% said they would rather play on a losing team than sit on the bench for a winning team [Henschen K, L Griffin in *Psychology Today* Sept. '77].

To avoid misunderstandings with parents (and CSA!) we recommend that you:

1. Know the club rules and abide by them.
2. Explain to your parents (at the Mother of all Meetings) the restrictions that are placed on you in terms of when you can legally substitute players during the game.
3. Prepare a fair substitution schedule before each game, follow it as best you can, and keep it on file for the season.

We strongly recommend that coaches prepare their line-ups before game time and substitute between periods or when the ball travels a greater distance to avoid delaying the game. For the older players, mid-way in each half and at halftime. Obviously, this is a general and basic guideline as injuries, fatigue, or as you become more comfortable can lead to substituting more frequently. Keeping in mind the flow of the game and not disrupting it as much as possible.

TIP ~ for U10 and above teams, to keep the subs interested in the game ask them to observe the game and keep statistics (i.e. number of passes made/missed, shots on goal, tracking who's accomplishing the teams daily goal); or for U12 and above teams to observe the position where they will be playing next.

For U12 and above ONLY ~ **ROTATE** your players, particularly in the U12 and U14 age group. Don't limit the forward positions to a few, everyone should have a chance to play defender, midfield, and forward. This is why in the U10 and below age groups we strongly recommend that coaches don't use or teach positions (see Section V). Every player should be encouraged to try goal keeping, but any player with a valid apprehension should not be forced to play this position. If you have difficulty getting volunteers, try to spread the task among a few players who can be rewarded by playing forward for the rest of their playing time. Giving each player some goal keeping experience during practice scrimmages will increase their confidence to try it during a game.

Referee Relations (for U10 and above age group)

The referees in our program have various degrees of experience and ability. There may be times when your game is in the hands of a novice referee, possibly handling a game for the first time. Go easy on the referee! He or she has a hard job and they are usually teenagers. Just remember, it could be your child out there some day--how would you want them to be treated?

Set the example by treating all referees with respect, and insist that your players and parents do the same. Accept their decisions as part of the game. Don't make calls for them, shout at or argue with them. Teach your players to focus on improving their own play and that of the team, not on criticizing the officials.

If the referee's conduct of the game is, in your opinion, endangering your players, then find the field supervisor or coordinator and ask him/her to observe play. He/she will then make a determination whether the play warrants intervention and he/she may then approach the referee and discuss the handling of the game. If there is no field supervisor or coordinator readily available, you may have to act in the best interests of your players. Any discussion with the referee should occur between halves or at the end of the game.

Coaches need to be careful not to overreact to some of the inevitable bumping and incidental contact that occurs in a soccer game. Contrary to some misconceptions, soccer is a contact sport. Legal contact is clearly defined in the rules of the game. Before questioning the referee's handling of the game, be certain that he or she is consistently failing to control illegal contact.

There will inevitably be calls with which you disagree. Don't let it become a distraction for you or your team. Over the course of the game the "bad" calls will probably even out.

If the referee does a good job, be sure to let him/her know and thank them after the game. If you find that one of your referees is consistently missing calls, contact CSA's Referee Coordinator or the Board of Director's who will monitor and work with any referees needing help. CSA has included in your packet of materials Referee Evaluation Forms, which you can use for this purpose. We value your feedback, both positive and negative, as we understand that our referees need suggestions for improvement, as well as, praise for things done well.

For Parents

During the 1999 spring season CSA enforced a noise ban called "Silent Day" on all parents and coaches watching from the sidelines during one day's play. Spectators could only respond to goals or superior play with encouraging words and for fouls and other incidents with a smile, a nod of approval, or a shake of the head. The day of silence was an attempt to put youth soccer back in perspective. Having personally spoke with a number of players ranging in age their responses were all similar, that they had a great time and they "were able to make decisions on their own without being questioned or yelled at."

This may be an extreme solution, but if you're a parent/coach who's new to soccer or you're a little unsure what is expected of you during a game, remember how much the kids enjoyed that day of silence. Soccer is an emotional game, littered with tragic examples of how some people have let that emotion run riot.

Unfortunately, more and more often, youth sports events are marred by the behavior of parents. Yes, soccer can be a very emotionally involving game for a spectator, especially for a parent watching his/her child. But it's still a game, just a game. In the following pages you'll find information pertaining to how to be a soccer parent. These pages can be copied and passed around at your 'Mother of all Meetings' or just covered during this meeting or given to parents with persistent problems. What ever you decide these pages are provided to assist you in educating your parents.

How to Be a Great Soccer Parent ¹

Kids want their parents to watch them play soccer. They don't want them to gossip to the other parents, or spend the whole game talking on a cell phone or reading a book. And they certainly don't want them to yell instructions or argue with the referee or the opposing coaches. Just watch the game. It can be as enjoyable and rewarding to watch a game of youth soccer as it is to play.

1. Remember: Your Child Just Wants to Have Fun

Remember that your child is the one playing soccer, not you. It's very important to let children establish their own goals--to play the game for themselves. Take care not to impose your own standards and goals on them. Don't put too heavy a burden on your child to win games. Surveys reveal that 72% of children would rather play for a losing team than ride the bench for a winning team. Children play for the fun of playing.

2. Don't Be a Sideline Coach or Referee

Kids dislike parents shouting instructions at them, even if the parents know what they're talking about. Often your kid is too busy concentrating on the game to hear you anyway, and if you shout even louder, you just end up embarrassing him or her. The only voice a player wants to hear is the coach's.

Arguing with the coach or the referee may seem like an act of support to some parents, but to kids it is nothing more than a waste of time and a cause of acute humiliation.

If a player hears her parents question the coach's decisions or disparage the coach's effort, she'll lose respect for that coach. If she hears her parents shout abuse at the referee, she's likely to do the same. Of course, referees make mistakes; that's an integral part of all sports at all levels. You want your child to learn to be a good sport, so don't blame losses on the referee.

Where appropriate, ask the coach to clarify exactly what is expected of you and what you are entitled to expect from the coach. Remember, refs and coaches are just volunteers; they are there solely for a love of soccer and kids. Be considerate of the people taking time out to work with your child. Let the coaches coach and the refs ref.

3. Always be Positive

Parents serve as role models for their children. Become aware of this, and work to be a positive role model. Applaud good plays by your child's team as well as good plays by the opposing team. Avoid becoming frustrated or focusing on players' failings.

John's worst experience in youth soccer occurred during a U14 game. He was at the far post defending an in-swinging corner. He tried to clear the ball out of danger, but he momentarily took his eye off the ball and ended up slicing it into his own net. His coach and teammates consoled rather than rebuked him, but then he heard two voices screaming at him from the touch line. "I looked up to see Paul's parents, red with anger, yelling all manner of insults at me for scoring an own goal. I was mortified. Even after play resumed, I could still hear them shouting abuse at me." This continued through the rest of the second half. Every time he was on the ball on their side of the field, they shouted at him. As a 13-year-old, he had no comeback. He just snarled at them and tried to avoid the ball for the rest of the game, terrified at what their reaction might be if he made another mistake.

As an adult, John finds it just as difficult to understand their behavior. What kind of people do that to a kid just for making a mistake on the soccer field? Negative comments have no place on the field or the

The 11 Keys to Being a Soccer Parent

1. Remember: Your child just wants to have fun.
2. Don't be a sideline coach or referee.
3. Always be positive.
4. Support your child.
5. Accept your child
6. Never compare your child to others.
7. Keep your expectations realistic.
8. Be on time for practice and games.
9. Make safety a priority.
10. Emphasize effort over winning.
11. Promote sportsmanship.

sidelines. "I speak from painful experience," says John. "I still cringe at the mere recollection of that game.

4. Support Your Child

Supporting your child by giving encouragement and showing interest in the team is very important. Even if they have had fun and played well, kids still prefer to win rather than lose. Maybe allow them some quiet time after a game to think about things; then help them see the positive aspects of the game, like the effort they put in, the fun they had being with their teammates. Positive reinforcement is the best way to help children achieve their goals and overcome their natural fear of failure. Nobody likes to make a mistake. But it's all part of learning, so encourage a child's efforts and point out the good things he/she accomplished.

Help your child work toward skill improvement and good sportsmanship in every game. Kids love learning something new, especially when a parent teaches it. Encourage your child to accept responsibility for his/her own performance and behavior. Don't blame losses on a teammate or a bad refereeing decision or a coach's mistake. Your child is part of the team and so shares equally in the losses as he does in the victories.

5. Accept Your Child

Parental approval and acceptance are hugely important to children. Your child might not be the most talented soccer player and he may not play for a winning team, but he/she can still be a success in your eyes, if success is judged by effort and perseverance. Everyone has good qualities as well as not-so-good ones. Accepting a child without condition, good qualities and bad, empowers the child and builds self-esteem and self-confidence regardless of the level of talent.

6. Never Compare Your Child with Others

Parents often compare their child with other players on the soccer field--those who appear to be the most talented--and judge their own child negatively. If Christine can control the ball like that, why can't my child? Children develop at different rates, and of course some develop certain skills better than others. Christine might be a talented soccer player, but your child is probably better than her at something else.

Not every child can be a great soccer player. But every child can enjoy the game and learn the value of effort and determination.

7. Keep Your Expectations Realistic

Parents consciously or unconsciously believe that their child must be everything they were, be as great as they were (or think they were). Maybe they have dreams of parenting a World Cup winner or professional athlete. These unrealistic expectations can burden a child, crippling him with a fear of being rejected by the parents for failing.

Parents who have expectations that are not congruent with the child's ability can take even the most highly motivated child and drain him or her of all confidence and self-assurance. Keep your expectations reasonable. Expect your child to have fun, to play with commitment, and to develop self-confidence on and off the soccer field. These are the important things. Anything beyond that is just gravy.

8. Be on Time for Practice and Games

Being on time is a courtesy to coaches--so they don't have to keep repeating instructions every time a late arrival turns up. It's also courteous to the other players, so they don't have to interrupt practice activities or start the game without the whole team assembled.

9. Make Safety a Priority

Cleats are not required to play in CSA, but if your child has a pair make sure they are clean, in good condition, and appropriate for the playing surface--molded studs for normal playing conditions, plastic or aluminum screw-in studs for very wet or slippery fields. Have shin guards and other equipment packed and ready to go for practices and games.

Be sure your child eats a balanced meal the night before a morning game or the morning before an afternoon game. Bring plenty of water or sports drinks to the field, especially on hot days. And remember that in cold weather kids lose body heat faster than adults, so have a sweatshirt ready after practice and games.

10. Emphasize Effort over Winning

Praise effort and performance more than results. Emphasize the importance of striving to win rather than winning itself. Teach your child that hard work and an honest effort are often more important than victory--that way, your child will always be a winner despite the outcome of the game!

If you're not present at a game, the first question you should ask the child when he/she comes home is "Did you have fun?" or "Did you play well?" **not** "Did you win?"

11. Promote Sportsmanship

Parents are the most important role models kids have. Always promote the positive aspects of the sport, such as fair play, and never condone violations of the laws of the game or behavior that breaches the spirit of the laws. Children learn sportsmanship through the example of parents and coaches. They learn by watching and listening, so always keep a positive outlook and demonstrate good sportsmanship by supporting the coaches, referees, and players on both teams, despite any mistakes they may make during the course of a match.

Parents need to demonstrate:

- The fun of hard-fought but fair competition.
- How to win graciously.
- How to lose graciously.
- How skills and abilities can be improved through practice and hard work.
- The social skills involved in being a member of a team.
- The importance of acknowledging good play by teammates and opponents.
- Gratitude towards the coaches and referees that donate their time and energy to the good of kids and soccer.

Why Soccer? Why Sports at All? ¹

It's important for parents to assess why they have their child in soccer and to understand what participation in soccer can potentially mean for their child, both now and in the future.

Stop and ask yourself why you want your child in a soccer league. Here are some frequently cited reasons:

1. Everyone else's children are in soccer.
2. It is a great babysitting service while I get my shopping done.
3. Maybe my child can get a scholarship and, who knows, become a wealthy pro soccer player.
4. I can show off my superior genetic lineage.
5. It's a great way for my child to meet new friends.
6. It's time that I can share with my child to bond.
7. It's a chance for the family to support one another.

8. It's an opportunity to help my child deal with the realities of life, which includes both victory and defeat.

Well, if you picked 1 through 3 and admit it, you're at least truthful. There is hope for you. If you answered yes to number 4, there are other sports you might prefer having your child participate in--like bare-knuckle boxing.

If you picked 1, 2, and 3, but after reading 5 through 8, think those are what you really want, then youth soccer is the place for you child.

Youth soccer is an opportunity for children to have fun, make friends, improve the fitness and academic abilities, increase their self-confidence, learn teamwork and social skills, and develop character.

Fitness

Almost 50 percent of preadolescents are overweight. For many kids, eating excess food can be a habit, as much as smoking is a habit, and like smoking, it can lead to illnesses such as heart disease and cancer.

Fitness has two parts:

1. It keeps weight down by burning calories.
2. It increases the capacity of the cardiovascular system and, just as importantly increases neurotransmitters (nerve juices) in the brain to make one feel healthy, energetic, and happy.

Exercise is a major treatment for depression as well as for weight gain. It lowers bad cholesterol and increases good cholesterol. It reduces blood pressure, increases heart capacity, and decreases heart disease. It can also arrest osteoporosis, cancer, and possibly Alzheimer's disease, the major cause of memory loss in the aged.

Soccer offers plenty of running and provides the opportunity for a child to establish good exercise habits for life. It pulls your child from the three most common fatteners:

1. Sitting in front of the TV.
2. Playing computer games.
3. Snacking while doing either of the above.

Youth soccer brings your child onto the field of fitness where his mind, as well as his body, is exercised.

Yes, Mom and Dad, your children might not know it, but just by taking them out to the soccer field you have pointed them in the direction of a longer, healthier, and therefore possibly happier life.

Academic Achievement

Youth sports in general are directly related to academic achievement. Statistics show that children who play active sports are:

- 57 % more likely to finish high school.
- 40 % more likely to go to college.
- 37 % less likely to become involved in delinquent behavior at school.
- 88 % less likely to be negatively involved with the police.

In organized sports like soccer, children are provided with the tools to excel in any endeavor. They are taught discipline and responsibility and are rewarded for effort. Soccer teaches citizenship and loyalty and teamwork--all the tools to develop a better society and a successful child.

Character

A recent nationwide survey of 8,600 U.S. high school students conducted by the Josephson Institute revealed the following statistics:

- 71 % of all high school students admitted they cheated on an exam at least once in the previous 12 months.

- 92 % lied to their parents in the previous 12 months; more than one in four (27 %) said they would lie to get a job.
- 40 % of males and 30 % of females say they stole something from a store in the previous 12 months.
- Nearly one in six (16 %) said they had been drunk in school during the previous year.
- 68 % said they hit someone because they were angry in the past year, and nearly half (47 %) said they could get a gun if they wanted to (60 % of males).

Youth soccer organizations like AYSO and CSA have recognized the need to teach and promote the principles of character as Vince Fortanasce outlines them in his invaluable book, *Life Lessons from Soccer*. The game of soccer has been described as "an unscripted drama" or "an improvised play," and we would certainly agree with that. Like any play or movie, a game of soccer is a reflection of our lives, and while players are on the field, there is a wealth of opportunity to learn and demonstrate the principles of good character.

What is Character? ¹

Character, in the long run, is the decisive factor in the life of an individual and of nations alike.

-Theodore Roosevelt

Character is the ethics, values, and habits that a person displays; the way he responds to challenges, obstacles, success, and failure. The Josephson Institute of Ethics has categorized the qualities of good character into the Six Pillars of Character.

1. Trustworthiness

This covers the principles of honesty, integrity, promise keeping, and loyalty. For example, when the ball comes off a player's leg before going out of bounds for a throw-in or corner, the player concedes possession without trying to convince the ref that the ball came off his opponent last.

If a child promises to be at practice, parents need to make sure he learns the importance of keeping that promise.

2. Respect

Respect includes dignity, courtesy, tolerance, and acceptance. A player doesn't, for example, argue with his coach or the referee but respects and accepts their decisions. Parents can help teach respect by demonstrating it themselves--refraining from arguing or abusing coaches, officials, or other parents--and by encouraging politeness in their child, insisting on the use of "please" and "thank you."

3. Responsibility

Accountability, obligation, dependability, and the pursuit of excellence are part of responsibility. Players demonstrate responsibility by striving to win, giving every game their best effort, but accepting defeat as graciously as victory. Don't set a poor example by blaming defeat on the referee or a bad coaching decision.

4. Caring

Caring encompasses the qualities of compassion, consideration, giving, sharing, and kindness. Encourage your child to help up an injured opponent, for example. But let her see you do the same. Cheer for the other team when they make a good play; commiserate them if they lose or make a mistake.

5. Fairness

Fairness is demonstrated by impartially, consistency, and equality. Players need to treat their teammates equally, regardless of their abilities or position on the team. Each player is equally important. Don't let your child feign injury on the field, or cheat in any other way.

6. Citizenship

Law-abiding behavior, community service, and protection of the environment are citizenship responsibilities. In the context of soccer, this means following the laws of the game and the spirit behind those laws. In a wider context it means kids need to see their parents partake in, not just talk about, performing charitable services.

Both parents and coaches teach the Six Pillars of Character. Everything an adult does sends a message to kids. Throwing temper tantrums, screaming at the ref, or bending the rules is an implicit ratification that these actions are admirable qualities, indeed, qualities to be emulated.

Hints for Teaching Character

1. Be an example. Children see what you do, not what you say. Character is taught by example, not just words. Be responsible, be on time, and be respectful to the referee and the players, parents, and coaches on both teams.
2. Recognize and try to rise above your own competitive and self-serving instincts. Remember, your child plays youth soccer to have fun and learn, not to live out your thwarted ambitions.
3. Every dilemma or conflict on the soccer field is an opportunity to teach and demonstrate character. Tell your kids: If the ref mistakenly awards a free kick to you when you know there wasn't a foul, own up. If a player consistently fouls you, don't retaliate; just concentrate on your own game.
4. After a game, raise issues that occurred during the game. Praise your child if he handled an issue well, or discuss how he could have handled it better, or the lessons he can learn from the incident.
5. Admit when you're wrong. Everyone has shortcomings and makes mistakes. Let your child see that you're not afraid of admitting yours. It will increase her trust and help develop a healthy self-image.
6. Reward your child for his effort and for demonstrating good character, rather than for winning.

The Roles of the Soccer Parent

Having a child involved in youth soccer is a commitment. Not just commitment to sport, but a commitment to your child and your child's team. This commitment will include being a taxi service, personal assistant, fan, and friend.

Taxi Service

If you have more than one child, be prepared to travel. Get a calendar and try to allow yourself an extra 15 to 30 minutes so you can avoid the mad dash to the field that leaves both you and your child in disarray. Carpooling when you have more than one child, at times, is the only alternative.

Personal Assistant

The major reason why many young children drop out of soccer is a bad experience with the coach. A close second is lack of parental preparation. A child will have difficult time enjoying him/herself if just prior to the game you go through the great scavenger hunt. "Where are you shin guards? Your socks? Your shoes?" Remember the five S's from bottom to top: shoes, socks, shin guards, shorts, and shirt.

The other equipment needed may be a water bottle and soccer ball. The night before, get a bag and make certain everything is packed away. On a weekday practice or game, this routine can be a lifesaver.

Remember, children younger than 10 are distractible. Despite your telling them a thousand times, they may not have anything ready. This is normal. They're not being undisciplined, unappreciative, or lazy. At this young age, their brain development is such that they are easily distracted and naturally forgetful.

So, it falls to the parents to ensure that everything is packed and ready. If parents are consistent enough, kids will develop a good habit by 10 years of age. If parents always leave it up to their kids, there will be confusion.

Children who are berated or yelled at for being lazy or disorganized immediately before a game will rarely enjoy themselves.

Start on the right foot by being prepared.

Fan

You are your child's number one most important fan. When a parent is present, a child plays better, is more enthusiastic, and smiles more. Most parents bring out the best in their children; others, unfortunately, burden their children.

What is the single most important thing children remember about youth sports? Their parents' presence, or lack of it, which is a major factor in the development of the child's self-esteem. After all, how important can a child feel if mom and dad never go to a game while all their friends' parents are always there?

Friend

A coach, a neighbor, or a buddy can help as a shoulder to cry on, but there's no shoulder as comforting as mom's or dad's.

If your child is a goalkeeper who made a mistake, or an outfield player who missed an easy chance or an important tackle, you may well have to deal with the agony of disappointment and defeat. This child needs consoling.

Remind your child that it's just a game. All that is important is that he tried. Share with him a similar experience that you've had. This is a true opportunity to bond with your child and one he will always remember. Then do something that's fun: go to a movie or out for pizza.

For the goalkeeper, perhaps the most apt to feel blame, remind her the ball must get by all the other players on the team before it passes her. So any goals scored are the responsibility of the whole team, not just her.

CSA tries its best to ensure every player is in the action for at least half of a game, so no child is made to feel left out. Remember, a child's sense of self-worth, especially when the child is under 12 years old, depends much more on your *reaction* to him than whether he is second string or not.

Tell your child that being a utility player, one who backs up others at any position, is very important. Let him know that you love him and never compare, or allow any one else to compare, your child with other children.

If you do feel affected by your child's being second string, then help him work on his skills. Just make sure it's fun and you don't burden them with unrealistic expectations. Discourage your child from just quitting. Unless there is a very good reason, quitting is a bad habit to develop.

¹ The Official AYSO Handbook; V. Fortanasce, M.D., L. Robinson, J. Ouellette; Simon & Schuster 2001; pgs.164-180